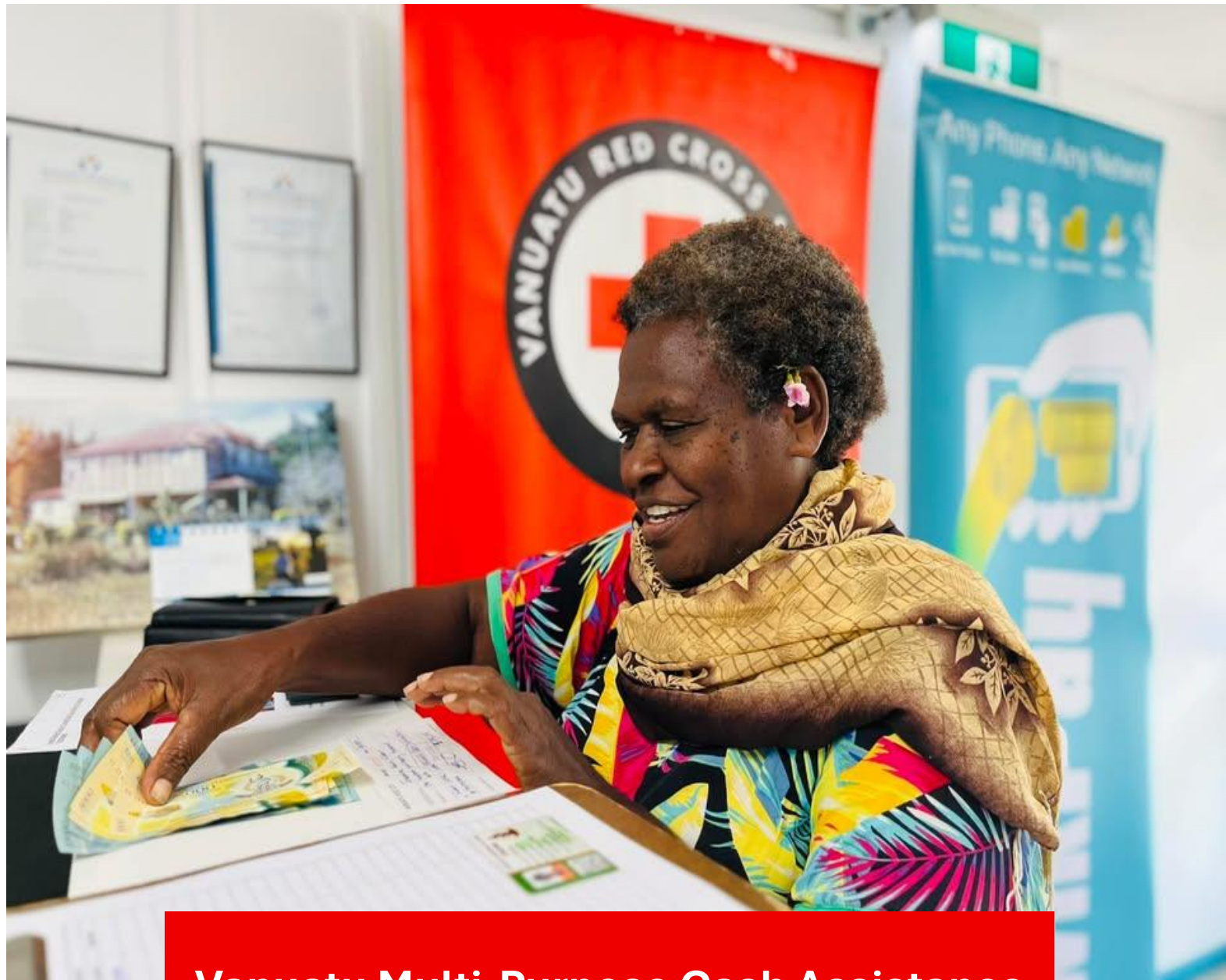




Vanuatu Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Post Distribution Monitoring Report

2025



1 VRCS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Following the earthquake on December 17, 2024, the Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) promptly deployed teams for assessments while initiating the distribution of essential household items. Leveraging recently replenished stocks from the Tropical Cyclone Lola response, VRCS effectively provided emergency relief, aided by partner contributions such as tarpaulins, shelter tool kits, kitchen sets, and hygiene kits.

