

ISLAND DISPATCH

WINTER 2015

HIGHLIGHTS



“When people participate in peace-building, they gain dignity and can integrate back into society better.”

- Josephine Kauona, Bougainville peace advocate

[READ STORY](#)



“I worked hard to ensure that she stayed alive, and would see her three children grow up.”

- Rose, Kila Kila, Papua New Guinea clinic nurse

[READ STORY](#)



“I should vote. I am a citizen and it’s my right.”

- Fijian voter on election day

[READ STORY](#)



“Enhanced local capacity is not simply a catchphrase, but the most logical underpinning for community survival and post-disaster efforts.”

- Mark Adams, PREPARE Chief of Party

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This Samoan beach resort was at-risk of crumbling into the sea due to coastal degradation. See how the community saves themselves and their livelihoods from the effects of climate change.

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USAID'S HEROES

By Maurice Knight, Regional Director USAID Pacific Islands

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In the same way that none of these countries can get ahead if women are left behind, none of them can succeed without the heroes that step forward.



Maurice Knight, Regional Director of USAID Pacific Islands, stands amongst community leaders in Kiribati. (Photo by C-CAP)

Last December, USAID honored men and women from around the world working to end gender-based violence as part of the [16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence](#) campaign. From November 25—the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and to December 10—International Human Rights Day—the campaign raised awareness and triggered action to end the global scourge of violence against women and girls.

Josephine Kauona of Bougainville’s Tunainya Open Learning Center – a recipient of a USAID Pacific Islands Women’s Peace Building Initiative grant - was among the 16 activists that USAID showcased in its Hero series as a result of her work on gender based violence. Josephine’s story spread across the internet. People liked, clicked, and shared their way through the online campaign, joining the global conversation and raising awareness within their own social networks. Josephine is surely a hero and I am proud that USAID supports her important cause to ensure gender equity.

In my work, I see many heroes like Josephine who serve their communities in countless ways. In this newsletter issue, you will meet Rose, a nurse from the Kila Kila clinic in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea whose attentive care provides hope to patients fighting to survive HIV/AIDS. You will learn how local leaders mobilized a Samoan community to adapt to climate change and save their town. And you will catch a glimpse of Fiji citizens’ excitement when they participated in the first open national elections in almost a decade.

These heroes - our partners - might not have all gotten viral recognition on the internet. But their contributions, their impact,

is visible in bustling voting centers, robust job growth, communities saved, and lives transformed. They are all heroes.

Our USAID work in the Pacific Islands covers 12 countries over an area roughly the size of the continent of Africa. Our partners speak more than 1,000 languages and live in populations that range from less than 10,000 people to more than 7 million. The region includes some of the most biodiverse terrestrial and marine ecosystems in the world, resources that support local livelihoods, supply global food demands, and serve as a source for new medicines.

In the same way that none of these countries can get ahead if women are left behind, none of them can succeed without the heroes that step forward. USAID seeks out and supports these heroes as they confront the challenges of changing weather patterns, infectious diseases and governance. Their work ensures stability and prosperity in the Pacific as a region, in each nation and in the lives of families throughout the Pacific as they adapt to a changing world. Whether they are quietly counseling a patient in an HIV/AIDS clinic or rallying community support to save a degraded coastline, these heroes advance our mutual goal of sustainable, transparent and inclusive development across the region.

Partnering with all the Josephines, Roses and the many other heroes on the ground puts us at the frontlines of USAID global initiatives. I am proud to call them our partners and proud of the work that USAID enables across the region.

MEN AND WOMEN UNITE TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

“We men need to put ourselves in women’s shoes to know how they feel.”

The [16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence](#) (GBV) bears strong relevance in Papua New Guinea. This year, the Madang Family Sexual Violence Action Committee, composed of representatives from USAID’s implementing partner FHI360, government, community service organizations, hospitals and the Provincial Health Office, organized events to amplify the message against GBV in Madang. Colorful and vibrant, the activities engaged the community in meaningful and unexpected ways.

