

# PCCM NEWSLETTER

## Pacific Climate Change and Migration Project

### Warm Pacific Greetings and welcome

to the newsletter of the Pacific Climate Change and Migration (PCCM) project.

March 2015 Edition No.2

The PCCM project is a three-year programme funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Using migration as a way to adapt to climate change impacts, the projects' key goal is to strengthen Pacific Island Countries (PIC)'s capacity to address the impacts of climate change on migration.

### New Research on Climate Change and Migration Launched

Do you want to know how climate change will likely impact migration in the context of the region's social, environmental and economic landscape? If you do then the PCCM



publication on 'Climate change and migration issues in the Pacific' is a good place to start. Launched during the Climate Change and Disasters Partnership dialogue at the UN Third International Conference on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa last September, the publication describes five 'hot-spots' where populations will likely experience increased demand for migration: urban areas; urban atolls; nonurban atolls; coastal, delta and river communities; and communities prone to drought. The high fertility

rates in the Pacific islands mean that many of these 'hot-spots' have rapidly increasing populations. The demand for migration options will, of course, increase because of climate change. Estimates highlighted in the publication show that while the current number of Pacific people living on atolls is less than 200,000 this number is expect to rise to 350,000 by 2050. During this same time, the IPCC predicts that sea-level rise could be as much as 0.3 metres. Increased salt water intrusion, reduced land availability and high king tides, coupled with rising populations will greatly increase the demand for migration.

The publication discusses how labour migration could act as a 'release valve' for population and environmental pressure, increasing the long term sustainability of communities. *For more information download the publication at [www.unescap.org/resources/climate-change-and-migration-issues-pacific](http://www.unescap.org/resources/climate-change-and-migration-issues-pacific).*

#### Strengthened support for PCCM

The former Prime Minister of Tuvalu, the Right Honourable Bikenibeu Paeniu, has joined the PCCM project as the National Programme Officer for



The Right Honourable  
Bikenibeu Paeniu, PCCM  
National Programme Officer,  
Tuvalu]

Tuvalu. Born in Kiribati, the Rt. Hon. Paeniu later migrated to Tuvalu, where he would eventually serve three terms in office as Prime Minister and later as Minister for Finance, Planning and Industries. No stranger to the sustainable development and environmental spheres, Rt. Hon. Paeniu has over 10 years of freelance experience in these areas and has, over the past 25 years, been at the forefront of the global debate on climate change effectively championing climate change issues at the UN General Assembly and at other high-level fora. Speaking at the Second World Conference on Climate Change (Geneva) in 1990 and again at the Rio Summit in 1992, the Rt. Hon. Paeniu brought world attention to the impact of climate change in Tuvalu and other low-lying atoll nations. He is a well-respected son of the Pacific, an advocate for sustainable development in the region and is a welcome addition to the PCCM team! **Email: [paeniu@un.org](mailto:paeniu@un.org)**

## Migration Partnerships

PCCM staff participated in the 'Migration Partnerships for the Sustainable Development of SIDS' event which took place in Samoa during the UN SIDS conference last September. At this event, PCCM took the opportunity of outlining its position in relation to the three migration-related climate change coping mechanisms, namely;

- Climate change adaptation measures which create increased resilience so that people can stay in their current location for as long as possible;
- Migration as an adaptation strategy which provides opportunities for some people to move and others to stay and which also provides

additional

- income from remittances; and
  - Ensuring the protection of people that will be forced to relocate or displaced due to climate change.
- Focussing mainly on the second coping mechanism, the PCCM project aims to improve voluntary migration as a means of climate change adaptation.

## Better Data, Better Policy Making



*Participants at Statistics Workshop in Nadi.*

The lack of data collection and analysis on migration is a major obstacle to effective policy making in the Pacific, particularly in relation to international labour migration. While some data is collected through censuses and household surveys, the data is not always analysed or communicated to policy makers. Similarly, while international departure and arrivals cards are often used by statistical offices to obtain the numbers of international visitors to a

country, there is much less emphasis on recording the details of those who leave, including those departing as labour migrants.

To help in the collection and analysis of labour migration statistics, the PCCM Project facilitated a two-day workshop in Nadi where statistics experts from the ILO, UNESCAP and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) provided training for PIC government officials (Ministry/Department of Labour

and National Statistics Offices) and employer's representatives.

A Practical Guide on Statistics on International Labour Migration for Pacific Island Countries will be published later in 2015. The PCCM is also working with stakeholders in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Nauru to build the capacity of statistics organizations to collect and analyse data on migration.

## Sound Bite

PCCM spoke to ABC Radio about how climate change may contribute to a range of factors influencing Pacific Islanders' decision to migrate. Of key importance was increasing access to well-managed migration schemes for Pacific Islanders, as a way of adapting to the devastating effects of climate change.