As of February 7, 2025, VRCS and its partners reached approximately 12,005 individuals, distributing a variety of emergency relief items across several area councils, including tarpaulins, kitchen kits, and hygiene kits. In its role as co-lead of the National Shelter Cluster, VRCS collaborated with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to outline the shelter response strategy, distribute hygiene information, and provide Psychological First Aid in various settings. More detailed assessments are underway to gather data on physical damage and determine eligibility for multi-purpose cash grants, with a focus on inclusivity and support for vulnerable households, including partnerships with the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities.

**EMERGENCY APPEAL**
OPERATIONAL STRATEGY
Vanuatu, Asia-Pacific | Earthquake



VRCS volunteers distributing essential household items to one of the villages affected by the earthquake. (Photo: VRCS)

Appeal No: MDRVU012	To be assisted: 50,000 people	Appeal launched: 20/12/2024
Glide No: EQ-2024-000227-VUT	DREF allocated: CHF 750,000	Disaster Categorisation: Orange
Operation start date: 18/12/2024	Operation end date: 31/12/2025	

IFRC Secretariat Funding requirement: CHF 5 million
Federation-wide funding requirement: CHF 5.2 million¹

¹ The Federation-wide funding requirement encompasses all financial support to be directed to the Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) in response to the emergency. It includes the VRCS's domestic fundraising requests and the fundraising appeals of supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (CHF 0.2 million), as well as the funding requirements of the IFRC Secretariat (CHF 5 million). This comprehensive approach ensures that all available resources are mobilised to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the affected communities.

Internal

Objective

Vanuatu Red Cross Society aims to address the needs of the earthquake affected households by providing essential support through Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA). This initiative targets 1,500 households to cover their needs related to the aftermath of the disaster.

Outcomes

- To alleviate suffering by addressing the basics needs of the affected population during critical times in the aftermath of the earthquake.
- Short term support for people who have lost their livelihoods and households with severely damaged houses.



Target Population

The cash assistance targets 1500 vulnerable households in Vanuatu specially the households in Efate region that were heavily affected by the Earthquake. The target criteria used for this response was approved by the VRCS management and coordinated with the Vanuatu Government. Target locations are Tanvasoko, Eratap, Port Vila, Mele and Northwest Efate.

Category 1: Families with severely damaged houses

Category 2: People who were severely injured or hospitalized

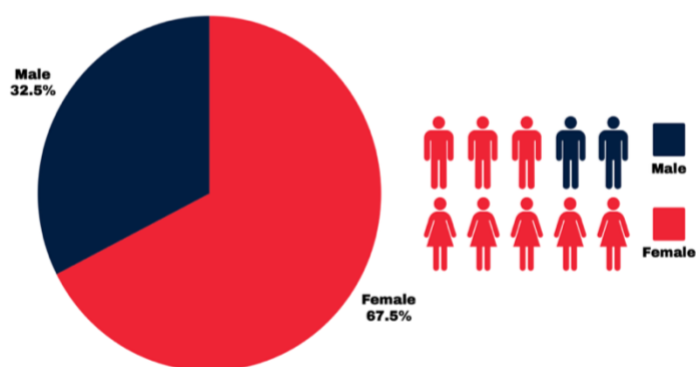
Category 3: People who have lost or reduced income sources

Transfer Value

The amount of money received by each selected beneficiary is VUV 20, 200 (inclusive of withdrawal fee per beneficiary). This value constitutes 35% of the minimum wage for a 44-hour workweek or 38% of the minimum wage for a 40-hour workweek—equivalent to VUV 300 per hour. The calculation for VUV 20,000 was against the minimum salary to provide a comparison between the transfer value and wages, given the absence of any established approved minimum expenditure basket.

