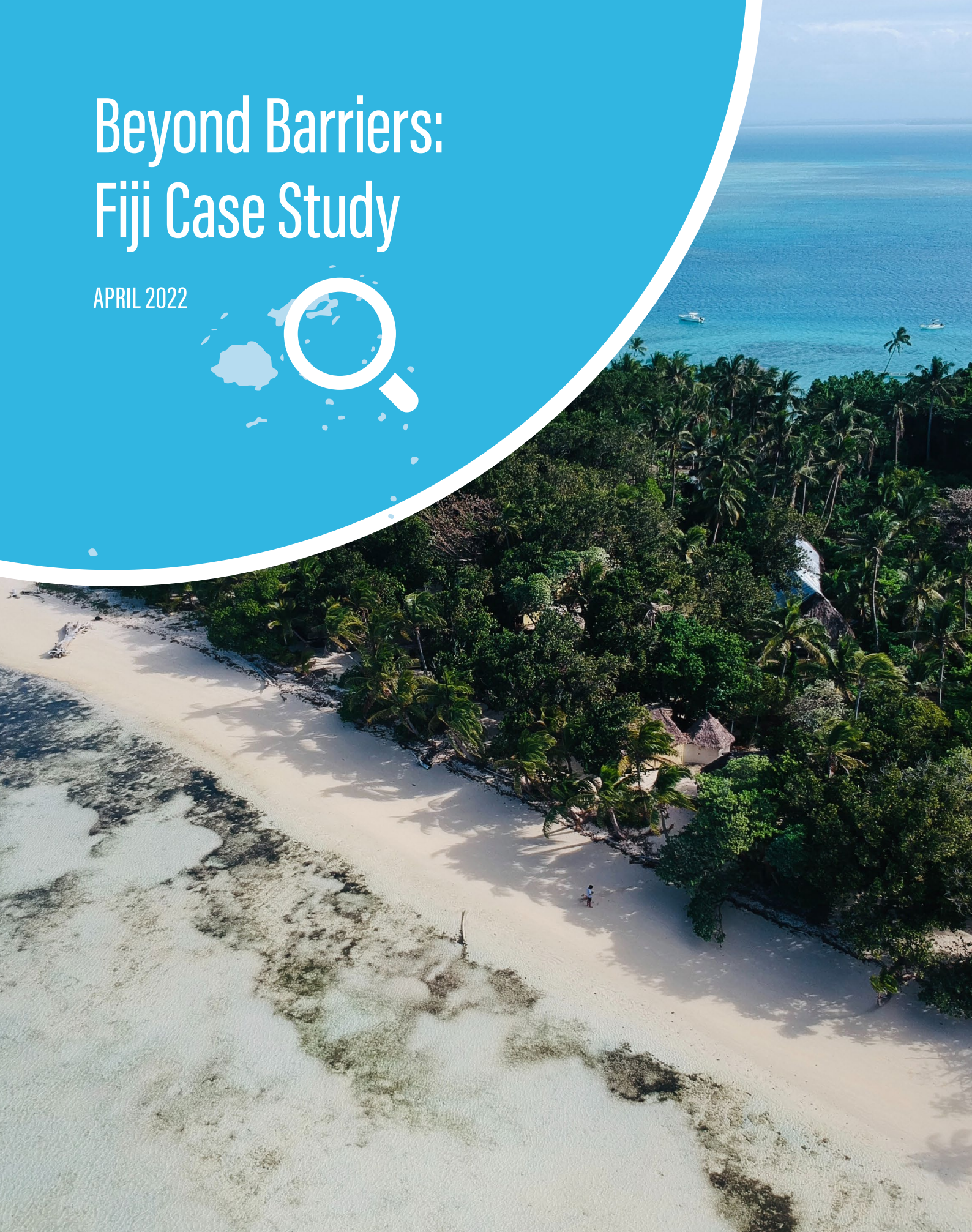


# Beyond Barriers: Fiji Case Study

APRIL 2022



HUMANITARIAN  
ADVISORY GROUP



AHP

Australian Humanitarian Partnership

World Vision





# Acknowledgements

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## About the research

This project is exploring opportunities for integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction programming, focusing on local practice and implications at the community level, while recognising that these are often shaped by national and regional policy frameworks. It seeks to capture local evidence of best practice and identify ways to strengthen and build on these models.

Phase 1 involves case studies across the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) Disaster Ready program, including Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea (PNG). Phase 2 will extend data collection outside of AHP programming to validate findings using a wider regional dataset, including case studies in Tonga and Kiribati. This data is being collected through desk review,<sup>1</sup> key informant interviews at the global, regional and national levels, and community focus group discussions in case study countries. Recommendations from this work will inform future AHP programming and supplement ongoing discussions at the national and regional level in the Pacific.

The research is being undertaken by Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) and supported by World Vision Australia through the AHP Disaster READY and Partnership and Performance Funds 2. These funding streams are managed by Alinea Whitelum on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

## About Humanitarian Advisory Group

HAG was founded in 2012 to elevate the profile of humanitarian action in Asia and the Pacific. Set up as a social enterprise, HAG provides a unique space for thinking, research, technical advice and training that contributes to excellence in humanitarian practice. As an ethically driven business, we combine humanitarian passion with entrepreneurial agility to think and do things differently.

## About Disaster READY

The Disaster READY initiative is part of the AHP, a five-year (2017-22), \$50 million partnership between DFAT and Australian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to improve humanitarian response. Disaster READY was designed to strengthen disaster preparedness and management across the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

Disaster READY serves to strengthen local humanitarian capability in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, PNG and Timor-Leste so that communities are better prepared for and able to manage and respond to rapid and slow-onset disasters. This includes ensuring that the rights and needs of women, people with disabilities, youth and children are being upheld and met in disaster preparedness and response at all levels.

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<sup>1</sup> A literature review from this research was published in July 2020: [Beyond Barriers: Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific](#).

