

**IVCO**  
PACIFIC 2020

**VOLUNTEERING FOR**

**CLIMATE ACTION IN**

**PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES**

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR IVCO 2020**

**BONNIE LEARMONTH**



On behalf of the author, AVI and Forum are very proud to launch this paper, the first global research of its kind, at IVCO 2020.

We thank all those who contributed to the research. They are listed in Appendix 2.

## Volunteering for Climate Action in Pacific Island Countries

*“Notwithstanding the current threats and impacts of COVID-19, climate change remains the biggest threat facing humanity today. We must not lose sight of this reality. The COVID-19 public health emergency and its ensuing humanitarian and economic fallout offers us a glimpse of what the global climate change emergency can become – if it is left unchecked and if we do not act now.”*

— Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The words of Dame Meg Taylor echo those of the volunteers who contributed to this paper. All emphasised the urgency of global action on climate change, which cannot be delayed despite the current COVID-19 crisis. Individually, and within organisations, communities, and government departments, volunteers in Pacific Island Countries (PIC's)<sup>1</sup> are working tirelessly to support climate action from the community to the global level. This paper focuses on their efforts and seeks to spark ideas and discussion points for participants at the International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations' Conference 2020 (IVCO 2020). The paper is aimed in particular at members of the International Forum for Volunteering and Development (Forum), suggesting that we must and can better support climate action, and that there are opportunities to do so as a network, as individual members, through our volunteers, and through our partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup> For this paper, Pacific Island Countries include the independent states and territories in the Pacific excluding Australia, New Zealand, France, and the United States (see Williams and Duie-Ra 2018). Each Pacific country is different, and some of the general statements made in this paper are not applicable to all. Where possible specific reference to countries and communities is made.

This paper starts with an overview of its reach and rationale, followed by an introduction that provides the context as to why the Pacific is a highly relevant (virtual) setting for the IVCO 2020 theme, Volunteering for Climate Action, and then discusses:

- 1.** The efforts of community, national, regional and international volunteers in PIC's supporting climate action. This section will start with an overview of how volunteering is perceived in the Pacific and the importance of informal volunteering for community resilience, before drawing on examples of the different formal<sup>2</sup> voluntary efforts focused on climate action through awareness and advocacy, strengthening of resilience and disaster response, and strengthening and adapting policies and systems.
- 2.** How Forum members operating in PIC's are supporting climate action through their volunteer programmes.
- 3.** Reflections on what we, the volunteering for development sector, need to do to strengthen our efforts on volunteering for climate action in PIC's.

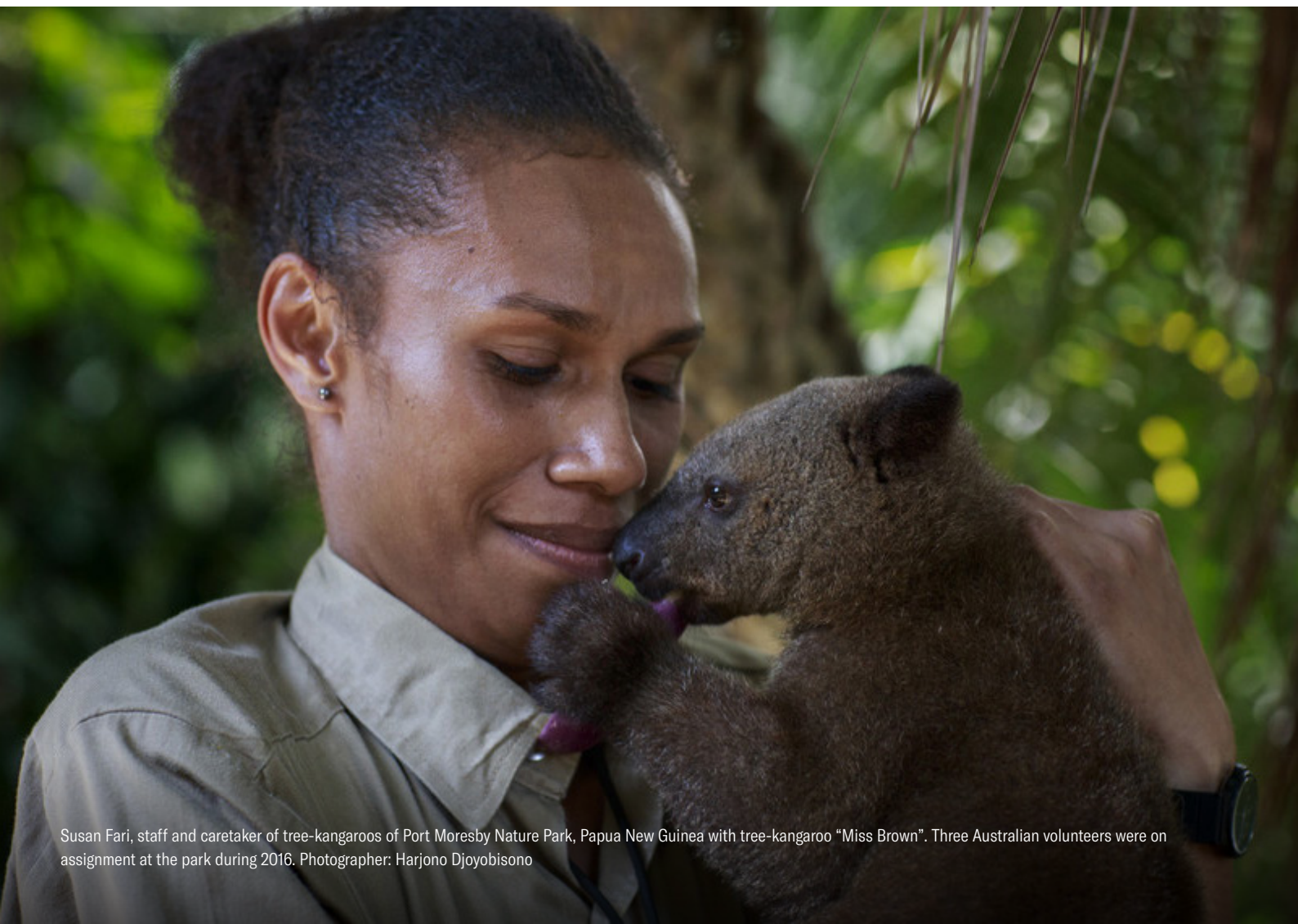
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<sup>2</sup> Formal volunteering is linked to a formal organisation, institution or programme of work. Informal volunteering is traditionally practised within communities in response to an individual or collective need and is not linked to a formal organisation or institution (see VSO and the Institute of Development Studies 2015, p. 7).

## 1. Reach and Rationale

The work of volunteers across PIC's is extensive, but not highly visible with volunteer efforts often not explicitly recognised in organisational and programme reporting and with minimal available volunteer data (see Tamasese et al 2010; UNV and the NYCF 2015).

This paper gathered information from over 30 people. Approximately fifty percent were working with a regional focus, five focused in Fiji and five in Vanuatu, four in Solomon Islands, two in Tonga, and one each in Kiribati and PNG. This research Forum members, their partners and volunteers active in the region, comprising AVI, Volunteer Services Abroad (VSA), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).



Susan Fari, staff and caretaker of tree-kangaroos of Port Moresby Nature Park, Papua New Guinea with tree-kangaroo "Miss Brown". Three Australian volunteers were on assignment at the park during 2016. Photographer: Harjono Djoyobisono

## 2. Pacific Island Countries, an Important Setting for IVCO 2020

The front line of the effects of climate change, the Pacific, provides an important setting for discussions at IVCO 2020. PIC's provide a clear demonstration of the extreme, immediate and increasing effects of climate change. Climate change is the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of people living in PIC's, the leaders of which have declared a climate crisis.<sup>3</sup> Amongst the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change (Tekiteki 2019), PIC's have high levels of exposure to intensifying and increasing natural disasters. Climate change threatens the productivity of agriculture and fisheries, the availability of fresh water and food, the effectiveness of coastal defences, the integrity of ecosystems, and causes damage to limited infrastructure (Pacific Community 2015a; Pacific Community et al 2016). It threatens the foundations of PIC economies: tourism, agricultural exports and fisheries (Pacific Community 2015a; Tekiteki 2019). In the last decade, some PIC's have experienced natural disaster losses that, in any single year, have approached or exceeded their GDP (Pacific Community et al 2016). Their small size, remote and isolated location over a vast area, dependence on natural resources and limited economic diversification, limit the capacity of PIC's to reduce their vulnerabilities (World Bank 2017). With the majority of the population (excluding Papua New Guinea (PNG)) living on the coast, communities are threatened (Pacific Community 2015a), with several community relocations already complete. Vulnerability is exacerbated in the poorest and most remote nations in the region (World Bank 2017) and amongst marginalised members of communities (SEREP et al 2016). The daily realities faced by people in PIC's demonstrate that climate change is not only an issue now, but one that affects all aspects of life, and therefore needs to be addressed in any development programming that is to be sustainable.

