

RSE Impact Study: Pacific stream report

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Pacific research associates and community-based assistants

Fiji	Bui (Materea) Turagasau	Several villages near Savusavu, eastern Vanua Levu
Kiribati	Rena Tekanene Meere Beiariki Tireta Ioane	South Tarawa South Tarawa South Tarawa
Samoa	Fotu Jody Jackson-Becerra Eliuta Sanonu Tavaii Misa Leiloa Tumanuvao Fui Dr. Maria Kerslake	Neiafu and Papa Palauli Neiafu and Papa Palauli Poutasi Poutasi Report on social impacts of RSE in Samoa
Tonga	Maleponi Taunaholo Selina Mahe Teena Brown-Pulu Semi Pulu Viliami Fifita Dr. Timote Vaoleti & Sandy Morrison	Nuku'alofa Kolonga Kolonga Kolonga Ha'alaufuli Report on a fānau-centric approach to RSE recruitment, and impacts on Tongan families
Vanuatu	Thomas Ambata Leitari Orah Mackin Valia Thomas Iatau Asel Tak Gwenda Kalmet Carlot Dr. Rochelle Bailey	Lamen Bay and Lamen Island Lamen Bay Lamen Bay Tanna Tanna Port Vila Report on social impacts of RSE in Vanuatu

Disclaimer: The data used in this report have been sourced from reliable sources which are noted in the report. The authors accept no liability for any inaccuracies in the data. The report is based on information available as at January 2020.

Abbreviations

ATR	Agreement to Recruit
ESU	Employment Services Unit, Vanuatu
INZ	Immigration New Zealand
LPV	Limited Purpose Visa
LSU	Labour Sending Unit
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, New Zealand
MCIL	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Samoa
MEHR	Ministry of Employment and Human Resources, Kiribati
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tonga
MSD	Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand
NEC	National Employment Centre, Fiji
NZ	New Zealand
PDT	Poutasi Development Trust, Samoa
PIC	Pacific Island country
PLF	Pacific Labour Facility
PLS	Pacific Labour Scheme
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer
SBEC	Small Business Enterprise Centre, Samoa
SPP	Strengthening Pacific Partnerships
SWP	Seasonal Worker Programme

Glossary of Terms

Faka'apa'apa	The Tongan word for acknowledging and returning respect.
Fale	A traditional Samoan house, commonly open-sided.
Fānau	The Tongan word for brothers and sisters. Fānau is a broad concept that encompasses all close blood relatives (e.g. cousins). Members of a fānau assume a high level of responsibility to each other.
I-Kiribati	An indigenous person from Kiribati
Li-Lamenu	An indigenous person from the Lamenu Bay area, Vanuatu
Matai	A chief, Samoa
Maneaba	A traditional meeting house, Kiribati
Mea'alofa	The Samoan word for a small gift of appreciation.
Misinale	The Tongan word for traditional, annual celebrations of monetary donations to the church.
Ni-Vanuatu	An indigenous person from Vanuatu
Noble	A hereditary peerage, passed down through patrilineal lines. There are 33 noble titles in Tonga each of which has a holding of land (estate) associated with it.
PACER Plus	The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations is a regional trade and economic integration agreement covering goods, services and investment. PACER Plus has been signed by Australia, New Zealand and nine Pacific Island countries (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).
Taulelea	The untitled Samoan men in the village. The Taulelea are responsible for all activities in the village that require hard labour, including agricultural and domestic work for the matai.
Turaga ni Koro	The leading Fijian official in the village (koro)
Sevusevu	A customary Fijian protocol whereby a small quantity of dried kava root is presented to the Turaga ni Koro when visitors arrive in the village.
Unimane	An elder, Kiribati

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Executive Summary

The Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Impact Study has been commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and its partner agency the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The study consists of four inter-related streams of work addressing the following overarching research questions:

1. What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme on, and for, communities in New Zealand?
2. What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme for Pacific workers and their island-based families?
3. What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme on, and for, Pacific communities?
4. What are the implications of the study findings for the future development of the scheme?

This report, referred to as the Pacific stream report, addresses research questions two and three. Question one was addressed in the New Zealand stream (completed in July 2019).¹ A strategic-level analysis of the findings from the two streams will be undertaken (in collaboration with MBIE and MFAT) to address question four. The key output of this will be the RSE Impact Study Synthesis Report which is due for completion in April 2020.

About the RSE scheme

The tenth anniversary of the RSE scheme was celebrated in 2017. From relatively small beginnings (involving approximately 3,500 Pacific workers), around 11,000 workers from nine Pacific Island countries (PICs) were approved to arrive in New Zealand for RSE work in the 12-months to June 2019. As at January 2020 there are 180 RSE employers, around 70 percent of whom employ fewer than 50 RSE workers each. Workers are employed to plant, maintain, harvest and pack crops in the horticulture and viticulture industries.

Discerning and assessing impact

A critical task for the Impact Study is to discern and assess the extent to which observed impacts are related, directly or indirectly, to the RSE scheme. Determining whether observed impacts can be directly attributed to RSE is impossible given the complexity of the scheme, the number of stakeholders involved, and the Australian labour mobility arrangements operating in the same PICs.

An analytical approach - contribution analysis – is used in the Impact Study. Contribution analysis provides a systematic and rigorous approach to establishing (or inversely, to discounting) a *plausible association* between a particular input (in this case, the RSE scheme) and observed changes. It addresses cause and effect by *demonstrating contribution* rather than *proving causality*. Contribution analysis is used to identify and understand the contribution of the scheme to observed changes, and to identify and understand other factors (unrelated to the scheme) that may be influencing such changes.

¹ Nunns, H., Bedford, C. & Bedford, R. (2019). RSE Impact Study: New Zealand stream report.

Pacific stream research team

The study's three principal researchers (the authors) were joined by seven research associates for the Pacific stream. They included locally-based indigenous associates as well as New Zealand-based Samoan, Tongan and I-Kiribati associates.

The Pacific research associates undertook a range of tasks including facilitating introductions at the village-level and organising interviews, introducing the researchers to informants in a culturally appropriate manner, providing interpreting services, and, in four communities, conducting and writing up records of interviews. Community-based assistants in all communities also supported the fieldwork, for example, by locating RSE workers and family members for interviews.

Pacific Islands countries in the Pacific stream

The five PICs that participated in the Pacific stream were selected in conjunction with MBIE and MFAT. Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa were chosen because, as suppliers of the highest numbers of RSE workers, these PICs would provide the most evidence of impact of the scheme (positive, negative, intended, unintended, actual and potential) on participating households and communities.

Kiribati was chosen because of its barriers to participation associated with distance and high travel costs for workers and employers, and the country's relatively high female participation rate in the scheme. Fiji was selected as a late-entrant to the RSE. Ten communities across the five PICs were chosen for fieldwork because of their links to individual RSE employers that participated in the NZ stream, thus enabling the New Zealand and Pacific data to be connected and compared.

Methods

Contribution analysis requires the research team to present evidence that provides a convincing case of the RSE scheme's contribution to observed changes (impacts). Evidence was collected in the five PICs about changes (positive and negative) that have occurred for households and communities involved in the scheme. Information was also collected about factors unrelated to the RSE scheme that may be influencing these changes.

The primary data collection method was face to face interviews, supplemented by descriptive statistical data analysis, literature review and media review. A total of 228 interviews were conducted in the five PICs with 302 informants including RSE workers and their families, community informants (e.g. village leaders, teachers, entrepreneurs), Pacific, New Zealand and Australian government officials, and NGOs.

Following an initial analysis of the data, an iterative process involving the Pacific research associates and members of the RSE Impact Study Expert Panel was used to further analyse and prioritize the key positive and negative impacts to which the RSE scheme is deemed to be contributing for RSE workers, their families and communities.²

The principal researchers then tested these contribution claims by searching for any potential rival explanations to the observed change(s). The refined contribution claims were documented and

² The RSE Impact Study Expert Panel consists of five academic and practitioner experts in Pacific labour mobility and/or research methodology located in the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand.

scrutinised in a meeting of the Expert Panel. These key impacts to which the RSE scheme is either contributing directly, or to some extent (or in some way) form the substantive part of this report.

Context for the findings about the RSE scheme's impacts

The findings about the impacts of the RSE scheme must be considered in the context of individual PIC's participation. In the year to 30 June 2019, the five PICs included in the Pacific stream provided 91 percent of the 11,168 Pacific RSE arrivals for seasonal work. Three of the countries – Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa (the “Big 3”) – have provided more than 80 percent of the annual arrivals of RSE workers from Pacific countries since the scheme began in April 2007. In 2018/19 they were the source countries for 85 percent of Pacific RSE workers, with Vanuatu alone accounting for 46 percent of arrivals.

These three countries are also the major suppliers of Pacific labour for Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), accounting for 85 percent of the 10,635 Pacific SWP workers in 2018/19. The majority of Pacific SWP workers are from Vanuatu (47%) and Tonga (35%), with a small, but growing share from Samoa (6%). In contrast, the other two PICs in the Pacific stream – Fiji and Kiribati – provide relatively few workers to New Zealand or Australia each season. In 2018/19, the shares of RSE workers from Fiji (3.9%) and Kiribati (2.3%) were both under five percent.

RSE worker participation is heavily male orientated, with only around 1,000 women workers each year. In recent years the share of women RSE workers recruited from the Pacific has been declining. In 2014/15, 13.5 percent of Pacific RSE workers were women. By 2018/19 this share had fallen to 9.8 percent.

In addition to RSE employers' clear preferences for labour from certain countries, employers tend to recruit (mainly) men in the productive working age groups, 20-49 years, which has implications for the maintenance of agricultural production and other village activities in rural-based communities. In both Tonga and Vanuatu, more than 12 percent of rural-based men aged 20-49 years were absent in New Zealand doing seasonal work in 2018/19.

When participation in Australia's SWP is accounted for, a third of Tonga's men (33.3 percent) and just under a quarter of Vanuatu's men (24 percent) aged 20-49 years were engaged in seasonal employment overseas during the 2018/19 financial year.

For Samoa, the share of the male population aged 20-49 years absent participating in the two seasonal work schemes during 2018/19 was just under 10 percent. While this is a lower share than Tonga and Vanuatu, in Samoa it is a certain group that is predominantly absent – namely the taulelea (untitled men) who perform a range of domestic, agricultural and communal activities in the village.

Findings: impacts to which the RSE scheme is contributing

The Pacific stream findings highlight that the impacts of the RSE scheme, positive and negative, are diverse across participating PICs and within individual PICs. This diversity occurs at every scale: macro (between countries), meso (between communities) and micro (between households and between individual workers).

Among the five countries covered in this report, the RSE scheme currently has a negligible impact in Fiji and Kiribati, beyond the participating households. This is because the numbers of RSE workers from these two countries are small and are widely disbursed across communities, districts and islands.

In contrast, in communities that have multiple households with RSE workers in New Zealand each year, there can be significant intended, positive impacts. There are also a number of emerging unintended, problematic impacts in communities with high numbers of RSE workers who are repeatedly absent. Such impacts are exacerbated if other productive members from the community are going offshore for temporary work in Australia (e.g. under the SWP or Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS)). These impacts may become more challenging if the numbers absent from the community continue to increase over time.

Given the diverse economic, social and cultural contexts in which the RSE scheme operates, it is impossible to identify village-level impacts of RSE participation that are applicable and generalisable across the five PICs. Consequently, the Pacific stream research identified only a small number of impacts that are relevant at the scale of the community.

Overall, the findings from the Pacific stream fieldwork are positive for workers and their families who greatly value the opportunity to participate in the RSE scheme. Informants consistently reported positive impacts from participation linked to the economic gains from paid seasonal work, the ability to use RSE earnings to improve living standards and to further productive livelihoods at home. In some instances, reference was made to the acquisition of skills in New Zealand that are of direct use to families and the community.

An abridged version of the key positive impacts is provided in Table 1, and the way in which the scheme is contributing to each impact (referred to as “contribution type”) is identified. The RSE scheme is making an unequivocal contribution to four key impacts (a direct contribution), while it is contributing in some way and to some extent to four other key impacts (an enabling or enabled contribution). (A full list of the contribution types is provided in [Appendix B: Contribution Analysis](#)).

RSE worker households are recipients of all eight positive impacts, while RSE communities are recipients of four of the eight positive impacts. Women who are able to work overseas and gain RSE employment are a recipient of one positive impact.

Where community-level impacts are presented, the word ‘community’ is used as a general term to refer to where the worker comes from and usually lives. In four of the countries these communities are rural villages, and the word village is synonymous with community in these contexts. In Kiribati the word community covers both traditional villages and urban suburbs in South Tarawa.

Table 1. RSE's contribution to key positive impacts

Impact recipient(s)	Key positive impacts to which RSE is contributing	Intended/unintended	Contribution type
RSE households	RSE income provides workers and their families with a regular, reliable source of income that is used, first and foremost, to meet daily living needs and contributes to the economic wellbeing of participating households.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE households	RSE income is making a direct contribution to educational participation in those countries where fees are required for primary and/or secondary school attendance, and for payment of university fees.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE households	The money earned through RSE participation supports families to further existing economic activities and, in some instances, engage in new ones, such as the development of small business enterprises (e.g. local shops).	Intended	An enabled contribution
Women who are able to work overseas; Female partners of RSE workers	The RSE scheme is generating income earning opportunities for women - for RSE workers, and for women remaining at home.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE households & their community	Income from seasonal work can provide a substantial cash injection to aid disaster recovery efforts at the household and community levels.	Intended	An enabling contribution
RSE households & their community	Some workers/their family members report that participating in RSE and/or Vakameasina ³ courses has enhanced existing soft/hard skills and/or led to new skills. Such skills may be transferable to their home environment (particularly horticultural production) and are being shared with extended family members.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE workers' community	RSE income is often distributed, directly or indirectly, beyond participating households to others in the community. This redistribution of income supports economic and social wellbeing in the community.	Intended	An enabling contribution
RSE workers' community	RSE income is having a distributional effect in some Pacific communities through contributing to improvements in community-based services and facilities.	Intended	An enabling contribution

Where negative impacts have been identified, these cannot be generalised across all communities or countries. The impacts are context-specific and depend on a range of influencing factors such as the numbers of RSE workers relative to the size of the community's (usually a village) population, and the length of time members of the community have participated in the scheme.

A diversity of views was expressed by the workers and their families. Even in communities where negative impacts were identified, these views were expressed by some, but not all, informants. In places where there was the strongest articulation of some negative impacts by various community members, no current or ex-RSE worker wanted to terminate RSE employment opportunities.

An abridged version of the key negative impacts is provided in Table 2. The RSE scheme is contributing directly to six of the seven key negative impacts, all but two of which are unintended impacts. The

³ Vakameasina is an MFAT-funded RSE worker training initiative. The programme delivers foundation-level training to new RSE recruits in English language, financial literacy and life skills, as well as more advanced training (e.g. in basic trades, leadership and small business management) to more experienced, return workers.

recipients of negative impacts are wide-ranging: RSE workers, RSE workers' partners and/or children, RSE villages, communities not accessing RSE employment, and participating PICs.

Table 2. RSE's contribution to key negative impacts

Impact recipient(s)	Key negative impacts to which RSE is contributing	Intended/unintended	Contribution type	Primary stakeholder(s) with oversight of the underlying issue
PICs (excl. the Big 3) Communities with no RSE workers	The capped environment of the RSE, and direct recruitment by employers, contribute to continued unequal access to seasonal jobs and the associated uneven distribution of benefits, both within and among PICs.	Unintended	A direct contribution	MBIE RSE employers LSUs PIC governments
RSE workers	Variable employment practices by some RSE employers, together with a lack of clarity about the way contract rates and deductions apply, create confusion and concern for some RSE workers about their employment conditions and calculation of earnings.	Unintended	A direct contribution	RSE employers MBIE LSUs
RSE workers RSE households	The amount of income available to RSE workers to remit/save is being eroded due to RSE wages not keeping pace with rising accommodation and transport costs, and other living costs.	Unintended	A direct contribution	RSE employers
RSE workers' partners RSE workers' family members (who support the partner)	In the absence of the RSE worker, the partner assumes additional responsibilities and/or experiences the stress of separation, both of which can be onerous. This is especially the case for women with childcare and household duties.	Intended	A direct contribution	RSE households Village leaders PIC governments
RSE workers' children	Children of repeat returnees are missing significant periods of parenting year-on-year by one or both parents.	Unintended	A direct contribution	RSE households PIC governments
RSE households & communities	When the RSE policy was developed, it was expected that the scheme would lead to the withdrawal of labour from rural communities and this could, in turn, have some negative impacts on village production. What was not intended was the extent and variety of impacts associated with the loss of labour in some source countries.	Intended/unintended	A direct contribution	RSE employers Village leaders LSUs PIC governments
RSE households & communities	In villages with large numbers of residents absent as seasonal workers, RSE participation is one of many macro and meso-level influences contributing to changing attitudes and behaviours which may, in turn, impact negatively on the practice of traditional values, leadership and governance at the village-level in some countries.	Unintended	An inhibiting contribution	PIC governments LSUs Community leaders RSE employers

Key negative impacts: implications

Seven implications of the eight negative impacts are highlighted as needing to be addressed:

- Unequal opportunities for RSE participation.
- Worker concerns about wages, employment conditions and accommodation.
- Women's participation in temporary seasonal work.
- The overall 'value' of RSE participation for workers.
- Maintaining sustainable lives at home.
- Making the RSE scheme more family-friendly.
- Understanding the impact of seasonal worker absences on children.

Addressing unequal opportunities for RSE participation

The unequal opportunities among the five PICs included in the Impact Study (and more widely among the nine PICs that participate in the RSE scheme) to gain RSE employment are highlighted in the findings. Within those PICs able to access RSE jobs, there is unequal access across islands and communities with some villages having large numbers of RSE workers absent each season and others with relatively few or no RSE workers. In Vanuatu, evidence of such inequalities can be seen in the built environment where there are clear contrasts between the permanent materials houses built by RSE workers, and the more traditional thatched houses that are commonly lived in by those based in rural settings.

While the problem of unequal opportunities for RSE employment among and within Pacific countries plays out at the PIC-end, the cause of the problem is predominantly at the NZ-end. The cause is multi-dimensional and includes: the capped nature of the scheme; employer-led recruitment; the RSE job market being captured by three of the five early entry PICs, leaving few vacancies for the later entry PICs; and PIC governments being non-directive with RSE employers regarding how and where they recruit (with the exception of Fiji and Kiribati).

There are several potential mechanisms, suggested by the authors, to spread RSE employment opportunities more equitably among PICs, and within individual PICs. For MBIE/INZ these include:

- Large RSE employers (300+ RSE workers) who regularly secure increases in workers numbers of more than a specific minimum each year (say 20) could be required to recruit at least half of their new recruits from PICs other than Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.
- New RSE employers could be required to recruit from countries other than Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.
- In allocating new places in the scheme that arise with approved increases in the cap, priority could be given to employment opportunities for women and for workers from countries with low participation rates.
- An incentive and recognition system for RSE employers could be implemented to reward those employers who are 'best practice'. This would include rewarding those employers who recruit from countries other than Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa, and/or recruit women.

For PICs with large numbers of RSE and SWP workers, the challenge is to ensure a more equitable distribution of seasonal work opportunities and income across communities. This means PIC governments will need to be more active in the management of their labour mobility settings within their larger strategic contexts of national employment and workforce planning. In relation to participation in the RSE scheme, these PICs may wish to consider a range of options: limiting the

number of seasons a worker can return to New Zealand to work and/or introducing a stand-down period after a specified number of years of RSE employment; being more directive with RSE employers and labour recruiters about the communities from which they can recruit; where appropriate, giving a greater role to village and district leaders in identifying suitable workers whose absence will not harm the wellbeing of the community and introducing an approval process for inter-generational transfers of employment opportunities within families, rather than automatically allowing jobs to pass from parents to children.

Such mechanisms could help to mitigate against the negative impacts on village life associated with the regular withdrawal of productive labour from the community. Further, they could help to address the risk of seasonal worker households becoming unduly dependent on RSE income, necessitating a repetitive pattern of worker absence for significant periods each year.

Addressing worker concerns about wages, employment conditions and accommodation

Interviews with RSE workers sought to get their views on their employment conditions and accommodation arrangements in New Zealand, and a range of perspectives were expressed. Where criticisms are raised in the report, they should not be interpreted as applying to all workers and employers. Further, workers were concerned that any critical comments may be misinterpreted as a sign of their dissatisfaction with RSE work. This is not the case – the scheme is viewed positively by workers even when they have issues with some aspects of their working and living experiences in New Zealand.

Many of the concerns raised by workers, RSE Liaison Officers and PIC government officials relate to issues at the core of the RSE policy. The policy, as it currently stands, allows some of these practices of concern to continue, and these issues should be addressed in the RSE Policy Review scheduled for 2020.

These practices include:

- (i) The lack of requirements for employers to reward RSE workers' horticultural skills and/or years of RSE work experience, enabling employers to pay experienced, return workers no more than the minimum hourly rate;
- (ii) The policy requires payment for an average of 30 hours/week but has no parameters around how this is calculated, allowing employers to average out earnings over the term of the contract thereby undermining incentives associated with piece rates which reward hard work and higher levels of productivity;
- (iii) Deductions are required to "be for a specified purpose and for actual, reasonable, verifiable expenses", but there are no standardised parameters around what is deemed chargeable as a deduction or "reasonable" with respect to deductions for transport, meals and accommodation charges (in relation to the quality of beds and facilities provided).

Women's participation in temporary seasonal work

In recent years, a small number of Pacific women - approximately 1,000 per annum for the RSE scheme, and between 1,000-2,000 for the SWP - have chosen to take up temporary seasonal work overseas enabling them to earn levels of income that are otherwise inaccessible in the village. In particular, seasonal work offers opportunities for unpartnered women and older women, without

responsibilities for dependents, to gain paid employment which is unavailable in rural settings at home.

While improving the gender balance in seasonal worker statistics may be an aim of receiving countries, for PICs it is important that culturally-specific values relating to women are respected. Informants were generally supportive of seasonal work employment opportunities for women, but stressed the importance placed by their culture on the role of women in caring for children (particularly young children) and the elderly.

If more RSE employment opportunities are sought for Pacific women, the focus must be on appropriate work, safe working and living arrangements, culturally appropriate accommodation arrangements, and suitable arrangements for dependents remaining at home.

The overall 'value' of RSE participation for workers

Temporary seasonal migration involves sustaining lives in two places – the household at home and the worker in New Zealand. The relatively low movement of RSE pay rates since the scheme began over 12 years ago, the absence of any requirement for employers to reward skills and experience, and the increasing cost of worker accommodation and other employer deductions, raises questions about the extent to which workers and their families are keeping up financially from regular RSE participation.

It is acknowledged that factors such as crop quality, weather conditions, and the availability of full days of work every day can influence how much a worker earns in a given season. Nonetheless, a critical question for return workers and their families is whether earnings, after deductions, are increasing, stagnating or declining over time. The MBIE-sponsored RSE Remittance Surveys of earnings of 237 Samoan, Tongan and ni-Vanuatu workers from the 2014/15 and 2015/16 seasons demonstrated that between 30 and 40 percent of gross earnings went towards tax payments and employer deductions, significantly reducing the amounts available to remit home or to save.⁴

A detailed examination of the costs of participation for workers – prior to departure, in New Zealand, and on their return home – was out of scope of this study. Since the scheme began, there has not been a comprehensive assessment of these end-to-end costs. Without this information it is impossible to know whether RSE participation provides sufficient financial rewards to be “worth” the sacrifice for families to be separated for long periods of time and in some cases, over multiple years.

Maintaining sustainable lives at home

One of the objectives of the RSE scheme is to encourage economic development in the participating PICs. This happens mainly through the injection of RSE income at the grassroots level, supporting the economic wellbeing of participating families. Some of the benefits of such income can be distributed, directly or indirectly, to other households thereby potentially contributing to improved economic and social wellbeing within the community.

Findings from the Pacific stream research suggest that household and village economic and social wellbeing may be put at risk if the same productive workers sought by RSE employers (i.e. males aged 20-49) are absent from the village for periods of up to seven months every year. This depletion of

⁴ The relevant reports can be found on the MBIE website at: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/research-and-statistics/research-reports/recognised-seasonal-employer-rse-scheme>

labour has the potential to compromise food production and places additional burdens on those left at home to undertake routine duties required for the orderly operation of village life.

The development of rural communities is a priority for most PICs. Offshore seasonal labour migration needs to be managed in ways that support sustainable development of resources and the long-term well-being of residents in these communities. This is an issue that is receiving greater attention by Ministries overseeing labour migration in Tonga and Vanuatu in the development of their labour migration policies.

RSE employers and recruitment agents also have a responsibility to understand the risks associated with depleting productive labour from villages and to take this into consideration with regard to their current recruitment practices. Socially responsible recruitment also involves balancing the numbers of return and new workers, and making RSE jobs available to PICs and villages that have not yet had such opportunities.

Making the RSE scheme more family-friendly

The findings highlight the need to mitigate potential damage to marriages, parent-child relationships and child wellbeing as a result of repeated worker absences by making the RSE scheme more family-friendly.

Changes to existing visa settings for RSE workers and their families that would support this include a multi-entry visa for workers enabling them to return home for family emergencies, important family events, and periods when there is no work during the season. A multi-entry visa would reduce compliance costs for employers, PIC governments and INZ, as well as reducing visa costs for RSE workers.

Another way to make the RSE scheme more family-friendly is through improved digital connection between workers and their family. The cost for workers to purchase cell phone plans relative to their earnings is expensive. RSE employers could be encouraged to provide high speed, free digital connections in RSE accommodation that will cater for the number of workers living there, and/or provide financial support to workers for mobile phone data plans.

The findings highlight the important role that female partners play in seasonal work by maintaining the household and ensuring the wellbeing of household members, especially children. Knowing that family back home continues to thrive in his absence enables the worker to focus on work in New Zealand. The partner's role assumes greater importance in households where the husband is repeatedly absent for seasonal work.

Given the important role played by the worker's partner in seasonal work, more could be done to recognise and support women at home. This could involve a collaborative effort by PIC governments, Pacific-based NGOs, and MBIE and MFAT via Toso Vaka o Manū. A number of support activities are suggested. These include: household preparation workshops delivered by ex-RSE workers in the workers' village; support groups for families of seasonal workers; training and mentoring for women at home to support the seeding and development of enterprises using RSE income. Such activities would not only contribute to family wellbeing but would also enable the RSE household to gain greater value out of their participation through improved information and a more deliberate targeting of new training opportunities.

Understanding the impact of seasonal worker absences on children

On the one hand, children are benefitting from RSE income through the funding of their school education, and in some cases, tertiary studies. For many of the worker parents interviewed, a significant motivator to earn RSE income is to enable their children to access educational opportunities they did not have as children due to a lack of money. Children may also benefit from being able to access private health services paid for by RSE income (Samoa). They may be the recipients of sought-after electronics brought home by their parent such as Xboxes and other consumer goods.

On the other hand, children of repeat seasonal workers may not live as a physical family unit with one or both parents for months at a time, year after year. Their parent(s) is absent for significant milestones, such as birthdays and school graduations.

There is a substantive literature on the impact of absent workers on children remaining at home in countries with long histories of labour migration, such the Philippines. Other than a few recent studies focussed on Tonga and Vanuatu, the long-term effects of repetitive parental absences on Pacific children from seasonal work have yet to be comprehensively explored.

Conclusion

Acknowledging RSE impacts on families and communities

The RSE scheme has important economic and social impacts on participating families and communities in the Pacific. The most obvious direct economic impact is on the family where the regular, reliable source of income obtained through seasonal work can be used to support households' daily living and improve economic wellbeing. Workers may also acquire hard and soft skills in NZ that are of use at home. The social impacts on families are diverse, and relate mainly to the ability of those family members at home to replace the absence of the RSE worker over a period of several months each season.

At the community level, the most obvious economic and social impacts relate to the withdrawal of productive labour in the key working age group (20-49 years) for extended periods each season. This removal of productive labour from the village needs to be carefully managed to avoid impacting negatively on village-based agricultural production and other communal activities and events.

The RSE policy was based on the objective of a "triple win", namely that RSE employers, PICs, and their workers would all benefit from the scheme. The findings indicate that the "triple win" framework needs to be broadened beyond employers, workers and island countries, to include workers' families and communities that play an integral part in supporting workers' participation in seasonal work overseas.

While the RSE scheme is popular with the major stakeholders in participating PICs (workers, their families, LSUs and PIC governments), the distribution of benefits from the scheme is uneven at all levels: the community, the district/region, and the country. If the RSE scheme is to have a positive impact on the development of sustainable livelihoods in the source countries where workers and families must reside, then mechanisms need to be put in place to spread RSE opportunities more widely across PICs and within individual PICs.

RSE Impact Study

From the outset, the RSE scheme has acknowledged the need to balance the positive impacts for New Zealand (hereinafter referred to as NZ) with those for individual PICs. Over the twelve years of the RSE scheme's operation some unintended impacts have emerged, predominantly for PICs.^{5 6} The purpose of the Impact Study is to examine the impacts of the scheme to determine whether the RSE model as it was originally conceived remains appropriate for the scheme in the future.

Two areas of impact were prioritised for the study's focus by the commissioning agencies – MBIE and its partner agency MFAT. The first is the social and economic impacts for RSE workers, their families and communities. Concerns have been expressed by some Pacific Island governments about the consequences for households and communities arising from the absence of family members and productive labour for significant periods year-on-year. While some research has been done,⁷ more in-depth information is needed about the immediate and long-term consequences of seasonal labour migration for RSE households and communities. The second priority area is the impacts of the scheme on, and for, local New Zealand communities. While these two impact areas were identified as being priorities for the study, they did not preclude other impacts being examined.

The Impact Study has addressed four overarching research questions:

1. What are the social and economic impacts of RSE on, and for, RSE communities in New Zealand?
2. What are the social and economic impacts of RSE for Pacific workers and their island-based families?
3. What are the social and economic impacts of RSE on, and for, Pacific communities?
4. What are the implications of the study findings for the future development of the RSE?

The study consists of three closely linked work streams, all involving collection of primary and secondary data as shown in Table 3. Each of the work streams has been reported individually upon its completion. The key findings from the three streams listed in Table 3 will be integrated, analysed and synthesised into an RSE Impact Synthesis report to be completed in April 2020. A more detailed account of the research design is provided in [Appendix A: Methodology](#).

⁵ The RSE scheme is into its thirteenth year of operation. In this report, the information covers the first 12 years' operation with data for the period 2007/08 – 2018/19.

⁶ Impacts include intended and unintended, positive and negative, direct and indirect, actual and emerging/potential.

⁷ See for example, Rohorua, H., Gibson, J., McKenzie, D. & Martinez, P.G. (2009). How do Pacific Island households and communities cope with seasonally absent members? *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 24(3): 19-38; World Bank (2018). *The social impacts of seasonal migration. Lessons from Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme for Pacific Islanders*. Washington DC: World Bank.

Table 3. RSE Impact Study

Overarching research questions	Work streams	Timing
1. What are the social and economic impacts of RSE on, and for, RSE communities in New Zealand?	New Zealand stream	December 2018 - June 2019
2. What are the social and economic impacts of RSE for Pacific workers and their island-based families?	Pacific stream	May 2019 – January 2020
3. What are the social and economic impacts of RSE on, and for, Pacific communities?	Desk study on RSE worker engagement	March 2018 – January 2020
4. What are the implications of the study findings for the future development of RSE?	RSE Impact Synthesis report: analysis of the key findings from the three studies above, in collaboration with MBIE and MFAT	February – April 2020

About this document

This document presents the findings of the Pacific stream which examined the impacts of RSE participation on workers, their families and communities in the islands. RSE workers were interviewed in their home environments and it is for this reason that their experiences of seasonal work in NZ appear in the Pacific report. The decision to interview workers at home rather than in the workplace or in their accommodation in NZ was based on the belief that we would be able to have more open conversations about their experiences away from the work environment.

The report is presented in five parts, outlined below. The first part provides some important contextual information for the discussion of impacts in parts 2-4. The fifth part summarises some of the key findings and their implications for key stakeholders in NZ and participating PICs.

Part 1. Context for findings about the impacts of the RSE scheme

Part 2. Impacts for RSE workers

- The decision to become a seasonal worker
- Workers' experiences working and living in NZ
- Women's participation in the RSE scheme

Part 3. Impacts for RSE workers' families

- Economic benefits of participation in seasonal work and households' use of RSE income
- Acquisition of skills and transfer from workers to their families and the wider community
- Social impacts on female partners and children at home

Part 4. Impacts for RSE communities

- Impacts of the RSE scheme on the village economy and way of life

Part 5. Summary and implications of key impacts.

Views expressed in the report reflect the thoughts and observations of our informants, unless it is expressly stated that they belong to the authors. A considerable amount of information regarding specific findings in each of the 10 communities where fieldwork was conducted is contained in the appendices. Tables in the appendices are organised in order of country visited: Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, Fiji and Kiribati.

Introduction

Pacific labour mobility

The New Zealand Government through its NZ Aid Programme is committed to sustainable economic and social development in the Pacific to support regional stability and prosperity. At present, 60 percent of aid funding is directed to the region.⁸ In March 2018 the Government announced *Pacific Reset*, a refreshed approach to New Zealand's engagement with the Pacific guided by the principles of understanding, friendship, mutual benefit, collective impact and sustainability. A key principle of the strategy is that the New Zealand Government and individual Pacific Island governments will *strive for solutions of mutual benefit when developing domestic and foreign policy*.⁹ The RSE scheme is intended to be of mutual benefit for participating PICs and NZ.

The RSE scheme's success in opening up short-term employment opportunities for Pacific workers has led Pacific governments to seek greater access to NZ's labour markets for their unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The *Arrangement on Labour Mobility* between the New Zealand Government and individual Pacific governments, signed as part of the 2017 PACER Plus negotiations, describes NZ's commitment to creating more temporary employment opportunities in occupational areas where the country faces labour and skills shortages, and to build the capacity of Pacific States to participate in such opportunities.

Pacific governments are not only looking to the RSE scheme for increased temporary employment opportunities. The RSE scheme must be viewed within the larger context of other temporary labour mobility opportunities involving Pacific worker movement to NZ (Pacific Trades Partnership (PTP), Fisheries Pilot, Essential Skills), Australia (SWP, PLS), Europe and Asia (fishers and other seafarers, peacekeepers) and the movement of labour between PICs. In addition, there are the demands of local industry, services and enterprise within PICs that require workers. The RSE and SWP schemes are drawing on the same sources of Pacific labour. The impacts on PICs of this demand for mainly male workers from the younger working age groups (20-49 years) are discussed in Part 1: RSE impacts: Context for findings.

Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme

RSE beginnings

The impetus for the RSE scheme was driven by two forces: employers' demand for labour in NZ's horticulture and viticulture industries in the early 2000s; and PIC governments' calls for heightened access to NZ's labour market for lower skilled workers. During the period 2000-2004 NZ's horticulture and viticulture exports increased more than 30 percent, while at the same time unemployment rates were falling and the national labour market was tightening. A labour supply shortfall was identified as a potential risk to national export earnings and regional economic development, and as a constraint

⁸ New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan 2015-2019. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

⁹ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/pacific/>

to business growth. Simultaneously, Pacific governments were putting pressure on the New Zealand Government to allow Pacific workers to have improved short-term access to their labour markets.¹⁰

The RSE work policy, which became operational in October 2007, allows for the temporary entry of offshore workers to work in the horticulture and viticulture industries in NZ. The scheme was intended for low-skilled workers from rural, cash-poor households to plant, maintain, pick and pack crops. Preference was given to five PICs - Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu (referred to as the “Kick-Start states”) - who were provided with facilitation measures to support their participation. Four other PICs have subsequently formalised their engagement in the scheme – Solomon Islands in 2010;¹¹ Papua New Guinea in 2013, Fiji in 2014,¹² and Nauru in 2015. Six countries in Asia also participate in the RSE scheme, a residual from an earlier seasonal work policy that had been grandparented to the RSE.¹³

The RSE policy has multiple aims, including to:¹⁴

- create a sustainable seasonal labour supply for NZ employers.
- transform the horticulture and viticulture industries from low cost industries to industries based on quality, productivity, and high value through improved business practices.
- protect New Zealanders’ access to seasonal employment.
- minimise immigration risk.
- contribute to NZ’s broad objectives in the region, specifically encouraging Pacific economic development, regional integration, and stability.

The intended development outcomes for PICs include:¹⁵

- [named PIC] secures a fair portion of seasonal work opportunities under the RSE Immigration Instructions.
- [named PIC] workers are able to generate savings and relevant experience which may contribute to the development of [named PIC].
- [named PIC] cooperates effectively with NZ to maintain the integrity of the arrangements implemented, and

¹⁰ A more detailed account of the background to the RSE policy is provided by Ramasamy, S., Krishan, V., Bedford, C. & Bedford, R. (2008). The Recognised Seasonal Employer policy: Seeking the elusive triple wins for development through international migration. *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 23(3): 171-186.

¹¹ The Solomon Islands has provided RSE labour from the outset of the scheme even though it was not until 2010 that an Inter-Agency Understanding (IAU) was formally signed. Some accredited RSEs had been recruiting labour from the Solomons under an earlier seasonal work scheme and they were permitted to keep recruiting labour from this country under RSE from April 2007.

¹² Fiji was on the original list of kick-start states when the RSE work policy was announced by the former Prime Minister Helen Clark at the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Fiji in October 2006. Fiji was removed from the scheme following the military coup in Fiji in December 2006, and was formally included again after the country’s first post-coup elections in 2014.

¹³ Around 1,500 RSE workers are recruited each year from six countries in South-East Asia. The majority come from Thailand, followed by Malaysia and Indonesia. This component of the RSE workforce needs to be kept in mind when looking at total arrivals each year in relation to the annual RSE cap (currently set at 14,400).

¹⁴ Department of Labour (2010). *Final evaluation report of the Recognised Seasonal Employer policy 2007-2009* (p.5) Wellington: Department of Labour.

¹⁵ Extracted from the Inter-Agency Understanding documents for Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

- The cost of transport does not act as a barrier for [named PIC] nationals to access opportunities under the RSE Immigration Instructions.