# Acronyms

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AHP	Australian Humanitarian Partnership
DFAT	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
CCA	climate change adaptation
CCICD	Climate Change and International Cooperation Division
CDMC	Community Disaster Management Committee
DRR	disaster risk reduction
ECAL	Environmental and Climate Adaptation Levy
FGD	focus group discussion
FJG	Fijian dollars
FRDP	Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDMC	National Disaster Management Council
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PIC	Pacific Island Country
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PWD	people with disabilities
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN	United Nations
USD	US dollars

# Introduction

Fiji is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, some of which are projected to be increasingly frequent and severe due to the changing climate. The country was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> on the World Risk Index for 2021.<sup>2</sup> As such, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) continue to be major priorities of the Fijian government. Fiji was one of the first Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to submit a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2018, advocating for an integrated approach to DRR and CCA. The government also recently underwent a comprehensive reform process to update laws and policies surrounding DRR and CCA. Governance structures and policies for DRR and CCA remain separate, but are explicitly interlinked. Evidence suggests that integration is occurring at the implementation level in the absence of a unifying framework or single authority. This case study explores Fiji's progress in integration of CCA and DRR, identifying key themes and opportunities for stakeholders to advance approaches that reduce risk and enhance resilience at the community level in Fiji.

## Purpose of the case study

This case study aims to describe a country-specific approach to CCA and DRR integration and inform the strengthening of community-level outcomes. The study focuses on Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) programming in Fiji, although its results are intended for consideration by a wider range of stakeholders.

This case study will complement six other country case studies and additional Pacific-wide datasets. Findings across the entire dataset will be presented in a final report addressing the overarching questions below.

1. What are the existing challenges and opportunities in the implementation of integrated DRR and CCA programming?
2. How can AHP programs strengthen the integration of DRR and CCA at the community level in case study countries?

## Definitions

**Disaster risk reduction (DRR):** Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.<sup>3</sup>

**Climate change adaptation (CCA):** The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate change and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to the expected climate and its effects.<sup>4</sup>

**Integration:** In this report, the term 'integration' is used to refer to the integration of DRR and CCA, meaning the combination of interventions that address CCA and DRR with the intention of improving humanitarian and development outcomes for at-risk and crisis-affected populations.<sup>5</sup>

2 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2021-world-risk-report.pdf>

3 IPCC 2019 Glossary, available at [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/01/SYRAR5-Glossary\\_en.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/01/SYRAR5-Glossary_en.pdf)

4 Ibid.

5 This is a working definition adapted from the Global Nutrition Cluster and will be further refined and explored through this research. Available at: [Developing an Integrated Approach to Humanitarian Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)

# Methodology



Data collection was led by national researchers, overseen by a senior researcher based in Suva, Fiji and supported by HAG, World Vision Australia and AHP agencies and partners. The research used a mixed methods approach, including a desk review of 20+ documents, key informant interviews with 13 critical stakeholders, and seven community focus group discussions (FGDs) in three communities with 62 representatives, including men, women, children, elders and people with disabilities (PWD). National researchers contextualised research tools for Fiji.

## Limitations

**COVID-19 context and restrictions:** COVID-19 restrictions hindered field travel in Fiji, as well as the ability to interview some stakeholders due to competing priorities. As such, it was not possible to visit all of the communities planned for focus group discussions. This limited exposure to some agency programming.

**Representativeness:** Thirteen stakeholders participated in in-depth interviews, and 62 people took part in FGDs in three communities. These methods elicited a range of perspectives, but the small number of participants relative to the population of Fiji means that findings should be considered in tandem with other context-specific factors.

**Applicability of findings:** This study was intended to present findings and opportunities that are relevant not only to AHP agencies, but other agencies operating and intending to operate in Fiji. However, research participants focused on AHP agencies and programs, therefore the results may not be fully applicable to other agencies.

## Structure of this report

This report presents a brief snapshot of findings from data collection in three main sections.

- i. The first section provides an **overview of the disaster and climate context** in Fiji.
- ii. The second section provides an **overview of policy and practices** that influence DRR and CCA interventions and approaches.
- iii. The third section presents the **key findings and opportunities for stakeholders** in Fiji.

# Section 1: Setting the scene – the disaster and climate context in Fiji

This section provides a brief overview of Fiji's climate and disaster risk, and the institutional arrangements that structure climate and disaster risk reduction efforts.

## Climate and disaster risk profile

Fiji is located in Melanesia, in the South Pacific, and is comprised of 322 islands, approximately 110 of which are inhabited. Located in the vicinity of the Pacific Ring of Fire, it is highly exposed to earthquakes, earthquake-inflicted tsunamis and landslides, in addition to severe meteorological events, which often cause hydro-meteorological hazards. Most of Fiji's approximately 907,000<sup>6</sup> people are severely vulnerable to natural hazards, including those associated with climate change, with most of the population and infrastructure located within close proximity to the ocean and therefore highly exposed to rising sea levels and weather-related hazards.<sup>7</sup>

Some existing and forecast contextual challenges facing Fiji are listed below.



Climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of cyclones and natural hazards.<sup>8</sup>



Climate-inflicted extreme rainfall patterns will increase the frequency of landslides, posing risks to livelihoods, infrastructure and agriculture.<sup>9</sup>



Fiji's agricultural sector will face severe damage from cyclones and floods; these have caused over USD500 million in losses to the sector over the past 16 years.<sup>10</sup>



Around 20% of Fiji's urban population live in unplanned settlements which are highly vulnerable to natural hazards.<sup>11</sup>



25,700 people are being pushed into poverty due to cyclones and floods each year; this is projected to reach 32,400 people per year by 2050.<sup>12</sup>



Mean sea level is projected to rise by 8–31cm by 2055, and 21–62cm by 2100, posing a significant risk to Fiji's large coastal-based population.<sup>13</sup>



Extreme weather events are projected to become 'normal', increasing risk of damage to livelihoods, infrastructure and economic sectors.<sup>14</sup>



Projected changes in weather patterns will intensify wet seasons and create hotter dry seasons; this will disrupt biodiversity and agriculture, as well as increase the threat of climate-sensitive diseases such as Dengue fever.<sup>15</sup>

6 Statistics Times, 2022, [Population of Fiji](#)

7 UNISDR, 2019, [Disaster risk reduction in the Republic of Fiji](#)

8 Ibid.

9 World Bank Group (2021), [Climate Risk Country Profile: Fiji](#)

10 DFAT, 2021, [Fiji - Australia's commitment to strengthening climate and disaster resilience in the Pacific](#)

11 GFDRR, 2018, [Assessing Fiji's climate vulnerability: a blueprint for building resilience](#)

12 World Bank Group, 2017, [Climate vulnerability assessment: Making Fiji climate resilient](#),

13 IFRC, 2021, [Climate change impacts on health and livelihoods: Fiji assessment](#)

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.





Photo: Jeremy Bezanger on Unsplash

### Box 1: Spotlight on Laucala Island

One of the communities visited for this research is located on Laucala Island, in the Cakaudrove province of Fiji. Laucala Island is subject to heavy rains, cyclones, flooding, coastal erosion and sea level rise. Participants in the FGDs reflected that crop yields are getting smaller due to the changing climate and salt intrusion in the plantations. Also, people are struggling to fish because many species have migrated to other environments due to changes in sea temperature, and high tides continue to damage and erode the shoreline.<sup>16</sup>

**“It is like the island is getting smaller and smaller, [I fear] that we won’t have an island within the next 50 years. The seasons have changed and do not follow its usual period of occurrences.”**  
(Community member)<sup>17</sup>

## Overview of governance

Governance arrangements for DRR and CCA in Fiji remain separate, but there is evidence of coordination and collaboration between the bodies. At the ministerial level, climate change is governed by the Climate Change and International Cooperation Division (CCICD) of the Ministry of Economy. DRR governance is split between three Ministries: Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, Ministry of Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, and Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Community Development.<sup>18</sup>

Following the devastation from Cyclone Winston in 2016, the Fijian government began the process to update and revise policy and governance structures for both DRR and climate change. This resulted in new national policies and legislative updates, which sought to refine and strengthen institutional arrangements for disaster and climate change. A key feature in all updates is the acknowledgement and prioritisation of the integration of DRR and CCA measures. While governance remains separate, it is clear that separate bodies are working together towards a common goal.<sup>19</sup> However, challenges persist surrounding effective coordination between government, non-governmental organisation (NGOs) and the private sector, and inconsistent methods for collecting and sharing information across numerous governing bodies.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> FGDs 3, 4

<sup>17</sup> FGD 3

<sup>18</sup> [The Republic of Fiji National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018-2030](#)

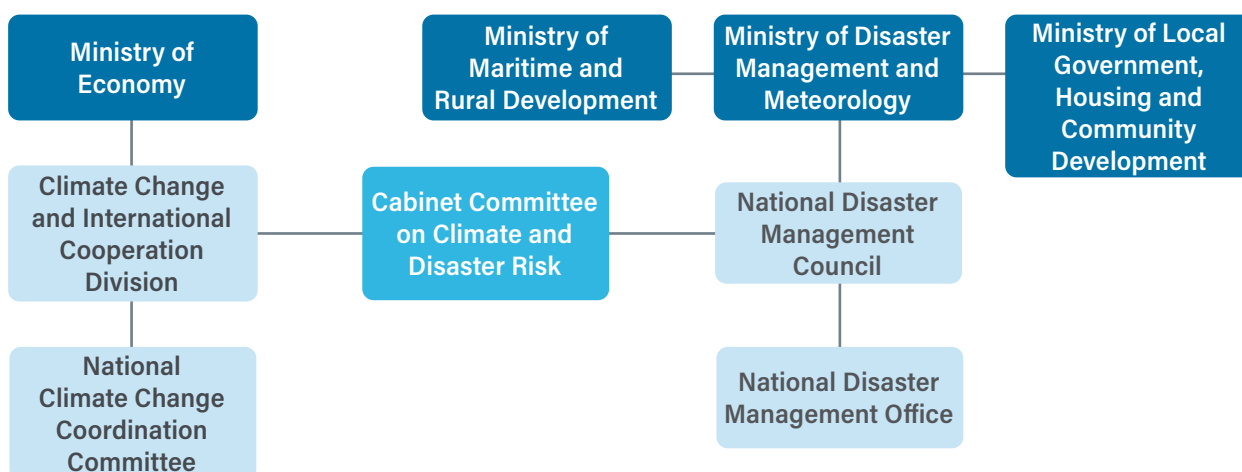
<sup>19</sup> IFRC, 2020, [World Disasters report 2020](#); Republic of Fiji National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018-2030 (2018); Republic of Fiji National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030

<sup>20</sup> IFRC, 2020, [Law and policies that protect the most vulnerable against climate related disaster risks: Findings and lessons learned from Pacific Island Countries](#)

## Key governing bodies

- The **Climate Change and International Cooperation Division (CCICD)** sits within the Ministry of Economy. It is the primary body responsible for the implementation of the National Climate Change Policy. It manages the coordination of climate finance, reporting, knowledge management, advisory support, national advocacy and awareness and international engagement.
- The **National Climate Change Coordination Committee** is the main provider of guidance and policy advice to government on all matters relating to climate change and disaster management. It ensures climate considerations are integrated across cross-cutting policies and frameworks.
- The **Cabinet Committee on Climate and Disaster Risk** was established by the National Climate Change Policy in 2018, to improve high-level oversight of climate and disaster risks and national responses and support high-level inter-governmental policy decisions intended to advance national risk management and resilient development objectives.
- The **Ministry of Disaster Management and Meteorological Services** is responsible for meteorological communications and leading the establishment and implementation of DRR-related policies, programs and action.
- The **Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development** is responsible for the design of policies and implementation of programs relating to rural and maritime services, and is mandated to facilitate disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, as well as emergency operation, relief and rehabilitation.
- The **Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Community Development** coordinates with other DRR bodies in implementing resilience-building programs.
- The **National Disaster Management Council (NDMC)** is responsible for the formulation of policies and strategies for disaster management and DRR.
- The **National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)** is the central agency implementing and coordinating the implementation of NDMC policies, including disaster mitigation and preparedness.