In his opening remarks, a pastor revealed that he once physically abused his wife. He shared that when he became aware of the harms of GBV, he stopped this practice. His bold statement illustrates that GBV has permeated all corners of society; however it also demonstrates the progress already made in raising awareness about the issue.

Activities focused mostly on the issue of rape, and educated the community that women’s behavior is not an expression of consent for rape or violence. Males and females chanted powerful slogans:

Clothes are NOT your CONSENT
Walking at night is NOT your CONSENT
Where we go is NOT your CONSENT

Men demonstrated their stance against GBV by wearing a woman’s *meri* blouse. In this community, men dressing as women takes courage. A doctor shared that he chose to wear the *meri* blouse when he considered his wife and daughters. Others said



A man wears a woman’s meri blouse and places his hand print on a board to pledge against GBV. (Photo by FHI360)

they never realized that *meri* blouses are hot and uncomfortable to wear. One man empathized “we men need to put ourselves in women’s shoes to know how they feel. I wear this blouse to show my respect for women and to support the stop of violence against women.”

Attendees watched educational dramas about alcoholism and played games like “vote with your feet” – an activity where a facilitator read statements about appropriate behavior and participants answered with what they believed to be the correct response by walking to a specific location. Incorrect answers sparked discussion. Other activities included the “hand print board,” where men pledged against GBV by printing their hand on a public sign.

Whether the more than 400 participants spoke publicly about their experiences, wore a *meri* blouse or quietly “voted with their feet,” each attendee courageously made a stand against GBV and ignited the 16 days of awareness-raising that followed.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

People are still talking about the campaign. Click the hashtag [#gbv](#) to join!



Counterpart Int. [@counterpartint](#) · Dec 5 “When people participate in peace-building, they gain dignity.”
[#Counterpart](#) partner Josephine Kauona on GBV [#16Days](#)



USAID Philippines [@USAID_Manila](#) · Dec 5 Josephine gave birth alone in the jungle during a civil war. Today she is a
[@USAID](#) Hero. [#16Days](#) [#gbv](#)



USAID [@USAID](#) · Dec 5 Congrats Josephine Kauona on being a USAID Hero! You inspire us to make a difference!

USAID'S HERO SERIES



Josephine Kauona, a peace advocate in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, took the global stage when USAID highlighted her in the [16 Days Against Gender Based Violence](#) campaign. The agency promoted her story alongside other men and women in its Hero series on its website and across its social media platforms while encouraging others to join the global conversation. See below for her story and [click here to read about other USAID Heroes](#).

Josephine Kauona is a champion of peace and prosperity in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. She survived the decade-long Bougainville Crisis that began in 1989. Ten percent of the population lost their lives during that time. Many people were forced to leave their homes, including Josephine. She gave birth alone in the jungle during a total blockade of the island. With no medical assistance available, many women died giving birth. Josephine adopted a daughter whose mother died in this way.

During the blockade, Josephine organized women groups to sustain themselves. She advocated for peace, testifying to the suffering endured by mothers and children. Eventually, she helped lead cease fire negotiations.

The war's end forced survivors to confront a new reality where trauma disrupted the fabric of society. Abuse of all kinds – from domestic to elderly to substance - became a coping mechanism of a people unprepared to handle this devastation.

Josephine and other leaders pressed on to restore normalcy, building safe houses for victims of violence. When Josephine noticed that high illiteracy rates stunted progress, she founded the Tunainya Open Learning Center, coupling literacy and job skills training with counseling and mediation services to address domestic violence, land disputes and other conflicts.

Josephine engages community volunteers to amplify awareness. “When people participate in peace-building, they gain dignity and can integrate back into society better,” says Josephine. Demand for the center’s services reached across the land; today, some people walk for three hours from their home to get assistance. Her husband, Sam Kauna, was a commander during the conflict and now works alongside his wife to heal their wounded community and promote peace and prosperity in the region.

Josephine’s organization recently received one of the first USAID Women’s Peace Building Initiative award and her work has gained her international attention – including a consultancy with the UN and spot on a regional human rights committee.