The Pacific has become a *"battle ground"* for the *"great climate war,"* declared in a new video by the voluntary organisation Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change (2020). They continue to say that *"we are doing what we can to stop it, but the smoke that started this fire did not come from these islands."* This is the second consideration that makes PIC's such an important setting for this conference, the stark picture PIC's paint of global climate injustice. PIC's, contributing only 0.03% of greenhouse gas emissions, clearly demonstrate a key concern of Allum et al's paper (a2020), that, *"those least responsible for climate change are also those suffering most from its impacts"* (p.4).

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<sup>3</sup> 2019 Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/50th-Pacific-Islands-Forum-Communique.pdf>

This highlights the importance of addressing climate change across all development programming concerned with equity and justice (Allum et al 2020, p.4), and also poses important questions to those of us living outside of PIC's regarding our actions in our own countries, including through our work.

The Pacific is not a region to simply accept these vulnerabilities, but continues to show resilience and courage in the climate war. Regional leaders and activists demonstrate strength and unity across countries, held together by diverse, yet shared, cultures and histories. The volunteer group 350 Pacific Climate Warriors summarises this well, *“We rally behind the mantra “we are not drowning, we are fighting.” The ideals behind this mantra allows us to retell the world stories about our people living on the frontlines of climate change. To shift it from one that only paints us as mere victims of climate change to one that recognises that ... we are also actively drawing on our indigenous knowledge and time tested traditions to mitigate impacts of climate change and strengthen our resilience”* (PCW's 2019).

As part of their fight, PIC's have regional infrastructure to support the coordination of targeted climate action between countries. This includes a number of regional bodies,<sup>4</sup> governance structures and policy documents, emphasising the need for the integration of climate change in all development work and across all sectors (see Pacific Community et al 2016; Williams and Duie-Ra 2018). There exists a strong ethic of volunteering, which supports resilient communities, an active climate change civil society movement, working locally to globally, and a strong political focus on climate action (see Williams and Duie-Ra 2018). The Pacific region therefore provides opportunities for us, as a volunteering for development sector, to contribute to the coordinated efforts already in place.

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<sup>4</sup> Such as Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the University of the South Pacific

### 3. Volunteering for Climate Action in Pacific Island Countries

This section will provide an overview of voluntary activities in PIC's that support various aspects of climate action. The first part will provide an overview of volunteering in PIC's, how it is perceived and the strong role informal volunteering plays in resilience. The remaining three sections will focus on formal volunteering, considering volunteering for climate action in relation to: awareness and advocacy, resilience and adaptation, and policies and systems. The examples provided below only consider mitigation briefly, as by far the majority of examples provided focused on adaptation.

#### Understanding Volunteering in the Pacific

*“Participation is also ‘the Pacific way.’ It is this community orientation that is one of the greatest factors of community resilience in Pacific societies”*

(Paton and Fairbairn-Dunlop 2010, p. 688)

The term volunteering is not widely used in the Pacific (Tamasese et al 2010). Activities that can be defined as informal volunteering are however widespread. Not organised by a third party, they are acts of mutual help and collaboration between individuals and communities, supporting their wellbeing, and are a result of time, energy, and care dedicated by others (UNV and NYCF 2015, p. 19). The Programme Coordinator of the National Volunteer Service in PNG explained, *“Volunteering is an English term that may mean something else to us here but culturally it is part of us; it is an inbuilt system in us to help someone in need. It is our Melanesian way of doing things; we survive by assisting a brother and a sister in need.”* Informal voluntary activities are associated with concepts of serving, duty of care, sustaining the community, fulfilling cultural obligations, and expressing love and reciprocity relating to kinship and protocol (Tamasese et al 2010, pp. 21-22). They are deeply rooted in cultural understandings and traditional leadership and social structures, which are still largely in place (see Bridges and McClatchey 2009; McMillen et al 2014; Mc Namara and Farbotko 2017). The Executive Director of the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) explained, *“the structure of society is that every Fijian has it (volunteering) embedded into their psyche...people find their skills and their role in society, and they build on that with their actions.”* These ties run deeply and indeed globally throughout PIC communities. For example, Pacific diaspora in Australia play a key role in disaster response in PIC's. Part of their role is in voluntary acts, including fundraising money and collecting goods for affected communities. The primary motivation to volunteer is responsibility to their communities, based on a sense of solidarity, loyalty to their ancestral lands, and obligations to their family (Vivekananthan and Connors 2019).



Traditional ecological knowledge is central to social and cultural beliefs in PIC's (McMillen et al 2014), and close monitoring and understanding of climatic and biological environments guide community actions (Mc Namara and Farbotko 2017). Such actions enable communities to directly respond to climate variability and environmental changes. In Vanuatu, the Coordinator of the Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN) pointed to examples of voluntary acts to construct sea walls and relocate villages. These were done by communities in Vanuatu without any external support or guidance but in reaction to changes they observed. He explained, communities in Vanuatu “are implementing government climate change policies without knowing they are.”

The Christian faith, followed by more than 90% of people in the Pacific (Cochrane 2018), calls on people to support works of mercy, love and service through volunteering (Tamasese et al 2010). The Country Manager of Tonga Live and Learn explained, “*the Churches teach us to volunteer.*” Churches play a large role in climate action, including in the voluntary activities they encourage. Church-based volunteers are often the first responders, providing shelter, psychosocial support, and resources (Fletcher et al 2013). Pacific theologians have identified that practical expressions of faith include being informed of weather updates, preparing for emergencies, setting up accessible evacuation centres, and reconnecting with cultural and spiritual beliefs to read the environment and mitigate and adapt to climatic changes. The prophetic voice includes climate advocacy, speaking up “*for a more responsible attitude to creation, and for changes to the injustices and inequities which contribute to disaster*” (Carroll, S & Theology of Disaster Resilience Working Group 2019, p.11).

While informal volunteering makes up the majority of volunteer actions in PIC's, formal volunteering is increasing. In PIC's this includes volunteering managed by governments, faith-based groups, research organisations, non-government organisations, civil society organisations (CSO's), international organisations, and to a much lesser extent, the private sector (see Pacific Solution Exchange, 2014). Volunteers are a major resource for CSO's, with many relying heavily or solely on volunteers in the absence of paid staff (UNV and NYCF 2015). Based on information gathered through interviews, formal volunteering is often associated with urbanisation and supporting youth on the pathway to employment. Youth make up a large proportion of the volunteer base (UNV and NYCF 2015) and of the unemployed population across PIC's (Pacific Community 2015c). Nevertheless, when speaking to people across PIC's about why they volunteer in a formal capacity, the core motivation is still linked to their Pacific identity and associated obligations to care for their communities and islands. Volunteering for action on climate change, as a central issue of concern regarding the current and future viability of communities, was identified as a necessary way to fulfil these obligations.

## Awareness and Advocacy

*“They are the hands and legs doing the work on the ground, collecting signatures, walking the streets, making the signs, chanting, creating the groundswell necessary for systematic change. Change comes from the people, the people are young, they are volunteers and they are important.”*

### – Youth leader for the Bua Urban Youth Network

Overwhelmingly run by youth volunteers, advocacy for climate action in the Pacific is strong, passionate and urgent. This section will provide examples of volunteer-led advocacy movements and awareness-raising activities focused on climate action.

The Pacific Community (2015b) argues that youth advocates in the Pacific are more radical, positive and proactive than their Pacific leaders, in response to the repeated failure of leaders to reduce emissions internationally and make progress on climate justice. Perhaps the most iconic youth advocacy group in the region are the Pacific Climate Warriors (PCW's). The PCW's are part of 350 Pacific, the regional organisation of the global group 350.org (Craney 2019). PCW's raise awareness about the damaging effects of climate change, advocating for community-owned, 100% renewable energy. They focus on the fossil fuel industry and the industrialised governments and organisations supporting it (Mc Namara and Farbotko 2017). They directly lobby leaders, run peaceful and vibrant demonstrations and electronic campaigns (Craney 2019). This includes their 2014 protest in Australia. Using traditionally made canoes, PWC's led kayakers and paddle boarders to block towering coal ships and prevent the operation of the largest coal port in the world. At the largest mine in Europe, they unfolded a large traditional tapa cloth with the words 'end fossil fuels now' (PCW 2019). PCW's are a global network, including PCW's living in diaspora communities (Mc Namara and Farbotko 2017). They are recruited based on their demonstrated ability to lead initiatives, bringing their networks and leadership skills and channelling these into the climate movement. PCW's initiate campaigns within their communities that are echoed and supported internationally by a united and active base (Carney 2019).

Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC) is a new regional youth organisation. Founded in March 2019 by law students at the University of the Pacific, they focus on legal activism, highlighting the important role courts can play to help avert and mitigate the climate crisis. Their main campaign is focused on the leaders of PIC's, Australia, and New Zealand to seek an Advisory Opinion on human rights and climate change from the International Court of Justice (ICJAO). They successfully included their request for an ICJAO in the Leaders Communique for the 50th Pacific Islands Forum,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Paragraph 16 of the Forum Communique of the Pacific Island Forum, 2019

and have run side events at regional and international conferences to generate support. Learning from the Palau Government's attempt at legal action on climate change in 2012, which focused on state responsibility, PISFCC focus on human rights, highlighting the moral responsibilities to act on climate change. One PISFCC member explained that, "This approach has greater transformative potential given the human rights are inalienable and not based on the lowest common denominator decision making, demand of consensus-based treaty processes."

Volunteer activist groups are also acting as intermediaries between national governments and communities to improve inclusive participation in climate action. The Coordinator from the Solomon Islands Climate Action Network (SICAN), explained that volunteering for climate action in the Pacific has recently gained momentum because decisions made by leaders were not being progressed adequately or transparently. Fiji's Bua Urban Youth Network was established when founders, youth from Bua province who had moved to urban areas, saw communities in Bua were not given adequate information on proposed mining developments affecting their lives. The Network focuses on ensuring community members understand the implications of decisions being considered by the Fijian Government, and advocate strongly for free, prior and informed consent, supporting communities to make informed and dignified decisions about their future. SICAN is



Sunrise at Kokopo, East New Britain, Papua New Guinea in 2016. Photographer: Harjono Djoyobisono

lobbying the Solomon Islands government to update its climate policy and to ensure inclusion of marginalised community members in this process. SICAN are also working with Oxfam's Solomon Islands Social Accountability Coalition to develop a climate finance accountability tool, which will track how climate finance is affecting the lives of communities. Information from the tool will be used to advocate government, donors and NGO's to improve approaches to climate finance.

Indeed, Climate Action Networks (CAN's) across PIC's (including national CAN's and a regional CAN) play a key advocacy role in the region. The networks coordinate, collaborate and amplify the voices of diverse organisations working on various aspects climate change. In Kiribati, KiriCAN runs annual awareness raising events and community clean ups. In Vanuatu, VCAN, with over 50 members, is one of the largest CAN's. It runs regular media campaigns and, in 2019, organised a successful national climate rally. The newest, SICAN, established in late 2019, is already a large national network of international NGO's, CSO's, government champions and faith-based and private organisations, volunteering their time to support climate action. The Coordinator of VCAN explained that the power of CAN's is in collaboration to produce a clear and united message *"by uniting people's experience, we can have power and voice."*

Many of the youth see participation in activism as self-empowering, providing an opportunity to proactively address the most critical issue they face. Indeed, one of the reasons Project Survival Pacific (PSP) was established in 2008 was to provide youth an avenue to participate in climate change action. The Founder and current Board Member noted that this, in turn, required advocating for the legitimacy of the youth voice: *"young people were at the bottom of the list for governments to include in climate change decisions. They said we were inexperienced."* PSP, an advocacy organisation focused on sustainability and climate change, were relentless in ensuring they were seen and heard, *"we would sit at the back [of climate change meetings], we always made our presence felt. We would tell the Ministers we were there and listening to them."* In over twelve years of operation, one of their key achievements has been in helping to secure youth a seat at the climate change table and strong links to government. Despite remaining age prejudices across the Pacific, the youth do work closely with leaders on international and regional climate action (Pacific Community 2015b). They are a loud presence at international climate events and are recognised as a key stakeholder in regional climate policy documents (eg Pacific Community et al 2016).

The Active Citizenship Programme Manager at Oxfam International Solomon Islands, identified that an urgent need in the climate action movement is *"getting people in communities to understand climate change is a key issue."* Most advocacy organisations run general awareness-raising activities, bringing people together to understand the importance of climate change. This includes through art, festivals and other cultural events, such as PISFCC's digital Reimagining Pacific Futures Art Competition, on climate change and human rights

(see PISFCC 2020). Volunteer clean up days and ecosystem rehabilitation are other popular awareness raising activities. Alliance for Future Generations, for example, uses clean-ups and mangrove planting days as a way to raise awareness about the effects of climate change and environmental degradation. The Mamanuca Environment Society was started by resorts and tourism operators in the Mamanucas region in Fiji. They engage volunteers, including regional students and volunteers from the corporate (e.g. ANZ and Fiji Airways) and tourism sectors, to raise awareness of environmental issues faced by the region. Key volunteer activities include coral and tree planting, surveys and community engagement (MES 2020).

Some of these organisations bring international volunteers to the Pacific to raise global awareness of climate change. For instance, PSP organised a German and Fijian youth exchange, with German students visiting Fiji to exchange ideas on resilience and climate change. Another is Engineers Without Borders (EWB), which is planning an immersive educational programme in Vanuatu with young engineers from Australia hearing from leading climate change groups. The objective will be to support change within the Australian engineering sector, increasing climate awareness across the region.

Many advocacy organisations ran specific trainings to support capacity development for future climate leaders. One of the objectives for Alliance for Future Generations is the capacity development of young leaders so they can become *“protagonists and agents of change in their individual lives, homes, communities and nations.”* PSP also runs an annual, yearlong, youth ambassador programme. Participants are trained in leadership skills, and some are selected to attend regional and international climate forums. During COVID-19 lockdowns, PWC rolled out Pacific Pawa Shift, digital training in storytelling and mobilisation (350 Pacific Australia 2020). The many CAN's support capacity development of their members through training, for example, in participation at international forums and the provision of effective policy advice.

Development organisations are also focused on supporting the capacity of youth to participate effectively in climate action, building the movement of climate action leaders. Tonga Live and Learn has recently won funding to support youth volunteers living on the outer islands understand and lead climate change initiatives within their communities. The Red Cross is rolling out Y-Adapt across the Pacific. An interactive games-based curriculum, it aims to educate youth about climate change and inspire them to take action (We-adapt 2020). The World Wildlife Fund's Pacific Volunteer Program explicitly combines conservation work and skills development. The majority of volunteers are graduates from marine biology and environmental conservation seeking relevant experience (UNV and NYCF 2015) and networks within the sector. Volunteers help to deliver WWF's work, such as mangrove planting and coral reef rehabilitation (Root and Mihara 2020), while receiving training to prepare them for the workforce, including conservation skills and in 'job ready' skills such as CV writing (Women in Fisheries 2019).

## Adaptation and Resilience

This section will focus on voluntary efforts across a range of programmes and organisations, including work to support ecosystem resilience, voluntary efforts in community-based adaptation planning, the contribution of government-run volunteering programmes, and volunteer involvement in disaster response.

The first example focuses on sixteen communities in Vanuatu, who took a leadership role in what is now recognised as best practice community based protected area management, by formalising volunteer efforts and proactively establishing external partnerships. In the late 1990's, community members in the Nguna and Pele Islands of Vanuatu were informally volunteering to improve marine resource conservation and adapt to severe weather and sea level rise (UNDP 2018). In 2003, Village Chiefs decided to coordinate community efforts, creating the Nguna-Pele Marine and Land Protected Area Network, a non-governmental organisation focused on sustainable use and restoration of marine and land resources. The Network combines local customs with contemporary management systems, including ensuring women and youth are in leadership positions. It has a management and executive committee, who are all volunteers from the communities. The Network's conservation activities are also run largely by volunteers, who undertake activities such as biological monitoring, coral planting, environmental education, waste management, and support sustainable livelihood projects. The network has over 60 external partnerships including with government, NGOs, international donors, and research institutes (UNDP 2012). Peace Corps also support the network, with one Peace Corps volunteer nominated for an award for reducing the use (and discarding) of single use batteries (Peace Corps 2005). Through the Network's eco-tourism initiatives, tourists also volunteer to plant coral and support turtle conservation (UNDP 2018). The Network has achieved significant conservation outcomes, increasing the resilience of local ecosystems to respond to change (UNDP 2012). This example emphasises the importance of how communities are proactively responding to climate change. It also demonstrates one of the key messages of the latest State of the World's Volunteerism Report, that without external support, it is difficult for communities to be optimally resilient (UNV 2018, p. xi). In literature considering Pacific resilience, this is widely recognised (Fletcher et al 2013; Malsale et al 2018). With the speed and severity of climate change, and in some areas, eroding of traditional knowledge and structures, there is a need for contemporary science and inclusive development practice to build resilience (Pacific Community et al 2016).