Figure A: Climate and Disaster Governance in Fiji





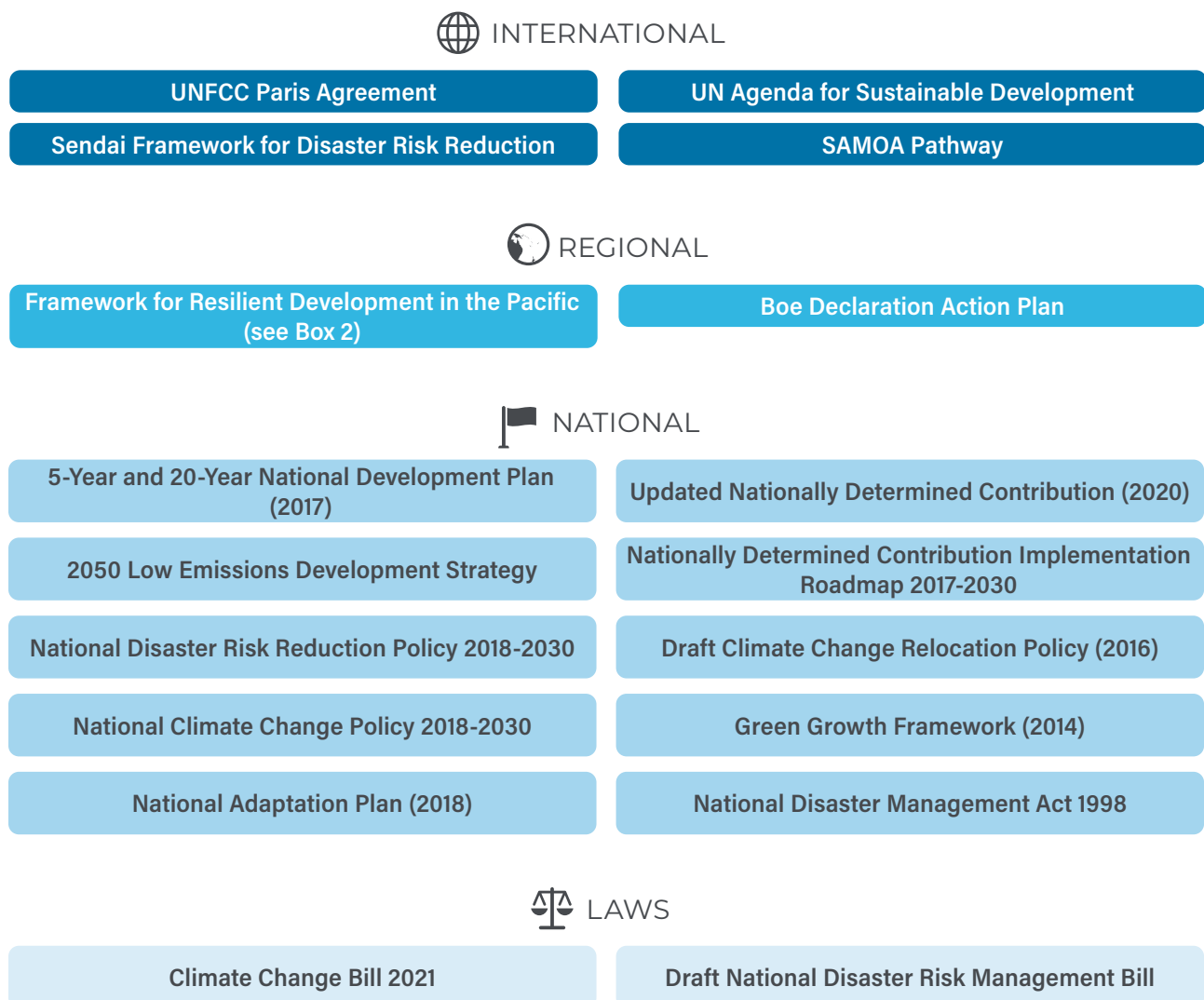
# Section 2: Lay of the land – Policy and practice in Fiji

This section highlights policies and funding arrangements relevant to disaster management, DRR and climate change in Fiji – the context in which implementing agencies operate. This section also provides a brief overview of AHP programming in the country.

## Snapshot of key policies, plans and frameworks for DRR and CCA

Fiji has made considerable progress in recent years in updating policies and frameworks that explicitly address climate change and DRR. This infographic (see Figure B) provides a high-level snapshot of the key policies, plans and frameworks for DRR and CCA in Fiji, including relevant policies at the regional and international level that influence national policy instruments.

Figure B: Key plans, policies and frameworks for DRR and CCA in Fiji



## Box 2: Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)

The FRDP represents the world's first integrated regional framework to build and strengthen resilience to disasters and climate change. The framework was created in response to regional recognition that climate change and disaster risks are cross-cutting and interrelated.<sup>21</sup> It provides strategic guidance to stakeholders on how best to respond to disaster risk, including those associated with climate change.

