

**ENGAGE
RESPECT
FACILITATE
EMPOWER**

**HELPR-1:
A platform
for change**

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Isola
Toga
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Gaua
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Mota Lava
Isola
Banks
Mé

**Espiritu
Santo**

M. Tabwemasana
1879

Aoba

Luganville

Malo

Nor

Malakula

“ We really appreciate all the support that Respond Global and HELPR-1 provide for us. HELPR-1 is the only way that we can safely get our teams and essential supplies to remote areas in Sanma province.

We wish to thank Dr Ian and the Respond Global team for their huge contribution to health services and especially in the disaster and emergency response situation.

HELPR-1 has helped to save and protect many lives.

”

Albert Ruddley, Sanma Provincial Government Secretary General





An aerial photograph of a tropical island. The island is covered in dense green forest and has a white boat anchored in the turquoise water. The water is clear, showing the coral reef and sandy bottom. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Introduction

With over 80 islands, stretching over 1,300 kilometers from top to bottom and split into six provinces, 75% of Ni-Vanuatu live in very remote communities which creates geographical, economic, and societal issues.

Isolation: due to the lack of adequate transportation and communication infrastructure. Many of the islands are only reachable by boat.

Vulnerability: The remote islands are highly exposed to the effects of climate change and natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, droughts and volcanic eruptions. These events can severely impact infrastructure, livelihoods and environment.

Inequality: The islands have unequal access to resources and opportunities in comparison to the urban areas, such as electricity, internet, infrastructure, and limited access to quality health and education.

Supply shortages: Can experience acute shortages of water and food due to frequency of natural disasters and the effects of climate change, resulting in crop failures and disrupted supply chains.

HELPR-1

Help where it's needed the most

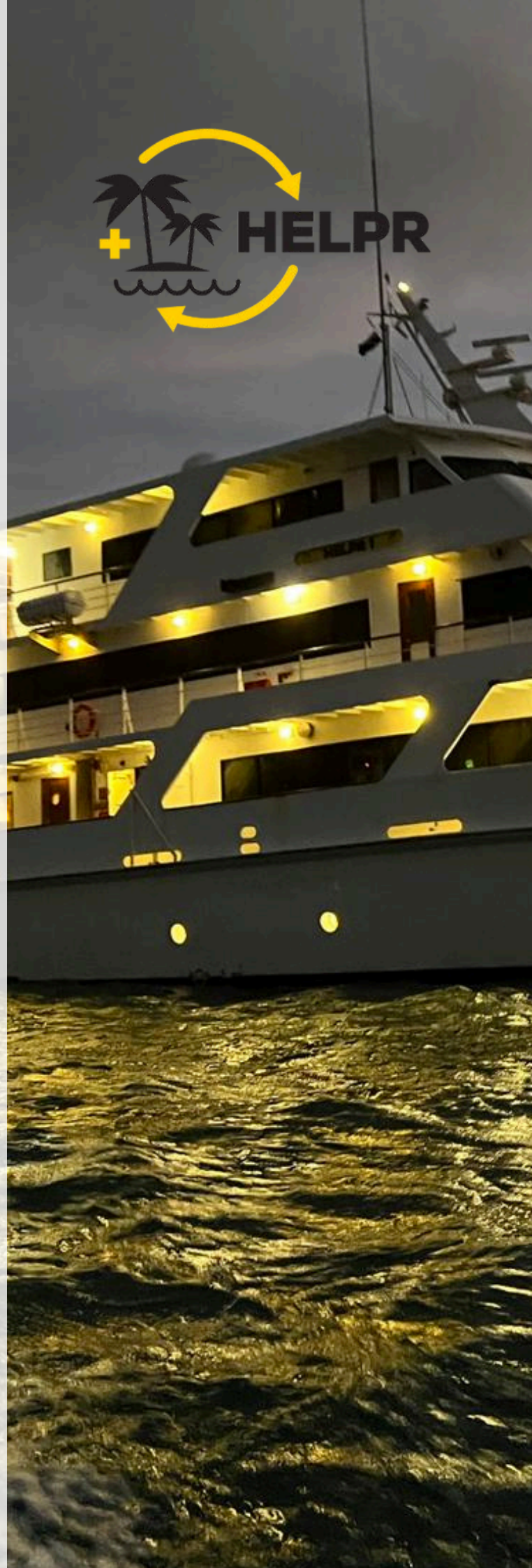
The HELPR program (Health Emergency Logistics Preparedness and Response) aims to support and strengthen local capacity for delivery of key government programs, particularly in rural and remote communities, and to support preparedness and response to emergencies and disasters.

HELPR-1 is a specially converted 32-metre vessel able to accommodate up to 52 people for up to 3 weeks at a time without resupply and is positioned to respond within hours to any emergency or disaster in the Vanuatu and nearby Pacific countries.

Its onboard medical facilities, communications capability, equipment, storage, and accommodation, coupled with Respond Global's extensive in-field and operational experience in disaster response are totally unique in the Pacific.

During her first two years of operation, HELPR-1 visited every province three or more times annually and demonstrated its capability to provide services to each of the 63 populated islands in Vanuatu.

In each of these missions, she has proven invaluable to National and Provincial teams in reaching isolated communities in order to deliver critical programs of benefit. This multi-sectoral approach has enabled multiple programs to be delivered by different agencies concurrently, ensuring maximum benefit to the highest number of remote communities in the least amount of time.





HELPR-1 significantly improves national resilience and response outcomes, and provides a safe and effective way for Respond Global, Government departments and other partners to deliver important health, education, climate change, and disaster resilience programs in hard-to-reach communities in Vanuatu. Uniquely the vessel conducts health, preparedness and climate related programs day-to-day, but becomes a response platform for disasters when required.

The work of HELPR-1 would not be possible without the generous support of the Australian Government and a private donor. We sincerely thank them for their unwavering support.

How We Work

Supporting, not replacing

We believe that the best response is a local response.

Our ethos is centred on supporting national, provincial government and communities to empower them to achieve better outcomes for themselves. The team is locally led (80% Ni-Vanuatu staff), supported by staff with extensive experience in the South Pacific region.

We work closely with provincial teams and local chiefs, in their language(s) and within their cultural structures, to ensure that help gets to those who need it most. We are culturally sensitive when planning how this help will be delivered, and employ local nurses, electricians, data officers and marine staff (along with carefully selected senior international staff) to apply a culturally appropriate delivery of support.



A man with a beard and sunglasses is shown in profile, talking on a mobile phone. He is outdoors, with trees and foliage in the background. The image is split vertically, with the left side showing the man and the right side containing text.

How We Work

Engage, Respect, Facilitate, Empower

We **ENGAGE** with local stakeholders, to facilitate transparent, ethical and long-term partnerships.

We **RESPECT** traditional leadership and structures, existing policies and mechanisms, providing support and mentorship where appropriate.

We **FACILITATE**. Our operational lead onboard HELPR-1 is a Ni-Vanuaut resident. He is supported by local clinical, energy and logistics leads and their respective teams, in addition to an experienced local marine crew.

