

FOCUS THEME 2

Methodologies and Assessments

Filomena Nelson, Karen McNamara and Pasha Carruthers

15 September 2026



What support do countries need across the NELs response pathway?

Survey findings from 25 government representatives across 22 countries highlight support needs across the full pathway from assessing NELs to acting on the evidence.

ASSESSING & DOCUMENTING

 **96%**

indicated the need for **methods for assessing and reporting NELs**, and **integrating NELs into national monitoring systems**

POLICY & PLANNING

 **92%**

indicated the need to **reflect NELs in national planning and reporting**, including **NDCs, NAPs, BTRs** and national **L&D response plans**

FINANCING

 **92%**

indicated the need to link NELs evidence to **finance and decision-making**, and to prepare **NEL-sensitive funding proposals**

“

[There is an] absence of agreed definitions, methodologies and indicators for identifying and quantifying non-economic losses across sectors and communities.

Participant 16, Philippines

Non-economic losses, despite often being equally or more significant to affected communities, are harder to quantify and consequently harder to finance.

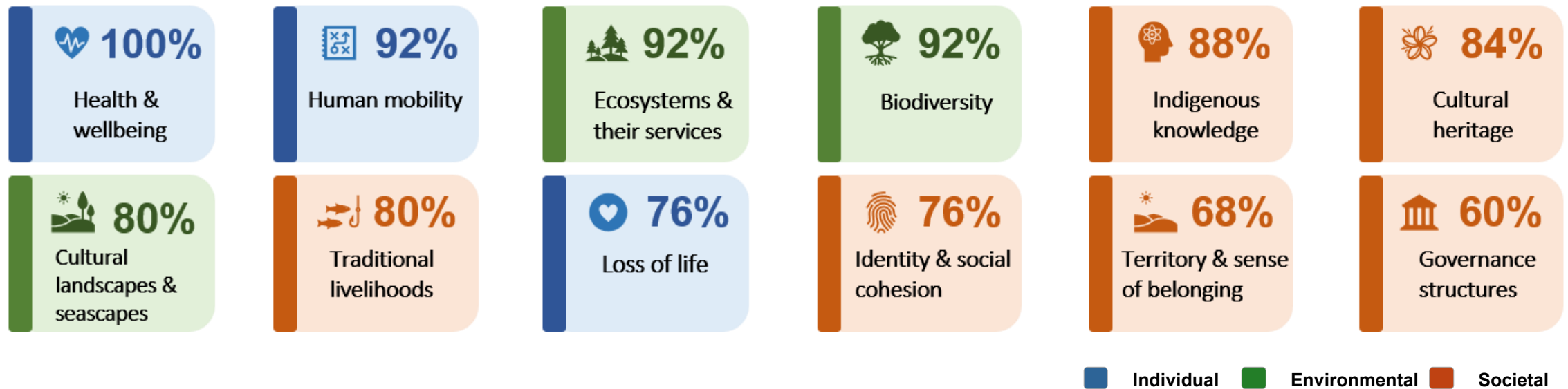
”

Participant 15, Marshall Islands

Which NELs do countries need most support with?

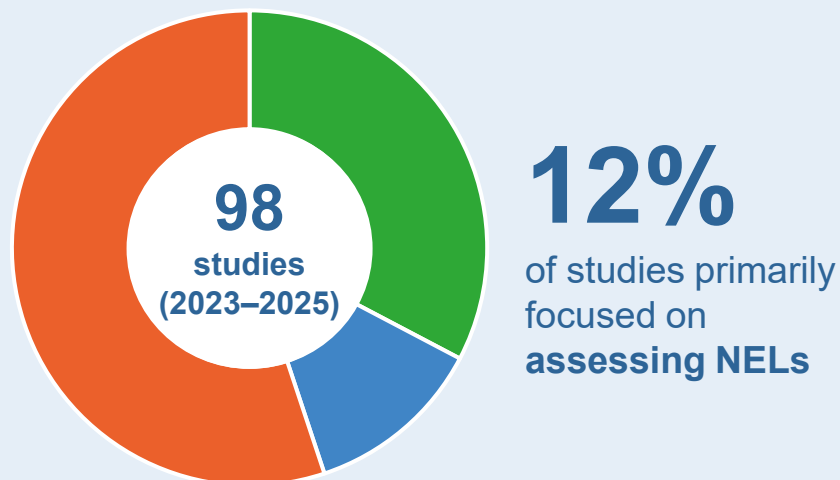
Survey respondents identified knowledge and capacity needs across a range of NELs spanning individual, societal and environmental dimensions.

