



CENTRE FOR
HUMANITARIAN
LEADERSHIP



CROSSING THE DIVIDE: PACIFIC DIASPORA IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

A diasporic perspective

SEPTEMBER 2019

“I experience (feel) a lot of things because I’ve been through this. If you haven’t been through that deal you will not know. I was 24 when I came to Australia. But I’ve seen so many hurricanes, so many floods you know.....what happens in the night if you don’t have a house or roof over your head? That’s what we experienced. So that’s what comes in your mind...”

“Lot of Pacific diaspora believe in having loyalty to understand the next person...having that trust. That’s something you have to work with before entering into their boundary to work with them.”

“What I have been able to do (is to) organize with different Fijian organisation in Melbourne to come together for disaster relief. What I have made it very clear to each and every organisation is that the group that we form is purely to assist for that particular disaster. As soon as the disaster help is done, we all go separate ways. We will only come together as a group when the next disaster happens. There is no committee, no organizational structure set up, it is purely based on voluntary and volunteers come on board.”

“How can someone sitting in a public service office or a politician looks through a lens at the Pacific without also knowing what the Pacific Islanders look through their lens back of Australia? If it goes both ways then I imagine that the diaspora can make a really constructive contribution in the name of Australia to the aid in the Pacific.”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pacific diaspora humanitarianism in response to natural disasters in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) remains largely unexplored and often misunderstood due to the gap in the knowledge of how and why Pacific diaspora engage in the humanitarian response. This report is the first output of the exploratory research carried out in 2018 to study the role of Pacific diaspora leaders in localising humanitarian response to natural disasters in PICs. The research was initially designed to understand Pacific diaspora humanitarianism based on a comparative analysis of perspectives of Pacific diaspora leaders, traditional humanitarian actors and national disaster management officials. However, it became apparent during the early stages of data collection that a comparative analysis of perspectives cannot be methodologically justified due to the lack of knowledge about Pacific diaspora in humanitarian response and their invisibility in the traditional humanitarian system.

The purpose of this report is, therefore, to understand Pacific diaspora humanitarianism from a diasporic perspective. It seeks to answer the following research questions from a diasporic perspective:

- What factors drive Pacific diaspora humanitarianism?
- How does Pacific diaspora respond to natural disasters in PICs?
- What does Pacific diaspora bring to the Pacific humanitarian eco-system?

The report does not include data from international and national actors. It attempts to depict what diaspora humanitarianism is through the worldviews and voices of Pacific diaspora leaders. It does not evaluate diaspora humanitarianism, and it does not compare diaspora humanitarianism with traditional humanitarianism. It is written in a way that is convenient for diaspora humanitarians and other non-traditional humanitarians to read and understand. This report encourages traditional humanitarians to understand diaspora humanitarianism outside of the dominant humanitarian narrative.

The research findings provide insights into what motivates Pacific diaspora to respond to natural disasters in PICs, how they respond, and what makes them unique as diasporic humanitarians. The report presents the characteristics of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism and links them with the localisation agenda. For the first time in Australia, it brings Pacific diaspora perspectives to the sectoral discussions and policy debates in humanitarian assistance.

Methodology

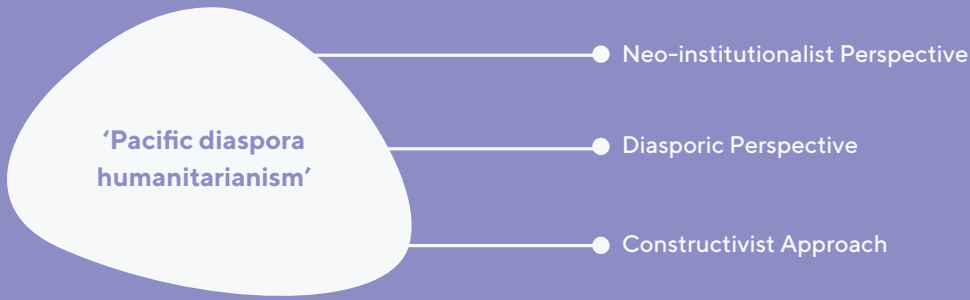
Pacific diaspora humanitarianism is an unexplored territory. This research was designed to be explorative and informative. A large part of the research process focused on learning how to connect with the Pacific diaspora communities in Australia, translating humanitarian jargon and academic terms into a language that could be understood by the diaspora communities and building relationships of trust with diaspora community leaders.

The research targeted Pacific diaspora leaders in Australia. They are leaders of various diaspora organisations, diaspora networks and diaspora communities. This report acknowledges the diversity in diaspora grouping and modes of diaspora humanitarian interventions.

The primary data was collected through an online survey and in-depth interviews. Secondary data sources such as diaspora websites, media releases and Facebook pages were also used to validate the primary data wherever it was available. The report acknowledges that the online survey was not a convenient tool for many diaspora participants. Most of the drawbacks of using online surveys were addressed during the interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. The face-to-face interview was acknowledged as an effective method by the researchers. It is important to highlight that trust and cultural understanding played considerable roles in conducting in-depth interviews.

The research used an inductive approach to the qualitative analysis of research inputs since Pacific diaspora humanitarianism has not been previously explored. This report uses as many quotes as possible from the interview transcripts to present the worldviews and voices of Pacific diaspora leaders.

A MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING 'PACIFIC DIASPORA HUMANITARIANISM'



DEFINING 'DIASPORA' AND 'PACIFIC DIASPORA HUMANITARIANISM'

"Diaspora is a transnational community whose members live outside of their self-identified homeland(s) on a temporary or permanent basis and remain connected to it (or them) through family, known and/ or imagined community spheres while maintaining a group identity that may change through time and space."

"Pacific diaspora humanitarianism is a transnational demonstration of solidarity by Pacific diaspora operating in family and/ or community spheres to support their homeland(s) and their people with humanitarian needs and recovery."

Research Findings

What factors drive Pacific diaspora humanitarianism?

Pacific diaspora humanitarianism is driven by multiple motivations, ranging from a sense of solidarity to obligation to families. Sense of humanitarian solidarity tops the list of motivations for the majority of the diaspora participants. This factor highlights that Pacific diaspora humanitarianism transcends the family sphere as well as the geographical boundaries of their countries of origin. There is also a strong indication of communal responsibility that drives Pacific diaspora to support their local counterparts in times of natural disasters.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

The research findings on factors driving Pacific diaspora humanitarianism indicates the value of families, communal responsibilities and solidarity. They suggest that a narrow focus on familial links cannot solely explain the boundaries of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Pacific diasporas, driven by their culture, tend to respond to calls for help from outside of their family sphere. The sense of solidarity outstrips national boundaries, and sometimes the regional boundary. A further discussion on humanitarian principles, in particular about the principle of impartiality, challenges

the assumption of traditional humanitarian organisations that diaspora actors are partial in their responses. Solidarity highlights the various ways for Pacific diaspora communities to mobilise and respond to natural disasters. These findings suggest that helping his/her family in a disaster context does not stop a diaspora individual from extending the helping hand to the broader community. These strongly urge a revisit to the conventional understanding of diaspora in humanitarian response beyond families, political motivation, the concept of a single homeland and partiality.

How does Pacific diaspora respond to natural disasters in PICs?

Pacific diaspora mostly gets involved in the response and recovery phases of a disaster. The empirical evidence from this research provides insights into different modes of diaspora humanitarian interventions and suggests that Pacific diaspora humanitarianism is much more than sending remittances to their families. The clear-cut distinction between the practices of sending money to families and sending money to broader communities demands theoretical clarity in defining remittances. Pacific diaspora leaders have different opinions about

cash transfer and providing relief supplies. An in-depth discussion on providing relief supplies adds a different dimension to Pacific diaspora humanitarianism which is often misunderstood, or underplayed, by the reference of their role in sending unsolicited goods. Volunteers are the salient feature of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Social media and ethnic radio channels of Pacific diaspora also play an important role in sharing crisis information and mobilising resources.

Humanitarian Actions



Cash Transfer and Remittances



Providing Relief Supplies



Cooked Food



Sharing Information



Fundraising



Volunteers



Programs and Projects



Reconstruction



Medical Assistance



Emotional Support



Physical Support

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Pacific diaspora perspectives differentiate between a family-to-family response and a community-to-community response. Participants in this research have primarily discussed the community-to-community response. The report does not use 'individual' and 'collective' response in order to underline that a family response can be a collective response from a family network and that is not what is discussed by 'community-to-community' response.

The discussion of why and why not participants prefer cash transfer or providing relief supplies indicates that Pacific diaspora leaders have diverse opinions and explanations, and thereby, indicates the diversity in practice of Pacific diaspora communities. In discussing the behavioural insights about unsolicited bilateral donation (UBD), the research by Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)

2019, p.8) proves that “The behaviour of sending a UBD is largely governed by a System 1 mode of thinking, people do not stop to explore possibilities of how the good will get to the destination, how much money will be required to do this, who will unpack it or where it will eventually end up”. Our research findings are suggestive of Pacific diaspora leaders who show a commitment to improving the effectiveness of their actions, respond to needs identified by government agencies, plan from collection to distribution of relief supplies, and open to exploring alternatives. These leaders offer different perspectives on the practice of providing relief supplies as a part of disaster response. On the other side, the example for ‘Clear message from the government’ highlights the importance of timely communication between Pacific diaspora communities and relevant authorities of PICs to coordinate diaspora’s disaster response. If an island country does not want containers of goods from its diaspora, it needs to send clear messages to its diaspora communities. The island countries also should provide alternatives for diaspora

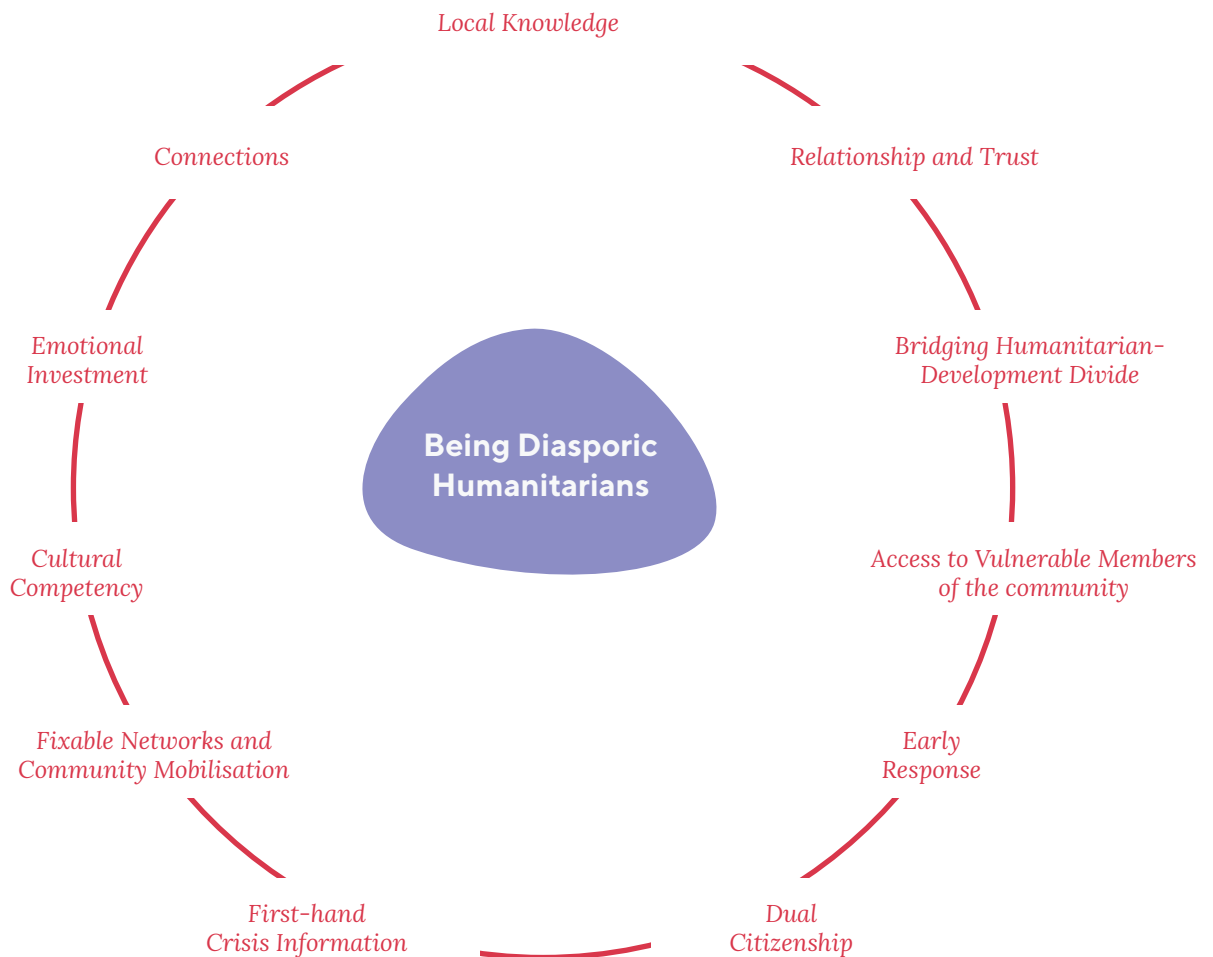
communities to meaningfully engage in disaster responses by other means. The research findings suggest that Pacific diaspora has tangible and intangible resources which could be diverted into more effective disaster responses if properly facilitated within the Pacific humanitarian ecosystem.

Networking between different Pacific community groups and organisations in Australia is essential for the future of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Networking can offer a way for Pacific diaspora to facilitate their humanitarian actions across states in response to disasters. The integration of the young people in the community activities will influence how the next generation of Pacific ancestry respond to natural disasters in PICs. The future of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism also depends on how their actions are acknowledged by other actors in the Pacific humanitarian ecosystem and how their enthusiasm to coordinate their actions is shared by local and international NGOs.

What does Pacific diaspora bring to the Pacific humanitarian eco-system?