“I have great hope for Bougainville,” she humbly gleamed.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD **Joan Atkinson, Health Advisor for Papua New Guinea**

Last December people across the globe observed World AIDS Day, celebrating advances made in HIV treatment and commemorating those who lost their lives in the battle against the disease. USAID works in many countries, including Papua New Guinea (PNG), to combat HIV and promote global health through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR. It is the largest commitment ever made by any nation for an international initiative dedicated to a single disease.

I have attended World AIDS Day all over the world for more than 20 years and I remember when people said we could not bring treatment to lesser-developed countries; and if you were told that you are HIV positive, it was like being told you will die very soon. As a nurse, I have cared for countless people while the HIV virus slowly stole their lives. It was not that long ago. Activists across the globe have helped boost political will and scientific progress, creating a historic opportunity to end HIV as we have known it; that is if we, as a people, don’t get in our own way.

Double Stigmas Stunt Progress: Although lifesaving medicine is available, there are some parts of the world, including Papua New Guinea, where seeking help for HIV/AIDS can be more deadly than the disease itself. Homosexuality is illegal in PNG, though seldom enforced. *(Continued on page 5)*

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Perhaps the true measure of USAID’s success will not only be the control of HIV/AIDS, but the degree to which society no longer tolerates any type of violence, stigma, or discrimination.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

(Continued from page 4)

Transgender and gay people face punishment instead at home, where more than 60 percent of men known to be selling sex to other men have been rejected by their family. On the streets they are subjected to discrimination, taunts, physical abuse and sometimes even murder. Women who exchange sex for money or goods or services face similar stigmas.

This has pushed an already vulnerable population into hidden pockets of society, creating “hotspots” where the disease is most heavily concentrated. Though the Government of Papua New Guinea offers free medicine and treatment plans to all people who carry the infection, few risk exposing their condition – and their lives – to the isolation and violence that follows.

Meeting Half Way: Treatment for patients with HIV/AIDS involve medicine regimes, ongoing test and clinic visits, and counseling; it is highly unlikely that someone with the disease would voluntarily appear at one of our USAID-supported clinics. So we go to them.

Peer counselors make their way into nightclubs and other havens, developing safe relationships with those who either have HIV/AIDS or may be exposed to it. When they are ready to come to a clinic, we sit with them in comfortable, private rooms and they begin the long journey of treatment.

Breaking the Stigma: Working with this vulnerable population is a delicate process and this is the heart of PEPFAR’s work. It is an expression of compassion and tolerance for those who are unable to make their voices heard. So many times I have heard that they want to receive the same rights and treatment as other citizens in PNG.

When I spoke at the Worlds AIDS Day event in Port Moresby in December, I was inspired by an HIV-positive woman who took the stage to claim her right – and those she represents - as a citizen. Her story surely reached beyond the day’s event, with people in her community talking about her in the days that followed. Her courageous act will surely spark positive change. I also applaud the Government of Papua New Guinea, who was

Joan Atkinson manages the USAID/Philippines-funded program in Papua New Guinea to strengthen HIV/AIDS services for those populations in which the epidemic is concentrated. Joan’s expertise is in international health, HIV/AIDS, TB, and development of gender-sensitive health training materials.



FHI360 volunteers and staff participate in World AIDS Day in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (Photo: FHI360)

represented at the event by high ranking officials from the Ministry of Health. This is a huge leap forward, considering that until recently the government did not acknowledge that transgender, males who have sex with males and female sex workers existed, which compounded the disease.

A few years ago people made frightening predictions about how badly HIV/AIDS was going to spread in Papua New Guinea; but thanks to the government’s swift action, the prevalence rate is much lower than predicted.

Moving Forward: World AIDS Day occurs just once a year. Though it brings attention to the issue, it is the quiet, every day actions of those at the forefront battling the disease, from outreach workers pouring into all corners of the community, to the attentive clinic nurses, to decision and policy makers – all carrying out the real work. These people ultimately advance tolerance; perhaps the true measure of USAID’s success will not only be the control of HIV/AIDS, but the degree to which society no longer tolerates any type of violence, stigma, or discrimination.

We at USAID work to ensure prosperity and stability reaches all people, especially the most vulnerable. I am honored and privileged to work alongside the Government of Papua New Guinea and all other partners, ensuring that no further lives – regardless of race, clan, age, sex, or sexual identity, are lost to a virus that is finally both preventable and treatable.