The main aspects of the RSE policy are as follows.¹⁶

- *Agency to agency relationship*: An Inter-Agency Understanding (IAU) between the Pacific Island government and the New Zealand Government sets out the respective obligations of the parties and arrangements for participation in the RSE scheme.
- *Employer recognition*: Employers who wish to participate must first gain recognition by complying with good employer practices and other requirements. Once they have achieved RSE status, the employer applies for an Agreement to Recruit (ATR) a specified number of RSE workers (for a specific timeframe, location, and work activities).
- *New Zealanders First principle*: The number of RSE workers approved in ATR applications is subject to the availability of suitable NZ workers. The total annual number of RSE workers is determined by government (referred to as the worker cap).
- *Employer driven*: The selection of workers and re-employment of return workers is determined by employers, based on their requirements. The relationship between the employer and worker is an employment one.
- *Short-term migration*: Worker applicants who have an offer of employment from an RSE employer and who meet the RSE worker criteria are granted a limited purpose visa (LPV) for the duration of work approved in the ATR for up to a maximum of seven months in any 11-month period.¹⁷
- *Circular migration*: The policy provides for the return of experienced workers (who have an offer of employment, want to return, and meet immigration requirements) in future seasons.
- *Pastoral care*: The RSE employer is responsible for the pastoral care of workers.

RSE after the first decade

From relatively small beginnings involving around 3,500 Pacific workers, the RSE scheme has grown significantly over the last 12 years. This growth has occurred in line with widespread expansion of NZ's horticulture and viticulture industries that has been largely driven by employers' access to a productive, reliable source of seasonal labour (discussed in the NZ stream report).¹⁸ In the year to 30 June 2019, over 11,000 workers from nine PICs arrived in NZ as seasonal workers (Table 4).¹⁹ There are 180 RSE employers (as at January 2020) around 70 percent of whom employ fewer than 50 RSE workers each.

¹⁶ Department of Labour (2010, p.6).

¹⁷ Because of the relative isolation of their countries, and high travel costs to NZ, workers from Kiribati and Tuvalu can be employed for up to nine months within any 11-month period.

¹⁸ Nunns et al. (2019).

¹⁹ In total, 12,500 people from 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific arrived as seasonal workers in the year to 30 June 2019, 89 percent of whom were from the nine PICs.

Table 4. RSE worker arrivals from Pacific countries

Pacific countries	RSE worker arrivals			
	2007/08	%	2018/19	%
Fiji	0	0.0	444	4.0
Kiribati	69	1.9	263	2.4
Nauru	0	0.0	19	0.2
Papua New Guinea	0	0.0	172	1.5
Samoa	647	18.2	2,315	20.7
Solomon Islands	238	6.7	696	6.2
Tonga	805	22.6	2,037	18.2
Tuvalu	99	2.8	92	0.8
Vanuatu	1,698	47.8	5,130	45.9
Total Pacific countries	3,556	100.0	11,168	100.0

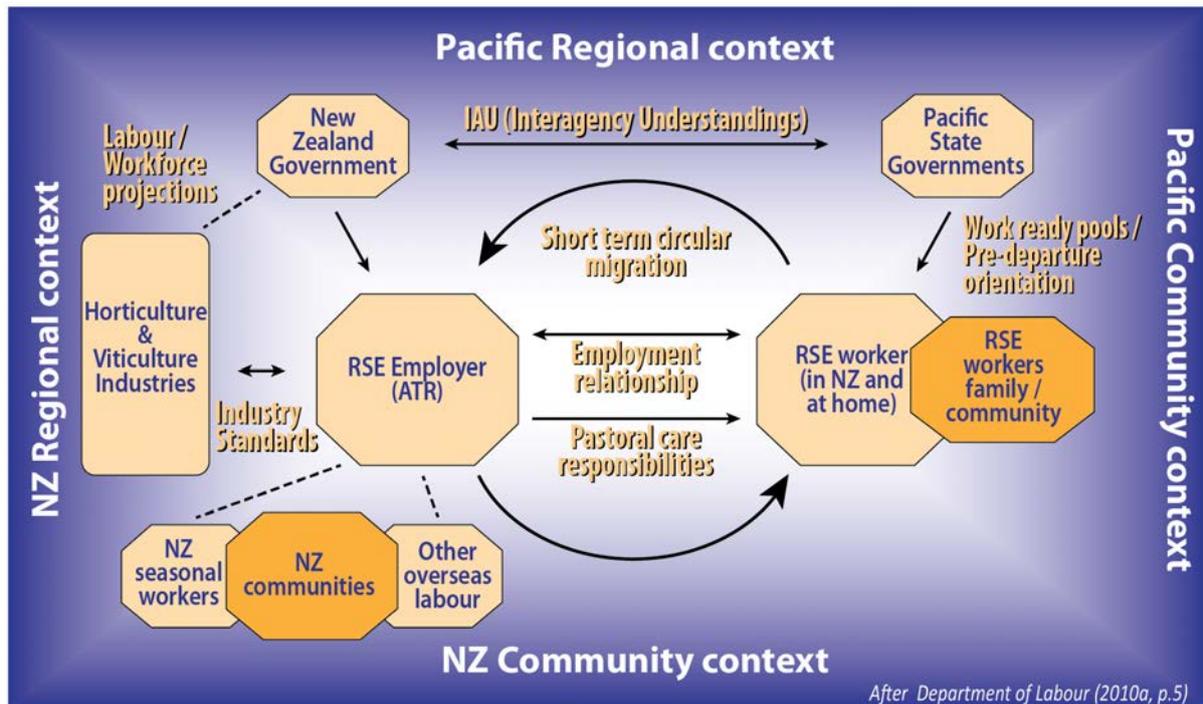
Of the nine participating countries, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa have consistently had the greatest share of RSE job opportunities, with Vanuatu accounting for over 45 percent of approved visas over the 12-year period (Table 4). Over the years, MBIE (and its predecessor, the Department of Labour) have endeavoured to encourage RSE employers to recruit beyond these three PICs. In particular, to recruit from smaller countries such as Kiribati and Tuvalu that face barriers to participation such as distance and high travel costs, and the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea that have few international outlets for labour migration. Only a small number of employers have responded to such efforts, due in part to the higher costs of recruitment from these countries. This has led to disparities in the availability of RSE work opportunities across PICs (discussed further in Part 1).

This report addresses the impact of RSE participation on families and communities in five of the nine Pacific labour supply countries. Included are four of the five original kick start states - Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. The fifth country included in the study is Fiji. The selection of countries to participate in the Pacific stream is explained in [Appendix A](#).

RSE stakeholders

The RSE scheme operates within a complex system of stakeholder connections within NZ, between NZ and individual PICs, and within PICs (Figure 1). Such connections, which have been built up over the last 12 years, are based on personal, cooperative relationships. Many RSE employer-PIC relationships are described as self-sustaining as a result of employers visiting the villages where their workers live and recruiting new employees directly through return workers.

Figure 1: The RSE system



In the early days of the scheme, the primary relationship was understood as being between the RSE employer and RSE worker. While the workers’ family and community were recognised as being part of the RSE context, it was not until the scheme had been operating for some years that their significance as stakeholders became better appreciated. The RSE worker’s partner, extended family, and island-based community members assume extra responsibilities for childcare, family management, and food production in the worker’s absence. Given the gendered nature of most RSE work, such responsibilities fall mainly on female family members.

At the NZ end, the focus was initially on RSE employers and the horticulture and viticulture industry organisations. From around 2013 onwards industry expansion began (due to guaranteed RSE labour) with a commensurate increase in the number of RSE workers. It was only then that the impact on, and for local communities in NZ began to be recognised. The NZ stream report, delivered in mid-2019, addressed the NZ-end of the system, examining some of the impacts of the annual influx of large numbers of RSE workers on six communities across the country. This report focuses on the PIC-end of the system, and the impacts of RSE participation on workers, their families and communities at home.

Research approach

This section provides an overview of the research approach used in the PIC stream. A detailed description is contained in [Appendix A](#). Three key aspects of the research approach for the RSE Impact Study are first described. This is followed by the PIC stream research questions, out of scope topics, a summary of the methods, the approach to data analysis and development of contribution claims, and the research limitations.

RSE Impact Study research approach: Key aspects

Aspect one: RSE scheme as a complex adaptive system

The research approach for the study is underpinned by the conceptualisation of the RSE scheme as a system, specifically as a complex adaptive system. Briefly what this means is:

- The system is a whole that is both greater than, and different to its parts. Understanding what is happening in the system cannot be achieved by examining what is happening to each part separately (e.g. government policy or compliance, RSE employers, workers and their families), because the parts are interconnected and interdependent and the interactions of the parts lead to evolution of the system as a whole.²⁰
- Changes in one part of the system lead to changes in all parts and the system itself, and these changes can occur in unpredictable ways because it is a complex system.
- Two distinctive features of systems are the concepts of feedback and equilibrium. A feedback loop is “a circular arrangement of causally connected elements, so that each element has an effect on the next”.²¹ Feedback can be positive or negative. Negative feedback loops initiate changes within the system that help to stabilise and maintain the system’s equilibrium. In other words, a change in one part of the system is matched by an adjustment elsewhere in the system to maintain a relatively stable state. Positive feedback loops, on the other hand, enforce small changes that escalate further change, and move the system away from equilibrium.²² This can lead to the occurrence of tipping points, where forces within the system reach a critical threshold and a small change may have a large ultimate effect. Tipping goes in one direction - it is not possible for the system to ‘go back’ after reaching a tipping point as the state of the system changes.²³
- Originating conditions are important for the direction of system development. However, every system carries its own contradictory pressures that might, if not checked, develop as probable and undesirable, rather than preferable, futures.

In the context of RSE, this means the scheme as a whole behaves in a particular manner that is quite different from, and cannot be reduced, to the behaviour of individual agents (government officials, employers, workers etc.). The success of the scheme depends on how individuals interact, the relationships they form, and how their interactions are organised to ensure the policy’s objectives are

²⁰ Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

²¹ Capra (1997) cited in Walby S. (2007, p.464). Complexity theory, systems theory, and multiple intersecting social inequalities. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 37(4): 449-470.

²² Midgley G. (2006). Systems thinking for evaluation. In B. Williams & I. Imam (Eds.) *Systems concepts in evaluation. An expert anthology* (pp.11-34). Point Reyes: American Evaluation Association, EdgePress.

²³ Bryne D. (1998). *Complexity theory and the social sciences: An introduction*. London: Routledge.

kept in balance. The RSE scheme exists because of the interactions between different groups within the system that work to reproduce it. As a result, while the RSE scheme has operated as a relatively stable programme over the first decade, it is not a static scheme. The scheme continues to evolve and is susceptible to change.

Aspect two: Use of contribution analysis to examine impact

A critical task for the Impact Study is to discern and assess the extent to which observed impacts are related, directly or indirectly, to the RSE scheme. Determining whether observed impacts can be *directly* attributed to RSE is impossible given the complexity of the policy, the number of stakeholders involved, the dynamic environment in which the scheme operates, and the range of Australian labour mobility arrangements operating simultaneously in the same PICs and employment opportunity space.

The attribution problem inherent in complex policy environments is widely recognised (Mayne, 2012).²⁴ An analytical approach - contribution analysis - addresses this challenge. Contribution analysis provides a systematic and rigorous approach to establish (or inversely, to discount) *a plausible association* between a particular input (or group of inputs) and observed changes: “Contribution analysis provides an argument with evidence from which it is reasonable to conclude with confidence that the intervention has made a difference and why” (Patton, 2012, p.367).²⁵ It addresses cause and effect by *demonstrating contribution* rather than *proving causality*. It is well suited for examining complicated policies: “Contribution analysis works well for understanding and interpreting results in complex systems where a variety of factors and variables interact dynamically within the interconnected and interdependent parts of the open system”.²⁶

In brief, contribution analysis examines research findings to:

- establish the existence (or not) of an *association* between an intervention and an observed change(s),
- systematically discount any other plausible explanations for the observed change (e.g. about the internal and/or external environment), and
- where an association is established, understand the nature of the contribution.

The intended end-result of this process is to establish a *plausible association* between an intervention and an observed result that will withstand scrutiny and critique (or inversely, to discount such an association).²⁷ A fuller explanation of how contribution analysis was used in the Pacific stream is provided in [Appendix B](#).

Aspect three: Linking of the Pacific and New Zealand streams

A feature of the research design is that the New Zealand stream is linked with the Pacific stream, thereby strengthening the study findings i.e. specific Pacific communities were targeted that have links with specific RSE employers, and vice-versa. These links between the employment context in NZ, and the worker’s home environment in the islands are an enduring feature of circular migration

²⁴ Mayne, J. (2012). Contribution Analysis: Coming of age? *Evaluation*, 18: 370-380.

²⁵ Patton, M.Q. (2012). A utilization-focused approach to Contribution Analysis. *Evaluation*, 18: 384-377.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ Mayne, J. (1999). Discussion paper: Addressing attribution through Contribution Analysis - Using performance measures sensibly. Ontario: Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

schemes whereby workers spend their lives in two locations every year. The linking of the two streams is consistent with a holistic, systems-based approach to examining the RSE scheme that gives due consideration to both contexts and the interconnections between the two.

PIC stream research questions

The PIC stream has two overarching research questions:

- What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme for Pacific workers and their island-based families?
- What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme on, and for, Pacific communities?

These overarching questions are underpinned by 32 sub-questions (listed in [Appendix A](#)) which, in addition to addressing impacts of the RSE scheme, also consider factors unrelated to the scheme (and seasonal work more generally) that may contribute to change (positive and negative) at the household and village level.

Out of scope topics

As agreed with MBIE, the following topics were determined to be out of scope for the Pacific stream. An initial list of out of scope topics was contained in the RSE Impact Study Research Plan (dated 5 November 2018).

- A quantitative analysis of the economic impacts of the RSE scheme for participating workers, households and communities.²⁸
- Effectiveness of the operation of Labour Sending Units.
- Effectiveness of RSE worker pre-departure training, health and police checks.
- Visa processing for RSE workers.
- Detailed examination of RSE worker earnings.
- Detailed examination of the financial costs associated with RSE worker participation.
- Evaluation of the nature and quality of RSE pastoral care provision.
- The operation and effectiveness of Vakameasina.
- RSE operational requirements/processes. (This topic was addressed in an Operational Review of the RSE scheme recently completed by MBIE).
- Detailed examination of the barriers for Pacific women to participate in the scheme. (Further work is being considered by agencies to understand how best to provide support for Pacific women's participation in labour mobility).

The research team

The study's three principal researchers were joined by seven research associates for the Pacific stream. They included locally-based indigenous associates as well as NZ-based Samoan, Tongan and I-Kiribati associates. The Pacific research associates undertook a range of tasks including facilitating introductions in villages and organising interviews, introducing the researchers to informants in a

²⁸ At the time the Impact Study was scoped, a separate economic analysis of impacts, similar to the World Bank-funded longitudinal surveys of development impacts of the RSE scheme in Tonga and Vanuatu (2007-10), was proposed. This economic analysis was not deemed feasible because of costs.

culturally appropriate manner, providing interpreting services, and, in four communities, conducting and writing up records of interviews.

In addition to the research associates, community-based assistants in all communities also supported the principal researcher with fieldwork. These assistants, who were often RSE team leaders at home in their villages between seasons, helped the principal researcher to locate RSE workers and family members for interviews, provided transport (driving the principal researcher to/from interviews) and, where appropriate, facilitated introductions to community leaders and other informants.

Selection of Pacific countries and villages

The five PICs which were included in the Pacific stream (listed in Table 5) were selected in consultation with MBIE and MFAT. Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa were chosen because, as suppliers of the highest numbers of RSE workers, they would provide the most evidence of impact (positive, negative, intended, unintended, actual and potential) on participating households and communities. Kiribati was chosen because of its barriers to participation associated with distance and high travel costs for workers and employers, and the country’s relatively high female participation rate in the scheme. Lastly, Fiji was selected as one of the late-entry PICs to the RSE.

The villages were chosen because of their links to individual RSE employers that participated in the NZ stream, enabling the NZ and Pacific data to be connected and compared.

Table 5. Pacific countries and villages

PIC	PIC villages
Fiji	10 villages across two provinces near the main town of Savusavu, southeast Vanua Levu
Kiribati	RSE households in various locations on South Tarawa
Samoa	Poutasi, Upolu Neiafu, Savai’i Papa Palauli, Savai’i
Tonga	Kolonga, Tongatapu Ha’alaufuli, Vava’u RSE households in Nuku’alofa
Vanuatu	Lamen Bay and Lamen Island, Epi Lenakel and surrounding villages, Tanna

Summary of methods

The methods used in the PIC stream are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6. Methods and data sources

Method	Informant/data	Data details
Face to face interviews	RSE workers, RSE households, community informants, government officials, other informants ²⁹	<p>Fieldwork in the five PICs was undertaken between May and September 2019. Face to face interviews, using one of six semi structured topic guides,³⁰ were completed in each of the 10 communities by the principal researcher(s) together with a Pacific research associate/community-based assistant, or by a locally-based female research associate (particularly interviews with women).</p> <p>228 interviews were conducted with over 300 informants across the five PICs. 65 percent of interviews were with RSE workers or household members. Of the 103 RSE workers interviewed, 62 percent were male, and 38 percent were female. Of the 55 RSE households interviewed, the ratio was reversed - 69 percent were female family members and 31 percent were male.</p> <p>In each village the research team followed appropriate customary protocols to request permission to undertake work and gain access to village-based households.</p>
Expert input	Commissioned reports	To support and triangulate the in-country data collection, three reports were commissioned from researchers with in-depth knowledge of the different cultural contexts within which seasonal labour migration is situated in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. ³¹ Researchers were asked to focus on the social impacts of the RSE scheme at the village-level.
Descriptive statistical analysis	RSE worker engagement database	To examine temporal patterns of RSE worker engagement, a database has been developed, as part of the Impact Study, that contains arrivals data for 16,222 individuals that were employed on RSE visas at some stage between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 (the period for which data were provided by MBIE). A primary focus of the study is on patterns of worker engagement in the RSE as assessed by the presence/absence of RSE workers in the seasonal workforce in each of the four financial years. In the database, patterns of movement can be identified for RSE workers by gender, country of origin, region of work and employer in NZ.

²⁹ Community informants included village leaders, church leaders, teachers, economic informants (e.g. commercial farmers, local businessmen) and RSE recruitment agents. Government officials included staff in the Labour Sending Units, government ministers and ministry CEOs (e.g. ministries of labour, agriculture and women), officials in the NZ and Australian High Commissions and INZ. Other informants included academics, staff in international agencies and training institutes, and Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) Advisers.

³⁰ The semi-structured topic guides were developed using a matrix based on the research sub-questions. The completed guides were reviewed by team members. During fieldwork the guides were adapted, where necessary, to ensure the questions were appropriate for the interview.

³¹ Bailey, R. (2019a). Observed social impacts on Ambrym island from seasonal worker programs (2009-2019). Unpublished report for the RSE Impact Study: PIC stream; Kerslake (2019). Socio-cultural, economic impacts of the Recognised Seasonal Employer programme for workers, families and communities in Samoa. Unpublished report for the RSE Impact Study: PIC stream; Vaioleti, T., Morrison, S., Taunaholo, M. & Vaioleti, L. (2019). A reflection on fānau/whanau-centric recruitment model for RSE developed by the Indigenous Māori and Pacific Adult Education Charitable Trust Inc. (IMPAECT*). Unpublished report for the RSE Impact Study: PIC stream.

Secondary data analysis	Statistical data	A range of secondary data at PIC and village-level were examined for the purpose of identifying potential influencing factors or rival explanations for changes (impacts) as required by contribution analysis. This included academic theses and research papers, Pacific government documents, reports commissioned by Pacific governments, non-government and private sector agencies, census and household labour force survey and other statistical data.
Document review	Official research and papers	Of particular relevance are the RSE Remittance Study reports, Pacific Women and Labour Strategy (draft, undated), Inter-Agency Understandings between NZ and participating PICs, documents relating to the Review of Pacific Migration Policies, National Labour Migration Policies for Kiribati, Tonga (draft) and Vanuatu (draft).
	Scan of relevant research literature	The research literature on the NZ and Australian seasonal work schemes was reviewed in the research scoping phase to identify impacts of labour mobility on workers, families and communities. The review was re-scanned as part of the analysis stage to compare emerging impacts from the fieldwork data with RSE impacts recorded in the literature.
	Media review	A review of mainstream Pacific-based media sources relating to the RSE scheme in the five years 2014-2019 was conducted.

Coding and data analysis

Following coding of the interview notes into NVivo10 software, an iterative process of analysis was used in which the interview data was “cut” and examined in three ways so as to provide differing perspectives: village-level, country-level, and by theme. The findings of this initial analysis were scrutinised and expanded further, and contribution claims developed using a three-step process:

- Following the completion of fieldwork in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, the three principal researchers met for a day-long analysis session on 15 August 2019. The purpose of the session was to compare emerging impacts from the fieldwork data with RSE impacts recorded in the literature. This literature had been summarised as part of the study’s scoping phase in mid-2018. The emerging findings were compared against each impact type identified in the literature. This process enabled reflection on the data collected in the three Pacific countries, identified new emerging impacts, and highlighted areas needing further examination during the remaining fieldwork.
- Following the analysis of data from the five Pacific countries, a workshop was held with the Pacific research associates involved in fieldwork plus members of the RSE Impact Study Expert Panel in Fiji on 19-20 November 2019.³² The initial findings from the fieldwork and expert reports were presented to the workshop for scrutiny and further development by participants. At the beginning of day two, participants identified seven negative impacts deemed to be the highest priority for PICs which were examined further during the rest of the day.
- The NZ research team developed contribution claims describing how and why the RSE scheme is contributing to these seven “priority” negative impacts, plus eight positive impacts of a

³² The Expert Panel consists of five academic and practitioner experts in Pacific labour mobility and/or research methodology located in the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. The panel met three times during the NZ and Pacific stream. The panel scrutinised (i) the contribution claims linking the RSE scheme and observed impacts, and (ii) the evidence underpinning such claims.

substantive nature. These contribution claims were scrutinised by the RSE Impact Study Expert Panel at a meeting on 9 December 2019 in Wellington.

Research limitations

The Pacific stream research has a number of limitations including.

- The Pacific stream report does not include all PICs participating in the RSE scheme. The research design provides in-depth information about specific communities in five Pacific countries which were selected to shed light on aspects or issues relevant to the research questions.
- The research has a strong qualitative focus by design. It is not possible to generalise the findings across the populations of participating PICs in ways that inquiries conducted with experimental research designs can sometimes allow. However, the insights from the study's findings have relevance for, and are transferable to, similar contexts and conditions.
- The study does not contain a systematic economic analysis of impacts of RSE participation on workers, their families and communities. Some data of relevance for the assessment of economic impacts were collected from RSE employers, workers and family members. The data obtained through self-reporting has limitations such as participant recall issues, and response and social desirability bias.
- The communities in the study were selected purposively, rather than at random, on the basis of their links with the RSE employers participating in the NZ stream.
- The RSE worker and household samples consisted of workers and households who agreed to participate in the study. They were not a random sample.
- RSE workers and household informants who were interviewed were often reluctant to criticise the RSE scheme for fear their criticisms might be shared with their employer and they could lose their opportunity to participate in the scheme.

Part 1. RSE scheme impacts: Context for findings

This section provides important contextual information for the discussion of impacts of RSE participation on workers, families and communities, contained in Parts 2 to 4 of the report. The five PICs have had different levels of engagement in the RSE scheme, due in part to varying approaches to recruitment and selection of workers. This variation in levels of RSE participation means that the scheme's contribution to household and community-level impacts is markedly different in the five PICs. The first part of the context section discusses each country's engagement to date, and the different approaches to recruitment and selection of workers. The largest suppliers of labour to NZ also supply the greatest numbers of seasonal workers to Australia and this is briefly discussed in this section.

There are clear source country, age and gender biases in worker selection practices in the RSE scheme. The demographic impacts of these biases can be seen most clearly in Tonga and Vanuatu where sizeable numbers of rural-based men aged 20-49 years, the key working age group for local agriculture as well as overseas employment, are routinely absent for seasonal work in NZ and Australia. The regular withdrawal of this group of labour from village-based settings has impacts on agricultural production and other communal activities. Some of these impacts are explored in Part 4 of the report.

Engagement in NZ and Australia's seasonal work schemes by the five PICs

In the year to 30 June 2019, the five PICs included in the Pacific stream provided 91 percent of the 11,168 Pacific RSE arrivals for seasonal work (Table 7). Three of the countries – Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa (the “Big 3”) – have provided more than 80 percent of the annual arrivals from Pacific countries since the scheme began in April 2007. In 2018/19 they were the source countries for 85 percent of Pacific RSE workers, with Vanuatu alone accounting for 46 percent of arrivals. In contrast, the other two PICs – Fiji and Kiribati – provide relatively few workers to NZ each season. In 2018/19 the shares from Fiji (3.9%) and Kiribati (2.3%) were both under five percent.

The total numbers recruited for the RSE scheme in any given year are governed by an annual cap, currently set at 14,400.³³ But the distribution of workers across the PICs is not regulated by policy. The demand-driven nature of the RSE scheme means decisions around worker recruitment – what country(s) to recruit from, and (with the exception of Kiribati and Fiji) where to recruit from within country(s) – are largely left to accredited RSE employers. Employers' selection biases in turn influence the contribution that the RSE scheme makes to impacts, positive and negative, within participating households and villages across the five countries.

³³ There is an administrative limit on the number of RSE places that can be taken up in any one year. The cap was set at 5,000 places when the scheme was established in 2007, and has progressively increased in response to employer demand for labour (8,000 in 2009/10, 9,000 in 2014/15, 9,500 in 2015/16, 10,500 in 2016/17, 11,100 in 2017/18, 12,850 in 2018/19, and 14,400 in 2019/20).

Table 7. RSE worker arrivals from the Impact Study countries

Impact study countries	RSE worker arrivals		
	2007/08	2013/14	2018/19
Fiji	0	0	444
Kiribati	69	127	263
Samoa	647	1,169	2,315
Tonga	805	1,538	2,037
Vanuatu	1,698	3,070	5,130
Total 5 countries	3,219	5,904	10,189
Total Pacific countries	3,556	6,524	11,168
RSE total, all countries	4,486	7,855	12,581
<i>Percentages</i>			
% of RSE total from Pacific	79.3	83.1	88.8
% of Pacific total from the 5 countries	90.5	90.5	91.2
% of Pacific total from the "Big 3"*	88.6	88.8	84.9
% of Pacific total from Vanuatu	47.8	47.1	45.9
% of Pacific total females	17.7	13.6	11.8

* The Big 3 RSE supply countries from the scheme's outset have been Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.

Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa are also the major suppliers of labour for Australia's SWP, accounting for 85 percent of the 10,635 Pacific SWP workers in 2018/19. The majority of Pacific SWP workers are from Vanuatu (47%) and Tonga (35%), with a small, but growing share from Samoa (6%). The SWP, which was modelled on the RSE scheme and piloted between 2009 and 2012, became a fully operational temporary migration policy from July 2012.³⁴ After a rather slow beginning, with a total of 1,470 workers recruited in 2012/13, by 2018/19 the total number of workers recruited for SWP (12,202) was virtually the same as the total recruited for the RSE scheme (12,581). The SWP is uncapped and the numbers recruited are likely to eclipse NZ in 2019/20. When considering the impact of seasonal work overseas on rural-based families and villages in Vanuatu, Tonga and, to a lesser extent Samoa, the SWP must be considered. It is impossible to separate out the contribution that RSE per se makes, as opposed to participation in seasonal work more broadly, especially as some households have family members absent under both schemes.

Australia has also recently introduced the PLS which is uncapped and provides temporary employment opportunities for semi-skilled workers in a wide range of industries including accommodation and

³⁴ In the 12 months to 30 June 2019 12,202 seasonal workers were recruited under the SWP. The same Pacific source countries for the RSE provided 10,635 workers for Australia. The remaining 1,567 were recruited from Timor-Leste, the third largest source of seasonal labour under the SWP. The two main sources are Vanuatu (4,965) and Tonga (3,736 workers), with Samoa (677 workers) the fourth-ranked source. As in New Zealand, the great majority (83.6 percent) of Australia's Pacific seasonal workers were males. Their female share (16.4 percent) exceeded New Zealand's 9.8 percent of female RSE workers in 2018/19. There are no available data on the age distributions of seasonal workers in Australia but it can be assumed these are not dissimilar to those for RSE workers from the different source countries.

food services, health care and social assistance, and non-seasonal agriculture, forestry and fishing. PLS workers can stay for up to three years (minimum 12 months) on a PLS visa.³⁵ The scheme is open to all nine PICs participating in RSE, and will draw on the same sources of labour in rural-based PIC communities.

Recruitment and selection – access to RSE work opportunities

As part of the process of developing IAUs at the start of the RSE scheme, each PIC was required to establish a work-ready pool of suitable citizens from which RSE employers could recruit. It was envisaged that employers would recruit their seasonal workers from the work-ready pools, enabling PIC governments to retain control over worker selection, and spread employment opportunities across their islands and communities. It was also anticipated that the facilitation measures would provide a ‘level playing field’ for participating PICs – employers would look to recruit from all five kick-start states and the distribution of seasonal work opportunities between PICs would be relatively equitable.

In the early years when RSE employers were relatively new to recruiting from different PICs, they made considerable use of the work-ready pools. Over time, however, as employers have become familiar with workers from certain countries, and have established relationships with their RSE workers, direct recruitment has become more prevalent. Now it is common for return workers and team leaders to act as unofficial recruitment agents and to select new recruits for their RSE employer(s). This tends to result in the RSE employment opportunity staying within the extended family or village group, rather than spreading opportunities to non-participating households in other areas. Table C1 in [Appendix C](#) outlines the recruitment options in each of the five PICs involved in the Pacific stream.

The Big 3

Vanuatu has consistently been the major source of RSE labour, contributing over 45 percent of all workers from the Pacific in every season. Vanuatu was involved in a World Bank-funded pilot of the RSE scheme in 2006, sending a small group of 45 ni-Vanuatu workers to Central Otago, and the country has always retained its first-mover advantage. The country’s dominance in the scheme is due, in part, to the Vanuatu Government’s continued support for direct recruitment by employers, including recruitment via licensed labour agents that handle all aspects of worker recruitment and pre-departure administrative activities for their NZ employers. Recently, some issues have emerged regarding the activities of a small number of licensed agents in Vanuatu (discussed in [Appendix C](#), pp.158-159).

Tonga has been the second largest supplier of RSE labour, followed by Samoa. In 2018/19, Samoa surpassed Tonga for the first time. Tonga, until very recently, was the largest supplier of labour to Australia under the SWP (now second to Vanuatu), providing more than 3,700 workers in 2019. When the RSE scheme was implemented, Tonga was the only country to take an explicitly pro-poor approach to recruitment of workers, with deliberate attempts to recruit from the outer islands and rural areas, and to ensuring that those with wage-earning jobs in Tonga were not selected for seasonal work in

³⁵ <https://dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/engagement/pacific-labour-mobility/Pages/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>

NZ.³⁶ Over time the pro-poor focus has diminished as greater numbers are recruited directly by employers, rather than selecting workers from the government's work-ready pool.

In Samoa, the numbers recruited have been steadily increasing over the past five seasons, from around 1,100 in 2013/14 to 2,300 in 2018/19. Samoa also sends several hundred seasonal workers to Australia (677 SWP workers in 2018/19). The participation of Samoan women in the RSE and SWP remains low, with fewer than 100 women workers in both schemes in 2018/19. The Samoan Government's preferred approach to recruitment is via the work-ready pool, but direct recruitment by RSE employers is allowed, and this tends to occur through church or community affiliations. The Falealili RSE scheme is one example of direct recruitment in Samoa. At the time of the 2016 census, just over 80 percent (270) of the country's 337 named villages (including suburbs around the Apia urban area) had at least one household member absent for seasonal work in NZ during the preceding year.³⁷ The distribution of participating households across Samoa's communities is more comprehensive than is the case in countries with much smaller numbers of seasonal workers.

The choice by some RSE employers to recruit from Samoa and Tonga is the result of their prior experience of hiring Tongans and Samoans via previous work permit schemes plus the fact there are large NZ-based communities from these islands. The NZ-based Tongan community (60,336 at the time of the 2013 census) and the Samoan community (144,138) are now viewed by employers as having largely positive influences on RSE workers while in NZ.³⁸

Kiribati and Fiji

The numbers recruited from Kiribati have remained around 2 percent of total worker arrivals over the 12-year period (2007-19), despite ongoing efforts by MBIE to facilitate the country's engagement in the scheme.³⁹ The persistently low numbers from Kiribati are due in part to the country's distance from NZ and the high participation costs for I-Kiribati workers.

Kiribati uses an island-based quota system for selection of workers to distribute seasonal work opportunities. While this system ensures all islands with resident populations (excluding Kanton in the Phoenix Islands Group) are represented in the RSE scheme, the small numbers recruited from Kiribati each season mean very few are selected from individual islands. Data on recruitment of workers for the 2019 calendar year showed only five of the country's 20 inhabited atolls and reef islands had 10 or more people participating in the RSE scheme. Fifteen of the islands had fewer than 10 workers

³⁶ Gibson, J., McKenzie, D. & Rohorua, H. (2008). How pro-poor is the selection of seasonal migrant workers from Tonga under New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer program? *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 23(3): 187-204.

³⁷ Data from the Samoa Population and Housing Census 2016 provided by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Apia.

³⁸ StatsNZ (2013). 2013 census ethnic group profiles: Samoan http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/ethnic-profiles.aspx?request_value=24708&parent_id=24706&tabname=#24708; Stats NZ (2013). 2013 census ethnic group profiles: Tongan http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/ethnic-profiles.aspx?request_value=24711&parent_id=24706&tabname=#24711

³⁹ For example, when Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) was introduced in 2009, MBIE undertook facilitated recruitment drives to Kiribati and Tuvalu, accompanying a small number of RSE employers to both countries to assist with the recruitment of small groups of women workers.

each. Of the country's 168 named villages in the 2015 census, the majority had no absentee seasonal workers in NZ in 2019;⁴⁰ the RSE makes a negligible impact at the village level in Kiribati.

Kiribati remains the Pacific source country with the highest share of women in its RSE worker population; women accounted for 36 percent (95) of the total number of 263 I-Kiribati arrivals in 2018/19. But this share seems to be declining. In 2019, less than half of the 11 RSE employers of I-Kiribati workers recruited women, and only four employers took more than 10 women each. Kiribati officials in the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources (MEHR) expressed frustration at the slow growth in opportunities for work in NZ and Australia. Among the 33 I-Kiribati workers interviewed, many had been registered with their island councils for at least three or four years before being selected, with some waiting as long as 10 years for a job offer.⁴¹ Access to seasonal work remains a rare prospect for most I-Kiribati seeking work, and RSE jobs are highly valued.

Fiji is a relatively late entrant to RSE with formal engagement in 2014. Over the past five seasons the numbers of Fijian RSE workers have grown significantly - almost 1,400 percent - from 30 workers in 2014/15 to 444 in 2018/19. But as a percentage of total RSE arrivals, Fiji remains a small player at four percent. Similar to Tonga, Fiji places a strong emphasis on pro-poor recruitment.⁴² However, like Kiribati, the relatively small numbers recruited from Fiji to date mean the impacts of the RSE scheme on poorer, rural communities are limited. Less than five percent of the country's many hundreds of named settlements and koro (villages) have had seasonal workers employed in NZ or Australia.⁴³

Fijian officials in the country's LSU, the National Employment Centre (NEC), are dissatisfied with the lack of opportunities for Fijian workers in NZ, and recognise that while the annual cap remains in place the numbers of Fijian RSE workers are unlikely to grow significantly because of the limited number of new places available. The NEC's work-ready pool has several hundred prospective recruits who have been registered for more than three years. The demand for new workers from Fiji is far smaller than the numbers of Fijian citizens seeking work. The NEC's attention is shifting to Australia's SWP and the PLS which provides employment opportunities beyond agriculture.

The demographic context – selection biases and impacts on labour supply

In addition to RSE employers' clear preferences for labour from certain countries, there are strong age and gender selection biases in worker recruitment. These biases have important implications for rural economic and social activities and for the adjustments that village-based families must make when one or more of their members is absent for seasonal work.

The RSE scheme specifies a minimum age of 18 years for recruitment. There is no prescribed upper age limit, but over 90 percent of workers from the five PICs are aged between 20 and 49 years. Within

⁴⁰ Ministry of Employment and Human Resources (MEHR) statistics on the numbers of I-Kiribati employed in the RSE between 1 January and 30 September 2019; Kiribati National Statistics Office (NSO) (2016). *2015 Population and housing census. Volume 1: Management report and basic tables*. Tarawa: NSO, Ministry of Finance.

⁴¹ For example, an I-Kiribati worker from the southern island of Tamana was on the Island Council's list of potential RSE workers for seven years before he and some others from Tamana went to Tarawa to find out why no-one from his island was being selected under the island-based quota system for RSE. After considerable pressure on the LSU in Tarawa he was finally selected for an RSE job.

⁴² Curtain, R. & Sherrell, H. (2017). How recruitment and selection can shape seasonal work programs: Comparing Fiji and Papua New Guinea. *Devpolicy Blog*, 2 February 2017.

⁴³ National Employment Centre statistics on numbers of Fijians employed as seasonal workers, 2014-2019.

this broad age band there are some variations across the five countries, but workers aged 20-29 and 30-39 tend to be preferred by RSE employers as shown in Table 8.

There is also a clear bias towards recruitment of males for seasonal work. In three of the PICs, males comprise 90 percent or more of their RSE workforces, with Tonga (89.9 percent) also effectively at 90 percent. Kiribati is quite distinctive in terms of the gender composition of its seasonal workers - over a third are women (highlighted in red, Table 8). The higher share of I-Kiribati women RSE workers is due to efforts made by former MBIE staff to incentivise RSE employers to recruit female workers. The preferred work for women has been in the packhouse, but there are strict controls on recruitment of RSE workers to do tasks that New Zealanders are willing to do. Pacific women (and men) tend to be recruited for night shifts in packhouses in regions with regular labour shortages, and in some regions for work picking berries, and thinning kiwifruit and citrus.

Table 8. Composition of Pacific workers approved for RSE visas, 2018/19

Age and gender composition	Percentages in each group				
	Fiji	Kiribati	Samoa	Tonga	Vanuatu
<i>Age group</i>					
Under 20	0.8	0.3	1.6	8.2	0.2
20-29	36.1	35.2	48.6	54.9	37.3
30-39	41.6	51.8	34.0	24.8	39.5
40-49	19.6	12.7	14.4	10.3	18.8
50+	1.8	0.0	1.4	1.8	4.1
Total 20-49	97.3	99.7	97.0	90.0	95.6
<i>Gender</i>					
Females	6.1	36.1	4.2	10.1	8.2
Males	93.9	63.9	95.8	89.9	91.8

Demographic impact of the RSE scheme on rural-based men

From the outset the RSE scheme and, to a certain extent, the SWP, has prioritised recruitment of people from rural areas who have limited, local income-earning opportunities. This rural focus has not been implemented rigorously, but it remains a target in the five PICs. In Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, more than 70 percent of the country's total population is classed as "rural" (Table 9), meaning the majority of those selected for the RSE scheme are likely to be based in rural villages where subsistence agriculture remains at the heart of the village economy. Only in Fiji and Kiribati is the share of the population living in rural areas less than 50 percent.