We **EMPOWER** and help build capability, through education, training, advice, mentoring, and support

Key Areas of Focus

HELPR-1 provides a secure platform for servicing remote communities in the Pacific. During the past 2 years, she has focused on four core areas, all with the aim of supporting, strengthening, and improving daily life for residents in the outer islands of Vanuatu.

1

STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS TO ENABLE UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

2

EMPOWERING DISASTER RESILIENCE AND RESPONSE IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

3

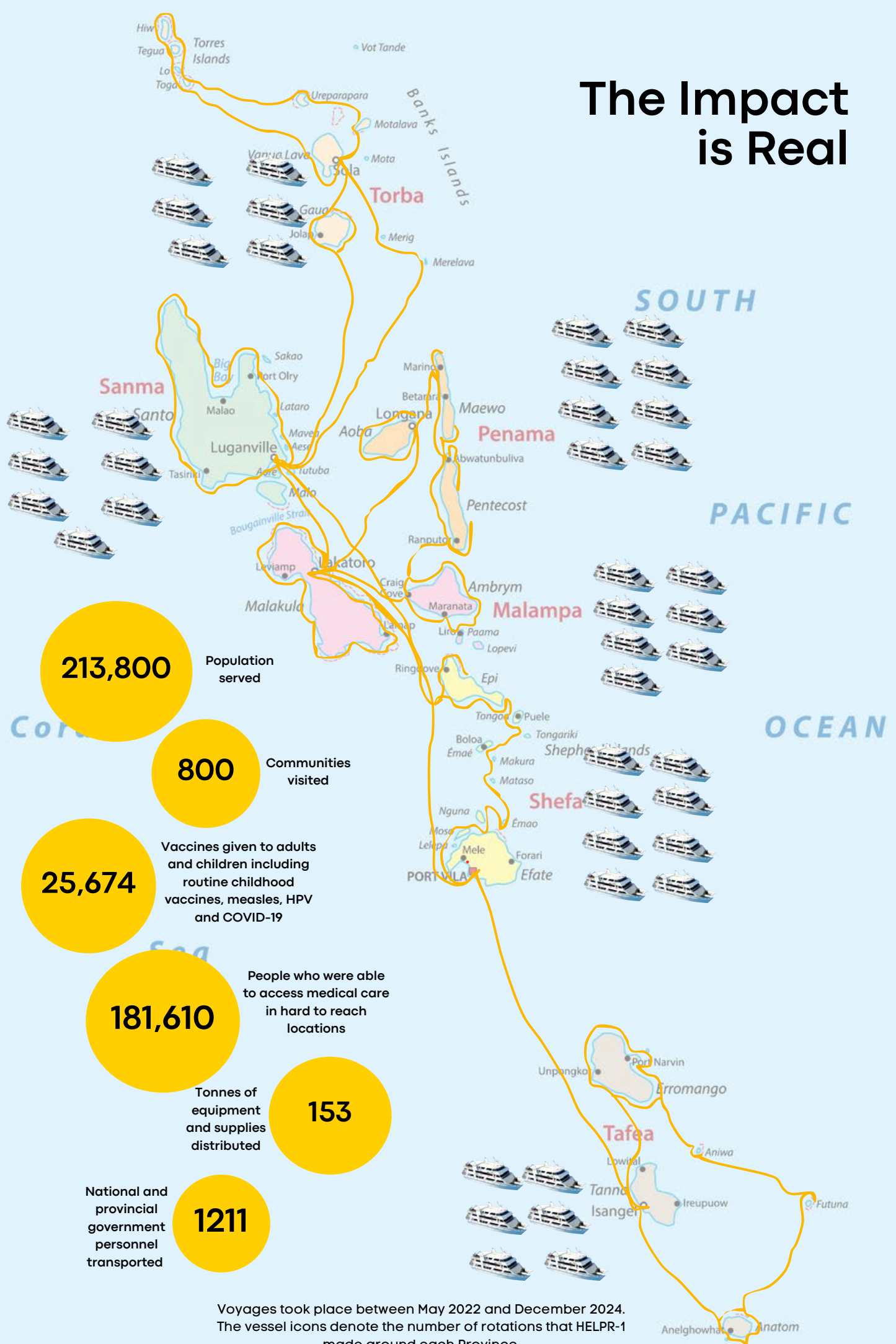
ELECTRIFYING COMMUNITY FACILITIES WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY

4

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BY PROVIDING OPERATIONAL SUPPORT TO IMPACTFUL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS/PROJECTS



The Impact is Real



FOCUS

Strengthening Health Systems to Enable Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

AIM

To strengthen primary healthcare delivery through infrastructure improvements, supply chain optimisation, workforce capacity building, targeted community outreach, and strategic partnerships on key public health initiatives.

KEY ISSUES

Geographic isolation and limited transportation options limit the access and mobility of patients and health workers, as well as the delivery of supplies and equipment.

The impacts of climate change and natural disasters cause damage to clinical infrastructure and can disrupt the delivery of essential health services and supplies to affected areas, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks and worsening health outcomes.

The prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases, such as malaria, dengue and scabies as well as diabetes, and hypertension poses a significant burden on the health system.

The limited availability of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in some areas increases the exposure to waterborne and vector-borne diseases and impacts hygiene and nutrition.

HELPR-1 is being employed as an efficient, safe, and effective delivery platform that is supporting the Vanuatu National Health Sector Strategy 2021-2030, which sets out a vision for a healthy population that enjoys high-quality physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being through an effective decentralized health system with a primary health care focus.

Assessments of clinics across the provinces, to check infrastructure, equipment, and medical supplies, in addition to repairing or renewing solar panels, battery systems, lights and vaccine fridges which are essential for community health facilities.

Facilitate regular and guaranteed integrated primary healthcare team outreaches to all remote communities in all provinces.

Facilitate capacity building and training of remote health workers through provision of direct training and/or supervisory visits.

Strengthening health information systems, across all levels of the health system, by being a platform that brings expertise from the Ministry of Health to train local nurses in their own clinics and providing internet capabilities for timely reporting.

Safe storage and transportation of medical equipment and supplies and strengthening supply chain of medical supplies in Vanuatu.

Oxygen resupply, to the hardest to reach facilities that would otherwise would never be able to access oxygen using HELPR-1's oxygen concentrator.

Health surveillance and onboard testing for vector borne and other illnesses, using the onboard GeneXpert machine, with capabilities to test for multiple diseases including respiratory, TB multi-drug resistance, HPV.

OUTCOMES

Integrated Primary Healthcare Teams

CASE STUDY

To date HELPR-1 has delivered direct health services to over 181,600 people in all the provinces in Vanuatu.

