Climate Change, Relocation and Peacebuilding in Fiji: Challenges, Debates, and Ways Forward

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Introduction

On 5 and 6 October 2020, the Toda Peace Institute, Conciliation Resources and Transcend Oceania hosted a workshop under the title of 'Comparative Learning: Climate Change, Relocation and Peacebuilding in Fiji'. It used an innovative hybrid format where participants attended online and in-person in Suva. The workshop brought together more than 50 researchers, practitioners and policymakers from Fiji, New Zealand and Australia, as well as representatives of international organisations, donor agencies and non-governmental organisations.[1]

In line with previous workshops that the Toda Peace Institute has organised on issues of 'climate change, conflict and peace in the Pacific', in Auckland in 2018 (Climate Change 2018) and in Tokyo in 2019 (McBryde 2020), this workshop also brought together academics, policymakers and practitioners for a dialogue on the challenges posed by the conflict-prone effects of climate change and pathways to conflict-sensitive and peace-supportive climate

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[1] Originally it was planned to have a conventional workshop in Suva, but due to COVID-19 travel restrictions we had to change to this experimental format and, given the challenging circumstances, it worked well, thanks not least to the skillful online and in situ facilitation. Due to the change of format, however, it was not possible to have broad participation of a range of community leaders—traditional chiefs, local government representatives, church, women and youth leaders—as had been the plan.

change mitigation and adaptation. This time the workshop had a specific geographical and thematic focus: on the Pacific Island country of Fiji, and on climate-change induced human mobility. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, climate change induced human mobility is a pressing issue for Fiji already. Several villages affected by sea-level rise and coastal erosion have relocated to higher ground, others are currently in the process of relocation, and many more are preparing for it. Secondly, in Fiji, the government, civil society and international donors are well advanced in addressing the issue of climate change-induced relocation; in this regard Fiji is an international pioneer. And thirdly, some peacebuilding NGOs are currently engaged in projects working together with relocating communities, hence a body of experience is building up in Fiji which lends itself to cooperative learning.

The workshop sessions covered the following six themes: climate change induced relocation of rural communities; climate change and urbanisation; COVID-19 and the climate crisis compared; the relationship between community worlds and policy worlds; external support for Fijian communities; and final reflections. The aim of the workshop was to identify peace and conflict issues in the context of climate change and mobility, explore the best ways forward when working with people who need to relocate due to the effects of climate change, and to bring a range of stakeholders together for an exchange of experiences and discussion of potential future collaboration.

The purpose of this Policy Brief is not to document the proceedings of the workshop in detail. Rather, based on the presentations and discussions in the various sessions, it aims to identify the key issue areas and focus on the most relevant findings and insights. Some of the lessons learned and policy recommendations are in the conclusion.

1. Community Relocation: Experiences, Challenges, Needs

In Fiji, several villages have been relocated over the last few years due to the effects of climate change; some are currently in the process of relocating, and others are preparing for relocation. The government of Fiji (GoF) has identified more than 80 villages which will need to relocate in the near future, and many more long-term. This poses a tremendous challenge for the affected communities, state institutions, civil society and external actors who are prepared to assist in the relocation efforts. Climate change-induced relocation is a highly complex 'wicked problem'; it would be a serious mistake to approach it as a mere technical issue that can be solved in a linear manner. It entails a broad spectrum of interlinked challenges: technical, financial, logistical, political, economic, social, cultural, psychological and spiritual. Accordingly, there cannot be a standardised one-size-fits-all solution for relocation. Rather, approaches have to be highly flexible and context-specific. They have to address the interlinked problems in an integrative and holistic manner. Experience so far shows, however, that often-technical approaches dominate, while social, cultural or spiritual dimensions are marginalised.

Moreover, community relocation necessitates the coordination and cooperation of a variety of actors across multiple scales. Although carried out locally, it is not just a 'local' event. On the contrary, non-local actors exert immense influence on relocation decisions, such as state

institutions, civil society organisations, and external donors. The 'local' also is home to a variety of actors with diverse views, interests and needs related to relocation, whether it be differences between men and women, or young and old. Furthermore, local leadership is manifold with traditional chiefs, local government institutions and church leaders all playing important roles. For the success of relocation, it is critical that all the different actors are brought together for collaboration.

This, however, is easier said than done. A fundamental impediment, for example, are the vastly different time frames. Schedules are often pre-determined by external actors, and often there is a tension between tight externally imposed timeframes and the need for a long-term approach that acknowledges local needs and ways of doing things. Relocations need time well beyond the time spans of two or three years that are typical of externally funded projects. Relocations need a staged step by step approach; trying to jump steps will lead to failure, to frustration of communities and conflicts between communities and external actors.