Fiji's total population (884,887 in 2017) and rural resident population aged 20-49 years (154,325) is much larger than the other four PICs.⁴⁴ As a result, the RSE scheme, with its current cap of 14,400, cannot expect to have much impact on the employment of people aged 20-49 years in Fiji. In Kiribati (20,723) and Tonga (28,129), however, the RSE scheme has the potential to have an impact on the countries' rural working-age populations.

Table 9. Some characteristics of the populations of the five PICs

Population characteristic	Numbers and percentages in each group				
	Fiji	Kiribati	Samoa	Tonga	Vanuatu
Year of last census	2017	2015	2016	2016	2016*
Total population	884,887	110,136	195,979	100,651	272,459
Rural population	390,635	53,748	158,588	77,430	204,710
% total population rural resident	44.1	48.8	80.9	76.9	75.1
Rural population aged 20-49 years**	154,325	20,723	57,378	28,129	74,880
% total rural population aged 20-49	39.5	38.6	36.2	36.3	36.6

* Vanuatu held a mini Census in 2016 following Cyclone Pam.

** 20-49 years is the key working age group for seasonal work

As noted above, it is largely men recruited for the RSE scheme. Table 10 shows the populations of rural-based men in the key age groups (20-49 years) for seasonal work in each of the five PICs, and the percentages of those rural populations that are RSE workers, in 2018/19. The entries highlighted in blue show where between 5.0 and 9.9 percent of the rural population was absent in RSE employment; red is 10-19.9 percent; and purple is above 20 percent.

In both Tonga and Vanuatu, more than 12 percent of rural-based men aged 20-49 years were absent in NZ doing seasonal work in 2018/19. Tonga stands out with the largest share absent in a particular age group. The equivalent of a fifth of the 5,351 men aged 20-29 in Tonga's rural population was absent under RSE in 2018/19. This is a much higher percentage absent in a specific age-sex group than for any group in the other four countries. At the other extreme, in Fiji, all of the age groups shown for males had RSE absentee rates of less than one percent of the rural population.

The strong bias towards recruitment of male workers under the RSE scheme means the female absentee rates were very low in all five countries; less than one percent of the female rural population, aged 20-49 years, was absent for RSE work in 2018/19.

⁴⁴ To illustrate the variable impact of age and sex selectivity on the populations of the source countries in 2018/19 three assumptions about the populations at risk to recruitment are made. The first is that the recruited workers are drawn from the rural populations aged 20-49 as these can be defined in the latest censuses for the five countries. The other two assumptions relate to the gender and age distributions of RSE and SWP workers. The distributions by gender that are given, by source country, in the 2018/19 RSE visa approvals data and the visa arrivals data for the SWP, define the respective seasonal worker populations. The age distributions, by gender, for all people approved for RSE work visas in 2018/19 are used to calculate the age distributions of male and female SWP recruits in that financial year.

Table 10. Shares of rural based males in the five PICs, by age group, in the RSE workforce, 2018/19

Male RSE workforce by age group	Numbers and percentages in each group				
	Fiji	Kiribati	Samoa	Tonga	Vanuatu
<i>Rural population by age group</i>					
20-29 years	28,290	4,263	11,813	5,351	15,132
30-39 years	29,135	3,286	9,270	4,267	11,997
40-49 years	23,537	2,684	8,663	3,891	9,061
Total 20-49 years	80,962	10,233	29,746	13,509	36,190
<i>RSE visa approvals 2018/19</i>					
20-29 years	174	87	1,125	1,083	1,917
30-39 years	198	90	804	471	1,959
40-49 years	84	21	339	180	888
Total 20-49 years	456	198	2,268	1,734	4,764
Total (all ages)	462	199	2,334	1,938	4,951
% 20-49 years	98.7	99.5	97.2	89.5	96.2
<i>RSE approvals as % of rural population</i>					
20-29 years	0.62	2.04	9.52	20.24	12.67
30-39 years	0.68	2.74	8.67	11.04	16.33
40-49 years	0.36	0.78	3.91	4.63	9.80
Total 20-49 years	0.56	1.93	7.62	12.84	13.16
Total (all ages)	0.23	0.74	2.84	5.00	4.77

The combined impact of the RSE and SWP on rural-based men

When the RSE numbers of approvals and SWP arrivals for 2018/19 are combined, some even clearer patterns of bias in impact on specific age groups become apparent. Table 11 provides the combined male RSE and SWP workforce numbers in 2018/19. The table also shows the combined seasonal workforce numbers as percentages of the male rural populations in the key age groups (20-49 years). The colours used in Table 11 highlight the following: blue is for percentages between 5.0–9.9; red is 10-19.9 percent; purple is 20-29.9 percent; and green is 30-39.9 percent. The percentage highlighted in yellow is for more than half of the rural population in the age group.

Table 11. Shares of rural based males in the five PICs, by age group, in the combined RSE and SWP workforce, 2018/19

Male RSE +SWP workforce by age group	Numbers and percentages in each group				
	Fiji	Kiribati	Samoa	Tonga	Vanuatu
<i>Male RSE+SWP seasonal workers</i>					
20-29 years	328	231	1,423	2,810	3,494
30-39 years	374	239	1,017	1,222	3,571
40-49 years	159	56	429	467	1,619
Total 20-49 years	861	526	2,869	4,499	8,684
Total (all ages)	872	529	2,953	5,028	9,025
% 20-49 years	98.7	99.4	97.2	89.5	96.2
<i>Male RSE+SWP as a % of rural population</i>					
20-29 years	1.16	5.42	12.05	52.51	23.09
30-39 years	1.28	7.27	0.01	28.64	29.77
40-49 years	0.67	2.09	4.95	12.00	17.87
Total 20-49 years	1.06	5.14	9.64	33.30	24.00
Total (all ages)	0.43	1.96	3.60	12.98	8.70

When the two seasonal workforces are combined they have a major impact on the male rural working-age populations in Tonga and Vanuatu. The equivalent of 52.5 percent of Tonga’s village-based men aged 20-29 were absent for at least six months, and usually up to the maximum time permitted by the visa, in either Australia or NZ during the 2018/19 financial year. This is also the primary age group impacted by migration for trades and professional training that often requires absences in overseas institutions. When other migration flows are taken into consideration, the share of 20-29 year old males absent from Tonga will be even higher.

A third of Tonga’s men (33.3 percent) and just under a quarter of Vanuatu’s men (24 percent) aged 20-49 years were engaged in the RSE and SWP during the 2018/19 financial year. Given the numbers of men absent, it is not surprising that impacts of seasonal labour migration on village-based economic and social activities in these two countries were frequently cited by informants.

For Samoa, the share of the male population aged 20-49 years absent under the two seasonal work schemes in 2018/19 was just under 10 percent. While this is a lower share than Tonga and Vanuatu, in Samoa it is a certain group that is predominantly absent – namely the taulelea. They are the “strength of the village” and carry out all duties that require hard labour e.g. planting gardens and other agricultural work as well as domestic and security duties for the matai (Kerslake, 2019). Withdrawing this specific group of labour from the village has impacted on village-level agricultural production and other activities in two of the three villages in Samoa where fieldwork was carried out.

Fiji and Kiribati provide much smaller numbers of seasonal workers under the RSE scheme and the SWP, and the impacts of the seasonal work schemes on their male rural populations are minimal. Five percent of Kiribati’s male population aged 20-49 years was absent under RSE and SWP in 2018/19. As noted earlier, the Kiribati Government has a deliberate strategy of spreading seasonal work

opportunities as widely as possible via an island-based quota system, so the numbers selected from different rural villages across Kiribati's islands are very small. In Fiji, only 1 percent of males aged 20-49 years were absent for seasonal work in the last financial year; the village-wide impacts of RSE and SWP in Fiji are negligible. In the case of Fiji, movement offshore for employment and study under other visa settings is far more important. In 2018/19, 5,142 Fijians were approved on temporary work visas, other than RSE, to NZ. The 462 RSE visa approvals in that year accounted for only 8.2 percent of all temporary work visa approvals for Fiji.⁴⁵

These statistics demonstrate a critical point that must be kept in mind when reading the remainder of the report: namely that the contribution the RSE scheme (and SWP) makes to impacts, positive and negative, on rural-based families and communities among the five PICs is context-specific, highly variable and occurs within a wider setting of other labour mobility schemes/migration pathways for their citizens. It is impossible to generalise across the different PICs.

Presentation of the report findings

The next three parts of the report present the findings for the worker (part 2), the worker's family (part 3), and the worker's community (part 4). This division is somewhat artificial in that these groups do not operate in isolation; there is overlap in the ways that the RSE scheme contributes to impacts for workers, their families, and their communities, due to the interconnections and interdependencies between the different groups.

Where community-level impacts are presented, the word 'community' is used as a general term to refer to where the worker comes from and usually lives. In four of the countries these communities are rural villages, and the word village is synonymous with community in these contexts. In Kiribati the word community covers both traditional villages and urban suburbs in South Tarawa.

At the end of each part, key positive and negative impacts are presented. These key impacts were identified, developed and assessed in a three-step analytical process involving the Pacific research associates and the RSE Impact Study Expert Panel (discussed in [Appendix A](#)).

As is required by Contribution Analysis, each of the key impacts is assessed in terms of the contribution that the RSE scheme is making to the observed impact. External factors that influence the extent of the observed impact are identified, and any potential rival explanations for the observed impact are provided.

⁴⁵ MBIE Migration Explorer database accessed 3 January 2020. Retrieved from https://mbienz.shinyapps.io/migration_data_explorer/

Part 2. Being an RSE worker in NZ

When the RSE scheme was established it was a novel innovation in the area of international labour migration policy because of its focus on what the United Nations termed a “triple win”.⁴⁶ The “winners” were to be: the employers who required the labour, the workers who would secure short-term employment (with the potential to be re-employed in future seasons), and the countries providing and receiving the seasonal labour. In this part of the report the workers’ experiences of RSE employment are examined. The focus is on the individual worker and their perspectives on seasonal employment in NZ.

The separate consideration of workers in this report is deliberate. Despite the well-established roles of families and communities in the migration decision-making process (discussed below) the individual worker and her/his employer are the two main actors in the RSE scheme (see Figure 1, p.19). Most of the institutions and infrastructure in NZ and in the Pacific that have been created to support the RSE scheme’s operation focus on ensuring these two actors get significant, positive returns from their participation. Twelve years after the scheme’s implementation, there is no question that the RSE scheme has made a significant difference to the productivity of RSE employers, NZ’s horticulture and viticulture industries more generally, and the wider economy. The question, raised by some community informants in NZ and in PICs, is whether a fair share of the benefits of that growth are going back to workers and their families through the income and skills workers obtain during their time in NZ.

The interviews with workers: a caveat

All of the workers employed in 2018/19 that were interviewed for this study highly valued the opportunity to work in NZ; they did not want to jeopardise in any way their chances of being reselected for another season. Our interviews sought to get their views on their contracts, working conditions, pay and deductions, accommodation and internet access and, where it was relevant, meals provided by their employer or accommodation provider. Most of those interviewed had some critical comments to make about aspects of their work experience in NZ. However, an undercurrent in many of the interviews was a concern that any critical comments workers raised about their employment, or any other aspect of their life in NZ, might be interpreted as evidence that they were either unhappy about the seasonal work they were asked to do, or that they were “trouble makers”. Many workers made explicit requests not to report any critical comments back to their employers.

Workers’ views on working and living in NZ varied widely. Where criticisms are raised in this report these should not be interpreted as applying to all workers or to all contracts, employment conditions, accommodation and so forth. Our primary objective in raising particular issues is to identify areas where some adjustments could be made to the current RSE policy, or to the current responsibilities of employers, contractors and third-party providers, to address commonly expressed concerns by workers. Such action would contribute to achieving a better “win” for workers from their seasonal employment experiences in NZ.

⁴⁶ United Nations (2006). International migration and development, report of the Secretary-General, Agenda Item 54(c), sixtieth session of the General Assembly of the UN, 18 May 2006, A/60/871.

The discussion of workers' participation in seasonal work is in three sections. The first section deals with the decision to become a seasonal worker, and some of the economic and social drivers that led respondents to engage with the RSE scheme. The second section covers the experiences of the workers in NZ and identifies some specific issues which workers feel need to be addressed either by RSE policy in NZ, or by their employers, or by the Ministries overseeing the RSE scheme in the Pacific source countries. The third section focuses on the experiences of female workers from Fiji and Kiribati. Information on the experiences of women engaged in seasonal work was specifically requested from the commissioning agencies, MBIE and MFAT. At the end of Part 2, the key positive and negative impacts for workers identified during the research are presented in two [impact summary tables](#).

Becoming a seasonal worker

While the RSE scheme places the worker, along with the RSE employer, at the centre of the employment relationship (Figure 1, p.19) the decision to migrate to undertake seasonal work is rarely an individual choice. In many parts of the world, including the Pacific, migration is embedded in an extended family context, and the decision to move is linked to the needs and aspirations of the household. Kinship ties are of fundamental importance, and there is pressure to ensure family obligations are met regularly, and to maintain one's status as well as that of one's family. Physical separation through temporary labour migration overseas is often justified on the basis that it enables the family to fulfil a particular project, whether it is putting children through school or improving the family's economic circumstances.

There is a significant literature on migration decision-making in the Pacific dating back to the late 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁷ Particularly relevant for the discussion in this section is Marcus' (1974, 1981) work on the role of the extended family in such decision-making in Tonga.⁴⁸ In Tonga and elsewhere, migrants have been seen as part of a 'transnational corporation of kin' where mobility is a deliberate household/kinship group strategy to diversify and maximise household incomes for island-based families (Marcus, 1981).⁴⁹ Similarly in her research on skilled migration from Samoa, Liki (2001) discusses the central role of the 'aiga (extended family) in sustaining all social actions, behaviour and relations among Samoans, including decisions to migrate.

The findings presented in this section generally support what is already known about migration decision-making in Pacific contexts. At this point it is also important to acknowledge that the decision to move overseas for seasonal work is mediated by those beyond the family, including village leaders and LSUs involved in the recruitment and selection of workers. While individuals, supported by their

⁴⁷ See, for example Borovnik, M. (2007). Labour circulation and changes among seafarers' families and communities in Kiribati, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 16(2): 225-249; Brown, R. & Connell, J. (2004). The migration of doctors and nurses from South Pacific nations. *Social Science & Medicine*, 58: 2193-2210; Connell, J. & Brown, R. (2005). *Remittances in the Pacific – An overview*. Manila: Asia Development Bank; Lee, H. (2003). *Tongans overseas: Between two shores*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press; Liki, A. (2001). Moving and rootedness: The paradox of the brain drain among Samoan professionals. *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, 16(1): 67-84; and Macpherson, C. (2004). Transnationalism and transformation in Samoan society. In V. Lockwood (Ed.), *Globalization and culture change in the Pacific Islands* (pp. 165-181). New Jersey: Pearson.

⁴⁸ Marcus, G. (1974). A hidden dimension of family development in the modern kingdom of Tonga. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 5(1): 87-102; (1981). Power on the extreme periphery: The perspective of Tongan elites in the modern world system. *Pacific Viewpoint*, 22: 48-64.

⁴⁹ Also see Bertram, G. & Watters, R. (1985). The MIRAB economy in South Pacific microstates. *Pacific Viewpoint*, 26(2): 497-519.

families, may make the decision to migrate, there are wider village-level considerations, such as the extent of the withdrawal of productive labour from the village, that may impact on individuals' abilities to move. Some of these influencing factors are discussed later in the report. Ultimately, of course, the decision to offer a contract for seasonal work rests with the RSE employer.

Family-based decision-making

There were many examples of family-based decision-making about who stays at home and who becomes a seasonal worker in NZ/Australia to ensure the wellbeing of those at home and to minimise potential adverse effects on the family. In such cases, family priorities are central. RSE incomes are usually shared around extended family members to assist them to achieve specific goals, such as paying school/university fees, and building or upgrading homes (discussed further in "Prioritisation of RSE income" pp.70-79), and decisions regarding who goes abroad as a seasonal worker are often driven by income-related goals. Some contexts for and examples of family-based decision-making are given in the table below.

Table 12. Family-based decisions for seasonal work

Family-based decision-making	Examples
The decision about who will go is based on a determination of whose absence will have the least impact on the functioning of the family at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two brothers in a ni-Vanuatu family became RSE workers when the scheme started. One brother stopped after two years so he could look after their shared gardens to grow food for family consumption and sale. - A Samoan man connected to a high-ranking matai worked on the scheme for two years but was then encouraged by the matai to remain in the village and develop a business to benefit the larger extended family. - A Tongan man in his early 30s, who had been an RSE seasonal worker for 11 years, was persuaded by his older brother that it was time for him to stay in the village to support his aunt and his young family.
Family members take turns or stagger their absences for seasonal work to minimise the effects of their time away from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In another ni-Vanuatu family, two brothers rotate their absences – one does a season in NZ while the other brother stays at home and looks after their business ventures and the extended family. In the next season they swap their respective roles. - Adult siblings in a Tongan family organise their absences in seasonal employment so that there is always adequate care for their elderly parents and another family member. The family's seasonal work schedule is as follows: a brother goes to NZ to work in November for seven months and another brother goes in February for seven months. When the first brother returns home in June, the sister's husband goes to Australia to work for seven months.
Decisions are made based on what works best for individual family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The I-Kiribati mother of an unpartnered female RSE worker said that she sees her job as looking after her grandchildren so her daughter can work in New Zealand for as long as she is interested. Her daughter's RSE income pays for daily living costs in their urban location, plus school fees for her children and those of extended family members. - Family members without childcare and other care responsibilities, such as unpartnered people or grandparents, may work in NZ or Australia to pay for the school fees of family members. Examples of this were provided in Samoa where young, unpartnered men go to NZ as seasonal workers to earn money to support the education of others in the extended family (e.g. younger siblings or nieces/nephews). The worker's parents decide how the RSE income is distributed within the family. Examples were also provided in Kiribati, e.g. a female I-Kiribati worker who has only one child still at school pays the school fees for her nieces

	and nephews. She said she is looking forward to all the children finishing school so she can “focus on myself” in her final years as a worker.
Succession planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When asked about changes that have occurred in his village as a result of RSE participation, a ni-Vanuatu ex-worker observed that sons and younger brothers are now being sent to NZ to work as soon as they become eligible for an adult passport (21 years of age). In his case his two sons are now RSE workers. - Succession planning may also involve partners – we talked to a number of households where wives had started RSE employment when their husbands decided to stay at home. In some instances, both the husband and wife will undertake seasonal work once the children are fully grown, often with one parent in Australia and the other in NZ (Bailey, 2019a).

Economic drivers for participating in seasonal work

It was clear from discussions with workers in all of the Pacific stream countries that seasonal employment provides them with levels of income that are far in excess of what they can earn through waged employment at home or, for many, from cash cropping.^{50 51} The interviews with workers, their households and village leaders suggest that there are different “economic drivers” for participating in seasonal work. These are summarised in Table 13. It should be noted that the drivers are not mutually exclusive.

Drivers 1-4 are aligned with the RSE scheme’s aim to support Pacific governments’ development objectives. It is the fifth driver – seasonal work as a “career” – that is identified by some village leaders, church ministers and other informants as having adverse effects on families and communities. This driver is more likely to be associated with an increasing shift towards more westernised views, individualism, accumulation of personal assets, and decreasing respect for traditional customary practices and leadership (discussed further in the section on “changing attitudes and behaviours” in part 4, and in Table D2: Positive and negative impacts of RSE in participating communities, [Appendix D](#)).

There is support among some Pacific officials and other informants for a limit to be placed on the number of years that people can participate in seasonal work. Time-limited participation would focus families on saving towards specific goals and reduce the risk of them becoming dependent on seasonal work income. It would also enable seasonal work opportunities to be distributed more widely within communities. An enforced rotation policy is currently being implemented by the senior matai of the Falealili district (Samoa). RSE/SWP workers are allowed to work for three seasons and then they must stand down for a minimum of one year to allow someone else to take up the employment opportunity.

⁵⁰ Examples of local wage employment among the RSE workers we interviewed included nurses, paramedics, ex-teachers, and ex-government officials.

⁵¹ An exception is kava as a cash crop which is currently attracting high prices. Kava is grown for local and overseas markets in Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. In 2015 the EU lifted a ban on kava imports after it was found to be safe and may contain therapeutic properties. There is now a significant export market for kava, not just to Pacific expatriate communities.

Table 13. Economic drivers for seasonal work participation

Economic driver	Explanation	Examples
<p>1. Seasonal work as a means to improve an extended family's wellbeing and livelihood.</p>	<p>The worker and their extended family views RSE/SWP participation as a means of achieving specific goals requiring a significant cash injection such as new/improved housing (or to repair cyclone damage), income-earning ventures, and paying school/university fees. Income from seasonal work is spread around the extended family. This "type" of worker remains committed to their livelihoods at home.</p>	<p><i>Example 1:</i> A young Samoan couple and their seven children share a fale. The husband's RSE earnings are being used to construct a permanent materials house. He does not remit any of his earnings because the couple are very clear about their goal. The couple's only other source of income is from crops from their gardens which they sell in their road-side stall. All of their children work in the garden alongside their mother, with the occasional help of another family member. Income from sale of produce covers school fees and daily living costs.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> An I-Kiribati woman who is currently unpartnered has done two seasons as an RSE worker. Her wages pay for the school fees for her two children (who are cared for by her mother), and her nieces and nephews living in the family compound.</p> <p><i>Example 3:</i> A ni-Vanuatu man who has been an RSE worker since 2011 (with two seasons off) is a committed farmer, with kava and cattle as his main business. He sees his future as a farmer at home, not as a wage-earner in NZ. He is grateful for the opportunity to earn money in NZ to further his farming in Vanuatu.</p>
<p>2. Seasonal work to diversify an extended family's income streams.</p>	<p>Individual members of an extended family frequently contribute income from a range of sources including cash cropping, waged employment, making and selling of mats/handicrafts, and seasonal work. In Fiji, Tonga and Samoa in particular, income is also likely to include remittances from family members living overseas. Diversifying income streams is a common Pacific strategy for minimising risk and enabling families to cope with unforeseen challenges, such as the destruction of cash crops and houses by cyclones.⁵²</p>	<p><i>Example 1:</i> A Samoan worker is married with three school aged daughters. In addition to his RSE earnings, the family's other income sources are: sale of produce from the family's plantation at a roadside stall, and the sale of fine mats made by his wife. The family also fish for lobsters and collect crabs and other shellfish from the reef which they may sell at the stall.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> The family of a Fijian women RSE worker has income from a family member's wages working in the tourist industry, and a shop started with RSE earnings. They will get income in the future from a new kava plantation funded by RSE earnings. RSE income is valued because it is regular during the time the worker is in NZ, and is in sufficient quantity to allow for saving towards developing new income streams for the wider family.</p>
<p>3. Seasonal work to support urban-based households.</p>	<p>Seasonal work provides income for workers and their families who do not have access to land suitable for food production and/or lack other</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> An I-Kiribati woman with school aged children comes from an outer island and is now living on Tarawa. Both her parents are deceased, and she has no close relatives living</p>

⁵² John Gibson (2014) provides a useful discussion of seasonal employment as a component of a Melanesian risk minimizing strategy in his paper entitled: Circular migration, remittances and inequality in Vanuatu, *New Zealand Population Review*, 41: 153-167.

	options for income generation and/or lack family support.	nearby. Her younger, second husband looks after the children. The family live on poor land (purchased with RSE income) in a dwelling built of temporary materials (also from RSE income). She has been an RSE worker for nine seasons, working for periods of four-six months. Her income is used for daily living and school-related costs. She is saving up to build a house of permanent materials.
4. Seasonal work as a means for rural women to have access to waged employment and significant income.	Seasonal work provides women living in rural villages with opportunities to accumulate large amounts of money that is impossible in village settings. This is discussed further in the section “Women RSE workers”.	<i>Example:</i> A woman from a rural location in Vanuatu with a school age child (cared for by her sister) who is currently unpartnered has been an RSE worker for eight seasons, working for periods of between four and seven months. After tax and NZ living costs have been deducted, the worker had accumulated savings of around NZ\$55,000 over the eight years. RSE income has been used to build a permanent materials house for the extended family, plus pay the school fees for her child and children in the extended family.
5. Seasonal work regarded as a “career”. Discussed further in the section “reliance on RSE as a long-term employment option”.	The worker (who is likely to have been participating in RSE for some time) views seasonal work as their long-term employment. This “type” of seasonal worker and their household is likely to demonstrate one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are neglectful of their gardens at home. - Depend on RSE remittances for basic daily living costs. - Are less interested in and/or have fewer options to maintain/develop an income stream at home. - Are less engaged in the communal dimensions of village life. - Are more focused on life in NZ than family at home. 	<i>Example 1:</i> The wife of a ni-Vanuatu RSE worker who has been to NZ for seven seasons said when her husband comes home, he always seems keen to return to NZ. When he is at home he is happy to leave her to bring up their teenage children and he isn’t as engaged in the church as much as he used to be. When he is in NZ, he doesn’t seem interested in the family and sometimes it is hard to get him to stay in touch. <i>Example 2:</i> A ni-Vanuatu man who has worked in NZ since 2007/08 (with only one season off) has promised his wife many times that he will stay at home now that only one child remains at school (school fees were the main reason for him working in RSE) but it is yet to happen. His wife said that he finds the more relaxed lifestyle in the village hard to adjust to and is always ready to return to the more organised work routine in NZ. She said it is not a good idea for men to keep going back to NZ for as many years as her husband has done because it makes them not want to be at home, even though it is where the family has to remain.

Non-economic drivers for participating in seasonal work

Non-economic drivers for participating in seasonal work may change over time, depending on the numbers of years a worker has been returning. Non-economic drivers may not be the primary or initial driver for engaging in seasonal work overseas, but they may emerge after a year or two of experience as a worker. Examples provided by informants include the following.

- A desire to improve English language skills. This is often an ancillary driver linked with a primary economic one, especially for workers who have been returning for a few years.
- An opportunity for young people to get overseas experience. Two Tongan District Officers said the disciplined work environment of the RSE scheme was good for young people as it helped prepare them for life as adults in the village. In Samoa, seasonal work can enrich the taulelea, broadening their worldview and expanding their skills set for use in their community (Kerslake, 2019).
- Another non-economic driver is associated with the status and/or freedom that seasonal work provides, especially for women who may be subject to restrictive gender roles at home. It is acknowledged, however, that a dimension of such status relates to being an earner of a substantial cash income. For example:
 - An I-Kiribati woman has been an RSE worker since 2010. Her RSE earnings support a large extended family living in the south Tarawa urban area. She is married and has a child who is cared for by her mother while she is in NZ. The marriage broke down when the woman refused to stop returning because she enjoys the status and freedom of seasonal work in NZ.
 - A Samoan RSE worker has married into his wife's village which means the husband has an inferior role to the men of the village. Being an RSE worker has increased his status within his wife's family.
- A desire to get work experience to qualify for other visa categories, especially the Pacific Access Category (PAC), that can lead to residence in NZ. This was mentioned by an I-Kiribati worker who has been back to NZ several times as a team leader and tries every year to get balloted for the PAC.

Deciding to stop or have a break from seasonal work

The 103 men and women interviewed who had jobs in NZ as seasonal workers during 2018/19 all felt fortunate to have been given the employment opportunity. The common response to a question about how long they intended to keep returning for seasonal work was "as long as possible". Very few had a specific period in mind for the duration of their engagement with the RSE scheme.

Data from the RSE worker engagement database provides a picture of how many seasons, on average, workers tend to be employed, and whether they choose to take breaks/a season off, during the course of their employment. The database contains information on 14,060 individuals from Pacific countries employed as seasonal workers over a four-year period, 30 July 2013 – 1 June 2017.⁵³ Each individual had to be employed for at least one season within those four years. Some of the individuals had also

⁵³ Data on RSE worker arrivals were provided by MBIE covering the four-year period 30 July 2013 – 1 June 2017 as part of a specific contract to construct a database on engagement patterns. At the time of analysis, data on worker arrivals for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 seasons had not been supplied.

worked in NZ under the RSE scheme before 2013. For those individuals, data on their employment patterns since 2007 are included in the database.

The five Impact Study countries account for 90.5 percent (12,724) of the total number of Pacific workers in the database. Data on the number of seasons employed since 2007 covers four of the five countries: Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.⁵⁴

Table 14 shows the number of seasons employed since July 2007 by RSE workers who were recruited for at least one season between July 2013 - June 2017. The maximum number of seasons a worker could have been employed between July 2007 and June 2017 is 10 seasons. The table shows the percentages of workers from each of the four PICs in each category of seasons employed. The table also shows the average number of seasons workers had been employed by RSE employers as at 30 June 2017.

Table 14. Seasons employed since July 2007 by RSE workers recruited between July 2013-June 2017

Total seasons employed	Percentages			
	Kiribati	Samoa	Tonga	Vanuatu
1	27.3	33.2	30.1	28.8
2	14.1	20.1	18.7	18.4
3	12.4	11.9	13.1	15.0
4	7.6	9.8	10.0	11.8
5	15.3	6.5	8.2	9.3
6	10.4	6.6	6.8	6.6
7	5.6	5.0	4.7	4.1
8	4.0	3.0	3.4	2.9
9	1.2	2.7	3.9	2.5
10	2.0	1.2	1.1	0.6
1-4 years	61.4	75.0	71.9	74.0
5 yrs+	38.6	25.0	28.1	26.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number (workers)	249	2,623	3,065	6,385
Average (seasons)	3.65	3.16	3.35	3.24

Over 70 percent (highlighted in blue) of Samoan, Tongan and ni-Vanuatu workers had returned for between one and four seasons in June 2017. Kiribati is the only country that differs; around 60 percent (highlighted in red) had worked for one-four seasons, while almost 40 percent (shown in purple) had worked for five seasons or more.

⁵⁴ Fiji is excluded from this analysis because recruitment from Fiji only began in 2014/15 and the majority (83%) of the 404 Fijian citizens in the database had only been employed for one season by 30 June 2017.

When looking at the average number of seasons worked, however, the four PICs are very similar; during the first 10 years of the scheme, workers were employed for between 3 and 4 seasons on average. A very small share, under 10 percent of workers from any of the four PICs had worked for eight or more seasons. Thus, while workers might state they intend to continue working under RSE for as long as possible, the data show that many of those who are recruited either cease their employment after a certain period, or do not have their contracts renewed.

We interviewed RSE workers who were having a break or were considering a break from RSE, and ex-workers who had ceased RSE employment altogether. Their decisions were based on a range of reasons, as summarised in Table 15.

Table 15. Decisions to cease RSE employment

Decision to cease participation in RSE	Examples
Decision based on life stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Tongan male who started as an RSE worker when he was 20 years of age completed seven seasons working in NZ before stopping. He said he valued the opportunity to earn a sizeable amount of money when he was young, got married and started raising a family. RSE income helped him to establish a good life in the village. Now his home and his interests are in Tonga.
Decision based on responsibilities as a parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Samoan team leader has completed 10 seasons in NZ. He has been away for much of his youngest child’s life and he is very conscious of this. He plans to work for perhaps another two seasons and then retire from RSE. He wants to spend more time with his wife and teenage children. He said he focuses 100% on his family when he is home. - A Tongan couple have four children. The husband started as an RSE worker in 2011 and worked until 2017, and the wife started in 2013 and is continuing to work. When the eldest of their children (a son) became a teenager, the couple decided that the father would remain at home to look after the children. He said seven months’ work is too long for parents with children. He might consider going back to NZ for three months but is doubtful that his earnings would cover the participation costs.
Decision based on responsibilities at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A ni-Vanuatu worker began working in NZ in 2011. Since then he has stayed at home for two seasons – the first season was for a family event, and the second season was to work on his farming venture (he has built up a sizeable herd of cattle using RSE earnings). - Two ni-Vanuatu workers, who are brothers, alternate their seasons in NZ. While one brother is in NZ as an RSE worker, the other is at home managing the family businesses and supporting the extended family. - A young Samoan male is one of the leaders of the taulelea. While he is working in NZ, the communal work undertaken by the untitled men to support the matai is not being done properly. The backlog of village-based work he has to deal with when he returns home is enough to make him reconsider whether he would go back to NZ if asked to do so.
Decision based on comparison of RSE income with earning potential at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Tongan male worked as an RSE worker for 10 years. He stopped after the 2017/18 season because the earnings were not as good as they were when he first started. He said participation costs have grown more rapidly than returns from work in NZ and his earnings in his last season were not enough to make it worth him going. He said he could make more money out of kava and this was one of the things that helped his decision not to return. - A ni-Vanuatu team leader said that some men are staying back in the village because they can earn reasonable money through cash crops

	(peanuts, watermelon and kava). Kava is currently commanding a high price due to demand from export markets, and because of the devastation caused by Cyclone Pam to kava plantations across south and central Vanuatu. The men's partners may become RSE workers if their children are old enough to manage without their mother.
Decision based on the extent of support available for mothers	- A Tongan ex-worker who worked for 11 seasons as a single and newly married man now has young children. He said he won't return to NZ until someone else stays back to help his wife with the children.
Decision based on worker age or health-related reasons	- A couple of long-standing workers from Samoa and Vanuatu were interviewed who have recently decided to pull out of the scheme because of their age and/or health issues.
Decision based on achievement of financial goals	- A ni-Vanuatu village chief was an RSE worker for four seasons but stopped once his children's school fees were paid. He said RSE is not a job he wants to do unless there are particular things he needs money for.

RSE workers' experiences in NZ

The research questions that were identified for the Pacific stream of the Impact Study are detailed in [Appendix A](#). They include several questions addressing economic and social aspects of the workers' experiences in NZ. This section contains a high-level summary of responses to these questions, bearing in mind points made earlier about workers' concerns about raising any criticisms. The scheme, overall, is viewed very positively by workers, even if they have issues with some aspects of working and living in NZ. The summary of impacts on workers is presented in two sections. The first addresses working conditions and the work environment. The second focuses on selected aspects of workers' experience of living in a New Zealand community for several months, often over successive seasons.

Working in NZ

The words that best sum up the collective experience of seasonal work are: "it is hard work". The eight-twelve hour work days in the field or the packhouse, six and sometimes seven days a week, are physically demanding, especially when performed over periods of several months.

Common questions raised by return RSE workers related primarily to wage rates, and included:

- why return workers aren't paid more than new, inexperienced recruits;
- how workers can maximise their earnings in NZ when they often face periods of downtime due to weather or issues with the crop; and
- how workers can bring concerns about pay or working conditions to the attention of their employer when the current system for raising disputes is via the team leader, and team leaders generally want to avoid confrontations with the employer.

These questions and a number of associated issues raised by workers are discussed briefly below under four headings: employment contracts, terms and conditions; supervisors; team leaders; and raising concerns and problems.

Employment contracts, terms and conditions

Workers interviewed want greater clarity and transparency in employment contracts, especially in relation to:

- deductions.

- how piece rates are calculated.
- being informed of the piece rate before starting work, not at the end of the day when picking is completed.
- overtime rates.
- how pay rates are adjusted for work on public holidays.
- the amount of work that will be available over the term of the employment contract.

Return workers seek recognition of their skill, experience and loyalty to their employer through higher rates of pay. This is a complex issue because for many tasks seasonal workers perform, piece or contract rates are paid and these are standard for all workers (or supposed to be standard for all workers).⁵⁵ Experienced workers earn more by completing more of the tasks more quickly and efficiently than new workers. However, experienced workers felt that “experience and skill” needed recognition over and above the fact they could work faster and more efficiently than workers without their experience.

Workers also want steady work over the season, without which their ability to save is compromised after accommodation, transport and other living costs are deducted. The latter costs are incurred irrespective of the regularity of the work.

- A lack of work has impacts for experienced workers on piece/contract rates who can complete their assigned tasks faster than new workers. Unless there is additional work available for experienced workers, who employers prioritise in their recruitment each year, they are unable to increase their earnings.
- There are occasions when there are quite long gaps between, on the one hand, time of arrival for workers and commencement of work, or, on the other hand, time when the work finishes, and workers leave NZ. Accommodation and living costs have to be paid through these periods when no work is available. An example of this in 2018/19 was a group of kiwifruit packhouse workers who said their contract to pack the crop ended up being two weeks shorter than originally planned because of a shortage of fruit. But their departure from NZ was two weeks later. They had to continue to pay rent and living expenses during the fortnight without any income. Another example was an ex-RSE worker who recounted how picking did not start until three weeks after their arrival in Motueka for the 2015 season. He and his fellow workers had to borrow money from family in NZ and their village to support them through this period.

Weather-related downtime affects workers financially because they continue to have to pay for accommodation and other living expenses when they are not earning any income. Some workers we interviewed said that their employer made sure workers had other work to do on wet days such as weeding. Fijian and I-Kiribati workers who worked in Northland reported that the 2018/19 season was particularly bad for downtime.

Crops that are unready to be picked are another cause of downtime. Some Fijian women workers reported that during the 2018/19 season they only had half days of work for much of the five months

⁵⁵ There were workers who questioned whether RSE workers got the same piece rates as working holiday makers and New Zealanders on casual contracts. There was a sense among some that higher rates were being paid to non-RSE workers to make the work attractive to them. There was no clear evidence of such differentials, but it was a suspicion among RSE workers that indicated a lack of clear understanding of how the piece or contract rate system works.

of their contract (late September to the end of February). This was due to unripe fruit or bad weather. They picked strawberries in the morning and then, if other work was available, moved onto a different job in the afternoon. They said that in the weeks when there was a lot of downtime, they ended up with negative balances on payslips - deductions for accommodation, transport and meals exceeded their income.

Two NZ-based informants raised the following employment-related concerns:

- Employment contracts that change when the worker arrives in NZ.
- Workers might be doing jobs that are considered “equivalent” to their primary role (which is allowed for in the contract), but the equivalent job is much harder work and workers are not paid any more for this.

The practice of some employers averaging out earnings to achieve 30 hours a week at the minimum wage was reported by some informants. Excess hours/earnings from a very productive day are carried over to offset short working days (because of weather or low quantities of fruit ready for picking). This is a strategy frequently used by employers to honour the commitment to pay the minimum wage for 30 hours per week. In the informants’ view, employers should be paying for at least six hours a day at the minimum wage irrespective of the amount of money earned the previous day or week. This would encourage them to find tasks for the workers when it is wet and thus reduce actual unproductive down time. According to the informants, the practice of averaging out hours worked to achieve the required 30 hours a week of paid employment undermines incentives associated with piece rates that encourage higher productivity.