Joan Atkinson speaks at Worlds AIDS Day in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (Photo by FHI360)

NURSE IN PORT MORESBY CHAMPIONS PATIENT CARE

“I worked hard to ensure that she stayed alive to see her three children grow up.”

Treating patients with HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea is complex. Those who carry the disease also carry the burden of social stigma. By the time an HIV/AIDS-infected individual finally braves a visit to a clinic, they may be very sick.

“Jenny” – not her real name – came to the USAID-supported Kila Kila (or *Kilakila* as it’s known locally) clinic in Port Moresby. Clinic staff diagnosed her with multiple drug-resistant tuberculosis, a serious strain of TB that demands a long and debilitating medication course. As clinic doctors planned her treatment, they discovered that Jenny also had diabetes and hypertension. Final tests revealed that she was HIV-positive.

That’s when Jenny met Rose Rubin, a Kila Kila clinic nurse. Rose was assigned to Jenny as her anti-retroviral therapy (ART) nurse; she was to walk Jenny through her HIV treatment plan to ensure she got the care that she needed to survive.

“Jenny was a special patient to me. I am in a resource-limited clinical setting,” said Rose. “I worked hard to ensure that she stayed alive to see her three children grow up.”

Rose guided Jenny’s treatment to slowly introduce the powerful medications she had to tolerate. She dedicated attentive time to Jenny by scheduling her on the clinic’s least busy days. Through Rose’s patient-centered approach, Jenny, who was initially in denial of her HIV status, gradually formed a trusting bond with Rose and actively pursued treatment. Jenny now fully adheres to her medications and appointments. Although she still has a long road ahead, she looks and feels healthier than when she first visited the clinic.

USAID’s Strengthening HIV/AIDS Services for Most At-Risk Populations supports nearly 350 clients with ART nurses in PNG. The



Rose, a nurse in Papua New Guinea’s Kila Kila clinic walks patients through complicated HIV/AIDS and TB treatment plans. She inspires hope in her patients and saves lives. (Photo by FHI 360)

strong and supportive approach to case management has paid off; the patient adherence rate for these USAID-supported clinics is 90 percent.

Papua New Guinea suffers from the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the Pacific, with overall adult prevalence at nearly one percent. Data points to a more concentrated HIV epidemic linked to high risk populations, such as female sex workers and their clients, and men who have sex with men.

USAID - in collaboration with local and national governments, and civil society partners - is improving the country’s ability to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS through the Continuum of Prevention to Care and Treatment (COPCT) model, which is being implemented, sustained and replicated across the country, and now worldwide at other USAID Missions. Using this COPCT model, PNG recently secured a grant from the Global Fund to deliver services to high-risk groups, advancing the country’s ability to bring treatment to an even larger scale.

Through the dedicated work of partners like Rose, USAID Pacific Islands can envision an AIDS-free generation, where healthy, stable families are free to pursue livelihoods and contribute to prosperity in their homes and communities.

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USAID - in collaboration with local and national governments, and civil society partners - is improving the country’s ability to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS. This includes strengthening the overall health system, which allows for successful HIV efforts to be replicated. USAID also works in cross-cutting issues such as sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, gender based violence, and training of health workers.

USAID developed the Continuum of Prevention to Care and Treatment mode, which is now applied worldwide at other USAID Missions. It assists civil society and government partners to implement, sustain and replicate it in their respective regions. In May 2013, the Government of Papua New Guinea’s midterm review of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy cited the USAID’s Continuum of Prevention to Care and Treatment model as a high impact HIV strategy and called for the model’s replication nationally.

FOCUS ON: FIJI ELECTIONS

Cathy Hamlin, Democracy Officer
Office of Economic Development and Governance

Last September I witnessed the historic elections as a U.S. member of an international observation effort. Being the first election in many years, the mood around Fiji was electric with excitement. “I want a new government, one that will bring a good Fiji,” said one voter. Most voters said they understood the voting procedures, and were confident that their votes would count. Uniformly, voters were committed to participating in the process. One voter underscored this sentiment when he declared, “I should vote – I am a citizen and it’s my right.”