Longer time frames are also essential for building relationships and trust among the various actors. Only after relationships and trust are built, can meaningful community participation beyond mere tokenism become possible. Today there is general agreement among stakeholders that community participation in, and ownership of, relocation projects is essential; however, these in-principle commitments often are not translated into actual implementation and practice. For example, in the case of the relocation of Narikoso village, decisions regarding the relocation site, the lay-out of the new relocation village and the design of the houses were unilaterally imposed upon the community, resulting in the villagers' frustration and dissatisfaction. They were not happy with the new houses which were too small for the traditional way of living together, and the lay-out of the village failed to follow traditional village forms.[2] Issues like disagreement over relocation sites can very well lead to conflicts between locals and external actors.

In climate changed-induced relocation, such conflict prone issues are often driven by the unaddressed problem of power imbalances and power dynamics. Different stakeholders have different resources at their disposal, and they differ in their political clout, ability and capacity to impose their views and ways of doing things. Donors with the money or state institutions with decision-making authority clearly have power advantages, while locals have less power. However, they are not entirely powerless. If they are not happy with the relocation, they have the means to resist and even undermine the process, e.g. through deliberate or tacit non-participation or passive resistance; or they can try to gain power by linking with non-local supporters, e.g. civil society NGOs. It is therefore important that the underlying issue of power imbalances and power dynamics is properly acknowledged and addressed in order to deal with ensuing conflicts in a constructive manner and establish and sustain cooperation which is imperative for a successful relocation.

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[2] At the workshop, Anna Anisi, presented the example of the relocation of Narikoso village and drew some general conclusions from the experiences of this relocation. Her presentation built on her Toda Policy Brief on the Narikoso case, see Anisi 2020 https://toda.org/policy-briefs-and-resources/policy-briefs/addressing-challenges-in-climate-change-adaptation-learning-from-the-narikoso-community-relocation-in-fiji.html

The Fijian peacebuilding NGO Transcend Oceania (TO), with the support of Conciliation Resources, is currently attempting to address the above-listed challenges through its project on building peace in a changing environment and climate, which has been advanced in cooperation with local communities. The project aims firstly, to equip communities with the conflict analysis tools, skills and relationships necessary to analyse and prevent or manage conflicts that might emerge in the course of climate change induced relocation, and secondly, to provide civil society organisations with the knowledge, tools and skills to support relocating communities. Based on the experiences documented and the lessons learned, the project can contribute to the discussions about climate change induced relocation in national and international contexts.

TO has elaborated an action research methodology for engaging with communities which respectfully follows customary protocols of engagement and aligns with local formats and procedures, with talanoas,[3] listening and storytelling as well as mapping of actors, their relationships and the history of these relationships, as core elements.

TO's approach emphasises the importance of understanding the specific local context, of engaging with existing agency and adaptive capacity, and with local governance mechanisms. This is not without challenges: for example, working across gender and age power dynamics, to create space for the voices of women and youth to be heard, can be difficult. But it has to be done if one is committed to an ethic of inclusion and relationality.

Currently TO is working with two communities in particular: Vunidogoloa and Naviavia.

Vunidogoloa is the first village in Fiji which was relocated in its entirety, supported by the GoF. Although the relocation has been relatively 'easy' and straightforward, because it happened on the community's own land, and is generally presented as a success story, even today, a few years after the actual relocation, a number of issues remain. Particular mention has to be made of the psychological and spiritual aspect. Relocation for the villagers was a painful and emotional experience; they had to leave behind the security of their traditional settlement, the sacred space of the ancestors' village, including the burial ground nested beside the village.

In comparison to the 'easy' case of Vunidogoloa, the case of the village of Naviavia will be much more challenging. This case illustrates how complex local contexts can be. The community is situated on freehold land which had originally belonged to a local i-Taukei Yavusa (clan), was appropriated by the Anglican church, which in the 1940s allowed the descendants of blackbirded Solomon Islanders to settle on the land. The Anglican Church sold part of the land, which currently is utilised for farming by the Solomon Islands descendants, to the government of Kiribati, which plans to use it for food production and maybe, in the future, also for the resettlement of I-Kiribati if the effects of climate change in

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[3] Talanoa is a specific Pacific form of an open-ended conversation, used for sharing information and ideas, storytelling, building and maintaining relationships, addressing disputes, exchanging experiences. The term is used in particular in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa for this customary form of dialogue.