In Fiji, critical planning processes have used the FRDP as a core regional guiding document. For example, the NAP stocking processes incorporated relevant actions from the FRDP to in its approach to building resilience to climate change and disasters.<sup>22</sup>

Fiji has recently gone through a substantial reform process, reviewing and updating policies, frameworks and laws for both DRR and CCA. This has included the adoption of two separate policies for climate change and DRR and the development of two laws. Although the policies and legislation remain separate, each explicitly regards DRR and CCA as intrinsically linked and acknowledges the importance of addressing them in tandem. In 2020, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) argued that the parallel advancement of separate reforms and policies in Fiji has not caused counterproductive redundancies or duplications, rather has demonstrated that *DRR-CCA integration can occur in the absence of a single regulatory framework or governing authority*.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, the NAP and the National Development Plan (NDP) clearly advocate for an integrated approach to CCA and DRR. As noted earlier, Fiji was one of the first PICs to submit a formal NAP to the UNFCCC, in which it expressed its alignment with both global and regional frameworks for DRR and CCA. Both the National Climate Change Policy and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy have been integrated into the NAP. The NDP was developed by the MoE through extensive consultation with the private sector, civil society, community groups and the general public, demonstrating a participatory approach to policy development and the incorporation of community views.<sup>24</sup> However, the IFRC's research also highlighted a critical gap in understanding the impact of policies at the local level; this research found that there is a relationship between policy and practice at the community level, but there is opportunity to strengthen this link (see Box 3).

## Box 3: Policy to practice

**"There is a direct relationship between what happens at the ground level and the policies made. Although, this area is quite weak because on the ground level the needs are not adequately reflected in policy."**

**(National actor)<sup>25</sup>**

There were mixed views on how much influence policy had on community practice. Several stakeholders agreed that there was a relationship between policy and practice, but there is opportunity to further strengthen this link.<sup>26</sup> For example, one respondent emphasised the importance of ensuring communities understand the roles and responsibilities that policy documents lay out for specific members of their communities. This includes the coordination role between the village headman and the district officer, which then feeds into NDMO assessment and activities. If the village headman (or community focal point), district officer and NDMO work together, the response can be more targeted and meaningful, in line with policy guidance.<sup>27</sup>

21 FRDP 2017-2030

22 Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan: A pathway towards climate resilience, 2018

23 IFRC, 2020, Law and policies that protect the most vulnerable against climate related disaster risks

24 Ibid

25 Interview 5

26 Interviews 4, 5

27 Interview 9

Others suggested that at the community level there was little need to maintain awareness of policies and plans for DRR and CCA. They argued that communities were more concerned with specific projects being implemented and what this means for their lives and livelihoods.<sup>28</sup>

**“In terms of bringing it to the community level, communities do not care about the frameworks. Rather, they are concerned about what makes sense to them. Communities care about how the project benefits their livelihoods and their children.” (INGO actor)<sup>29</sup>**

Whilst there is a perception that policies have minimal utility at the community level, the relationship between policies and programs was consistently understood. Therefore, strengthening the implementation of policies is an opportunity to progress integration at the community level.

## Financing mechanisms

Fiji receives external climate and disaster risk financing through multilateral organisations, bilateral donors, foundations and NGOs, and climate funds. The CCICD acts as a conduit between donors, climate funds and sector recipients of climate finance. It also monitors national budget processes and works with relevant offices within the Ministry of Finance to improve budget tracking and reporting.<sup>30</sup>

Fiji also dedicates a considerable amount of domestic funding to CCA and DRR. For example, in 2017, Fiji was the first developing country to successfully issue a sovereign green bond,<sup>31</sup> which raised FJD\$100 million to fund climate projects. The country also raised more than FJD\$392 million between 2017 and 2019 through an Environmental and Climate Adaptation Levy (ECAL), imposed on specific goods and services to fund domestic efforts to adapt to climate change and reduce disaster risk.<sup>32</sup>

Fiji has also invested significantly in disaster risk financing and insurance. It has established two dedicated funds, the National Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund and the Rehabilitation Fund to support DRR and recovery activities. The Ministry of Finance and the NDMO work together to allocate funds.<sup>33</sup> There are also examples of smaller funds, which have been used to support communities to prepare for or recover from disaster (see Box 4).

### Box 4: Fiji's Climate Relocation and Displaced Peoples Trust Fund

In 2019, the Fiji Government launched a trust fund dedicated to finance anticipatory relocation of communities and infrastructure considered to be threatened by severe climate or disaster risk. This fund is designed to act as a source of immediate finance to support communities displaced unexpectedly following a disaster event. The fund is resourced by both domestic revenue and external donor support. The Fiji Government deposits 3% of all revenue raised through ECAL in the trust fund, and also seeks contributions from bilateral and multilateral sources.<sup>34</sup>

28 Interview 1

29 Interview 1

30 [Republic of Fiji National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030 \(2018\)](#)

31 Green bonds are debt instruments used by the government to finance projects that have a positive impact on the environment.

32 Fijian Ministry of Economy, 2020, [Fiji Climate Finance Snapshot 2016-2019](#)

33 Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative, 2015, [Country Note: Fiji](#), Disaster risk financing and insurance

34 PIFS, 2021, [An Overview of Climate and Disaster Risk Financing Options for Pacific Island Countries](#)



## AHP Disaster READY in Fiji

Disaster READY in Fiji is implemented by a consortium of four lead Australian NGOs and a diverse range of local partners delivering risk reduction, adaptation and emergency response programming across the country. At the community level, Disaster READY focuses on inclusive community-based DRR to ensure that people with disabilities (PWD), women and children are involved in disaster planning and that their diverse needs are being met. Objectives and activities include building community awareness, knowledge and preparedness for disasters, community disaster planning, the mapping of churches and other buildings as evacuation centres, volunteer training, strategic warehousing of supplies, and support for psychosocial and child protection activities. Additionally, the program is supporting the development of a training guide and awareness program for the NDMO. The program will also seek to strengthen coordination mechanisms among humanitarian actors, improving approaches to better meet the needs of women, men, youth, PWD, elderly people, and gender minorities.<sup>35</sup>

Figure C: Communities visited that receive assistance through Disaster READY



35 Australian Humanitarian Partnership (2021), Disaster READY Fiji



Photo: Jeremy Bezanger on Unsplash

## Section 3: Integration in action – Findings and Opportunities



### FINDING 1: Maintaining separate policies for DRR and CCA is not a significant barrier to integrated programming in Fiji.