Services delivered include:

- Dental, Ophthalmology/eye care, Ear, Nose and Throat care
- Mind care/psychology
- Midwifery, Maternal Child Health (MCH)
- Cervical cancer screening
- Pharmacy
- Medical imaging
- Non-communicable diseases
- Malaria outreach, Tuberculosis program
- Medical Team Outreach
- Cold Chain Specialist teams
- Pharmacists
- Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation
- Public health and environmental health teams

Primary health care remains key to addressing health challenges and achieving universal health coverage (UHC) in Vanuatu. HELPR-1 plays a significant role in advancing the MOH vision for an integrated, decentralised system that ensures effective, efficient, and equitable health services across Vanuatu. In just 18 months, we have reached over 60% of rural communities, with provincial teams delivering care while HELPR-1 enhances logistical efficiency.

Our 2025 program, with support from the Australian Government will continue to support the delivery of integrated primary health care teams to the hard-to-reach populations.



Improving Childhood Vaccination Coverage

Following the re-opening of borders after the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vanuatu National Health Emergency Operations Centre (NHEOC) and Ministry of Health (MoH) requested that HELPR-1's mission be expanded from its original COVID-19 vaccination to support the restoration of health services impacted by the pandemic. This involved resupplying remote clinics using stock from the National medical warehouse, specialist outreach teams, and supporting clinical care.

Additional challenges included:

- **Malaria outbreaks had been escalating**, with previous gains toward malaria eradication lost during the pandemic due to a lack of access to the outer islands, and a focus on COVID-19 prevention.
- **Childhood vaccination rates had fallen** during the pandemic due to the same lack of access, lack of funding, and inoperable cold-chain systems. A catch-up childhood immunisation campaign was launched to combat vaccine-preventable illnesses.
- **Measles in particular was a risk** and a campaign was launched to vaccinate children ages 1-5 years with a second dose as borders reopened.

HELPR-1 was therefore tasked by the MoH to urgently support these critical objectives in addition to assisting other program delivery partners in the areas of climate change, biosecurity, and widening healthcare access more generally.

To date over **26,000** vaccines have been delivered to over **23,300** children at immunisations clinics across **630** remote and hard-to-reach villages in every province of Vanuatu.



“I am very happy with the work that HELPR-1 is doing in our country. Since the beginning with COVID and now with routine immunisations, it is so good to see the provincial teams reaching our remote communities. I want to thank Respond Global for this initiative and for choosing Vanuatu as the base for HELPR-1.

It has changed the way we do things and all of our national public health programs have benefitted from this. ”

Dr. Jenny Stephens,
Director of Public Health

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)



Neglected tropical diseases (NTD) still occur in Vanuatu, especially in rural and remote areas. Working with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) HELPR-1 clinical teams (local and international nurses from Respond Global) deliver NTD screening and treatment for conditions like Scabies, Intestinal worms, and Yaws.

These three illnesses primarily affect children, cause stunted growth and failure to thrive, and can result in debilitating secondary skin infections including kidney failure from glomerulonephritis secondary to toxins released by streptococcal bacteria.

HELPR-1 teams also support surveillance for malnutrition through screening mid-upper arm circumferences of children, starting treatment when required and referring to the local remote nurse for follow-up. Remote nurses always join the ship team on each visit, ensuring they retain knowledge of all treatments conducted, and receive the latest updates on treatment protocols from MoH staff onboard.

- During this reporting period, the RG clinical team completed 15,304 NTD assessments in 193 communities (repeat visits accounted for) in all provinces
- Of this 1,621 cases of scabies were identified and treated
- 17 yaws cases identified and treated
- 12,891 deworming treatments were completed.

Malaria Elimination

Malaria has historically been one of the leading causes of ill health in Vanuatu. Significant efforts by the Ministry of Health's National Malaria Programme and partners had seen a consistent reduction in malaria prevalence over time. Initial plans to reach zero cases in 2023 and officially eliminate Malaria by 2026 have been hampered by the focus on COVID-19 and continued logistics and remote access issues

Most cases are now reported in the provinces of Malampa and Sanma, the island of Epi in Shefa province, and there have been recent outbreaks in the remote Torba region.

HELPR-1 supports the MoH's Malaria Programme, by enabling its staff to gain access to hard-to-reach areas for prevention and response activities including testing, treatment, and spraying. HELPR-1 also supported the delivery and distribution of over **59,000** mosquito bed nets LLIN (Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets) in all the provinces and continues to do so.

HELPR-1 has recently aligned its schedule with Malaria Outbreak Response to targeted provinces and communities to bring Vanuatu closer to eradicating Malaria by 2030.



Silip andanit
long moskit
net

“HELPR-1 has allowed the malaria team to reach areas that normally take us months to reach. We have been able to roll-out our rapid response teams using HELPR-1 around the islands of Vanuatu. We are so grateful for the Captain and the crew. We have been struggling with logistics and time but HELPR-1 has supported us to overcome those barriers as we respond to the Malaria outbreak around Vanuatu.”

Wesley Donald,
Malaria Program National
Coordinator

Medicinal Oxygen Re-supply



Following COVID-19, the need for reliable medicinal oxygen supply in provincial health facilities has become even more critical.

In Vanuatu, there are currently only two oxygen plants serving the entire country - one at Port Vila Hospital and another at Northern Hospital in Luganville. Other hospitals and health centers are dependent on these two sources, with deliveries often delayed due to transportation challenges.

A commercial option is available in Port Vila, but at a very high cost to the Ministry of Health.

With HELPR-1's dependable schedule to the outer islands, it is ideally positioned to support these facilities by delivering essential medicinal oxygen. Equipped with an onboard oxygen concentrator HELPR-1 has successfully resupplied hospitals in Penama and Tafea Provinces.

We are committed to extending this vital service to other provinces according to its schedule.

FOCUS

Empowering Disaster Resilience & Response in Remote Communities

AIM

To respond to increasing challenges resulting from the effects of climate change, and heightened the risks to remote communities.

KEY ISSUES

Vanuatu has a high exposure to natural hazards, such as cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and droughts, with limited capacity to deal with their impacts, especially in rural and remote areas.

The lack of reliable and timely information and communication systems that can facilitate the assessment of needs and the delivery of assistance to affected communities.

The limited availability and accessibility of life saving supplies, such as emergency food, water, shelter, medicine and fuel, essential for survival and recovery

The disruption of transport and logistics networks that can hamper the movement of personnel and materials to and from remote areas

The risk of secondary hazards and disasters that can exacerbate the existing vulnerabilities and damages, such as disease outbreaks, landslides, fires and looting

OUTCOMES

HELPR-1 was the first response vessel on scene following the 2023 twin cyclones event, clearing vital access roads and access to health and other community facilities, checking for casualties, transporting essential food supplies, and producing fresh water onboard. HELPR-1 has responded to 3 cyclones in the past 12 months.

Disaster preparedness training in chainsaw use and debris clearing was given to the crew and local responders, which proved to be timely when the cyclones hit a few months later. HELPR-1 provides a floating and movable training base, providing accommodation, catering, and onboard operational and logistics support.