Local knowledge, cultural competency, relationship and trust, connections, first-hand crisis information and early response are strengths of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. The diasporic characteristics of this non-traditional humanitarianism provide windows of opportunities for both local communities and traditional humanitarian actors and suggest new (or

different) ways of working in a humanitarian context. The report argues that an appreciation of the unique characteristics of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism and an acknowledgment of their strengths, strong connections and networks can create new alliances and networked ways of working in response to natural disasters in the future.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

This section highlights the unique characteristics of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism and suggests that these characteristics can be harnessed for increasing the overall effectiveness of Pacific humanitarian ecosystem by acknowledging them as the legitimate features of diasporic humanitarianism—the third humanitarian domain.

A localised humanitarian action is what ‘builds on and strengthens local and traditional practices and people’ (ARC 2016, p.5). Our research study of Pacific diaspora in humanitarian response to natural disasters suggests that Pacific diaspora humanitarianism supports a community-led humanitarian response and a bottom-up approach to addressing humanitarian needs. Pacific diaspora is in touch with the on-ground realities, and their decision-making incorporates direct inputs from the local actors at different levels— from families to government agencies. The Pacific diaspora leaders show commitment to local knowledge, local communities and local leadership. The multidimensional networks, flexible ways of working, the ability to mobilise resources as a community-to-community response to a disaster and different forms of solidarity of Pacific diaspora signal the potential of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism in contributing to community resilience in PICs.

However, this research presents only a diasporic perspective of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. We need to understand how local communities perceive the role of diaspora in humanitarian response in order to see what Pacific

diaspora humanitarianism can do for localising humanitarian action. We need local perspectives on Pacific diaspora humanitarianism to critically evaluate whether it offers local communities with control over resources, decisions and priorities in a humanitarian setting.

This research provides insights based on targeted sampling data into what motivates Pacific diaspora to become involved in humanitarian responses to natural disasters in PICs, how they respond to natural disasters and their unique characteristics as diasporic humanitarians. It presents a model for understanding Pacific diaspora humanitarianism grounded in neo-institutional and diasporic perspectives in a constructivist approach. We argue that Pacific diasporic humanitarianism should be acknowledged for what it is in order to work on the possibilities of creating alliances with them in the future to deliver a better response to the affected communities. Questioning the legitimacy of diaspora humanitarianism within the parameters of traditional humanitarianism only impedes the transformation of the humanitarian sector, which could be inclusive of different humanitarian actors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PACIFIC DIASPORA:

- Find out from the ground what the needs are before you plan the response
 - Work along with local authorities
 - Do not send rubbish
 - Network with other diaspora organizations
 - Engage the youth
-

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT:

- Local knowledge is power. Listen to your diaspora communities.
 - Appoint a national coordinator to facilitate diaspora's humanitarian responses across the states
 - A unit within DFAT to communicate and coordinate with diaspora communities
 - DFAT could share some instructions, procedures and contacts with the diaspora communities to support/ facilitate their humanitarian actions
 - Support diaspora volunteers with transport and accommodation
 - Document the diaspora actions on how they respond to disasters so that diaspora groups can learn from each other
 - Share a list of legitimate local organizations
 - Provide training to up-skill diaspora professionals in the preparation for a natural disaster
-

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS:

- Investigate the perspectives of disaster-affected Pacific communities on the humanitarian role of their diaspora counterparts
 - Series of case-study researches for a detailed study of diaspora organizations, diaspora networks and diaspora community initiatives
 - Participatory research to identify how diaspora humanitarian actors and traditional humanitarian actors can complement each other's humanitarian actions
 - Exploratory research studies into the role of governments, both in Australia and PICs, in facilitating the disaster response of Pacific diaspora
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INTRODUCTION

Overview

The international humanitarian system is in a critical position to urgently act on its promises for a fundamental reform to build a more effective, adaptive and inclusive humanitarian ecosystem (PFF 2016). The humanitarian ecosystem is anticipating an acceleration of alliances by creating a networked way of working between traditional and new actors to address the growing humanitarian needs and the increased complexity of the nature of humanitarian crises (The Future of Aid 2017). This foresight analysis urges the current system to recognise, include and promote a variety of actors, their worldviews and practices. Recent sector-wide studies shed light on the powerful inertias within the traditional humanitarian system which hold back transformative changes and shifts in power (IARAN 2018; PFF 2016). These studies challenge the worldview of the traditional humanitarian sector and pave a path forward to deconstruct dominant Western-narratives on what humanitarian actions should and should not be. It is repeatedly emphasised within the international humanitarian community that crisis-affected people should be in the driver's seat of humanitarian actions while ensuring the system is representative of all stakeholders. The fundamental reform of the current system requires a sophisticated understanding of different perspectives, identities and practices of a variety of stakeholders in humanitarian contexts.

We need to think outside of the traditional humanitarian paradigm to understand non-traditional humanitarian actors or newly recognised humanitarian actors such as diaspora. However, the humanitarian typology is generally understood in two parts, i.e. international and local (OECD 2017). This geographical interpretation of humanitarian actors ignores the third humanitarian domain- transnational humanitarianism by diaspora actors (Horst et al. 2015).

Diaspora humanitarianism is an under-researched subject (DEMAC 2018; Horst et al. 2015; IOM 2015). It is also often underestimated in the humanitarian sector due to the lack of knowledge about what diaspora humanitarianism is, the novelty of diaspora's ways of working in the humanitarian context, and the invisibility of these actors to traditional humanitarians. The traditional humanitarian community has concerns over the quality and legitimacy of humanitarian actions by diaspora actors, and, therefore, has been reluctant to recognise diaspora actors as humanitarian actors and equal partners. The critical considerations are the ability of diaspora actors to adhere to the humanitarian principles and the degree of their professionalism (DEMAC 2016; DEMAC 2018; IOM 2015; Sezgin 2015).

Purpose of the Research

The research was carried out to study the role of Pacific diaspora leaders in localising humanitarian response to natural disasters in PICs. The overall purpose of this research is to understand why and how Pacific diaspora in Australia involves in humanitarian response to natural disasters in PICs. This research was proposed to address the research gap in understanding Pacific communities in Australia within a humanitarian context and contribute to the emerging scholarship on the third humanitarian domain- transnational humanitarianism by diaspora.

The research encouraged the participation of Pacific diaspora leaders in Australia, relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and national disaster management officials in PICs, intending to bring perspectives from different stakeholders on the role of Pacific diaspora. However, it became apparent during the early stages of data collection that a comparative analysis of perspectives cannot be methodologically justified due to the lack of knowledge about Pacific diaspora in humanitarian response and their invisibility in the traditional humanitarian system. The lack of responses to the online surveys from the traditional humanitarian actors and the national authorities should also be noted. The research methodology was, therefore, modified.

The research seeks to answer the following research questions from a diasporic perspective:

- **What factors drive Pacific diaspora humanitarianism?**
- **How does Pacific diaspora respond to natural disasters in PICs?**
- **What does Pacific diaspora bring to the Pacific humanitarian eco-system?**

For the first time in Australia, this research brings Pacific diaspora perspectives to the sectoral discussions and policy debates in humanitarian response.

Report Structure

The purpose of this report is to understand Pacific diaspora humanitarianism from a diasporic perspective. Therefore, it does not include data from international and national actors. These data will be published in a separate report as a sequel to encourage further discussion on this topic.

This report attempts to depict what diaspora humanitarianism is through the worldview of Pacific diaspora leaders. It does not evaluate diaspora humanitarianism, and it does not compare diaspora humanitarianism with traditional humanitarian actors. It is written in a way that is convenient for diaspora humanitarians and other non-traditional humanitarians to read and understand. This report encourages

traditional humanitarians to understand diaspora humanitarianism outside of the dominant narratives.

The report has seven sections. The introduction states the three main research questions and defines 'diaspora' and 'Pacific diaspora humanitarianism'. The second section presents the context of the study. It applies a cross-disciplinary approach to the diaspora literature and discusses diaspora in development, diaspora in humanitarian response and Pacific diaspora in a humanitarian context. It sets the stage for the research and proposes a model for understanding Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Section 3 explains the methodology, methods and the limitations of the research. Section 4, 5 and 6 discuss the research findings. These provide insights into what motivates Pacific diaspora in Australia to act in response to natural disasters in PICs, how they respond and what makes them unique in the Pacific humanitarian ecosystem. Section 6 highlights the unique characteristics of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism and links them with the localisation agenda. The last section lists the recommendations from Pacific diaspora leaders to Pacific diaspora communities in Australia and the Australian government. It also has recommendations from the researchers for future research studies on this subject.

Defining 'diaspora' and 'diaspora humanitarianism'

The proliferation of diaspora across different disciplines of social sciences stretches and contests the meaning of it. Grossman's (2019, p.1266) 'cross-disciplinary content analysis of highly cited articles' presents a decontested definition of diaspora. His work identifies transnationalism, community, dispersal and immigration, outside of the homeland, homeland orientation and group identity as the salient features of diaspora definitions. For the purpose of this report, we draw on the salient features of diaspora presented in the work of Grossman and cross-check them with the characteristics of Pacific diaspora to reach the definition:

Diaspora is a transnational community whose members live outside of their self-identified homeland(s) on a temporary or permanent basis and remain connected to it (or them) through family, known and/ or imagined community spheres while maintaining a group identity that may change through time and space.

We define Pacific diaspora humanitarianism based on our research findings on why and how Pacific diaspora respond to natural disasters.

Pacific diaspora humanitarianism is a transnational demonstration of solidarity by Pacific diaspora operating in family and/or community spheres to support their homeland(s) and their people with humanitarian needs and recovery.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Diaspora is an emerging, dynamic and multifaceted transitional community that has been the attention of different disciplines of social sciences. In this section, we briefly discuss how it is presented in development, conflict and humanitarian scholarship. At the end of this section, we propose a model for understanding Pacific diaspora humanitarianism to overcome the limitations identified in the relevant literature.

Diaspora in Development

Diaspora in development has been the attention of academia and policymakers longer than diaspora in humanitarian response. Diaspora-led development is promoted and championed by the international development agencies, governments of host countries and intergovernmental organisations, particularly, in the Global North (Boyle and Kitchin 2014). Recognition of the scale and the growth remittances is one of the main reasons for governments and international agencies to change their perspective about the role of diaspora communities in the development of their countries of origin (Bakewell 2009). Despite the extensive focus on the economic aspects of migration-development nexus, the development studies suggest that the international development sector has shifted its focus from perceiving diaspora merely as remitters to diaspora as potential development agents (Boyle and Kitchin 2014; Brinkerhoff 2012). Diaspora's strong commitment to the development of their territories of origin, their close connections with their local counterparts and the intimate knowledge of their communities are seen as attractive aspects of diaspora-led development, besides the potential of their remittances (Bakewell 2009; Brinkerhoff 2012; DRC 2014; DAA 2014). However, overenthusiasm around diaspora strategies for a broader development agenda by governments and development agencies in Global North leaves us with a critique whether these strategies are instruments of neoliberal economic development that see diaspora as a new source of global competitive advantage (Boyle and Kitchin 2014; Brinkerhoff 2012). There is also criticism about the assumption that migrants should support the development of the broader nation in addition to their support to their kin (Bakewell 2009).

Diaspora in Humanitarian Response

This greater focus on diaspora in development does not mean diaspora in humanitarian response is a new phenomenon. The dearth of academic scholarship and sectoral discourse on how diaspora communities assist their communities of origin in times of war, conflict and disasters should not imply that diasporas are new actors in humanitarian contexts. It is rather a 'late acknowledgement' for reasons such as the lack of interaction between diaspora and traditional humanitarians, 'scepticism and parochialism' of traditional humanitarians, and the difficulty in calculating diaspora's 'resource mobilisation' in times of crises

(DEMAC 2016, p.17). There is also a lack of appreciation for diaspora humanitarianism mainly because 'some aspects of diaspora humanitarianism have received more attention than others' and 'added value' of diaspora engagement within traditional humanitarian paradigm 'is often not seen' (Horst et al. 2015, p.221).

It is not surprising to see that the economic aspects of remittances have received more attention than the other forms of diaspora's assistance in humanitarian crises. Remittances are considered as 'private' donations, not responding as 'humanitarian aid', and 'far from universal' (Bryant 2019). The problem with approaching remittances as an alternative source to traditional humanitarian aid is that it ignores the complementarity of remittances in humanitarian contexts and reduces diaspora to a purely economic role. The centrality of diaspora in contemporary conflicts and transnational politics is another aspect that has received more attention in the international arena (Demmers 2007; Smith and Stares 2007). Diaspora activism and identity-based politics in war and conflict portray them as political actors. This explains, to some extent, the scepticism of traditional humanitarians who aspire to be apolitical in humanitarian spaces.

Most often, the added-value of diaspora engagement is explained within the parameters of traditional humanitarianism (Horst et al. 2015). Where does that leave diaspora's humanitarian actions which do not fit in the frameworks of a highly institutionalised humanitarian system? The origin of modern humanitarianism is placed in Western history, Christian and imperialist thoughts (Barnett & Weiss 2011; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Pacitto 2015). The reproduction of the knowledge of humanitarianism by academia in the Global North and humanitarian actors in the institutionalised humanitarian regime excludes other forms of humanitarianism which cannot be explained by the dominant humanitarian narrative. The dominant narrative of humanitarianism maintains ICRC's definition of humanitarianism as the gold standard: 'the independent, neutral, and impartial provision of relief to victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters.' (Barnett & Weiss 2011, p.9). Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Pacitto (2015) problematize the universality of ICRC's principles. They argue that these principles are Northern-biased, partial and politicised themselves. Their discussion of multiple and overlapping solidarities by individuals and communities sets a stage for discussing other modes of humanitarianism and humanitarian narratives. The problematization of the dominant narrative, which is used to label what is accounted as humanitarianism and who are considered as humanitarians, allows us to understand diaspora humanitarianism from a different perspective.

The research studies by DEMAC (2016) and Horst et al. (2015) are essential in shifting the mainstream understanding of diaspora humanitarianism in humanitarian studies. DEMAC (2016) adopts institutional multiplicity as a framework for humanitarianism to

include diaspora actors in the humanitarian discourse. Horst et al. (2015) adopt a neo-institutional perspective. If the fundamental structures of the humanitarian system are social and these structures are created and recreated by the process of interaction of the members of humanitarian community, what happens when newly recognised actors, such as diaspora, become a part of this humanitarian community? Horst et. al (p.214) argue that we need to explore the differences between traditional humanitarian actions and diaspora humanitarian actions to avoid the risk of creating parallel structures that 'replicate recognised flows in the current humanitarian system' and transform the existing normative institutional structures to be inclusive of new actors and meet more humanitarian needs.