While policies and governance for DRR and CCA remain separate in Fiji, they are explicitly linked. DRR considerations are integrated throughout the National Climate Change Policy, and CCA considerations are equally evident through the National DRR Policy. This research finds that while separate structures can cause significant challenges for integrated approaches, as evidenced in other countries,<sup>36</sup> in Fiji, programmatic integration is occurring without need for a single unifying policy.

At the national level, several Ministries have demonstrated efforts to integrate DRR and CCA considerations in sectoral strategy and planning (see Box 5). This demonstrates progress in mainstreaming DRR CCA integration throughout cross-cutting sectors in the absence of an integrated policy or governance structure, supporting the IFRC (2020) finding that separate governance has not necessarily hindered progress.<sup>37</sup>

#### Box 5: Fijian Ministries mainstream DRR CCA integration in sectoral plans

Several Fijian Ministries have shown evidence of the integration of DRR and CCA considerations in their systems and operations. This includes:

- Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development formally adopted risk screening into its standard operating procedure as a mandatory part of the Divisional development planning process in efforts to ensure that risk assessment is institutionalised.<sup>38</sup>
- Ministry of Economy has revised the Public Sector Investment Program template to include risk management considerations and also established four resilient development positions within the Ministry to oversee resilient investment and planning.<sup>39</sup>
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services, which has established effective surveillance of epidemics through use of an early warning, alert and response system in preparation and response to natural hazards and emergencies.<sup>40</sup>
- Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has also been involved in training of community development facilitators around themes such as safety, unity and social inclusion in planning for increased risks from natural hazards and climate change.<sup>41</sup>
- Ministry of Agriculture has also taken steps to integrate DRR and CCA concerns into strategic plans for a resilient agriculture sector.<sup>42</sup>

36 HAG, 2021, *Beyond Barriers – Timor-Leste case study*, pp 15 & 16; HAG, 2022, *Beyond Barriers – Papua New Guinea*, pp 14 & 15

37 IFRC, 2020, *Law and policies that protect the most vulnerable against climate related disaster risks*

38 UNDP, 2021, *Risk-Informed Development: A strategy tool for integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into development*, Annex D: Country case studies

39 Ibid

40 UNISDR, 2019, *Disaster risk reduction in the Republic of Fiji*

41 UNDP, 2021, Annex D: Country case studies

42 Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, 2022

At a programmatic level, interviews demonstrated a mixed awareness of policies among stakeholders. Some stakeholders indicated that their agencies had aligned programs with existing national policies, while others were not as familiar with recently updated policies. However, in both instances, stakeholders shared examples of how implementers are consistently working in an integrated approach (see Box 6).

#### **Box 6: Organisations taking the lead in implementing an integrated approach**

Evidence gathered during this case study demonstrated that there are strong examples of integrated programming in Fiji. For example, CARE uses a climate vulnerability analysis manual, which is an integrated manual that guides analysis of vulnerability to both climate change and other natural hazards.<sup>43</sup> Empower Pacific, a national organisation promoting health and well-being in Fiji communities, also utilises an integrated approach in their work by providing awareness and training on resilience initiatives for future effects of climate change and disasters.<sup>44</sup> Partners in Community Development Fiji also uses an integrated approach to deliver trainings, and additionally assists communities in establishing Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), which manage risks associated with climate change and disaster preparedness.<sup>45</sup>

**“[The CDMC] will harmonise the three themes of CCA, DRR and resilience, thus making it easier for communities to build their resilience towards risks that they are usually exposed to.” (National actor)<sup>46</sup>**

Some stakeholders indicated that there is generally a larger focus on DRR than CCA, and this is an area that could be strengthened.<sup>47</sup> It was suggested that more needs to be done to integrate CCA in DRR frameworks and facilitate a community-led approach to integration and resilience building.<sup>48</sup> Because communities are the first responders, empowering and supporting local actors to lead activities is the most beneficial and sustainable approach to building resilience.<sup>49</sup> There is opportunity to further build on understanding within communities that does not differentiate between the two fields.

**“Even when informing communities of the difference between DRR and CCA, communities still refer to each aspect as the same thing.” (INGO actor)<sup>50</sup>**

There is an opportunity to further socialise and operationalise national policies to increase their influence on integrated practice in Fiji. While evidence suggests that many stakeholders are already working in an integrated approach, efforts to further strengthen the link between policy and practice will help to ensure approaches are consistent and properly resourced across communities.

**“The two departments that oversee CCA and DRR operations have to align themselves because if these two co-operate then they’ll be able to bring [that approach] down to our level or to the district level maybe.” (National actor)<sup>51</sup>**

43 Interview 2

44 Interview 3

45 Interview 8

46 Interview 8

47 Interviews 1, 2, 8

48 Interview 1

49 Interview 3

50 Interview 1

51 Interview 8





## OPPORTUNITIES

Continue to build on bottom-up progress at the community level, cognisant of the tendency for DRR to be more prominent than CCA. Look for opportunities to balance the focus.

Support socialisation and operationalisation of policies with a focus on their similarities, not differences.

Donors/funders should seek avenues for funding that flexibly support integrated approaches rather than reinforce prevailing silos.



## FINDING 2: There is scope for existing coordination mechanisms to consolidate an integrated approach.

While there is evidence of coherence between separate structures at a policy and governance level, there is still scope for enhanced integration within existing coordination mechanisms. Current forums do not always have an integrated focus or active participation from key stakeholders.