HELPR-1 has responded to several search and rescue missions, both long-range and multi-day responses, which resulted in lives saved in a number of incidents. The vessel is always on standby to respond to and assist with search and rescue missions.

During the cyclone response, HELPR-1 was a floating emergency operations center, with numerous response teams using it as a base during this time, with support from the onboard medical and operational teams.

Cyclone Response

Kevin & Judy, March 2023

Lola, October 2023

CASE STUDY



“ We are delighted to see Respond Global supporting our emergency response teams in the cyclone response in Vanuatu. Our health teams were able to cover vast areas and reach remote communities with food, water, medicines, and relief supplies. HELPR-1 was incredible and helped our National Health EOC collect vital assessment data immediately after the cyclone to help us respond faster. ”

Judith Melsul,
(Former) Director General of Health

Rapid response

Being flagged in Vanuatu and stationed there full-time, HELPR-1 was the first response vessel to be able to assist the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to conduct on-ground assessments of casualties and critical infrastructure, in response to the cyclone events of 2023.

Debris-clearing

The HELPR-1 team cleared key access roads in the first few days and reinstated access to health clinics and other buildings, making sure they were safe in the aftermath of the cyclones.

Water & food delivery

The vessel has its own onboard desalination plant, which allowed it to provide over 20,000 litres of fresh drinking water to desperate villagers. Three 5,000-litre replacement water tanks were transported on the bow of the vessel and offloaded by hand. Many crops were destroyed, so over 10 tonnes of rice was delivered to communities in the first week of TC Kevin & Judy's impact.

Medical care and restoration of health access

We transported Vanuatu Medical Assistance Teams (VanMAT), supported by the HELPR-1 medical team to conduct health assessments, lifesaving treatment and patient transfers and to help restore critical health services (including maternity, vaccination and outpatient care).

Transporting national & provincial response teams

The HELPR-1 and Respond Global teams worked closely with the NDMO and Provincial Health Councils, to provide support for the transportation of national and provincial response teams, and delivery of emergency supplies on behalf of a number of global aid agencies.

Earthquake Response: Shefa Province

December 2024

Rapid response

HELPR-1 immediately pivoted into response mode following the earthquake's impact as it was positioned in the Shepherd Islands:

- Completed 29 multisectoral impact assessments on 12 islands over two days.
- Activated a mobile EOC to facilitate Shefa Health to coordinate with the National EOCs.
- Captured drone footage of impacts (landslides) and communicated information back to the NDMO.
- Delivered equipment and supplies to affected communities.

Onshore coordination support

The HELPR-1 team supported the set up and operationalisation of the Shefa Health EOC. Over four days, the Shefa Health EOC was operationalised to enhance response planning and data communication. Key achievements included:

- Established impact assessment and priority boards for Efate's health centers.
- Developed SITREP processes for efficient situational awareness.
- Donated \$500 worth of Shefa maps for real-time facility status tracking.

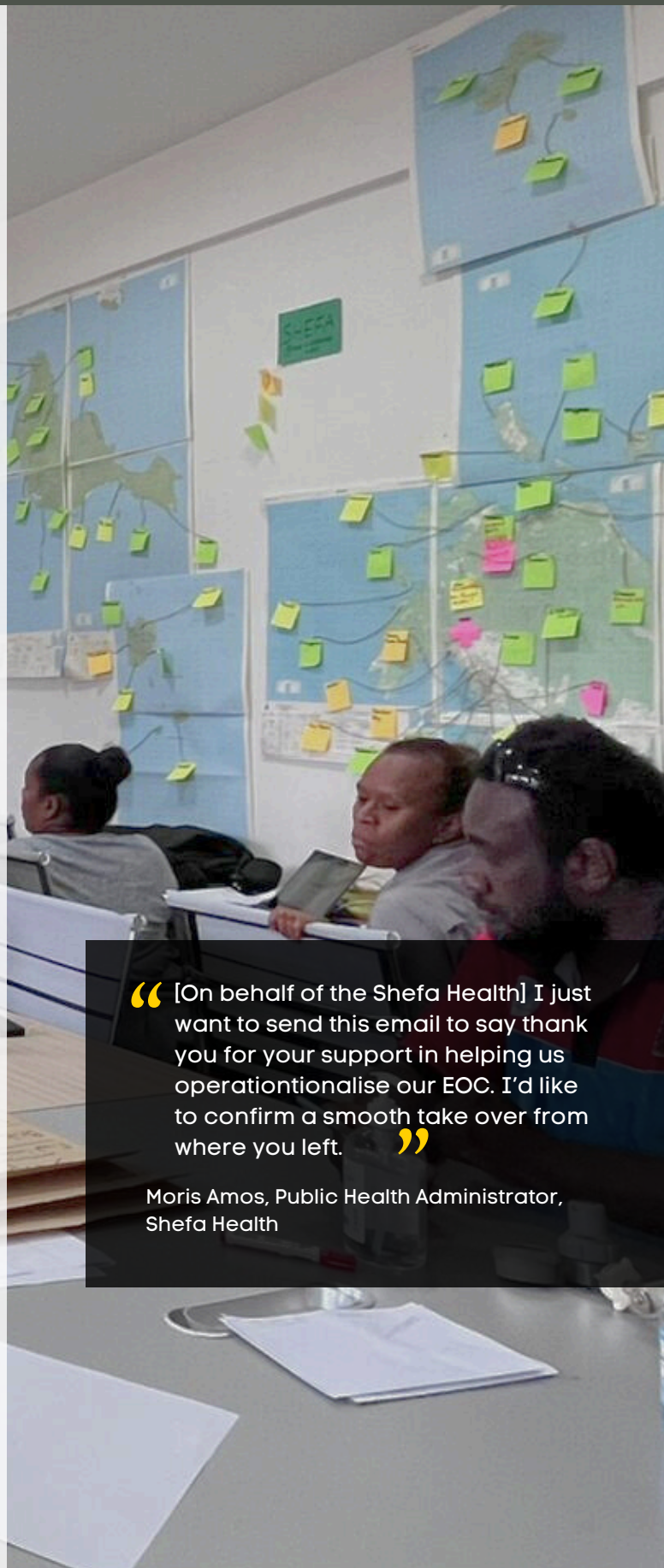
This effort built on prior HELPR-1 support, with Shefa Health officials leading throughout. The final two days focused on a seamless handover, ensuring the team was confident in maintaining operations independently.

Strengthened the operations at the Vila Central Hospital EOC

- Supported situation awareness and strategic thinking within already established EOC.
- Surge support to surgical team.

Embedded staff to support logistics at the NHEOC and NDMO

- The HELPR-1 team cleared key access roads in the first few days and reinstated access to health clinics and other buildings, making sure they were safe in the aftermath of the cyclones.



“ [On behalf of the Shefa Health] I just want to send this email to say thank you for your support in helping us operationalise our EOC. I'd like to confirm a smooth take over from where you left. ”

Moris Amos, Public Health Administrator,
Shefa Health

Cyclone Preparedness & Response Training

HELPR-1 has assisted in executing three cyclone preparedness training exercises.