Priority NEL areas for knowledge and capacity building support (% of respondents)



What is recent research telling us about assessing NELs?

ASSESSMENT HAS RECEIVED LIMITED ATTENTION



Assessment received **less attention** than **understanding (55%)** and **responding to NELs (33%)**

THE ASSESSMENT QUESTION IS EVOLVING

From an initial
focus on:

What was lost?

How much?

To increasingly asking:

What matters most?

What is intolerable?

How is loss experienced?

Who is affected?

**Where are adaptation
limits?**

WHAT REMAINS DIFFICULT?



Attribution

Disentangling climate
change from other
drivers



Time

Capturing slow-onset
& future losses



Data gaps

Limited baseline &
longitudinal evidence



Representation

What is measured shapes
what is made visible &
whose perspective counts

CROSS-CUTTING TENSION

*How can NELs be assessed
and used in decision-
making without losing the
local and cultural context
that gives them meaning?*

Meaning & context

Culturally specific •
Relational • Locally
grounded

*Meaningful
and usable
evidence*

Standardized

Comparable •
Trackable • Easy to
use

What are we exploring today?

Three complementary presentations exploring different parts of the pathway from assessment to action.

1

PRESENTATION 1

Assessing the breadth of loss

How can we better identify, assess and document economic and non-economic loss and damage?

Filomena Nelson

SPREP

Non-Economic Losses Expert Group

2

PRESENTATION 2

Understanding what matters & developing locally led responses

How can we understand what losses matter to people, and develop locally meaningful responses?

Karen McNamara

The University of Queensland

Non-Economic Losses Expert Group

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PRESENTATION 3

Connecting evidence to action and support

How can evidence and locally identified priorities inform national and regional responses and connect with technical assistance and finance?

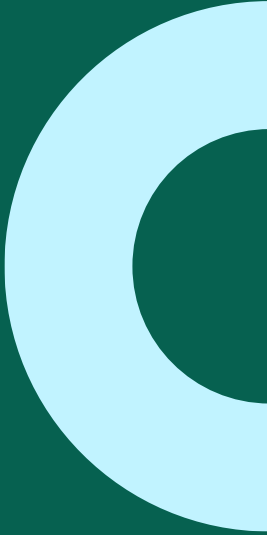
Pasha Carruthers

SPC

Action and Support Expert Group

Assessing the Breadth of Economic and Non-Economic Loss and Damage

15 September 2026



PRESENTATION 2

Understanding What Matters: A Values-Based Approach for Non- Economic Loss and Damage

Karen McNamara

15 September 2026



Why start with values?



VALUES HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOSS

Not all losses and damages matter in the same way.

Values help us understand why some losses are experienced as particularly significant, painful, or difficult to maintain or replace.



VALUES BROADEN WHAT BECOMES VISIBLE AS LOSS

Starting with what people value can bring attention to dimensions of loss that may be overlooked in conventional assessments.



VALUES HELP IDENTIFY PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Understanding what people value helps identify what communities most want to protect, maintain, restore, adjust to or respond to.

Values can help identify what is acceptable, tolerable and intolerable, and therefore where action should be prioritised.

