



*Church Agencies Network  
Disaster Operations*

# **CAN DO Annual Report**

## **2020-2021**





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# About CAN DO

## About us

The Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) is a consortium of eight Church-based agencies within the Church Agencies Network (CAN). CAN DO was formed in 2016 to strengthen their global humanitarian, disaster management and resilience building work. CAN DO’s vision is Churches Collaborating to Enhance Community Resilience to Disaster and Conflict.

## We are



## Our principles

**Faith Matters**

We are guided by Christian values and identity

**It’s not about us**

We will focus on the most vulnerable, at-risk communities

**Learning and improvement**

We commit to continual learning to strengthen CAN DO’s effectiveness

**Valuing what each entity brings**

We balance unity with unique contributions according to member capacity

**Trust and respect**

We respect and honour each member’s partnerships and church structures

**Transparency**

We are open and thoughtful in all our work

## Our vision and goal

**Vision is:**  
‘Churches collaborating to enhance community resilience to disaster and conflict’

**Goal is:**  
‘CAN DO will coordinate, build partnerships and work collaboratively, respecting and supporting the role of local faith-based humanitarian actors; in disaster resilience, disaster preparedness and emergency response; with the ultimate goal of increasing locally-led humanitarian reach and impact’

## CAN DO Coordination Unit



**Geoff Shepherd**  
Manager



**Madeline Baker**  
DMEL Coordinator



**Craig Margetson**  
Program Finance Manager



**Grace Asten**  
DMEL Coordinator



**Andre Breitenstein**  
Program Coordinator



## Executive summary 2020-2021

The 2020-2021 year was a busy year for CAN DO. The COVID-19 pandemic dominated our lives affecting the way our partners in country and members in Australia worked. Despite the challenges faced with the pandemic, partners adapted, and CAN DO continued to thrive with further successful grant applications expanding our work as a consortium.

Disaster Ready activities continued along with our two flagship programs, Safe n Redi and Theology of Disaster Resilience and Climate Change (TDRCC), with partners working hard under the current challenging circumstances.

Over 1000 Church, Government and Community centres have now been mapped as potential Evacuation Centres in Fiji, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands within Safe n Redi. Retrofitting of selected facilities is also taking place within a partnership with Field Ready to help ensure Evacuation Centres are accessible and “friendly” for persons with a disability.

The impact of work within TDRCC is being seen across all activities and highly relevant for the current context. Our members were able to create COVID-19 theological messages that have helped shift thinking away from the former belief that COVID-19 like environmental disasters are a punishment inflicted by God.

I am proud to be a part of our dedicated, innovative, and persistent group of humanitarians who are expressing their faith in practical ways. I am extremely excited for what the future holds for CAN DO.

Thank you to all our donors and supporters, who have given so generously to enable what we do. I would like to thank our Lead Agency Caritas, all our partners and members and the Coordination Unit who have all worked tirelessly to help make a difference in the lives of those being impacted by increasing disasters.