DEMAC's (2016, p.32) research study of Sierra Leonean, Somali and Syrian diaspora organisations depicts the variations and overlapping of motivations for these diaspora groups to get involved in humanitarian relief: ranging from family links to the commitment to the country of origin. It indicates that diaspora humanitarian assistance surpasses the kinship networks. There is also an indication of solidarity, particularly among the Syrian diaspora organisations. This research report presents different modes of diaspora's humanitarian intervention: fundraising, sending relief supplies, skills and knowledge transfer, media outreach (domestic and international), mobilising community support and implementing specific projects (p.26). The discussion of the findings suggests that these diaspora actors resist the compartmentalisation of development and humanitarian work, and instead sit on the continuum that ranges from early response to long-term strengthening of livelihoods.

Horst et al. (2015) affirm that diaspora humanitarianism goes beyond helping one's own, and conclude that it is driven by a sense of transnational civic responsibility. While comparing diaspora actors to the international humanitarian actors, they note the high accountability and the low administrative cost of collective remittances, trust-based networks of diaspora as well as the fluidity and informality of arrangements by diaspora actors. These differences explain why diaspora humanitarianism should be understood outside of the traditional humanitarian paradigm.

The cross-disciplinary approach to the literature on diaspora in development, conflict and humanitarian contexts suggests that understanding diaspora humanitarianism needs a framework that does not see diaspora

- as a new source of global competitive advantage
- for its added value to the highly institutionalised humanitarian regime
- as an alternative to traditional humanitarianism,

instead, looks at how these newly recognised actors respond to the needs of their local counterparts in a humanitarian crisis and a post-crisis context stand-alone from our conventional understanding of helping 'the other'.

Pacific Diaspora in a Humanitarian Context

Pacific Island Countries (PICs) have a high level of exposure to natural disasters and inherently vulnerable to the climate change (Gero et al. 2013; Me'heux et al. 2007; WB 2019). WorldRiskIndex 2018 (WorldRiskReport 2018, p.7) lists Vanuatu, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji and Kiribati within the first 15 countries which have a high disaster risk. Risk of natural hazards turning into disasters poses a threat to the future of these small island countries. What is the role of Pacific diaspora in response to these natural disasters? Why is it important to know their role in disaster response?

The Pacific region is profoundly dependent on remittances (Bedford & Hugo 2012). Remittance is considered as an important income source for PICs from a development perspective. This perspective mainly considers the economic impact of remittances on family networks and economies of island nations. There is also a growing interest in the role of remittances in disaster response in PICs (Bailey & Shiu 2016; Le De et al. 2013, 2016). A research study of the perspectives of Samoan migrants on remittances suggests that disaster is an emotional stimulus for the diaspora, and the increase in the level of remittances during disasters is an expression of cultural identity and solidarity (Le De et al. 2016). The results also indicate that Samoan migrants extend their solidarity from families to the broader community in response to disasters. The non-economic dimensions of remittances presented by this research study emphasise the importance of diaspora perspectives for the discourse on the role of remittances in disaster.

Pacific emigration data indicates an increase in the skilled migrants, including health workers, which signifies a brain drain in the region (Bedford & Hugo 2012). As a counterpoint for critical considerations of the sustainability of remittance-dependency and the negative impacts of migration, Lee (2009, p.7) presents the worldview of the Hau' ofa, an anthropologist, which suggests 'ocean connects migrants to their homelands and is not regarded as a hindrance to their ongoing, enduring ties'. This worldview encourages us to see the potential of Pacific diasporas and their transnational ties. Pacific diaspora identity is shaped by the culturally specific structures of families (Gershon 2007). The home for Pacific diaspora can be a combination of one or more countries and localities (McGavin 2017). The transnational activities of Pacific diaspora are not limited to remittances. These activities involve the exchange of cash, gifts, goods, rituals, cultural artefacts and expressions, people and ideas (Lee & Francis 2009). The transnational exchange networks of Pacific diaspora are shaped by the practice of 'reciprocity' (Nakhid 2009).

The historical emigration from PICs, the relatively significant size of Pacific diaspora population, of Pacific population, Pacific diaspora's strong ties to the island homes and the existence of exchange networks highlight the potential importance of the role of Pacific diaspora in disaster response to PICs.

Australia is one of the three main destinations for Pacific migration (Bedford & Hugo 2012; Lee 2009). The 2011 Census of Population and Housing indicates Australia hosts 274, 248 Pacific people of 23 Pacific ancestries (Ravulo 2015). However, scholarly knowledge about Pacific communities in Australia within a disaster context is minimal. Seasonal mobility programs are encouraged as a new response to disasters (Bailey & Shiu 2016), and there is mention of Pacific diaspora in the discourse of unsolicited bilateral donation (UBD) (ARC 2016). The potential of transnational networks of Pacific diaspora in responding to the humanitarian needs of island communities is largely neglected. The available literature suggests that the 'portrayal of exchange networks within a private realm of kin' and 'helping one's own is not accounted as humanitarianism' could be the reasons for the lack of interest by the Australian government, academia and the humanitarian community in this subject. Lee (2009, p.30) argues 'Any issues facing Pacific peoples must be discussed in the context of both the islands and their diasporas, taking the processes of 'world enlargement' and transnationalism into account'. The role of Pacific diaspora in humanitarian response to natural disasters, therefore, must be discussed if Australia aims to provide a constructive role in coordinating the responses to natural disasters across the Pacific.

A model for understanding Pacific diaspora humanitarianism

The discussion of diaspora scholarship shows a lack of diasporic perspectives in the construction of the knowledge. The incorporation of diasporic perspective, for an example, the research study by Le De et al. 2016, challenges our conventional way of understanding diaspora in relation to their economic role and their added value to a global neo-liberal agenda. On the other hand, a neo-institutionalist perspective (Horst et al. 2015) allows us to discuss other forms of humanitarianism that cannot be understood within the Western-dominant humanitarian narrative, however, still have the potential to increase the overall effectiveness of humanitarian ecosystem. Constructivist approaches to research encourage knowledge accumulation in the form of more informed and sophisticated reconstructions of vicarious experience (Lincoln et al. 2011). An inquirer is a passionate participant, serves as a facilitator of multivoice reconstruction. Constructivist approaches, thus, provide a space for reconstructing the knowledge about diaspora humanitarianism from both diasporic and neo-institutionalist perspectives.

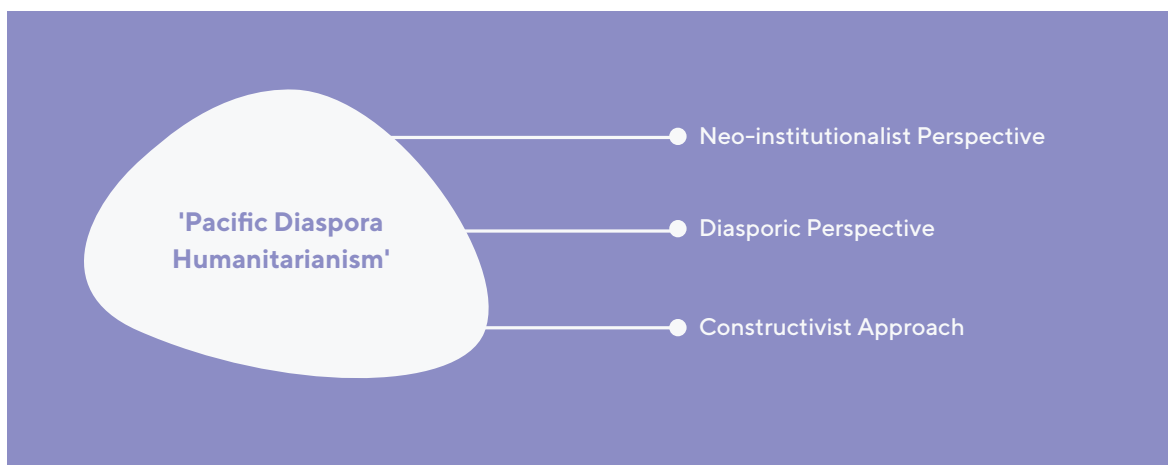


Figure 1: A model for understanding 'Pacific Diaspora Humanitarianism'

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Pacific diaspora humanitarianism is an unexplored territory. This research was designed to be explorative and informative. The research applies the paradigm of constructivism to inform and guide the researchers and the research process (Lincoln et al. 2011). The literature on diaspora in development and humanitarian response indicates that a diaspora perspective is mostly neglected in the construction of the existing knowledge. A diaspora perspective on why and how different diaspora communities are involved in response to war, conflict, natural disasters and post-crisis development is vital for the academic scholarship on this subject to be inclusive and ethical. We also need a neo-institutionalist perspective to argue for acknowledging and including diasporic perspectives in the reform of the current humanitarian system. Constructivist approach is based on relativism in the study of realities that are constructed and reconstructed by individuals. It assumes that multiple realities exist. This aspect of constructivism sets the stage for the inclusion of a diasporic perspective to understand Pacific diaspora humanitarianism.

A large part of the research process focused on learning how to reach the Pacific diaspora communities in Australia, translating humanitarian jargon and academic terms into language that could be understood by the diaspora communities and building relationships of trust with diaspora community leaders. 'Diaspora' was not a popular term among the Pacific communities in Australia. 'Humanitarianism' or 'Humanitarian' were also not familiar words to them. Trust-building was an important process that shaped the nature of the relationship with Pacific diaspora. But, trust was not just a matter of time. It was a matter of language, communication and critical reflection of process and practices. Some of the academic practices and language, thus, needed modification to produce a space in which Pacific diaspora leaders can be partners in the co-creation of knowledge about Pacific diaspora humanitarianism.

Positionality

The lead researcher acknowledges her positionality as a diaspora researcher. Her previous working experience as a Community Engagement Project Officer at Diaspora Action Australia and her insights from being a diaspora member of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora community in Australia have inspired her research interest in studying the role of diaspora in development and humanitarian response. She is also keen on the decolonisation of knowledge in development and humanitarian studies by research.

Methods

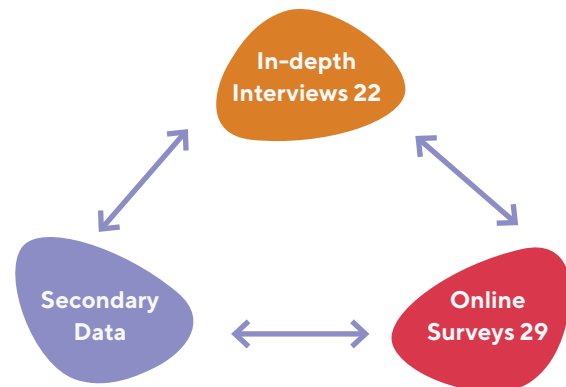


Figure 2: Summary of Data Collection

The primary data was collected through an online survey and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Secondary data sources such as diaspora websites, media releases and Facebook pages were also used to validate the primary data wherever it was available. An invitation to participate in the online survey was circulated at the beginning of the research as a means to reach a wider audience. The use of the technical terms in the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form (PLSC) and the survey, the format of both PLSC and the online survey as well as the impersonal nature of the initial data collection process did not work best for the purpose of the research. The report acknowledges that the online survey was not a convenient tool for many diaspora participants. Most of the drawbacks of using online surveys were addressed during the interviews.

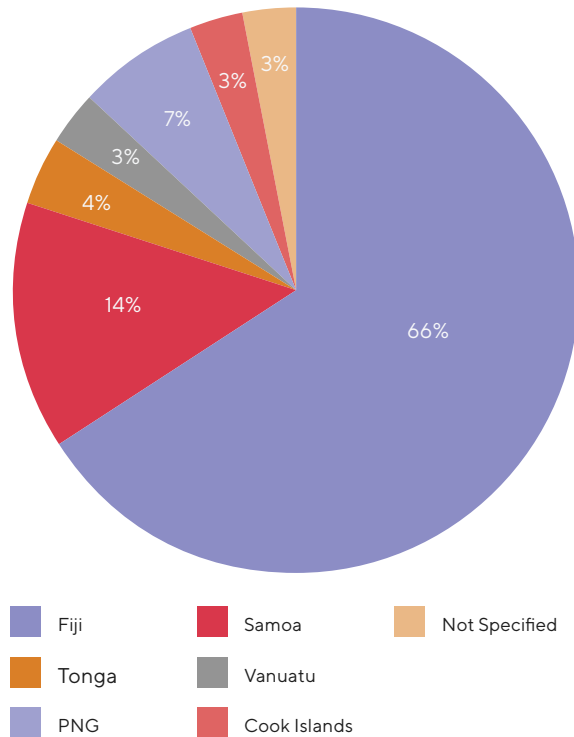
Nature of the questions in an in-depth interview enables a more profound process of mutual self-disclosure and trust-building (Johnson 2001). In-depth interviews provided both the researcher and the participants with an adequate dialogue for mutual disclosure and trust-building. It created a space in which diaspora participants had the authority to discuss their worldviews and perspectives on disaster response. Interviews were semi-structured, and the questions were open-ended. The face-to-face interview was acknowledged as an effective tool by the researchers. Interviews were conducted in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It is important to highlight that trust and cultural understanding played considerable roles in conducting in-depth interviews.

Inductive coding was used for the purpose of analysis (Thomas 2006). It allowed themes to be generated from the interview transcripts. Survey data and secondary data were used as supplementary sources for interview data during the analysis. The worldviews and voices of Pacific diaspora leaders are presented in the many quotes drawn from the transcripts. The report is

intentionally written to share the research findings beyond academic and traditional humanitarian circles. However, the context of the study is primarily written for the audience who are interested in the theoretical framework of this research.