Values must be at the heart of responding to loss and damage

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CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT
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COMMENT



Valuing a values-based approach for assessing loss and damage

Douwe van Schie^a, Karen E. McNamara^b, Merewalesi Yee^b, Afsara Binte Mirza^a, Ross Westoby^c, Moleen Monita Nand^b, Rawnak Jahan Khan Ranon^a, Rachel Clissold^{b,d}, Simon Anderson^e and Saleemul Huq^{a+}

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Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Geoforum

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/geoforum

Guiding our responses to climate change by what people value: Insights from Fiji

Moleen Monita Nand^a, Rachel Clissold^{a,b,*}, Karen E. McNamara^a, Merewalesi Yee^a

^a School of the Environment, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

^b International Centre for Environmental Management, Hanoi, Vietnam

A Vanuatu example: why values matter

Looking beneath the surface of the yam

“Significant events like grade taking ceremonies, custom marriages...usually happen after the yam harvest which is around April each year and yam plays a critical role as the main goods of service exchange[d] between families, chiefs, and tribes.

These **cultural practices, norms, and traditions** are the main **social fabric** that holds our **kinship, tribe and communities, and society together**, and yam plays a critical role as a **main commodity of value for exchange** during these cultural events.”

- Participant #61



Yam in south-west Tanna
Photo by Ramou Iapatu Missak

“The yams are significant in our culture. Its harvest is marked by special **cultural rituals and ceremonies**, but the climate had affected the harvest sessions which resulted in a big delay in harvest and that makes people **lose their normal cultural rhythm and ritual...**

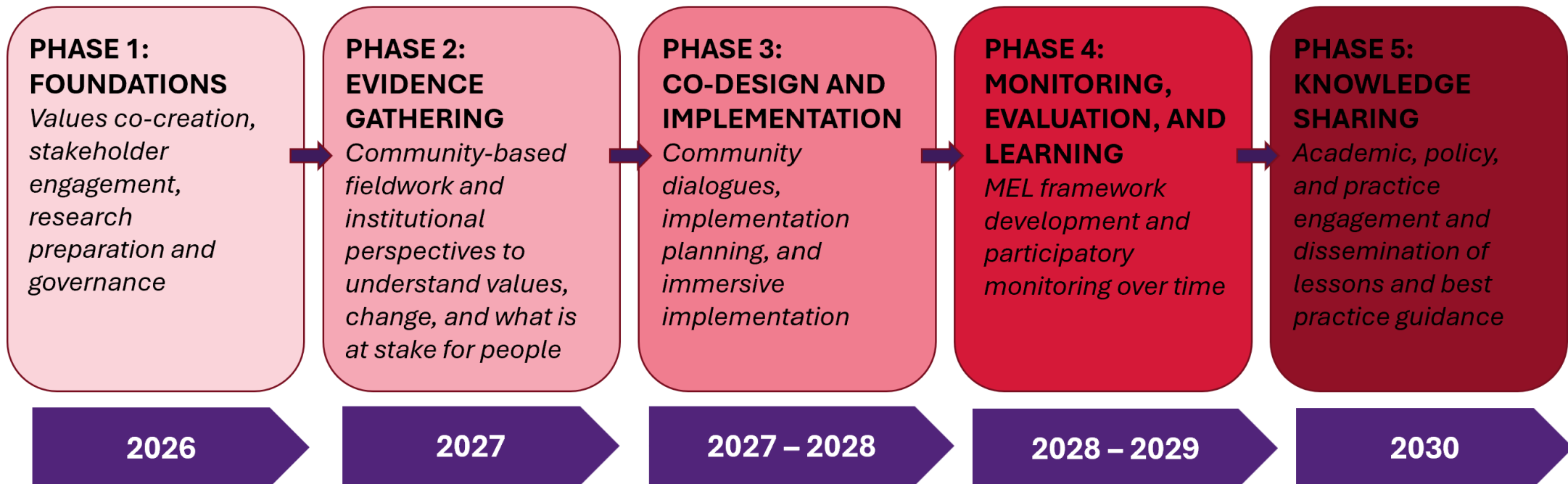
The cultural ways of planting are not adaptive to these fast changes caused by the climate which is now leading to a **loss of cultural practices and knowledge**. This is a **cultural right** that can never be recovered and re-built if we lose it... No financial means can recover those non-economic losses, which are our **heritage and dignity.**”

- Participant #59

From values to action: a new Pacific research program

Over the next five years, we will be working with **12 communities across the Cook Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu** to co-develop, implement and evaluate responses to climate-driven non-economic loss and damage.