Kiribati should make this necessary. The GoF is supportive of the Kiribati government's purchase of the land. So, you have a highly complex web of actors with their own views and interests: the Solomon Islands descendants, who, although embedded in the local traditional governance systems for a long time already, are still seen as 'foreigners'; the original landowners, who lost that land a long time ago, but still feel connected to it; the Anglican church; the governments of Kiribati and Fiji. To manage such a constellation in a conflict-sensitive and conflict preventive way requires patient relationship building and an all-inclusive relational approach which in particular engages with trusted legitimate local governance actors such as the churches and traditional authorities, but which also has to engage with actors beyond the local context, even at the regional Pacific level, and this necessitates the development of regional policy frameworks.

The Naviavia case may be particularly complex, but other cases also require mediation between a variety of different actors and logics of operating, at different scales, pursuing an inclusive, relational and holistic approach (Higgins 2020). Meaningful and inclusive consultation with local communities, based on relationship-building and trust-building, is imperative for an ethical approach – and for this, one has to take one's time. Long-term thinking and engagement is of the essence. Unfortunately, however, this often clashes with the short-term project cycles to which external actors are usually bound.

2. Urbanisation: Another Form of Climate Change Induced Mobility

Besides planned community relocation, unplanned rural-urban migration from climate change affected areas to the few urban centres in the Pacific is another form of climate change induced human mobility. Urbanisation will accelerate in the future due to the effects of climate change.

Over the last decades, urbanisation has become a key feature of social change in Pacific Island Countries. More and more people are moving from rural areas to urban centres. Today's rural-urban migration is caused by a combination of push and pull factors, e.g. expectations of better public services, infrastructure and employment opportunities in the cities, or population growth in rural areas. The effects of climate change are among the push factors (e.g. if food security in flood-prone coastal areas or small low-lying islands comes under pressure). With the increase in severity of such effects, climate change induced migration to the urban centres will become even more relevant, given that there are only limited options for rural-rural migration. In the current COVID-19 situation, a reverse trend of re-migration from cities to villages can be observed. It is not clear, however, whether this is due to the exceptional situation of a pandemic, or actually a trend that will persist. Against the backdrop of continuous population growth, pressure on land in rural areas will persist. Moreover, life in rural environments may not be as peaceful and harmonious as idealised conceptions of peacebuilding tend to suggest. It is of course debatable whether urbanisation is a positive desirable trend or should be slowed down—or even halted—by making life in the rural areas more attractive (and life in the cities unattractive), discouraging urbanisation and encouraging and enabling development in rural areas. But for the time being, whether desirable or not, the realities of urbanisation have to be addressed.

To date, the movement from outer islands and rural areas to the cities takes the form of unplanned migration of families, individuals or kinship groups, often stimulated by idealised pictures of life in the city. This type of human mobility is markedly different from planned community resettlement. It leads to a different set of challenges. While in the case of community relocation the challenges lie with the planning of relocation and the implementation of plans, in the case of rural-urban migration the challenges lie with planning at the new sites of settlement to which the people have moved in an unplanned manner. These are challenges of urban planning, which to date are largely unaddressed.

So far urban expansion has mainly taken the form of informal or squatter settlements at the fringes of the cities, e.g. in Port Moresby, Port Vila, Honiara, or the greater Suva area. These informal settlements are characterised by overcrowding, limited access to services and inadequate infrastructure (with regard to water, sanitation, waste disposal, electricity supply, etc.). Food security is often under pressure, and people often can no longer afford the healthy diet they were used to in their places of origin. As a result, they turn to unhealthy food or, for example, to fishing in the highly polluted waters of Suva harbour. Informal settlements are plagued by all sorts of social problems: unemployment, crime, everyday violence, not least gender-based and domestic violence, and inter-group conflicts. Such inter-group conflicts are either conflicts between original landowners and new settlers, or between settlers from different regions of the country (Campbell 2019).

Moreover, the informal settlements are often located on marginal land which is particularly exposed to the effects of climate change and natural disasters: river flood plains, steep slopes, mangrove swamps, flood prone coastal areas. Hence people who have left their place of origin because of the effects of climate change often find themselves in places where they are again confronted with the same or different effects of climate change (Campbell 2019).

These issues make the inhabitants of informal settlements vulnerable and their living conditions fragile. Added to this, they have to face fundamental mental, psychological and spiritual challenges; for them, the intricate connection between land and people, which is of utmost importance for the wellbeing of Pacific Islanders, is interrupted. Close connection to the land is a source of ontological security for people (Farbotko 2019). Hence, for rural-urban migrants, their ontological everyday security comes under threat.

