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CAPACITY BUILDING AND DISASTER RESPONSE:
A CASE STUDY OF NGOs’ RESPONSE TO CYCLONE EVAN IN SAMOA

A research report presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of International Development at Massey University, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

With natural disasters increasing both in number and economic impact, the challenge for governments is to effectively respond to the needs of affected communities. In difficult conditions, and often with resource constraints, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have contributed to meeting the needs of affected communities during disaster responses. NGOs usually have flexible structures, which enable them to respond to a rapidly changing environment. They also often have strong links to the communities in which they work, which creates good synergies when responding to disasters. The involvement of NGOs in a disaster response has been discussed widely in the international community. The challenge is to ensure that NGOs have the capacity to respond effectively when the need arises.

This report has a particular focus on Samoa and uses a capacity building lens to investigate a disaster response. It looks closely at the ability of NGOs to assist the Samoan government in a disaster response. The report used a document analysis and semi-structured interviews, with representatives from NGOs involved in the response to Cyclone Evan in 2012, to investigate capacity building in NGOs with a view to enabling them to respond effectively in disaster.

The key finding of the report is that the ability of NGOs to form relationships with other stakeholders and to maintain those relationships between disaster responses is important to building partnerships that contribute to the effectiveness of a response.
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SUMMARY OF TERMS (ACRONYMS)

ADRA Adventist Development & Relief Agency
CDCRM Community Disaster and Climate Risk Management
DAC Disaster Advisory Committee
DMO Disaster Management Office
DRM Disaster Risk Management
DRR Disaster Risk Reduction
ECDF East Coast Development Forum
FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FESA Fire and Emergency Services Authority
HFA Hyogo Framework for Action
IDA Initial Damage Assessment
IFRC International Federation of Red Cross
MNRE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MWCD Ministry of Women, Social and Community Development
NDC National Disaster Council
NDMO National Disaster Management Office
NDMP National Disaster Management Plan
NEOC National Emergency Operations Centre
NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
NZMFAT New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
PDNA Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PHT Pacific Humanitarian Team
SAT Samoan Tala
SOPAC South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SRCS Samoa Red Cross Society
SUNGO Samoan Umbrella of Non-Government Organisations
SWA Samoa Water Authority
UNOCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
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