Partners include DFAT, DCCEEW, SPREP, SPC, and national governments and civil society organisations across the three countries.



Identifying what matters most at a national level

1 Workshops

Formal and structured workshops with government, civil society and youth

2 In-situ discussions

Small group consultations in transient spaces (e.g., marketplaces)

3 Cultural advisory group

Cultural experts providing guidance in finalising value set

Individual Ideas & Values Tile

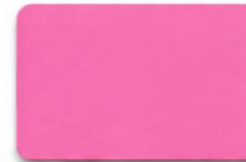
Capture ideas, experiences, places, practices, relationships, and values that matter



Petal-shaped tile to write down anything that feels important: a place, thing, relationship, activity, memory, tradition, or value

Cluster Tile

Look for patterns and connections



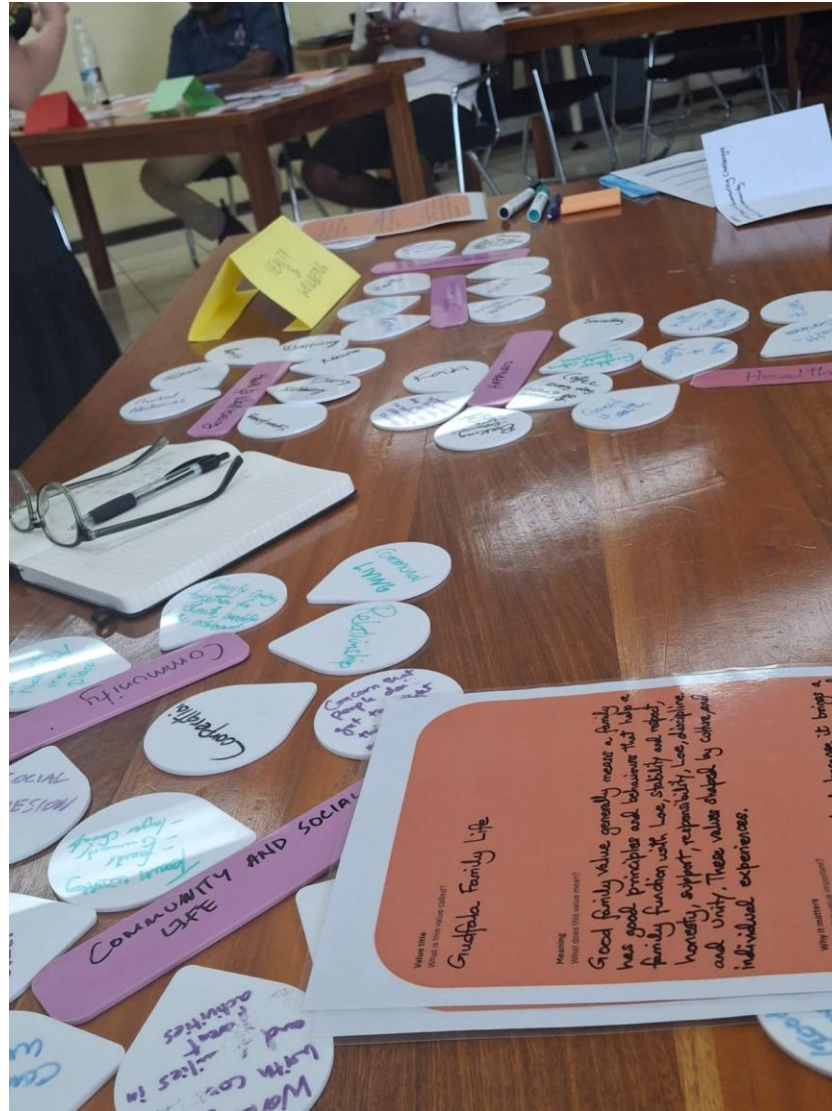
Centre tile to bring related petals together and identify the broader themes or values they may represent