However, there are ways in which people cope with these challenges and therefore they should not be regarded as passive vulnerable victims. First of all, people can maintain connections to their place of origin. There is a considerable amount of back and forth communication and exchange that takes place between the city and the village. But not only do people maintain connections, they also bring with them their customs, traditional governance structures and processes from the village to the cities. Customs, traditional knowledge, customary governance and conflict resolution structures and processes as well as traditional authority can travel. They are also implemented in the semi-urban informal settlements. Institutions and procedures which are transferred from their rural space of origin to the new urban environment can be a source of everyday security and conflict resolution. Of course, these institutions and procedures change and adjust to the new environment and new challenges (as custom is not static). In particular, they become embedded in a more complex constellation of actors, with civil society organisations and

state institutions more present than in the rural areas. This can have its own problems, e.g. with regard to legitimacy or the relation between customary law and state law.

The main point, however, is to be aware that informal settlements are not like blank slates, void of governance structures, and populated by passive vulnerable victims. There is agency and resilience, not least based on strong kinship networks and travelling traditional governance structures. This agency and resilience is the basis for maintaining peace and security in the settled communities, including their cultural and spiritual security.

Nonetheless, people in the informal settlements need the support of state institutions. There is an urgent need for urban planning, for example in the greater Suva area – planning which has to take into account climate change, both its role as an increasingly important driver of rural-urban migration and its impact on urban settlements. Such planning has to allocate sufficient resources to climate change adaptation and governance, so as to make the cities sustainable. It has to acknowledge the presence of non-state actors and to integrate them into the planning; it has to be conflict-sensitive and climate-sensitive, asking questions like: how urban settlements can be built—what should their architecture look like—so that they are conducive to peace and everyday security? How do the people themselves define what peace and security means to them in an urban environment? And how can small island states build urban centres that are resilient to the effects of climate change and natural disasters? Such planning has to include the people in the settlements and their local knowledge; it should not be done for them, but together with them.

3. COVID-19 and Climate Change Crises: Differences and Similarities

When comparing the COVID-19 crisis and the climate crisis, exploring similarities and differences, the problem of trust, and the dangers of securitisation, stand out.

COVID-19 has led to the securitisation of a social and health issue and to the securitisation of social space. It has been turned from a health issue to a security issue and often has been used as an excuse to infringe on civil liberties. COVID-19 can also be used as an excuse to keep national borders closed and impose restrictions on refugees and displaced persons. In such a way, climate change has become the subject of a securitised discourse (McDonald 2018). In both cases, this triggers responses which do not really address the causes and adequately deal with the problem at hand. Rather, the crises are instrumentalised for other purposes and interests, e.g. the legitimisation of increased militarisation, both within societies and in international relations.

Furthermore, handling of COVID-19 has led to a massive erosion of trust in political leadership in many countries around the world. This lack of trust in political leaders can lead to fragile situations in which the work of community-based organisations and local peacebuilders becomes particularly important: they can navigate spaces which governments and state institutions cannot reach. In this context, the example of the Ebola crisis in West Africa a few years ago provides a striking example. When government representatives parachuted into affected communities and told the people what to do, they were met with suspicion, aversion and even outright resistance. This was because of the

people's negative experiences with the government and state institutions, which were perceived as an alien force: they rejected these aliens' demand for them to abandon their long-held customs (e.g. specific burial rites). It was only when local customary leaders, whom they trusted, got involved that people were willing to listen and change their attitudes.

This example demonstrates that confidence and trust is not something that can be demanded of the other, but what one has to offer to allay concerns and suspicions from past history of negative experiences and mistrust. It is vital to find the entry points for dialogue between state actors and communities, and be prepared for difficult conversations which require patience and cultural sensitivity. Faith-based organisations such as churches in Pacific societies therefore have a crucial role to play both in bridging the divide between the state and the communities and in facilitating these conversations. In Fiji, for example, the churches stepped in as community leaders with authority to disseminate information on the pandemic, organised services, provided pastoral care and trauma healing. Church leaders are in for the long haul, and this is of importance when dealing with both the pandemic and the climate change crisis. Short-term engagement would not be sufficient; one has to be prepared to walk together with the communities long-term. Only then can one contribute to building resilience. In order to build resilience, inclusion of traditional indigenous knowledge, and of the holders of that knowledge, is of utmost importance. Without this kind of engagement, it is difficult to make the right decisions regarding relocation sites, for example. Often, these decisions are made by external forces and imposed upon the communities in a top-down manner, as was seen in the Narikoso case. Indigenous traditional knowledge has been used in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis (and the Ebola crisis before), and it can be used effectively in addressing the climate change crisis as well.