Pacific Diaspora Participants

Figure 3: Country Representation of Research Participants



We had 29 diaspora participants in total, 20 male and 9 female. Participants were leaders of various diaspora organisations, diaspora networks and diaspora communities. This report acknowledges the diversity in diaspora grouping.

Limitations

The researchers reached out to 170 Pacific diasporic individuals and more than 100 Pacific diaspora organisations. However, it was not as successful as planned for several reasons; the novelty of the research subject, technical difficulty, cultural sensitivity, trust, distance, invisibility and lack of secondary data. The research methodology and findings are primarily influenced by Fiji diaspora. Pacific diaspora community in Australia consists of different nationalities, ethnicities and tribal groups. The report acknowledges that the research sample does not fully represent this diversity.

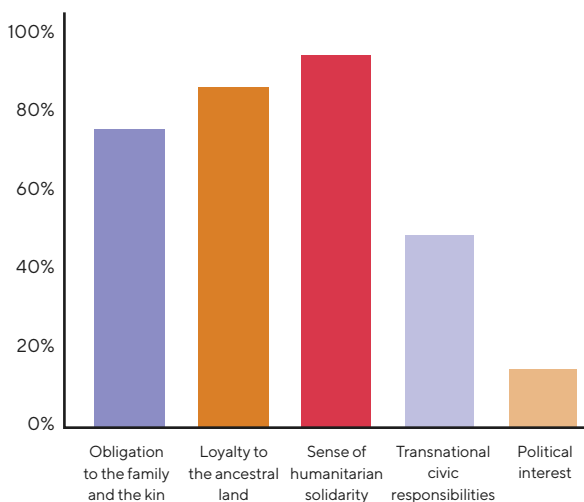
On the other hand, considering the absence of knowledge repository on Pacific diaspora humanitarianism in Australia, this report acts as a first attempt to document the humanitarian actions of Pacific diaspora from a diasporic perspective. Readers are encouraged to use this report as an entry point to further explore Pacific diaspora humanitarianism.

WHAT FACTORS DRIVE PACIFIC DIASPORA HUMANITARIANISM?

Identifying what factors drive the humanitarian actions of a particular diaspora community in response to a particular crisis is a prerequisite to understanding how they respond to that crisis. The report acknowledges that the survey question which was intended to identify the drivers of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism was inadequate to broaden the reflections of the participants outside of the traditional humanitarian imperative and the conventional understanding of what motivates diaspora in the humanitarian crises.

On the survey, participants were only able to choose between obligation to the family and the kin, loyalty to the ancestral land, sense of humanitarian solidarity, transnational civic responsibility and political interests. These factors were chosen from the available literature. As shown by the graph below, the sense of humanitarian solidarity tops the list, followed by loyalty to the ancestral land and obligation to the family and the kin.

Figure 4: Online Survey Q10: "What does motivate you to assist Pacific island communities in response to natural disasters?"



The in-depth interviews opened the space for participants to reflect on why they respond and, thereby, identify the drivers of humanitarian actions from their perspectives. They mainly discussed communal responsibilities, family ties, different forms of solidarity, extended loyalties and empathy. These motivational factors are closely linked with each other.

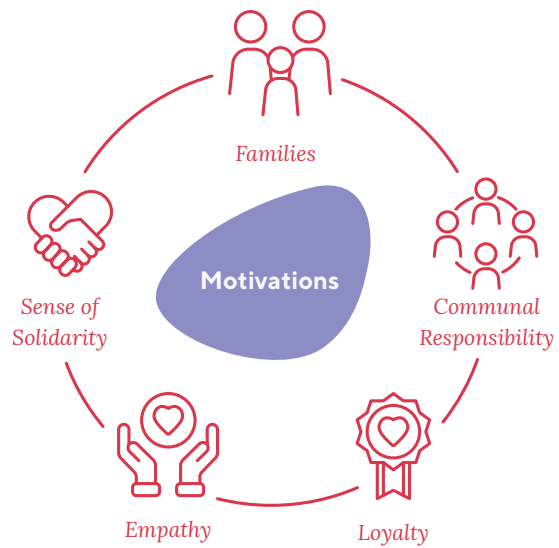


Figure 5: Motivations for Pacific Diaspora Humanitarians

Communal (or Collective) Responsibility

There is a clear distinction between responding as a community to a community and responding as a family to a family. Most of the participants mentioned that they do not have direct family members in their countries of origin, and they still assist the Pacific communities out of their communal responsibility. The communal responsibility is driven by their cultural perspective, which transcends the family boundaries of responsibility in times of natural disasters. Their humanitarian imperative is shaped by their customary practice of helping each other in times of suffering within their communities. Pacific diaspora actors apply their old saying 'it takes a village to raise a child'ⁱ in their humanitarian response. They perceive the broader, affected community as their family and take the responsibility to look after them. They believe that their responsibility goes beyond their kin when they come together as a diaspora community in Australia to support the survival of the affected communities in their countries of origin.

*"When you are doing it for the whole country for which you come together, we do it for the whole community, it is not (just) the family. Family becomes the whole country; the whole country is your family."*ⁱⁱ

Family

The response starts from home for diasporas who still have family members in their countries of origin. They believe that family is their first and foremost priority before they extend their support to the broader community. Participants told that they are culturally wired to be responsible for their families in the Pacific. They send remittances throughout the year and support the families in building livelihoods. In addition, diaspora members respond to their families immediately when disasters strike, in terms of financial assistance, emotional support and knowledge sharing. They continue to assist their families in recovery and reconstruction. Diaspora participants used words such as responsibility, commitment, love and guilty feelings when they discussed their assistance to their families in response to disasters.

"I spoke to my brother last week actually. I have been supplying him and 17 members of the family because they were affected by the flood that ravaged through, on 28th of January of this year. And the food has been, the garden supplies have been affected. Food supplies are quite hard to get so I am supplying them with financial assistance. Almost eight months now...it is difficult for my brother because they are village people, so they do not know how to go and access seedlings from the Department of Agriculture Stock and Fisheries." ⁱⁱⁱ

Loyalty

The disaster responses are also driven by diasporas' loyalty towards their countries of birth. In some cases, the loyalty extends to multiple countries, for example, countries from where their ancestors came, where they were born and where they spent a considerable time of their lives. The extended loyalty is shaped by the non-linear migration journeys of diasporas. These journeys have more than a single homeland and a destination country in the route. For example, a Fijian diaspora who were born in Fiji, whose ancestors came from India and who spent a considerable time of his/ her life in New Zealand before moving to Australia may feel loyal to India, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia at any given time. This factor urges diaspora members to extend their assistance beyond their countries of birth and the Pacific in response to crises. Participants also indicated that their loyalty had been divided between Australia and their communities of origin, and, thus, they assist affected communities in Australia in times of disasters and emergencies. Participants used words such as duty, patriotism, gratitude and sentimental affection to explain loyalty as a stimulus that gets them engaged in disaster response to their communities of origin.

"If you could talk about natural disaster, well you know, as soon as something happens we all panic. It is a panic mood, what can we do, with so many miles away or kilometres away from our Fiji, it is where we came from, we were born there, we grew up there, and it is like our

motherland. Even though we have migrated but we still look after. Even if something happens in India we do have a lot of concerns as it happens in Fiji because we know our background is from India." ^{iv}

Sense of Solidarity

The communal responsibility of Pacific diaspora groups to respond to any suffering extends beyond their communities of origin. In Australia, their active engagement with communities of different ethnic background, either from the same country or different countries across the Pacific and beyond, creates a sense of solidarity. The research data indicates different types of solidarities- ethnic solidarity, Pacific solidarity and humanitarian solidarity. When ethnic identity influences the group identity of diasporas of different nationalities, these diasporas assist countries of non-origin in solidarity with their ethnic counterparts in Australia. Fijian diasporas with an Indian heritage responding to a disaster in Nepal in solidarity with Nepalese diasporas with an Indian heritage can be of an example of such ethnic solidarity. When Pacific identity influences the group identity of diasporas of different Pacific island nations, these diasporas come together in solidarity with Pacific island communities regardless of their nationalities and ethnicities. As a participant mentioned 'we come as one but we are of many' ^v, these diasporas understand each other's culture and hardship, and work together in response to disasters in PICs. Humanitarian solidarity motivates some Pacific diaspora members to respond to disasters anywhere in the world. This solidarity is shaped by the culturally-driven compassion, sense of humanity, experience and improved standard of living in Australia

"It is always good to help from the human point of view. It is very nice to have the peace of mind that you have done your share for the humanity, for the people who are suffering and people who are in need." ^{vi}

Empathy

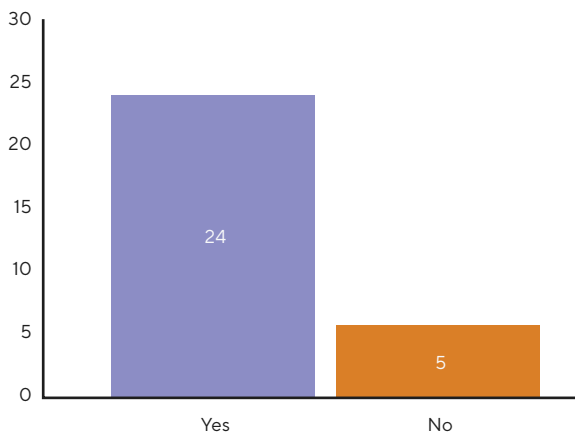
Pacific diaspora members are able to directly empathise with the local affected communities. This is due to their first-hand experience of disasters, their direct engagement with the affected communities and/or their experience of working with the national actors.

"I experience (feel) a lot of things because I have been through this. If you have not been through that deal you will not know. I was 24 when I came to Australia. But I have seen so many hurricanes, so many floods you know... what happens in the night if you don't have a house or roof over your head? That's what we experienced. So that's what comes in your mind..." ^{vii}

What do humanitarian principles mean to Pacific diaspora leaders?

The traditional humanitarian actors are expected to offer their services based on the principle of humanity and the humanitarian imperative. A critique of non-traditional humanitarian actors such as diaspora is whether they adhere to these principles in their actions in the same manner as traditional actors. Are their motivations guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence? Are they familiar with these terms? Do their diasporic characteristics pose a challenge to adhere to these principles? Diaspora research participants were asked to reflect on their understanding of humanitarian principles.

Figure 6: Online Survey Q17: "Are you familiar with the humanitarian principles?"



In contrast to the survey response, the findings from the in-depth interviews show that most of the diaspora leaders did not have a very good understanding of these terms. Once the principles were explained to them, Pacific diaspora leaders pointed out that they place humanity and impartiality at the heart of their actions even though they do not explicitly use these terms to explain their actions.

"I am not very familiar with humanitarian (principles). You know what I do is just to make sure that there is a helping hand and then people do get help. We'd identified anyone who was in need. So, at that time, we looked at who was in need. We didn't care he was a Muslim or a Christian or a Hindu....There was a need, we identified the need and we just helped them." ^{viii}

As mentioned above, most of the Pacific diasporas maintain a clear distinction between family-to-family response and community-to-community response. When they respond as a community, they collectively make decisions, which are not based on any personal preferences, instead, based on information in hand and the reach of their networks. It depends on the community leaders to make sure that their collective responses are not biased. In the interviews, some of the community leaders emphasised that they have zero tolerance towards any discrimination.

"There will be conflict within the community, yeah. The people love to donate things but then they have the worry that (it) is being misused, or this stuff, is it going to Fiji or it's going somewhere else? Or will it go to the Indian community or will it get to the native community? Or will it go to Hindus or the Muslims or the Christians? All this mentality. My way of managing it, if you have that kind of feeling please do not donate. I'm very open and I make it very clear. Be clear in your mind when you donate." ^{ix}

However, some of the community leaders expressed their concern over the application of humanitarian principles and standards while suggesting that knowledge-sharing would remedy these challenges in diaspora communities.

"I think it's hard to remain disciplined and transparent and non-biased. But it's an actual skill and again it's to do with the education and greater understanding. People need to understand what it is... So, there's a responsibility with governments and agencies and those that are working persistently in this space to hand that knowledge down." ^x

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

The research findings on factors driving Pacific diaspora humanitarianism indicates the value of families, communal responsibilities and solidarity. They suggest that a narrow focus on familial links cannot solely explain the boundaries of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Pacific diasporas, driven by their culture, tend to respond to calls for help from outside of their family sphere. The sense of solidarity outstrips national boundaries, and sometimes the regional boundary. A further discussion on humanitarian principles, in particular about the principle of impartiality, challenges the assumption of traditional humanitarian organisations that diaspora actors are partial in their responses. Solidarity highlights the various ways for Pacific diaspora communities to mobilise and respond to natural disasters. These findings suggest that helping his/her family in a disaster context does not stop a diaspora individual from extending the helping hand to the broader community. These strongly urge a revisit to the conventional understanding of diaspora in humanitarian response beyond families, political motivation, the concept of a single homeland and partiality.

HOW DOES PACIFIC DIASPORA RESPOND TO NATURAL DISASTERS IN PICs?

This section provides a comprehensive list of humanitarian actions carried out by Pacific diaspora in response to natural disasters in PICs. The findings depict a nuanced view of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism that challenges the conventional understanding concerning

remittances and unsolicited bilateral donation (UBD). The research findings suggest a range of actions by Pacific diaspora in response to natural disasters as depicted below:

Humanitarian Actions



Cash Transfer and Remittances



Providing Relief Supplies



Cooked Food



Sharing Information



Fundraising



Volunteers



Programs and Projects



Reconstruction



Medical Assistance



Emotional Support

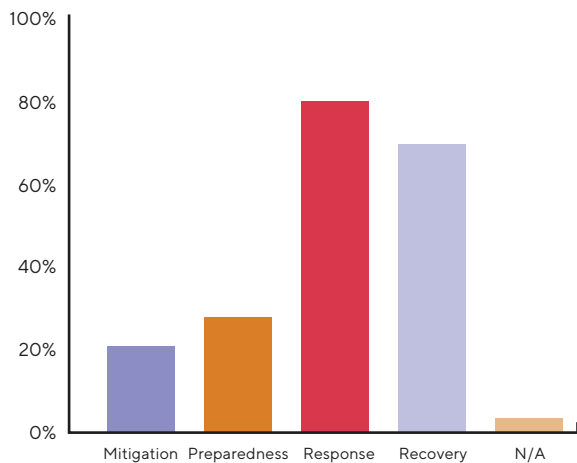


Physical Support

Figure 7: Summary of humanitarian actions of Pacific diaspora in Australia

A disaster cycle consists of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery phases. Pacific diaspora mostly engages in the response and recovery phases.