Value Meaning-Making Tile

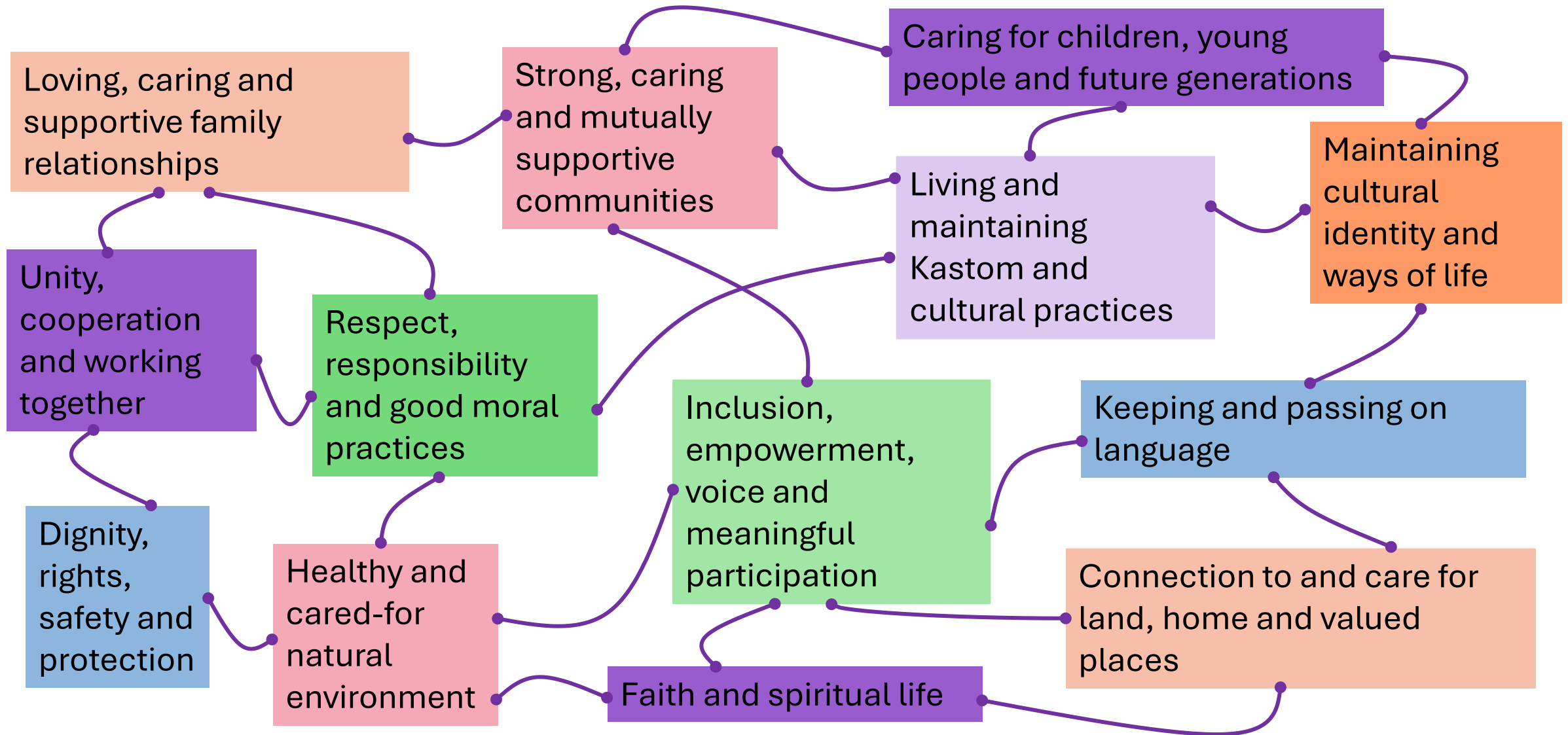
Explore what the value means and why it matters