By working closely with community members, volunteers can play an important role in enabling and coordinating external assistance, ensuring it is appropriate and tailored to community needs, is inclusive, and is therefore more likely to be sustainable and effective (UNV 2014). The important role of volunteers in supporting community-based adaption projects has been noted in this regard. One well documented example is

the implementation partnership between UNV and the United Nations Development Programme's Community-based Adaptation Project, funded through the Global Environmental Facility Small Grants Programme with support from the Governments of Australia and Switzerland. The pilot project, between 2008-2013, was implemented across ten countries including Samoa. Both UNV and Peace Corps provided volunteers. UNV supported the project with community, national and international volunteers whose contributions were significant. They provided critical support to mobilise community members and undertook participatory research to document project outcomes (UNDP 2015). A Peace Corps volunteer, who worked on this project in Samoa, reflected on their experience in working with community members to identify, source and build a water supply system. He worked with community volunteers to use the limited funding appropriately, building a simple but effective pipeline. After a cyclone in 2012, the community was able to repair the pipeline quickly and cheaply, being one of the first communities in the area to restore safe drinking water. UNV produced a guide and workbook to support, promote and measure the contribution of volunteering in community-based adaptation projects (UNV 2010) (see also Allum et al 2020). UNV volunteers are still involved in the Small Grants Programme, which is active across 13 countries in the Pacific.

The Red Cross, with twelve offices in the region, has volunteer networks that not only play a significant role in response, but are working with communities to identify vulnerabilities and appropriate ways to strengthen resilience in preparation for disasters. The Red Cross has a number of tools and processes to enable this. In PNG, the Red Cross was recognised for its work in an inclusive, strengths-based approach called Support, Appreciate, Learn and Transfer. This approach ensures participation of all community members in identifying their needs, strengths and appropriate ways to address vulnerabilities (see Pacific Community 2015c). Similarly, the Red Cross in Fiji uses an Integrated Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (ICVA). Volunteers work with communities to undertake risk assessments, identify strengths, vulnerabilities and necessary actions that can be implemented within community resources. The ICVA process includes consideration of traditional ecological knowledge, seasonal patterns, hazard frequency and impacts, food security, and risk and hazard mapping (Fiji Red Cross Society, 2016).

There are two government-run volunteering schemes in the Pacific, in PNG and Fiji. Whilst neither have a significant focus on climate action, they do support climate adaptation activities. The PNG National Volunteer Service (NVS) deploys and manages skilled Papua New Guinean volunteers to work in communities for two years. Their central programme supports the delivery of government services to rural and remote PNG. In another programme, they partner with organisations to support community development projects, including support for outcomes in environmental conservation, food security and eco-tourism. Monitoring data is limited, but NVS staff report volunteers have achieved positive outcomes. The strength of their programmes lies in the effectiveness of Papua

New Guineans helping Papua New Guineans, and pride and leadership skills this instils, and the emphasis on volunteers supporting communities to be self-sufficient, enabling sustainable change.

In Fiji the National Volunteer Service (FNVS) is part of the National Employment Centre established in 2009. The FNVS focuses on two major programmes, supporting youth employment and the regional deployment of medical and educational experts. In 2016, the Act under which the NVS was established was amended, stating that National Employment Centre should develop strategic partnerships with institutions dealing with climate change matters, including to promote green volunteers,<sup>6</sup> volunteers working on nature and wildlife conservation. As part of their work under the Act, the NVS have a partnership with the Ministry of Forestry to support youth volunteers plant trees. This will contribute to the Fijian Government's objective of planting 30 million trees between 2019 and 2034.

Disaster response in the Pacific is increasingly focused on the localisation of efforts, *“of recognising, respecting and strengthening the independence of leadership and decision making by national actors in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations.”* (Ayobi et al 2017, p.4). To support localisation, strengthened capacity is needed at the local level (Pacific Community et al 2016). The Australian Government's DisasterREADY programme aims to do this, working with local partners across five Pacific countries to strengthen their capacity to respond to disasters. The programme engages with volunteers at a number of levels. The Church Agencies Network Disaster Operation (CANDO) is a consortium of organisations working on DisasterREADY. They are working closely with faith-based volunteers in Fiji and Solomon Islands. Over the life of the five-year programme, they hope to work with at least 400 volunteers. To formalise and strengthen the contribution of volunteers to a number of disaster preparation and response activities, CANDO have developed a database to record volunteers' skills, qualifications and interests. When responding to a disaster, this enables CANDO to mobilise the most appropriate volunteers according to needs. For example, after this year's Cyclone Harold in the Solomon Islands, CANDO were able to use the database to mobilise volunteers specifically trained in damage assessments to undertake work in 36 communities. To further improve coordination nationally, the database is shared with organisations such as The Red Cross, and volunteers from different dominations are working together, often for the first time. The Project Manager at ADRA Fiji explained that CANDO want to ensure volunteers receive benefits from their voluntary roles. CANDO received funding to pay volunteers for their work. This however was met with resistance. Two Divisional Commissioner's Offices in Fiji were against the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Bill-No-31-National-Employment-Centre-Amendment.pdf>



idea, scared it would diminish the values within communities that inspire volunteerism. As such, the funding will be used for community projects. CANDO are able to pay volunteers for their basic expenses, provide targeted training, based on the interests of individuals, and they actively identify and support volunteers to attend networking events and programme management meetings, beneficial for their career development.

FCOSS is mandated under Fiji's National Disaster Management Act 1998 to coordinate civil society during a disaster response (AHP 2020). They do so through the mobilisation of District Council of Social Services (DCOSSs), voluntary organisations representing local civil society groups. Supported by the DisasterREADY programme, FCOSS undertook several activities to improve DCOSS coordination, including mapping of DCOSS members, running a capacity analysis on their ability to respond, and creating a response protocol. In response to COVID-19 and Cyclone Harold, FCOSS was able to quickly and effectively mobilise DCOSS's around the country, thanks to these restructuring efforts (AHP 2020). The Executive Director explained that by respecting and building on the work of community-based volunteers, she, *"simply added formality and structure to what already exists in communities. It is working because it is not trying to do something new."* She continued to note that the importance and capabilities of the role of national and local volunteers in response is starting to get greater recognition, *"what I am seeing with COVID and TC Harold is, I think, people are starting to reconsider the importance and role of volunteers. When COVID occurred, all the paid NGO's were immobilised; they could not react. But the volunteers in the communities saw the need to respond to a crisis and responded to community needs. They leveraged the importance of volunteerism."*

The above two examples demonstrate how local organisations are working to respect traditional understandings and structures of volunteering, while formalising and strengthening efforts to support volunteers better prepare for and respond to disasters.

Recently, the Australian Volunteers Program formalised a partnership with the DisasterREADY programme to recruit and deploy teams of Australian volunteers to work with partner organisations. Australian volunteers will work to strengthen organisational capacity of partners in areas of identified need, which cannot be fulfilled with local expertise. Possible areas of focus include more effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Australian volunteers will support local organisations to more effectively operate, and ultimately prepare and respond to disasters.

A final example of coordinating and mobilising volunteers for response comes from the private sector. The Vodafone ATH Foundation's Vodafone Red Alert Program- Disaster Response Unit uses mobile technology to provide immediate disaster assistance. It mobilises volunteers from around the country to assist and generates financial support through mobile-based donation drives (Vodafone ATH Fiji Foundation 2020).

## Policies and Systems

This final section will consider volunteering efforts to strengthen policies and systems. It will include consideration of voluntary efforts to strengthen capacity across a number of sectors.

As discussed above, there is a need to raise awareness of climate change amongst community members in PIC's. One way in which volunteers are supporting this is by strengthening the ability of sectors that engage directly with community members to effectively communicate on climate change. One of PSP's programmes focuses on strengthening the education sector. PSP run training sessions for primary and secondary teachers on how to teach climate change effectively, and, using a tool called 'Fitting the Pieces Together for Climate Change,' incorporate climate change into their lesson plans. In 2019, they worked with 450 teachers, mostly in the rural areas of Fiji. The Australian Volunteers Program has also worked to strengthen the capacity of the public Broadcasting and Publications Authority in Kiribati. Over twelve months, an Australian volunteer improved organisational and individual capacity to better capture and report on climate change and natural disaster impacts, through the introduction of a number of operational improvements, including guidelines on investigative reporting and research methods (Low 2020).