On September 17, 2014, nearly half a million Fijian citizens went to the polls to elect all 50 Members of Parliament (MP) to represent them in a unicameral legislature. It was the first national elections held since the coup in 2006.

Given the historic significance of the election, Embassy Suva requested assistance and USAID/Philippines secured \$500,000 from the Elections and Political Processes Fund in Washington to support voter education and election monitoring. With the adoption of its 2013 Constitution and updated electoral system, Fijian citizens needed guidance navigating key changes, which ranged from the use of an English-only ballot to a new multi-member, open list proportional representation electoral system.

Months of USAID-supported voter education activities reached more than 260,000 Fijians about the importance of and the process for voting. Furthermore, five non-government election experts were brought to Fiji to support the international observation of elections in addition to participants from the U.S. Government.

The Fiji Government instituted a Multinational Observer Group (MOG) to observe the elections. The group consisted of long- and short-term observers from Australia, Papua New

Guinea, Indonesia, India, Israel, South Africa, Brazil, Russia, Turkey, Japan, New Zealand, Iran, Korea and the United States.

Overall, Fiji’s election on September 17 was deemed credible, with 84 percent of registered voters casting a ballot. The MOG determined that the election broadly represented the will of the people and stated that it did not observe any fraud or deliberate misconduct, having observed at 31 percent of polling stations. According to the final election results announced on September 22, three political earned a seat in Parliament: Fiji First (32 seats), SODELPA (15 seats) and NFP (3 seats). Of these, eight women were elected to parliament comprising a historic 16 percent of parliamentary representatives.

In a final support for Fiji’s transition to an elected government, USAID trained civil society leaders and newly elected parliamentarians. In January 2015, training sessions and town halls for MPs and civil society representatives were conducted in Lautoka, Rakiraki and Labasa. These activities helped prepare citizens and elected officials to actively engage on policy issues through the use of town halls.

By expanding and strengthening its voter education and monitoring efforts, the Fijian government can become more participatory, accountable, legitimate and responsive to the needs of its citizens. These qualities promote confidence in citizens and advance prosperity and stability throughout the nation.

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I should vote.

I am a citizen and it’s my right.

-Fijian voter on election day



Left: Cathy Hamlin (right) engages with a Fijian voter. Center: With USAID support, nearly 265,000 Fijian citizens learned about the importance of and process of voting. Right: Representatives from the Fijians Elections Office manage polling stations, where nearly 600,000 voters cast their ballots.

DISASTER RESPONSE IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

“Enhanced local capacity is not simply a catchphrase, but the most logical underpinning for community survival and post-disaster efforts.” - Mark Adams, PREPARE Chief of Party

Shifting rainfall and storm patterns in the Pacific Islands expose people and their livelihoods to a number of devastating disasters, including typhoons, floods and landslides. Parts of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) are particularly prone to droughts. The people have adapted their lifestyle to last through dry seasons; however a 2013 drought that spanned several months wiped out food and water supplies, crippling families and leaving communities unsure of their ability to survive the next long drought.

Last October, International Organization for Migration - Micronesia, USAID's implementing partner for PREPARE, a disaster response program, conducted workshops on the remote Aur Atoll – located approximately 80 miles from the RMI capital of Majuro. The disaster preparedness-focused sessions fostered lively discussions on the 2013 drought's impacts and prompted ideas for improving community resilience.

Through this workshop, participants created the community's first ever disaster management plan for Aur and Toba Islands in Aur Atoll, known as bunten ne ko nan maanpapopo ilo ien idin, which translates to "the steps for natural disaster preparedness." Highly customized and driven by local needs and input, the plan standardizes early warning methods, designates evacuation centers, and establishes communications protocols, complete with evaluation drills.

As a result of these activities, the people in this rural atoll can coordinate immediate lifesaving measures when the next drought or other natural disaster hits. PREPARE Chief of Party Mark Adams stated, "In a remote island setting with the most challenging logistics in the world, 'enhanced local capacity' is not simply a catchphrase, but the most logical underpinning for community survival and post-disaster efforts. The USAID-funded PREPARE program recognizes the unique knowledge and skills already extant in the community and respectfully seeks to help these vulnerable populations build on this foundation."