Shefa and Sanma Province Training

To prepare communities to respond during and after a cyclone event Respond Global delivers cyclone preparedness and response training aboard HELPR-1, in partnership with Global Support and Development. The five-day training program focuses on two distinct cohorts of responders:


1. Post-cyclone debris removal teams (chainsaw and other tools), and,
2. Leadership and coordination during a disaster.

The course is a unique blend of coordinator and operational roles, with participants from the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Organisation, Provincial officials from the Ministry of Health, Police, Red Cross, Local Area Councils and Maritime Safety, as well as local NGOs.

In an intensive week, attendees practice working within an Incident Management System (IMS) run by the Provincial Government (PEOC), receive technical training in safe chainsaw use and debris removal, and participate in a full-scale simulation exercise.

HELPR-1 serves as the accommodation, teaching venue, and moving base for all exercises and simulations that are delivered on various islands in the north Efate region during an action-packed week.

HELPR-1's marine crew also attend the course and were called upon to put their debris-clearing training into immediate practice when Category 2 Cyclone Irene hit Port Vila in January 2023 and subsequently Cyclones Kevin, Judy, and Lola later that year.



“We are so honored to be able to work alongside HELPR-1 crew and clinical team in this disaster response. Thank you to the Directors, the Captains and the crew for keeping our teams safe, helping us to reach our vulnerable populations and deliver much needed. They came to help us at the right time when we needed them most. Now, we can respond faster and reach our communities in a timely manner.”

Lollyne Jeremiah,
Tafea Provincial Public Health Manager

Disaster Preparedness & Resilience Training

Torba Province Training

Respond Global has subsequently run courses for Provincial Emergency Operations Centre staff as a stand-alone course, for example, a course conducted in March 2024 in Torba Province with support from the British High Commission in Port Vila.

These intensive 4-5 day courses bring together key response and coordination staff from each of the major sectors and implementing agencies in the province (NDMO, Police, Health, Education, Red Cross, etc).

Training also brings together personnel from the Provincial EOC as well as area administrators and even leaders of counter-disaster and climate change committees (CDCCCs) at the village level. Training is in Bislama and English.

Training is conducted onboard the vessel with exercises conducted in remote villages and communities within their own province.

Communities actively participate and assist with role-playing, while the provincial response team get hands-on experience in communities they will be called upon to support in a real response.

As with other courses, the final day's simulation exercise is conducted in real-time with a series of challenges and incidents to react to, multiple teams active in different areas on land and on the vessel, and with a chance for personnel to practice leadership and coordination roles. A debrief and summary of the course are followed by course participant feedback to constantly improve the approach.

Feedback from communities has been excellent, they appreciate the opportunity to interact with their provincial leadership teams and see them taking an interest in their local area.

Respond Global can deliver similar training in other countries and regions as required.

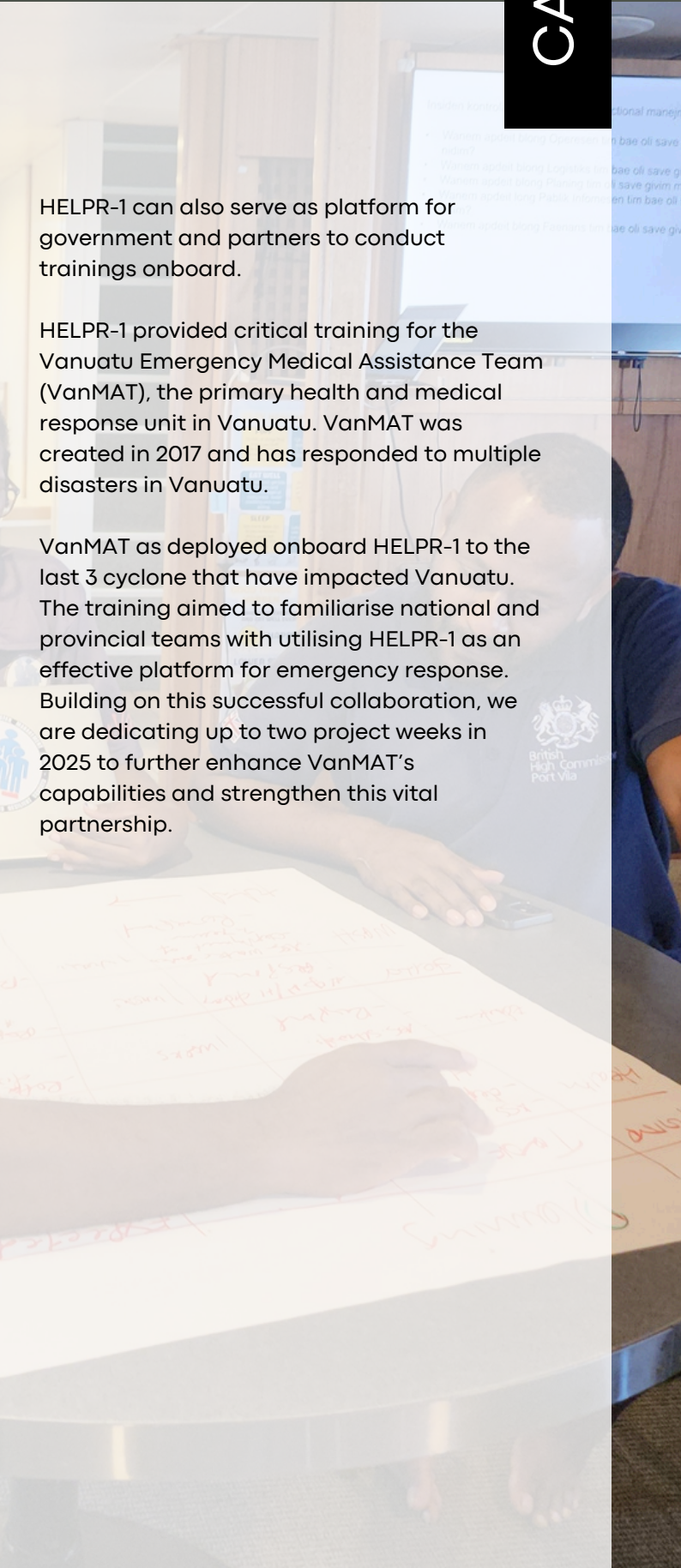


Disaster Preparedness & Resilience Training

HELPR-1 can also serve as platform for government and partners to conduct trainings onboard.

HELPR-1 provided critical training for the Vanuatu Emergency Medical Assistance Team (VanMAT), the primary health and medical response unit in Vanuatu. VanMAT was created in 2017 and has responded to multiple disasters in Vanuatu.

VanMAT as deployed onboard HELPR-1 to the last 3 cyclone that have impacted Vanuatu. The training aimed to familiarise national and provincial teams with utilising HELPR-1 as an effective platform for emergency response. Building on this successful collaboration, we are dedicating up to two project weeks in 2025 to further enhance VanMAT's capabilities and strengthen this vital partnership.