[www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/pacific-beat/climate-change-adds-to-labour-migration/1358792](http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/pacific-beat/climate-change-adds-to-labour-migration/1358792)

## Can Labour Migration Promote Climate Change Resilience?

*The link between climate change and labour migration is not always clear. How does labour migration promote climate change resilience of communities in a concrete way?*

Seasonal workers from the Samoan town of Poutasi provide one such example. Workers from this village have been participating in New Zealand's seasonal worker program for over five years, enabling them to save money for their families and to start small businesses in the community. "Just about everybody who's been in the [New Zealand's seasonal worker program], at least here in Poutasi, has done something useful [with their savings]," said the village Chief Tuatagaloa Annandale in a recent

interview. 'They've either repaired homes, extended homes, a lot of them have bought cars. Some have started

businesses'. Around 160 workers now participate in the scheme every year, with the support and guidance of the village chiefs (matai). But how does this relate to climate change or coping with natural disasters? Take the story of Pualele Fui Pa'ia'a, who first went to New Zealand in 2008. 'When I went in 2008 I earned about \$NZ10,000 and decided to buy a taxi.' However, tragedy hit when a tsunami engulfed Samoa, dragging Pualele's car out to sea.

*'I knew that after the tsunami many houses would be rebuilt and although I didn't know how to do the work, I found one young man who started teaching me how to make bricks',*

he said. By buying 50 bags of cement and other equipment, Pualele was

able to use what savings he had left to start a small business. He now runs a thriving business which employs 12

people supplying bricks to hardware shops, hotels and churches. Pualele and other seasonal workers contribute a small portion of their savings to the community through the Poutasi Development Trust which assists people struggling in the community.

Whilst the opportunity to migrate has not been able to prevent disaster striking, it has enabled workers like Pualele to generate a source of income for their family and community.

### Leading Universities Team Up with Us!

We are excited to announce that the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the United Nations University (UNU) are collaborating with the PCCM project. Starting in February 2015 PCCM began conducting extensive community surveys on people's attitudes toward climate change and migration in Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu. The results of these surveys will help governments identify policy interventions for improving the management of issues related to climate change and migration. UNU brings to the project a wealth of global experience in climate change and migration policy analysis. The USP is the regional academic leader in climate change research and will support the project through its network of in-country offices. The results of the surveys will be published later this year.



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## Gender, Climate Change and Migration

Research suggests that women are disproportionately affected by climate change – whether because of a lack of livelihood opportunities, or heightened vulnerability in cases of natural disaster. Although migration can be one way of mitigating these disadvantages, many women find it difficult to secure overseas employment.

Most countries have only limited pathways for legal immigration – temporary opportunities for skilled (and sometimes unskilled) labour migrants, or permanent migration through family reunification, quota systems

(New Zealand) or points systems (New Zealand and Australia). Although there is limited data analysis of permanent migration from Pacific Island countries, temporary migration is clearly male dominated. Amongst the seasonal worker programs, women currently comprise just 14 percent. There were six times as many men as women recruited during the year 2012/13, with some countries sending just 3 percent of female workers. In the seafaring sector, which has traditionally employed the largest proportion of international labour migrants from

Tuvalu and Kiribati, there are no female migrants. In the past, i-Kiribati women found work on international cruise liners but this work dried up when cruise ship owners sourced cheaper labour from elsewhere.





leaving the country (emigrants) and those coming into the country (immigrants). The gender imbalance in migration opportunities means that many women and families are left behind when men migrate. Many emigrate with the intention of providing income for their families. However, there is some evidence that women and children who are left behind sometimes experience higher vulnerability to abuse and economic disempowerment.

There is also a question of whether female migrants can be adequately protected. Migration opportunities traditionally open to women, such as home care, domestic work and hospitality, often lack a legislative protective framework. According to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants: “Female migrant workers engaged in domestic services are one of the most vulnerable groups of migrant workers. They are often exposed to health and safety threats

without being provided with adequate information about risks and precautions. Further, their vulnerability is heightened by the lack of domestic legal mechanisms recognizing or protecting their rights. Consequently, they are often excluded from health insurance and other important social and labour protections.” The review of legislation in the Pacific conducted under the PCCM Project revealed gaps in the legislation of many Pacific Island countries with regards to the protection of migrants

International labour migration needs to be seen from a gender perspective – women migrants experience different challenges, and women non-migrants whose husbands travel abroad are also affected differently to their male counterparts. Policy frameworks need to ensure that women’s needs (particularly those who are economically or environmentally vulnerable) are explicitly analysed, rather than relying on the experience of male migrants as the typical migration scenario.