2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Sex Disaggregation

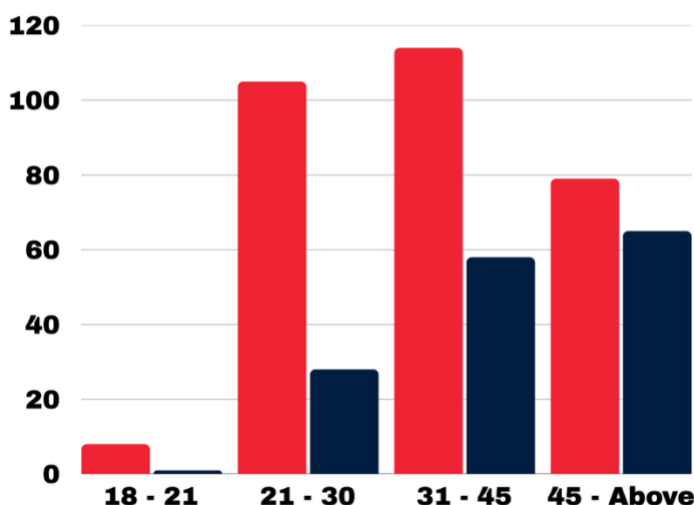


Majority of the selected beneficiaries for the multi-purpose cash grants are women, accounting for 67% of the total number of recipients. In contrast, men make up 32% of the households targeted by the program. This distribution reflects a broader trend in the target population for the cash response, where women are significantly more involved in informal sector activities. Specifically, many women participate in food vending, a common source of income in many

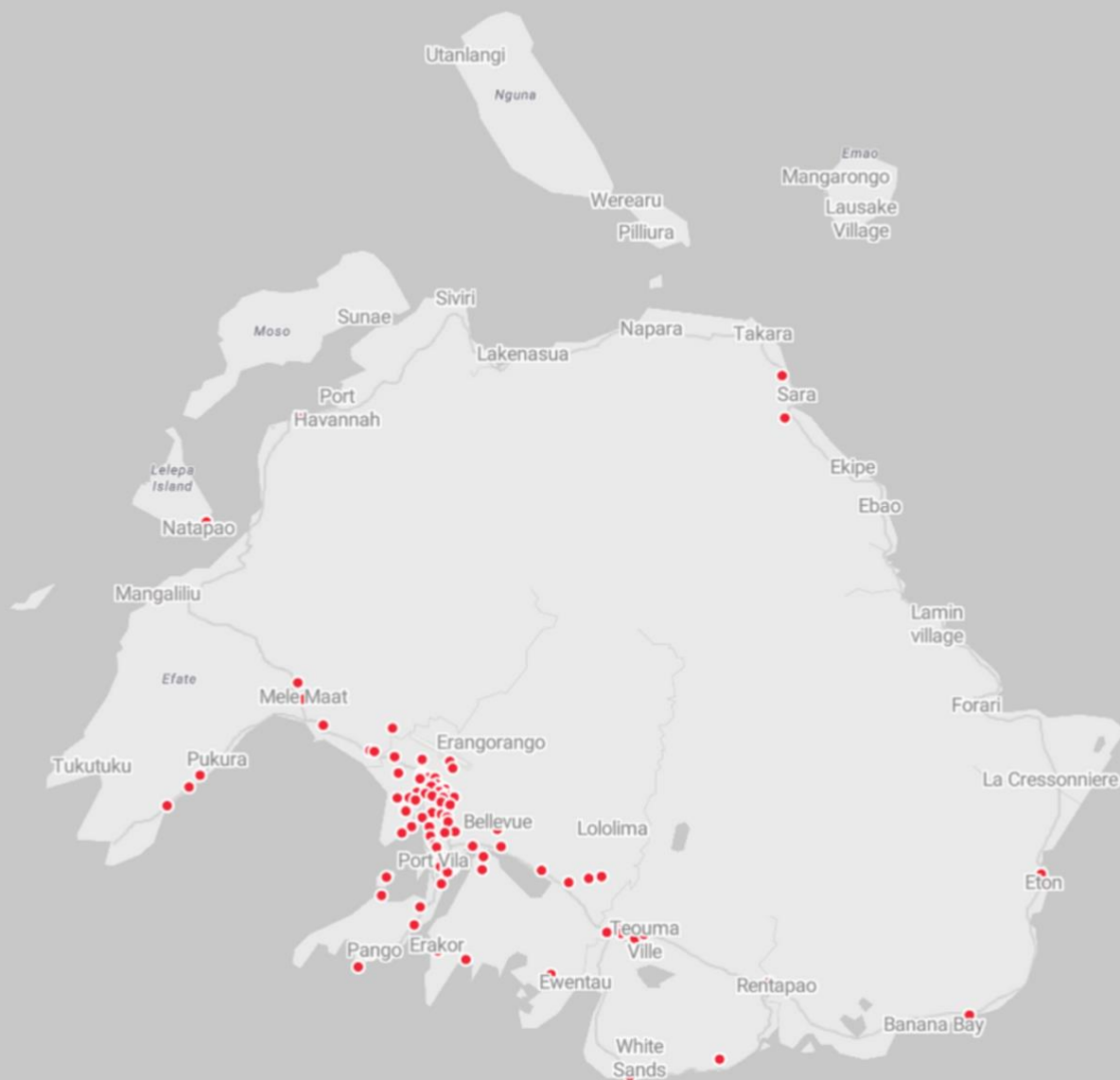
communities, as well as in green markets, where they often sell agricultural products or other locally sourced goods. By targeting women and recognizing their economic contributions in informal sectors like food vending and market trade, these cash grants help address gender disparities in economic participation and provide women with the financial stability needed to support their families and contribute to their communities' well-being.