FOCUS

Electrifying Community Facilities with Renewable Energy

AIM

To support the Government of Vanuatu National Energy Road Map 2016-2030, through expediting green energy electrification of the remote communities in Vanuatu.

KEY ISSUES

Expediting green energy access - Vanuatu has a low electrification rate of about 33%, with only 9% of the rural population having access to reliable and affordable energy.

A lack of access to affordable and reliable electricity.

Dependence on fossil fuels, such as diesel and kerosene, which are expensive, polluting, and vulnerable to supply disruptions.

Exposure to natural disasters, such as cyclones, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, **which can damage or destroy energy infrastructure**.

HELPR-1 is supporting programs that can help expedite green energy electrification in the remote islands.

Installed or restored renewable energy systems in over 131 facilities and serviced/repaired/maintained over 275 off-grid energy systems at schools, clinics and community halls in remote villages.

Installed over 350 security lights in over 175 locations to promote security specifically for vulnerable populations including women and children.

Assessed over 500 facilities - the data collected from these assessments has allowed us to be "shovel ready" for future innovative projects including complete electrification of prioritised health facilities in 2025, with the possibility of expanding work to include WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) and strengthening climate resilient infrastructure.

Relating to health, the GEP team have **served and restored power at numerous facilities**, many of which noted they had spent several years without light and were performing medical procedures including childbirth using mobile phone torches when they occurred out of hours. During the reporting period, the GEP team assessed 106 health facilities.

OUTCOMES

Climate Adaptation for Community Institutions



HELPR-1 will be delivering real improvements to community institutions like health facilities, schools, local government buildings and community halls and co-ops.

Energy:

- Installation and refurbishment of 40 health facilities supporting via the National Green Energy Fund (NGEF) pathway.
- Providing medical appliances to increase the level of service at 10 of these health facilities.
- Repair and maintenance of existing off-grid energy systems in remote health facilities, schools, and community buildings.
- Roll-out of shutdown procedures for these systems, including a repair hotline, remote triage, and cyclone preparedness measures.
- Installation of solar sensor lights in high-risk areas, especially those posing gendered safety risks.
- LED bulb replacement in public buildings for energy efficiency (carry over of funding from 2024).
- Facility assessments and support for future off grid projects.
- Student field experience in partnership with VIT (Vanuatu Institute of Technology).
- E-waste program for proper disposal of old solar and battery systems.

WASH/Water:

- Service and repair of WASH systems on community buildings e.g. repairing guttering and taps, servicing pumps and water tanks.
- WASH assessments of community institutions to ensure sites are project ready for WASH projects.
- Liaison with relevant government departments (Department of Water Resources/Department of Public Works) and other partners working in WASH in remotest areas.
- Piloting the installation of some water infrastructure on select community institutions for proof of concept to encourage further donor investment. This may include solar pumps or water tanks where transportable by HELPR-1.

FOCUS

Building Partnerships by Providing Operational Support to Impactful Government Programs/Projects

AIM

To support the Government of Vanuatu to deliver essential government services from its departments to Area Councils and communities that are geographically isolated from Port Vila and the Provincial capitals.

KEY ISSUES

Biodiversity protection and invasive species eradication and prevention. The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), is a serious pest that can damage and kill coconut palms and other palm species. Detected in 2019, the beetle is rapidly spreading, posing a serious threat to the country's coconut industry and the livelihoods of the thousands of people who depend on it.

Building safer and more inclusive communities. Isolation and lack of the necessary protection mechanisms in the more remote communities create issues that affect families, particularly women and children.

Establishment of Memorandums of Understanding between HELPR-1 and Government agencies to ensure consistency of service delivery to the provinces, HELPR-1 has MoUs with various government agencies including; Ministry of Health, Department of Energy, Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, Ministry of Education, Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority, Ministry of Justice and Community Services, and UNFPA.

Facilitate capacity building for maritime safety, by enabling the VMSA to complete the first maritime safety training and boat safety course for boat owners in two of the most remote provinces.

Helping to promote social responsibility, by enabling the Ministry of Justice and Community Services to educate community members on adhering to relevant laws such as the Penal code law, domestic violence, promoting social inclusion and protection of vulnerable populations and improving referral processes for reporting of cases.

Promote access to free education to children living in the remote islands and communities through delivery of curriculum materials and training of teaching staff.

Partnering with the national civil registration and identification management department to promote free access to essential identification documentations for people in the remote communities.


HELPR-1 supported the establishment of rhinoceros beetle traps in strategic locations in Malekula (litzlitz), Sanma (Luganville), Torba (Loh, Toga, Hiu, Uraparapara and Sola), and Penama (Lolowai) and assisted in delivering a series of biosecurity awareness programs.

Facilitated delivery of ballot boxes for two elections and a national referendum for four provinces (Shefa, Penama and Tafea) and provided access to voting for over 60,000 people. During this project we transported over 160 officers from the National Police Force, Vanuatu Army, and the national electoral commission to ensure safety and security during the election process. e national civil registration and identification management department to promote free access to essential identification documentations for people in the remote communities.

OUTCOMES

Biosecurity Surveillance & Control

CASE STUDY



The coconut industry is a vital part of Vanuatu's economy and culture, contributing 45% to the country's GDP and supporting the livelihoods of many Ni-Vanuatu. However, the industry is under threat from the invasive coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), which was introduced in Vanuatu in 2019 and has since caused severe damage to coconut trees. The CRB feeds on the crown of trees, killing them within months and leaving behind a trail of destruction.

To respond to this threat, the Department of Biosecurity launched an early surveillance response to detect, contain, and eliminate any CRB presence on the outer islands.

Respond Global HELPR-1 supports the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to combat invasive pests and plants including CRB that pose a serious risk to flora, fauna and the people of Vanuatu. Through this support the Department has guaranteed positions onboard on all missions to all provinces allowing them to complete the following activities;

- Installment of new and maintenance of existing early warning traps, and educating the community on its surveillance, reporting, and immediate management measures.
- Investigation and verification of potential reported CRB sites as well as other invasive flora/fauna.
- Implementing other biosecurity activities including releasing biological agents to manage invasive plants and insects, GPS mapping of sites with new invasive flora/fauna, and collection of specimens for research.
- Community engagement and biosecurity awareness.

Education


Supporting Remote School Initiatives

HELPR-1 supports the Department of Education and the school system in several ways:

- Vaccination programs for children at school.
- Healthy school initiative, supporting dental and oral health and hygiene education programs from the MoH.
- Delivering school textbooks and supporting provincial education officers to visit remote schools to provide support to remote teachers, update new curriculums, and so on.
- Cyclone response repairs to school buildings to ensure education continues for impacted children in remote communities.
- Electrification of schools through the Green Energy Project; facilitating access to simple electrical items such as lights, fans and to some schools internet and computer access.



Vessel Capabilities



HELPR-1 carries 44 crew and deployment members comfortably, with capacity for up to 52 during emergency deployments. The 14-person marine crew includes two highly experienced international mariners and 12 Ni-Vanuatu crew members.