In another example, a VSA volunteer worked with members of the Honiara City Council in Solomon Islands to improve their ability to communicate and consider climate risks. He worked with the Mayor, CEO, councillors, and members of the Physical Planning Division. He ran trainings and improved operational processes, strengthening the capacity of the council to make policy and development decisions in consideration of climate risks, and importantly, to communicate more effectively about these with the community. The volunteer also worked to support community participation in council decision making processes. With members of UN Habitat, he helped establish structures and processes for community participation, so members are better able to consider and communicate their concerns and needs to the council. His efforts helped develop a strong foundation for the first year of the Climate Resilient Honiara project, which will continue to work with the council and communities to improve climate resilience.

EWB works in Vanuatu to implement projects focused on strengthening policies and systems related to the provision of safe water and sanitation systems, which are resilient to the effects of climate change. EWB engage volunteers in their programming on an as-needs and as-appropriate basis. Volunteers are mostly those who have highly specialised engineering expertise. EWB has four streams of volunteers. This includes: Australian and New Zealand volunteers, engaged and mobilised through partnerships with the AVP and VSA, pro bono professionals from the corporate sector, volunteers directly engaged through EWB to help with programme management and monitoring and evaluation, and research volunteers through Deakin University in Australia, who undertake field or remote

research. One recent project, a partnership between EWB and Live and Learn Vanuatu, developed sanitation systems for a peri-urban community near Port Villa. In the early stages, an EWB volunteer worked to successfully support the design and construction of latrine systems for community settlements, including developing accessible models for people living with disabilities, and designing structures that have since been used in disaster response. An Australian volunteer then used the outcomes of this work to support the development of national guidelines on sanitation and hygiene standards with the Ministry of Health.

Across PIC's, the strengthening of meteorological systems and processes is needed to more closely observe climate changes, to make more accurate predictions, and to effectively communicate weather warnings (Pacific Community 2016). JICA, UNV and Australian Volunteers have supported capacity development within meteorological departments. In Samoa's Meteorological Division, a JICA volunteer helped to develop the application Samoa Weather. Widely used throughout the country, it provides updated information including a daily weather map and warnings for natural disasters. A UNDP Volunteer in Fiji worked with the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to increase the quality of data collection and improve weather prediction, including helping to purchase modern equipment and training in its use (UNV Pacific 2019). In Solomon Islands, Australian volunteers worked with the Solomon Islands Meteorological Service to support the delivery of accurate and easy to understand weather and climate information to communities. This included integrating traditional climate and weather indicators with conventional forecasts.

National and community volunteers also play key roles in strengthening meteorological systems. In 2005, the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department (VGMD) set up the Vanuatu Rainfall Network to increase climatic and weather data capture across the country (Malsale 2014). The network has over 84 sites monitored by volunteer rainfall collectors. Volunteers are trained in weather observation, rain gauge maintenance and data collection, and report monthly to the VGMD (Pacific Community 2016). Observations include rainfall, cloud cover, wind speed and direction as well as traditional ecological indicators (Malsale 2014). Volunteers work with community disaster committees, The Red Cross, and the National Disaster Management Office, in preparation for adverse weather events. They disseminate information to their communities from the VMGD (Pacific Community 2016). Monitoring and data collection errors do occur. These are addressed through training (Pacific Community 2016) and data quality control within the VGMD.

Volunteering in the collection and dissemination of climate data can help to empower vulnerable community members, enabling them to effectively communicate their needs and observations (UNV 2017), and can contribute valuable local knowledge and insights (see Allum et al a2020). This is certainly the case with Women's Weather Watch (WWW). A femLINKpacific platform started in 2009, WWW is active in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tonga (Pacific Community 2015c) and Vanuatu (ActionAid 2020). The WWW

system connects women, who volunteer their time in community leadership positions, to understandable and real time weather updates. Each country has a slightly different system. In Vanuatu, WWW is a mobile phone based social network known as Women Wetem Weta. This network sits within the Women I TokTok Tugeta Network<sup>7</sup> supported by ActionAid. Young women volunteer to implement the platform within their surrounding communities. They act as a link between their communities, the larger network and a central coordinator. Information is shared through the network, including information from government departments and weather information services, which is communicated by volunteers, simply and in local languages, to the communities. Information is also shared from communities, which can then be broadcast to government departments to request assistance and provide real time weather updates (ActionAid 2020). In Fiji, WWW is implemented by femLINK in a similar way, with local women leaders coordinating the flow of information from a central hub. Women also use the network to check on each other and provide needed support during difficult times (Rahmani-Shirazi 2018). In all countries except Vanuatu, WWW includes the use of community radio, with voluntary women presenters delivering consistent and gender specific messaging to rural and remote women (Pacific Community 2015c). WWW is giving women not only access to important information but building their capacities and opportunities to communicate complex climate information. It amplifies their voices and visibility as key responders (femLINK 2019). In Vanuatu, the platform also supports participation of women in national and international forums to influence gender inclusion in disaster preparedness and in the production of disaster risk planning and climate adaptation strategies (ActionAid 2018; 2020).

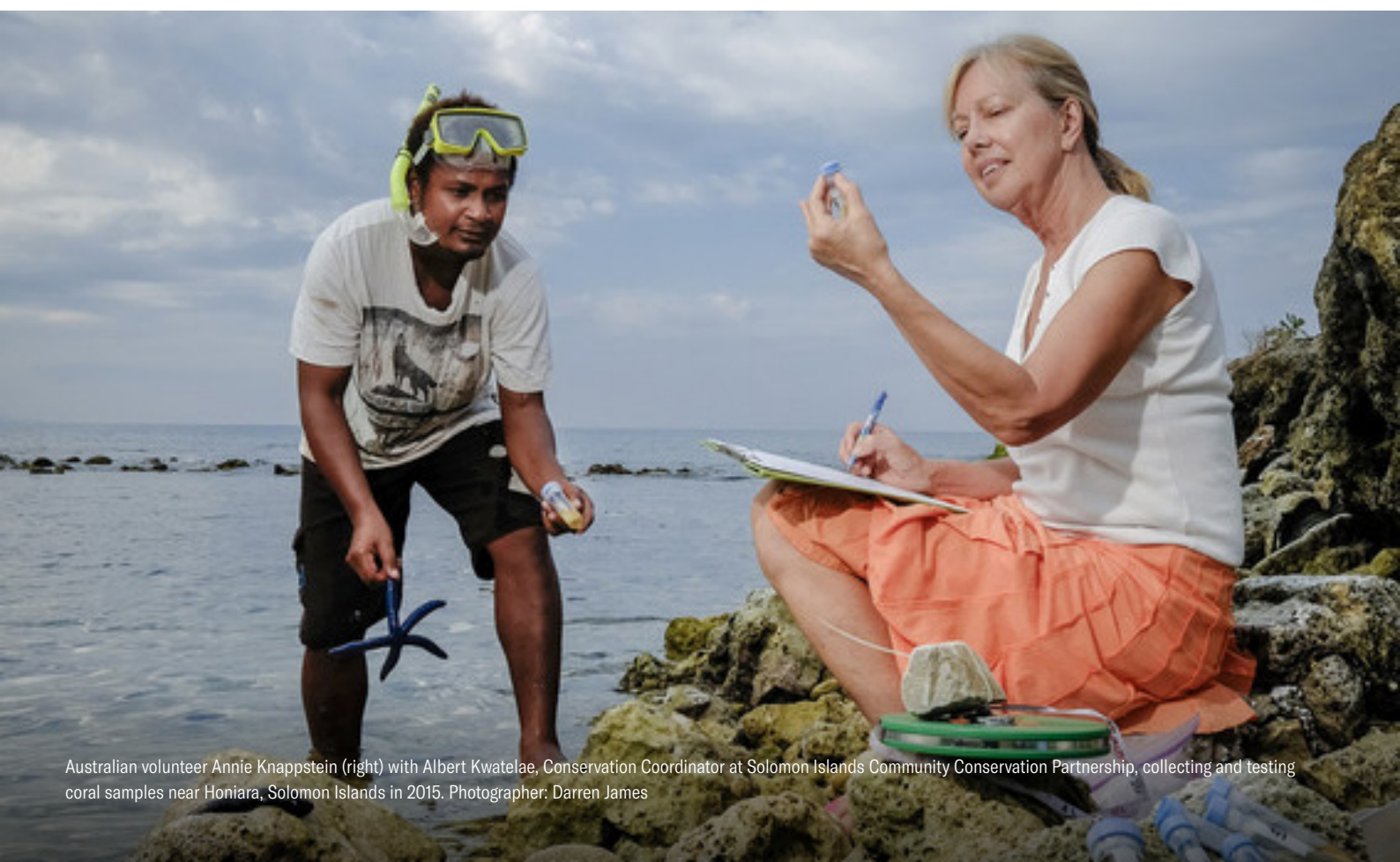
The involvement of the private sector in climate action is still in the early stages across PIC's, and regional organisations are working to create a stronger enabling environment for the sector's participation. The Australian Volunteers Program has long-standing relationships with several private sector organisations in the region, and Australian Volunteers have worked to strengthen business resilience to a changing climate. This includes within the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) in Fiji, where one volunteer worked with PIPSO members to run training on planning for disaster risk mitigation and recovery. More recently, a volunteer worked with the Kiribati Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives. One of the key roles of the Ministry is to build business resilience to climate change and natural disasters amongst its membership. The volunteer introduced a number of measures to enable staff to better support their members, including a focus on how to support businesses in the outer islands, which are more vulnerable to climate change (Robinson b2020).