Climate change and COVID-19 are closely linked. Climate change has massive effects on the environment, and this provides fertile grounds for pandemics like COVID-19. COVID-19, in turn, weakens capacities and willingness to address climate change. The dual crises of climate change and pandemics have fundamental implications for peacebuilding, governance and the provision of justice across societies. Currently in mainstream discourse and politics, COVID-19 has sidelined the climate issue, with a shift in public attention, political priorities, and allocation of resources towards addressing the pandemic. There is the danger that COVID-19 will further shrink the spaces for climate change engagement. From a climate justice, peacebuilding and conflict resolution perspective, this is a worrying trend. In the interest of sustainable peace, both crises have to be dealt with in tandem, as interlinked, even if they require different policies and responses (Clements 2020).

4. Bridging the Gap Between the Community World and the Policy World

Bridging the gaps between community worlds and policy worlds, making local voices heard in the realm of state and politics, and translating the language of state and policy into the local vernacular, is a major challenge for climate change adaptation in general and relocation in particular. The question is how to link different levels of actors; how to bring local messages and narratives across to government and state institutions, and, at the same

time, bring the messages of government and policies to the communities in ways that align with community members' understandings and worldviews. In other words, the challenge is to facilitate dialogue across multiple scales and between different types of actors (Barnett and McMichael 2018).

The links between climate change, human mobility, peace and security have become an issue that spans villages or informal peri-urban settlements in Fiji (and elsewhere) to the United Nations Security Council (Boege 2020). [4] Accordingly, understandings of and approaches to the issue differ widely. While the UN Security Council tends to deal with climate change as a threat to international security and to the national security of UN member states, for women in a village or semi-urban informal settlement, the threat might take the form of gender-based everyday domestic violence, which for them is a much more pressing security issue than international or national security. And there is a vast variety of understandings of security in-between these levels. In the Pacific, for example, the Pacific Islands Forum's Boe Declaration of 2018 presents an important regional approach to climate change and security, at the same time framing it as an issue of human security (Boe Declaration 2018). Furthermore, different arms of the state and government also can have different approaches. Interestingly enough, in Australia for example, it is the armed forces, the Australian Defence Force, which is much more progressive than other state institutions when it comes to climate change. More and more the ADF has to deal with the devastating effects of climate change and it is at the forefront when it comes to dealing with disasters like bushfires, floods or cyclones, both at home and overseas. Accordingly, they are more willing to address the climate change issue than other arms of the state.

The focus on disaster response by the military, however, can be problematic as it encourages short-term thinking that is narrowed down to the most visible and devastating effects of climate change, but does not address the root causes of the crisis and the need for long-term adaptation; community relocation, for example, has to be thought of in time spans of a decade or so. Such short-termism is embedded in the above-mentioned more general problem of the securitisation of climate change (McDonald 2018). One of the problematic aspects of securitisation is that it legitimises responses which reserve agency for state institutions (like the military), while affected communities are put in the position of passive objects of state policies. This is exactly the wrong path which ignores the need for exchange and dialogue, for the inclusion of a broad spectrum of state and non-state actors in long-term climate change adaptation, and which ignores the agency of the people on the ground. People in the Pacific have shown agency throughout history, they have responded to enormous challenges – and they also will respond to climate change. Hence adaptation should not be done to the people, but together with them. Accordingly, adaptation in general and relocation in particular has to be a collaborative effort of state institutions, the public sector, civil society, churches and traditional authorities.

Over the last years, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) has been involved in efforts to bring the various actors together in Fiji. PCC was asked by the GoF to support their

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[4] For the following see the video presentation by Jon Barnett at the comparative learning workshop. It can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O28t-Hyjfbs&feature=youtu.be See also Barnett and McMichael 2018.

relocation endeavours and provide pastoral care for the relocating communities, e.g. Vunidogoloa. A key learning for PCC was the need to resolve the obstacles in the complex decision-making processes that arise from different types of decision-making (e.g. by community consensus or by orders of the government). The challenge lies in creating a transparent and inclusive decision-making process. It was stressed that each and every stage of the process needs to be transparent and inclusive; and must include women, youth, and the elderly, which often can be difficult both in customary village settings and state-dominated endeavours.

Transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making is crucial for building trust and confidence. Only in an atmosphere of trust can difficult conversations take place, for example between villagers who want to relocate and those who do not want to move. The latter must be offered some viable options. Furthermore, lending ears to the stories of the local people, acknowledging their indigenous knowledge and experience regarding the effects of climate change, is a necessary ingredient for inclusiveness and trust-building. Local knowledge and stories cannot be easily translated into the language of official reporting of state agencies and donors; nonetheless they are —or should be—highly critical for official relocation planning and risk assessments. Unfortunately, the locals are often under pressure to adjust their ways of thinking and talking in order to fit the outsiders' formats, not the other way around. This also applies to monitoring and evaluation; there may be differences between what community members versus external experts gauge as successes and failures. Often the non-material, psychological and spiritual aspects are not acknowledged enough or understood by outsiders; the trauma of being uprooted and disconnected from their land, the loss of identity and culture linked to relocation, the loss of the place of their ancestors and community burial sites. These non-material losses are difficult to capture in conventional 'loss and damage' terms – one cannot put monetary value on them as is commonly done with material losses involving houses or infrastructure.

To ensure that the relocating communities maintain their identity and culture is of utmost importance. However, this can be an extremely difficult task: if a fishing community has to move inland and uphill, for example, how can they maintain their identity and culture as fisherfolk? These immaterial factors have to be taken into account particularly when making decisions regarding the new homes for relocated communities; it is not only about choosing the right site and right design of the houses (this is of course very important: the Narikoso case demonstrates that things can go awfully wrong in this regard if communities are not adequately included in the decision-making process), but also about a village setting which is in line with the customary spiritual understanding of how the village should look.

When all such factors are considered, it becomes obvious how complex and onerous the 'wicked problem' of community relocation actually is, and how important the collaboration of a broad range of actors across various scales. And the whole undertaking becomes even more challenging if one tries to translate these 'hyper-local' experiences to the national, regional and international level. At these levels, it becomes necessary to generalise and move beyond the specificity of cases in order to be able to develop national or regional policies. At the same time, it is nonetheless vital that learnings from local experiences are not ignored. In this context, for example, an extremely important challenge lies in

introducing the significance of the 'culture' dimension of relocation into the international debate – a debate which is often dominated by technical and financial considerations.

5. External Support for Climate Relocation: Challenges and Opportunities

Governments of Pacific Island Countries have an obligation to support households and communities that are forced to relocate to new sites in order to sustain their livelihoods in response to both rapid climate change-induced disasters and slow onset impacts of climate change. The Fijian government is at the forefront of developing relocation policies, strategies and programmes through its National Climate Change Policy and its National Adaptation Plan. It is making significant efforts to address the impacts of climate change and to support ongoing as well as future resettlement.

With an increased concern that more and more communities in Fiji may be forced to relocate over both the short- and long-term, the Fiji Government is currently undertaking nationwide, community-based vulnerability and adaptation assessments. These ongoing assessments aim to identify the potential sites that may require relocation. In conjunction with these activities, the government has elaborated national Displacement Guidelines and Planned Relocation Guidelines (PRG); it has recently established a Climate Change and Displaced Peoples Trust Fund, drafted a Comprehensive Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Framework and is currently working on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the PRG.

The PRG are one of the state-led adaptation strategies. They acknowledge that planned relocation needs to follow an inclusive and participatory process, ensuring that plans are developed in close consultation with potentially affected communities. Relocation plans and designs must be sensitive to the needs and desires of the people of the community. Relocation is a costly and risky undertaking, not only financially but socially, psychologically and spiritually. It is therefore imperative that such guidelines consider not only the tangible financial losses and issues concerning rights to land, but also the losses that are related to people's cultural and spiritual assets.

Relocation is an immensely complex process that goes beyond merely moving houses; it is about moving people's lives and livelihood. The Climate Change and International Cooperation Division (CCICD) of the Fijian Ministry of Economy therefore stresses that relocation should be considered as an option of last resort for climate change-affected communities. And for the very same reason, government efforts to support the relocation need to be integrated, holistic and guided by a multi-scalar consultation process. This is not without challenges, e.g. with regard to monitoring and reporting, coordination, a whole-of-government approach, or access to funds.

Governments and communities in the Pacific are supported by various international and inter-governmental organisations that work in partnership with governments to facilitate the process of relocation. For example, Germany's Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) directs a global programme—'Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change' (2017-2023)—commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It works with national governments, researchers and migration organisations to share knowledge on climate-induced migration and is carried out in cooperation with partners in the Philippines, Caribbean, Africa and the Pacific, with the aim of facilitating dialogue and exchange between regions. GIZ's key role is to

support regional organisations and national governments to develop their capacities to deal with climate change-induced migration, provide policy gap analysis and policy-related advice. GIZ has worked closely with the Fijian government and relevant stakeholders to develop the above-mentioned guidelines for relocation and displacement, provide trainings as well as coordination mechanisms.

The Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security Programme (PCCMHS) (2019-2022), funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security and New Zealand Aid, is another regional programme in the Pacific, implemented by multiple international agencies: the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), International Labor Organization (ILO), the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS). PCCMHS is currently facilitating online policy discussions among government officials of a number of Pacific Islands countries to examine opportunities and challenges when climate change related hazards drive not only voluntary migration flows but increase displacement both internally and across borders. The aim of these dialogues is to promote a shared understanding amongst Pacific governments about the complex nexus of climate change related migration, relocation and displacement and other forms of human mobility. A difficult question in this context is, for example, the issue of trans-border labour migration. It has to be seen from two perspectives: climate change affecting human mobility, and human mobility supporting climate change adaptation. Bringing together these two strands of thought, and accordingly, the climate change and the labour migration experts, is so far a widely unaddressed challenge.

PCCMHS stresses the importance of developing migration policies that are based on a comprehensive, people-centred human security framework. However, initial discussions seemed to focus on governments and regional and national level policy-making only and lacked the inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives of multiple stakeholders beyond state actors and international organisations. The programme later established a technical advisory group with the participation of government, academia, international organisations, and civil society to address this gap.

The lesson obtained from Fiji's past relocation projects is that the key ingredient to successful relocation lies in acknowledging that communities have to lead the relocation decision-making process in terms of when, how and where. Seeking suitable resettlement sites that satisfy the long-term needs and sustainability of the people's livelihood is not an easy task. To ensure the community's engagement and ownership, they should be offered resources and human capital in order to enable them to participate fully in the relocation efforts.

But even relocations planned and implemented according to best practice still cannot fully ameliorate the deep-rooted challenges for the people in the Pacific. For them, the connection to their ancestral homelands is at the heart of their culture and identity. People's identity and agency is closely linked to their sense of place. The land/people connection should not be overlooked in discussions about relocation. The threats to identity, culture and spirituality which come with relocation deserve much more attention.

6. Reflections

Relocating communities comes with considerable risks and enormous responsibilities. Experience so far indicates that people who have to relocate are usually worse off after relocation, both materially and mentally or spiritually. This is not an acceptable outcome. If one acknowledges that climate change induced relocation has become a permanent component of development that will increasingly become more prominent as a development issue in the future, then much more effort has to be made to address the question of how such relocation can actually contribute to development for the affected people, e.g. in the context of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Even if relocation is conceptualised 'only' as an adaptation measure of 'last resort', complacency is not an option. One has to be pre-emptive, and start planning now as future projections clearly show that the matter will become more and more urgent. Even if 'Plan A' is to make every effort to enable people to stay put in their home environments, there also has to be a 'Plan B' for relocation. Such planning for relocation has to be explorative, adaptive, and conflict-sensitive, acknowledging that relocation can lead to conflicts between various actors and across scales; these conflicts are highly localised and complex, hence conflict prevention and peacebuilding also has to be specific and complex. It is clear that linear, one-size-fits-all tool box approaches would not work. Conflict analysis and peacebuilding tools will have to be elaborated in the specific context, together with communities, and cannot be brought in off the shelf from outside (Higgins 2020).

The experiences of climate change induced relocation in Fiji demonstrate the need to bring a broad variety of actors together and link different levels. Transparent and inclusive decision-making has to be built on relationships of trust - not least trust in political leadership. The main type of trust that is in demand in this context is competence trust – trust in the competence of governments and other actors who get involved in relocation.

Planning and implementation of relocation have to be pursued in long time frames beyond project cycles, and it has to include local traditional knowledge and embrace local wisdom, without exploiting that knowledge and wisdom and squeezing it into non-Pacific 'Western' formats of science and politics. Rather, what is needed is exchange and dialogue – to translate science and research (which in its Western format can be offensive to communities) into the vernacular so that people can understand the issues at hand in the context of their own worldview.