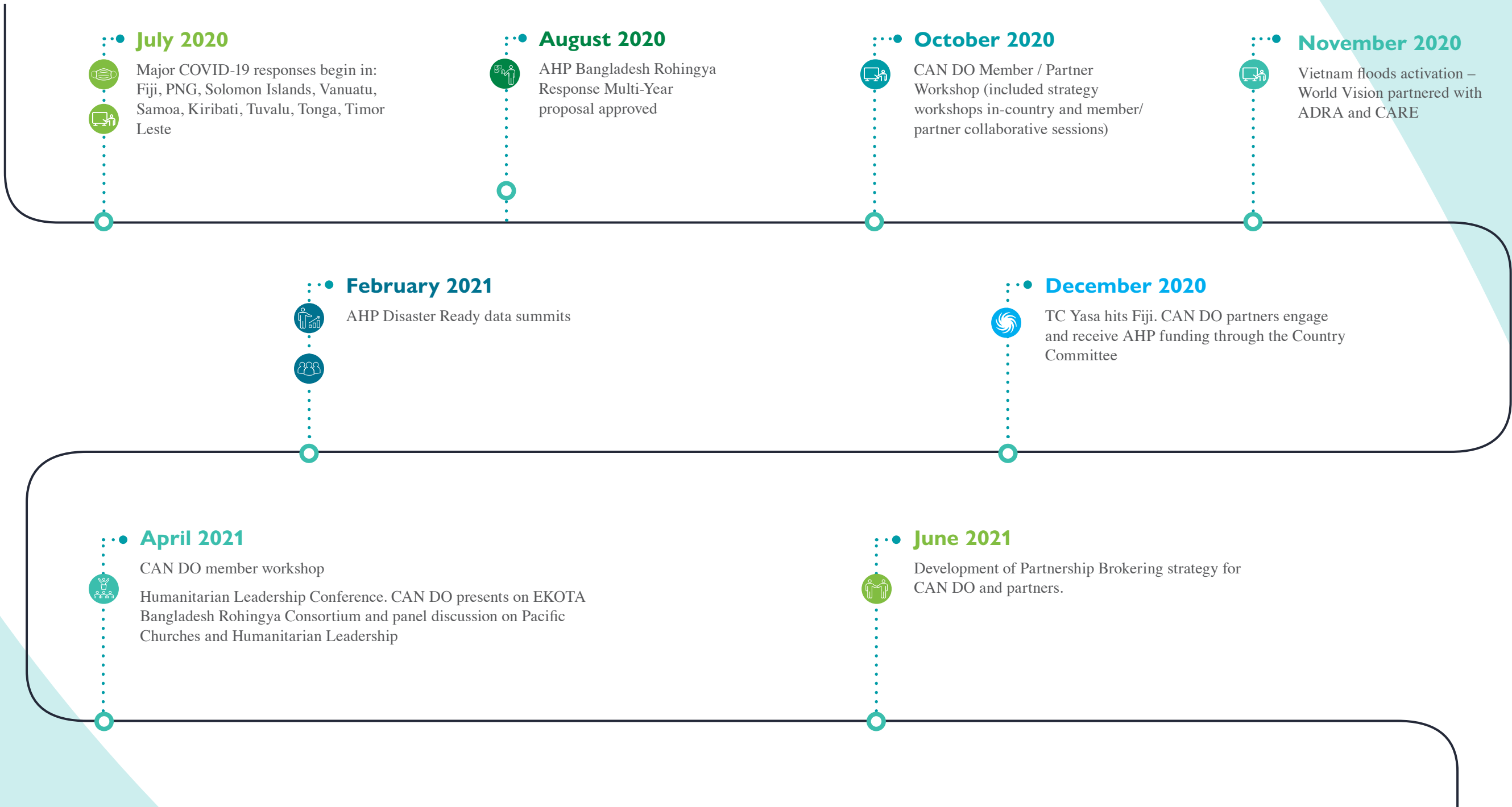
**Murray Millar**  
Chair CAN DO Steering  
Committee