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<sup>7</sup> ActionAid has supported Ni-Vanuatu women to establish Women I TokTok Tugeta (WITTT). The locally-led and driven women's forum brings together over 4000 women from three islands, who meet regularly through women's collectives to respond to climate change and disasters.

PIC's want greater capacity to access finance to support climate adaptation and mitigation efforts (Pacific Community et al 2016). The Green Climate Fund has launched its own volunteering initiative through their Direct Climate Action Platform (DCAP). A targeted, short term, digital volunteering programme engages technical experts to work with individuals and organisations that need specific assistance, including in submitting successful GCF funding applications. This includes in areas such as: translations, proposal reviews, modelling, risk assessment, consultation, gender, and monitoring and evaluation (GCF 2020).

Volunteers are also supporting the renewable energy sector. For example, a JICA volunteer supported the National Training and Productivity Centre of the Fiji National University. The JICA volunteer trained members to effectively service and maintain hybrid Toyota cars, which make up 80% of cars in Fiji. Another example is the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), which is currently rolling out a KOICA funded programme strengthening rural electrification and the green economy in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and PNG. Part of this programme involves the training of trainers to deliver ten modules to local government officials, communities, small businesses, and traditional leaders on green economy and renewable energy principles. Local volunteers, who are given some payment for their contributions, are trained as trainers with up to ten people in each of the four countries participating.



Australian volunteer Annie Knappstein (right) with Albert Kwatela, Conservation Coordinator at Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership, collecting and testing coral samples near Honiara, Solomon Islands in 2015. Photographer: Darren James

## 4. Forum Members and Climate Action in PIC's

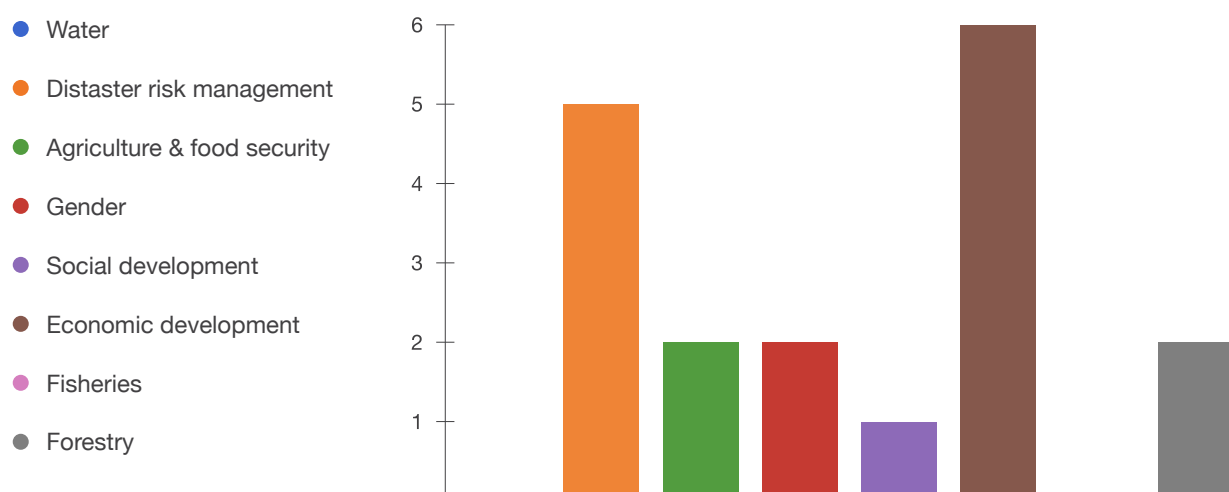
The focus of this paper is on regional, national and community-based volunteers and volunteer organisations. In order to learn from them and reflect on Forum's own practice, this paper briefly considers an analysis of the work of Forum members active in the region: AVI, VSA, UNV, KOICA and JICA. In particular how they are engaging in volunteering for climate action in the Pacific through targeted programming.

**All Forum members in the Pacific consider climate action as one of the many areas of development they are seeking to support through their programming. None have specific volunteer programmes focused on climate action, climate change is not mainstreamed in their work, and climate change focused assignments are not given priority in terms of number of assignments.** Both VSA and AVI stressed that their volunteer programmes are based on country priorities and local partner needs, with partners choosing the assignment focus. UNV is similar, focusing on supporting the UN system through placement of volunteers in UN entities. Both JICA and KOICA, as governmental organisations, support their governments' wider development programming in the Pacific, within which climate change is one priority area. VSA noted that their business development unit actively seeks partnerships with climate focused organisations. Their current partners include United Nations Development Programme, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and UN Women, all of which have supported assignments with a climate change focus.

**Forum members have partnered with programmes focused on climate change action, providing volunteers to support programme objectives.** JICA have a technical cooperation project to promote solid waste management. They dispatch volunteers to collaborate with JICA experts for implementing the programme. As outlined above, the Australian Volunteers Program run by AVI has recently partnered with the Australian Government's DisasterREADY programme. AVP volunteers will soon be deployed to work with local partners in the Pacific to strengthen their capacity in preparing for and responding to disasters. VSA recently formalised a partnership with Live and Learn Environmental Education International, with VSA supporting volunteers to work with Pacific-based Live and Learn offices and deliver joint knowledge and learning products and events. These will focus on innovative approaches towards meeting development challenges, including climate change resilience as a priority theme (Live and Learn 2019). In the past, UNV partnered with the UNDP to support a community-based adaptation pilot programme, including work in Samoa. UNV volunteers played a key role in the programme's success (see above). KOICA intend to involve volunteers in their broader climate change programming in the future.

**Volunteers in the Pacific, supported by Forum members, contribute to a wide range of climate action in a number of organisations, including both adaptation and mitigation efforts.** Assignments most commonly supported by VSA include those focused on renewable energy and policy strengthening in the public sector. For JICA, the majority of volunteers support environmental education and disaster preparation. Most JICA volunteers working on climate action are based in government offices and schools. KOICA volunteers work across disaster recovery, waste management, renewable energy, and health issues related to climate change. UNV ran a survey of their volunteers working in the Pacific in June 2020. Of the active assignments in the region (including international and national volunteers) the two most supported sectors were economic development and disaster management, followed by agriculture and food security, and gender (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: UNV sectoral efforts on climate change in Pacific Island Countries in July 2020 (provided by UNV Pacific office)