Figure 8: Online Survey Q11: "Which phase(s) have you been involved in response to a natural disaster?"



How do Pacific diasporas identify the needs of the affected population?

- Based on their past experience
- Direct inputs from the local communities
- Direct inputs from the government agencies in PICs
- Seeking media information

Diaspora networks play a huge role in the task of identifying the needs of disaster-affected communities. Pacific diaspora leaders use their personal and professional connections with local communities and government agencies to get the inputs for their decision-making. Their networks consist of local advisory councils, community volunteers, ministers, relatives, religious organisations and professional associations such as teachers unions. They also get in touch with district offices in PICs, national disaster management offices as well as relevant high commissions in Australia to identify what is needed on the ground.

Cash Transfer and Remittances

If 'remittance' is understood as a source of income for households from their family members in the diaspora, the application of the same term for diaspora's collective cash transfer to the broader communities in response to a disaster can diminish the potential of this action. The report uses cash transfer and remittances in different notes to maintain theoretical clarity in accordance with the practice.

Remittance is used to explain the family-to-family transfer of money, which is, in case of disasters, both economic contribution and emotional response. Pacific diasporas perceive remittance as a coping mechanism for their families in the aftermath of disasters. Their immediate response to their families in PICs is to send them money. The remittances play a key role in the recovery phase as well. Participants mentioned that

their families in PICs use the money to meet their urgent needs, sustain their livelihoods and reconstruct the damaged properties.

"When cyclone Winston happened, one of my second cousin's house was blown away. The first thing we did, the Narayanan family here, was to collect money amongst us and sent it to him. He got everything and got his house built within, maybe, less than a month. That was the immediate help he needed."^{xi}

The cash transfer is used to explain the community-to-community transfer of money for which disaster is an emotional stimulus. Cash transfer also includes the transfer of money from diaspora members who do not have familial links in PICs. Cash transfer, in this context, does not necessarily mean the direct transfer of money to the affected population, and it is inclusive of various cash-based interventions. The research findings suggest that the Pacific diaspora transferred money to different sources in the local community and for different actions.

- Money to the local businesses to buy relief supplies and volunteers on the ground deliver them to the affected communities
- Money to the local businesses and organise vouchers to those in need
- Money to the local humanitarian agencies to assist them with their responses
- Money to support the initiatives by local community volunteers
- Money to local schools
- Money to government relief funds

Cash transfer programs are promoted by traditional humanitarian agencies as complements and alternatives to in-kind assistance in humanitarian crises. Findings show that Pacific diaspora leaders have different opinions about cash transfer, and these opinions influence their decisions in disaster responses in choosing between sending cash and sending relief supplies. The following diagrams depict why some of them positively view cash transfer as an effective response while others are not.



Figure 9: Rationale for 'Cash Transfer'

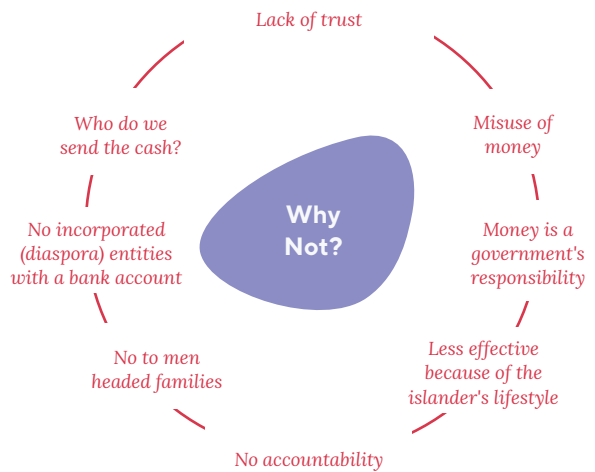


Figure 10: Rationale for not choosing 'Cash Transfer'

Providing Relief Supplies

The report uses 'providing relief supplies' to explain both sending containers of goods as well as distributing relief supplies to the affected communities. It acknowledges two approaches to providing relief supplies.

1. Sending containers to the disaster-affected countries and have them distributed by either local authorities or volunteers.
2. Diaspora volunteers pay a direct visit to the disaster-affected areas with the money collected in Australia, and they buy relief supplies from the local businesses to distribute to those in need.

While the humanitarian sector encourages cash-based interventions in the humanitarian settings, online survey responses indicate, from a diasporic perspective, providing goods is perceived as the most effective way of helping an affected population in the aftermath of disasters.

Figure 11: Online Survey Q12: "Which is the most effective way of helping affected population in the aftermath of disasters? From your experience, please indicate the value of effectiveness by ranking the options between 1 - 7. 1 is the lowest and 7 is the highest value of effectiveness."

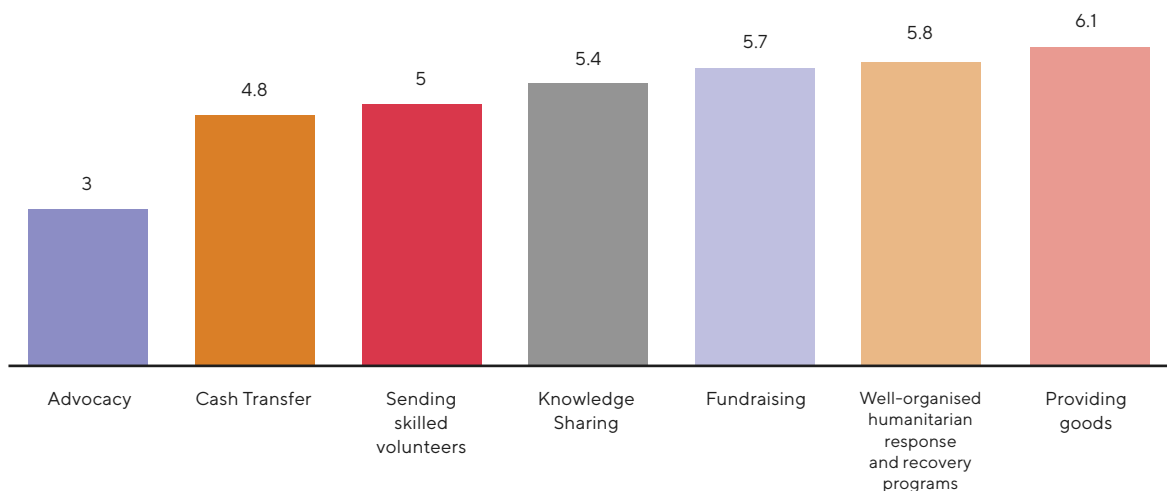
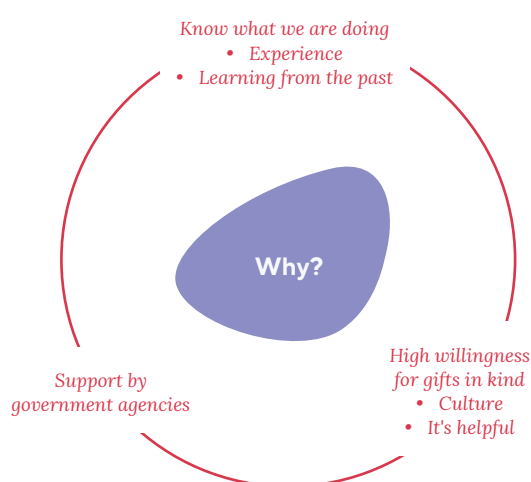


Figure 12: Summary of supplies sent in the containers by Pacific diaspora

- Food supplies, eg: canned food and dry food
- Blankets
- Pillows
- Mattresses
- Water supplies
- Medical Equipment
- Flashlights and torches
- Building materials
- Kitchen Utensils
- Second-hand clothes
- New clothes
- School supplies
- Furniture
- Linen
- Pots
- Hardware products
- Electronic equipment

The findings from in-depth interviews indicate, same as the findings on cash transfer, Pacific diaspora leaders have mixed opinions on sending containers of goods and relief supplies. The following diagrams depict why some of them positively view sending containers of goods as an effective response while others not.

Figure 13: Rationale behind sending containers of goods and relief supplies



Participants whose preference is to send containers of goods presented different cases to explain why. Some people send both cash and goods. Cash is the immediate help to their families and sending containers of relief supply is the next step. They believe, based on their experience in the past, that sending containers of goods helps their local counterparts, especially when prices are up, some goods are not available in the market or markets are destroyed. They also believe that locals are happy to receive overseas goods; ‘they are happy like overseas family visiting from overseas, getting gifts’^{xii}.

Some of the community leaders mentioned that they have been doing this for a long time, and thus, they have learnt what not to do from their experience. These leaders are conscious of people who use this as an opportunity to dump stuff they no longer want. Leaders send clear messages to the community and discourage people from donating goods that are not required.

"We had to dispose without telling those who gave it, so many rubbish, electrical equipments, torn blouses and some shoes. In fact, this year when we sent out our request, I put into the promo 'please do not send your rubbish'." ^{xiii}

Community leaders explained that they request for specific goods, categorise and pack them with clear instructions, and dispose of the unnecessary goods. One of the community leaders highlighted that waste had reduced so much in the past ten years. Participants mentioned that they learn from their experience and continuously attempt to rectify the drawbacks of sending relief aid across the islands. Diaspora communities use their connections to transport companies and relevant businesses to make transportation of containers more effective in times of disaster. Diaspora leaders coordinate with local volunteers or send volunteers from Australia to make sure the relief aid is delivered to the people in need. They also get in touch with relevant government authorities and politicians whenever there is a need to avoid bureaucratic delays.

"...because we've got a wide network of communities out there we were able to get people in those industries to help us smooth and fast track all our processes as best we can.... We work with the people at the port, making sure that we've got connections... following and tracking properly throughout the whole time." ^{xiv}

The research findings show particular cases where Pacific diaspora coordinate the act of sending relief aid through and with relevant government agencies of PICs. These cases include receiving information on the resources required and approved by the local government, coordinating via High Commission in Australia, sharing the cost of containers, and duty-free options. These cases are of Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu.

“Whatever we collect here, or whatever we have to collect here, we get a list of things first through the Fiji High Commission. Once we get the list then we decide which ones we want to do. (For example) We get a list of, maybe, 20 items. We go through the items and then I sit down (and) say that these are the things that we can quickly get together. We do it on that basis. So it's not something that we just want to send to Fiji, (it is) what is required in Fiji, we get a list.”^{xv}

On the other side, some of the participants expressed a strong preference for cash over the practice of sending containers of goods due to the reasons depicted below:

“We have sorted clothes out in the past as we have been doing it for many years. Some of them you know in a situation even your own family won't wear. No way. It's like damaged good. We have been throwing half of the items away and it costs us money to throw all the items which were not required. Nowadays what we tell people is it's better to collect money and send it... It's easy to give cash and let them buy whatever they want.”^{xvi}

Figure 14: Rationale for not sending containers of goods and relief supplies



EXAMPLE FOR CLEAR MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNMENT:

“The key message in this most recent disaster, which was different from historical disasters, was a plea from the Tongan authorities not to send shipping containers. The first thing every Tongan in New Zealand, Australia and America does is sending a container. Everyone donates food supplies, donates building materials, and whatever they can give. So we start sending containers overseas. Each of those containers can cost about three to five thousand dollars. The more you send, the cheaper it is. However, this time the word from Tonga was ‘we need money’.

We need money to be generated within the local economy. Building supplies are available in Tonga and what isn't available is already coming on aircraft from Australia and New Zealand through the government aid. Most things are available on the ground. But people need money to go and purchase it. Actually send money, remit money back to families so that they can be empowered to go and purchase.

Therefore the encouragement was to send cash instead of wasting thousand dollars on shipping fees. That was a new concept. Not everyone in the community completely agreed. There were still people pushing for containers, but we were trying to put the word out there. It was the first time I think people sat back, took a breath and thought ‘okay, that is a lot easier, I would just send money through some of the remittance providers’. There were several of them, started to allow us to send money for no fees. No fees for us for a specified period. So that was really good.” – Sulieni Layt

Programs and Projects

The research findings show that Pacific diaspora, specifically Fiji diaspora, directly and indirectly, engage with some well-organised projects and programs in their countries of origin. These projects and programs include initiatives by Pacific diaspora itself as well as support to locally existing programs. Given below is a list of examples suggested by participants:

- (Re)Building Schools
 - » Fiji Senior Citizen
 - » Fiji United Community
- (Re)Building Bridges
 - » Reach for Your Future Foundation
- Medical Assistance
 - » Brisvani Aid Foundation
- Supporting Rural Schools
 - » Fiji Aid Melbourne
 - » Humdarad
 - » Reach for Your Future Foundation

- Supporting Nursing Home
 - » Humdarad
- Supporting Underprivileged Students
 - » Fiji diaspora
- Supporting Local Relief Societies
 - » Fiji diaspora
 - » PNG diaspora

However, these examples cannot be identified as humanitarian programs. They rather sit on the continuum of humanitarian assistance and development. Most of them leverage their contacts and resources into humanitarian actions whenever there is a disaster, and continue to support the local community through reconstruction and rehabilitation. It is important to note that Pacific diaspora actors do not maintain a clear distinction between their humanitarian actions and development work. They also do not label themselves 'humanitarians' or 'development agents'.

BRISVANI AID FOUNDATION: FROM MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO AID RELIEF

Brisvani Radio 1701 AM hosts financially assisted a young kid with his eye surgery by pledging an appeal through their radio channel. When the money started flowing in, the hosts realised that it was getting serious business and they formed Brisvani Aid Foundation. The foundation initially assisted people with medical needs. When there was a big disaster in Fiji, because people felt comfortable with the foundation, the foundation expanded its scope to deliver humanitarian assistance. The members of the foundation run radiothons in Australia, purchase relief supplies in Fiji and deliver door-to-door assistance. Over the years, they have built a response system which rapidly responds to natural disasters with the assistance of volunteers, Fiji Army and local businesses. The foundation keeps a strong policy that 100% of the raised money should go into humanitarian assistance. Members and community volunteers pay out of their pockets for any administrative cost. Brisvani Radio plays a significant role in the success of Brisvani Aid Foundation. It helps to reach out to the Fijian community in Brisbane and report back to them on the disaster response. The foundation still assists Fijians with medical needs besides its disaster response.