# 1. Year at Glance and Timeline 2020-2021

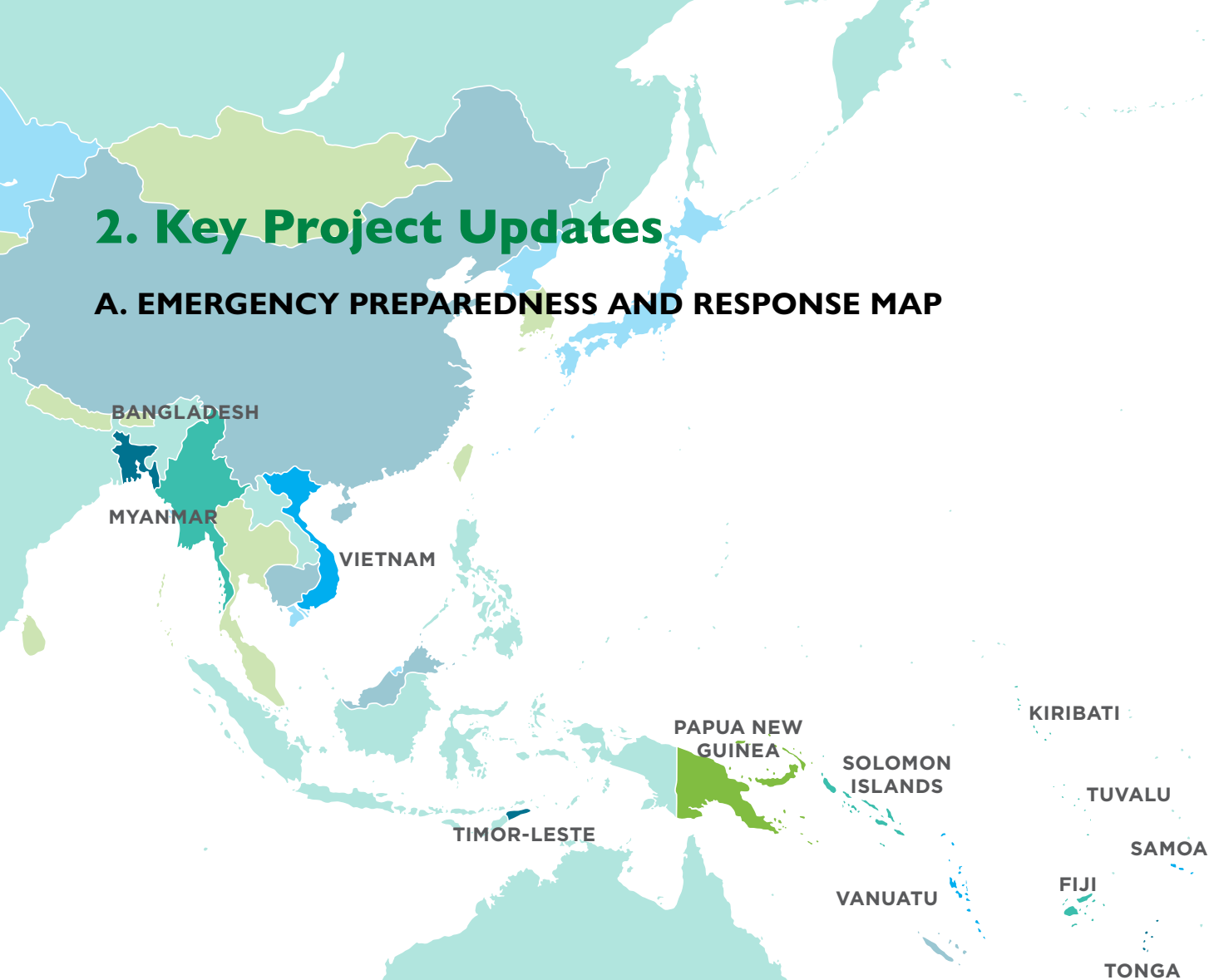
The second half of 2020 proved complex for CAN DO. The ongoing pandemic and consequent COVID-19 projects, TC Harold and Rohingya responses were further complicated by the flooding in Vietnam and the impacts of TC Yasa in Fiji. The complexity of these activities and ongoing fluctuation of the pandemic throughout the globe had a significant impact on CAN DO members and partners. The development and finalisation of the Theory of Change (which highlights CAN DO's 6 priority areas between 2021-2026) was undoubtedly impacted by the events around the world and impacts of the pandemic here in Australia yet was finalised despite ongoing challenges and has become a key guiding document for CAN DO.