Key informants indicated that several coordination mechanisms exist for DRR and CCA in Fiji; they include, most prominently, the cluster system and the AHP Disaster READY Country Committee. Respondents acknowledged that these forums were generally effective but focused mainly on DRR, with less consideration of CCA activities.

**“The cluster system in Fiji for example focuses on certain aspects of DRR; the climate change adaptation or context is usually absent from this cluster discussion.” (INGO actor)<sup>52</sup>**

Several stakeholders mentioned the importance of better integrating climate change across DRR coordination forums.<sup>53</sup> For example, it was noted that the cluster system focuses mainly on DRR and response activities and typically does not include climate change actors or consider climate impacts.<sup>54</sup> The Country Committee was also seen to have a greater focus on DRR in some instances, with coordination of CCA activities being on more of an ad hoc basis.<sup>55</sup> Other forums also exist among actors that are left out of the more formal mechanisms, which has led to some challenges with duplication of efforts.<sup>56</sup>

**“There are forums where climate change or DRR preparedness and response are discussed but they don’t necessarily talk to each other, which potentially is a gap in the region, particularly when I think of the cluster system, it isn’t looking at forward planning for climate change.” (INGO actor)<sup>57</sup>**

It was suggested that the clusters need to review their terms of reference to clarify roles and membership to include climate change actors and CCA activities to limit the proliferation of separate

<sup>52</sup> Interview 2

<sup>53</sup> Interviews 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9

<sup>54</sup> Interviews 2, 5, 8

<sup>55</sup> Interviews 1, 2

<sup>56</sup> Interviews 1, 2, 8

<sup>57</sup> Interview 2

forums.<sup>58</sup> There has been progress within the AHP Country Committee mechanism to better integrate CCA activities, but this is viewed as an area that still needs to be strengthened.<sup>59</sup>

**“The AHP is an example of a great coordination mechanism that brings together organisations working on DRR, CCA and resilience [...] the forums are effective but critical stakeholders are missing, there are other people who can be included to be part of these forums, so it not limited to only AHP partners.” (National actor)<sup>60</sup>**

Moreover, existing coordination platforms do not consistently or systematically engage some key stakeholders – such as local organisations, churches and community representatives – in formal mechanisms.<sup>61</sup> The absence of community representatives and local actors in forums can impair coordination with communities and impede the flow of information to them<sup>62</sup> (see finding 3).

**“[Important actors to include in coordination and information sharing] include the church, the Vanua<sup>63</sup> our schools and provincial office. Since these are the systems that help governs us, it will be easier for them to provide the relevant information with the guidance of the National Disaster Management Office” (Community member)<sup>64</sup>**



## OPPORTUNITIES

Strengthen existing coordination forums through i) inclusion of climate change coordination in their terms of reference, and ii) making integrated coordination mechanisms more inclusive for a broader range of relevant stakeholders.

Ensure open communication between community representatives and district officials & community representatives and implementers.



## FINDING 3: Meaningful, appropriate two-way information sharing is integral to strengthening community resilience.

Community members reported that existing communication channels are generally effective in sharing information about weather forecasts and early warning signals. They cited channels including their village headmen, radio, social and mass media, and word of mouth.<sup>65</sup> However, community members called for more information on the longer-term impacts and projections of climate change and disasters to better understand their own vulnerability and solutions to adapt.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Interviews 1, 2, 8

<sup>59</sup> Interviews 2, 9

<sup>60</sup> Interview 10

<sup>61</sup> Interviews 2, 10

<sup>62</sup> FGDs 1–7

<sup>63</sup> Vanua means 'land', 'home' or 'village' in many Austronesian languages

<sup>64</sup> FGD 3

<sup>65</sup> FGDs 1–7

<sup>66</sup> FGDs 4, 7,

**“We [want] assistance in terms of understanding the terms of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and what do we need to better equip ourselves with the knowledge and resources to increase the resilience of our community.” (Community member)<sup>67</sup>**

The importance of ensuring that relevant information is translated, accessible and easy to understand was emphasised.<sup>68</sup> Information will be different for inland and coastal communities, as well as for men, women, children, elders and PWD. It is also important to ensure messaging is tailored to targeted audiences, inclusive and accessible to all groups.<sup>69</sup>

However, sharing information should not only be one-way from agencies to communities, rather agencies can do more to listen to community members and build on existing knowledge and experience.<sup>70</sup> The importance of an effective feedback loop was also emphasised so that communities can own and update information regularly.<sup>71</sup>

**“Rather than saying ‘hey, there is this thing called climate change,’ we could ask what difference have you noticed with your agriculture, weather patterns. You’re now coming in with that harnessing existing knowledge approach rather than ‘we need to teach you because you’re just a community member and we’re a degree-educated member from Suva.” (INGO actor)<sup>72</sup>**

Stakeholders agreed that there was room for improvement in information gathering, management and sharing between agencies and communities;<sup>73</sup> there is no consistent approach to – or centralised system for – generating, managing, owning and translating climate change and disaster information.<sup>74</sup> This often leads to inadequate information sharing, or data being analysed or presented in a way that is not accessible to communities.<sup>75</sup>

**“In terms of who owns that information, this is where there is an interesting discussion because really it is the community that should own the information, but I think that the feedback loop from those processes doesn’t necessarily get back to communities.” (INGO actor)<sup>76</sup>**



## OPPORTUNITIES

Establish more standard practice/guidance around two-way information sharing with communities and external stakeholders.

Identify preferred communication modalities for different groups to ensure accessibility and appropriateness of information, including translation to vernacular.

Use integrated coordination mechanisms to strengthen information management channels and approaches and facilitate learning across agencies.