Value Title	
Meaning	
Why it matters	
Examples	
Local terminology	
Relationships	

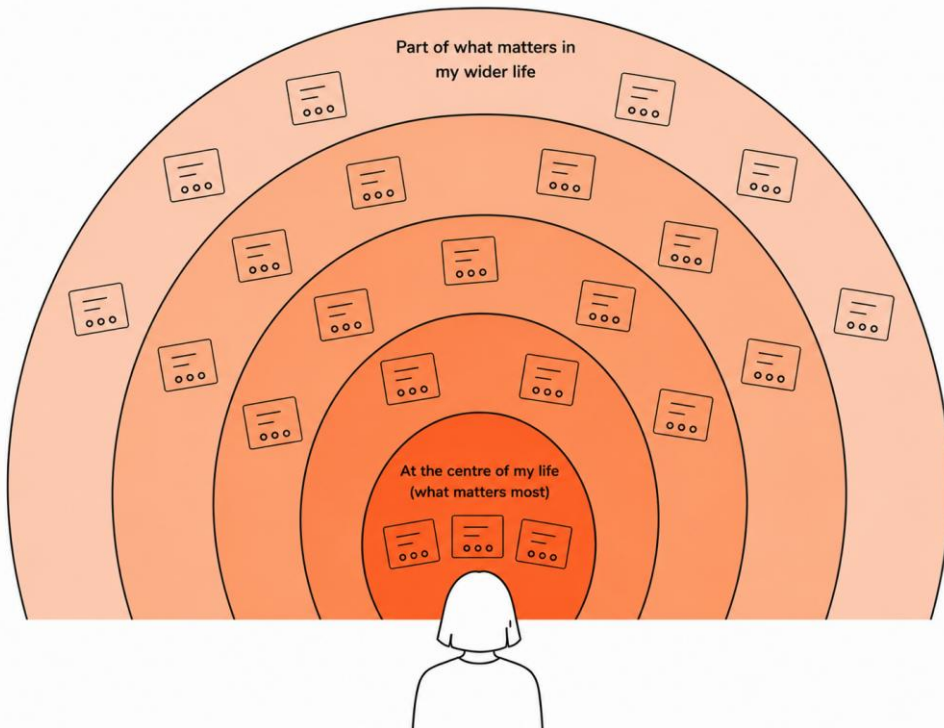
Large tile used to explore what the value means, why it matters, examples that bring it to life, local terminology, and how it connects to other values



Examples of preliminary values emerging from Vanuatu



Understanding what matters and what is at risk



Values profile: A visual representation of an individual's values, which will be supported by the narratives that explain why those values matter