Under NZ Employment law, employees are not eligible for sick leave until they have worked for an employer for a period of six months. This is problematic for RSE workers who often come down with colds or flu within the first few weeks of arriving in NZ as their immune systems adjust to a new climate. Despite not earning any income, sick workers still have to pay for their rent and food. The 103 workers interviewed did not report having any serious medical issues while in NZ, other than an I-Kiribati women worker who had to have gallstone surgery. She was unable to work for three weeks, during which time she continued to have to pay her \$145/week rent and food costs even when she was in hospital.

Some workers reported they are working longer hours than in past seasons. A team leader who works in the Hawke’s Bay described working 13-hour days, starting at 6am and finishing at 7pm six days a week, or six and a half days at the height of the season. Another team leader said the men can work 60+ hour/week, especially when thinning kiwifruit - up to 12 hours/day Monday-Friday, and then a half-day on Saturday. Workers may be asked to work on Sundays, especially at the height of the season. A Samoan worker told of one such request which some men in his team refused to do. The worker wonders whether this may affect their chances of being reselected next season. He reluctantly worked on Sundays but did so because of the sense of obligation the men were made to feel towards their employer.

The workers interviewed had different preferences about their length of time working in NZ. Some workers said they would prefer three-four months’ work so they are not away from their children for too long, although a male worker noted that his earnings over three months might be insufficient to cover his costs. In contrast, women workers from Fiji and Kiribati would like to work for longer than

the current seven/nine months to maximise their earnings. Some single Samoan workers would like to work up to nine months at a time.

Supervisors

Some informants report there can be a disconnect between the supportive attitudes of an RSE employer towards their Pacific workers and the supervisor who is responsible for the workers on a day-to-day basis. In some instances, RSE workers are more skilled and experienced than the NZ supervisors who oversee them. Some NZ supervisors are described as:

- lacking culture-specific competencies required to work with workers from individual Pacific countries.
 - o Tongan informants said that if workers feel a supervisor disrespects their culture, they will not provide their best performance for the supervisor: “If the supervisor is clear and respects the workers’ culture, they will reap the rewards” (Vaiotele et al., 2019).
 - o A NZ-based I-Kiribati informant said that I-Kiribati workers are often shy and don’t like asking questions - they may be too proud to ask, do not want the employer to “think they’re dumb”, don’t want to offend the employer and want to show respect; or are afraid of losing their job.
- having racist attitudes towards RSE workers; favouring NZ or backpacker workers over RSE workers (Vaiotele et al., 2019).
- humiliating RSE workers in front of other workers e.g. sending workers home for the day without pay if their work is not fast enough/not to a certain quality compared to other workers, being threatened with being sent back to the PIC if they do not work harder or faster (Vaiotele et al., 2019).

Team leaders

RSE team leaders are the intermediary between the employer/orchard supervisor and workers – the team leader manages the workers to ensure their productivity for the employer, at the same time as being the workers’ “voice” to ensure they have optimal working and living conditions. Of the team leaders interviewed, most (but not all) of their employers recognise the critical role their team leaders play by compensating them via a higher hourly rate or another financial reward e.g. free accommodation, payment of the full cost of airfares.

The team leader role requires a person who is highly respected by both the employer and workers. In order to have workers’ respect, the team leader is likely to be a person with customary ascribed authority to set rules regarding behaviour and deal with disciplinary issues e.g. a matai (Samoa), an unimane (Kiribati). If this person lacks sufficient English skills to communicate with the employer, a co-team leader will be appointed for this liaison role. This dual leadership approach is seen to work well. If there are mixed-gender groups of workers, there is likely to be both female and male team leaders. The team leader role is described as being more difficult if workers come from different villages/islands, making them a less cohesive group. For example, one of the I-Kiribati team leaders interviewed is responsible for a diverse group of 25 workers from 11 islands.

The interviews with team leaders revealed how challenging and stressful the role of negotiator between the employer and workers can be. For example, two team leaders described situations where supervisors asked them to instruct the workers to only pick fruit of a certain quality. The workers

(working on a piece rate) ignored these instructions and picked as much fruit as they could, much to the supervisors' annoyance. Such situations lead to criticism of the team leader for not managing the workers properly.

Team leaders may act as an advocate for a worker who is at risk of being sent home for a misdemeanour in out-of-work hours. For example, an employer wanted to send a Samoan worker home but the team leader asked the employer to give the worker three weeks' grace to redeem himself by working especially hard on the orchard. The team leader realised the serious implications for the worker's family and possibly his village if he was sent home (the Samoan Government may place restrictions on the family or village when it comes to participating in the RSE scheme during subsequent seasons).

The team leader may also provide pastoral care e.g. managing worker wellbeing, providing spiritual leadership and guidance, and advising workers about practical matters such as saving/remitting income. The support and guidance provided by team leaders is especially important for workers facing personal problems at home e.g. concerns about children, sickness of a family member. The interviews revealed that team leaders play a vital part in maintaining customary values and cultural practices while the workers are living and working together. For example, Samoan team leaders ensure that Fa'a Samoa (Samoan way of life) is practiced through daily prayers and requiring workers to attend church. A Fijian team leader runs nightly prayer meetings for the workers. Maintaining important cultural practices is relatively straightforward when workers from the same PIC are living together. It is more problematic when workers are living alongside workers from other PICs, or are in accommodation shared with backpackers and other itinerant seasonal workers.

Some team leaders impose rules to minimise the risk of workers getting into trouble or absconding (which was an issue in the early days of the scheme) such as:

- banning smoking and consumption of alcohol and kava in workers' accommodation and public places.
- having a nightly curfew e.g. 9.30pm.
- limiting workers' engagement with NZ-based relatives. For example, some team leaders do not allow workers to stay overnight with NZ-based family. Relatives and friends can visit the workers at their accommodation during the day. Other team leaders allow workers to stay with NZ-based family during public holidays.
- limiting contact with local Pacific residents and churches. In some cases, this is to ensure workers save their money to take home rather than contributing to Pacific churches in NZ.
- not permitting males to be in female workers' bedrooms after 10pm.

Team leaders may impose harsh punishments on workers who break the rules. For example, a fine in mutton flaps to the value of NZ\$600 was imposed on a group of Samoan workers when they were caught drinking alcohol. Comments from some workers during interviews suggested the strict application of such rules by some team leaders during the 2018/19 season caused tensions between workers and team leaders.

As noted earlier, many RSE employers rely on their team leaders to recruit workers. This approach ensures team leaders choose people whom they know will work hard and form a cohesive group that will be easy to manage. However, there are potential pitfalls - for example, team leaders can be seen to favour members of their extended family. If a worker lacks productivity or "misbehaves", the team

leader may be held responsible by the employer and may decide not to recruit them for the following season.

None of the team leaders interviewed appear to have had mediation or leadership training to help them in their role. These topics could be added to courses available through Vakameasina and/or included in pre-departure training targeted at team leaders. A team leaders' workshop was held for ni-Vanuatu RSE and SWP team leaders held in Port Vila in 2017. Ni-Vanuatu RSE team leaders have created a support network via a closed Facebook page where they can discuss and seek advice about issues in a confidential manner.⁵⁶

Raising concerns and problems

When workers were asked about what they do (or don't do) if they have a problem or concern about work or accommodation, their team leader was identified as their first point of contact. However, as evidenced in interviews, workers may be reluctant to raise issues of concern for a number of reasons.

- Customary respect for authority may prevent workers raising concerns. They may fear that doing so could be interpreted as not respecting their employer and/or as being disloyal to them.
- Workers may be fearful that they are seen by their employer and/or team leader as "trouble-makers" and may run the risk of not being invited to return the following season.
- Team leaders may be seen to be "in the pocket of the employer", wanting to protect their reputation and position as a successful team leader.
- Some I-Kiribati informants describe their people as tending to be shy and compliant in situations that are unsatisfactory, rather than asking questions or raising issues.
- Some workers said they had been told by their LSU not to make any complaints to their employer because they want the employer to recruit more workers from the PIC.

A Pacific Liaison Officer may be another person who workers call on for advice. Some workers have more direct engagement with their Liaison Officer than others. Liaison Officers are, however, employed by the PIC government which may create a perception of a conflict of interest - workers may be concerned that the Officer will relay their complaint to the LSU, potentially jeopardising their place in the scheme. At times, Liaison Officers hear about workers' issues through members of the local Pacific community, rather than directly from workers.

Living in NZ

Most RSE workers spend the equivalent of at least half of a year in seasonal employment in NZ. Although joint ATRs, whereby workers are employed by more than one employer across a season, have become more common in recent years, the great majority of workers spend their time with one employer in one community.⁵⁷ This stability has some advantages for the employees in the sense that

⁵⁶ Bailey R. (2017). RSE/SWP team leaders' workshop Vanuatu 2017. *In Brief 2017/27*. Canberra: State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Program, Australian National University.

⁵⁷ Of the 8,840 workers from Pacific sources in the RSE worker engagement database who were employed during the 2016/17 financial year, only 1,507 (17.0 percent) had worked on joint ATRs involving different employers. A further 388 (4.4 percent) had worked for the same employer in different regions. All transfers of RSE workers between regions, including intra-company transfers, require formal approval by MBIE and the issuing of joint ATRs.

they only need to get to know about local services and facilities in one community. They also become familiar with, and known to local commercial enterprises and social organisations.

On the other hand, an advantage of moving between work sites in different locations is that RSE workers get an opportunity to compare living and working conditions in different places. This can be especially useful when they want to understand better the different types of accommodation and work-related transport arrangements RSE workers can have, and which are often discussed and compared when they get back to their home communities. There is considerable diversity in the type, quality and cost of accommodation – an issue that was frequently raised by workers and their families during interviews in their homes.

The most prominent issues relating to living in NZ that were mentioned by workers were: accommodation and transport (both of which incur weekly charges deducted from workers’ wages), nutrition and meals (that may also incur weekly charges deducted from workers’ wages), worker health, leisure time and keeping in touch with family at home. These topics are discussed in this section. A common theme in the interviews with return workers was that the cost of living in NZ has increased over the last 12 years of the scheme’s operation, without comparable increases in wage rates other than those linked to minimum wage increases (\$5.70 over the eleven years 2008-2019).⁵⁸ Such cost of living increases, which are mentioned in several places below, are progressively reducing the amount of money available to workers to save or remit to their families (see Part 2).

Pastoral care

RSE employers are required to provide pastoral care to their Pacific workers. This involves the provision of a range of services and facilities, detailed in Table 16.⁵⁹

Table 16. RSE employers’ pastoral care requirements

On arrival	While working	At the end of the contract
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pick workers up from the airport (workers pay for the transport). - Provide a work induction programme to help workers settle in. - Arrange somewhere for workers to live at a fair price – in some regions restrictions on the use of residential housing apply. - Explain how and where workers can get medical insurance, access banking services, and send money home safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport to and from work, paid for by the workers. - Any safety equipment they need to do their job. - Toilets and somewhere to wash their hands. - First aid, shelter and fresh drinking water. - Translations of health and safety instructions. - Opportunities for recreation and religious observance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport to the airport, paid for by the worker.

When asked about the pastoral care they received, workers did not raise any specific concerns or issues. Workers’ responses suggest that they rely on their team leader more than the pastoral care

⁵⁸ In 2008 the minimum adult wage rate before tax was \$12/hour. From 1 April 2019, it is 17.70/hour before tax. Retrieved from <https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/pay/minimum-wage/minimum-wage-rates/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/employ-migrants/hire-a-candidate/employer-criteria/recognised-seasonal-employer/apply-atr>

worker for guidance and support. Return workers who are familiar with the local community help new workers to settle into their new home and routines.

The NZ stream report indicated that there are diverse approaches to pastoral care. One such approach is based on Tongan cultural values whereby *mo'ui fakatokolahi* (living together in a cooperative lifestyle), *fetokoni'aki* (helping each other), *tauhi vā* (maintenance of good relationships), and *fai fatongia* (carrying out cultural obligations) enable workers from different families in Tonga to create a *kāinga* (home) for workers in NZ. Pastoral care was led by a Tongan woman leader who was brought to NZ specifically for this role. This position was discontinued when INZ informed the RSE employer that the role could not be filled by a Tongan national due to the New Zealander first policy (Vaioteletia et al., 2019).

Accommodation

The NZ stream findings indicated significant variation in the standard of RSE accommodation – from older, “tired” buildings with few amenities, to newer purpose-built accommodation with facilities such as a soccer field, volleyball court and large recreation rooms with pool and table tennis tables. There is also a range of types of accommodation – houses in residential neighbourhoods or on orchards, Portacom on orchards, complexes (e.g. ex-motels), and large-scale, purpose-built seasonal worker accommodation sites.⁶⁰ Some of this accommodation is owned by RSE employers, while other properties are rented by employers from private sector landlords. As the number of RSE workers has grown over the 12 years of the scheme’s operation, the increasing demand for low cost worker accommodation has created additional stress on already tight rental markets in some towns.

Since the NZ stream report was completed, the Government has announced restrictions for seven regions regarding the type of accommodation that can be offered to RSE workers to ensure increases in worker numbers do not restrict New Zealanders’ access to residential and rental housing.⁶¹ In these regions RSE workers must not live in a residential house unless:

- the house was included in an ATR approved before 26 September 2019, or
- the RSE employer owns the house, and in the case of Hawke’s Bay and Bay of Plenty, the employer bought it on or before 26 September 2019.

These restrictions are designed to reduce RSE employers’ reliance on the private accommodation market, especially when they are seeking increases in their RSE workforce.

For the 103 RSE workers interviewed, the weekly cost of rent during the 2018/19 season ranged from \$90 (Motueka) to \$145 (Bay of Plenty). The cost of rent usually includes power, water and Wi-Fi. It may also include sheets/towels, a weekly room clean, and a weekly change of linen. Where this is not the case, workers are charged additional costs e.g. one accommodation provider charging \$125/week for rent has additional charges for Wi-Fi (\$2 for 5 hours or \$10/week), and for the use of washing machines (\$4 per load) and driers (\$2 per load).

⁶⁰ All accommodation occupied by RSE workers must be approved by MBIE’s Labour Inspectorate as meeting the RSE Accommodation Standards (INZ, 2017).

⁶¹ The regions are: Northland, Auckland (including upper Auckland), Bay of Plenty, Hawke’s Bay, Marlborough, Nelson/Tasman, and Otago.

A consistent complaint from workers is the cost of rent increases each year. They are not given any explanation for these increases and usually there are no obvious improvements to the accommodation to justify the higher cost.

The most frequent complaint from workers about their accommodation is that there are too many workers for the size of bedrooms (e.g. nine people in one bunkroom) and/or for the number of toilets and bathrooms.⁶² Illnesses spread very quickly under such conditions. According to one group of workers, more than 30 people were sharing three showers for the best part of five months during the 2018/19 season. Other complaints about accommodation included: saggy beds, inadequate heating for the winter months, slow or inadequate amounts of hot water for the number of people using showers, lack of storage space for clothes, and one television shared among 55 people.

Shared accommodation is particularly problematic for RSE workers who work nightshifts. For example, a group of workers who worked the night shift in a kiwifruit packhouse described difficulty sleeping during the day due to noise in a large accommodation complex housing lots of daytime workers.

The coverage and quality of Wi-Fi in workers' accommodation is variable. Connectivity can be particularly problematic when there are multiple people trying to use the network at the same time. Workers are buying additional mobile data for their phones (frequently costing around \$20/week). Some working in Hawke's Bay and Motueka said that their accommodation did not have internet connection. In the case of the Hawke's Bay workers, they were likely to be living in a house that was rented by the employer and the landlord had not installed internet access. In the case of the Motueka workers, it is likely that the remote location of their accommodation meant internet access was not available.⁶³

Village leaders, church ministers and Pacific government officials stress the cultural importance of male and female workers living in separate accommodation. This is discussed further in the section "Women RSE workers".

Transport

Money is deducted from workers' earnings for the cost of transport continuously throughout their employment in New Zealand. There are five major types of transport-related deductions:

- International travel.
- Travel within New Zealand between the airport of arrival and departure, and the place of employment.
- Required travel between the workers' accommodation and different sites of work for the employer.

⁶² The RSE Worker Accommodation Standards (INZ, 2017) specify the following requirements: one bath or shower per seven persons; one toilet per seven persons; bedrooms must have 6 sq.m of floor space for one person, 9 sq.m for two people, for more than two people - 9 sq.m for first two people and 4.5 sq.m for every additional person.

⁶³ Despite a NZ Government initiative to install broadband connection throughout rural NZ, a 2018 review by the Auckland Institute of Technology titled Current State of Broadband Usage of Rural Communities in New Zealand reports there are rural locations without digital connectivity or that have problems with internet speed and connection reliability. Retrieved from https://internetnz.nz/sites/default/files/InternetNZ%20RBUS%20Final%20Report_1%20of%20August%20final.pdf

- Required travel between employers in different regions (or for the same employer operating in different regions) for workers on joint ATRs; and
- Discretionary travel for non-work-related reasons during out-of-work hours.

There are two areas of transport costs where clarification and direction are required from MBIE regarding acceptable RSE employer practice and charges.

The first is the cost associated with the daily movement of workers between their accommodation sites and their various work sites which was initially covered by many employers, but this is not common now. A standard weekly fee is charged to workers for such transport, usually provided in company-owned minibuses, or provided by third-party providers appointed by the employer. As noted above, weekly deductions for intra-company transport range from \$10 to \$40 a week per worker (this was also noted in the NZ stream report). While most workers appreciated there were costs involved in getting them from their accommodation to their work sites, they found it difficult to understand how it cost the employer over \$400 a week to transport 10 of them in a minibus relatively short distances to and from work. They did not understand the way the costs were estimated and why they could vary from \$10 a week to \$40 a week.

The second relates to transport costs between regions (sometimes involving inter-island travel) for workers on joint ATRs. At present these are charged directly to the worker but there was a question raised in interviews about whether the employers should be paying these costs since the movement of workers between regions was to address their labour needs; it was not something the workers requested. This should not be interpreted as dissatisfaction with the joint ATR arrangements that often allow workers' contracts to be extended – most workers wanted the opportunity to spend more time in seasonal employment in NZ. However, there continues to be ambiguity regarding who should bear the cost of transport between different places of employment - the employer who needs the labour and whose productivity benefits from the labour transfer; or the worker who has already paid the cost of getting to and from the original employment site.

Food and nutrition

During their time in NZ, most workers are required to be self-sufficient, buying and cooking their own food in facilities provided in their accommodation. The amounts of money workers spend on food vary. Tongan workers interviewed who buy their own food appear to spend more than workers from other PICs: Tongan workers' weekly spend was \$50-\$100, whereas Samoan and ni-Vanuatu workers' weekly spend was \$20-\$50/week.^{64 65} Tongan, Samoan, Fijian and I-Kiribati workers are more likely to pool their money for food purchases and to cook in groups than ni-Vanuatu workers.

Many informants interviewed in the NZ stream are concerned about the small amount of money workers are spending on food and the consequences for workers' nutrition and health. They are also mindful of workers' tiredness at the end of a long day that may make them less inclined to cook a nutritious meal. Recognising the impact of poor nutrition on worker health, energy levels and

⁶⁴ The University of Otago undertakes annual research on weekly food costs in NZ's four main cities. In 2018, the weekly cost of a *basic diet* for males was \$67-\$72, and for females \$57-\$61. The weekly cost for a moderate diet was \$88-\$93 for males, and \$75-\$78 for females.

Retrieved from <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/handle/10523/8056>

⁶⁵ The cost of food in rural locations (e.g. Central Otago, Motueka) is likely to be higher than in the main cities and towns.

productivity, some RSE employers now provide workers with one or more daily meals (usually dinner) five-six days a week and the cost of the meals is deducted from the workers' wages.⁶⁶ This is a new type of deduction for workers, and the meals are not popular with some who have wanted to opt-out of them (for one or more of the following reasons). Employers have responded by making the meal(s) a condition of employment.

- The cost of the meals.⁶⁷
- The quality of the meals e.g. women workers complain there is too much fried food, and insufficient vegetables and rice.
- The monotony of the meals.⁶⁸
- Food is not cooked the way workers are accustomed to at home.
- Individual Pacific countries have different dietary preferences. This is particularly problematic when workers from a number of PICs share the same accommodation.

Some I-Kiribati women workers, who had initially lived in accommodation that provided meals and then moved to another accommodation site which required them to cater for themselves, acknowledged that prepared meals, although expensive, have advantages. At the second site they were too tired to prepare a nutritious meal after a long day of work, relying instead on quick meals such as instant noodles.

Worker health

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) requires workers to have health insurance while they are in NZ. The weekly cost is up to NZ\$17 (depending on the insurance company and level of medical cover) and the premium is deducted from workers' wages.

In the most recent RSE Survey (2019), thirty-three percent of the 102 RSE employers who responded reported that their workers arrived in NZ for the 2018/19 season with health issues.⁶⁹ The most common issues were dental problems and boils (each of these conditions were reported by around 50% of employers); and skin rashes/allergies and existing injuries (each of these conditions were reported by around 25% of employers).

A frequent theme raised by workers is their difficulty adjusting to the cold weather in NZ. As noted above, workers are particularly prone to colds and flu in the first few weeks. Other health issues mentioned by workers are boils, headaches (caused by tiredness and/or dehydration), and backache (caused by bending down to pick berries and/or standing for long periods in the packhouse). Apart from one worker who had to have gallstone surgery, none of the workers interviewed reported having major health issues. The main complaints workers made use of their "Orbit card" or medical services to address were colds, headaches and the flu.

⁶⁶ In some cases, employers are providing meals because the cooking facilities at the accommodation site are inadequate for the number of workers.

⁶⁷ The New Zealand phase of the study suggested that the cost of a dinner was \$8-\$11.

⁶⁸ A weekly dinner menu cited by workers costing \$55/week: Monday – barbecue (sausages and chops) (3 pieces per person); Tuesday - fish and chips; Wednesday - barbecue (sausages and chops); Thursday - a soupy stew (vegetables and mutton); Friday – barbecue (sausages and chops).

⁶⁹ RSE employers are surveyed annually by Research NZ on behalf of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Retrieved from <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/research-and-statistics/research-reports/recognised-seasonal-employer-rse-scheme>

A NZ-based Pacific Liaison Officer has observed increasing rates of depression among workers over the 12 years that the scheme has been operating. Employers that have workers who won't get out of bed in the morning have contacted the Liaison Officer seeking help. A visit to the doctor has been unable to identify any physically-related medical reason for the worker's state.⁷⁰

The extent of the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among single and married RSE workers is not known. Kerslake (2019) reports an increase in chlamydia infections in one of the district hospitals on Savai'i between 2012 and 2016.⁷¹ During the NZ stream, we visited some medical practices to find out about the types of health conditions for which RSE workers are seeking treatment. Workers with STIs are prescribed a course of antibiotics (all of the medication must be taken for it to be effective). Some medical staff were concerned about workers stopping the medication early. Kerslake (2019) maintains STIs arising from worker infidelity and/or promiscuity are likely to remain hidden because of cultural sanctions and fear of negative consequences for the worker which may extend to penalties for their entire village. To mitigate the risk to public health, Kerslake (2019) suggests returning workers should be required to complete a confidential questionnaire on sexual behaviour and incidence of STIs.

A health-related issue that is yet to be investigated and addressed by the NZ Government is that of workers who return home with an injury suffered in the course of seasonal employment (e.g. a back injury, repetitive strain injury) that impairs their ability to work at home (Bailey, 2019b).⁷²

Leisure time

Workers spend their day off (usually Sunday but sometimes Saturday for Seventh Day Adventists) attending church and resting from physically demanding work. Workers say they don't want more time off work – they want to keep busy so they can earn as much money as possible while they are in New Zealand. Keeping active also means they will not think so much about their families and become homesick. One consequence of longer working hours is that workers do not have time in the evenings to play sport or attend Vakameasina classes.

Workers' use of kava is variable. The findings of the NZ stream revealed that some RSE employers/accommodation providers prohibit kava use on their accommodation site, while others are more flexible about its use providing it does not impede workers' productivity the following day.

⁷⁰ Bailey (2020) argues workers are not adequately supported with mental health problems such as stress and depression. Workers often feel isolated and struggle with being absent from home and pressure to earn enough to repay migration costs and fulfil financial obligations to family. Workers' daily devotions with co-workers and communication with family at home are highlighted as important ways to support workers' mental wellbeing while working in NZ/Australia (Bailey, R. (2020). Health care management in Australia's and New Zealand's seasonal worker schemes. Working Paper 2020/2. Canberra: Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University).

⁷¹ There was a rise in the rate of STIs among wives of RSE workers when they presented themselves at the clinic for antenatal and health checks.

⁷² Bailey, R. (2019b). *New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) 10-year longitudinal case study*. Canberra: Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University.

Some workers have NZ-based family. If their family lives locally, workers may visit them during their days off.⁷³ Workers may also visit members of the church they attend. A team leader said he discourages his male team from interacting with the [named PIC] locals to minimise the risk of bad behaviour (especially drinking) and absconding. Rather than the men attending the local Pacific church, the team leader runs prayer services to avoid workers being pressured to give money to the church in NZ.

For the majority of workers interviewed, the only interaction they have with locals outside of work is through attending church on Sundays and participating in other church-related activities. Workers tend to socialise among themselves, including playing sport. There are exceptions – Samoan workers in Hawke’s Bay have played in a local volleyball team, and Tongan workers in Motueka have played in local rugby teams.

Keeping in contact with family at home

A consistent theme expressed by workers is they miss family at home, especially their children. Homesickness is heightened on family days such as Christmas, Easter Sunday, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, White Sunday (Samoa and Tonga), Children’s Day and Independence Day (Vanuatu). The most challenging time for workers is during the cyclone season (November to April) when there is always a risk that contact with loved ones could be disrupted.

Bailey (2019a) describes the difficulties experienced by ni-Vanuatu workers in the early days of the RSE scheme to keep in contact with their families while they were in NZ. The development of digital technology in Pacific countries has transformed communication between workers and their families. Regular phone/video calls with family now go some way to easing workers’ homesickness. Further, she notes that digital technology allows workers to be involved in family and community decision-making, helping them to feel connected while they are away.⁷⁴ However, not all locations in the Pacific have mobile coverage. For example, members of Fijian workers’ families visited in some inland villages on Vanua Levu have to walk to the main road to get a mobile signal.

As noted above, poor (or no) connectivity in workers’ accommodation can make contact difficult. In such cases, workers buy NZ mobile plans which are expensive given their level of earnings e.g. a NZ\$20/week mobile plan over a seven-month period costs NZ\$560.⁷⁵ Some workers cover the costs of Pacific-based mobile plans and their family contacts them because it is cheaper than the worker ringing from NZ. Fijian workers interviewed spend NZ\$30-\$40/week topping up the phone of their key

⁷³ In the early days of the RSE scheme, a deliberate effort was made by RSE employers and officials to encourage RSE workers to be separated from New Zealand-based Pacific communities. This was done to reduce the potential for workers to breach their visas by abandoning their RSE workplace to seek employment in another industry or location. The findings from the NZ stream indicate that NZ Pacific communities now have a better understanding of the visa conditions of RSE workers that restricts them to a particular employer and location, and are less likely to encourage them to leave their RSE employment.

⁷⁴ In their work on Filipino and Indonesian migrant families, Graham et al. (2012) note that the growing use of mobile phones and Skype on computers has revolutionised the way families maintain contact, increasing opportunities for active parenting from a distance and enabling migrant parents to maintain a presence in their children’s everyday lives (Graham, E., Jordan, L., Yeoh, B., Lam, T., Asis, M. & Su-Kamdi (2012). *Transnational families and the family nexus: Perspectives of Indonesian and Filipino children left behind by migrant parent(s)*. *Environment and Planning A*, 44(4): 793–815).

⁷⁵ An RSE worker receiving the minimum hourly rate (currently \$17.70/hour before tax) would need to work more than four days to cover this cost.

contact at home. Workers also talked about visiting local shops (e.g. The Warehouse) to use their free Wi-Fi service.

While digital technology has improved communication between workers and their family, it has created new problems. The widespread use of mobile phones and social media across the Pacific has made it very easy for (mis)information to be spread at home about extra-marital relationships among workers in NZ. When an accident involving RSE workers occurs in NZ, news about it can be spread at home via social media before the affected families are informed.

The sickness or death of a family member is a particularly hard time for workers in NZ, requiring them to decide whether to return home or remain in NZ. The difficulty of such decision-making is heightened by the importance Pacific cultures place on mourning, showing respect to the deceased person and supporting the bereaved. This dilemma was described by a Samoan worker who decided not to return home for his father-in-law's funeral, a decision which he now regrets because of the impact his absence has had on family relationships. His employer allowed him to return home but he decided to stay and send money instead. He felt pressured to stay because of the amount of work on the orchard and now feels he should have got more support from his team leader to return.

When informants were asked about how the RSE scheme could be improved, the most frequent request was for the current single-entry visa to be replaced by a multi-entry visa. This would allow RSE workers to return home for funerals and other family-related emergencies without having to go through the time-consuming and expensive process of having to apply and pay for another visa. Some workers also want the option of returning home for Christmas if there is no work available, or for their family to be able to visit them in NZ over the Christmas period.

Women's participation in the RSE scheme

An important, but as yet unexamined, component of the RSE workforce is the women who come to NZ every year as workers. These women perform multiple roles, often undertaking specialised tasks on the orchard/vineyard (e.g. grafting different varieties onto rootstock)⁷⁶ as well as providing significant support to others in informal pastoral care roles.

Over the past five years (2014/15-2018/19) the number of Pacific women arriving on RSE visas has stayed roughly the same at approximately 1,000 women. As a percentage, however, women's rate of participation has dropped as the total number of Pacific RSE arrivals has gone up. In 2018/19 women accounted for 9.8 percent of RSE worker arrivals compared with 13.5 percent in 2014/15. Within the overall female participation rate, there are variations by Pacific country. Kiribati (36%), Solomon Islands (28%) and Tuvalu (22%) have the highest female participate rates (as a percentage of the total number of RSE arrivals from each country), while Samoa (4%) has the lowest. In terms of absolute numbers, the largest numbers of women are recruited from Vanuatu (a total of 419 in 2018/19).

There are recognised barriers to the participation of women in seasonal work, both from the Pacific-end and NZ-end (discussed below). MBIE has made efforts over the last decade to support the

⁷⁶ An RSE that runs a fruit tree nursery employs women for summer work nurturing the rootstock, which includes grafting. The work requires very good hand-eye coordination and attention to detail, as well as good dexterity. In the employers' view, women are better suited to this work than men.

engagement of Pacific Island women in the scheme,⁷⁷ and the Ministry is currently exploring further ways of enhancing temporary employment opportunities for women in NZ.⁷⁸

We interviewed 39 female RSE workers, 28 of whom have dependent children. Their children ranged from pre-school (six mothers had one or more children under five years of age) to young adults attending university. The women have performed a variety of tasks in NZ – packhouse work, picking berries and other ground cover crops, and thinning kiwifruit and lemons. The work in the packhouse involved standing for shifts of up to 10.5 hours for seven days a week at the height of the season. This was described as physically demanding, particularly for night shift workers.

Attributes of women RSE workers and their income from seasonal work

Women RSE workers should not be thought of as substitutes for male workers. Women offer attributes different to those of male workers. Informants describe them as:

- forming more cohesive groups than men (despite the women being from different islands or PICs)
- being easier to manage e.g. being less likely to exhibit drunken or disorderly behaviour as is the case with some male workers.
- being very focused on their financial goals.

These attributes were confirmed by accommodation and pastoral care informants interviewed during the NZ stream.

Informants in Vanuatu and Fiji described seasonal work as being an attractive option for rural women given their limited earning opportunities in the village and/or lack of access to customary land. The amount and consistency of income from seasonal work is impossible for rural women to achieve at home.

Seasonal work is particularly beneficial for women who are not currently partnered and may have no/limited other income sources. This is especially the case for women who:

- have been widowed. Among the women workers interviewed, there were young widows with school age children who relied on seasonal income for the family's daily living costs, and older widows with secondary school-age children attending schools away from home who needed income for education costs.
- are single parents. There were a number of single mothers among the women interviewed. If the woman was working in NZ at the time of our visit to the village, they nominated a member of their household to be interviewed. In all cases, the women workers had school-aged children who were being looked after by a maternal grandparent or aunt.

A significant motivator for mothers and grandmothers to work in RSE/SWP is to pay the school/university fees and school uniforms for their children/grandchildren. In rural locations and/or outer islands, children attending secondary school may need to re-locate, increasing the cost of secondary education (Bailey, 2019a).

⁷⁷ For example, when Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) was introduced in 2009, MBIE undertook facilitated recruitment drives to Kiribati and Tuvalu, accompanying a small number of RSE employers to both countries to assist with the recruitment of small groups of women workers.

⁷⁸ MBIE (2018). Draft Pacific women and labour mobility strategy. Unpublished report. Wellington: MBIE.

Some informants expressed the view that women are particularly goal-orientated regarding use of their RSE earnings. For example, the 13 Fijian women workers interviewed were focused on earning money to fund home-based income generating ventures such as a shop, a boat and outdoor motor (to hire out), beehives, a micro-finance venture, a rental property in town, and to establish new or developing existing kava plantations.

Costs of seasonal work for women

Bailey (2019a) notes that childcare costs are overlooked in discussions about the cost of participation for families where both parents are seasonal workers. Couples need to ensure that family members looking after their children have adequate means to feed and care for their children in their absence. In her discussions with ni-Vanuatu workers, between NZ\$950-NZ\$1400 (for periods of between five-seven months) was given to family members for childcare before the parents' departure for NZ.

The most frequent comment from mothers is that they miss their children while working in NZ. They describe this as a sacrifice they are prepared to make in order to earn income for school fees and to provide a better standard of living for their family. In Kiribati in particular, some mothers may not get to see their children when they return home. This occurs when children are being cared for by grandparents on distant islands involving lengthy and expensive sea travel such as Kiritimati (Christmas Island), Tabuaeran (Fanning Island) and Teraina (Washington Island) in the Northern Line Islands in Kiribati.

Personal issues

A NZ-based Pacific Liaison Officer said that the number of male workers involved in out-of-work incidents suggests that male workers are the more challenging group. Such incidents however usually involve relatively minor issues, such as drunken behaviour. In the Liaison Officer's experience, issues experienced by women workers are likely to be more complex and the women are more likely to keep such issues to themselves, for example, concerns about their children or problems in their extended family. This is illustrated in a woman team leader's comments about one of her team whose husband is looking after their four children (the grandparents are deceased). The husband is described as constantly seeking her advice in their daily phone calls which is very distracting for the worker.

Another example of personal issues, cited by RSE employers in the NZ stream, is pregnancy. Some RSE workers become pregnant while in NZ and depart early to have their baby at home. In a few instances, babies have arrived early while the mother is still in NZ.

During the 2018/19 season, groups of I-Kiribati and Fijian women were living in a complex with male workers which required them to share a shower block. The women were uneasy about using the showers late at night or before others got up in the morning unless they had a companion with them.

Barriers to women's participation in seasonal labour mobility

Informants largely support seasonal work opportunities for women in principle. Reservations were expressed, however, about mothers of young children working offshore because of adverse impacts on their children's wellbeing. While aunts, grandparents and extended family members may take over childcare responsibilities, the general view is that children need their mothers at home especially during their younger years. Other Pacific-end barriers include the following.

- *Samoa and Vanuatu*: Traditional customary roles are for the husband to be the breadwinner and the wife to perform childcare and household duties.
- *Samoa*: Women officials advised that while gender roles in Samoa are starting to shift, seasonal work is considered more suitable for men. There is a preference for mothers to stay at home to raise their families and perform household duties, including agricultural work. If the NZ Government decided to increase the number of women seasonal workers, selection would have to focus on single women without children. These women could support their parents and extended family, for example, by sending money home for school fees for nieces and nephews. One official noted the risk of single women becoming pregnant while in NZ.
- *Tonga*: Tongan cultural norms preclude women doing hard, physical work in the garden or plantation (unlike women in Melanesia). A Tongan official advised that the Government strongly discourages women with children under five years from participating in seasonal work.⁷⁹
- *Vanuatu*: In some parts of Vanuatu (e.g. the Lamien Bay area) chiefs will only endorse women for seasonal work if their children are over six years of age.⁸⁰ Six is the age when primary education often begins.
- *Fiji*: One Fijian team leader prefers to select women for seasonal work who have school-age children; not those with very young children. Raising very young children is a significant burden on husbands at home, and can lead to women being distracted during their time in NZ because of the constant need for their advice and input on child care issues.

There are also barriers at the NZ-end to women's participation. The NZ Ministry of Social Development (MSD) places restrictions on the employment of seasonal worker women in the packhouse – these are jobs primarily for New Zealand workers. This restriction, coupled with a common stereotype among employers of work in the field being better suited to men than women, has made it difficult to achieve higher participation rates for women in the scheme.

Changes in RSE employment practices arising from the previous National Government's directive that Pacific RSE workers should have work available for the entire seven-month period of the LPV (or nine months for workers from Kiribati and Tuvalu) have negatively impacted on employment of women workers. Some employers, who had women working in the packhouse on a three- or four-month contract, now favour men for packhouse work because they can stay on after the packing season and do winter pruning. It has also led to employers making more use of joint ATRS with other RSE employers. These developments are reducing opportunities for women workers who may only want to work in NZ for three to four months to minimise their absence from children and home.

Further, there is a preference among Pacific cultures for women and men RSE workers to be accommodated in separate accommodation sites. From an accommodation management point of view, it is easier for employers to employ either women or male workers, rather than a combination of genders.

⁷⁹ Also see Chattier, P. (2019). Beyond development impact: Gender and care in the Pacific Seasonal Worker Programme. *Gender & Development*, 27(1): 49-65.

⁸⁰ The Vanuatu Government requires people wishing to be a seasonal worker to have a letter of endorsement from their village chief.

RSE workers: Impact summary

In the following impact summary tables one positive impact, focusing on women’s participation in seasonal work, and two negative, unintended impacts are presented. The negative impacts relate to variable employment practices by some RSE employers, along with a lack of clarity around contract rates, creating confusion for some workers, and workers’ wage rates not keeping pace with rising living costs in NZ.

Each of these impacts is assessed in terms of the contribution that the scheme makes to the observed impact. External factors that influence the extent of the observed impact are identified, and any potential rival explanations are presented.

POSITIVE INTENDED IMPACTS	
<i>Positive economic impacts for women RSE workers</i>	
How RSE contributes to the impact	Participation in RSE is providing small numbers of rural women with substantial income earning opportunities which are otherwise unavailable to them in villages. Income from seasonal work is particularly beneficial for women who are not currently partnered (e.g. widows, single parents) who may have limited or no other income sources. The income earned from seasonal work is far in excess of other income earning ventures for women, such as making of mats and handicrafts, and cash cropping (with the exception of kava).
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The availability of RSE work opportunities for women. - Cultural norms in PICs regarding women’s role in the household and/or village (e.g. women’s roles as mothers and carers) and the appropriateness of seasonal work for women.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	N.A.