The five-year PREPARE Program works closely with national authorities and local communities in both RMI and the Federated States of Micronesia to prepare for, and respond to, large and small-scale disasters.



During a prolonged drought in the Marshall Islands, Julian Bejang and her children had to survive on breadfruit and coconut water. [Click here to read the complete story on USAID's Transforming Lives and learn how the Republic of the Marshall Islands responded to the prolonged drought to protect its people.](#) (Photo by Sofie Van Gunsteren)



Left: The Toba and Aur community signs the inaugural disaster management plan, which they created themselves after attending USAID-supported training workshops. **Center:** Community members put their disaster management plan into practice with an evacuation drill. **Right:** Community members participate in a disaster management planning exercise by creating a hazard vulnerability map. (Photos by PREPARE)

C-CAP DAI INNOVATION CHALLENGE FINALIST

Last summer, DAI - an international development company and implementing partner for USAID's Coastal Community Adaptation Project (C-CAP) - called upon its projects to share their most innovative activities. More than 50 DAI projects submitted a total of 92 entries. Following a stream of written applications and videos, C-CAP emerged as a top five finalist.

In October, DAI invited the finalists to present to a panel of judges near Washington D.C. Community Liaison Officer Isoa Korovulavula represented C-CAP alongside DAI Project Manager Joey Manfredo. Together they outlined the team's approach to climate adaptation in the 12 Pacific Islands where they operate.

Panel judges, composed of international development leaders, remarked that C-CAP's approach to the challenge was simple, elegant, inexpensive, and applicable in all the various island nations C-CAP covers. The panel noted that mapping projects are not new, but C-CAP's simple innovations used to achieve scalability caused the project to stand out.

"It would be great to standardize this type of tool for other projects – especially those that are working directly with communities," one panelist said.

In the end, an education project in Pakistan won top honors. USAID congratulates the C-CAP team and is proud to give the project a global voice, advancing innovation among international peers.

Entry Highlights

C-CAP's entry to the DAI Development Challenge - "Charting New Pathways to Resilience with Climate Change Risk and Asset Maps"- soared past nearly 100 entries, earning the project a spot in the top five finalists. Here's what caught the judges' attention:

The basics: C-CAP combines climate change projections, awareness of risks and climate variability, and spatial layout of community assets into one map. These maps guide community leaders in their planning for adapting vulnerable community assets like water systems, evacuation centers, economic infrastructure and coastal barriers.

The innovation: Part of C-CAP's innovation was in using free, easily-accessible and user-friendly adaptation tools. In the remote and highly dispersed countries of the Pacific Islands region, the only path to sustainability is via low-cost, scalable development interventions.

The application: C-CAP applies the free GoogleMaps platform, widely accessible country-level climate change trend projections and hand-drawn community maps to create a digital planning tool that has been shared between the region's most remote island communities, local and national government partners, project support team members in the United States, and USAID/Pacific Islands.

Want to try it out for yourself? Interact with C-CAP GoogleMaps by clicking on the hyperlinked community names on the C-CAP Flickr page: <https://www.flickr.com/people/c-cap/>



Top: The Team: Dr. Isoa Korovulavula - C-CAP Community Liaison Office and senior technical staff from the University of the South Pacific, Andrew Whiteman - Associate II in the Asia Region office for DAI in DC, Joey Manfredo - C-CAP Project Manager - Environment & Health, Asia for DAI in DC, Walter Weaver - Director, Environment & Health - Asia for DAI in DC.
Bottom: C-CAP's Dr. Isoa Korovulavula presents to the panel in the final judging phase. (Photos by DAI)

COMMUNICATING CALLS TO ACTION

ADB Study Underscores How Climate Change Hurts Livelihoods



Communities and their livelihoods are at risk to the damaging effects of climate change. This Samoan beach resort was at-risk of crumbling into the sea due to the effects of climate change. Read the full story on the following page. (Photo by C-CAP)

Climate change has become a household phrase. People can easily understand images of degraded coastlines and melting icecaps. Though the impact is clear and immediate, it doesn't tell the complete story. How does climate change affect agriculture and tourism? How will it impact people's jobs or their ability to feed their families?