## Kiribati President Tong on the Importance of Labour Migration



*President Tong speaking in Samoa on the importance of labour migration*

The Third UN Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Conference in Apia brought over 2,000 delegates from across small island developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, as well as a multitude of other countries to discuss important issues facing the SIDS. One of the issues that was brought to the fore through a side event featuring President Anote Tong of Kiribati, was the

importance of labour migration to the lives of many people in this small country. Sharing the floor with a high-level panel of speakers including the ILO Deputy Director General, a Senior Economist of the World Bank and a representative of the Australian Government, President Tong called on both PIC's and Pacific Rim countries to develop policies to encourage and expand well-regulated labour migration.

Kiribati, one of the target countries under the PCCM, is only able to provide employment opportunities to a small portion of its young people, meaning that unemployment and underemployment are ever-present issues in the country. Even before seasonal worker programs, temporary migration through seafaring was an important means of employment and source of remittances. However whilst at one time up to 2000 i-Kiribati men were employed in the seafaring industry, that number has been reduced by three-quarters. The take-up of seasonal worker positions has also remained low. Kiribati, Tuvalu and Nauru (the three PCCM target countries), face a multitude of barriers to national employment creation, to which climate change adds yet another worrying dimension.

Although participating in labour migration schemes will not solve all unemployment problems in Kiribati, President Tong argued that more needs to be done to provide opportunities for semi-skilled and skilled temporary workers abroad. He noted that opportunities could be expanded to sectors including construction (including the rebuilding of Christchurch), trades and other industries, where a pool of trained i-Kiribati is available.

## PCCM Looks At Tuvaluan Migration to Fiji

In 1947, the Vaitupu community of Tuvalu bought the small island of Kioa at public auction and started a relocation programme the following year. Although only 25sqKM in size, Kioa has roughly the same land mass as the whole of Tuvalu with the added benefits of rich volcanic soil, timber, an artesian water source and a mountainous interior. Of the original 38 Tuvaluan settlers - only one remains, a 90 year old lady named Siapo.



PCCM survey team with Kioa elders



Siapo: the last original settler from Tuvalu

Presently, the total resident population is around 400 but this can swell to over 1,000 during the festive season. Whilst still retaining the cultural heritage and traditions of Vaitupu there is overwhelming pride among residents of being Fijian (granted in 2005). Life on Kioa is supported via subsistence farming with few wage-earning opportunities. Youth seek employment in surrounding hotel resorts or further afield in Suva and abroad.

*“When asked what advice they would give Tuvalu in terms of climate change and sea-level rise, elders pointed across the bay and said: “buy land here in Vanua Levu.”*

Climate change is very much on the minds of Kioans, not only on how it may affect their island but also on how it will affect Vaitupu and Tuvalu. Based on interviews conducted by the project in December 2014, the community appears ready to accept further settlers from Vaitupu should the need arise. However, immediate concerns of the Kioans are to increase their own population numbers, currently in decline because of out migration. When asked what advice they would give Tuvalu in terms of climate change and sea-level rise, elders pointed across the bay and said: “buy land here in Vanua Levu”.



Looking across the bay to Vanua Levu from Kioa

## New Resource on Labour Migration Legislation

Despite the importance of migration in the development landscape, little is known about how Pacific island countries regulate migration into and out of their respective countries. To support knowledge building in this important field, the PCCM has published a Compendium of Labour Migration Legislation and Institutional Arrangements for Pacific Island Countries.

Speakers at the launch of the publication included the acting head of the UN Office for the Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Union Ambassador for the Pacific, the USP, the World Bank, ESCAP and the ILO. Discussion focused on the importance of labour migration legislation in facilitating migration, while at the same time protecting workers' rights. The Compendium serves as a valuable resource from which to analyse gaps and areas for reform in legislation.

Promoting voluntary migration within and outside the Pacific region can form a positive strategy for dealing with challenges such as environmental degradation and climate change.

"Migration is not only a last resort coping mechanism to climate change, but can also be a valuable strategy in the



*EU Ambassador Andrew Jacobs addressing participants at the launch of the PCCM Compendium of Labour Migration Legislation*

face of the likely impacts of climate change on the livelihoods of Pacific people," said the European Union's Ambassador for the Pacific, Mr. Andrew Jacobs. "Labour migration is an important adaptation strategy for Pacific Islanders – reducing strain on local resources, diversifying a household's income and providing skills and training opportunities."

The Compendium is available online:

[www.unescap.org/resources/compendium-legislation-and-institutional-arrangements-labour-migration-pacific-island](http://www.unescap.org/resources/compendium-legislation-and-institutional-arrangements-labour-migration-pacific-island)



## Climate Change, Migration and Civil Society Organizations

PCCM participated in the workshop in Fiji on Climate Change, Disasters and Human Mobility which looked at the key role of Civil Society Organisations working with communities to develop people-centred approaches toward climate change and migration. The event highlighted that internal migration and access to land are intertwined. Some of the participants noted that if people from other countries in the region are to consider moving to Fiji, the lessons learned from the migration to Kioa and Rabi should be considered to improve future migration outcomes.

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