NEGATIVE UNINTENDED IMPACTS	
<i>Variable employment practices are negatively impacting on some RSE workers</i>	
How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>Variable employment practices by some RSE employers, together with a lack of clarity about the way contract rates and deductions are determined, create confusion and concern for some RSE workers about their employment conditions and calculation of earnings.</p> <p>Issues associated with employment practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of a standardised, clear and transparent employment contract. ○ Lack of clarity around piece and overtime rates. ○ Lack of steady work available over the period of employment (note: this does not refer to downtime caused by bad weather). ○ Some employers are averaging out earnings to achieve 30 hours/week at the minimum wage.⁸¹ ○ Some return workers are not recognised for their skill and experience through a pay rate that is higher than a first-year worker.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSE worker/team leader reluctance to seek clarification about issues of concern with their supervisor/employer out of respect for authority and/or for fear that they will not be re-employed the following season.

⁸¹ When averaging out earnings to achieve 30 hours/week at the minimum wage, excess hours/earnings from a very productive day are carried over to offset short working days due to bad weather or fruit not ready for picking, thereby meeting the requirement to pay the minimum wage for 30 hours per week.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some team leaders are perceived by workers as being aligned to the employer and therefore less likely to pursue workers' issues of concern with the employer. - The terms of the RSE LPV mean that RSE workers are 'captive' employees who are unable to withhold/withdraw their labour in protest. - Lack of union participation by RSE workers.⁸² - Limited time and resourcing available to Pacific Liaison Officers to assist workers with their issues of concern.⁸³ - Inadequate briefing about contract conditions and employment expectations during pre-departure training.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	N.A.
<i>RSE wage rates not keeping pace with rising costs for workers in NZ</i>	
How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>Over the twelve years of the scheme's operation, workers' accommodation and transport costs have increased without any comparable increase in wage rates other than those linked to minimum wage increases. Rising costs impact negatively on the amount of income workers have available to remit/save.</p> <p>Another area of significant cost for workers is keeping in touch with family at home which is expensive when calculated over the period they are in NZ, given their low wage rates.</p>
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cost of accommodation and transport differs across RSE employers/private accommodation providers/private transport providers (and, for accommodation, by region). - RSE workers' accommodation costs are driven by factors in the local lower quintile rental property market, specifically, the level of demand and supply, and lower quintile residential rent levels. - Whether it is cheaper to buy a PIC-based digital data plan for the family to ring the worker, or a NZ plan for the worker to contact the family.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The demand for low cost housing for increasing numbers of RSE workers has coincided with a tightening property market and decreasing rental and residential housing affordability in the main centres and regional NZ.

⁸² See NZ stream report pp.55, 60.

⁸³ See NZ stream report p.56

Part 3. Social and economic impacts for RSE worker families

Part 3 of the report examines some of the social and economic impacts of the RSE on participating families. Evidence from the Pacific stream indicates that the scheme is making a direct contribution to the economic wellbeing of participating households. This section begins with a discussion of some of the economic dimensions of seasonal work, including how households prioritise the use of RSE earnings, and some of the options for productive investment in village-based economies. Workers' acquisition of skills during their time in NZ is a positive impact of RSE participation that is linked to both economic and social dimensions of seasonal work. Skills learning and the transferability of skills to the home environment are discussed on pp.86-88.

For workers and their families there are trade-offs between the financial benefits of participation in seasonal work and the social costs. There are changes to traditional allocations of work, gender roles, and family dynamics as families adjust to the relatively lengthy absences of seasonal workers each year, and look to replace the absent worker's contribution in the household.⁸⁴ At the household level the social impacts are influenced by the gender of who migrates and who remains at home.⁸⁵ Some of the issues for female partners of RSE workers, and children coping with the absence of a seasonal worker parent(s), are then discussed (pp.88-94). At the end of Part 3, the key positive and negative impacts for RSE worker families are presented in three [impact summary tables](#).

Improvements in living standards among RSE households and participating communities

Across all five PICs, there is consensus among informants that the RSE scheme makes a direct contribution to the economic security of participating households and supports improvements in living standards. Money earned through seasonal work is now factored into the lives of many families, and the reliability of this source of income is a 'pull' factor for workers to make repeated returns to NZ. Informants reported improvements in diet and health linked with a regular source of income that can be used to purchase a wider variety of goods, better access to medical care as families can afford to pay for a private doctor (Samoa), better educational attainment for children as families can afford to pay children's school fees, improved standards of housing including access to water and power, better access to technology (e.g. computers and mobile phones), the ability to purchase vehicles and associated improvements in transport (especially Tonga), and being able to make greater contributions to the church and to family and community events. These factors combined contribute to overall improvements in living standards.

RSE income is not the sole contributor to improvements in living standards in rural villages – the majority of families have access to other sources of income. In Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, high prices for cash crops such as kava and vanilla, and for cattle, are contributing to enhanced living standards for households in rural communities that have good access to land and can engage in large-

⁸⁴ Rohorua, H., Gibson, J., McKenzie, D. & Martinez, P.G. (2009).

⁸⁵ There is a large literature on the family 'left-behind'. In Asia, research has focused on the gendered nature of migration and the impacts on those at home including spouses, children, parents and extended family members that may be involved in caregiving arrangements. See Graham et al. (2012) for a review of recent literature. In the Pacific, since the 2000s Pacific scholars have paid increasing attention to emerging trends of feminised migration as growing numbers of PIC women make autonomous decisions to take up opportunities for work and study overseas. See Cangiano, A. & Torre, A. (2016). Migration, gender and politics of development in Pacific Islands: An introduction. *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, 36(1): 5-20.

scale agricultural production. The current boom in kava or 'green gold', especially, makes it difficult to unpack the contribution of RSE in those communities where kava is an important agricultural crop.⁸⁶ Participation in the RSE scheme, however, provides two things: 1) a regular, reliable source of income that can be used to meet ongoing costs (e.g. school fees); and 2) a sizeable amount of money each season that can be put towards larger-scale projects, such as home improvements. These bigger projects cannot easily be achieved through other sources of income such as cash cropping.

The contribution that RSE income makes to improved living standards is highly variable across PICs and depends on a range of factors including: household assets, access to land, and other economic activities that families are engaged in. In Ha'alaufuli (Tonga), for instance, many households are engaged in commercial-scale agriculture. Whereas in Papa Palauli (Samoa) - a relatively low-income village with limited opportunities for agricultural development - RSE participation makes a more obvious contribution to improvements in economic wellbeing. In more stratified societies, such as Tonga and Samoa, the impacts of RSE income on living standards are most visible among lower socio-economic groups, due in part to the initial selection focus on poorer, rural areas. In Vanuatu, the scheme's contribution to living standards is visible across all levels of society. Again, this is due in part to early selection processes that did not adopt a pro-poor focus, but instead allowed those in higher socio-economic groups (i.e. those who had previously held wage employment) to participate in the scheme.⁸⁷

The selective nature of RSE employment opportunities, and the associated access to RSE income, has the perverse effect of also contributing to economic inequalities at the village level, as some families participate repeatedly in the scheme and experience improvements in economic wellbeing, while other households fail to gain access to seasonal work.

Money earned and saved in NZ: how much can be taken home?

While there is evidence that RSE income is making a positive contribution to families' economic wellbeing, there are significant financial costs involved for participating households. Sending migrants abroad is an expensive endeavour, particularly for lower-skilled workers. With reference to Asia, Hugo (2008, p.42) notes that, "at every stage of the process – recruitment, preparation to travel to the destination, in transit to the destination, at the destination and upon return to the home country – migrant workers are subject to making payments for services and to gatekeepers".⁸⁸ Despite migrants and their families viewing the costs of migration as a necessity to improve their livelihoods, every season RSE workers have to repay loans first (whether loans provided by RSE employers, the church,

⁸⁶ German Courts implemented a ban on kava imports to European markets in 2002 due to concerns regarding the potential negative health effects of kava on the body (especially linked to liver toxicity). The German ban was lifted in 2015 due to lack of scientific evidence on kava's negative effects, by default lifting the associated ban on imports to America, Australia and NZ. Imports of kava to Australia for commercial purposes are prohibited currently because of concerns about potential negative side-effects, especially addiction, on Aboriginal communities. Kava bars are part of the retail landscape in South Tarawa now and have recently begun opening in Auckland.

⁸⁷ McKenzie, D., Martinez, P.G. & Winters, L.A. (2008). Who is coming from Vanuatu under the new Recognised Seasonal Employer programme? *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 23(3): 205-228.

⁸⁸ Hugo, G. (2008). Demographic change and international labour mobility in Asia-Pacific – implications for business and regional economic integration: Synthesis. In G. Hugo & S. Young (Eds.) *Labour mobility in the Asia-Pacific region. Dynamics, issues and a new APEC agenda. A survey and analyses of governance challenges on labour migration for APEC economies* (pp. 1-62). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) Publishing.

or the PIC government), before they can start saving their earnings, and it can take repeated absences over several seasons before households are in the financial position to make other productive investments.

Upfront costs of participation in RSE

A detailed examination of the full costs of mobility for RSE workers - internal transport and administrative costs pre-departure, workers' living costs while in NZ, and their costs on return – is out of scope for this study. An estimate of costs associated with pre-departure, including the costs of visas, medicals and police checks were provided by LSU staff in the five PICs. There is quite a lot of variation in costs depending on whether recruits need to apply for a new passport (and the processing time), the extent of the medical check and the police clearance (ranging from NZ\$3.60 in Tonga up to \$67 in Fiji with same-day processing). Rough estimates can, however, be provided. Pre-departure costs (in NZ\$) are lowest for Tongan workers; costs for a new passport, medical check and x-ray, police clearance and RSE visa average around \$420. I-Kiribati workers' costs average around \$470, while Samoan workers (approx. \$530) and Fijian workers (approx. \$600) pay more. The costs are highest for the ni-Vanuatu workers, up to \$830 if the worker applies for a new passport (with a three-day processing time), and a full medical. These costs exclude workers' internal transport costs to get to the main urban centre in each PIC for pre-departure training, costs for workers while they remain in town until their departure, and workers' half share of the airfare to New Zealand.

For I-Kiribati workers, the full pre-departure costs are especially high given the country's distance from NZ and the current arrangement whereby I-Kiribati workers must pay their full airfare to Fiji, and then the half share of the airfare from Nadi to Auckland. Airfares alone may cost I-Kiribati workers close to NZ\$2,000. I-Kiribati workers are able to access loans from the Kiribati Government to cover their upfront costs. These loans must be repaid first, ahead of saving and sending money home. For some I-Kiribati women who were interviewed, the amounts they earn in NZ each season are only sufficient to pay off their loans and meet daily living costs in South Tarawa. However, their RSE earnings still far outweigh what the women can earn in South Tarawa, and the opportunity to work in NZ is highly valued.

Earnings in New Zealand

When discussing the economic benefits of participating in RSE for workers and families, the figures that are most often cited by industry and government are workers' gross wages. This is misleading because gross incomes do not take into account money that is deducted for tax and employer deductions.⁸⁹ A more accurate picture of the amounts of money workers have available to save and send home comes from workers' net incomes after tax, employer deductions, and living costs have been accounted for.

⁸⁹ The incomes of all RSE seasonal workers are subject to a standard tax rate of 11.94 percent. Most workers also have to pay for a share of the costs of international airfares to get them to and from NZ (which varies depending on where the worker is coming from), medical insurance premium, a weekly charge for accommodation on or off the orchard, and a contribution towards the costs of transport associated with their daily work.

Data from the 2014/15 and 2016 RSE Remittance Surveys illustrate this point.⁹⁰ Data on the gross earnings, deductions and net earnings for 237 workers employed for 21 or 22 weeks (approximately five months) in the 2014/15 and 2016 seasons were obtained from five RSEs. There were three groups of workers: 100 Samoans and 60 Tongans picking apples in Hawke's Bay over the 2014/15 season; and 77 ni-Vanuatu workers picking kiwifruit and/or pruning grapes in the 2016 season. Average gross incomes for the three groups ranged from \$15,842 (ni-Vanuatu) up to around \$20,000 for the Samoans and Tongans. Tax and employer deductions averaged \$6,148 across the three groups.

Once these deductions were accounted for, the ni-Vanuatu workers had an average of \$9,773 left after tax and employer deductions, the equivalent of around 60 percent of their gross incomes. The Tongans and Samoans had net incomes of \$14,303 and \$15,200 respectively, equating to around 70 percent of their gross incomes. In other words, the Samoans and Tongans lost around 30 percent of their gross earnings to tax and employer deductions, while the ni-Vanuatu workers lost more – close to 40 percent of their gross earnings went on tax and deductions.

More recent data on the earnings of a group of 111 ni-Vanuatu and Samoan workers employed picking apples, and picking and packing kiwifruit during the 2017/18 season, produces similar findings. The group were split roughly 50/50 – 50 percent were new recruits in their first year, while the other 50 percent were experienced workers who had been employed for five or more seasons. Once money is deducted for tax, employer deductions and a living allowance for some food and general expenses of around \$100 month (\$25 per week), workers are left with a 'residual income'. For the 57 experienced workers, their residual incomes averaged around \$10,700. The average residual income for the 54 new recruits was 22 percent lower at \$8,350. This is the money that workers have available to them for saving and to send home.

Government informants in Samoa and Vanuatu stressed the importance of involving family members in the pre-departure training to help manage expectations around earnings and remittances. This is especially important for families of new recruits who may be unfamiliar with some of the costs workers incur during the first few months in NZ, including repaying employer loans, before they can start sending money home.

Remittances

It is increasingly common for Pacific families in some countries, such as Tonga, to have some of their most productive members regularly offshore for temporary employment, including seasonal work under the RSE and SWP. Access to remittances while the worker is absent can influence the extent to which household members can replace the absent worker's usual contributions in the household (e.g. to agricultural production) and adjust to their absence.⁹¹ In an effort to get a sense of participating households' access to and reliance on RSE remittances during the season, RSE workers and family members were asked whether money earned is sent home, and about the frequency of remittances. Responses varied within communities, but there were some general trends.

⁹⁰ Bedford, R. & Bedford, C. (2017). RSE earnings and remittance surveys. Samoans, Tongans and ni-Vanuatu employed in Hawke's Bay, the Bay of Plenty and Marlborough for 18-22 weeks, 2014/15 and 2016. Report for MBIE. Wanaka: Bedford Consulting.

⁹¹ Rohorua et al. (2009).

In Vanuatu, the most common strategy is for workers to send money home when requested by family members, usually for specific purposes such as a family event or school fees. Only a small number said they send money regularly to cover daily living costs at home. Responses in Samoa were similar - most workers send money home when requested. This is perhaps a change in Samoa over recent seasons. Whereas in earlier years it was common for Samoan workers to remit on a regular basis, as evidenced in the RSE Remittance Survey,⁹² there is now a strong emphasis on savings driven by village leaders and team leaders involved in selection and recruitment, as well as by employers in NZ. This means workers are discouraged, to an extent, from sending money home regularly. It is common for household members to cover daily needs through other means e.g. sale of produce, and for RSE money to be set aside for specific projects.

The Fijian women's responses were mixed - some remit on request while others send money home regularly, usually every fortnight. For those remitting regularly, the money is used mainly for school-related costs e.g. school uniforms, books, lunches and bus fares. For those remitting money on request, the money is sent home for a specific purpose e.g. to pay people, often members of their extended families, who are managing plantations while the women are away, or for special events.

RSE workers in Tonga were more likely to state that they send money home on a regular basis, usually every one-two weeks, and this money is used to cover immediate household needs and school fees. In the village of Kolonga some tensions were noted between returning RSE workers and their wives around the use of money sent home as remittances. Similarly, in Kiribati, two-thirds of workers stated they send money home on a regular basis (around \$200-\$300 each time) usually every fortnight. Informants commented on the high costs of remittance transfers, but noted that remitting money is a necessity to support households' daily living in Kiribati. One I-Kiribati worker splits her income 50/50 with her family in Tarawa. Every fortnight she sends home all of her week's earnings (after deductions), while on the alternate week she keeps the money for her own use. This ensures the family is regularly supported by her RSE income.

Several initiatives have been introduced since 2008 to assist Pacific households with management of their remittance transfers. These include remittances price comparison websites;⁹³ low-cost online currency exchange services that enable members to send money home at competitive rates; and money transfer cards launched by NZ and Australian banks that allow customers to send money home with minimal transaction costs.

Despite these initiatives, transfer costs remain high. Samoans, Tongans and ni-Vanuatu workers involved in the RSE Remittance Survey remitted an average of \$300 each time they sent money home over the 21-22 week period. If using Western Union (the major agency used to transfer funds to the islands) this is at a cost of \$20 per transfer. The 67 ni-Vanuatu workers in the study made over 170 remittance transactions over the 21-22 week period and spent more than \$3,500 in transfer fees. The Samoans and Tongans were far more frequent remitters. The group of 99 Samoans made almost 800 remittance transfers over the 21-22 weeks, and the 60 Tongans made a similar number of transactions

⁹² Samoans involved in the RSE Remittance Survey remitted an average of \$5,900 over the 21-22 weeks, equivalent to 30 percent of their gross incomes, and they sent money home on at least 50 percent of the weeks they were employed. In contrast, the ni-Vanuatu workers remitted an average of \$1,800, equivalent to around 13 percent of their gross incomes. The frequency of remitting by the ni-Vanuatu was also lower; the workers only remitted on 15 percent of available weeks (Bedford & Bedford, 2017).

⁹³ www.sendmoneypacific.org

(776). Both groups spent over \$16,500 on transfer costs (Bedford & Bedford, 2017). Research by Gibson et al. (2012) designed to measure the impact of delivering financial literacy training to Pacific Island migrants in NZ and Australia found there was relatively low uptake of low-cost facilities and money transfer cards offered by banks, primarily because respondents found another method of remitting was either more convenient for them, or for the receiver in their home country.⁹⁴

Prioritisation of RSE income

There is clear prioritisation of RSE income by households, with a focus on immediate, short-term needs, followed by longer-term projects. While RSE may not be the sole source of income for the family, informants acknowledged it is generally the most important one, and is used to:

- cover daily living costs including regular church donations.
- pay for education (school and university fees).
- build/renovate and furnish a house.
- purchase a vehicle (often for use on the plantation).
- invest and develop plantations and cattle farms, including the purchase of gardening equipment and machinery, and/or invest in a small business.

Table D1 in [Appendix D](#) summarises responses from RSE workers and family members on the current uses of their RSE earnings, their future plans for use of RSE money, and the main opportunities, at the village level, for agricultural development. In virtually all communities, agricultural production is the mainstay of the local economy and the primary option for developing sustainable, rural livelihoods, with the exception of Kiribati where the workers interviewed were located in a densely populated urban environment. There is clear prioritisation of RSE money first and foremost to improve household living standards. It may take three-four years (or longer) of participation in the scheme before families shift towards longer-term investments in agricultural production or small business development.⁹⁵

At the RSE Employers' Conference in Vanuatu in 2019, MFAT's former Senior Adviser on Labour Mobility presented a hierarchy of RSE expenditure, illustrated in Figure 2.⁹⁶ At the bottom of the hierarchy, the immediate priority for use of earnings is the consumption of goods and services, both consumption by RSE workers in NZ, and by families at home to meet daily needs. This consumption contributes to the next level of the hierarchy that includes education, health and housing. Housing improvements are a major use of RSE earnings and a key contributor to better household health and education outcomes. At the top of the hierarchy there is investment in future productive activities. This level of the hierarchy may only be reached by RSE families after four or more years of participation in seasonal work.

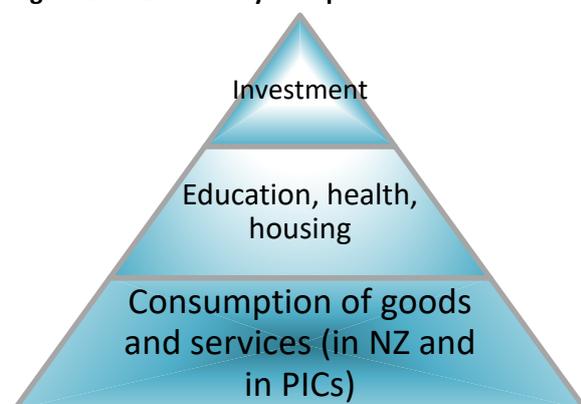
⁹⁴ Gibson, J., McKenzie, D., & Zia, B. (2012). The impact of financial literacy training for migrants. *Policy Research Working Paper No. 6073*, Washington DC: World Bank.

⁹⁵ Bailey and Kautoke-Holani's (2018) research in Vanuatu and Tonga found it is only after three years' participation in RSE/SWP that workers look to invest in business ventures (Bailey, R. & Kautoke-Holani, A. (2018). Encouraging and enhancing economic development in RSE and SWP. *In Brief 2018/3*. Canberra: Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University).

⁹⁶ Gibbs, M. (2019). Industry partnerships for community development in the Pacific. Presentation to the RSE Employers' Conference, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 17-19 July 2019.

Evidence from this research strongly supports this hierarchy of expenditure. An area that would merit further exploration, linked to the reintegration of workers, is how RSE workers can be supported to meet their immediate needs more quickly so that they can shift towards future productive investments, and what support is needed at the investment stage.

Figure 2. RSE hierarchy of expenditure



Housing

The biggest, and most visible, impact of RSE earnings is on the built environment, with the building and/or extension of permanent materials houses, and the associated improvements in housing standards. Well-constructed permanent materials houses generally provide more strength and stability to withstand natural disasters, they are better furnished and equipped with modern appliances, and there are improvements in hygiene and sanitation as kitchen and bathroom facilities (with flush toilets and showers) are shifted indoors.⁹⁷ RSE earnings make a more significant contribution to changes in housing than other factors, such as income from cash cropping, because of the sizeable amounts of money earned by RSE households in a short period of time that can be used to invest in this type of project.

Vanuatu

Changes to housing are particularly visible in Vanuatu, where concrete block houses are being built by RSE workers alongside traditional housing. RSE workers are often building houses themselves, and it can take three-four seasons' work in NZ to get them finished. In her research on the impacts of seasonal work in the Lamenu Bay area, Smith (2016) suggests the construction of a 'good house' has become a preoccupation for seasonal worker households; it is an icon of the Li-Lamenu vision for improved moral and material standards of living.⁹⁸

Linked to the building of houses, there are improvements in power generation and water supply. In Vanuatu, RSE households are using earnings to buy solar panels and/or diesel generators for

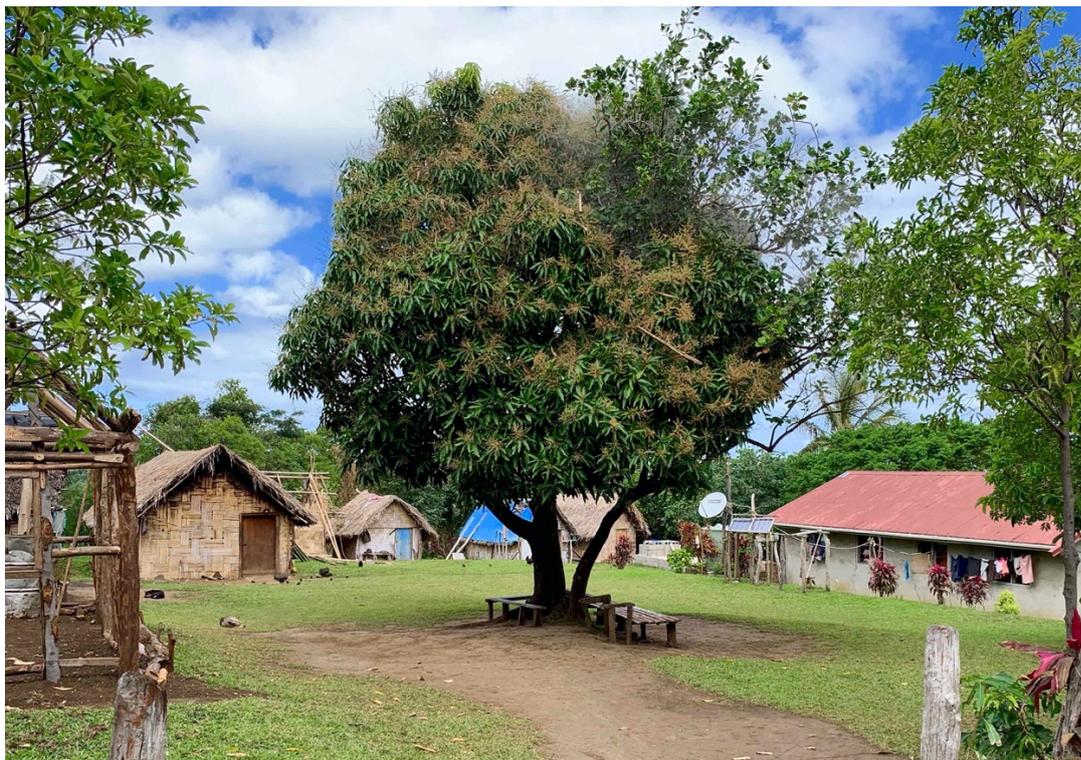
⁹⁷ In his research in Lamenu Bay, Craven (2015) argues that while the construction of concrete block houses increases adaptive capacity at the individual level by making households less vulnerable to extreme weather events, the rapid increase in the number of permanent materials houses has led to large-scale erosion as traditional vegetation is cleared to make way for building sites. Increased construction of houses with Western-style showers and flush toilets is also placing pressure on the community's finite water source and water security is an emerging concern (Craven, L. (2015). Migration-affected change and vulnerability in rural Vanuatu. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 56(2): 223-236).

⁹⁸ Smith, R. (2016). "The goal of the good house": Seasonal work and seeking a good life in Lamenu and Lamenu Bay, Epi, Vanuatu. PhD Thesis, University of Manchester.

electricity, particularly in more remote, rural villages where there is no access to the town electricity supply. Respondents in Lamén Bay noted that solar power for lighting, computers and mobile phone use is transforming learning opportunities for ni-Vanuatu children. Families now have light in the evenings for children to do their homework, and power to charge phones and computers for online watching and learning.



The ultimate 'good house', Lamén Bay July 2019.



Family compound in Letaus village, including an RSE house (with solar and a TV dish), July 2019.

Fiji

In Fiji, families have been building permanent materials houses for some years. This is linked with long histories of overseas migration and associated remittance flows. It is also linked to successive governments' initiatives to encourage rural develop and support improvements in local housing. RSE households are more likely to be renovating and improving an existing house (e.g. shifting bathroom and kitchen facilities indoors), rather than building a new one.

The number of seasonal workers from Fiji employed in New Zealand and Australia (around 600 in aggregate) is very small in relation to the country's total population (around 900,000). In the majority of the source communities there are only one or two people per village who have been selected for seasonal work. Participation in seasonal work has had minimal impact on housing in Fiji's rural communities.



Korotasere village, Vatuva Tikina, Vanua Levu, August 2019. There are no RSE houses as such in the village. The houses in the photo were all built before Fiji joined the RSE scheme.



Houses built with the support of government funding as part of the village's relocation following flooding of a previous site.

Tonga

As in Fiji, Tonga has a long history of houses built of permanent materials. In Tonga's case this has been heavily influenced by the migration of Tongans to New Zealand, Australia and the United States over the past four decades, supported by remittances and building materials sent back to the islands by members of Tonga's extensive diaspora.

Similar to Fiji, it is difficult to see direct evidence of the contribution of RSE income in the built environment in Tonga, despite the country's significant engagement in the scheme since the outset.

In Kolonga and in Ha'alaufuli, RSE savings are used more often for house extensions, rather than new builds.



Entering Kolonga village, Tongatapu, May 2019.



Entering Ha'alaufuli village, Vava'u, May 2019.



Village-based holiday home for Tongans living overseas. Built before the RSE scheme started.

Samoa

Samoa, like Tonga, has a large overseas diaspora which has invested heavily in the country's economic and social development. Houses built of permanent materials have been common for many years, especially on the most heavily populated island, Upolu, where the main urban area of Apia is located. Despite some similarities in histories of housing development in villages between Samoa on the one hand, and Fiji and Tonga on the other, Samoan villages where fieldwork was conducted show more direct evidence of investment of RSE savings in the building of new permanent materials houses.

Linked with the building of houses there has been a shift towards living in smaller family units. In the past it was common for extended family groups to live together in large open-sided fale. Now families are choosing to build smaller houses for use by the immediate family that provide more privacy and personal space (Kerslake, 2019). RSE workers may build more than one house on their land for use by extended family members. In Poutasi (Samoa), and also in the Lamenu Bay area (Vanuatu), there was clear evidence of the flow-on effects of RSE money into the building industry, especially into local block-making enterprises that supply materials for new RSE houses.



An RSE-funded house in Neiafu Uta – a combination of bungalow and fale styles.



New RSE-funded concrete block houses inland from the coast at Poutasi.

Kiribati

The context for housing in South Tarawa is fundamentally different from the other four countries. In all of the villages visited in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, the residents interviewed had the right to build a house on the land where they were living. In South Tarawa this is often not the case. The majority of residents are either 1) renting accommodation, usually from the Government; 2) leasing land belonging to someone else, often one of the Local Government Councils, especially if they are living

on reclaimed land; or 3) living on land belonging to customary owners in one of the several villages that are incorporated into the urban area.

Irrespective of their location in South Tarawa, the I-Kiribati ‘good house’ has a common feature: open walls, often with a mesh grid for security, to maximise air circulation. Where RSE earnings are used for housing developments, the preference is to build traditional, open-sided houses. In South Tarawa, RSE earnings are commonly used to accumulate household goods, including furniture, whiteware, and gardening equipment. These are urban-based families, with limited opportunities for agricultural production, so investment in household goods is a priority, both for families’ own use, and for use in small business ventures e.g. sewing machines to make and sell clothing, and chest freezers to sell frozen goods.



RSE-funded house in Temaiku with an RSE-funded freezer underneath. The kitchen is located in the temporary shelter to the right. Kitchen utensils were purchased with RSE savings.



Interviews were often conducted in these small, traditional-style houses. The solar panel was purchased with RSE savings.

Education

Educational attainment is a major priority for families in all PICs and a primary use of RSE earnings.⁹⁹ In contexts where children attend fee-paying secondary and tertiary institutions, RSE income makes a direct contribution to children's educational attainment. In Vanuatu, RSE money has made secondary school education a reality for many families who previously could not afford the school fees.

The use of RSE money for educational attainment often goes beyond the immediate household. RSE workers are not just paying school fees for their own children, but are supporting the education of others in their extended family as well. Examples of this were provided in Tonga and Samoa where young, unmarried men are sent by their families to NZ to earn money that will contribute towards the school fees of their siblings' children. Supporting educational attainment of extended family members is one means of distributing wealth within the community.

Church

Contributions to the church are an important use of money in all PICs, although less frequently mentioned in the interviews in Kiribati, Fiji and Vanuatu than in Samoa and Tonga. The church often plays an important role in financing upfront costs for workers to participate in the scheme. Repaying loans and making financial contributions to the church come ahead of meeting other financial goals. In Samoa and Tonga, families make sizeable donations to the church, both on a weekly basis, and as annual contributions.

One reason for RSE participation that was cited by Tongan officials was the ability for workers to make larger church donations than they could previously afford, including the annual misinale in the final quarter of the year which supports community activities. In Neiafu, Samoa, the most commonly cited use of RSE money earned during the 2018/19 season was to contribute to a new Methodist church that is under construction in the village and will cost around WST\$1.5 million (roughly NZ\$850,000). The 57 families in the village that are parishioners are all expected to contribute.

Community leaders in Samoa raised some concerns regarding the potential drain the church places on families' limited resources, particularly for those attending the traditional Samoan Congregational Church (EFKS) where it is common practice for parishioners' donations to be read out every Sunday. This is not a concern that is restricted to Samoa per se, but criticisms of the role of the church were most widely noted by Samoan informants.

Emphasis on savings

Community leaders and government officials in Samoa and Vanuatu stressed the importance of saving and planning for use of RSE money, and the need for financial literacy and money management training for RSE workers and their family members. This issue was raised a number of times in the context of family and community obligations for use of money. In Samoa, government officials,

⁹⁹ The prioritisation of seasonal work earnings for education has been discussed by others conducting research in Vanuatu and Tonga. See for instance, Bailey R. (2014). Working the vines: Seasonal migration, money and development in New Zealand and Ambrym, Vanuatu. PhD thesis, University of Otago; Bailey, R. & Wells, S. (2016). Temporary labour schemes, the new avenue of social mobility: Case study Vanuatu. *In Brief 2017/21*, Canberra: State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Program, Australian National University; and Kautoke-Holani, A. (2017). Enhancing the development impact of labour mobility in Pacific Island countries: The role of the Seasonal Worker Program and the PACER Plus. PhD thesis, University of Adelaide.

community leaders and RSE workers referred to *fa'alavelave* – the family and community obligations placed on all Samoans, that often carry with them significant financial implications. RSE workers noted the pressures on them to contribute to these family and community commitments that are a core part of *Fa'a Samoa*.¹⁰⁰ Similarly in Tonga and in Vanuatu, the use of RSE money to contribute to family and community obligations and events, was widely noted.

For young, unmarried RSE workers, their earnings often return to their parents who decide how the money will be spent to support the household. Once workers are married, they are generally supporting their immediate family as well as their wife's family, including elderly dependants. This is an important way of redistributing RSE wealth, but workers feel an additional burden to financially support a second family.

In the early years of the scheme there were complaints by village leaders that RSE money was often wasted in NZ or on the return home, with the purchasing of consumer goods that were deemed of little benefit to families and the community. This has changed over time, largely due to the emphasis on savings instilled by government officials, village leaders and NZ employers.

Recovery from natural disasters

Several Pacific countries (Vanuatu, Fiji especially; Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga less frequently) experience cyclones on an annual basis that destroy crops, damage houses and disrupt infrastructure. In recent years there have been particularly severe (category 5) cyclones in Vanuatu (2015), Fiji (2016), and Tonga (2018), and a tsunami in Samoa in 2009. If RSE workers are in NZ at the time of such disasters, they are encouraged by family members to remain for the term of their contract to earn income for rebuild efforts rather than returning home immediately.¹⁰¹ Workers purchase building materials and equipment in NZ to ship home for repair of houses and community facilities. Transport costs are often funded by the workers' employer. This is a further example of RSE income being distributed among community members.

Earnings from seasonal work are also important to compensate for the loss of income from damaged horticultural crops. For example, Cyclone Pam in 2015 devastated kava plantations in south and central Vanuatu that are only recently fully recovered. Bailey & Ng Shiu (2016) report that following the cyclone, a large RSE employer received requests for work from ni-Vanuatu people who previously had no interest in seasonal work.

Over the 12 years of the RSE scheme's operation, there have been many examples of RSE employers, churches and local NGOs from communities that host RSE workers providing funding, labour, building and other materials for recovery efforts in workers' communities. Such activities have included installation of new water storage and supply systems (e.g. Water4Tanna). Some of these activities are

¹⁰⁰ In her research on skilled migration from Samoa, Liki (2001, p.77) acknowledges the fundamental role of the *'aiga* (extended family) in migration decisions and remittance practices: "it is within the *'aiga* that the practice of reciprocal exchange (e.g. remittances of money or goods) takes place, thereby strengthening and sustaining ties of kinship". Remitting takes place not to retain kinship ties, but because of those ties. NZ-based skilled Samoans are continually involved with major *fa'alavelave* (obligations) linked to their *'aiga* in the islands.

¹⁰¹ Bailey R., & Ng Shiu, R. (2016). New responses to natural disasters through seasonal labour mobility programs. *In Brief 2016/12*. Canberra: State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Program, Australian National University.

described in Table 18 (pp.102-104) that covers a range of impacts of RSE participation on community services and facilities.

Investment in economic activities

Once immediate needs for RSE income have been met, families may look to further existing economic activities and, in some instances, engage in new ones, such as the development of small business enterprises. In most of the 10 communities in the study, examples were provided of investment in agriculture or small business ventures. Some of these are detailed in Table 17 (p.83) that covers other sources of income aside from RSE, and in Table D1, [Appendix D](#) that outlines current and future uses of RSE income.

In order for the RSE scheme to contribute to household investment in economic activities, there needs to be a supportive domestic environment that enables workers and families to leverage their RSE income for business investment and development.¹⁰² For instance, RSE earnings can contribute to commercial-scale agricultural production only in those places where there is access to land, a good physical environment for growing crops, access to farm labour to undertake and maintain large-scale plantings, and high prices for cash crops. Similarly, for investment in small businesses, there needs to be a domestic market for the goods and services that are being sold.

RSE income can create a positive feedback loop whereby the establishment of small businesses has a multiplier effect on the local economy, creating employment and wealth and stimulating further investment in small business activities by others. Participating households have more money available to spend on a wider range of goods and services in the local economy, and can invest in their own economic activities that often require the use of waged labour to maintain during the workers' absence. Linked to this is the retention of residents in rural areas as more jobs are created locally, rather than them seeking waged employment in towns.

Residents of the Lamén Bay area (Vanuatu), for example, have had extensive engagement in RSE since the scheme's implementation in 2007. Over the past decade, there has been increasing evidence of small business development, and a shift towards ventures selling new consumer goods. Informants reported that local stores now stock a wider range of goods - there are bakeries selling bread and donuts and, most recently, a shop selling ice-cream. Other business ventures include: block-making businesses, water taxis, guest houses, clothing/sewing shops, and kava bars.

This positive feedback loop can occur within families as well, as one business venture leads to another. An RSE worker on Tanna, for instance, runs five businesses with his brother. Both men are RSE workers and they take turns working in NZ. While one brother works for the season, the other remains at home to support the family and run the business ventures which include: a tour guiding business, an AirBnB guest house, a wheel repairs and mechanical servicing shop, a family-run store, and a mobile sawmill.

¹⁰² See, for instance, the work of The Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI). Funded by the NZ and Australian governments and ADB, PSDI works across the Pacific region to reduce constraints to business investment and development and works to improve women's participation in Pacific economies. According to the PSDI: "for any country to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth that increases formal employment, investment and entrepreneurship, and reduces poverty, a robust and vibrant private sector is needed." Retrieved <http://www.adbpsdi.org/who-we-are/about-psdi/>.

Two of these ventures, return money to the RSE worker and his brother, while income generated from the other three ventures is distributed among the community.

Small businesses are often run by the partners of seasonal workers who are responsible for the household while the worker is away and who manage RSE/SWP remittances that can potentially be invested in economic activities at home. Business ventures run by the wives of workers may be independent from the RSE worker's own business enterprise. For instance, in Tonga, the wives of SWP workers have used remittances to set up clothing shops, credit facilities, home bakeries and real estate businesses.¹⁰³ In Vanuatu, Bailey (2019a) notes that it is common for RSE workers to pay extended family members to run small businesses while they are absent. Few seasonal workers can afford to give up their employment in NZ to remain home and run the business; money earned overseas supports the operation of local businesses, and is often used to repay loans taken out to get business ventures established.