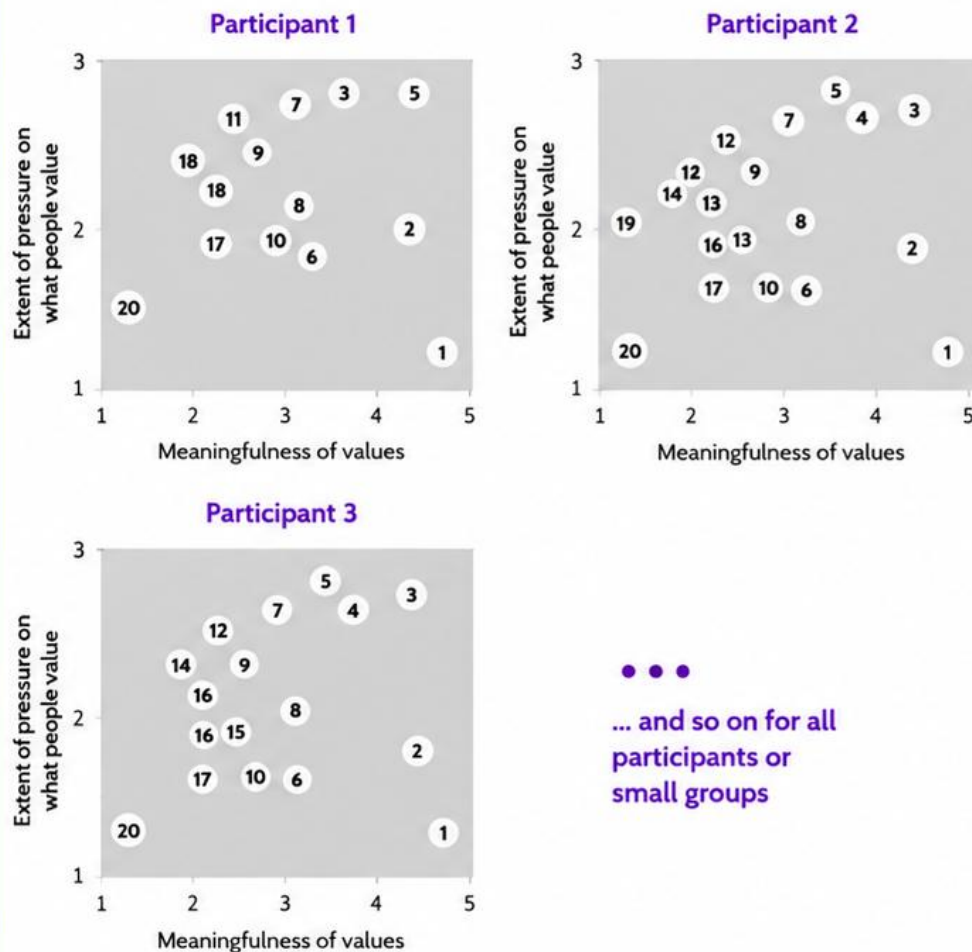


Pressure profiles: A profile for each value which includes the extent of the pressure (from 0–3) and narratives. All profiles together reveal what aspects of life are most affected and by what types of pressures

What should be prioritised?

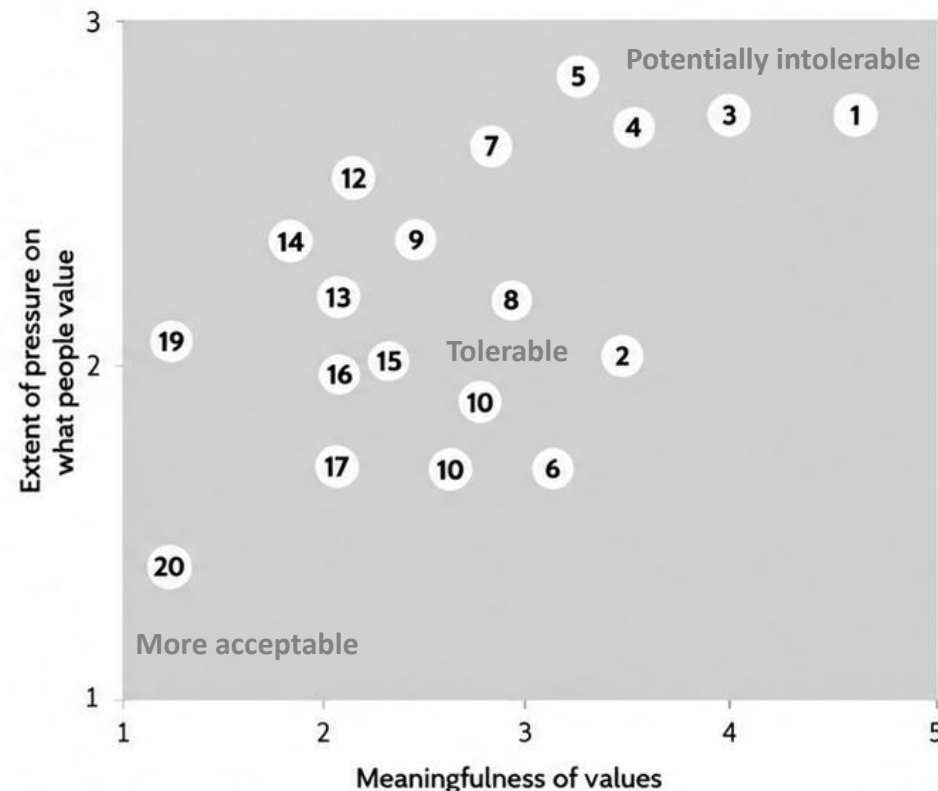
1. INDIVIDUAL VALUES-PRESSURE SPACES

One loss space is created for each participant.