## 2. Key Project Updates

### A. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE MAP



### OUR CAN DO MEMBERS RESPONDED TO EMERGENCIES IN:

#### 2020-2021 CAN DO Projects

##### Disaster READY

- Vanuatu (AfP lead)
- Fiji (ADRA lead)
- PNG (Caritas lead)
- Solomon Islands (AOA lead)

##### Bangladesh Rohingya Response

- (Caritas, ALWS, AfP)

##### Education in Emergencies Rohingya Response

- Myanmar (ALWS)

##### COVID-19 Major Package

- Vanuatu (AfP, ADRA, AID, UW)
- Fiji (ADRA)
- PNG (Caritas, ADRA, UW, AID)
- Solomon Islands (AOA, UW, Caritas)
- Timor Leste (Caritas)
- Samoa (ADRA)
- Kiribati (UW)
- Tuvalu (UW)

##### COVID-19 Outbreak

- PNG (Caritas, AID, ABCID)

##### TC Harold + COVID-19

- Vanuatu (AfP, AOA, ADRA)
- Fiji (ADRA, AID, TAI, UW, CA, AOA)
- Tonga (AfP, Caritas, UW)

##### TC Yasa

- Fiji (ADRA, UW)

##### Vietnam floods

- Vietnam (ADRA)



### B. BANGLADESH ROHINGHA RESPONSE

After a long co-creation design process that commenced in late 2019, approval of the Bangladesh Rohingya Response project by DFAT came in August 2020, with activities beginning shortly after.

CAN DO works alongside other AHP partners in this project. CAN DO partners involved in the Bangladesh project are RDRS Bangladesh, Caritas Bangladesh, and Christian Aid. These partners collaborating on this project go by the title EKOTA, which means “unity” in Bengali. EKOTA are the only AHP funded partners where local partners are leading and receiving the majority of funding (more than 70%) in collaboration with international partners.

The overarching goals of the Bangladesh Multi-Year Project is to: ‘Contribute to international efforts to meet humanitarian and protection needs and increase self-reliance and resilience building of Rohingya and host populations in Bangladesh.’

The specific project focus for EKOTA is to increase community self-reliance and resilience through livelihoods, environmental protection and disaster risk reduction activities. The goal is for communities and local partners to have increased power to make decisions, lead on activities, and strengthen their voice within the community and with other organisations.

#### Progress to date

- Beneficiary reach: 53,108
- Key activities:
  - ◆ Food Security
  - ◆ WASH
  - ◆ Protection
  - ◆ Early Recovery
  - ◆ Disaster Risk Reduction



- COVID-19 restrictions slowed EKOTA activities. However, WASH activities in camps were declared essential and were able to continue reaching a total of 34, 063 beneficiaries
- COVID-19 activities included installation of handwashing stations, dissemination of awareness messages, COVID-19 awareness raising among refugee communities
- EKOTA partners also provided 2321 hygiene latrine and waste management kits to beneficiaries and volunteers in the camp.

C. COVID-19 RESPONSE

When the COVID19 pandemic hit, DFAT rapidly released funding for Disaster Ready countries. In mid 2020, CAN DO received funding for the COVID19 response in PNG, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and Fiji. CAN DO also received further funding for COVID-19 projects in Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati and Tuvalu.

Key sectors in the COVID-19 response projects in the Pacific include:

- Food Security and Livelihoods
- WASH
- Protection
- Community Resilience Buildingz
- Risk, Communication and Community Engagement.

Tonga COVID-19 and TC Harold Response

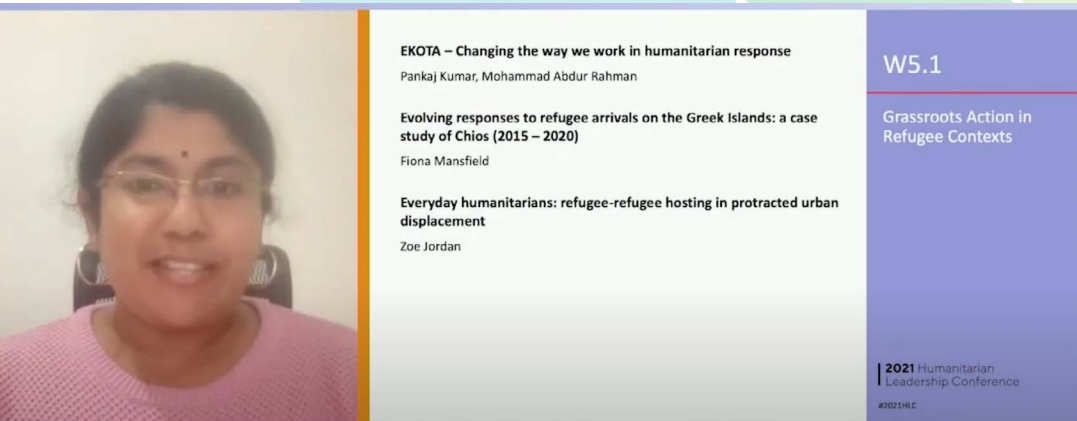
In 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, local church organisations the Tongan National Council of Churches, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Free Wesleyan Church and Caritas Tonga partnered to respond to the impacts of TC Harold and COVID-19, funded through DFAT.