In Kiribati, many small businesses are established not only through monetary remittances, but also material remittances in the form of goods brought home by workers.¹⁰⁴ Some of the most enterprising business initiatives are developed in this way. Workers return with household appliances, electronics, gardening equipment and tools that can be used to run a business (e.g. kitchen appliances to establish a bakery, or gardening equipment for a lawnmowing business), or that are sold or rented out to others for a service fee.

Many of the 23 I-Kiribati women interviewed bring goods home each season including second-hand clothing, shoulder bags, electronics, jewellery and perfume that are advertised via Facebook, and sold from the women's homes. One of the I-Kiribati women, who has been to NZ for nine seasons, uses some of her RSE earnings to support the family garment business in Bikenibeu, purchasing new sewing machines and fabric in NZ. The business makes and sells wedding gowns, school uniforms as well as women's clothing. Another I-Kiribati woman returned with a freezer and toasted sandwich maker and makes ice blocks and toasted sandwiches for sale to children at the local school. These enterprises provide another source of income to support urban-based families in South Tarawa where there are few opportunities for agricultural development.

In Samoa, while examples were provided of small business enterprises, this sort of investment was less evident in the village. Community informants and staff in the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)¹⁰⁵ noted the biggest barrier to viable small business development in Samoa is cultural. Fa'a Samoa and the practice of fa'alavelave is so strong that families will always meet their financial obligations to family and community ahead of prioritising money for family-based business ventures.

¹⁰³ Bailey & Kautoke-Holani (2018).

¹⁰⁴ Also see Bailey (2015) for a discussion of the use of material remittances in small business development (Bailey, R. (2015). Using material remittances from labour schemes for social and economic development: Case study Vanuatu. *In Brief 2015/15*. Canberra: State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Program, Australian National University.

¹⁰⁵ SBEC is a semi-government run organisation offering small business training and support.

Other income generating opportunities supporting the village economy

For the majority of households interviewed in all PICs, while RSE money makes a substantial contribution, it is not generally the sole source of income. Table 17 (p.83) outlines the main sources of income identified by informants across the 10 communities.

Subsistence farming

Subsistence agriculture remains the mainstay of rural village economies. In all PICs, except for Kiribati,¹⁰⁶ respondents mentioned growing crops for household consumption and sale on the local market as the main source of income aside from RSE. Extended family members usually replace the absent RSE worker in the garden, and the majority of informants said they are able to maintain production while the worker is away, albeit sometimes at a reduced level. In Neiafu an unexpected health benefit of RSE participation noted by several fathers of RSE workers, who are also matai, is their return to agricultural work while their sons are away.

Hiring local labour to replace absent RSE workers is an increasingly common strategy, especially for work on larger plantations and to manage small businesses (e.g. village store). In Vanuatu, some households pay members of the local church/women's committee to assist with gardening and childcare duties. In Tonga and Fiji, payment of farm workers to maintain plantations is common. Payment of local labour is a key way of distributing RSE money beyond the immediate RSE household, and in both of these countries wage rates for agricultural labour are rising linked with high prices for kava.

Commercial agriculture

In rural communities with good access to productive land and where prices for cash crops are high, large-scale agricultural production for sale on domestic and export markets is a viable option for income generation. Access to land is critical, especially for farmers trying to operate on a commercial scale.

Kava or 'green gold' is an important cash crop in Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga and, to a lesser extent Samoa. Ground kava is commanding high prices across the Pacific following the removal of a decade-long ban on kava imports, lifted by the German courts in 2015. Widespread expansion of kava plantations is occurring, supported by increasing domestic and international demand for kava products, and shortages of the crop due to severe weather events such as the cyclones that hit Vanuatu (2015), Fiji (2016) and Tonga (2018).

There are challenges to producing kava as a commercial crop, linked primarily to economies of scale. To operate on a commercial scale requires a large amount of land; the use of farm labour – producers cannot rely solely on family members; and there are quality control and supply issues. In Fiji, Ha'alaufuli and Lamenu Bay there were some informants who are choosing to remain at home, rather

¹⁰⁶ Interviews in Kiribati were with RSE workers living in South Tarawa. If the interviews had been conducted in villages in the outer islands, RSE workers and their families would have mentioned local agricultural and fishing activities as a significant source of income aside from the RSE. In the case of agriculture this would be because of a generous government subsidy for copra (US\$2.00 per kilogram), the main commercial product from the coconut palm.

than go overseas for seasonal work, because they can earn more money growing and selling kava, than they can earn as seasonal workers in NZ.

Waged employment

For urban families living in South Tarawa, waged employment of other household members (aside from the RSE worker) was a primary source of additional income. Of the 33 RSE workers interviewed, more than half had family members in waged work. In the four other PICs, examples were provided of family members working for wages, especially among households that are located relatively close to main towns, but this was less common than in Kiribati.

No other income aside from RSE

In all countries, with the exception of Fiji, there were families where RSE money is the primary source of income. For households close to urban centres such as Nuku'alofa or on South Tarawa, there may be limited, or no access, to land for subsistence farming. For these families, RSE earnings are critically important to meet daily needs and to help improve standards of living.

Table 17. Other income sources identified by RSE workers and household informants, aside from RSE earnings

Income sources	TONGA			SAMOA			VANUATU		FIJI	KIRIBATI
	Kolonga	Ha'alaufuli	Nuku'alofa	Neiafu	Papa Palauli	Poutasi	Lenakel area	Lamen Bay area	Vanua Levu	South Tarawa
Subsistence farming – family consumption and sale on local market	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Commercial-scale agriculture (e.g. kava, vanilla)	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Cattle / Pigs		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Fishing – household consumption	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Handicrafts	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Remittances other sources (excl. RSE)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Waged employment (other family members)	✓ Teacher	✓ Shopkeeper, teacher	✓ Bank teller, nurse, carpenter, electrician, fisherman	✓ Teacher, librarian		✓ Teacher, local hotel staff, wholesaler	Customs officer, climate change advocate	✓ Nurse assistant	✓ Local hotel staff	✓ Council officer, fisheries worker, seafarer, government worker, cargo officer, ICT worker, carpenter, teacher, paramedic, security worker
Self-employed / small business (often supported by RSE income)	✓ Plumber and builder	✓ Village store, tourist transfers and tours		✓ Village store	✓ Taxi driver	✓ Block-making business, florist	✓ Sewing business, village store, motor mechanics, guest house, tour business	✓ Carpenter, block-making business, sewing business, truck hire, village store, guest house, kava bar, bakery		✓ Village store, bakery, clothing store, sale of second-hand clothing and jewellery
No other income aside from RSE	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓

Reliance on RSE as a long-term employment option

When the RSE scheme was designed, it was likely envisaged by policymakers that RSE workers would make selective use of the scheme to earn an income and further their livelihoods at home, because of the restrictions associated with the RSE LPV (e.g. partners and dependent children cannot accompany the visa holder). It was not envisaged that workers would necessarily want to return to NZ year after year. While many workers do make selective use of the scheme, as discussed in Part 2 (pp.43-46), there is evidence of increasing reliance by some workers and families on the RSE as a long-term employment option.

This dependence is not, necessarily, at the level of the individual. Of the 16,222 RSE arrivals in the RSE worker engagement database, only a very small share (1,035 workers or 6.4%) had worked for at least eight of the 10 years between July 2007 and June 2017 (including all four financial years, 2013-17, covered by the database). Of those 1,035 workers, just over 30 percent were from Vanuatu (314), with Tonga (200) and Samoa (146) accounting for a further third (346 or 33.4%). The average numbers of seasons worked by workers from Kiribati (3.61), Samoa (3.16), Tonga (3.35) and Vanuatu (3.24) were all less than four seasons.

Where dependence seems to be occurring is within households where there is often the expectation of intra-family transfers of RSE jobs. An RSE worker might decide to take a year off for family or community obligations at home, but expects the employment opportunity will stay within the family.

Growing dependence on RSE income is exacerbated by a range of factors including:

- Limited options for income generation in the village (e.g. lack of land and/or lack of cash cropping opportunities). For families with few other income generating opportunities, RSE income is critical to support to daily living.
- Changing attitudes towards subsistence farming and life in the village as a long-term livelihood option.
- Recruitment and selection procedures – namely pressure from RSE employers for experienced workers to continue returning to NZ over successive seasons.
- Pressure from family and/or others in the community to remain in the scheme to ensure the opportunity is not lost, including a potential opportunity for the intergenerational transfer of the job with the same employer.
- Economic objectives and/or requirements that necessitate ongoing participation in the scheme. For instance, repayment of loans used to purchase land or establish small businesses, and payment of school fees for successive children.
- On-going monetisation of village economies and the increasing substitution of traditional exchange items (like pigs, mats etc) for cash. This fuels further reliance on wage earning opportunities to support household needs and obligations.

In some communities (e.g. in Kolonga and the Lamén Bay area), household and community informants noted that increasing reliance on RSE income, and a shift in attitudes towards viewing RSE as a long-term employment option, is having negative flow-on effects on household agricultural production and on family dynamics, as return workers become less interested in productive activities at home. These issues are discussed further in Part 4 of the report, and detailed in Table D2, [Appendix D](#).

Recruitment and selection procedures by RSE employers contribute to this issue of dependence. Employers tend to favour experienced, return workers, and encourage them to return year after year, fostering reliance on the scheme for income generation. This is further compounded by the lack of any time limit on participation in the scheme and no enforced rotation policy that requires workers to step down after a set period. A tendency to reward experienced workers and team leaders with the opportunity to select new recruits furthers dependence, as RSE jobs are passed to others within the family.

Workers may also feel under pressure from community leaders to remain in the scheme. Bailey (2019b) noted that two workers in her longitudinal study of ni-Vanuatu RSE workers are the sole representatives from their village and both have expressed concern that if they stop participating, the contribution that RSE income makes to their community will cease.

Switching from the RSE scheme to Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme

Among the households interviewed, there were cases of workers who had switched from RSE to Australia's SWP. While the costs of participation in SWP are higher (the employer no longer pays half the international airfare), these are offset by higher earnings. A Tongan informant said that although workers earn more in Australia, they feel they are treated better in NZ because they have a relationship with the same employer(s) every year. This is not the case in SWP as the primary employer is often a labour contractor and workers are hired out to growers who do not have incentives (as is the case with most RSE employers) to establish direct relationships with their workers.

Examples of workers who have switched from the RSE scheme to SWP/PLS include the following.

- When a Tongan male was employed in NZ as an RSE worker (2014-2016), he used to send Tonga Pa'anga (TOP)\$300 home each week and he returned home at the end of the season with TOP\$1,300 in savings. He went to Australia for the first time in 2018. He sent home TOP\$500-1,000 each week and returned with TOP\$1,500 in savings.
- When the SWP started in 2012, a Tongan informant's husband shifted from RSE because the money was better and the extended family thought it would be good to have people in both schemes (the informant's two brothers are RSE workers). The informant joined her husband in SWP in 2015 once her children had finished school. The family thinks that working in both countries gives them a better spread of overseas earnings than having workers in one country. Because of the seasonal spread of crops on the farms where family members work in the two countries, they have someone employed overseas throughout the year. This has been a deliberate strategy to ensure receipt of overseas income over a continuous, 12-month period.
- A Fijian woman RSE worker is considering switching to Australia's PLS because she and her husband think the financial return for her time spent working in NZ is not good enough. In the 2018/19 season, the woman took home only NZ\$5,000 after five months' work. This was much less than she and her husband had expected. The lower than expected earnings were due mainly to significant weather-related downtime and high living costs in NZ.

A Samoan official advised that the Government strongly discourages RSE workers switching to SWP or PLS as the Government wants to spread seasonal work opportunities as widely as possible, rather than allowing those families who have already had access to RSE income to gain new employment opportunities in Australia.

Acquisition of skills and transfer from RSE workers to families and the wider community

Skills development in NZ and the transferability of skills to workers' families and communities in the islands is one of the purported 'wins' of temporary labour migration policies like the RSE. Two of the policy's critical success outcomes, outlined in the IAUs signed between MBIE in NZ and the relevant implementing ministry in the PIC, are that: 1) workers are able to generate savings and relevant experience which may contribute to development of [named PIC]; and 2) if funding is available, the Ministry, in collaboration with other stakeholders, will identify, scope and implement targeted training for [named PIC] RSE workers.

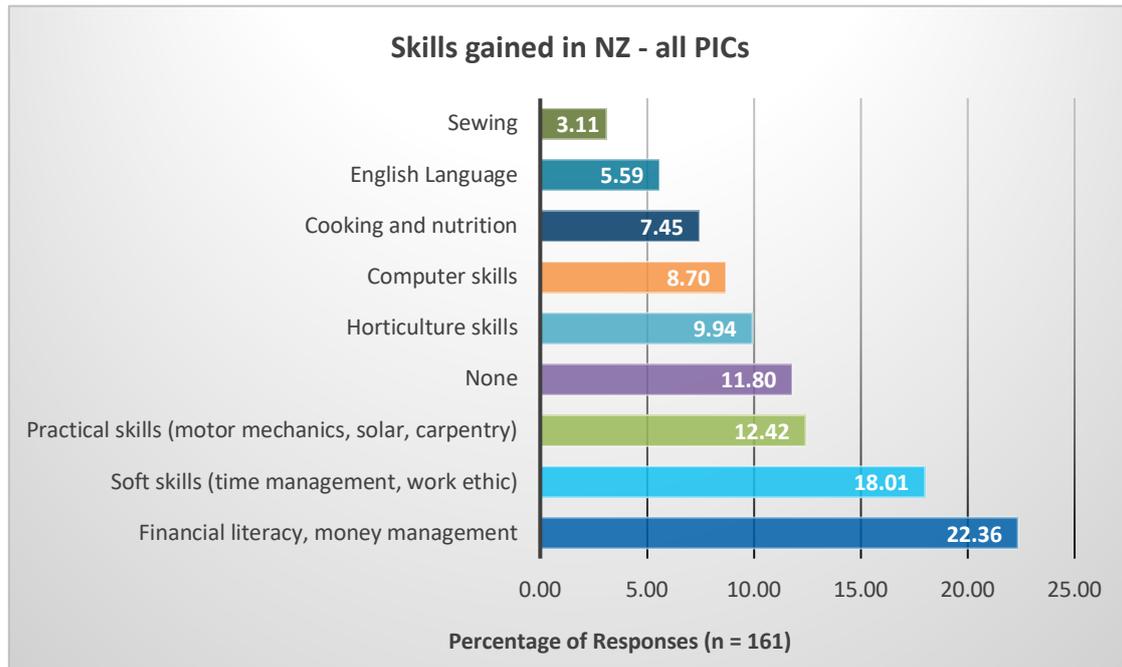
RSE workers and household members were asked to identify any skills obtained in NZ that are of use at home. Many (but not all) informants identified a range of hard and soft skills gained from RSE participation, some of which are learnt while working on the orchard or vineyard, while others have been obtained through attendance at Vakameasina courses.

The majority of workers interviewed had undertaken one or more Vakameasina courses, often as new recruits. Access to Vakameasina relies on the RSE employer liaising with the Vakameasina provider and organising training for the workers. The courses offered to workers vary between regions, and different courses may be offered at different times of the year. While the foundation courses are regularly offered, some of the more advanced basic trades training, can only be offered if suitable instructors and resources are available.

Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the skills obtained at work, and through Vakameasina courses, that were cited by workers and family members as being of most relevance. Financial literacy and money management were the most commonly cited skills obtained in NZ that are of use at home. This may be due, in part, to the fact that financial literacy training is one of the most widely available courses to RSE workers. The money earned in NZ allows families to move beyond living for the day/week and to plan for big projects (e.g. building houses) to be executed. One of the biggest shifts in thinking for workers and their families is learning how to budget and save the money earned through seasonal work.

Soft skills including time management, planning/organisation of daily work, improved productivity and work ethic, were the second most cited skills by informants. The disciplined work environment on the orchard/vineyard in NZ has positive flow-on effects into agricultural production and small business development, as workers are more task oriented and focused when they return home. Village leaders mentioned young people, in particular, as gaining these sorts of like skills through seasonal work experience.

Figure 3. Skills gained in NZ that are of most relevance at home



Practical skills such as carpentry, basic motor mechanics and engine maintenance, and use of solar power, are highly valued in the village. Carpentry skills are especially helpful as many workers are building their own homes and are able to transfer basic building skills to others in the community. When asked about additional courses that workers would like to undertake in NZ, the practical courses were the most frequently cited.

RSE workers also spoke of the utility of skills gained on the orchard/vineyard. Thinning, pruning and weeding are transferable skills for use with local crops. Informants noted that while the crops are different, the principles are the same, especially if growing crops for sale. A wide range of examples were provided by informants on the use of horticultural skills at home. The impact of new approaches and skills learnt on NZ orchards and vineyards is more pronounced for those workers living in rural areas with access to agricultural land. I-Kiribati workers living in South Tarawa did not identify horticultural skills as being of use.

The Fijian and I-Kiribati women, as well as household members interviewed around Nuku'alofa, identified skills in cooking, sewing and computers as especially relevant. The cooking classes provide women with new recipes to use at home, and some workers noted that their families have a more balanced diet now thanks to what they have learned in NZ.

Some informants felt they had not gained skills in NZ that are of any real use at home. In some instances, workers had not received any Vakameasina training at the time of interview. Others had participated in Vakameasina courses and while they had enjoyed them, they did not feel the skills were transferable to their home environment. This was the case for a number of the I-Kiribati workers. The extent to which Vakameasina training can have an impact on workers' skills development is mediated by access. The programme has a capped number of places available each year (1,200 for the

12 months April 2018 – March 2019),¹⁰⁷ and RSE employers determine whether their workers have access to training. Some employers have voiced concerns about Vakameasina training in its present form. Courses are usually held in the evening which precludes workers on night shift, and courses are delivered in English which precludes workers with limited English. Workers living in remote, rural areas are less likely to have access to training.

Other barriers to skills training include:

- Workers are often too tired after a long day of work to attend evening classes.
- Lack of training progression. Workers received training when they were new recruits, but have not been offered training in subsequent years.
- While there are foundation-level courses, there appear to be fewer advanced courses available. Most RSE workers just complete the foundation-level courses.

Some informants would like to see Vakameasina scaled up, with more resourcing, so that the programme can offer training to a greater number of RSE workers and provide more of the advanced-level courses.

Female partners remaining at home

Participation in seasonal work involves more people than the worker who works in NZ or Australia. “Behind” each worker is a partner, children, parents, in-laws, extended family members and those living in the same village/community, all of whom may be affected directly or indirectly in their daily lives by the worker’s absence. These are the less visible and less frequently acknowledged participants in seasonal work. This section focuses on the female partners of seasonal workers who remain at home.¹⁰⁸

The daily lives of women who have men absent working in NZ or Australia demonstrate the sacrifice that is involved in seasonal work. Female partners hold the family together in their husband’s absence by taking on additional responsibilities, such as those discussed below. Women who have had their male partner away for multiple seasons are likely to have become more accustomed to these additional responsibilities than the partners of newer RSE/SWP workers who may struggle to adjust to their new roles.

Sole parenting

Mothers become sole parents. Managing children, caring for sick children or providing special support to children who are missing their father are additional pressures on mothers. A Tongan mother’s

¹⁰⁷ The target number of enrolments in Vakameasina training has steadily increased from 540 workers in 2012, to 1,200 workers by 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Previous research on the impacts of migration on women ‘left behind’ in Asia, Africa, South America and the Pacific has cited positive and negative outcomes for women as they take on the role of the ‘head of the household’. Positive impacts for wives of migrant men include greater autonomy and self-confidence, while negative impacts include increased loneliness and isolation, difficulties managing and disciplining children, and difficulties coping with the additional household responsibilities including management of remittances. For a review of some of this literature see Bedford, C., Bedford, R. & Ho, E. (2009). The social impacts of short-term migration for employment: A review of the literature since 1990. Report for NZAID. Hamilton: Migration Research Group, Population Studies Centre, University of Waikato. For more recent literature see Graham et al. (2012).

observation, which is indicative of other mother's experiences, is that one of the most difficult things about her husband's absence is disciplining their children who are naughtier when their father is away.

Assume culturally gendered roles

Women may take on roles that are culturally gendered as male in some Pacific cultures, for example, the "head of the household" in Samoan culture. In some interviews, the Samoan woman informant talked about her son becoming head of the household or her father-in-law assuming this role (Kerslake, 2019).

Take on additional responsibilities

Women may take on additional responsibilities in the extended family/village including the following.¹⁰⁹

- Additional responsibilities for care of their elderly in-laws or other family members. A ni-Vanuatu mother with three children under the age of 10 was also looking after her elderly in-laws, her brother's pregnant wife and managing her new business that she had established with money from her husband's RSE earnings. She was not happy with the extra pressures and did not want her husband to return to NZ the following season.
- Women may assume more responsibilities for food production for household consumption and cash income.
- They may look after newly established businesses initiated through RSE income.
- Women may be responsible for managing RSE remittances. This can be challenging for families who have not had a cash income before. A frequent request from female partners was for training in money management and financial planning.
- Women may take on their husband's responsibilities in the village e.g. the wife of a Tongan RSE worker rings the church bell which is her husband's task when he is at home.
- Aunties and grandmothers are more likely to look after children of women RSE workers than the father who remains at home. Female family members are also more likely to perform household duties than the worker's husband. An exception to this arrangement is illustrated by a couple who have four children from aged 4-15. The wife works in NZ and her husband looks after their children as her parents are deceased.
- Fa'a Samoa involves the taulelea undertaking domestic and communal duties for the matai. As the number of the village's untitled men involved in labour mobility increases, the women's committee picks up this work. These women are often mothers of young children.

Negative impacts from absence of male partner

Many wives talked about missing their husband and feeling lonely when he is in NZ/Australia. Women's sense of personal security may be affected. Some wives of Tongan RSE workers said they feel insecure in their homes at night when their husband is away. The absence of husbands has caused

¹⁰⁹ These findings are echoed in Chattier's (2019) research on the gendered impacts of seasonal migration in Tonga and Vanuatu. Women in Tonga and Vanuatu tend to bear the greatest burden of housework, care work, and communal obligations in the village and church while men are away. Chattier argues that the over-reliance on women's unpaid labour to meet family and communal obligations frees up time for male members of the household to undertake seasonal work. This, in turn, means women at home not only carry a heavy burden of domestic responsibilities, but have little free time for productive work outside the household.

some ni-Vanuatu women on Lamén Island to be afraid to visit their gardens which are located over on the mainland. None of the female family members interviewed in Samoa, Kiribati or Fiji mentioned concerns about personal security.

Positive impacts from absence of male partner

Some women reportedly gain greater confidence and/or empowerment as a result of their new responsibilities. In Samoa, women noted such empowerment has come from performing roles that are traditional male roles, such as learning to drive so they can take their children to school or visiting town to shop in their husband's absence (Kerslake, 2019). In some instances, women have grown closer to their in-laws during their husband's absence. Several ni-Vanuatu wives said they enjoyed not having to cook a big meal each day for their husbands. The downside of this is that the wife may not eat as well – fasting is often a sign of sadness in Vanuatu culture (Bailey, 2019a).

Impact of RSE absences on marriages

The negative effects of ongoing RSE worker absences on marriages was raised by informants in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. (Informants included Pacific officials, village leaders, church ministers, business people, and RSE household members). The sensitivity around this topic makes it impossible to measure the extent to which repeated RSE/SWP participation is contributing to marriage breakdowns. Informant comments include the following.

- *Samoa:* Informants gave examples of RSE workers who have multiple wives/families and are supporting children in Samoa and NZ. Kerslake (2019) states that seasonal work is undermining the institution of marriage in Samoa.
- *Vanuatu:* A chief said it is more common for RSE men to form relationships with NZ women than for RSE women to form relationships with NZ men. He gave the example of a male worker who is in a relationship with a woman in NZ and has had two children with her. He has abandoned his wife and young children in Tanna who now have to rely on extended family members for support.
- *Tonga:* An informant observed that the big difference between RSE/SWP on the one hand and the early migration flows from Tonga on the other is the restriction on family members accompanying those going to work. In the 1970s and 1980s, much of the migration involved couples rather than single men or women.
- *Kiribati:* Among the 23 I-Kiribati women workers interviewed, two women had recently divorced their home-based husbands due to the men's infidelity while the women were working in NZ.

In contrast to such negative effects on marriages, an interesting perspective emerged in some of the interviews with Tongan wives of male RSE workers. These women said their relationship with their husband had improved while he was working in NZ – the couple was now working as a team and was communicating better through their daily phone/video conversations. Some of their husbands are now helping with household tasks when they return home.

Support for women at home

In the villages visited, traditional/informal supports are available for women whose husbands are working in RSE/SWP. Extended family members provide most of this support, supplemented by the church. While this is the case for women living alongside extended family in the village, the extent to

which these supports are available for women living in urban settings away from extended family is not known.¹¹⁰ Some informants said co-ordinated formal support, such as counselling services and financial management training would be helpful for women and children left at home.

Samoa

- Extended family help with childcare and food production. The women's parents-in-law may move in to assist.
- The wife's father or father-in-law will act as her representative in village activities, such as speaking on her behalf at village council meetings.
- The church, village council, and the village women's committee support families while their partner is working overseas e.g. ensuring children attend school, securing homes in preparation for a cyclone.

Vanuatu

- Women may have some support from extended family to assist with agricultural production and/or household duties. Extended family may also provide companionship.
- If family members are unable to assist, women may use some of their RSE remittances to pay others in the community (e.g. the church women's group) to help with household and childcare duties, assist in the garden, and/or tend livestock.
- Women may return to their own families to live while their husband is overseas for support and companionship.
- Women may tend to their gardens with other partners of RSE workers to share childcare responsibilities and for companionship.

Tonga

Extended family, the church and the community "keep an eye out" for families with absent family members or assist when needed. Examples include:

- Community groups provide low-interest loans to families until remittances arrive.
- An ex-RSE worker who grows domestic and export crops shares some of his produce with families who have a worker absent overseas.
- A village member who was a social worker in NZ provides free counselling services in his community.

Some families have moved from their home in the outer islands to Tongatapu to be closer to schooling, health facilities and/or be more accessible to recruiters seeking seasonal labour. An informant advised that these families often experience more isolation when workers are absent because they are away from their extended family networks which remain in the outer islands.

¹¹⁰ Borovnik's (2007) research on seafarer families in Kiribati found that women who had moved from the outer islands to South Tarawa had few relatives in the family who could help out. These women faced practical difficulties as they were unable to perform some of the tasks traditionally performed by men (e.g. fishing and climbing trees to cut coconuts) and it was inappropriate to ask unrelated neighbours for help. The women had to purchase goods such as fish and toddy (a coconut drink that is a delicacy in Kiribati and a source of nutrition) for the family, or go without.

Fiji and Kiribati

In Fiji and Kiribati interviews were with (mainly women) RSE workers, rather than with female family members at home. No information was collected about support arrangements for female partners remaining at home. One I-Kiribati worker interviewed felt nine months is too long for husbands and wives to be separated – there is a risk of extra-marital relationships. He would like his wife to be able to visit him in NZ over the nine-month period to help maintain their marriage.

Children of seasonal workers

Children of workers are the least visible participants in seasonal work.¹¹¹ While we did not interview any children, the interviews with female partners of RSE workers and women RSE workers revealed insights into the lived experience of children of seasonal workers, as summarised below. Many of these findings are similar to those found in a qualitative study undertaken by Moala-Tupou (2016), now a statistician but a teacher in the local high school at the time she wrote her thesis, about Tongan children aged 13-16 with a parent or older siblings absent for seasonal work.¹¹²

Effects of repetitive parental absence

Children of long-standing RSE/SWP workers are likely to have spent the greater part of their childhood with one (or both) of their parents absent for up to seven months of the year, or possibly nine months in the case of children in Kiribati and Tuvalu if their parent/s were able to secure employment for the full period of their visa entitlement. Their parent is likely to have been absent for their birthdays, at Christmas and for other family celebrations year-on-year. Such absences led an informant to comment: “Earning money to pay school fees on its own is not enough. Children need the attention of their fathers and mothers – not just toys and screen time”.

A consistent theme in the interviews with mothers was that their children miss their father. For example, a worker said that his pre-school and school-age children always cry when they see him on video calls. Mothers said they have explained to their children that their father’s absence is for the good of the family – he is working to pay for their school fees and to build a better standard of living for them all. While children may understand this, it doesn’t ease their sadness about his absence.

Filling in for an absent parent

Children may assume additional responsibilities during their father’s absence, such as work in the gardens or around the home to free up their mother for her new responsibilities. A Samoan worker

¹¹¹ There is a lot of recent literature on ‘left behind’ children of migrant workers. In Asia, research has focused on the gendered nature of migration, impacts on children’s well-being and different caregiving arrangements within the family. Rather than depicting children as passive dependents, recent literature has highlighted children’s agency in the migration process – either as migrants themselves, or as active members of the family left behind and the centre of familial relations devoted to their care (Graham et al., 2012). In the Pacific, recent research has focused on children as migrants, including the circulation of children through informal fostering or adoption arrangements, and children migrating overseas for education. See for instance, Schachter, J. & Wentworth, C. (2017) The dynamics of mobility: New perspectives on child circulation in the Pacific [special issue]. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 18(4); and Torre, A.R. & Cangiano, A. (2018). When children are not ‘the left behind’: transnational practices of intra-regional mobility in the South Pacific. *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration*, 2(1): 43-63.

¹¹² Moala-Tupou, L. (2016). The social impacts of seasonal migration on left-behind children: An exploratory study from Lifuka, Tonga. Master’s Thesis, University of Waikato.

described being worried about the pressure placed on his son when he is in NZ - he becomes “the man of the house” in his father’s absence. In another Samoan family a boy had been adopted to assist with gardening duties while his adoptive father was working overseas.

Care of children in parental absence

As noted above, children are often left in the care of one or more grandparents.¹¹³ This may be a successful arrangement with younger grandparents. Aging grandparents may, however, be unable to provide the level of care required.¹¹⁴ A Fijian official is concerned about childcare arrangements where children of seasonal workers are left with carers who are not immediate family. The informant’s concern relates to the potential for child abuse during the parent’s absence. An I-Kiribati woman worker expressed concern about the safety of her teenage daughter during her absence in NZ.

Effects on children’s education

Based on their professional experience, two Tongan teachers interviewed are of the view that seasonal work schemes are having negative impacts on children. In their experience, the best time for a father to be absent is when children are young (i.e. between two and seven years) as children of this age do not seem to experience the sorts of emotional trauma and learning difficulties that may be the case for some older children. As noted above, the consistent view expressed by informants is that children need their mothers at home, especially in their younger years. The teacher informants advised that both parents should be present during their children’s early teenage years when behaviour problems are most common. Problems can be exacerbated by a parent’s frequent absences for long periods.

A worrying trend in Tonga, which is being linked with repeated recruitment for RSE/SWP, is children dropping out of school around age 14. This is attributed to lack of parental support and guidance at a critical stage in their children’s education because one or both parents are working overseas every season. The teacher informants are of the view that parents are either not aware of the negative effects of their absence on their children or choose to overlook them, prioritising the financial benefits of RSE income instead.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ In their research on left-behind children in Indonesia and the Philippines, Graham et al. (2012) use the concept of a ‘care triangle’ within transnational families: the left behind child, migrant parent(s) and co-present carer(s). Graham et al. (2012) argue that children in both Indonesian and Filipino sending communities generally encounter less disruption in care arrangements when fathers migrate compared to mothers, and that maintaining connection and regular communication among members of the care triangle is crucial to maintaining the resilience of the family. Similarly in their research on elderly parents left-behind (who often become the primary caregivers of grandchildren), Aminuddin et al. (2019) maintain that a key indicator of the welfare of left-behind parents is their ability to stay in regular contact with the migrant overseas. (Amminudin, M., Pallikadavath, S., Kamanda, A., Sukesu, K., Rosalinda, H. & Hatton, K. (2019). The social and economic impact of international female migration on left-behind parents in East Java, Indonesia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 28(1): 97-114.

¹¹⁴ Noveria (2015) found grandparents often encounter difficulties caring for grandchildren mainly due to insufficient funds to meet their grandchildren’s needs, and in disciplining them, especially pre-teenagers and teenagers (Noveria, M. (2015). Grandchildren caregiving: Elderly support for the family (A case study in some international migrant sending areas in West Java). *Journal of Population Ageing*, 8(3): 187-202).

¹¹⁵ In her research on Tongan children, Moala-Tupou (2016) found children of seasonal workers are likely to have impaired educational performance (e.g. incomplete homework), while some may drop out of school at an early stage.

Another perspective is provided Bailey (2019a) who describes how children of seasonal workers on Ambrym, Vanuatu have pressure put on them by family, church and community members to work harder at school because of the sacrifice their parent(s) is making to pay for their education. This has led to resentment and rebellion by some children.

Loss of traditional skills

A village chief and other ni-Vanuatu informants expressed concern at the effect of increasing wealth on children’s learning about village life. A negative consequence of the electronic and other goods purchased with RSE income is that children are losing important resilience skills (e.g. traditional skills in housebuilding, gardening and fire making) as well as their connection with working the land.

Children’s increased expectations

In all five PICs, there were parents who noted that their children’s expectations have increased - children have come to expect increasing numbers of material gifts to be purchased by their RSE worker parent and brought home as presents. Children also want more expensive gifts, such as an Xbox to play video games.

The well-being of children at home is considered further in Part 5: Implications for key stakeholders.

RSE worker families: Impact summary

In the following impact summary tables seven positive impacts are presented that focus primarily on economic benefits of participation in seasonal work, and the different ways that RSE income contributes to improving livelihoods in the five PICs. Two negative intended impacts are also provided, and these relate to the impacts on the partners and children of seasonal workers at home who must adjust to workers’ absence.

One negative, unintended impact of RSE participation is included - the growing dependence by some families on RSE as a long-term employment option. This dependence should not be overstated, but it is important to acknowledge that in some villages in Vanuatu and in Tonga informants noted what they considered to be a growing dependence on RSE income, demonstrated by a reduction in household agricultural production and workers’ lack of engagement in other village based activities.

Each of these impacts is assessed in terms of the contribution that the scheme makes to the observed impact. External factors that influence the extent of the observed impact are identified, and any potential rival explanations are presented.

POSITIVE INTENDED IMPACTS	
<i>Income to improve living standards</i>	
How RSE contributes to the impact	RSE makes a direct contribution ¹¹⁶ to the economic wellbeing of participating households by providing workers and families with a regular, reliable source of income that is used, first and foremost, to meet daily living needs.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standard of living before participation in RSE - Other income sources e.g. cash cropping, waged employment, remittances - Access to land for production

¹¹⁶ RSE is making an unequivocal contribution to an observed impact (positive or negative).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How families prioritise the use of their RSE earnings – what the money is spent on. Linked to this are the other financial obligations on families that may absorb funds.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other sources of income (e.g. cash crops) contribute to improved living standards. - PIC government initiatives to encourage rural development and support investment in housing and local infrastructure also improve living standards. - Activities of village-based local businesses, NZ-based churches and NGOs contribute to improving living standards in the village.
Payment of education fees	
How RSE contributes to the impact	RSE is making a direct contribution to educational participation in those countries where fees are required for primary and/or secondary school attendance, and for payment of university fees. In all PICs, covering costs of education is a priority use of RSE income. The use of RSE earnings to pay the education costs for family members and others is one way that RSE money is distributed more widely in the community, beyond RSE households.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of children that require fee-paying education. - Access to other sources of income that can cover school fees. - Length of time as an RSE worker. A worker may not participate for enough years to cover the school fees of multiple children. - Costs of secondary and tertiary education. Education fees may still be prohibitive for some families.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The availability of fees-free education at primary and secondary school is a recent development in some PICs. - Other sources of income (cash crops, remittances from overseas-based kin (Tonga), and income from small business ventures) assist as well, especially for tertiary education.
Income to improve housing standards	
How RSE contributes to the impact	RSE makes a direct contribution to improved housing quality for participating households through workers' and families' prioritisation of RSE income for home improvements. These improvements can take different forms including: the building and/or extension of permanent materials (concrete block) houses, improvements in kitchen and bathroom facilities, and improvements in water supply and power generation. RSE's impact on housing is highly variable across PICs. For communities, RSE, in conjunction with other factors (e.g. remittances from overseas-based kin, government initiatives) enables improvements in housing standards.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standard of housing before RSE. - Extent to which families prioritise their earnings for home improvements. Linked to this are the other financial obligations on families that may absorb funds ahead of housing. - Access to building materials and equipment (e.g. water tanks, solar panels, household goods).
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Income from other sources e.g. remittances from overseas-based kin. The influence of remittances (unrelated to RSE) on housing standards is especially evident in Tonga. - In Fiji, improvements in housing quality are also linked to successive governments' initiatives to encourage rural development and support investment in local housing.
Investment in economic activities	

How RSE contributes to the impact	RSE makes an enabled contribution ¹¹⁷ to supporting households to further their economic activities or, in some instances, engage in new ones such as the development of small businesses. RSE can only generate this sort of positive impact if there is a supportive domestic environment that enables workers and families to leverage their RSE income for business investment and development.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The domestic economic environment and availability of income-generating activities in the village. - The level of domestic demand for goods/services (and associated prices for goods/services). - Whether families choose to invest in economic activities, or in other areas. Linked to this are the other financial obligations from family and community that may absorb workers' funds. - Length of time participating in RSE. Investment in small business ventures is generally a longer-term goal for use of RSE earnings, once more immediate needs have been met. - Access to small business training and support. - Access to labour to assist with a business venture e.g. waged farm labour to assist on large-scale plantations or extended family to run small businesses while RSE workers are absent. - Family and/or community obligations to return to agricultural production, rather than undertake other forms of economic activity (Bailey, 2019a).
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Income from other sources, e.g. cash crops and remittances from overseas-based kin, will also contribute to household economic activity. - Income earned through SWP. SWP workers tend to earn larger amounts of money in Australia than RSE workers in NZ, so SWP households may be able to extend their economic activities more quickly than those engaged in RSE. - Other government or community initiatives to support small business development in the village. - Access to loan finance (e.g. Tonga Development Bank, SBEC Samoa). - The role of local middlemen in facilitating access to export markets (e.g. Tonga).
Positive economic impacts for women at home	
How RSE contributes to the impact	RSE income is making an enabling contribution ¹¹⁸ for female partners at home to develop village-based income earning ventures that can be undertaken around home responsibilities (e.g. a bakery, sewing business).
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The domestic economic environment and whether it supports income-earning ventures in the village. - How families prioritise the use of their RSE earnings and whether money is available for women to seed new businesses. - Access to other sources of income that can be used by women for income earning ventures. - Availability of family and/or village-based support to assist women with home duties and new business ventures.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SWP may also contributing to new business ventures and changing roles for women at home. - In Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, remittances from overseas family members could also be used by female family members to seed new income earning ventures.
Income for households and communities for recovery efforts from natural disasters	
How RSE contributes to the impact	RSE makes an enabling contribution to recovery efforts in two ways:

¹¹⁷ Something else has to be in place or happening (e.g. a contextual factor) in order for the RSE scheme to have an impact (positive or negative).