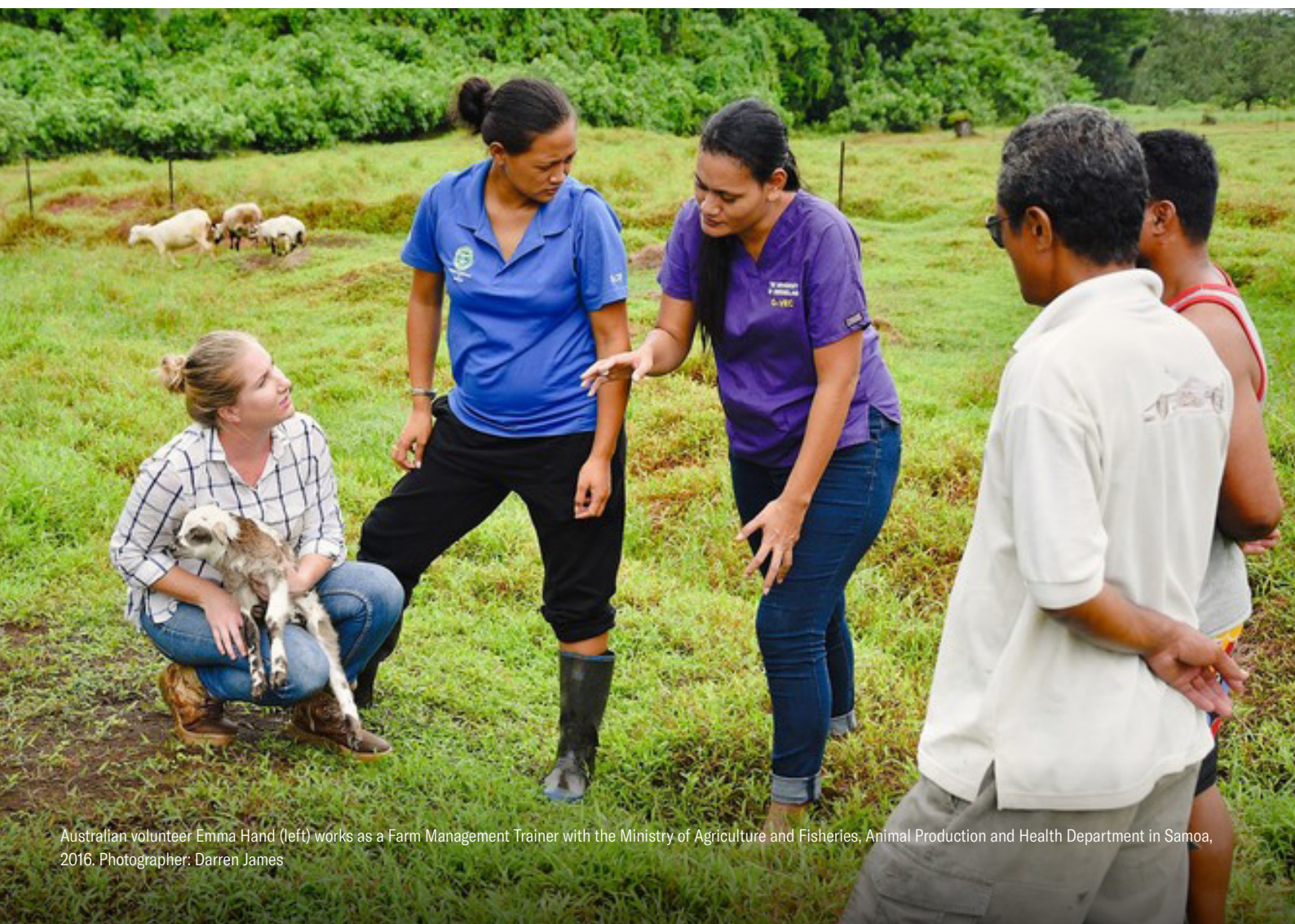


**The percentage of assignments focused on climate change vary significantly between organisations, and, in most organisations, the contributions of volunteering to climate change are not specifically measured.** JICA had the highest percentage of volunteer assignments focused on climate change, with 82% of assignments (before COVID-19) in the region focused on environmental education. For UNV, in June 2020, 74% of assignments focused on climate change, 37% to some extent and 37% as an integral component. In the last two years, 10% of VSA assignments had an explicit climate focus. AVI was the only organisation that had an existing methodology to monitor climate change assignments. The AVP has three thematic areas, which act as lenses for monitoring and help the programme demonstrate policy alignment with

Australian Government priorities. Climate change/disaster resilience/food security is one priority thematic area. The first analysis of the Program's priority areas in 2018 found that 39% of AVP assignments in Vanuatu aligned to the climate change priority area. In central and north Pacific, 26% of assignments aligned, and in the south Pacific, 28% aligned (Gero et al 2019).

As we can see from this analysis, and from examples provided in the above sections, Forum members are making important contributions to climate action within the PIC's in which they work. This contribution is made through the efforts of volunteers, through individual volunteer assignments, and through volunteer assignments linked to climate change programmes. This work is positive, and there are opportunities to learn from it.

Overall, however, if we listen to the volunteers and leaders in the Pacific, it is clear that the international volunteering for development sector is not doing enough, as identified by two former Forum research papers presented in 2007 (Brooke) and 2010 (Mulligan), as well as Allum et al's paper for IVCO 2020 (a2020).



Australian volunteer Emma Hand (left) works as a Farm Management Trainer with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Animal Production and Health Department in Samoa, 2016. Photographer: Darren James



## 5. Reflections and Opportunities

This final section seeks to prompt discussions amongst participants at IVCO 2020 about what Forum members can do to strengthen their work in volunteering for climate action. The actions suggested at the end of this section are by no means the end point, but represent low hanging fruit to start Forum's steps towards climate action.

Mulligan (2010) outlined a number of steps that Forum members could take to support stronger action on climate change. Four of these stand out as practically relevant in the context of this paper: mainstreaming climate change across programmes and within organisations; deliberately focusing on climate change as a key programme area, supporting strategic climate action on adaptation and mitigation; reducing organisational and programmatic contributions to climate change; and supporting advocacy and global education.

The first two align with The Framework for a Resilient Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. This is a regional voluntary framework, which seeks to guide sustainable and coordinated climate action and includes specific guidance for development organisations such as Forum. The Framework strongly states that action on climate change and disaster risk must be incorporated across all work, particularly that implemented by development organisations. It argues that climate action needs to be mainstreamed as a cross-cutting issue and that work in all sectors needs to incorporate climate change adaptation and disaster risk management. Actions should be coordinated regionally and with all relevant stakeholders. This is necessary for effectiveness, sustainability and efficient use of limited resources (see Pacific Community et al 2016).

The Framework therefore strongly supports a call for **mainstreaming of climate change** across all of our programming in the same way as, say, Gender Equality, rather than as an outcome theme, as the impacts of climate change are being felt across sectors.

Specific programming to address climate change could also align with the Framework's objectives of addressing climate change adaptation and disaster risk management if it focused on strategic sectoral level change. As identified above, Forum members have partnered with programmes specifically addressing climate change and support change across sectors. So far, however, efforts in this regard have been on a small scale and limited in reach and scope. Overall, Forum's support for climate action is primarily based on the outcomes of individual assignments, not as part of targeted, coordinated and comprehensive programming.

If Forum members actively listen to the volunteer advocates and leaders in the Pacific, they also need to consider and act on their **own contributions to climate change**, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If they do not, it will be considered that members are complicit in the underlying causes of the problems they seek to address

through their work on adaptation, and Forum may undermine its own commitment to equality and justice (Allum et al a2020) and of leaving no one behind.

Drawing directly on Allum et al.'s (a2020) call to speak truth to power, Forum should also leverage its influence to support a reduction in behaviours contributing to climate change globally. Although there may be limitations in the ability of members to advocate and direct changes in some circumstances (see Allum et al a2020), members can and should seek to influence where possible. Forum, as a network of members and through volunteers, has extensive reach into countries that are contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Again, as climate change has significant impacts on the outcomes we seek to achieve, global advocacy and awareness raising is within our remit to support sustainable and equitable development.

The significant change for Forum members caused by COVID-19 is not an excuse to deal with climate change later but an opportunity to restructure our operations and programming in consideration of both COVID-19 and climate change. Below is a list of opportunities for Forum members in the Pacific to act on, relatively easily and quickly, to begin to understand how they can take steps in repositioning their organisations and programmes to more adequately support climate action.

**The first action is for Forum members working in PIC's to better understand how they are supporting climate action and to actively monitor, learn and adapt based on their current work.** With the exception of the AVP, Forum members do not specifically collect and report on targeted data to demonstrate their contribution to climate change. VSA did, however, indicate that they were likely to do this in the future. Forum members need to first understand how they are contributing to climate action to understand how they can strengthen efforts most effectively and appropriately. They might even find they are doing more than they think, as demonstrated by the survey completed by UNV for this paper, showing a significant proportion of their assignments related to climate change.

As Allum et al (a2020) stated, there is an urgent need for a **mechanism to support learning and collaboration between volunteer managing organisations and volunteers specifically on climate action.** As well as a global mechanism to support learning between Forum members, there is value in specific, formal, and active regional mechanisms to enable considerations of, and alignment with, the Pacific context. Forum members could come together to share ideas and learnings and collaborate and coordinate to support shared objectives. For example, one of the examples above referred to three volunteers, supported by different Forum members, all working to strengthen metrological systems across PICs. This is a valuable example of where Forum members could exchange ideas on learnings and approaches to sector change

to support more effective and coordinated efforts between volunteer managing organisations. In the region, volunteers engaged by different Forum members working on climate change should also be supported to discuss their work and find ways to collaborate and learn from each other. Despite its large geographical area, the Pacific is a small place. Targeted strengthening of these networks is therefore likely to have significant reach and impact.

**Forum members should be actively engaging with regional organisations and processes to better understand how we can align our work to regional efforts.**

As described above, within the Pacific there exists a Framework that can be used to help Forum members design their strategies for climate action. The Pacific Resilience Partnership Taskforce, the governance arrangement to support and monitor the implementation of the Framework, runs technical working groups that are open to all interested organisations and individuals. One member of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat suggested that this provides volunteer sending organisations an avenue for participation and actively encouraged the sector's involvement as a way to support and coordinate volunteering for climate change action. In addition, the regional bodies implementing the framework are existing partners for most Forum members and could help identify and design opportunities for stronger climate action.