At the conclusion of the project Partners conducted an evaluation on the locally led response.

The evaluation highlighted the significance of local leadership, and culturally and contextually relevant activities and ways of working together through church organisations. The evaluation allowed local partners to reflect on their work, their partnerships, the importance of localisation and highlighted the relevance of the project to affected and vulnerable communities.

Partners reflected that the heavily localised, collaborative project had provided them all with significantly increased capacity, further to the strong partnerships and connections made between partners.

CAN DO member participation in The Humanitarian Leadership Conference



EKOTA presentation- Changing the way we work in humanitarian response

The Humanitarian Leadership Conference (HLC) is a 2-day workshop of panels, workshops and presentations that open new space for humanitarian challenges and solutions. The conference is held biannually, with the 2021 conference part of the global transition from rhetoric to action.

CAN DO supported two sets of partners to present their local leadership experience at the conference:

- Presentation: ‘Changing the way we work in Humanitarian Response: Transformative ways of Working’
  - ◆ Presented by Pankaj Kumar (Christian Aid) and Mohammad Abdur Rahman (RDRS)
  - ◆ The presentation discussed how EKOTA (3 CAN DO partners working in consortium) is working differently in the humanitarian system and is shifting power relations - having local NGOs and INGOs on a level playing field are steps towards a truly local program.
- Panel session: ‘Pacific Churches and Humanitarian Leadership: Leadership in a world of upheaval and crisis's’
  - ◆ Panelists included Reverend James Bhagwan, General Secretary, Pacific Conference of Churches; Reverend Ikani Tolu, General Secretary, Tonga National Council of Churches; Reverend Amy Chambers, Manager, Moana Anglican Services and Teaching Centre (MAST)
  - ◆ The panelists, all Pacific Theologians who are in a unique position to influence humanitarian aid in the Pacific, a heavily religions region
  - ◆ The session invited the Theologists to address humanitarian aid topics and the role of churches, addressing their specific experiences and insights.

### 3. Disaster READY

Disaster READY

Disaster Ready is a 4.5-year program funded by the Australian Government to help Pacific communities prepare for and build resilience to natural disasters. As part of this project, CAN DO partners are implementing disaster preparedness activities in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea. Activities ongoing in these countries include:

- Women's Leadership
- Coordination with key stakeholders (e.g., cluster meetings)
- Livelihoods-based initiatives
- Strengthening representation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in communities
- Utilising existing church structures and groups to train and coordinate community members.

During 2020-21, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, funds provided through the Disaster Ready program were pivoted to respond to the needs of communities regarding the pandemic and its impact on Pacific countries.

As a part of the activities in the program, CAN DO has developed two significant initiatives for churches in the region, which cut across several Disaster Ready countries:

#### a. Theology of Disaster Resilience in a Changing Climate (TDRCC)

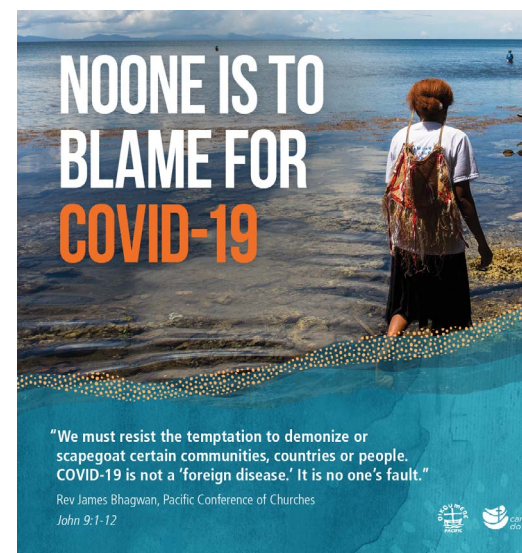
The Theology of Disaster Resilience in a Changing Climate (TDRCC) project, led by Pacific theologians and supported by CAN DO and the Disaster Ready project, aims to reduce belief barriers in relation to preparedness for and resilience to humanitarian disasters across the Pacific Island countries of Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. UnitingWorld is the technical lead in this innovative, faith-based behavior change work, which focuses on building resilience and encouraging preparedness through addressing the underlying theological beliefs which impact current disaster responses across the Pacific.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a new kind of disaster for Faith leaders in the Pacific, as misinformation spread even quicker than the virus itself in the early weeks. Rev James Bhagwan and other leaders knew that faith and church communities are a central part of everyday life in many Pacific communities, and religious leaders are highly influential in shaping beliefs about critical issues like disaster preparedness and COVID-19.

Drawing on the messages shared by Rev Bhagwan and others, seven key theological messages about COVID-19 emerged, which have been circulated and adapted across churches in the Pacific.

#### These messages are:

1. Care for those most vulnerable to COVID-19
2. COVID-19 is not a punishment from God
3. No one is to blame for COVID-19
4. COVID-19 does not discriminate. Christians are not immune
5. Faith and official medical advice are not enemies
6. Be prepared as an act of discipleship
7. God is with us in this time of suffering.



This theological messaging and the scale at which it has been adopted has helped shift thinking away from the former belief that COVID-19, like environmental disasters, is a punishment inflicted by God. It has instead promoted the idea that Christians are not immune, that it is our responsibility to be prepared and protect our loved ones, and has led to greater cooperation between church, government, and NGOs, which is one of the Disaster Ready outcomes for the TDRCC. It has also shown how key messages can be adopted and contextualized to reach a wider audience, another intention of the project.

Other major TDRCC activities that were undertaken in the financial year include:

- Fiji made a start of translating bible studies
- A virtual Theology of Disaster Resilience in a Changing Climate reflection workshop
- The engagement of women and marginalised groups in Fiji
- The engagement of church leadership in Solomon Islands
- Introduction of regional reflection and Learning Workshops to expand monitoring and learning
- The development of a video in Vanuatu on inclusion during disasters.

#### b. Safe'n'Redi

CAN DO is working with its partners to improve evacuation centres in Fiji through its Safe n Redi Project which is funded by DFAT. The Safe n Redi program was designed to make sure that communities are prepared for future disasters - especially weather-related ones in the Pacific Islands like floodings or after a cyclone.

Often during disasters, it is unclear which places can be used as evacuation centres during a flood or after a cyclone. Unfortunately, even more often these centres do not fit the needs of the community. For this purpose, retrofitting activities are being conducted. Evacuation centres are safe and inclusive, meet the needs of local people including the vulnerable members of the community and meet international humanitarian standards. The main goal of this program is that a safe evacuation place is prepared during disasters.

#### In 2020-2021 the program focused on the following efforts:



1. Web Portal technology: this platform collects data on location, number, and size of rooms available for shelter, water storage, facilities, and amenities. The Web Portal is currently available to church leaders in Vanuatu, Fiji, and Solomon Islands



2. Retrofitting: to create accessible, safe, and appropriate buildings for vulnerable groups (e.g., women and persons with disabilities) by replacing and adding certain elements



3. Establishing partnerships between organisations and disaster responders that share information and collaborate in times of disaster.



# 4. Strategy and Learning

Every year CAN DO undertakes several strategy and learning activities. The Health Check and Localisation / Partner Survey is completed each year, with other additional strategies and learning activities being undertaken. In the 2020-21 annual year, CAN DO also underwent a Governance Review. The outcomes of these efforts fed into the development of the Theory of Change 2021-2026.