67 FGD 3

68 FGD 7; Interviews 1–5, 9

69 Interviews 1, 2, 4, 5

70 Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4

71 Interview 2

72 Interview 2

73 Interviews 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9

74 Interviews 1, 2, 3

75 Interviews 1, 2, 4

76 Interview 2





#### **Finding 4: Participation and inclusion of diverse groups is a priority area for strengthening to advance effective integrated DRR and CCA approaches.**

Findings suggest that participation and inclusion of diverse groups in planning and programming for DRR and CCA is an area that needs strengthening in Fiji. In order for approaches to integrated risk reduction to be effective, they must consider the unique concerns and abilities of all groups in the community.

**“For inclusion and participation our culture does not facilitate equal access, let alone participation, at community level. Even though our policies are around gender inclusion and disability. Often, we forget, in the context it needs a lot of sensitisations to be able to make changes in communities.” (INGO actor)<sup>77</sup>**

Stakeholders identified notable challenges in disability inclusion and accessibility and a lack of disaggregated data following disasters to identify unique concerns and gaps in assistance.<sup>78</sup> It was noted that disability inclusion is more advanced in DRR and disaster preparedness than in relation to CCA.<sup>79</sup>

**“We know that there are already integrated approaches at the community level but what we are really not seeing in terms of persons with disabilities is the disability inclusion into these integrated policies or approaches at the community level.” (National actor)<sup>80</sup>**

Cultural barriers were identified as the main hindrance to meaningful engagement.<sup>81</sup> Stakeholders acknowledged persistent challenges to inclusion in Fiji and that there is a lot to be done in sensitising approaches to suit local context and different social groupings, but expressed motivation to overcome

<sup>77</sup> Interview 1

<sup>78</sup> Interviews 5, 9

<sup>79</sup> Interview 5

<sup>80</sup> Interview 5

<sup>81</sup> Interviews 1, 2, 3, 5, 9

these barriers. One respondent suggested that program evaluations need to go beyond reporting on numbers to tackle the impact of participation and engagement of diverse groups in communities.<sup>82</sup>

**“At the beginning when partners ask us are you being inclusive, we say yes, we involve women and children in meetings, and they sign the participant registration sheet and we tick the box. However, now that doesn’t cut it. We want to know what was the impact, what was the result of them being involved in the meeting? Did they make an impact on any decision-making?” (INGO actor)<sup>83</sup>**

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of diverse groups’ engagement and leadership in decision-making for adaptation and risk reduction, rather than simply ensuring their inclusion as a box-ticking exercise.<sup>84</sup> Community members consistently identified youth as a key group that should be engaged in more in trainings, information sharing and implementing activities in the community.<sup>85</sup> Youth were perceived as capable and motivated to help protect the community and preserve their future by working together to reduce risk from climate change and disasters.<sup>86</sup> The experience of the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation in setting up disability emergency operations centres to serve as information hubs in disaster responses can be built upon to develop more integrated forums that connect organisations for PWD and focal points in the community with government agencies.<sup>87</sup>

**“I think in terms of language, we just need to be clear that when we are talking about these groups, we are not just talking about vulnerabilities but what they can offer as well. Sometimes we talk about vulnerability so much that we forget that every community member can contribute to an action plan or preparedness plan.” (INGO actor)<sup>88</sup>**

There is opportunity for implementing agencies to prioritise and strengthen inclusion and meaningful engagement of diverse groups in integrated approaches to DRR and CCA in communities. This includes not only ensuring that all needs are accounted for and met, but that all voices are heard and considered in decision-making.



## OPPORTUNITIES

Work on sensitising approaches to suit local context and diverse groups; ensure inclusion of diverse groups in decision-making, including the role of youth as the voice of the future.

Implementing agencies actively prioritise inclusion of PWD in integrated programs and ensure that program impact evaluations capture and report on learnings.

Develop disaggregated community profiles to inform decision-making.

82 Interview 5

83 Interview 9

84 Interviews 2, 5, 7, 9

85 FGDs 1–4, 7

86 FGDs 1, 2

87 Interview 5

88 Interview 2

## Summary: Snapshot of findings and opportunities

There is significant opportunity to build on the good practice and progress that is being made in policies and operational practices to enhance community outcomes related to CCA and DRR in PNG. Four key findings and opportunities for consideration by implementing agencies are presented below. Future phases of this research may seek to deepen the dataset and implement and assess recommendations to link evidence to impact.

 KEY FINDINGS	 OPPORTUNITIES
<b>Maintaining separate policies for DRR and CCA is not a significant barrier to integrated programming in Fiji</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Continue to build on bottom-up progress at the community level, cognisant of the tendency for DRR to be more prominent than CCA. Look for opportunities to balance the focus</li> <li>□ Support socialisation and operationalisation of policies with a focus on their similarities, not differences</li> <li>□ Donors/funders should seek avenues for funding that flexibly support integrated approaches rather than reinforce prevailing silos</li> </ul>
<b>There is scope for existing coordination mechanisms to consolidate an integrated approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Strengthen existing coordination forums through i) inclusion of climate change coordination in their terms of reference, and ii) making integrated coordination mechanisms more inclusive for a broader range of relevant stakeholders</li> <li>□ Ensure open communication between community representatives and district officials &amp; community representatives and implementers</li> </ul>
<b>Meaningful, appropriate two-way information sharing is integral to strengthening community resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Establish more standard practice/guidance around two-way information sharing with communities and external stakeholders</li> <li>□ Identify preferred communication modalities for different groups to ensure accessibility and appropriateness of information, including translation to vernacular</li> <li>□ Use integrated coordination mechanisms to strengthen information management channels and approaches and facilitate learning across agencies</li> </ul>
<b>Participation and inclusion of diverse groups is a priority area for strengthening to advance effective integrated DRR and CCA approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Establish more standard practice/guidance around two-way information sharing with communities and external stakeholders</li> <li>□ Identify preferred communication modalities for different groups to ensure accessibility and appropriateness of information, including translation to vernacular</li> <li>□ Use integrated coordination mechanisms to strengthen information management channels and approaches and facilitate learning across agencies</li> </ul>