The age distribution of the selected beneficiaries for the multi-purpose cash grants primarily falls between 18 and 45 years old, which aligns with the general working-age population. A closer look at the data reveals that most of the selected households within the productive or working-age bracket. Among these, women beneficiaries are generally younger, typically ranging from 21 to 45 years old. This suggests that many of them are either actively engaged in informal economic activities or are primary caregivers and household heads seeking financial support to sustain their families.

Age Group



Efate Island

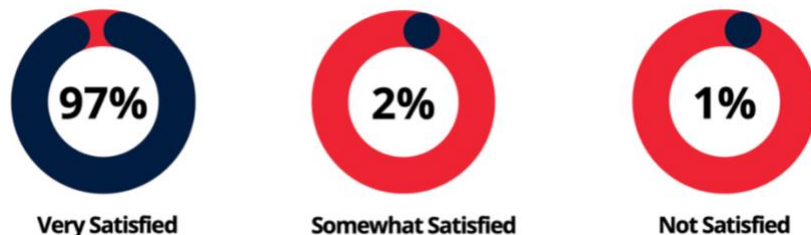


3 Geographic Distribution

Most of the selected beneficiaries are located within the Port Vila greater area. Since the impact of the earthquake was mostly in the urbanized part of Efate island, this is the reason why more of the beneficiaries are located within or in the immediate villages outside the city center. Majority of beneficiaries are employed within Port Vila which is the economic hub of the Efate. However there are some beneficiaries located in the northern and eastern communities. Total respondent of the PDM survey is 455 households.

4 KEY FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction



Majority of the respondents verbalized that they are very satisfied with the multi-purpose cash grants. Based on the feedback during the exit survey after the cash distribution majority of the beneficiaries were appreciative of the cash assistance

provided by VRCS. This can perhaps be attributed to the selection process, the transfer value of the cash grants and timeliness of the distribution after the earthquake. Note also that there were no other organizations that distributed cash assistance. VRCS was positioned to be one of the few local organizations that provided comprehensive humanitarian support for earthquake affected households in Efate. Overall the respondents are satisfied with the type of support provided by Vanuatu Red Cross.