HUMDARAD: A FRIENDSHIP NETWORK

The founder of Humdarad visited the Northern division of Fiji in the aftermath of a major flood to see what was needed on the ground. He found that many rural schools were damaged and kids had lost their homes to the flood. He decided to provide scholarships to these kids to support their education. Once he was back in Australia, he told his friends what he was going to do, and the friends also wanted to join with his initiative. The friendship network formed Humdarad Inc. Humdarad supports rural schools in addition to their support to underprivileged kids. When there is a disaster, Humdarad volunteers work with local volunteers to deliver humanitarian assistance which includes distributing cooked food and relief supplies to the disaster-affected communities. This friendship network has been functioning for sixteen years, and the founder believes it is still going strong.

REACH FOR YOUR FUTURE FOUNDATION (R4YFF): BRIDGING DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN WORK

The founding president of R4YFF is a Fijian diaspora. He took students from RMIT School of Engineering on an educational tour to Fiji as part of R4YFF's STEM 4 Social Action program before the cyclone Winston. They came across a community in the highlands of Viti Levu, Waivaka, which had lost its suspension bridge during a cyclonic flood in 2004. This community was disconnected from accessing the main feeder road to essential services. Villagers were struggling to get across a fast-flowing river to access markets, hospitals, and other essential services. Whenever the river level ascended during tropical wet season, the attendance at the local schools dropped significantly, as the children faced difficulties getting across the river. The Waivaka community pleaded with R4YFF to aid in reinstating the suspension bridge. With cooperation from the local and the Australian governments, the organisation re-designed and re-instated the 55 meters suspension bridge within six months, via a collaborative partnership with RMIT University, and a local engineering design company. The project employed a workforce from the community and some experienced civil construction trades to build capacity in the village community to ensure the bridge could be maintained for its longevity. They have developed a model and methodology for engineering and construction of a pedestrian suspension bridge which could be used in remote places in similar cases.

Building a good relationship with the local people is the priority of R4YFF. The president visits villagers more than once to establish trust and relationship. This relationship extends to offer emotional and social well-being support to the affected communities in the aftermath of disasters.

"I made a very ad-hoc visit to the island of Koro (one of the most worst affected islands), to see the status of the community post-cyclone Winston in June 2016. I saw how distressed and traumatized the whole community was with their homes destroyed and the majority of the community sheltered in makeshift shelters with what was left of their belongings. I felt obliged to motivate the community by offering some guidance during a brief community gathering. I talked about the values and wisdom of their ancestors and elders. The values and principles they have left behind with a strong cultural and communal foundation. I highlighted "You can't just continue to wait for the help to arrive. You are communally integrated and are very resilient, act now and secure yourselves. The tenacity and resilience you all had exhibited when you lost 26 loved ones at the peak of the disaster were acts of love, devotion, and courage. You are a very resilient community, with the learnings from this disaster should be taken away to rebuild the community". The following week the community got together and got on with the immediate and essential things they had to resolve as a community. A few weeks later, I got a letter thanking me for coming to their island home and reminding them about what our elders stood for. Little words of advice and inspiration, stimulate and motivate people. They make people move. You normalise the people in the process. The importance of any response is how we spark to make them realize that they are not alone, that there are people around them that care....."- Ganesh Sen

Importance of sharing timely information

Sharing information is identified as one of the effective responses to a natural disaster. As with all humanitarian actors, Diaspora communities need timely information to plan and implement their humanitarian actions. They need to know what is required on the ground, and the key points of contact within the local government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

The research findings suggest that social media and ethnic radio channels play a remarkable role among Pacific diaspora communities in sharing information on natural disasters and disaster responses. These media outlets are great sources for resource mobilisation among diaspora communities in response to natural disasters. As shown above, Brisvani Radio plays a huge part in the response of Brisvani Aid Foundation by running radiothons, sharing timely information and reporting on the response. Another example is Voice of Tonga, the ethnic radio station in Brisbane, which played an important role in conveying the message from the Tongan authorities to Tongan communities in Brisbane, emphasising on sending cash instead of

sending containers. Some of the interview participants mentioned that they used Facebook to report to the community members of their disaster response activities by providing them with a live update on the ground situation with pictures, which areas they were responding and who was receiving the help.

— — — — — — — — — —
"Take photos to show people what we are doing, and people are more encouraged to contribute. Then we do advise them what to contribute... Social media has the potential. Anything that you can see and feel is the reality, isn't it? ...if you put it together in an honest way." ^{xviii}
— — — — — — — — — —

Volunteers

Diaspora volunteerism is a crucial part of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Diaspora volunteers deliver both emotional support and physical support to disaster-affected communities. The findings highlight the potential of the voluntary mobilisation of Pacific communities in Australia to organise a community-to-

community response. Volunteers collect, sort and pack relief supplies to send in containers. Some of them fly out to ensure the delivery of containers to the people in need. Some of them do the fundraising in Australia, visit the disaster-affected areas to learn what is required and deliver what is required. There are diaspora people who travel to their countries of origin or communities of origin to offer direct support to the local communities, for example, help the local people with rebuilding their damaged properties. Diaspora volunteers pay for airfares and accommodations out of their own pockets. Participants indicated that many diaspora people would fly to island countries to offer their support in person if the cost for airfares and the accommodation is covered. The participants also suggested training for diaspora volunteers to up-skill them in disaster response.

"You know, to be honest, everything was a challenge because it is very hard to get things moving ahead. And we are grateful for the many volunteers in our communities for coming forward." xviii

Fundraising

One of the primary sources of funds for diaspora activities is their fundraising events. Pacific diaspora organisations organise fundraising events using their ability to mobilise both Pacific diaspora and non-Pacific diaspora communities in Australia. These events celebrate their diasporic identities, at the same time, promote a sense of solidarity among different community groups.

"When the disaster happened, we had a foreign minister attend our fundraiser in which the community came together, all different nationalities, and supported night of food and song..... So that was great!" xix

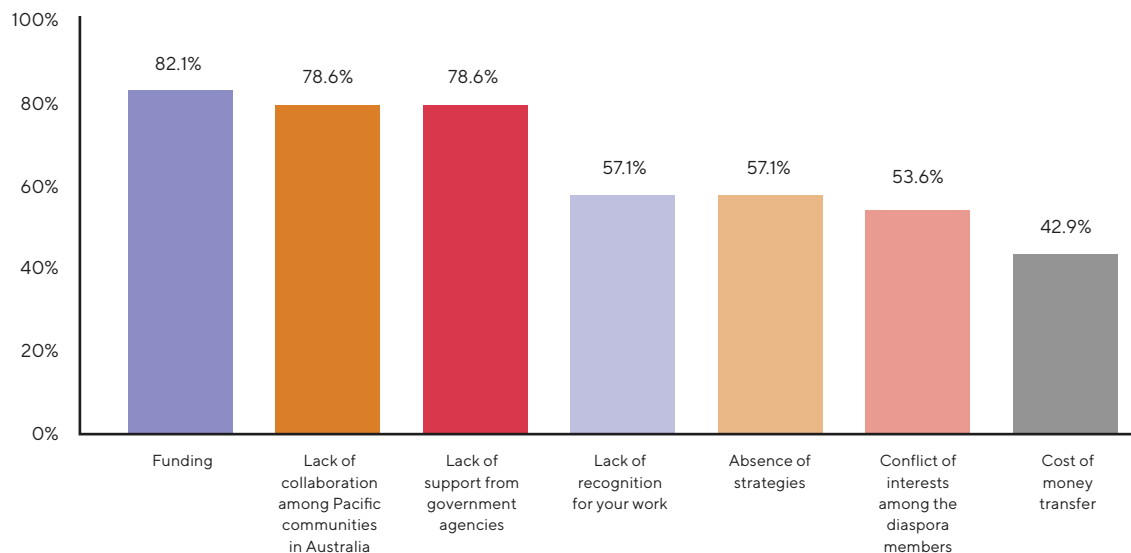
Challenges

Survey respondents identified funding, lack of collaboration among Pacific diaspora communities in Australia and lack of support from government agencies as key challenges for delivering humanitarian assistance to natural disasters in PICs.

On the other hand, in-depth interviews revealed that trust is also a challenge for Pacific diaspora humanitarians. Since trust is a cultural factor that creates and retains relationships, Pacific diaspora takes time to trust new actors and agencies. Participants expressed their concern over working with INGOs, governments and local organisations with which they have not had a previous relationship.

Online mapping of diaspora organisations shows there are a plethora of Pacific diaspora organisations mainly in Queensland, NSW and Victoria. It was found later that most of them are either not active at all or not very active. Some of them are out of reach for external contacts. These organisations have been set up mainly for supporting Pacific communities in Australia. There are also religious-oriented organisations and ethnic-based organisations. When a disaster strikes, most of the organisations attempt to organise their humanitarian response individually rather than working collaboratively with others. It leads to competition over resources, confusion and replication of humanitarian actions.

Figure 15: Online Survey Q24: "What are the challenges for Pacific diaspora to deliver humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters in the Pacific Region?"



There are initiatives to overcome these organisational boundaries to work together in times of a crisis, for example, Pacific peak bodies play an intermediary role in connecting various communities and organisations. However, community leaders have two different opinions on this issue. Some of them suggested that it is better to leave them as they are, considering the nuances of religious, ethnic and tribal background, while others suggested it is effective to work hand-in-hand at least in responding to natural disasters in PICs.

Participants also identified a lack of communication as well as a lack of information as challenges for diaspora humanitarianism. They indicated the lack of communication among Pacific communities across states and the lack of communication between Pacific communities and the relevant government authorities. It was acknowledged that Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has a vital role in sharing necessary information in times of disasters, for example, sharing an updated list of Pacific diaspora organisations to coordinate humanitarian responses or track down who is doing what.

"I think communication between the Australian government, state government and even the Brisbane City Council with Pacific communities is something that needs to be worked on. The Pacific community is very hidden. The statistics, including our census, is not very clear. You'd know this from your research. Conflicting information, figures, and stats and it is difficult to point at...so when a disaster happens who does the government contact? The list on the multicultural directory, half of them is not active anymore. Then there is that breakdown of communication." xx

The future of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism

The discourse on the future of diaspora humanitarianism usually gives more significance to the role of subsequent generations. The question is always the same in the aid and development sector. Does diaspora-led development or diaspora humanitarianism have a future?

Two of the research participants represented the second and third generation of Pacific diaspora in Australia. A few others identified themselves as second and third generations of Indian and Nepali diaspora apart from their Pacific diasporic identity. Community leaders were open-minded to discuss this topic in both their personal and professional capacities. They agreed that the humanitarian role of subsequent generations would not be the same as the first generations because of the cultural deviation and a lack of emotional attachment. However, most of them share a belief that it depends on parenting, cultural education and community integration.

"I'm talking as a Samoan community leader and I'm talking as a Christian church leader. Because of this training in this culture and this system, I believe it will go a long way. Because of my children, as we respond together to these things. I have grown up children. I have grandchildren. We teach them the values.... In our culture and in Christianity... because of the strength in it, it will go a long way." – Asofitu Leatuavao

"There's saying that you're a product of your upbringing. So the subsequent generation, it's dependent on really what they have been exposed to as they were growing up. In the context of the Pacific Island community here, I don't see that it will diminish.

When there's a disaster, not even a disaster, let's say remittances... Kids are born and brought up here. And they're struggling to understand why my parents are still giving (remitting) to the extent that there's this resentment... I was one of those people that grew up where I saw my mom and dad always doing things for the community. But as I was growing up I didn't want anything to do with it. And even when I went into university I didn't want to have anything to do with that. And by default what I'm doing, I am actually doing what my parents were doing..... product of your upbringing... And so with the young community members here with the Pacific (background), there's a smaller number who are into community (services). And those are the ones that we are nurturing and we are currently putting through our capacity building in leadership. Those ones we know that they will take on these roles as community leaders." – Ema Vueti

It is also essential to consider generational integration for a sustainable future of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Some of the community leaders mentioned that there is a need to integrate younger generations within organisational or community activities. The younger members of diaspora choose to stay out diaspora organisations because of the organisational politics among the senior members. The younger members of the diaspora have good ideas which sometimes the senior members fail to listen. Therefore, these leaders insisted the diaspora youth should be given space within diaspora organisations to share their point of views, and opportunities to lead the actions.

The essence of diaspora humanitarianism will be undermined if we judge its future only by studying the role of subsequent generations of diaspora. Diaspora, like the concept itself, is an ever-changing, evolving and multifaceted transnational community. Pacific diaspora leaders predicted that the future of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism would be about:

- Networking between Pacific diaspora organizations in Australia during disasters in the Pacific
- The collaboration with Pacific diaspora communities across the world
- The contribution to the relocation of locals from the flood-prone areas
- The systematic collection and storage of emergency items
- The collaboration with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- The co-existence and responses from both small and large agencies
- Social Media

There is a need to work smarter in disaster response, especially in terms of sensible resource management. If Pacific diaspora groups can network with each other during the response, the response will be coordinated and 'bigger the group bigger the force' ^{xxi}. However, some of the community leaders acknowledged that the concept of working together is not easy across different Pacific groups and raised the question 'how does it look like to work together in response to disasters?' ^{xxii}. They suggested that lead community groups must sit together and discuss their role in disaster response. These groups can also learn from the non-Pacific diaspora, for example, Philippine diaspora, about their disaster responses. Although it is hard for different Pacific communities to come together from a diasporic perspective, it was suggested that they should come together 'in the best interest of our local communities and families' ^{xxiii}.

Survey responses indicate the interest of Pacific diaspora for delivering humanitarian assistance with other NGOs in the future. Even though they highly prefer direct engagement with affected communities in PICs, they are likely to coordinate their future responses with local NGOs and international NGOs. One of the interview participants highlighted the importance of co-existence of both small and large agencies. He differentiated diaspora organisations of small capacity from agencies with big financial capacity and mentioned both small and large agencies are relevant as long as they aim to help the people in need in times of disasters.