## c. Health check

The Health Check is a survey for our Australian members that is conducted annually to improve and strengthen the effectiveness of both the members and coordination unit.

Overarching positives:

- Increased profile with DFAT. Increased funding outside of Disaster Ready countries including Bangladesh, Vietnam, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu
- Safeguarding, MEL, strong coordination & collaboration
- Promoting localisation through partners.

Improvements that could be made:

- Proposals and activations: clarity of processes, responsibilities & decision making; lag time in funding
- COVID-19 response: reactive, communication & coordination
- Communication, including from SC & LA to members.

Considerations, what can we improve on and how?

- Localisation: role of ANGOs, increased voice of local partners, local decision-making
- Increase in funding equals increase in pressure on staff. CAN DO needs adequate support partners in capacity building
- Investment in CAN DO beyond the Pacific
- Increase guidance on partnership management.

## d. Localisation and Partner Survey

The purpose of the localisation and partner survey is to invite CAN DO local partners to provide feedback on their experience collaborating with CAN DO in Australia. We want to understand how we can better support our partners in all aspects of our shared partnership and programming.

The survey was completed by 38 responders in 2020-21. All the respondents were local and national staff of which 80% belonged to a local church.

*“CAN DO has done great in its approach to localise the humanitarian response.”*

*“CAN DO has done well by creating a platform for Faith based organisation such as ourselves. and other FBO to collaborate. and continue the good work.”*

Overarching positives:

- Partnership, participation, and voice-based questions
- 80% of responders described CAN DO Australia partners as respectful and supportive, openRecognising local skills and capacity
- Local actors making decisions related to the projects
- Transparent allocations
- Encouragement in local decision making
- Feeling comfortable sharing thoughts with partners
- Listening and considering local partners.

Areas for improvement:

*“It is important to get the local opinion and utilize local capacity within local partners to enable those who understand local context and may be open up for suggestion relative to local traditional knowledge that can also be used to enhance the work in country.”*

“Reducing dependence on CAN DO”

- It is important to get the local opinion on local and/or traditional knowledge included in need assessment and program design? 56% reponded sometimes and 14% responded rarely
- Are funding allocations between local/national and international actors in the CAN DO network fair? 34% responded sometimes and 20% responded rarely.



e. Governance Review

The objective of the governance review was to ascertain whether the current governance and management structures and processes are adequate, and are perceived as adequate, for delivering the two overarching goals of the current Roadmap and ToC. This included reviewing the governance mandate, operations, approaches, coordination, structures, and processes. Respondents were CEOs and International Program Directors/Managers of each of the eight CAN DO members; the CEOs of CAN agencies who are not members of CAN DO; the members of the CAN DO CU; and CAN DO member agency humanitarian team members. AHP SU & DFAT were also invited to participate.

Recommendations:

- Facilitate a review of the Terms of Reference for each component of the governance structure
- Review CAN DO consortium communication and reporting processes
- Develop a strategy to broaden diversity of representation in CAN DO governance and operational mechanisms
- Review the framework for funding and support, taking into consideration ROI principles and an analysis of financial and non-financial investments and returns.