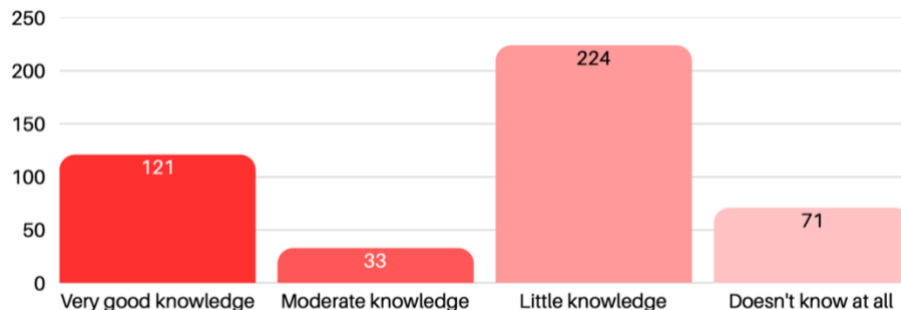
Timeliness of Cash Grants



The cash distributions were conducted in multiple batches based on the volume of registered beneficiaries. The first distribution took place in April 2025, reaching a

total of 451 households. Although VRCS initiated the assessment in January, the data validation process for mobile money transfers experienced several delays, which affected the overall timeline. The second batch of distribution was completed in May, followed by the third and final batch in July 2025. Based on the survey results, 48% of respondents reported receiving their cash grants within four weeks of registration, while 34% indicated that it took more than a month before they received their assistance. One of the key takeaways to the timelines is the streamlining of the manual steps during the registration and cash disbursement process.

Understanding of the Criteria

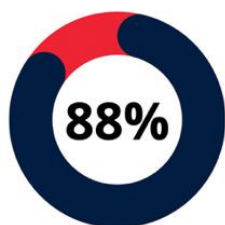


Less than half of the surveyed households reported having a clear understanding of the program's targeting criteria. Although VRCS launched public and media campaigns to raise awareness about the

earthquake response, these efforts did not fully translate into widespread understanding of the cash assistance program. To address this gap, VRCS provided on-site briefings to beneficiaries during the cash distribution, explaining the selection process and the purpose of the cash grants to ensure greater transparency and community awareness. Despite the initial gap in understanding, 97% of respondents stated that the selection process was fair and agreed that the program successfully targeted vulnerable and affected households.

Access to Information

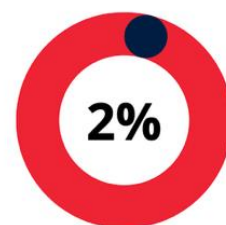
88% of the total respondents agree that they have full access to information about the program. Meanwhile 10% mentioned that they have limited access to information.



Yes, completely



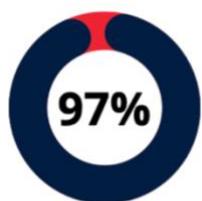
No, not really



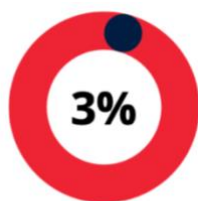
Don't know

VRCS has a dedicated communications officer that provides support to the CVA Team in disseminating the information. The finance service providers also provided technical assistance through the provision of free sms to beneficiaries. VRCS also have a dedicated CEA focal point that assisted in managing the feedback and complaint from the beneficiaries.