¹¹⁸ RSE by itself, or in conjunction with something else, is enabling a positive impact.

	<p>(i). RSE income provides households with a ‘quick’ way of earning a significant amount of money for much needed housing repairs and to bridge income streams from horticultural production until crops recover which may take some years.</p> <p>(ii). Financial/materials/ labour contributions for disaster recovery have come from RSE employers, NZ churches and NGOs from regions hosting RSE workers.</p>
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of workers from each Pacific country recruited by RSE employers has an impact on the amount of RSE income that flows back home for disaster recovery efforts. - Amount of money RSE workers have available to send home to support disaster recovery. - Cost of remittance transfers for workers when sending money home. - Families’ access to remittances following a natural disaster.¹¹⁹ - Extent of assistance by RSE employers, NZ churches and community groups to aid recovery.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<p>Other sources of funds for disaster recovery at the household level include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - remittances from family members working overseas. - income flows from other temporary overseas employment e.g. seafarers and fishers (Kiribati and Tuvalu), peacekeepers (Fiji), SWP and PLS workers. <p>Sources of funds at the community level include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pacific governments. - Disaster relief efforts from donor countries.
Acquisition of transferable skills	
How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>For many (but not all) RSE workers, participation in the scheme is making a direct contribution to the enhancement of existing soft/hard skills and/or leading to the attainment of new skills. These may be skills attained on the orchard/vineyard, or via Vakameasina courses (if available). Some of these skills are transferable to their home environment (e.g. financial skills, practical skills such as carpentry and motor mechanics, and new ways of improving the productivity of gardens/plantations). Village and other leaders describe young people in particular as gaining important life skills (e.g. personal discipline, work ethic) through seasonal work experience.</p>
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The impact of new approaches/skills learnt on NZ orchards and vineyards is more pronounced for newer RSE workers and workers living in rural areas at home with gardens/plantations for cash cropping. Workers and households living in urban Tarawa did not identify horticulture skills as being of use. - Access to training in NZ. There are a number of barriers for workers to access Vakameasina courses which limits the courses’ impact.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SWP workers may also be returning home with new horticultural approaches/skills, and other skills, that can be transferred to their home environment. - Members of Pacific diasporas may share knowledge, hard and soft skills with their family members at home.

NEGATIVE INTENDED IMPACTS

Female partners coping with the absence of male RSE workers

How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>While the RSE worker is absent, the female partner assumes additional responsibilities for the day-to-day wellbeing of the family and, in some cases, takes on work in the household and/or village that is traditionally male gendered. The additional responsibilities, together with the stress of being separated from their</p>
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¹¹⁹ Two challenges facing families trying to access remittances include: difficulties with electronic remittance systems in the Pacific immediately following a natural disaster, and difficulties accessing remittances as a result of lost personal identification documentation (Bailey & Ng Shiu, 2016).

	<p>partner, can be considered onerous. The year-on-year absence of an RSE worker may be detrimental to the marital relationship.</p> <p>By design the RSE policy requires RSE workers and their families to spend several months apart every year. Thus, women having to cope with the absence of RSE workers is an intended impact of the scheme. What was not intended was the extent and variety of impacts that workers' absence would have on female partners at home.</p>
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The length of time the worker is in NZ (i.e. ranging from three to nine months) or Australia (now up to nine months). - Number of consecutive seasons as a seasonal worker. - The absence of other family members offshore for employment. - The informal support available from extended family, community and church for the partner and children. - The number of other seasonal worker families in the village requiring support. - The availability, quality and cost of keeping in contact via digital connectivity. - The availability of remittances to support the spouse while the worker is absent.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<p>The RSE scheme is not the only cause of work-related absences. Migration from outer islands to work in town can create similar circular migration patterns and lengthy periods of separation of workers from their families. The difference here is that families can visit or join their partners at the locations of their work. This is not possible with the RSE scheme.</p>
<i>Children coping with the absence of RSE parents</i>	
How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>Children of repeat returnee workers may miss significant periods of parenting year-on-year by one or both parents. The absence of parents may impact children's education and their mental health. The long-term consequences of ongoing parental absences on children's wellbeing and educational achievement has yet to be fully examined.</p>
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The length of time the worker is in NZ (i.e. ranging from three to nine months) or Australia (now up to nine months). - Number of consecutive seasons as a seasonal worker. - The age of children - those aged between two and six, and teenagers were identified as being vulnerable to a parent's absence. - The gender of the child. Teenage boys in particular are described as needing the presence of their father. - The absence of other family members offshore for employment. - The informal support available from extended family, community and church for the partner and children. - The number of other seasonal worker families in the village requiring support. - The availability, quality and cost of keeping in contact via digital connectivity. - The availability of remittances to support the upbringing of children (e.g. to pay for school fees or for child care).
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<p>As above.</p>

NEGATIVE UNINTENDED IMPACTS

Growing dependence on RSE by some workers and families

How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>Over time, continued participation in the RSE scheme may be creating dependence among some RSE workers and their families, as they become reliant on the regular source of income that RSE provides to meet living costs at home. This is exacerbated by a range of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Limited income generating opportunities in the village;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The relatively large amounts of money that can be earned in NZ, over a short period of time, compared to earnings at home; and ○ RSE employers' recruitment practices that tend to favour experienced, return workers.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other income sources for the household. - Other income generating opportunities in the village, including access to land for production. - Recruitment practices by RSE employers. - The extent to which workers may feel pressured by family or community members to continue as a seasonal worker in NZ. This may include financial obligations on the worker from family and/or community.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing attitudes among youth populations and an associated decline in interest in agricultural work and/or living in the village. - A trend towards growing consumerism in village economies e.g. households' increasing reliance on store-purchased foods and goods, rather than producing food for their own consumption. This in turn makes access to regular wage-earning opportunities increasingly attractive.

Part 4. Social and economic impacts for RSE communities

Impacts of the RSE scheme on the village economy and way of life

Beyond the direct impacts of RSE participation on individual workers and households, there is evidence of change within participating communities. When asked about community-level change, informants identified a range of impacts of RSE participation, both positive and negative, on their village economy and way of life. Table D2, located in [Appendix D](#), outlines the main positive and negative impacts identified by informants in each community.¹²⁰ Drawing on this information, this section discusses several positive impacts including the redistribution of RSE income among local communities and improvements to community facilities and services that have been supported by RSE participation. Two significant negative impacts that informants attribute to participation in the RSE scheme – the withdrawal of productive labour, and changing attitudes and behaviour in the village – are then discussed. At the end of Part 4, the key positive and negative impacts identified at the community level are presented in three [impact summary tables](#).

Redistribution of RSE income

RSE income is often distributed in local communities as workers' earnings support extended family members, money enters the customary exchange system and, in some cases, RSE workers support community initiatives. Numerous examples were given of the ways in which money is redistributed in the village economy, especially via the payment of extended family members' school fees. The methods of redistributing money in the village vary. In Kiribati, RSE income is redistributed mainly via the extended family. RSE workers are recruited through an island-based quota system, not from a single island or community, so there is minimal engagement in community projects. In Samoa, redistribution of RSE earnings may be influenced, to an extent, by the village council and matai system. All RSE workers selected from Falealili district, for example, make a weekly contribution to the Poutasi Development Trust (PDT) that supports a range of community initiatives.¹²¹ In Vanuatu and in Tonga, informants commonly cited the payment of others for assistance in the home or garden as a means of redistributing RSE income.¹²²

Positive changes in behaviour

The main positive change to village practices identified in Samoa, Tonga and in Vanuatu was a reduction in alcohol consumption in the village associated with RSE because of the no-drinking rules enforced by RSE employers in NZ. In Samoa, informants emphasised the strength of Fa'a Samoa in the three villages, and the rules enforced by the village councils that govern behaviour at home. While

¹²⁰ Interviews with RSE workers and household members in Fiji and Kiribati did not cover community-level impacts. The 13 RSE women interviewed on Vanua Levu came from 10 different villages, and the 33 I-Kiribati RSE workers were scattered throughout the densely populated 20km strip of land that comprises South Tarawa.

¹²¹ The PDT was set up following the 2009 tsunami to aid in the recovery of the village. The PDT is the primary avenue through which development initiatives are undertaken in Falealili district. The Trust's goals are to provide employment opportunities, further education and develop skills that will support development of people in the district (Deed of Declaration of Trust for Development of Poutasi, July 2014).

¹²² Bailey (2019a) notes that in Vanuatu, the increasing monetisation of the village economy linked with participation in RSE and SWP is having the unanticipated effect of raising expectations among local community members regarding the amounts they should be paid for their labour; they now expect to be paid more because they have remained at home and are "missing out" on the RSE / SWP opportunity.

RSE workers are back in the village, the men must keep alcohol consumption to a minimum if they want to be reselected by the village council for the next season. The opportunity to participate in RSE – and the risk of losing your place for misbehaving – is a major incentive for good behaviour at home.

Community projects supported by RSE participation

The third positive impact relates to various improvements to community services and activities linked with participation in the RSE. In some cases, these developments are the result of fundraising and donations by RSE workers,¹²³ while in others there has been direct engagement and support by the NZ employer. In Vanuatu, development initiatives have been undertaken by NZ-based community organisations and church groups in Te Puke and Kerikeri that have developed close connections with ni-Vanuatu workers based in their communities each year. Table 18 outlines the main community initiatives identified by informants in Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu.

¹²³ Two ni-Vanuatu team leaders noted that one of the most rewarding aspects of fundraising for community initiatives is that it teaches the men to work together to achieve goals. Men from Ambrym, for instance, might be contributing to a house that's being built on Tanna. The common goal helps keep men from different islands united as a cohesive group during their time in NZ.

Table 18. Community projects that have contributed to local services and facilities

Community	Project types	Development initiatives
TONGA		
Village(s): Kolonga Island: Tongatapu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport - Education - Security - Agriculture - Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSE workers have donated to several projects including the local school bus, scholarship fund, purchase of a tractor for use by local farmers, and community patrol (neighbourhood watch). - Community leaders in Kolonga felt there is a tendency for Kolonga households to prioritise earnings for themselves and their extended families, rather than wanting to contribute to community projects e.g. the reef restoration project.¹²⁴
Village(s): Ha'alaufuli Island: Vava'u	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure - Education - Transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A former RSE employer contributed to the building of a local kindergarten through the provision of materials and labour to build the facility. Over 60 children attend the kindergarten. - RSE workers have contributed to the funding of a school bus for primary and secondary students, and there are plans to fundraise for a second bus.
SAMOA		
Village(s): Papa Palauli Island: Savai'i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NZ employer, part of the Pick Hawke's Bay cooperative, has sent a container of goods to the village supplying school books and furniture.
Village(s): Poutasi and 8 surrounding villages, Falealili District Island: Upolu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure - Education - Agriculture - Cultural / tourism - Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Poutasi Development trust (PDT) is the primary avenue through which community projects are undertaken in the Falealili district. The 235 RSE workers recruited via the Falealili RSE scheme in 2018/19 all make a weekly donation to the PDT. Since its establishment in 2008, the PDT has undertaken a range of activities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Construction of the Poutasi Village Hall (built in memory of those who died in the tsunami), the Manumalo primary school and kindergarten,¹²⁵ and the PDT Arts & Crafts Centre. o PDT community gardens that grow and sell produce to local hotels. o PDT community kitchen. o The Falealili Forest Restoration Project – a carbon offset scheme, with funding from the Samoan Government and UNDP. All RSE workers must plant six native hardwood trees when they return

¹²⁴ Kolonga is the only village on the main island of Tongatapu to have community ownership and management of their reef. Under the Tonga Fisheries Management Act 2004, the 2.4 mile foreshore fronting the village is a special management area. The village fought the government for over a decade to get a law to protect their customary fishing rights, and to establish a marine reserve covering a section of their foreshore. The reserve currently has a no swimming and no fishing ban to conserve a sustainable supply of shellfish, fish, seaweed, and coral to feed Kolonga families for future generations and to ward off sea-level rise by using natural resources as a buffer to climate change. The reef restoration project is a major conservation initiative which is designed to re-stock the reef with shellfish and other marine life that was essentially fished-out.

¹²⁵ RSE households registered under the Falealili RSE scheme are required to send their children to Manumalo (PDT primary). This is a fee-paying school. The school started with a role of 15 students and now has approx. 150. The school currently teaches up to Year 6. In the next 2-3 years the plan is to extend the primary school to teach through to Year 8.

Community	Project types	Development initiatives
		<p>home each season to offset the carbon from workers' flights to/from NZ and the carbon emitted from cars in the village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PDT financial loan scheme that offers interest-free loans to RSE families to pay for children's school fees. ○ A small number of scholarships for tertiary study at the National University of Samoa. <p>- The senior matai of Poutasi is keen to establish a new secondary school in the district, funded by the PDT.</p>
VANUATU		
<p>Village(s): 8 villages including the main town of Lenakel Island: Tanna</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health - Infrastructure - Construction - Education - Business enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fruit of the Pacific's (FOTP)¹²⁶ Vanuatu Oral Health Awareness Programme was established around 2010. The programme, delivered by FOTP staff and return RSE workers, with support from staff in Auckland University of Technology's (AUT) dental care programme, taught local Tanna families about the importance of dental hygiene and supplied households with toothbrushes and toothpaste. The programme is not running at present due to a lack of resources and in-country capacity to deliver the training. - FOTP – Te Puke Tanna Together (TTT). Following Cyclone Pam in 2015, FOTP set up TTT, a district-wide partnership to engage the local Te Puke community in the recovery and rebuild efforts. In the months following the cyclone, TTT undertook a range of rebuild projects on the island, with on-the-ground management of the projects overseen by return RSE workers. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A mobile sawmill loaned to communities to cut timber for the rebuilding of kindergartens, schools, houses and churches (the sawmill has now been gifted to ni-Vanuatu operators based in Lenakel). ○ The provision of furniture and educational resources to schools damaged during the cyclone. ○ Water supply projects (tanks, water pipes, spouting, taps). ○ TTT also developed a housing model, called the earthship 'strong hoas' built from tyres, compressed earth and concrete that is low-cost, sustainable and wind resistant, designed to withstand severe weather events. Two earthships have been built on Tanna. - Water4Tanna, Te Puke Baptist Church. In partnership with TTT, the Te Puke Baptist Church has undertaken a series of water supply projects on Tanna. Following the cyclone, the church was involved in the installation and repair of water supply pipelines, water tanks and taps. More recently

¹²⁶ Fruit of the Pacific is a Te Puke-based charitable trust established to provide training, especially in community leadership and strengths-based community development, to ni-Vanuatu RSE workers employed in Te Puke's kiwifruit industry. The trust has provided a range of courses to ni-Vanuatu workers since the introduction of RSE, including financial literacy and money management, small business training, and healthy eating and exercise programmes.

Community	Project types	Development initiatives
		<p>Water4Tanna has been installing spouting on community buildings including churches and schools. The initiative is ongoing, in collaboration with other churches in the Te Puke area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanna Farms is an employer-led initiative established in 2013. The company produces high grade, cold pressed organic coconut oil for export to NZ and New Caledonia. The coconut oil mill, based near the main town of Lenakel, employs 6-8 local people at the factory on two-week rotations. Beyond those employed directly at the mill, additional people are employed to clear land, plant and harvest coconuts at the plantation, and as truck drivers. Tanna Farms has expanded their product range to peanuts, and now produce peanut butter, and they have re-planted coffee (destroyed in Cyclone Pam) that is due to come into production in 2019/20.
<p>Village(s): Lamén Bay and Lamén Island Island: Epi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure - Health - Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A doctor's house has been built in Lamén Bay beside the small medical centre. The house cost NZ\$135,000 to build, and was funded 50/50 by the NZ employer and the employers' RSE workers. The employer also provided building materials and specialist building skills. The doctor's house was officially opened in 2018. There are now plans to extend the medical centre, through fundraising and donations by RSE workers, to create a local 'mini hospital'. - The pastor of the Kerikeri Baptist Church and his wife have been visiting Epi on an annual basis over the past decade and have undertaken a number of community projects. These have included construction of kindergartens, churches and meeting houses, the installation of water tanks and solar power, healthcare initiatives, the provision of school books and other educational resources, and the provision of second-hand clothing. - The Kerikeri Baptist Church has mobilised others in the community to assist with these projects, including two local Kerikeri doctors. The doctors have made five trips to Epi, and have visited different villages to work in the local aid dispensaries, treating people for a wide range of ailments, linked predominantly to NCDs (e.g. high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes and poor oral health). The doctors provide training and equipment to local nurses and aid posts during their visits.

In most communities, informants' views of RSE were overwhelmingly positive - the benefits of participation in the scheme outweigh any costs that were identified. There were, however, two common negative themes that emerged. These related to the withdrawal of labour from the village; and changing attitudes and behaviour that impact on household and village-level production and on traditional structures of local governance. These two themes were especially evident in discussions with informants in Kolonga (Tonga) and the Lamenu Bay area (Vanuatu), two areas with long histories of participation in RSE.

In Kolonga, some informants felt the RSE scheme impacts negatively on the village economy and way of life, and the costs to the village are greater than any benefits to individual households. In Lamenu Bay, informants were not necessarily of the view that the costs outweigh the benefits of participation, but they identified negative social and economic impacts that are becoming more apparent over time, as workers make repeated trips to NZ (see Table D2, [Appendix D](#)).

Withdrawal of labour from the village

The most commonly cited negative impact by informants in Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu relates to a shortage of labour for agricultural production and communal activities, such as church services, sporting events, and major ceremonies. The withdrawal of labour is an intended impact - by design, the RSE scheme contributes to the removal of labour from the village because RSE recruitment targets those in the productive working-age groups. The potential negative impacts of this withdrawal of labour have also, to an extent, been anticipated. Evidence of this can be seen in Falealili (Samoa) where the senior matai of the district requires all RSE workers to each plant 5,000 taro before departing for NZ every season. The planting is to mitigate the adverse effects of workers' absence on agricultural production and provide families with a staple crop for household consumption. What was not intended was the extent and variety of impacts that the loss of labour would have on village life. When the RSE policy was designed there were several underpinning assumptions:

1. That there is a large pool of working-age labour available in the Pacific, with limited domestic employment opportunities at home. Providing seasonal work offshore would be one way of contributing to wage-earning opportunities for rurally-based residents.¹²⁷
2. Linked to this, an expectation that employment opportunities under the RSE scheme would be distributed more equitably across participating countries. The dominance of three countries from the outset – Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa – was not anticipated.
3. That RSE workers would not want to return to NZ year after year, given the conditions of the RSE LPV (and restrictions on family) and would, instead, make selective use of the scheme. This selective use of the scheme by workers and households would, in turn, minimise negative impacts on village activities.
4. That the savings made by RSE workers in NZ coupled with the fact that migration under the scheme is circular and seasonal, would mean that any negative impacts were partially mitigated.

Moreover, the policy thinking regarding the effects of the RSE scheme on participating PICs has been at two levels: the macro, and the micro. At the macro-level, the underlying impetus is that RSE

¹²⁷ Ramasamy et al. (2008); World Bank (2006). Pacific Islands at home and away. Expanding job opportunities for Pacific Islanders through labor mobility. Washington DC: World Bank.

provides a much-needed wage earning opportunity for citizens of participating PICs, and will foster economic growth in Pacific countries. At the micro-level, the focus has been on individual workers and the opportunities that the scheme provides to “derive income and skills, have successful re-entry into their home community and heighten the prospect of return employment in New Zealand”.¹²⁸ What was missing from the original policy thinking relates to the meso-level – the potential effects of the RSE scheme on participating communities.

The impacts of the withdrawal of labour from the village are complex, and reflect different social structures in PICs as to who usually performs agricultural work. The impacts are also influenced by the numbers of seasonal workers absent relative to the size of the total village population, and the length of time the village has been participating in RSE. At the household level, most families are able to maintain some agricultural production while the RSE worker is absent, but this may be at a reduced level; households may produce enough for their own consumption, but not produce a surplus that can be sold locally. For those engaged in commercial-scale agriculture, the loss of labour is more problematic as the scale of work cannot be managed solely by extended family members, requiring hired wage labour to replace absent RSE workers.

In Kolonga (Tonga) there is local demand for farm labour, but wage rates are low. Village leaders noted an obvious decline in agricultural production that they ascribe to participation in RSE and SWP, and return workers’ disinterest in gardening when they are home. Evidence of this is seen in the unused or underutilised tracts of land in the village. Similarly, in Vanuatu, household members around the main town of Lenakel on Tanna and in the Lamén Bay area noted a disinterest among some RSE workers to return to their gardens, with the men instead preferring to rely on their RSE earnings to maintain the family. Informants in Lamén Bay cited a decline in the quality and intensity of gardening, evidenced by encroachment of weeds and the bush into land that was once cultivated, and problems with increasing numbers of wild pigs, as men are no longer securing, feeding and tending to their pigs as they once did.¹²⁹

The loss of labour for community events is especially evident at times when major ceremonies (e.g. funerals) are held. In Poutasi and Papa Palauli (Samoa) the only negative impact of RSE identified at the village level relates to the loss of the taulelea who perform a range of agricultural, domestic and community activities for the matai. The local women’s committees are required to pick up the communal work traditionally performed by the untitled men, which places an additional burden on them. Neiafu, on the island of Savai’i, was the only community that did not identify the withdrawal of labour from the village as a negative impact. This is potentially due to the short length of time the village has participated in RSE (sending workers for the past two seasons 2017-19), and the small number (20) of RSE workers selected from Neiafu, relative to the size of the village population (904 residents at the time of the 2016 census).¹³⁰ The loss of the young, untitled men from the village is not on a large enough scale to cause problems at the community level at this stage.

The temporary withdrawal of labour from the village is a long-standing practice in Pacific village economies. This is not a new trend, rather the continuation of a well-established household livelihood strategy whereby households engage in a range of economic activities, including migration, to

¹²⁸ MBIE (2009). Inter-agency Understanding: Tuvalu; MBIE (2014). Inter-agency Understanding: Fiji

¹²⁹ Also see Craven (2015) for a discussion of the impacts of the withdrawal of labour on the village in Lamén Bay.

¹³⁰ Data from the Samoa Population and Housing Census 2016 provided by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Apia.

minimise risk and diversify their sources of income.¹³¹ However, for those communities that have had extensive engagement in the RSE scheme, the numbers of working age men and women absent from the village at any one time can have a detrimental effect on communal production. Linked to this are the changing aspirations and attitudes towards subsistence agriculture. As Craven (2015) noted in his research on the impacts of RSE in Lamén Bay:¹³²

A shift in the occupational focus of migrants means that there is less interest, less motivation and less societal pressure to engage in work at home. Many migrants believe that they fulfil their societal and household obligations by earning income abroad. As a result, the number of migrants engaged in subsistence agriculture has declined. Accordingly, although migrants are off-island for only six months, participants characterised them as absent year-round.

Changing attitudes and behaviour

It is impossible to unpack the extent to which changing attitudes and behaviours can be linked directly to participation in the RSE scheme. However, where the impacts of RSE on village societies can be differentiated from other forms of migration is in the repeated cycles of return. RSE workers are required to return home every year and stay in the village for several months. During these periods, workers return with new attitudes and values that influence others. Informants in Kolonga, for instance, spoke of the demonstration effect on children as RSE fathers return each year with different experiences, gifts and ideas from their time in NZ. Unlike PIC citizens living overseas who may return home for short visits, RSE workers must reintegrate into village life every year when they return home, and this can prove challenging.

Changing attitudes and behaviour are also influenced by the magnitude of the numbers moving. Villages sending large numbers of seasonal workers offshore, relative to the size of the local population, may experience more accelerated levels of change than those that are sending small numbers, or have only participated in offshore seasonal work schemes for a short time. Those selected for RSE have tended to be young males with limited wage-earning opportunities at home. This has been identified as one of the benefits of RSE – that the scheme provides employment to those that would find it difficult to secure employment at home. However, RSE participation is creating new wealth among a group that traditionally has not held status in the village. This may create tensions within the village as traditional authority structures are challenged. Informants in Tanna and the Lamén Bay area noted that some RSE workers return and question the authority of village chiefs, traditional rules and communal practices.¹³³

Among some RSE workers and households there is a shift towards greater individualism and consumerism - personal, material wealth and accumulation of assets (e.g. consumer goods) is of growing importance. Evidence of this can be seen in the Lamén Bay area where RSE households now

¹³¹ Connell, J. (2010). Pacific islands in the global economy: Paradoxes of migration and culture. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 31: 115-129; Ellis, F. (1998). Household strategies and rural livelihood diversification. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 35(1): 1-38.

¹³² Craven, L. (2015).

¹³³ In his research in Lamén Bay, Craven (2015) argues access to seasonal work overseas is changing attitudes and behaviours in the village, including a reduction in agricultural production and loss of respect for traditional practices and governance structures (e.g. communal management of resources). This is contributing to a decline in community resilience.

make efforts to protect their wealth by putting locks on their doors – household security is a very recent development in the village. There are also problems with non-recyclable waste. RSE workers return with goods and packaging that cannot be easily disposed of, and local communities lack the facilities to deal with the waste. Rubbish is left to accumulate in the village.

There are many factors, beyond RSE, that are contributing to changing attitudes and behaviour at the village-level. These include the influence of Pacific diasporas living overseas, an ongoing shift towards cash economies, and the advent of new digital technologies and social media. However, there is a perception among some village leaders that RSE participation is contributing to a breakdown of traditional values and practices which lessens community cohesion and resilience.

RSE communities: Impact summary

In the following impact summary tables two positive impacts are presented: the redistribution of RSE income that often occurs in communities; and the contribution that the RSE makes to the development of community services and facilities in some countries, either through RSE workers’ own contributions, or through the engagement of RSE employers and others in community projects. The withdrawal of labour from the village is provided as a negative, intended impact, while changing attitudes and behaviours at the village level is included as a negative, unintended impact of RSE participation. This negative, unintended impact should not be overstated. Pacific villages have been living with Western influences for many years, and the RSE is simply one of a number of factors contributing to changes in village economies. There is, however, a perception in some villages that RSE participation is contributing to attitudinal change, and therefore the impact has been included here.

Each of these impacts is assessed in terms of the contribution that the scheme makes to the observed impact. External factors that influence the extent of the observed impact are identified, and any potential rival explanations are presented.

POSITIVE INTENDED IMPACTS	
<i>Redistribution of RSE income in the village</i>	
How RSE contributes to the impact	Participation in the RSE scheme can make a direct contribution to the redistribution of money within the village, and creates a positive or reinforcing feedback loop. ¹³⁴ RSE income is distributed beyond participating households to others in the community in a wide range of ways (e.g. through contributions to the church, payment of school fees or for waged labour). This redistribution of money helps support and improve the living standards of others in the village, in turn fuelling further redistribution of money among local households, and enhancing economic and social wellbeing.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent of family and community obligations on workers to distribute their income beyond the immediate household. - Whether the amounts of money earned in NZ are sufficient enough to enable distribution of earnings beyond the immediate family. - The extent to which RSE households need to pay others for support while the RSE worker is absent. - Extent to which there are community-level schemes that RSE workers are obligated to contribute to (e.g. PDT; the doctor’s house in Lamén Bay).

¹³⁴ A positive or reinforcing feedback loop is where something facilitates more of the same.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which churches get involved in major fund-raising activities which can absorb funding that might be used for other purposes (e.g. Samoa). - Frequency of natural disasters. Responses to these events tend to have a wealth-redistribution effect in Pacific communities.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other income sources (e.g. high prices for cash crops) contribute to improved living standards and to the redistribution of money within communities. - Income earned through SWP also contributes to the redistribution of money in participating communities. - Village-based programmes, and aid initiatives, which can serve to redistribute wealth indirectly through improvements in infrastructure that benefit all residents irrespective of wealth. - Local business activities (e.g. an informant's concrete block-making business in Poutasi) that employ people who otherwise might not have had wage-earning opportunities in the village.
Improved community services and facilities	
How RSE contributes to the impact	RSE income has had a distributional effect and is making an enabling contribution in some Pacific communities by supporting improved services and facilities. New/improved community facilities have been completed through financial and other contributions from RSE workers, RSE employers, NZ churches and NGOs, and members of NZ communities.
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of seasonal workers from the village and the number of seasons they have been contributing to community initiatives. - The extent to which community projects are identified as a priority by village leaders and/or local recruiters and/or team leaders in NZ. - Whether RSE workers' contributions towards community projects are voluntary or mandatory. - The extent to which workers and their households prioritise the use of earnings for themselves and their extended families, rather than contributing to community projects. - The extent to which RSE employers and/or NZ churches or community groups develop connections with specific communities and choose to invest in community development initiatives.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Pacific government, MFAT and other overseas donors may also be contributing to community infrastructure and services. - Overseas-based kin may contribute to community infrastructure in the village. This is especially the case in countries with large diaspora (e.g. Tonga).

NEGATIVE INTENDED IMPACTS	
Withdrawal of labour from the village	
How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>Recruitment and selection policies for RSE that favour working-age men and women who are physically fit and able directly contribute to the withdrawal of productive labour from the village. Without household and community strategies in place to manage the loss of labour, there can be an associated decline in agricultural production and loss of labour for community activities.</p> <p>When the RSE policy was developed, it was intended that the scheme would lead to the withdrawal of labour from the village and this could, in turn, have some negative impacts on village production. What was not intended was the extent and variety of impacts that the loss of labour would have on village life in some communities.</p>
Factors that influence the extent of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numbers of RSE workers absent relative to the size of the village population. - The extent to which those absent generally perform agricultural work and other village activities. - Length of time the community has been engaged in RSE.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which households can implement strategies to replace the absent RSE worker e.g. the use of extended family members, or the payment of farm labour to assist with production. - Extent to which villages can implement strategies to manage the loss of labour e.g. recruitment strategies that ensure there aren't too many men or women away at any given time. - Community obligations / expectations on RSE workers to return to agricultural production and other village activities when they are home.
Potential rival explanations for the observed impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing attitudes and aspirations among village youth, and declining interest in village life and agricultural work as a long-term livelihood option has been a trend in some Pacific village economies for many years. - Lack of opportunities for agricultural production (e.g. Lenakel, Vanuatu) and/or difficulties accessing gardens/plantations (Lamen Island, Vanuatu). - Increasing participation in the Australian SWP, especially in Vanuatu and Tonga. This scheme also contributes to the loss of young working-age labour from the village. - Loss of labour from the village through internal migration or other forms of international migration.

NEGATIVE UNINTENDED IMPACTS	
<i>Changing attitudes and behaviours at the village level.</i>	
How RSE contributes to the impact	<p>RSE (and other seasonal work schemes) are one of many macro and meso-level influences contributing to changing attitudes and behaviours within rural Pacific communities. These changes may inhibit¹³⁵ the practice of traditional values, leadership and governance at the village level in some countries.</p> <p>In villages that have large numbers of seasonal workers relative to the size of the local population, and/or long periods of engagement in seasonal work, there can be a perception among some village leaders that participation in RSE in particular, and seasonal work in general, is contributing to a breakdown of traditional values and practices. Workers experience life in NZ (and Australia) that is largely free from the constraints of village/church leadership, social structures, traditional values and customs, and with repeated seasonal employment new aspirations may emerge that are incongruent with Pacific values (e.g. social status as a result of having money). Unlike citizens living overseas who may return home for short visits, RSE workers must reintegrate into village life on the return home. RSE can be differentiated from other forms of migration in the repeated cycles of return. RSE workers must return to the village for several months each year, and it is during these periods that new attitudes, ideas and beliefs can be shared with others on a continuous basis.</p> <p>In some villages with a lot of residents participating in seasonal work, RSE is accelerating already established trends. In such cases, RSE may be regarded as making a 'tipping point' contribution where the extent of changes in the village mean the village will not 'go back' to an earlier state. An example of this is the increasing amounts of non-recyclable waste in the village. Consumer goods purchased in NZ with RSE income (e.g. household appliances, electronics) and vehicles shipped from NZ/purchased at home are contributing to increasing levels of non-recyclable waste, with potential to degrade the natural environment. This was cited as an issue in the Lamen Bay area (Vanuatu) and in Poutasi (Samoa). PICs may not have the facilities to handle inorganic waste, and rubbish accumulates in the village.</p>
Factors that influence the extent of impact	Village-level factors influencing the extent of impact:

¹³⁵ An inhibiting contribution/effect – RSE inhibits or gets in the way of something else.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The strength of traditional leadership, other social structures and cultural traditions. - The influence of the church, particularly in Samoa and Tonga. - The number of current/ex seasonal workers in the village and the length of time participating in seasonal work. - The amount of remittances and other cash income received by households from sources other than seasonal work. - The extent of flows of people into and out of the village for reasons other than seasonal work. - The extent to which households have access to digital technology and social media. - Access to arable land and other income earning opportunities in the village.
<p>Potential rival explanations for the observed impact</p>	<p>Changing social behaviours are the consequence of the interplay of a range of factors, including the influence of Pacific diasporas living overseas, the emergence of cash economies, increasing consumerism, the advent of social media and digital technology enabling streaming of overseas media into Pacific homes. RSE is one of many macro and meso-level influences contributing to attitudinal change within the village.</p>

Part 5. Implications for key stakeholders

As noted in the report's introduction, this study aims to establish (or discount) the contribution of the RSE scheme to observed impacts (rather than attempting to attribute RSE to observed impacts), based on the evidence collected during the study, and using an analytical approach called contribution analysis. At the end of the findings in Parts 2, 3 and 4, 15 key impacts (eight positive and seven negative) to which the scheme is contributing are listed.

In this section an overview of these eight positive and seven negative key impacts is presented, followed by a discussion of eight substantive issues arising from the negative impacts. Each of these issues has implications for one or more RSE stakeholder group – the RSE policy team, Immigration NZ/MBIE, RSE employers, LSUs, PIC governments, PIC communities, Pacific workers and their families. How each issue is best addressed requires further consideration by the appropriate stakeholder group(s).

This section does not provide specific recommendations for how issues raised in this report might best be addressed. Some suggested responses are contained in the final Synthesis report of the RSE Impact Study, which contains a systems-based, strategic analysis of the integrated findings from the NZ and Pacific stream reports, as well as a discussion of implications of these integrated findings for key RSE stakeholders in NZ and participating PICs.

Impacts of the RSE scheme - overview

The Pacific stream findings demonstrate clearly that the impacts of the RSE scheme, positive and negative, are diverse across participating PICs and within individual PICs. This diversity occurs at every scale: macro (between countries), meso (between communities) and micro (between households and between individual workers).

In two of the countries covered in this report, Fiji and Kiribati, the RSE scheme currently has a negligible impact beyond the participating households. In Fiji, just over one percent (1.06 percent) of rural-based men aged 20-49 years were absent as RSE and SWP workers in 2018/19. In the same year in Kiribati, five percent of males and 1.5 percent of females in this age group were absent as seasonal workers in NZ and Australia during 2018/19. The Kiribati Government's deliberate strategy of distributing seasonal work opportunities via an island-based quota system means that numbers selected from different rural villages across Kiribati's 20 inhabited islands are very small. A similar situation applies in some other participating PICs, like Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, where the small numbers recruited each year are distributed widely across different source communities.

In contrast, in communities that have multiple households with RSE workers in NZ each year, there can be significant intended, positive impacts. There are also a number of emerging unintended, problematic impacts in communities with high numbers of RSE workers who are repeatedly absent. Such impacts are exacerbated if other productive members from the community are going offshore for temporary work in Australia (e.g. under the SWP or PLS). These impacts may become more challenging if the numbers absent from the community continue to increase over time.

Given the diverse economic, social and cultural contexts in which the RSE scheme operates, it is impossible to identify village-level impacts of the RSE scheme that are applicable and generalisable

across the five PICs included in this study. Consequently, only a small number of impacts were identified at the level of the community. There are, however, common themes that have emerged during fieldwork regarding positive and/or negative impacts of the scheme for families and workers. The following discussion is focused predominantly on these individual and household-level impacts.

Overall, the findings from the PIC stream fieldwork are positive. Workers and their families greatly value the opportunity to participate in the scheme, and informants consistently reported positive impacts from participation linked to the economic gains from paid seasonal work, the ability to use RSE earnings to improve living standards and further productive livelihoods at home and, in some instances, to gain skills in NZ that are of use to families and the community in the islands.

An abridged version of the key positive impacts is provided in Table 19, and the way in which the scheme is contributing to each impact (referred to as “contribution type”) is identified. The RSE scheme is making an unequivocal contribution to four key impacts (a direct contribution), while it is contributing in some way and to some extent to four other key impacts (an enabling or enabled contribution). (A full list of the contribution types is provided in [Appendix B: Contribution Analysis](#))

Table 19. RSE’s contribution to key positive impacts

Impact recipient(s)	Key positive impacts to which RSE is contributing	Intended/unintended	Contribution type
RSE households	RSE income provides workers and their families with a regular, reliable source of income that is used, first and foremost, to meet daily living needs and contributes to the economic wellbeing of participating households.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE households	RSE income is making a direct contribution to educational participation in those countries where fees are required for primary and/or secondary school attendance, and for payment of university fees.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE households	The money earned through RSE participation supports families to further existing economic activities and, in some instances, engage in new ones, such as the development of small business enterprises (e.g. local shops).	Intended	An enabled contribution
Women who are able to work overseas; Female partners of RSE workers	The RSE scheme is generating income earning opportunities for women - for RSE workers, and for women remaining at home.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE households & their community	Income from seasonal work can provide a substantial cash injection to aid disaster recovery efforts at the household and community levels.	Intended	An enabling contribution
RSE households & their community	Some workers/their family members report that participating in RSE and/or Vakameasina courses has enhanced existing soft/hard skills and/or led to new skills. Such skills may be transferable to their home environment (particularly horticultural production) and are being shared with extended family members.	Intended	A direct contribution
RSE workers’ community	RSE income is often distributed, directly or indirectly, beyond participating households to others in the community. This redistribution of income supports economic and social wellbeing in the community.	Intended	An enabling contribution
RSE workers’ community	RSE income is having a distributional effect in some Pacific communities through contributing to improvements in community-based services and facilities.	Intended	An enabling contribution

Where negative impacts have been identified, these cannot be generalised across all communities or countries. The impacts are context specific and depend on a range of influencing factors as identified in each of the impact summary tables in Parts 2, 3 and 4. A diversity of views was expressed by our village-based informants. Even in communities where negative impacts were identified, these views were expressed by some, but not all, informants. In the village where there was the strongest articulation of some negative impacts by various community members, no current or ex-RSE worker wanted to terminate RSE employment opportunities.