**The organisations and volunteers included in this paper could also provide Forum members with suggestions and strategies to strengthen their work on climate action, and opportunities to partner and collaborate should be explored.**

Organisations in the Pacific may be able to help members develop tools and systems to mainstream climate change and design targeted programmes. For example, the Red Cross has a number of tools to support community-level climate change adaptation and awareness raising. PSP also has tools to support climate change education. ActionAid and femLINK have addressed issues of the intersectional approaches to climate action through WWW. All of these regionally effective approaches should be considered and will indeed help redesign Forum's approach to climate action.

**Forum can directly engage with volunteer advocacy and training organisations to train and engage staff and volunteers in climate action.** Groups like PSP, Alliance for Future Generations, PCW's and the CAN's run training sessions on various aspects of climate action. Forum members in the Pacific could engage with these groups to run staff and volunteer training, teaching members and volunteers how to proactively engage in climate advocacy and awareness raising regionally and internationally. This also touches on a call in many papers (Brooke 2007; Mulligan 2010; Allum et al a2020) to harness the power of volunteers to support global advocacy. If volunteers are actively encouraged to learn about climate change while in the Pacific, this will provide an important foundation to encourage them to think and act more critically on climate change within

their assignments and once they return home. As Mulligan (2010) reflects, if returned volunteers are inspired by their experiences, they are also more likely to contribute to global action. The approach of PSP and EWB in supporting international volunteer exchanges demonstrates a similar idea.

**Both Forum members and volunteers could join networks such as the national climate action networks to proactively engage in advocacy movements.** The VSA volunteer in Solomon Islands, whose work was referred to above, claims that one of the most rewarding aspects of their time in Solomon Islands as volunteering with SICAN was outside of his assignment. Globally, Forum members can also join the CANs around the world, as well as engage with diaspora groups from the Pacific, like PCW's, to support their work outside of the region.

**Forum members can also support the existing efforts of community, national and regional volunteers working on climate action.** There are a number of avenues to explore. With the exception of UNV, Forum members in the Pacific support the deployment of international volunteers to work in the Pacific. Members can learn from UNV, as well as organisations such as FCOSS, CANDO and Vodafone Foundation, and adapt their programmes to support community, national and regional volunteers more directly. This includes by directly supporting volunteering opportunities, but also designing assignments and programmes that focus on international volunteers working directly with community, national and regional volunteers to strengthen climate action efforts.

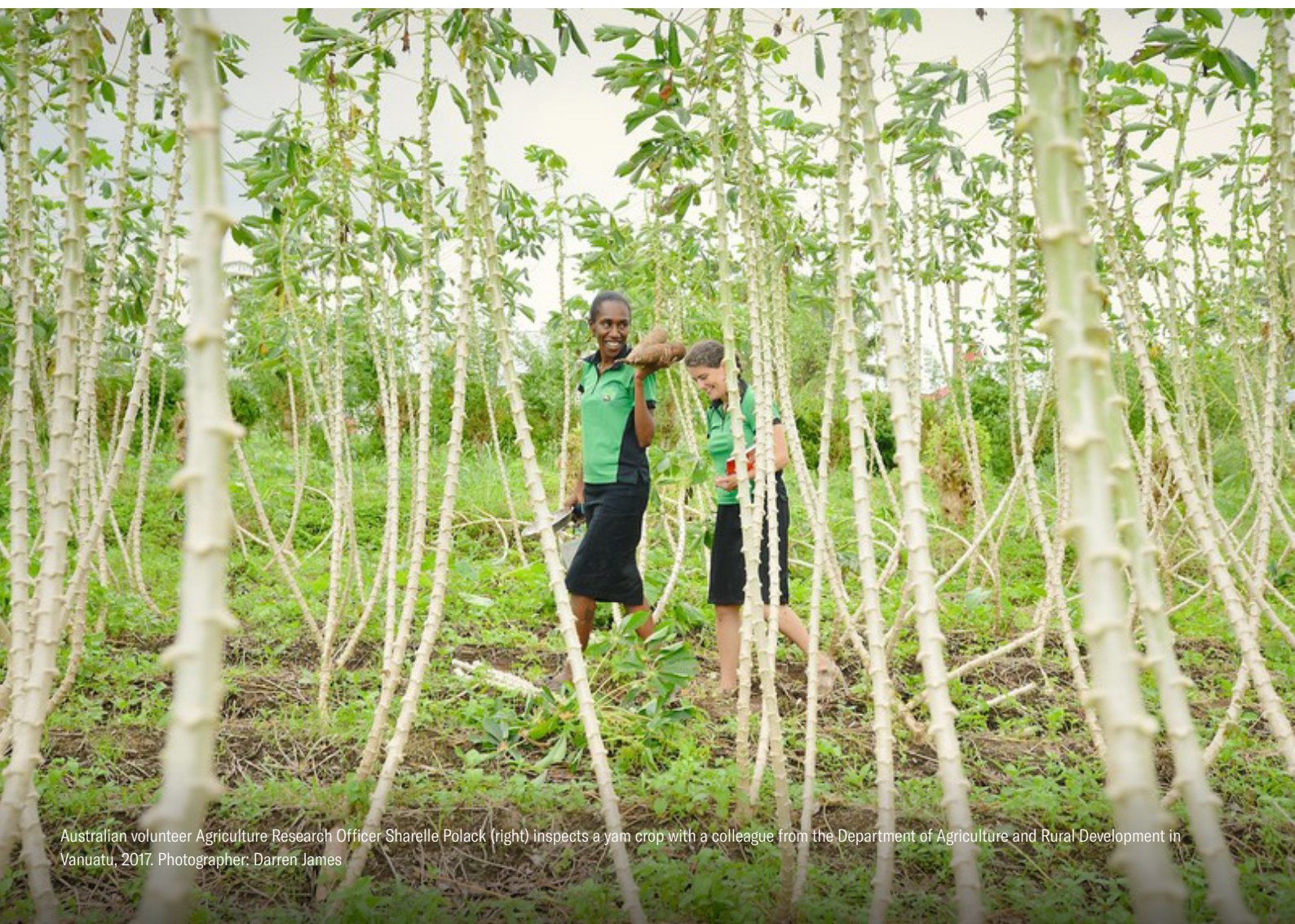
**Forum members can use the resources it has as a network to strengthen volunteer management processes and policies in the region, supporting national volunteer managing organisations to more effectively recruit and manage volunteers working on climate action.** Forum is well positioned to do this with access to resources like the Global Standard, and with extensive expertise in monitoring and evaluation, as well as inclusive volunteering. 'As this paper demonstrates, information on volunteering in the Pacific is limited, in part because of the lack of processes and structures to manage volunteers in the region. UNV and the National Youth Council of Fiji (2015) identified that across the region there is significant need to boost volunteer management capacity. Forum and its members can play an important role in this, as part of its role as an international network to support volunteering for development, and as part of our efforts to support stronger climate action.

## 6. Conclusion

As a sector with a key role in the implementation of the SDGs, and as a sector whose very work is threatened by climate change (Mulligan 2010), Forum and its members should be leaders in climate action.

*“I want you to act; I want you to act as if you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if the house was on fire, because it is”*

— **Greta Thunberg**



Australian volunteer Agriculture Research Officer Sharelle Polack (right) inspects a yam crop with a colleague from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vanuatu, 2017. Photographer: Darren James

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## Appendix 2 – Contributors

A big thank you to everyone who helped write this paper through interviews, written answers and providing documents.

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Engineers Without Borders (Australia and Vanuatu)  
Fiji Council of Social Services  
Fiji National Volunteer Service  
Fiji Red Cross  
Global Green Growth Institute  
Japan International Cooperation Agency  
KiriCAN  
Korea International Cooperation Agency  
Lavame'a Ta'e'iloa Disabled People Association Inc  
Live and Learn New Zealand  
Live and Learn Tonga  
Oxfam Solomon Islands International  
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat  
Pacific Islands Research Network  
Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change  
Papua New Guinea National Volunteer Service  
Project Survival Pacific  
Solomon Islands Climate Action Network  
United Nations Development Programme Fiji  
United Nations Development Programme Innovation Lab  
United Nations Volunteers (Bangkok and Fiji)  
Vanuatu Alliance of Non-Government Organisations  
Vanuatu Climate Action Network  
Volunteer Services Abroad (New Zealand office and Solomon Islands based volunteer)