Figure 16: Online Survey Q15: "How likely are you to deliver humanitarian assistance in coordination with a local NGO in a Pacific island country?"

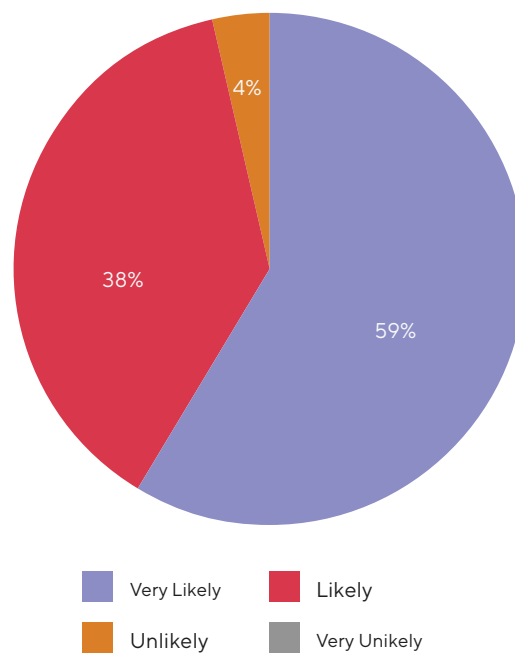
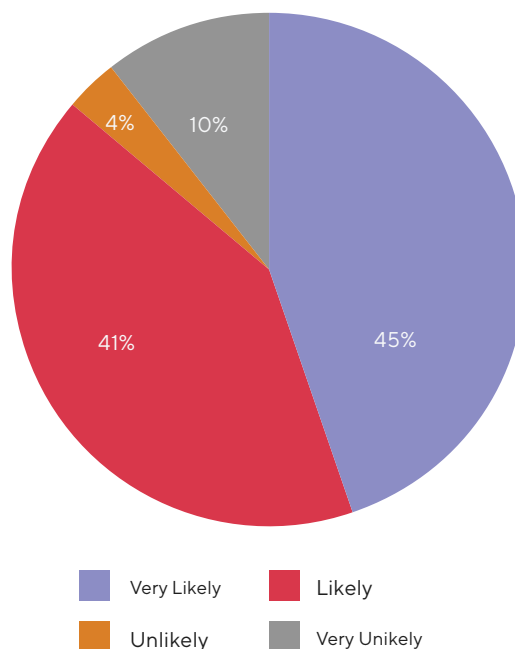


Figure 17: Online Survey Q14: "How likely are you to deliver humanitarian assistance in coordination with an Australian NGO as a response to a crisis in the Pacific region?"



FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Pacific diaspora perspectives differentiate between a family-to-family response and a community-to-community response. Participants in this research have primarily discussed the community-to-community response. The report does not use 'individual' and 'collective' response in order to underline that a family response can be a collective response from a family network and that is not what is discussed by 'community-to-community' response.

The discussion of why and why not participants prefer cash transfer or providing relief supplies indicates that Pacific diaspora leaders have diverse opinions and explanations, and thereby, indicates the diversity in practice of Pacific diaspora communities. In discussing the behavioural insights about unsolicited bilateral donation (UBD), the research by Australian Council for International Development (ACFID 2019, p.8) proves that "The behaviour of sending a UBD is largely governed by a System 1 mode of thinking, people do not stop to explore possibilities of how the good will get to the destination, how much money will be required to do this, who will unpack it or where it will eventually end up". Our research findings are suggestive of Pacific diaspora leaders who show a commitment to improving the effectiveness of their actions, respond to needs identified by government agencies, plan from collection to distribution of relief supplies, and open to exploring alternatives. These leaders offer different perspectives on the practice of providing relief supplies as a part

of disaster response. On the other side, the example for 'Clear message from the government' highlights the importance of timely communication between Pacific diaspora communities and relevant authorities of PICs to coordinate diaspora's disaster response. If an island country does not want containers of goods from its diaspora, it needs to send clear messages to its diaspora communities. The island countries also should provide alternatives for diaspora communities to meaningfully engage in disaster responses by other means. The research findings suggest that Pacific diaspora has tangible and intangible resources which could be diverted into more effective disaster responses if properly facilitated within the Pacific humanitarian ecosystem.

Networking between different Pacific community groups and organisations in Australia is essential for the future of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. Networking can offer a way for Pacific diaspora to facilitate their humanitarian actions across states in response to disasters. The integration of the young people in the community activities will influence how the next generation of Pacific ancestry respond to natural disasters in PICs. The future of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism also depends on how their actions are acknowledged by other actors in the Pacific humanitarian ecosystem and how their enthusiasm to coordinate their actions is shared by local and international NGOs.

WHAT DOES PACIFIC DIASPORA BRING TO PACIFIC HUMANITARIAN ECO-SYSTEM?

The non-traditional diasporic humanitarians create opportunities for both local communities and traditional humanitarians. Pacific diaspora opens the door for new (or different) ways of working in response to a natural

disaster. Their strengths, links and networks can be utilised to localise humanitarian actions and thereby increase the overall effectiveness of the humanitarian eco-system in the Pacific.



Figure 18: Unique characteristics of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism

Local Knowledge and Cultural Competency

Pacific diasporas know the disaster context, the people and the culture. Interview participants highlighted that 'local knowledge is power'. 100% of survey responders indicated contextual knowledge and cultural competency as positional advantages in their disaster responses. The diaspora uses its local knowledge to know what their counterparts need and what works in times of disasters.

— — — — —
"With Samoa, with our own, we know what we (they) really need. You know what I mean? In Indonesia, we don't know whether they need blankets, whether it's hot or cold or whatever. Needs may vary in terms of weather and culture. And that's the difference..."^{xxiv}
 — — — — —

Relationships and Trust

Pacific communities, both in Pacific and Australia, are culturally sensitive. They have their tribal ways of doing things. Interview participants identified trust as a crucial factor to create and retain relationships. Relationships are advantageous for diaspora responders in times of disasters. The pre-existing relationships with other diaspora members in Australia as well as their local counterparts in PICs help diasporas to work collaboratively in their response. 100% of survey responders believe that trust from locals is a positional advantage for diaspora humanitarians.

"Lot of Pacific diaspora believe in having loyalty to understand the next person.....having that trust. That's something you have to work with before entering into their boundary to work with them." xxx

Connections

Diaspora's personal plus professional connections across both humanitarian and non-humanitarian spaces are utilised for building rapid networks in times of disasters. These connections are vital for diaspora humanitarians in their resource mobilisation.

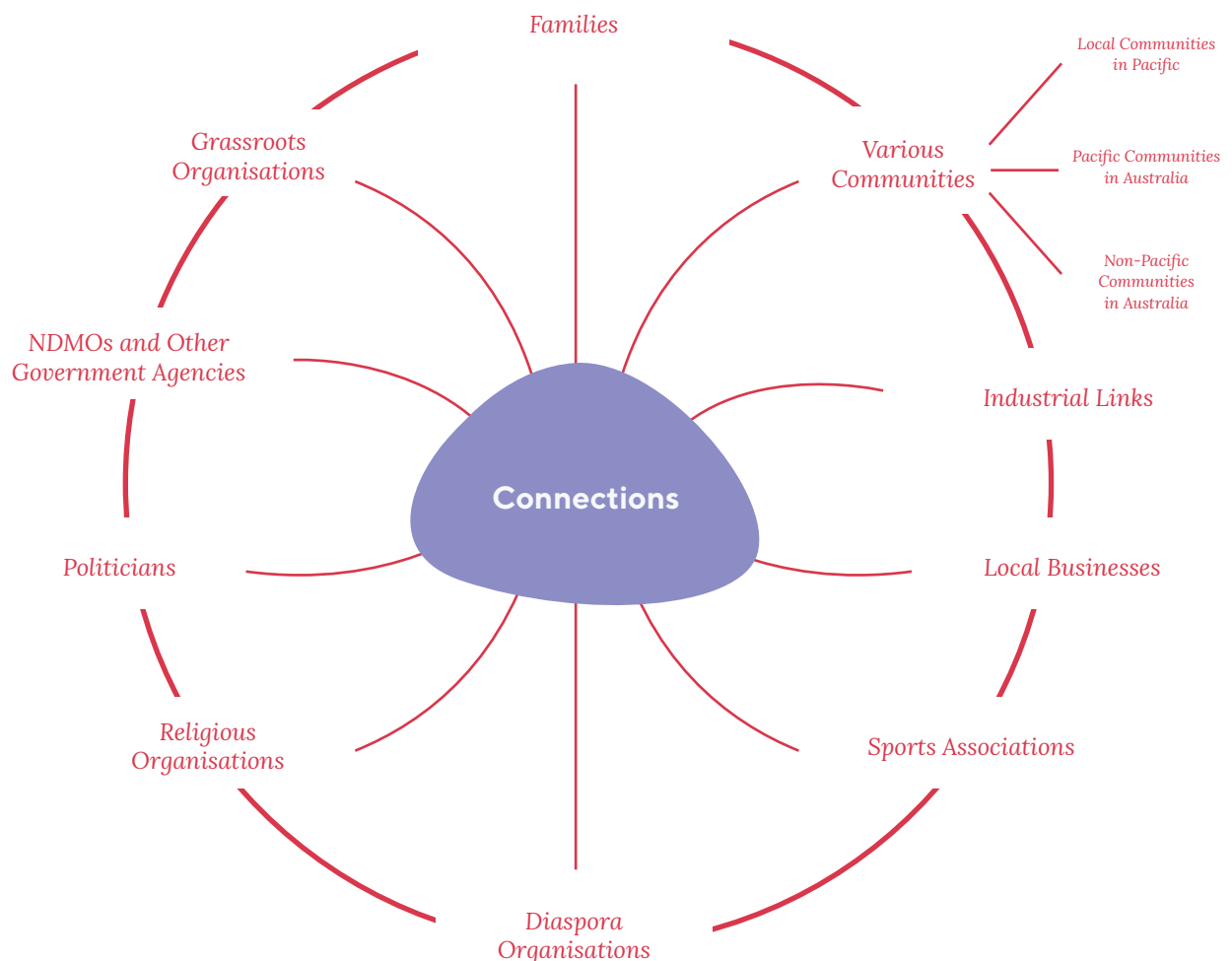


Figure 19: Social Network of Pacific diaspora

First-hand Crisis Information and Early Response

100% of survey responders indicated first-hand crisis information and early response as positional advantages in their disaster response. Diasporas use their personal and professional connections with their countries of origin to collect information about the situation and the needs. Early response normally involves sending

money to their families and relatives. Some of the participants also mention about sending money to their local connections to organise an early response, such as distributing cooked food and other essential food supplies.

Access to Remote Areas and Vulnerable Members of the Community

88% of the survey responders indicated that Pacific diaspora has the advantage of accessing the remote areas. Some of the interview participants explained that they use their pre-existing links with the local government and the local communities to make sure the delivery of emergency supplies reach the remote areas. Fiji diaspora participants highlighted the support of the Fiji army in accessing the remote areas. Also, the participants expressed their concerns about the vulnerability of the affected communities in these remote areas.

"Fiji Army helps us in a big way. Otherwise, you would not be able to go to those remote areas. They are very good as far as the distribution is concerned. Everybody is treated equally... we never had a problem. Actually, our distribution was probably one of the best being with them." xxvi

Emotional Investment

Diaspora donors are emotionally invested in assisting their local counterparts in times of natural disasters. This emotional investment eventually turns into either a financial or material contribution. Diaspora donors reinforce their diasporic identity by contributing back to their communities of origin. The emotional investment of diaspora donors can be harnessed for building community resilience in humanitarian settings. The question is whether diaspora's emotional investment is directed to meaningful contributions. How do island communities in PICs perceive the role of diaspora donors in a humanitarian setting?

New ways of working?

It is vital for traditional humanitarians to understand how Pacific diaspora groups organise themselves in response to natural disasters in PICs. Most of the Pacific diaspora organisations are established to support their communities in Australia and celebrate their culture. Their responses to natural disasters are mostly informal and varied from time to time. Only a few of them have separate accounts and procedures for disaster response.

The findings suggest there are friendship networks and informal groups that voluntarily organise any disaster response. The friendship networks are of like-minded people who trust and support initiatives within their network in response to natural disasters. They do not have an organisation set-up or a reporting structure. Friends collectively make decisions based on their trust with each other.

"We have enough friend networks that actually do want to do good.... It's more effective... last year a friend of mine actually went to Fiji, he went to Labasa. He took a good few container loads of building materials from

here (for) which we all contributed to buy. It was after the big disaster. The hardware was basically unavailable to private people." xxvii

Some of the participants implied that they do not want to be part of any organisation as such. Organisations for them involve organisational politics and impede decision-making. They prefer to work as informal groups where various diaspora organisations and independent diasporas voluntarily come together only as a response to disasters in the Pacific and dissolve once the mission is completed. These groups also transcend ethnic, religious and, sometimes, diaspora identities.

"What I have been able to do (is to) organise with different Fijian organisation in Melbourne to come together for disaster relief. What I have made it very clear to each and every organisation is that the group that we form is purely to assist for that particular disaster. As soon as the disaster help is done, we all go separate ways. We will only come together as a group when the next disaster happens. There is no committee, no organisational structure set up, it is purely based on voluntary and volunteers come on board." xxviii

The Pacific diaspora leaders play an important role, mostly as conveners and coordinators, to mobilise the diaspora communities in times of disasters in PICs. There are individual champions in Pacific diaspora communities who have the managerial courage and interpersonal skills to facilitate communal responses to natural disasters. They drive changes in their communities by challenging old ways of working, promoting Pacific solidarity and inspiring the next generations.

"There is something in us that everybody wants to go out and help. But now I have said to the leaders; ask yourselves how can you help in this. All of us want to send containers. But, is that what they need on the other side? So one of the things that we have done in QVITI, as soon as there is a disaster we get in touch with the people who are organising the disaster relief from the other side and ask what is needed there. Then we will get back to the community here and say this is what's needed." xxix

The diaspora conveners and coordinators use ethnic media and social media to mobilise the wider community to organise disaster responses. Their wealth of connections with various communities and stakeholders shows their capacity for community mobilisation in great length.