Furthermore, the resilience and agency of local people has to be acknowledged (in contrast to the dominant 'victim' narrative) and to be put at the centre of any relocation strategies and activities. The involvement of communities has to go beyond conventional formalised consultation; one has to ask what inclusive consultation actually means and how it has to look in a Fijian or Pacific context. Genuine participation of communities in all stages of relocation means that aspects which so far have been underestimated or marginalised have to be given more prominence: issues of identity, of culture, of spiritual wellbeing, of ontological security. These aspects come to the fore if one takes into account what 'security', 'development' and 'wellbeing' actually (should) look like from a Fijian or Pacific perspective. Taking this perspective transcends a merely human-centred approach of climate change adaptation and relocation. A 'whole of life' approach which does not have the human being

in isolation at its centre, but understands human beings and human society relationally, in relation to other-than-human beings, both in the material and spiritual worlds, would fundamentally shift the understanding and practice of climate change induced relocation (Vaai 2019). In other words: A genuinely Pacific holistic relational approach means to overcome a human-centred perspective. 'Community' encompasses more than just the living human beings: the land, the ocean, the unborn generations, the spirits of the ancestors, other than human beings are all part of the community in a Pacific relational way of understanding the world. The conventional human-centred approach to climate change induced relocation does not capture this; even a far-reaching concept like human security does not go far enough – it still compartmentalises and cannot address the cultural and spiritual dimensions adequately.

7. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The workshop teased out several core themes:

- Climate change-induced relocation as a highly complex 'wicked problem';

- The need for a holistic and integrated multi-stakeholder and multi-scalar approach: coordination and cooperation of a variety of actors—state, non-state traditional, civil society, private sector—and for integrative approaches across scales, from the local to the international;

- The need for inclusive dialogue and communication between a plurality of narratives and voices, in times of a crisis of trust;

- The importance of time (not least for building relationships and trust), the tension between tight externally imposed timeframes and the need for a long-term approach;

- The problem with standardised formats and the need for high flexibility, both with regard to relocation planning and conflict prevention;

- The marginalisation of social, cultural and spiritual aspects in technically-informed relocation; in this context, the importance of local traditional knowledge was highlighted;

- The challenges of meaningful community participation beyond mere tokenism, and, connected to this, the often unaddressed problem of power imbalances and power dynamics, that is questions like: who is included in decision-making, who decides about inclusion and exclusion, what does consultation and participation actually look like, whose voices are heard, and whose are silenced, how can the gap between governments and communities be bridged, what does transparent decision-making and genuine consultations actually mean in a Pacific context?;

- And finally, the limits of a merely human-centred approach (which is still inherent in a rather comprehensive and progressive concept such as human security) were problematised, and a plea was made for a 'whole of life' approach.

These Pacific experiences and perspectives should be introduced into the international discourse about climate change induced relocation; international actors, like donors and

INGOs, have a role to play in this regard. There are important stories of climate justice work, of resilience and ingenuity out there in the Pacific communities. These stories should be shared as messages of hope.

Such messages of hope are needed in the current COVID-19 crisis. This crisis can also be seen as a chance to think creatively about what 'community' means, how it emerges and how it can become the source of resilience. The interconnected crises of COVID-19 and climate change force us and enable us to transcend the way of thinking and behaving which led to these crises in the first place. Embedded in a relational 'whole of life' approach, ethical values can become central to climate change adaptation and relocation – beyond merely technical fixes and material and financial considerations.

Flowing from the discussions of the workshop and these conclusions, the following recommendations can be made:

- Thinking about and planning for climate change induced relocation has to transcend project cycles – long-term timeframes and programmes are necessary (ten years and more), and finances have to be secured long-term;

- Decision-making has to be inclusive and transparent in each and every stage of community relocation, embracing a broad spectrum of stakeholders and linking different scales;

- Community participation in planning, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation has to be front and centre in relocation endeavours;

- Such community participation has to be conducted based on local customary formats that allow communities to speak their own language and follow their own practices, and which include local traditional knowledge;

- Urban planning needs more attention in the context of climate change induced human mobility; it has to take into account climate change as a driver of urbanisation and it has to secure urban settlements against the—conflict-prone—effects of climate change;

- Collaboration and dialogue between climate science experts, churches and community leaders, weaving together climate science, local traditional knowledge and the spirit of creation care, has to form the basis of adaptation and relocation policy and practice;

- Relocation has to be conflict-sensitive; conflict analysis and peacebuilding measures have to be developed in the specific local context, together with communities and other stakeholders, targeted at that specific context;

- Dialogues for the exchange of experiences, knowledge and perspectives have to be organised, both vertically, e.g. between communities and governments, and horizontally, e.g. between communities in various stages of relocation, in various localities, across countries;

- External actors who come in to support community relocation have to listen and to learn first, and they have a role to play in making the voices and the stories of communities heard in the international context.

Acknowledgements

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