Access to the Cash Grants



Yes

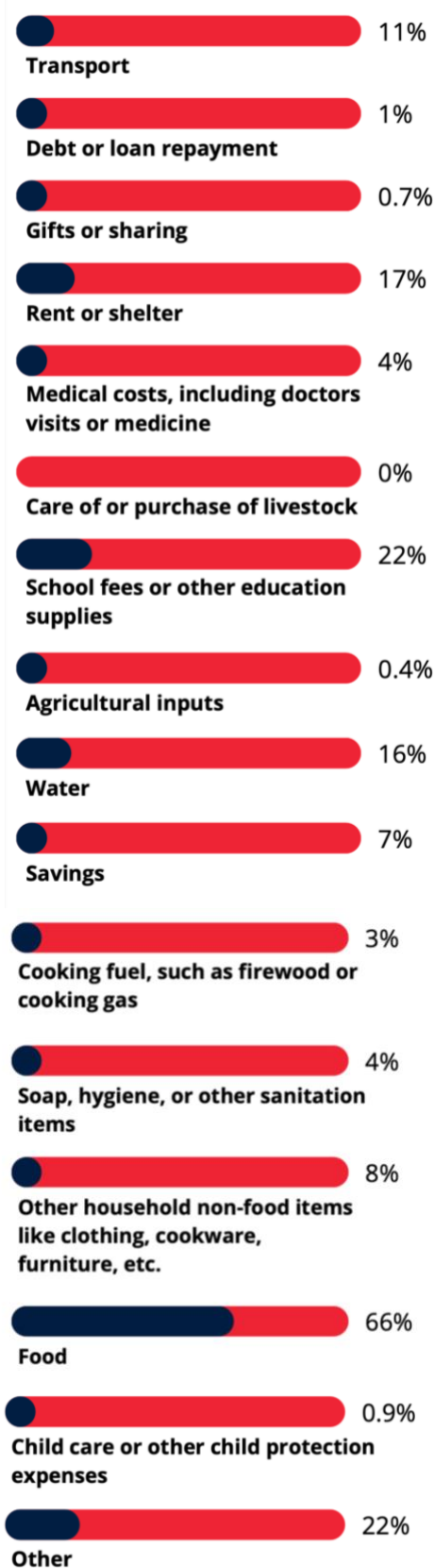


No

97% of respondents mentioned that they had easy access their cash assistance. Since the mode of transfer is through a mobile wallet most people had access to both physical and digital cash. The only limitation with this modality is the need for a mobile phone. Unfortunately a small number of beneficiaries has limited access to mobile phone.

Utilization of Cash Grants

The table presents the main categories of household expenditures among beneficiaries of the cash assistance program. The transfer value for the multi-purpose cash grant was VUV 20,000, determined based on the approved minimum wage salary approved by the Vanuatu Government. The majority of targeted households were those living below the poverty line and whose primary sources of income were disrupted by the earthquake. The assistance aimed to help these households meet their immediate and essential needs during the recovery period.

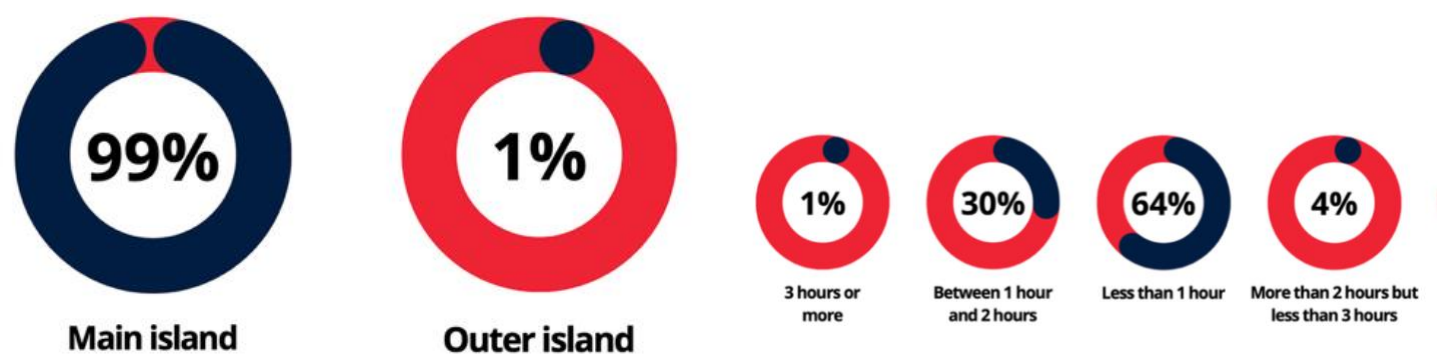


PDM indicate that food purchases were the most common use of the cash assistance, reported by 66% of respondents. This demonstrates that the grants effectively supported food security among affected families. Rent and shelter expenses ranked second, reflecting the urban context of many beneficiaries who reside in rented accommodations within Port Vila, where rental costs constitute a major portion of household expenses.

Water was another significant expenditure category. Beneficiaries reported using the cash to pay water bills or purchase clean drinking water, which remains a basic necessity in Port Vila despite the general availability of potable water. Approximately 11% of respondents used part of their grants for transportation costs, mainly for commuting to work, markets, or health facilities. Public transport in the city typically costs between 150 and 300 VUV per trip, while travel from outer villages can cost up to 1,000 VUV.