Pacific diasporas in action do not identify themselves as humanitarians or development workers in absolute terms. The research findings suggest three cases. People contribute to development projects in PICs and extend their support to address humanitarian needs in times of disasters by using their existing contacts. In the second

case, people respond to a natural disaster and continue to support the local community in reconstruction, rehabilitation and development – this characteristic of diaspora humanitarianism bridges the humanitarian-development divide. The third case includes one-time responses to disasters which do not guarantee a repetition of the action.

Pacific diaspora networks and the multifaceted nature of humanitarian responses indicate flexibility, informality, irregularity and variability of actions by Pacific diaspora in response to natural disasters. What does it mean to a highly institutionalised humanitarian regime? Do traditional humanitarians have appropriate measures to acknowledge and collaborate with Pacific diaspora humanitarians?

Towards a local leadership

Pacific diaspora leaders prioritise the local leadership and direct engagement with disaster-affected communities in PICs. 100% of the survey respondents indicated that recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership of Pacific island communities in PICs is **very important or important**.

When the survey respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of engagement in humanitarian responses by ranking the option between 1 and 6 in which 6 is the highest value, they ranked **direct engagement with affected communities** as the most effective way of engagement

Family links, communal responsibility, sense of solidarity, loyalty and empathy indicate that Pacific diaspora humanitarians have the relevant motivations

to support a community-led humanitarian response in PICs and thereby suggest a bottom-up approach to addressing humanitarian needs. Local knowledge, cultural competency, local connections and pre-existing relationships of Pacific diaspora humanitarians can be used for promoting local leadership and empowering affected communities in humanitarian responses. Moreover, individual champions in Pacific diaspora communities, who have the managerial courage and interpersonal skills to facilitate communal responses to natural disasters, present a future of possibilities for local humanitarian leaders to guide Pacific diaspora humanitarianism for the benefit of local communities.

Figure 20: Online Survey Q22: Recognising, respecting and strengthening the leadership of Pacific island communities for humanitarian response in PICs is:

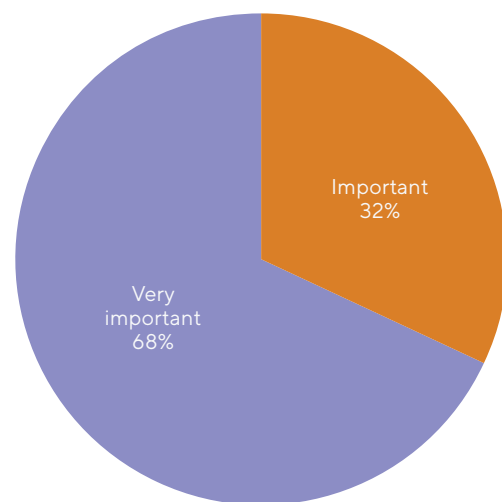
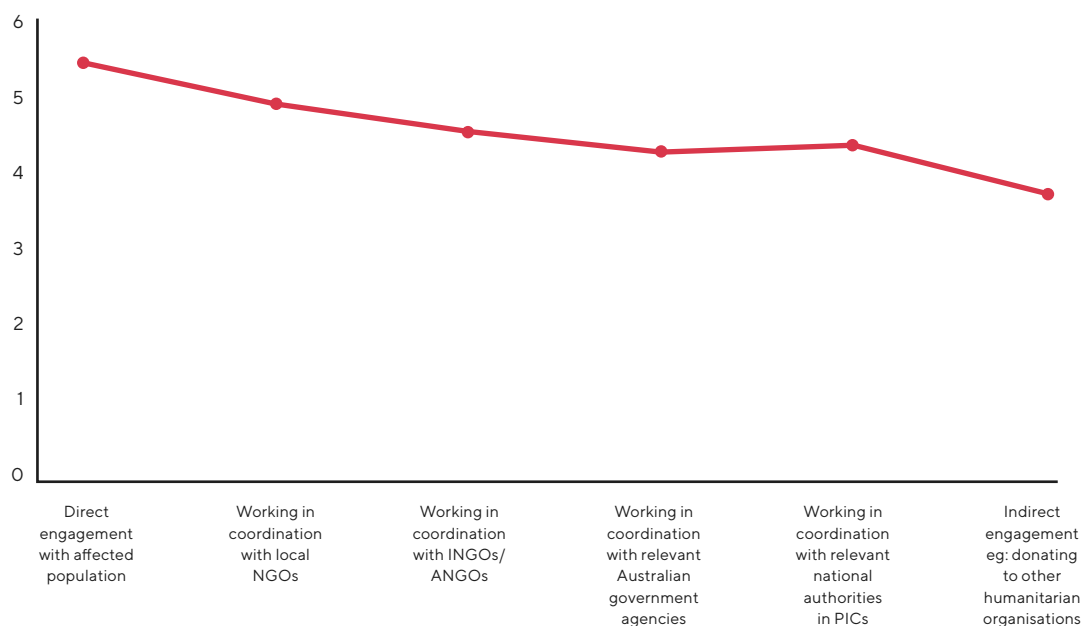


Figure 21: Online Survey Q13: "Which is the most effective way of engagement in humanitarian response to natural disasters in PICs? Please indicate the value of effectiveness by ranking the options between 1-6. 1 is the lowest and 6 is the highest value."

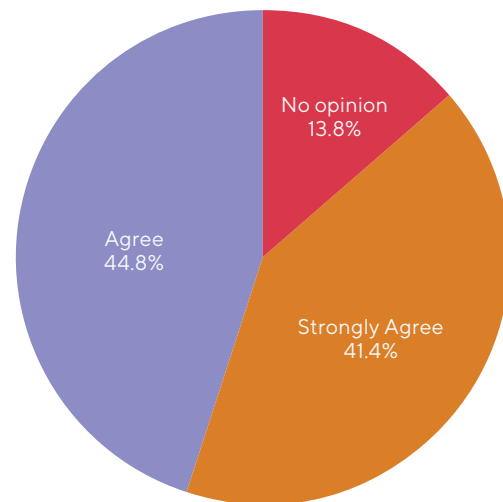


Acknowledge for what it is!

Pacific diaspora is willing to collaborate with traditional humanitarians. However, they consider creating parallel structures with formal humanitarian organisations as a risk for diaspora organisations. 25 out of 29 Pacific diaspora leaders call for the acknowledgment of diaspora's unique way of responding to humanitarian crises.

This call from diaspora leaders demands that traditional humanitarians should be able to acknowledge Pacific diaspora humanitarianism for what it is rather than romanticising what it could be for their benefits. The traditional humanitarian system should transform its normative, regulative and cognitive structures to understand, acknowledge and include diaspora humanitarian actors, who have a different set of motivations and their ways of responding to disasters, within the humanitarian ecosystem to create new alliances for improving the overall effectiveness of humanitarian assistance to natural disasters in PICs.

Figure 22: Online Survey Q21: "Creating parallel structures with the formal humanitarian organizations is a risk for diaspora organizations. Diaspora organizations should be acknowledged for their unique way of responding to humanitarian crises."



FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

This section highlights the unique characteristics of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism and suggests that these characteristics can be harnessed for increasing the overall effectiveness of Pacific humanitarian ecosystem by acknowledging them as the legitimate features of diasporic humanitarianism- the third humanitarian domain.

A localised humanitarian action is what 'builds on and strengthens local and traditional practices and people' (ARC2016, p.5). Our research study of Pacific diaspora in humanitarian response to natural disasters suggests that Pacific diaspora humanitarianism supports a community-led humanitarian response and a bottom-up approach to addressing humanitarian needs. Pacific diaspora is in touch with the on-ground realities, and their decision-making incorporates direct inputs from the local actors at different levels—from families to government agencies. The Pacific diaspora leaders show commitment to local knowledge, local communities and local leadership. The multidimensional networks, flexible ways of working, the ability to mobilise resources as a community-to-community response to a disaster and different forms of solidarity of Pacific diaspora signal the potential of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism in contributing to community resilience in PICs.

However, this research presents only a diasporic perspective of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism. We need to understand how local communities perceive the role of diaspora in humanitarian response in order

to see what Pacific diaspora humanitarianism can do for localising humanitarian action. We need local perspectives on Pacific diaspora humanitarianism to critically evaluate whether it offers local communities with control over resources, decisions and priorities in a humanitarian setting.

This research provides insights based on targeted sampling data into what motivates Pacific diaspora to become involved in humanitarian responses to natural disasters in PICs, how they respond to natural disasters and their unique characteristics as diasporic humanitarians. It presents a model for understanding Pacific diaspora humanitarianism grounded in neo-institutional and diasporic perspectives in a constructivist approach. We argue that Pacific diasporic humanitarianism should be acknowledged for what it is in order to work on the possibilities of creating alliances with them in the future to deliver a better response to the affected communities. Questioning the legitimacy of diaspora humanitarianism within the parameters of traditional humanitarianism only impedes the transformation of the humanitarian sector, which could be inclusive of different humanitarian actors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides the recommendations made by the Pacific diaspora leaders to Pacific diaspora communities and the Australian government. Since this research is exploratory, the report also recommends topics for further research on Pacific diaspora humanitarianism.

Recommendations for Pacific Diaspora:

- Find out from the ground what the needs are before you plan the response
- Work along with local authorities
- Do not send rubbish
- Network with other diaspora organisations
- Engage the youth

Pacific diaspora leaders emphasised that identifying the needs on the ground should be the first and foremost step to plan any response to natural disasters in PICs. Pacific communities in Australia should use their local contacts to find out what resources are required by the affected communities, relevant agencies and authorities in PICs.

"I would suggest to everybody out there who is willing to help, keep in mind that the goods are there. Make some inquiry before you do that, before you start collecting here and sending containers. Another thing I have noticed that it becomes a cleaning place for some of the people that dump all kinds of stuff; clothes that you'll never wear. These people have dignity." xxx

If a diaspora group organises a container of relief supply as a part of its community-to-community response, it has the responsibility to ensure what they are sending from Australia is what solicited by the affected communities. If local communities need specific resources from Australia, the next step should be checking the legislative and operational requirements for sending containers to PICs in times of disasters, including customs clearances and distribution to the affected communities. Some of the leaders suggested local authorities as to the first points of contact in the aftermath of a disaster. However, they advised that local people could be better links where approaching government agencies causes bureaucratic delays.

"If I am a member of a (diaspora) organisation here, first of all, I would look after my own family, but then I look upon what my organisation here needs (to do). The leaders of the organisations need to keep in mind that they are helping on a national basis rather than on a personal basis; that's where things can go wrong." xxxi

The majority of the research participants consciously maintained a boundary between a family-to-family response and a community-to-community response. One of them highlighted that it is the responsibility of organisation leaders to influence the members to not confusing between a personal response to the family and organisational response to the broader nation.

Recommendations for Australian Government:

- Local knowledge is power. Listen to your diaspora communities.
- Appoint a national coordinator to facilitate diaspora's humanitarian responses across the states
- A unit within DFAT to communicate and coordinate with diaspora communities
- DFAT could share some instructions, procedures and contacts with the diaspora communities to support/facilitate their humanitarian actions
- Support diaspora volunteers with transport and accommodation
- Document the diaspora actions on how they respond to disasters so that diaspora groups can learn from each other
- Share a list of legitimate local organizations
- Provide training to up-skill diaspora professional in the preparation for a natural disaster

The research findings indicate that Pacific diaspora leaders perceive that the Australian government could have a significant role in facilitating the diaspora's response to humanitarian crises. However, this perception comes with a caution that involvement of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) should not discourage diaspora people from helping their communities of origin. Diaspora leaders suggested that DFAT can support diaspora communities by sharing instructions, procedures and contacts to plan a disaster response. For example, DFAT or Red Cross can share a list of their reliable contacts of grassroots organisations with diaspora communities for encouraging cash transfer. A national coordinator or a diaspora unit within DFAT can support the coordination of humanitarian responses by diasporas across states. One of the leaders highlighted the importance of documenting actions by different diaspora groups in response to crises. This will give an opportunity for diaspora humanitarians to learn from each other on what works and what does not during a humanitarian response.

"I think for the Pacific we are coming into what I like to call the Pacific century. This is my own term... So in that regard, I am thinking now with what we have talked about, this is the time with the establishment of the Pacific office and so on. This is a time for Australian Government, state governments and local governments to

engage with the diaspora to use this untapped resource of knowledge of family links, of life experience, or migration experiences... How can someone sitting in a public service office or a politician look through a lens at the Pacific without also knowing what the Pacific Islanders look through their lens back of Australia? If it goes both ways, then I imagine that the diaspora can make a really constructive contribution in the name of Australia to the aid in the Pacific." xxxiii

Pacific island nations have their local knowledge and customary practices. Pacific diaspora leaders advised that Australian government should listen to Pacific communities in Australia when there is an issue concerning of Pacific and give Pacific diaspora the necessary tools to respond to the call for help.

Recommendations for Researchers:

- Investigate the perspectives of disaster-affected Pacific communities on the humanitarian role of their diaspora counterparts
- Series of case-study researches for a detailed study of diaspora organizations, diaspora networks and diaspora community initiatives

- Participatory research to identify how diaspora humanitarian actors and traditional humanitarian actors can complement each other's humanitarian actions
- Exploratory research studies into the role of governments, both in Australia and PICs, in facilitating the disaster response of Pacific diaspora

Our research discusses Pacific diaspora humanitarianism from a diasporic perspective. We need to bring local perspectives on this newly recognised humanitarianism to critically evaluate the role of diaspora humanitarians in disaster response. The research findings are based on limited data. They set the stage for exploring this subject further. The findings should be taken as insights into a previously unexplored territory rather than generalising what Pacific diaspora humanitarianism is. We recommend a series of case-study researches to understand initiatives by various diaspora groups in response to natural disasters in PICs. The knowledge repository of Pacific diaspora humanitarianism should be further developed before we conduct critical studies and comparative studies.

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ii	Participant #6
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