- Extended fuel tanks holding a total of 32,000L diesel and a 1,250 nautical mile/2,300 kilometre range.
- Desalination plant producing over 15,000L of fresh water daily, with freshwater tanks holding 26,000L.
- Accommodation for 14 marine crew and up to 35-38 passengers (52 beds).
- Full galley with the ability to feed over 70 people per day for 2 weeks.
- 3 tender crafts including:
 - A large 9.5 metre tender with direct access loading and capacity for 27 passengers and at least 1,500kg of cargo.
 - 1 x 4m rigid inflatable and a 5 metres aluminium boat for small mobile team transfers
- Full bridge capacity and 24-hour watch/operational capability, compliant with all Vanuatu and equivalent international safety standards.

Medical & Clinical Support Capabilities

HELPR-1 is a unique multi-use response vessel, flagged in Vanuatu. While its design enables emergency response, its true value lies in its day-to-day support of delivering full-time outreach partnership programs by providing operational, logistical, and healthcare expertise.

- State-of-the-art trauma and stabilisation medical room with intensive care level care capacity for up to two patients.
- Large medication and medical/pharmacy storage area (which can be converted to a patient care area when required).
- Inbuilt vaccine fridges with hard-wired alarms and additional mobile cold-chain units.
- Onboard GenXpert machines for on-the-spot diagnostics (up to 8 cartridges at once).
- Rapid response equipment to support retrieval and response teams.
- Shelters and furniture to manage over 300 outpatients daily in up to 3 different locations concurrently.
- Large capacity oxygen concentrator and compressor to refill oxygen bottles for remote clinics without the need to wait for resupply from Port Vila or Luganville.



Disaster & Emergency Response Capabilities

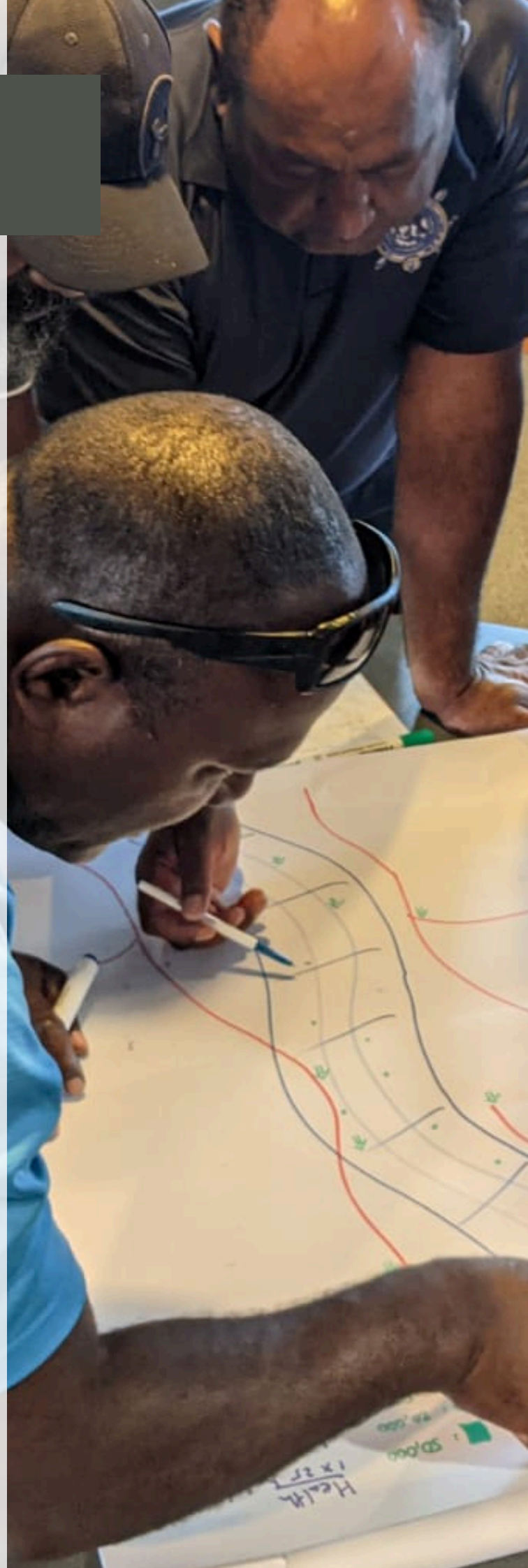
HELPR-1's onboard medical, communications, and equipment capabilities coupled with Respond Global's extensive in-field and operational experience in disaster response are 100% unique in the Pacific.

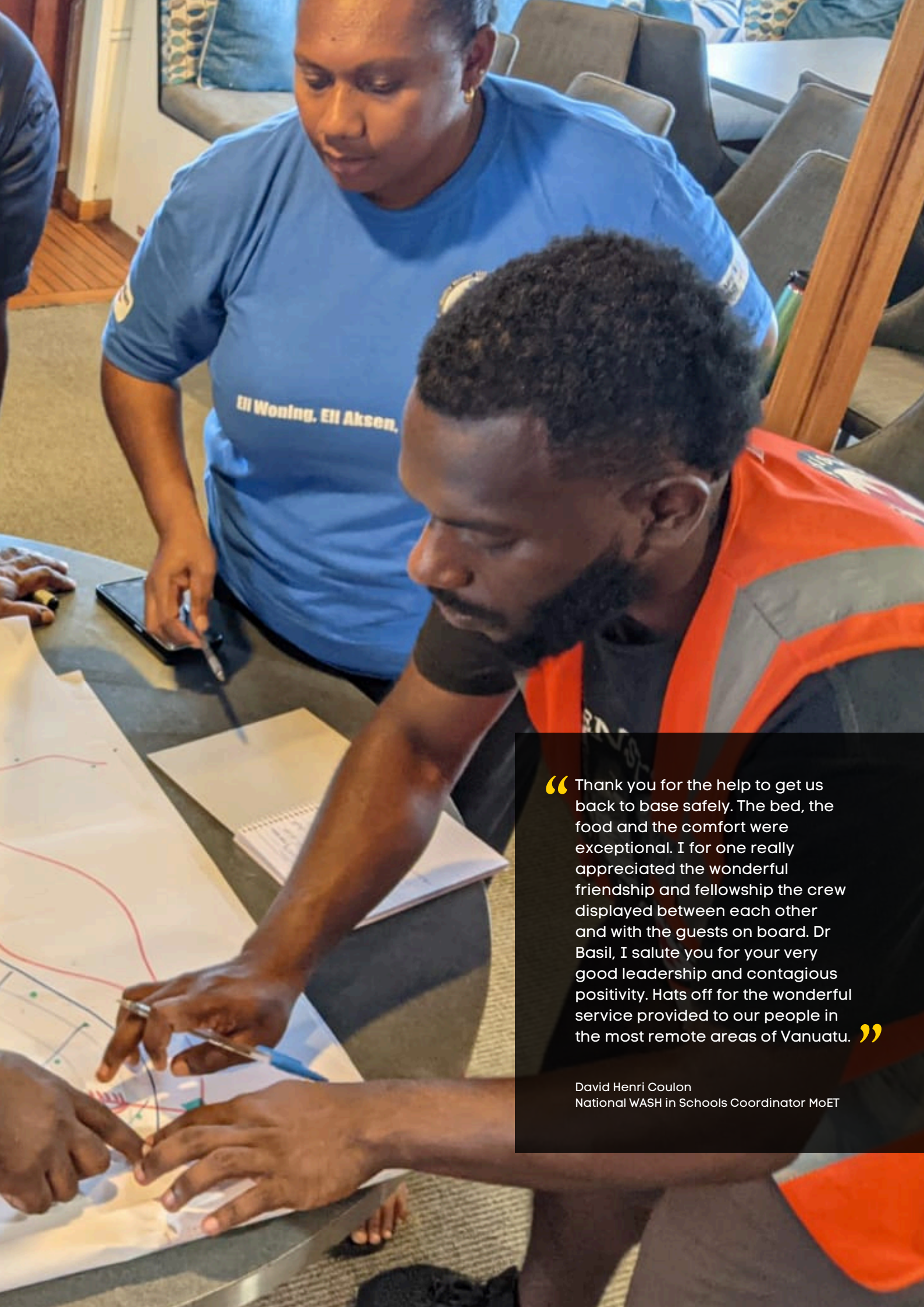
- Rapid transport of local teams to the area of impact, offering safe accommodation, support, and base of operations.
- Heavy lift capability for rapid response caches of equipment.
- The vessel is capable of fulfilling the role of an on-scene coordination platform in support of the national and local response leads.
- Shallow draft, maneuverability, and ability to safely load teams and equipment to shore landing craft are unique.
- Tasking is by the National and Provincial Emergency Authorities in consultation with relevant Ministries and after an operational and safety assessment by Respond Global and the HELPR-1 Captain.