USAID and development players across the globe are digging deeper to examine these hidden impacts and translating them to affected communities to spark action. A recent Asian Development Bank report, "Economics of Climate Change in the Pacific," examines climate change projections in terms of economic impacts and on overall gross domestic product (GDP).

The report assessed how potential changes in temperature, precipitation, sea level rise, and ocean acidity, among other areas, may impact important economic sectors in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Finally, report contributors conducted economic analysis to quantify the economic losses resulting from the projected climate change impacts.

The report projects declines of between 2.9 and 12.7 percent of annual GDP across the countries, under a medium emissions scenario.

The report continues with concrete impacts, such as:

- Rising sea levels damaging critical infrastructure like airports and roads.
- Poor air quality creating a sharp increase in respiratory diseases.
- Less attractive oceans and landscape slowing down tourism.

The findings channel readers to recommendations that adaptation projects such as climate-proofing infrastructure can be used to increase economic resilience. USAID has long been at the forefront of putting these words into action across the Pacific Islands region. USAID's Coastal Community Adaptation Project (C-CAP), for example, works with 74 communities across nine Pacific Island countries to support local-level climate change interventions and increase the resilience of coastal communities to the projected impacts of climate change.

As seen in the ADB report, USAID's own work, and firsthand stories of people living in the Pacific Island, climate change effects can devastate already vulnerable populations. While C-CAP works to rehabilitate and construct infrastructure like flood control or rainwater catchment systems, other USAID initiatives work in ecosystem conservation, disaster assistance and governance. By uncovering and communicating real life impacts of climate change, and by pursuing innovation and partnerships, communities can take charge of saving lives and livelihoods.

CASE STUDY: Samoa Beach Community Fights to Save Resort

Tanu Fales is a community-owned resort in Manase, Samoa. Traditional standalone guestrooms dot the scenic shoreline. A main tourist attraction, it is an important economic asset of the community; but the impacts of climate change threaten its future and the livelihoods of those around it.

Rising sea levels and flooding exacerbate coastal erosion. This has already marred the beauty of the landscape and could eventually cause the resort to crumble away if left alone.

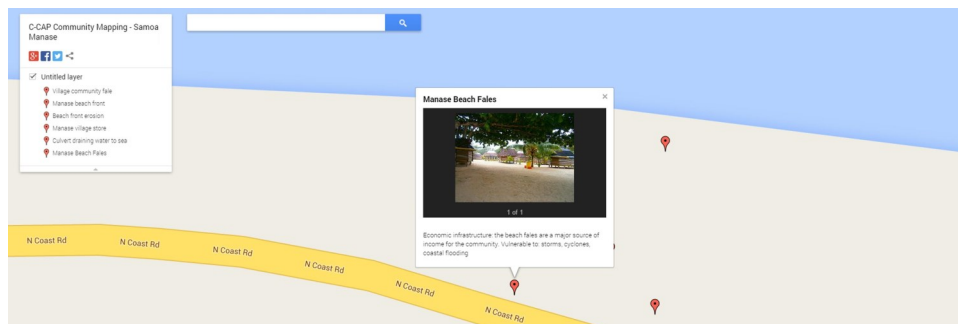
Local leaders have since partnered with C-CAP to protect their community. Together they identified and prioritized the shoreline protection of Tanu Fales resort during risk mapping and Infrastructure Prioritization Index exercises.

C-CAP used an innovative approach to stabilize the coastline. They installed a sandbag container called Elcorock geofabric below the waves just off the coast of Manase. The simple solution works double time, functioning mostly out of tourists' view to reduce erosion and protect the large beach that draws them to Tanu Fales.

With a protected shoreline, tourists can continue to enjoy the scenic resort, while the community can remain stable and prosperous.