2. COMMUNITY VALUES-PRESSURE SPACES

All individual loss spaces are accumulated to create the overall community loss space.



Community values-pressure spaces: Demonstrate which values are under greater pressure, and which losses may be considered more acceptable, tolerable or intolerable, helping communities identify priorities for action

Turning priorities into action

Identify priorities for action and where to focus

Use the values-pressure spaces to identify the priority values under pressure and potential intolerable losses and the communities most affected or for whom they matter most – whether place-based or connected through shared identities, experiences or livelihoods.



Place-based
(e.g., village or island)



Identity-based
(e.g., women, youth, persons with disabilities)



Livelihood or experience-based
(e.g., market vendors, fishers)

Co-develop locally meaningful responses

Work with communities to co-design responses to priority losses – including what can be protected, restored, adjusted to or healed. Responses may involve one action or a package of complementary actions involving different actors or unfolding over different timeframes.



Single or multiple actions



Short, medium or longer-term



Different actors and partners

Implement, monitor & learn

Support locally-led implementation and monitoring and then learn from experience and adapt responses over time.



Track progress and changes



Reflect with communities



Adapt and build on learning

PRESENTATION 3

Connecting Evidence to Action and Support

Pasha Carruthers

15 September 2026



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY: FROM DATA TO ACTION

Facilitators:

Karen McNamara, Filomena Nelson and Pasha Carruthers (in-person)

Paulina Jabczyńska and Rachel Clissold (online)

15 September 2026



Small group discussions: From data to action

FROM DATA TO ACTION

What data do we have, what do we need, and how can it be used?

NELD Domain: _____



1 WHAT DATA DO WE CURRENTLY HAVE?

DATA <i>What data is currently available?</i>	METHODS AND APPROACH <i>What methods, tools or approaches are used to generate it?</i>	SCALE <i>At what scale is the data collected and/or used?</i>	UTILITY <i>How is the data being used to inform policy and practice, access funding or seek technical assistance?</i>

2 WHAT DATA IS MISSING OR NEEDED?

DATA <i>What data is missing or needed?</i>	METHODS AND APPROACH <i>What methods, tools or approaches could generate it?</i>	SCALE <i>At what scale would the data need to be collected and/or used?</i>	UTILITY <i>How could the data be used to inform policy and practice, strengthen funding requests or seek technical assistance?</i>

1 Step 1

Form a small group and select one NELD domain to explore. Please try to spread evenly across the domains:


Health and wellbeing


Human mobility


Ecosystem services and biodiversity


Cultural heritage and Indigenous knowledge

Small group discussions: From data to action

FROM DATA TO ACTION

What data do we have, what do we need, and how can it be used?

NELD Domain: _____

1 WHAT DATA DO WE CURRENTLY HAVE?

DATA What data is currently available?	METHODS AND APPROACH What methods, tools or approaches are used to generate it?	SCALE At what scale is the data collected and/or used?	UTILITY How is the data being used to inform policy and practice, access funding or seek technical assistance?

2 WHAT DATA IS MISSING OR NEEDED?

DATA What data is missing or needed?	METHODS AND APPROACH What methods, tools or approaches could generate it?	SCALE At what scale would the data need to be collected and/or used?	UTILITY How could the data be used to inform policy and practice, strengthen funding requests or seek technical assistance?

2 Step 2

Use the post-it notes to write answers into the matrix, starting with **data we currently have** and then moving on to **data that is missing or needed**.

As you work through the matrix, please consider:

1. *Whose experiences and priorities might be missing?*
2. *Are losses interconnected and does the evidence capture those connections?*
3. *Can the evidence inform decision-making at larger scales without losing local context and meaning?*

Thank you

For further information or to
continue the conversation:

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