A smaller proportion of beneficiaries, about 4%, reported spending the cash on hygiene items such as soap, sanitary products, and cleaning materials. Some also used the assistance to cover medical expenses, including medicines and basic health check-ups. Additionally, around 8% of respondents spent part of their grants on miscellaneous household items such as kitchen utensils, clothing, and other daily necessities.

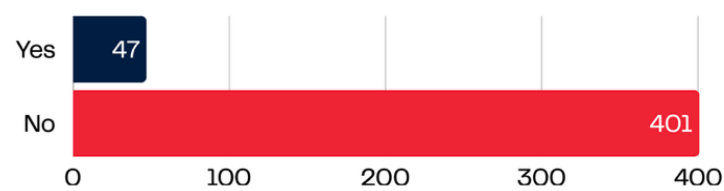
Market Information



Almost all respondents reported that they purchased goods within Efate. As shown in the previous graphs, food was the primary expenditure category for the cash grants. The main markets for fresh produce and supermarkets are located in Port Vila, which aligns with the purchasing behavior of beneficiaries since most of them reside in the city or in nearby villages. This indicates that the majority of beneficiaries accessed local markets within or around Port Vila to utilize their cash assistance.

In terms of travel time, 64% of households stated that they traveled less than one hour to reach the nearest market, suggesting that accessibility to goods and services was relatively convenient for most beneficiaries. Around 30% reported traveling between one to two hours, likely those coming from areas outside Port Vila. Only a small proportion of respondents indicated that it took them more than two hours to access markets

Food Insecurity



The respondents were asked whether they had experienced low or decreased food consumption during the past 30 days. Approximately 10% of beneficiaries reported that they

had gone an entire day without food within that period. This finding highlights ongoing food security challenges among affected households. In recent months, household incomes in Port Vila have been negatively impacted by earthquake-related damage to infrastructure and a decline in tourism during the first quarter of 2025. According to national data, around 20% of the total population in Vanuatu experiences moderate food insecurity, while approximately 10% live on less than USD 2 per day, based on the 2021 FAO report. These figures underscore the vulnerability of low-income households and the critical importance of continued cash assistance to support basic food needs and economic recovery.

4 CONCLUSION

The Vanuatu Red Cross Society successfully implemented the Earthquake Emergency Appeal response following the December 17, 2024 earthquake, providing timely and effective humanitarian assistance to affected households. The cash response demonstrated the Society's capacity to rapidly mobilize resources, conduct assessments, and deliver aid through cash modalities, ensuring support for the most vulnerable households in Efate and surrounding areas.

The MPCA response effectively supported families whose livelihoods and incomes were disrupted by the earthquake. The cash transfer value of VUV 20,000 enabled beneficiaries to address their most pressing needs, including food, shelter, water, and transportation. Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) results indicated that 97% of respondents found the selection process fair, and the majority expressed high satisfaction with the assistance received. The cash-based approach provided flexibility and dignity to affected households, allowing them to prioritize their needs while stimulating local markets within Port Vila and nearby communities.

Operationally, the program benefited from strong coordination between the different departments as well as collaboration with Financial Service Providers. However, the response also highlighted several operational challenges, including delays in household validation and limited initial understanding of targeting criteria among beneficiaries. These issues were mitigated through improved beneficiary communication, additional briefings, and stronger data management systems.

While accessibility to markets and financial services was generally high, a small portion of households still faced challenges due to limited access to mobile phones or remote locations. Furthermore, the findings underscored the ongoing vulnerability of households in Port Vila, where income disruptions and moderate food insecurity remain pressing issues, emphasizing the need for sustained recovery support.

Overall, the VRCS response achieved its primary objective of alleviating the immediate suffering of affected households and strengthening community resilience through a people-centered and efficient cash-based response. The success of this operation reaffirms VRCS's role as a leading national humanitarian actor, capable of delivering localized, inclusive, and coordinated assistance in times of crisis.



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