[Click here to interact with the map that C-CAP and community leaders created to save this town.](#)

(Photos by C-CAP)



IN MEMORY OF TOM SETA

It is with great regret and sorrow that we announce the passing of Tom Seta. He was a devoted member of the Pacific Islands team and served as the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist for the Women Peace Building Initiative in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

He is remembered for being a best friend to those around him, who loved to laugh and generously share his favorite *buai* nut with others. He was a strong teacher, mentor and example of hard work and compassion. His colleagues honor him for his contributions to the Mission, especially to the Women's Peace Building Initiative, which he helped launch in May 2014.

A colleague recalls a time when Tom led a local survey team to Buin in the Southern part of Bougainville, where he visited the people of Buin in their villages. "When he came back, we discussed the lives of the people he met in Buin for days," says the colleague. "That shows how passionate Tom was about others' lives."

His caring demeanor was a valuable asset to the project and his team's morale. His team will miss his friendship and honor him in their continued work for the people of Bougainville.



Tom Seta (second from left) stands amongst his Women's Peace Building Initiative colleagues, a program that he helped launch. (Photo by Counterpart International)

NEW FACES WORKING WITH USAID PACIFIC ISLANDS

Michael Denham, Development Assistance Specialist



Mike Denham joined USAID's Regional Sub-Office in Suva, Fiji in January of 2015 as the Development Assistance Specialist. He works closely with USAID's Regional Main Office in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, supporting functions to USAID projects in Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu and Nauru. Mike joins the Mission with a diverse and interesting work history. He graduated from Truman State University in 2003 and was commissioned as an Officer in the US Army. He served overseas in Suwon, South Korea and Basra, Iraq. After leaving the Army he also taught high school history in San Antonio, Texas and was a human resources clerk at the US Embassy in Madrid. Mike is married to Jane Denham, US Embassy Suva's GSO, and has two children, Helena who is two years old and James (JD) who is 3 months old.

Steven Wisman, Chief of Party, Women's Peace Building Initiative (WPBI)



Steven Wisman is Counterpart International's new Chief of Party for its WPBI project based in Buka, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Originally from Concord, California, he has over 29 years of project management, operations, and oversight experience working on development and post-conflict/transition-related projects in Asia, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Much of his professional experience has consisted of providing capacity building, training and technical assistance to local nongovernmental organizations—areas critical to the effective implementation of the WPBI program. His overseas postings have included assignments in Palestine, South Africa, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. In addition, he served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger and U.S. Department of State Intern in Benin. Steve has a Master's Degree from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Washington, D.C., and a Bachelor's Degree from Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, California.

From left to right: Alvin Kumani, Finance Officer; Abhilasha Sharma, Gender Specialist; Steven Wisman, Chief of Party; Ethel Marena, Administrative Officer; Wilson Monori, Deputy Chief of Party. Photo by Counterpart International.

PACIFIC ISLANDS OVERVIEW

Pacific Island nations are among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of global climate change, as well as being some of the least able to respond. USAID assistance covers 12 Pacific Island nations: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The region is home to more than 9 million people, major fisheries, coral reefs, and important tropical forests, and is vital to U.S. Security and regional interests. The islands are culturally diverse, with more than 1,000 languages spoken and national populations ranging from less than 10,000 to more than six million.

The region's varied topography includes mountainous islands and low-lying coral atolls, some of which are only 15 feet above sea level.

USAID's Pacific Islands Office works with Pacific Island nations to address acute environmental issues and the potential negative effects resulting from global climate change. The office also manages a disaster mitigation, relief and reconstruction program in the Republic of Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, assists Papua New Guinea in building its capacity for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment, and is engaged in both Papua New Guinea and Fiji with support to elections and democratic processes. In addition, USAID works to promote women, peace and security in Papua New Guinea.

USAID works closely with Pacific Island governments, regional organizations, and bilateral and multilateral partners to ensure that its assistance yields the highest impact by incorporating lessons learned and best practices from around the world.



USAID/Pacific Islands
c/o U.S. Embassy, Douglas Street
P.O. Box 1492

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Tel: (675) 321-1455 ext. 2002

Fax: (675) 321-3421

Email: infopacificislands@usaid.gov

<http://www.usaid.gov/pacific-islands>

<http://www.facebook.com/usaid.philippines>

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