Operational Platform Capabilities

With HELPR-1's unique logistics platform, critical personnel, supplies, and debris clearance teams can rapidly deploy within hours of an event. With the support of the vessel, these teams are fully self-sufficient and carry additional capacities to support local infrastructure such as oxygen, and clinical and pharmaceutical supplies.

- HELPR-1 can act as an EOC/HEOC when required, with dedicated rooms available for this purpose.
- Storage onboard for extra supplies in two purpose-built storage rooms, 3 outside cages, and room for extra loading on fore and aft decks.
- Three lounge areas, including audio-visual equipment for teaching.
- Intranet and satellite communications for passengers and responders (as well as marine VHF, HF and satellite and Starlink systems).
- 24 handheld VHF radios for use by marine and shore-based response teams, plus 3 satellite phones and personnel locator beacons.
- Administration office and support onboard.





“ Thank you for the help to get us back to base safely. The bed, the food and the comfort were exceptional. I for one really appreciated the wonderful friendship and fellowship the crew displayed between each other and with the guests on board. Dr Basil, I salute you for your very good leadership and contagious positivity. Hats off for the wonderful service provided to our people in the most remote areas of Vanuatu. ”

David Henri Coulon
National WASH in Schools Coordinator MoET

Operational Responsibility for HELPR-1

Respond Global provides internationally proven and practical health and disaster management solutions, that are scalable, adaptable, and fit for purpose.

HELPR-1 is one such solution, focused on providing assistance in the South Pacific. Other solutions, available internationally, include:

Health Operations Management

The ability to deliver health programs (vaccinations, surveillance, outbreak response and specialist health out-reach) in austere settings.

Disaster & Emergency Management

All Hazards disaster planning and readiness support to build local response capability.

Rapid Response

Rapidly deployable response teams consisting of disaster managers, clinicians, and logisticians, to provide support or workforce surge capacity during times of disaster response.

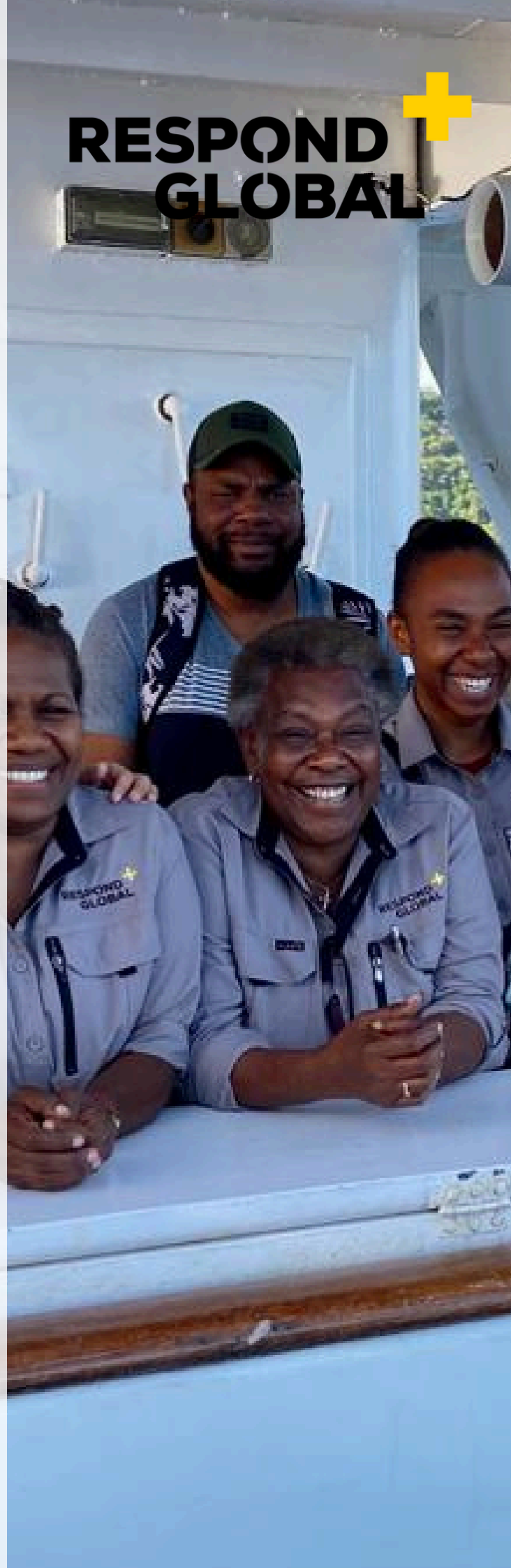
Training & Simulations

All Hazards incident management training and simulations. From short tabletop simulations to the testing of national scale response systems, training and simulation ensure in-house response teams, systems, and processes are fit for purpose and well-rehearsed, ready when needed.

Public Health & Advisory Services

National, regional, and international medical, public health, and disaster management advisory services that set the standard for global best practices.

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www.respondglobal.com

+61 7 5343 1940

info@respondglobal.com