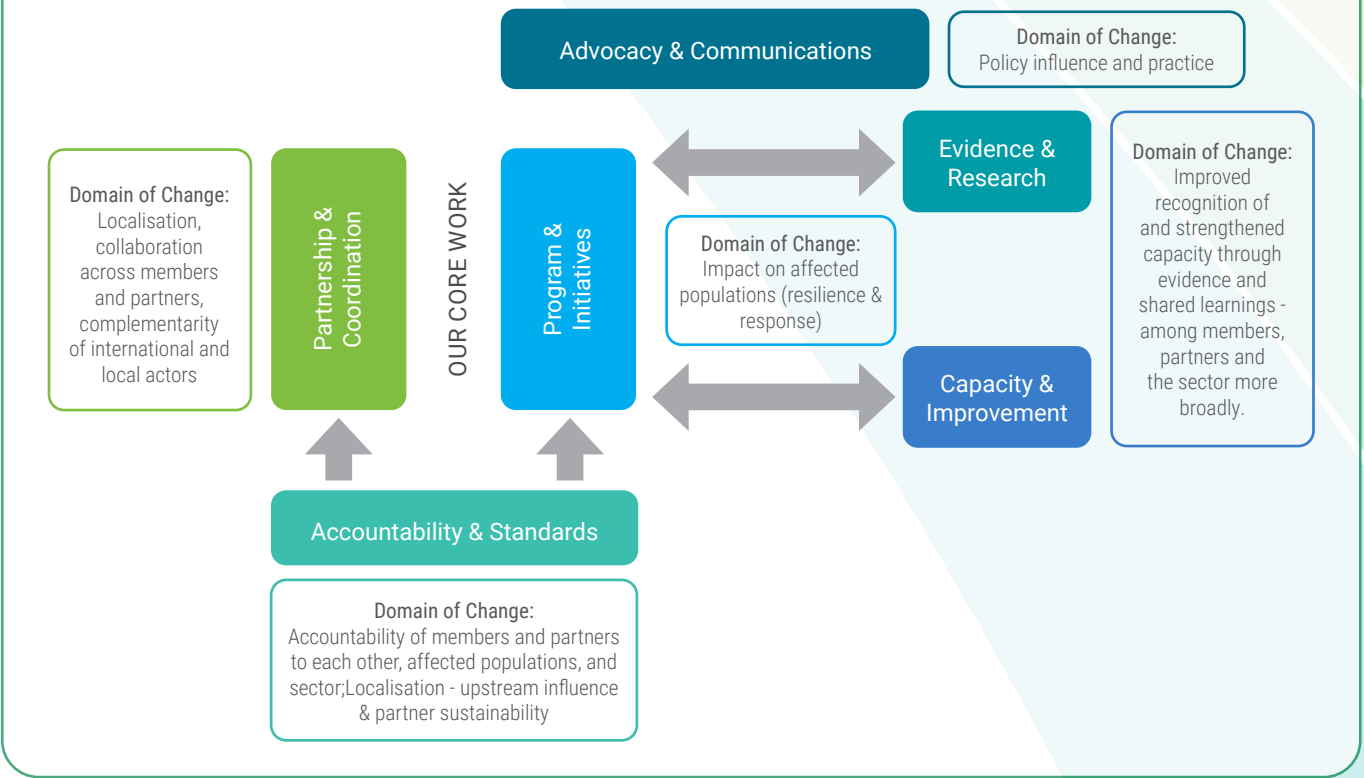
e. Theory of Change

The CAN DO Theory of Change identifies the consortium’s 6 priority areas. It was developed through consultation and reflection with CAN DO members and local partners. The goal of the ToC is: **‘CAN DO will coordinate, build partnerships and work collaboratively, respecting and supporting the role of local faith-based humanitarian actors; in disaster resilience, disaster preparedness and emergency response; with the ultimate goal of increasing locally-led humanitarian reach and impact.’**

The ToC is a strategic document which states CAN DO’s intended outcomes and practical pathways towards those outcomes. This is a unifying document of CAN DO’s strategy for 5 years (July 2021 – June 2026).

The CAN DO CU develops quarterly workplan reports based on the ToC priority areas and tracks these activities through monthly member update meetings. These processes facilitate ongoing reflection on progress towards targets, outcomes, and outputs.

CAN DO Theory of Change



f. Safeguarding Update

The CAN DO Safeguarding Working Group has been active since 2018, with Safeguarding focal points from each member agency contributing to the group.

In 2020-2021 the Safeguarding Working Group has achieved notable outcomes including:

- Developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for interagency collaboration and report handling
- A comprehensive training package to socialise the SOP with each agency has been developed. Each agency’s focal point is training their respective agencies, including joint-agency training
- Safeguarding and protection modules within the Disaster Ready training program have been developed and implemented.



**Thank you**  
for your generosity and support.







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