



# UNESCO

## Activities supported by the Heritage Emergency Fund in VANUATU



Participatory assessment of needs - Intangible cultural heritage belonging to the Ambae community (2018) © UNESCO/Vanuatu Culture Centre

### Participatory needs assessment of intangible cultural heritage practised by the Ambae Community (2018-2019)

Following the eruption of the Manaro Voui volcano in September 2017, an estimated 10,000 members of Vanuatu's Ambae community, were evacuated and relocated to the neighbouring islands of Maewo, Santo and Pentecost. The incident led the Government of Vanuatu to declare a State of Emergency. At the request of the Vanuatu Government, the HEF funded an activity during 2018 and 2019 aimed at inventorying and documenting the ICH being practiced by the Ambae community. Following the successful completion in 2018 of the first components of the activity, follow-up activities were carried out in the first half of 2019. In particular, the trained staff continued to conduct field research in Maewo and Santo islands in order to collect testimonies from the Ambae community on the impact that the disaster and consequent evacuation had on their traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, customs and protocols. In order to complement the field research, a consultation meeting with members of the Ambae community, the mission team and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) was organised in February 2019 at the VCC in Port Vila. The activity succeeded in improving communication between the Ambae community and the NDMO and helped to better understand the cultural needs of the community. With this communication, it is possible to raise awareness of the importance of integrating cultural heritage in Vanuatu's overall DRR Plan for the Ambae emergency.