An abridged version of the key negative impacts is provided in Table 20. The primary stakeholder(s) with oversight of the issue and underlying problem is also shown. The RSE scheme is contributing directly to six of the seven key negative impacts. In villages with large numbers of residents offshore for seasonal work, RSE participation is one of many macro and meso factors influencing changing attitudes and behaviours that may, in some contexts, inhibit the practice of traditional values and governance at the village-level (an inhibiting contribution).

Table 20. RSE’s contribution to key negative impacts

Impact recipient(s)	Key negative impacts to which RSE is contributing	Intended/unintended	Contribution type	Primary stakeholder(s) with oversight of the underlying issue
PICs (excl. the Big 3) Non-RSE villages Non-RSE households	The capped environment of the RSE scheme, and direct recruitment by employers, contribute to continued unequal access to seasonal jobs and the associated uneven distribution of benefits, both within PICs and among PICs.	Unintended	A direct contribution	MBIE RSE employers LSUs PIC governments
RSE workers	Variable employment practices by some RSE employers, together with a lack of clarity about the way contract rates and deductions apply, create confusion and concern for some RSE workers about their employment conditions and calculation of earnings.	Unintended	A direct contribution	RSE employers MBIE LSUs
RSE workers RSE households	The amount of income available to RSE workers to remit/save is being eroded due to RSE wages not keeping pace with rising accommodation and transport costs, and other living costs.	Unintended	A direct contribution	RSE employers
RSE workers’ partners RSE workers’ family members (who support the partner)	In the absence of the RSE worker, the partner assumes additional responsibilities and/or experiences the stress of separation, both of which can be onerous. This is especially the case for women who have primary responsibility for childcare and household duties.	Intended	A direct contribution	RSE households Village leaders PIC governments
RSE workers’ children	Children of repeat returnees are missing significant periods of parenting year-on-year by one or both parents.	Unintended	A direct contribution	RSE households PIC governments
RSE households & communities	When the RSE policy was developed, it was expected that the scheme would lead to the withdrawal of labour from the village and this could, in turn, have some negative	Intended/unintended	A direct contribution	RSE employers Village leaders LSUs PIC governments

	impacts on village production. What was not intended was the extent and variety of impacts associated with the loss of labour in some source countries.			
RSE households & communities	In villages with large numbers of residents absent as seasonal workers, RSE participation is one of many macro and meso-level influences contributing to changing attitudes and behaviours which may, in turn, impact negatively on the practice of traditional values, leadership and governance at the village-level in some countries.	Unintended	An inhibiting contribution	PIC governments LSUs Village leaders RSE employers

Issues arising from key negative impacts

Eight issues arising from the key negative impacts that present actual or potential risk to the RSE scheme in general, and participating worker households and communities in particular, are discussed in this section. These are:

NZ-end issues

- Unequal opportunities to gain RSE employment.
- Worker concerns about wages, contracts and living conditions.
- Women’s participation in temporary seasonal work.
- The overall ‘value’ of RSE participation for workers.
- Making the RSE scheme more family-friendly.

PIC-end issues

- Actual and potential loss of youthful male labour in villages.
- Female partners of RSE workers – support to maintain household wellbeing during worker absence.
- The wellbeing of children of seasonal workers.

NZ-end issues

Unequal opportunities to gain RSE employment

As has been shown in Part 1 of the report, there are unequal opportunities among the nine participating PICs to gain RSE employment. The scheme continues to be dominated by three early-entry PICs – Vanuatu (46% of all Pacific worker arrivals in 2018/19), Samoa (21%), and Tonga (18%). Taken together, these three PICs accounted for 85 percent of all Pacific RSE worker arrivals in 2018/19. The remaining 15 percent of Pacific RSE worker arrivals came from the six remaining PICs – Kiribati and Tuvalu (early-entry PICs), Solomon Islands and PNG (later-entry), and Fiji and Nauru (most recent entry).

Within those PICs able to access RSE employment opportunities, there is unequal access across islands and communities with some villages having large numbers of RSE workers absent each season and others with relatively few or no RSE workers. In Vanuatu, evidence of such inequalities can be seen in the built environment where there are clear contrasts between the permanent materials houses built by RSE workers, and the more traditional thatched houses that are commonly lived in by those based in rural settings. Building a ‘good house’ is a key motivator for participation in seasonal work in Vanuatu (Smith, 2016), and the extent of permanent materials housing in the village is an indicator of

participation in the scheme. In villages in Tonga and Samoa, vehicles purchased with RSE income are a tangible indicator of RSE income, while in Kiribati ownership of a large flat-screen TV is a common marker of RSE participation.

The real extent of the problem of unequal distribution of RSE opportunities in Vanuatu and Tonga, the two biggest suppliers of seasonal workers to NZ and Australia, is not known. Bailey & Rereman (2019) attempted to map the distribution of an estimated 7,000 ni-Vanuatu workers participating in the RSE and SWP in 2017/18, but due to a lack of data held by the Employment Services Unit (ESU), the records of only 2,992 workers could be analysed. This meant less than half of the total number of workers participating in the two schemes were reflected in the results of their study.¹³⁶ The difficulties in understanding the distribution of RSE opportunities in Tongan and ni-Vanuatu villages became evident during the fieldwork for this study when it was impossible to find out how many households have participated in the RSE scheme and the SWP.

It would be useful for PIC governments, RSE employers and the NZ government to know exactly how RSE opportunities are currently distributed across communities within a PIC to enable gaps to be identified. This could be achieved through spatial mapping of the locations and numbers of current RSE and SWP workers. Without this information it is difficult to understand the true extent of impacts associated with offshore seasonal work. Technical assistance and financial resourcing from NZ could assist PICs to undertake a spatial mapping exercise.¹³⁷

While the problem of unequal opportunities for RSE employment among and within Pacific States plays out at the PIC-end, the cause of the problem is predominantly at the NZ-end. The cause is multi-dimensional involving a range of stakeholders as summarised below.

RSE policy:

- The capped nature of the RSE scheme together with relatively small annual increases in the cap means there is limited opportunity for Kiribati, Fiji, Tuvalu, PNG, Solomon Islands and Nauru to increase their worker numbers via cap increases.
- The lack of a quota-based system that allocates new places available from cap increases to PICs other than the 'Big 3' makes it difficult to address this issue.

RSE employers:

- Worker recruitment is predominantly employer-led. Over time, RSE employers usually develop preferences for workers from specific PICs. They also prefer return workers who have the required skills to be productive as soon as they arrive in NZ.
- Whereas in the early days of the scheme, employers recruited from the work ready pools administered by PIC governments, many employers now prefer more direct recruitment approaches for identifying new recruits. RSE team leaders and return workers are often asked

¹³⁶ Bailey, R. & Rereman, J. (2019). Vanuatu's seasonal workers: Where are they from? *Devpolicy Blog*, 8 January 2019. Retrieved from <https://devpolicy.org/vanuatu-workers-20190108/>

¹³⁷ Asking questions about participation in offshore seasonal work in the next round of national censuses in participating PICs is one method of getting this information. Samoa's Bureau of Statistics has done this in their 2011 and 2016 Population and Housing Censuses with summary data available at the village level. Vanuatu's 2009 Census and 2016 Mini-Census also included questions on participation in seasonal work, with data available at the Area Council level. It would be useful to have data on household's participation in RSE and SWP at the village level in Tonga and Vanuatu in their next full population censuses.

to identify suitable candidates for employment as a reward for their productivity. Such approaches may lead to RSE jobs staying within extended families rather than being distributed more widely among households which have not been able to access seasonal work to date.

Labour recruiters:

- NZ-based and locally-based labour recruiters contracted by RSE employers add a further layer of complexity to worker recruitment. Recruiters often have preferred places for recruiting workers which are linked to the locations where they have personal networks, including their extended family. This can produce systematic biases in the selection of places where recruits will be sought.

PIC governments:

- With the exception of Kiribati and Fiji, the governments and their associated LSUs examined in the PIC stream countries have not attempted to direct where seasonal workers are recruited from thus enabling RSE employers and their agents to recruit from wherever they choose. This has had the dual effect of allowing concentration of recruitment from specific areas, as well as diluting the pro-poor focus that was originally intended for the scheme in countries such as Tonga.¹³⁸

MBIE:

- In line with the employer-led principle of the scheme, MBIE has a hands-off approach to where and how employers recruit workers. However, since the scheme's inception the Ministry has informally encouraged RSE employers seeking increases in worker numbers to recruit from PICs other than Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga.

There are a number of potential mechanisms, suggested by the authors, to address how employment opportunities can be spread more equitably among PICs, and within a PIC (listed below). These mechanisms could also help to mitigate against the negative impacts on village life associated with the regular withdrawal of productive labour from the community. In addition, they could help to address the risk for seasonal worker households becoming unduly dependent on the income earned overseas, as a result of repetitive absences of household members for significant periods each year. Examples of such households were observed during interviews with workers and family members as described in Table 13. Economic drivers for seasonal work participation (pp.41-42).

The suggested mechanisms include the following. It is acknowledged that some of these mechanisms will not be popular with certain stakeholder groups.

MBIE/RSE policy:

- Large RSE employers (300+ RSE workers) who regularly secure increases in worker numbers of more than a specified minimum of workers each year (say 20) could be required to recruit at least half of their new recruits from PICs other than Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.¹³⁹
- New RSE employers could be required to recruit their workers from countries other than Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.

¹³⁸ Gibson, J., McKenzie, D. & Rohorua, H. (2008).

¹³⁹ There were 149 RSE employers in 2018/19. Ten (6.7%) of them employed 300 or more workers and accounted for 5,691 (45.2%) of the total number of 12,581 Pacific and Asian RSE workers.

- In allocating new places in the scheme that arise with approved increases in the cap, priority could be given to employment opportunities for women and for workers from countries with low participation rates.
- A new incentive and recognition system could be implemented for RSE employers to reward those employers who are 'best practice' and encourage others to improve their employment practices. Employers would be awarded a different status (gold, silver, bronze) based on a range of criteria,¹⁴⁰ including their current recruitment practices. Employers who are making a concerted effort to recruit from countries other than the 'Big 3', and/or to recruit women, attain a high score on those criteria. If an RSE employer scores highly across the different criteria they would be granted 'gold status' which could qualify them for new RSE worker numbers if requested, and a multi-year ATR.

For PICs with large numbers of RSE and SWP workers, the challenge is to ensure a more equitable distribution of seasonal work opportunities and income across communities. This means PIC governments will need to be more active in managing labour mobility policy settings within their larger strategic contexts of national employment and workforce planning.

In relation to participation in the RSE scheme, these PICs may wish to consider the following options:

- PIC governments could place a limit on the number of seasons a worker can return to NZ to work, and/or introduce a stand-down period after a specified number of years of worker participation in the RSE scheme.
- PIC governments could become more directive with RSE employers and labour recruiters about the communities from which they can recruit, targeting villages that do not have seasonal workers.
- In some PICs, as appropriate, a greater role could be given to village and district leaders in identifying suitable workers whose absence will not harm the wellbeing of the community.
- An in-country quota system could be introduced to spread labour mobility work opportunities among islands and communities (as is the case in Kiribati).
- An approval process for inter-generational transfers of employment opportunities within families could be introduced. This would allow for wider redistribution of work opportunities as people from individual families leave the RSE workforce. Children would not automatically have the right to take their parent's place in the scheme.

The problem of inequitable access by Kiribati, Tuvalu, PNG, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Fiji to RSE work opportunities in the context of capped worker numbers is one that requires attention. We note that this issue has been excluded from the RSE Policy Review which recommends that existing work

¹⁴⁰ Industry leaders are considering a recognition system for RSE employers as part of the thinking around RSE worker allocations under the annual cap. The range of criteria against which an employer would be assessed include: training and employment of New Zealanders, wage rates, deductions, accommodation standards, RSE recruitment practices, and growth projections (ha planted). RSE employer's individual ratings would be considered alongside regional factors including the local unemployment rate, regional growth projections, availability of housing and other infrastructure to cater for more workers. The rating system would need to be flexible enough to differentiate between large and small RSE employers, their different workforce needs and recruitment practices.

to influence RSE employer selection decisions outside of RSE policy settings should continue.¹⁴¹ Despite MBIE making considerable efforts in this regard for some years, the minimal number of worker arrivals from these five PICs in the 2018/19 season, relative to the numbers recruited from the ‘Big 3’ suggest that these efforts need to be reviewed and new strategies considered.

RSE wages, contracts and living conditions

Many of the concerns raised by workers, RSE Liaison Officers and PIC government officials relate to issues at the core of the RSE policy. The policy, as it currently stands, allows some of these practices of concern to continue. Many of the issues discussed in this section can be addressed by the RSE Policy Review.

- The policy requires RSE employers to “ensure that workers will be paid no less than the market rate (which is the typical rate a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder is paid for doing the equivalent work, in the same period, in the same region) for actual hours worked”.¹⁴² There is no requirement to reward RSE workers’ horticultural skills and/or years of RSE work experience, enabling employers to pay workers no more than the minimum hourly rate. Despite annual increases in the minimum hourly wage, such increases are not keeping pace with workers’ accommodation and transport costs in NZ. This raises questions about whether workers’ ‘real’ income after deductions are stagnating or decreasing (discussed below in the section “The overall ‘value’ of RSE participation for workers”).
- The policy requires payment for an average of 30 hours/week but has no parameters around how this is calculated, allowing RSE employers to average out earnings over the term of the contract to meet this minimum.¹⁴³ This practice undermines the incentives associated with piece rates which reward workers for quick, accurate work. Workers’ financial rewards for hard work on dry days when crops are ready to be picked are offset by wet days when they are unable to work or on days when there is a limited number of hours’ work available due to crops being unready to harvest. While this practice is allowed under RSE policy, it is not understood by RSE workers who assume they are getting paid fully for the work they have completed. The averaging of hours worked also reduces incentives for employers to find alternative work (like weeding) on days when it is too wet to pick fruit.
- While deductions are required to “be for a specified purpose and for actual, reasonable, verifiable expenses”,¹⁴⁴ there are no standardised parameters around what is deemed chargeable as a deduction or “reasonable” with respect to deductions for transport, meals and accommodation charges (in relation to the quality of beds and facilities provided).¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ MBIE (2019). Review of Pacific migration policies – proposed scope and sequencing. Briefing Paper to the Minister of Immigration. Confidential, unpublished report.

¹⁴² <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/employ-migrants/hire-a-candidate/employer-criteria/recognised-seasonal-employer/apply-rse-status>

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ As part of the ATR application process, employers are required to submit all proposed deductions to Immigration New Zealand (INZ). INZ staff review them in consultation with the Labour Inspectorate. There is nothing in the current Immigration Instructions (policy) to determine how “reasonable” should be assessed. The Labour Inspectors use their local knowledge and precedent to determine what is reasonable. RSE workers are expected to pay a fair rent, power and other living costs associated with accommodation, transport and meals. RSE employers must not profit from RSE workers’ contributions to living costs.

- The policy does not include any formal mechanisms for workers to raise issues of concern and for the resolution of disputes (discussed below).

While there are many RSE employers who meet the standards required by NZ Employment law, the findings indicate that there are some RSE employers that are not meeting all of the requirements of the law or RSE policy. Examples mentioned during interviews with workers included:

- The employment contract signed by the worker before they leave their country changes after they arrive in NZ;
- Workers are not always told at the start of the day about the piece rate(s) for the tasks they will perform that day;
- There is no explanation provided for increases in rates for the same accommodation and same transport provision;
- There are deficiencies in the provision of facilities such as showers and toilets for large groups in some accommodation complexes or, in the case of toilets, in the field.

Failure to meet requirements of New Zealand’s Employment law and RSE policy undermine the reputation of the RSE scheme and have the potential to seriously damage horticulture exports to overseas markets.¹⁴⁶

Lastly, there is the issue of how workers can be helped to raise issues and concerns about work in a “safe” manner so they do not feel they are compromising their future RSE employment prospects. As the findings indicate, there are structural and cultural barriers that discourage workers from raising concerns – the power imbalance between workers and their employer being the most ubiquitous. We acknowledge that this is a difficult issue to address. A two-step process is suggested – firstly, examining dispute resolution approaches used by other temporary seasonal work schemes and the effectiveness of such approaches; and secondly, convening a working group of RSE employers, RSE Liaison Officers, RSE team leader representatives and Vakameasina tutors to work on developing dispute resolution processes that workers will feel empowered to use.

Women’s participation in temporary seasonal work

Migration for employment is a long-standing practice in the Pacific. Traditionally this form of temporary movement has been undertaken mainly by men. In several Pacific societies cultural norms around the division of labour in households have restricted opportunities for women to be temporary migrants.¹⁴⁷

In recent years, a small number of Pacific women - approximately 1,000 per annum for the RSE scheme, and between 1,000-2,000 for the SWP - have chosen to take up temporary seasonal work

¹⁴⁶ There is increasing pressure on global exporters to adopt socially sustainable and ethical employment practices linked with the advent of legislation such as the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015. Global companies (e.g. Tesco and Sainsbury’s supermarkets in the UK) are examining their supply chains and require assurance systems that drill down into the social practices of suppliers. Horticulture is NZ’s fourth largest export and the perceptions of international buyers are a powerful incentive for NZ producers to meet quality standards through compliance with labour laws.

¹⁴⁷ There were exceptions, especially during the colonial era, including some circular migration of women for employment as copra cutters on plantations in Vanuatu and coffee pickers in the Highlands of New Guinea. Generally, however, it has been uncommon for women to be away from their children for long periods.

overseas enabling them to earn levels of income that are otherwise inaccessible in the village.^{148 149} In particular, seasonal work offers opportunities for unpartnered women and older women, without responsibilities for dependents, to gain paid employment which is unavailable in rural settings at home.

As noted in Part 2 (“Women’s participation in the RSE scheme”), despite MBIE’s efforts to encourage RSE employers to recruit women, the percentage of women as a proportion of the total number of RSE arrivals has declined as the RSE annual cap has increased. MBIE and MFAT continue to place emphasis on identifying ways for women to be more included in the RSE end-to-end process through targeted support. It is important, however, that such efforts do not become a matter of simply improving the gender balance in seasonal worker statistics. The findings have confirmed the need for PIC-specific values relating to women to be respected and accommodated. The focus must be on appropriate work, safe working and living arrangements, culturally appropriate accommodation arrangements, and suitable arrangements for dependents left behind.

We interviewed several partnered and unpartnered women RSE workers (aged from early twenties to early fifties) who described how they enjoy their work and life in NZ for periods of up to nine months each year. They have become accustomed to moving between and living in two countries. Those with dependent care responsibilities have negotiated successful care arrangements with other family members who benefit from the workers’ incomes. Case studies of such women workers from individual PICs could be developed and made available to the LSU and the relevant Women’s ministry to disseminate to appropriate audiences in the PIC. Case studies of RSE employers who employ RSE women in a wider range of crops and roles than those generally recognised as ‘women’s work’ could also be developed and distributed among RSE employers.

The overall ‘value’ of RSE participation for workers

Temporary seasonal migration involves sustaining lives in two places – the household at home and the worker in NZ. The relatively low movement of RSE pay rates over the twelve years of the scheme, the absence of any requirement for employers to reward skills and experience, and the increasing cost of worker accommodation and other employer deductions, raises questions about the extent to which workers and their families are keeping up financially from regular RSE participation.¹⁵⁰ As the RSE Remittance Surveys of earnings of 237 Samoan, Tongan and ni-Vanuatu workers from the 2014/15 and 2016 seasons demonstrate, between 30 and 40 percent of gross earnings went towards tax payments and employer deductions, significantly reducing the amounts available to remit home or to save (Bedford & Bedford, 2017).

¹⁴⁸ In 2016/17 there were 770 female SWP workers from Pacific countries. By 2018/19 this number had increased to over 1,700 women. The majority of the Pacific women were recruited from Vanuatu (51%) and Tonga (37%) (Unpublished data from the Department of Home Affairs, 2019).

¹⁴⁹ Chattier (2019) notes that from the outset of the SWP in July 2012, participation of women has been low. In the five years 2012-2017, male participation was 86.3% while female participation was 13.7%. In the year to 30 June 2019 the female participation rate was 16.4% of the total number of SWP arrivals; higher than NZ’s female participate rate of 9.75 percent.

¹⁵⁰ It is acknowledged that factors such as crop quality, weather conditions, and the availability of full days of work every day influence how much a worker earns in a given season.

A detailed examination of the costs of participation for workers – prior to departure, in NZ, and on their return home – was out of scope of the Impact Study. This is an area that requires examination. Since the scheme began, there has not been a comprehensive assessment of these end-to-end costs. Without this information it is impossible to know whether RSE participation provides sufficient financial rewards to be “worth” the sacrifice for families to be separated for long periods of time and in some cases, over multiple years (discussed further below). Some former RSE workers who were interviewed had decided that there was a better overall return for the family if they stayed at home, contributing to cash cropping and food production for the family, care of children and elders, general household management and attending to village responsibilities. An assessment of end-to-end costs could be undertaken by MBIE (using routinely collected information from RSE employers about worker earnings and deductions) in association with PIC governments who could provide information about the upfront in-country costs and possible costs on return home.

Making RSE more family-friendly

Each Pacific government participating in the RSE scheme has an IAU with MBIE setting out “the arrangements to facilitate access of [named PIC] nationals to seasonal work in the horticulture and viticulture industries under New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer Work Policy”, and identifying the critical success outcomes for both the PIC and NZ.

It is interesting to note that the focus of the IAU is only on the worker – there is no recognition of the workers’ family who, as the findings demonstrate, are active participants in ensuring circular migration for seasonal work is both a viable and a rewarding option for individual workers. There is a need for greater acknowledgment of and support for the important role that partners (discussed further below in the section “Female partners of RSE workers – support to maintain household wellbeing during worker absence”), children and other family members play in supporting their RSE worker to be away from home for a lengthy period. As an important first step, the wellbeing of family remaining at home could be incorporated into the critical success outcomes for the RSE policy listed in the IAU.

Despite physical and emotional separation of loved ones being an accepted aspect of seasonal work, it is still a sacrifice for the worker and those left at home. The findings highlight the need to mitigate potential damage to marriages, parent-child relationships and child wellbeing as a result of repeated worker absences by making the RSE scheme more family-friendly. Changes to existing visa settings for RSE workers and their families that would support this include:

- a multi-entry visa for workers enabling them to return home for family emergencies, important family events, and periods when there is no work during the season. A multi-entry visa would reduce compliance costs for employers, PIC governments and INZ, as well as reducing visa costs for RSE workers (Quirk, 2019).¹⁵¹
- family members being able to visit workers while they are in NZ.

Another way to make RSE more family-friendly is through improved digital connection between workers and their family. Advances in digital technology (and the widespread use of social media) over the 12 years since the scheme’s inception mean cell phones are now an essential communication tool enabling daily interaction between the worker and his/her family. Yet as has been shown, the cost for

¹⁵¹ Quirk, B. (2019). RSE recruitment and visa reinforcing cycle. Options for an RSE multiple limited visa. Unpublished report for the RSE Impact Study: PIC stream.

workers to purchase cell phone plans relative to their earnings is expensive. RSE employers could be encouraged to provide:

- high speed, free digital connections in RSE accommodation that will cater for the number of workers living there.¹⁵²
- financial support to workers for mobile phone data plans. The level of support could be an amount based on the number of months the worker is in New Zealand.

At the PIC-end, digital providers could be approached to offer cell phone packages for seasonal worker households at a reduced rate. Efforts to support seasonal workers' access to mobile data have occurred in the past. Digicel in Vanuatu, for example, used to offer seasonal workers reasonable roaming rates that were more competitive than NZ providers. Digicel's charges have, however, increased over the past two years (Bailey, 2019a). More work is required to understand what current mobile data options are available to workers in different PICs, and how best to support their communication with families at home.

PIC-end issues

Actual and potential loss of youthful male labour in villages

Negotiating more access to employment opportunities in NZ and Australia has been a high priority for most of the independent Pacific States for many years.¹⁵³ This priority was at the forefront of the Pacific response to the PACER Plus negotiations and resulted in the *Arrangement on Labour Mobility*. This Arrangement, in turn, provided the impetus for the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM) which is held, in alternate years, in NZ, Australia and a PIC that has agreed to be part of the PACER Plus Agreement. This macro-level approach to labour mobility on a regional scale is a clear signal that Pacific governments that are signatories to PACER Plus consider labour mobility to be a significant contributor to their social and economic development.

As has been shown in Part 1 of this report, labour mobility linked with the NZ and Australian seasonal work schemes is having different impacts on the male labour forces of rural populations in the five PICs. In two of the main suppliers of seasonal labour, Tonga and Vanuatu, some villages are losing between a third and half of their male labour force aged 20-49 years for between six and nine months a year to overseas employers. In these PICs, as well as in Samoa where the young untitled men have specific responsibilities in the village, interviews generated mixed responses to questions about impacts of the seasonal work schemes on local labour supply. There was repeated reference to some negative impacts of recruitment from specific age groups.

While none of the families with absentee seasonal workers wanted to lose access to offshore seasonal employment, they did note that repeated returns to work in successive years was affecting their economic and social activities in the village. This was especially noticeable in villages with a lot of land

¹⁵² It is acknowledged however that some rural locations in New Zealand do not yet have access either to broadband or high-speed internet.

¹⁵³ The independent Pacific States do not include the self-governing countries like the Cook Islands and Niue or the colony of Tokelau where their populations have automatic access to New Zealand citizenship. Also excluded are the colonies of France (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna) and the United States (American Samoa, Guam).

in crop production – a shortage of young male workers was resulting in declines in production and, over time, a move away from reliance on local economic activity for livelihoods to increasing dependence on incomes earned overseas for family wellbeing. Some village leaders questioned the desirability of this as a long-term strategy for developing sustainable rural livelihoods in the islands. This issue requires further investigation at the village level.

By definition, seasonal labour migration takes workers away from their homes for variable periods of time and adjustments to the absences of younger men in particular have to be made to accommodate the reduced availability of local labour. But the policies underpinning the schemes also have specific objectives to assist families and communities in the rural Pacific to develop sustainable lives at home. The requirement for workers to return home at the end of each season prevents them from establishing long-term livelihoods in New Zealand or Australia.

The development of rural communities is a priority for most PICs. Offshore seasonal labour migration needs to be managed in ways that support sustainable development of resources and the long-term well-being of residents in these communities. This is an issue that is receiving greater attention by Ministries overseeing labour migration in Tonga and Vanuatu in the development of their labour migration policies.

RSE employers and recruitment agents also have a responsibility to understand the risks associated with depleting productive labour from villages and to take this into consideration with regard to their recruitment practices. Socially responsible recruitment also involves balancing the numbers of return and new workers, and making RSE jobs available to PICs and villages that have not yet had such opportunities.

Female partners of RSE workers – support to maintain household wellbeing during worker absence

The temporary nature of seasonal work means that workers need to maintain a household, family relationships, and livelihood at home. If the worker is partnered, the key person who enables this to happen is the worker's partner. Given the gendered nature of seasonal labour mobility, this person is more likely to be a woman (Chattier, 2019). The findings highlight the important role that female partners play in seasonal work by maintaining the household and ensuring the wellbeing of household members, especially children. Knowing that family back home continues to thrive in his absence enables the worker to focus on work in NZ. The partner's role assumes greater importance in households where the husband is repeatedly absent for seasonal work.

Given the important role played by the worker's partner in seasonal work, more could be done to recognise and support women at home. This could involve a collaborative effort by PIC governments, Pacific-based NGOs, and MBIE and MFAT via Toso Vaka o Manū. Support activities such as those suggested below, would not only contribute to family wellbeing but would also enable the RSE household to gain greater value out of their participation in the scheme through improved information and a more deliberate targeting of new training opportunities.

Prior to the worker's departure:

- Improved preparation of the worker's family for the worker's absence. Ideally, such household preparation workshops should be separate from, and prior to, the pre-departure workshop and would need to be delivered in the workers' village, not at a main centre as is the case with

pre-departure training. The workshop could be delivered by trained ex-RSE workers in the community where new recruits are coming from. The workshop could focus on goal setting for RSE earnings, strategies for the family to manage financially in the weeks before the worker is able to start sending money home, understanding the impact of deductions on savings/remittances,¹⁵⁴ financial planning/management, and strategies for partners and children to cope in the worker's absence. Financial training was a consistent request from female partners of male workers, particularly from households unused to sizeable cash incomes. This demand is congruent with findings from a study by Chatterier (2019) about contemporary expectations of gender roles in Tonga and Vanuatu in light of seasonal work. In both countries, "the good husband" is the main income earner, while "the good wife" (p.57) manages household finances as well as contributing to the household income.¹⁵⁵

- During the worker's absence:
 - o A support network for families of seasonal workers developed by a group of long-standing RSE households in Port Vila (Vanuatu) demonstrates support options that can be made available to women and children at home. The Strengthening Seasonal Worker's Family Program (SSWFP), established in 2011-12, provides a range of activities to support RSE and SWP families including childcare support, counselling services, and monthly fundraisers where the proceeds are donated (on a rotation system) to seasonal worker households to contribute towards household expenses. The SSWFP also provides loans to assist workers and their families to establish new businesses (Bailey, 2019b).
 - o Training and mentoring for female partners at home to support the seeding and development of enterprises using RSE income (Bailey & Kautoke-Holani, 2018).¹⁵⁶

The wellbeing of children of seasonal workers

There is a substantive literature on the impact of absent workers on children remaining at home in countries with long histories of labour migration.¹⁵⁷ A 2003 study undertaken by the Scalabrini Migration Centre in the Philippines on the children of migrant parents who remain at home surveyed 1,443 children covering a wide range of indicators including education, physical and mental health, and vulnerability to abuse.¹⁵⁸ The key findings are presented below. While Pacific cultures and

¹⁵⁴ Such information would help to avoid situations reported by informants where families of new workers expect higher levels of earnings to be sent home than actually occurs.

¹⁵⁵ The World Bank's (2018) recent research on the social impacts of seasonal migration to Australia reports similar findings. The good wife and mother is "always self-sacrificing, hardworking, a primary carer of children and elderly, household coordinator and manager, spends remittances wisely, and has the support of her husband and community" (World Bank, 2018, p.25).

¹⁵⁶ In her research in Tonga, Kautoke-Holani (2017) found that spouses of SWP workers play an important role in income diversification and investment in business activities. She suggests a range of ways to further support women entrepreneurship including: skills training, access to finance for small businesses, development of business opportunities for women's collectives/groups, engagement of women in pre-departure training including development of household plans for income diversification, and sharing of information between women entrepreneurs and those looking to establish businesses.

¹⁵⁷ A significant body of literature on transnational families and children left behind comes out of South East Asia. For a review of recent literature see Graham et al. (2012).

¹⁵⁸ Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ECMI)-CBCP/ Apostleship of the Sea(AOS)-Manila, Scalabrini Migration Centre and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) (2004). *Hearts Apart: Migration in the Eyes of Filipino Children*. Manila: ECMI-CBCP/AOS-Manila, SMC and OWWA.

contexts are very different to those of the Philippines, the study's findings about household division of labour and the importance of access to communication are congruent with the PIC stream findings.

- There are more obvious changes to household division of labour when mothers are away. When fathers are absent, the mother picks up the father's duties. When mothers are away, caregiving is generally picked up by other female family members, not necessarily by the father.¹⁵⁹
- The importance of access to communication while parents are absent, enabling the absent parent to continue being part of the family and maintain a parenting role.
- The critical role played by the extended family in helping children cope with parental absence.
- The important role of teachers as part of the support system for children.

Research by Rohorua, Gibson, McKenzie and Matinez (2009) undertaken in the first years of the RSE scheme examining how Tongan families cope with absent workers found no change in children's attendance at school. More recent insights are provided in an exploratory study of impacts on Tongan families in Lifuka, Ha'apai, by Moala-Tupou (2016) which found children aged 13-16 are more likely to have increased housework and farm work responsibilities during their parent's or older sibling's absence, reducing their time and energy to devote to schoolwork. Children may have impaired educational performance (e.g. incomplete homework), while some may drop out from school at an early stage.

On the one hand, children are benefitting from RSE income through the funding of their school education, and in some cases, tertiary studies. For many of the worker parents interviewed, a significant motivator to earn RSE income is to enable their children to access educational opportunities they did not have as children due to a lack of money. Children may also benefit from being able to access private health services paid for by RSE income (Samoa). They may be the recipients of sought-after electronics brought home by their parent such as Xboxes and other consumer goods.

On the other hand, children of repeat seasonal workers may not live as a physical family unit with one or both parents for months at a time, year after year. Their parent(s) is absent for significant milestones, such as birthdays and school graduations. The long-term effects of repetitive parental absences on Pacific children from seasonal work have yet to be comprehensively explored, for example:

- To what extent does the absence of one or both parents affect
 - o child bonding and attachment to the absent parent?
 - o children's development, health and emotional wellbeing?
 - o educational attendance and achievement?
- Who cares for the children when the mother or both parents are away? Does the care of children occur within the extended family? Beyond the extended family?
- What, if any, actual or potential child protection issues arise from parental absence(s)?
- What is the optimal time(s) during a child's life for the father/mother/both parents to be away for seasonal work? (i.e. pre-schooler/primary-aged/pre-teen/teenager).

¹⁵⁹ Graham et al. (2012) note that studies in the Philippines, Indonesia and other parts of South-East Asia have found that non-migrant fathers do take on more childcare when their wives migrate, but there is considerable debate about the extent of their involvement. It is common practice for other female family members to assist with these responsibilities.

- What is the optimal period of time over a season for children to be separated from their seasonal worker parent? Does the optimal period of time differ according to the child's age?
- What support mechanisms are currently in place for children of seasonal workers? What additional supports are needed?
- How can the carers of children of absent seasonal workers be supported in their role?

Conclusion

The Pacific stream report has presented key impacts – positive and negative; intended and unintended – that have occurred for RSE workers, their families and communities over the 12 years of the RSE scheme’s operation (2007/08 - 2018/19). Evidence has been presented showing that the impacts of the scheme are diverse across participating PICs and within individual PICs.

In the five PICs included in the PIC stream, the scheme is having most impact in Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa which, between them, provide 85 percent of the RSE workers. In the other two PICs examined in the Pacific stream - Kiribati and Fiji - the scheme is having negligible impact beyond participating households because the number of RSE workers is small and workers are spread thinly across numerous communities, districts and islands.

Within RSE households, the intended impact of RSE participation, to improve the economic wellbeing of participating families, is being achieved. The scheme provides families with a regular, reliable source of income to pay for daily living costs, improve housing standards, meet education-related costs, and invest in economic activities. RSE income is generally having a distributional effect in the worker’s community as it is shared beyond participating households through activities such as church contributions and payment of waged village labour to help family left at home.

The findings indicate, however, that not all communities benefit equally from RSE work opportunities. Many RSE employers prefer to use direct recruiting methods (rather than government-run work-ready pools) and to prioritise recruitment of experienced workers over new workers. This practice, while logical from the employer’s point of view, is creating disparities among villages, and among households within the same village.

Alongside tangible economic benefits for participating households is the potential for negative impacts for villages with large numbers of RSE (and SWP) workers. When the RSE policy was developed, it was acknowledged that the scheme would lead to the withdrawal of labour from the village for periods of time each year.

What was not intended was the extent and variety of impacts that the loss of labour would have on villages with large numbers of seasonal workers relative to the size and demography of the village population. In such villages, the removal of productive, predominantly male members is contributing to a decline in agricultural production and a lack of human resources required for community events such as funerals.

The RSE policy was based on the objective of “a triple win”, namely, that RSE employers, PICs and their workers would all benefit from the scheme. The findings raise questions about the extent to which the financial gains from seasonal work offset the social costs for workers and their families coping with lengthy periods of absence each year. The relatively low movement of RSE pay rates over the 12 years of the scheme, the absence of any requirement for employers to reward skills and experience, and the increasing cost of worker accommodation and other employer deductions indicate that this is an issue requiring attention in MBIE’s RSE Policy Review.

The findings suggest that the “triple win” framework needs to be broadened beyond employers, workers and island countries. The gendered nature of seasonal labour mobility, and the varied impacts

for female partners and children at home, suggests more could be done to recognise and support women at home, and families more generally, both prior to the worker's departure and during the worker's absence.

A general conclusion that can be drawn from the research for the Pacific stream is that while the RSE scheme is popular with key stakeholder groups in the participating PICs (workers, their families, the LSUs and PIC governments), the distribution of benefits from the scheme is uneven at the community, district/region and country levels. If the RSE scheme is to have a positive impact on the development of sustainable livelihoods in the source countries where workers and families must reside, then there need to be mechanisms in place to spread RSE job opportunities more evenly across PICs, and within individual PICs.

Workers' families and communities - the anchors of long-term wellbeing in island countries - have to feature more prominently in the scheme's framework and in the development of immigration policies that institutionalise short-term circular migration from the Pacific. In a strategic synthesis of key findings from the Pacific stream and the NZ stream, a more broadly-based framework for delivering "wins" from the RSE scheme will be explored that includes explicit reference to island-based families and communities.

Appendix A. Methodology

This appendix addresses the following topics about the methodology used in the Pacific stream:

- The overarching research questions for the RSE Impact Study
- The research sub-questions for the Pacific stream
- Out of scope topics
- The research team
- Pacific country sample
- Methods and data sources
- Coding and analysis of interview data
- Ensuring the validity of the findings
- Potential limitations
- Ethical protocols.

This appendix should be read in conjunction with Appendix B: Application of contribution analysis.

Overarching research questions

The RSE Impact Study has four overarching research questions:¹⁶⁰

1. What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme on, and for, communities in New Zealand?
2. What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme for Pacific workers and their island-based families?
3. What are the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme on, and for, Pacific communities?
4. What are the implications of the study findings for the future development of the RSE scheme?

Research question one was addressed in the NZ stream (November 2018 - April 2019), and questions two and three in the Pacific stream (April 2019 - January 2020). The fourth research question will be addressed in the Synthesis stage (February - April 2020).

Research sub-questions for the Pacific stream

The research sub-questions for the Pacific stream are detailed in Table A1. These questions focus on the social and economic impacts of the RSE scheme for workers, their families and communities in the islands, while also considering other factors that may contribute to change (positive and negative) at the household and village level. As RSE workers spend half or more of each year in New Zealand, some of the economic and social dimensions of their lives there have direct and indirect impacts on their families and communities in the islands. Consequently, several of the research sub-questions for the Pacific stream cover topics relating to living and employment conditions in New Zealand.

¹⁶⁰ RSE Impact Study Research Plan, 5 November 2018.

Table A1. Pacific stream research sub-questions

<p><i>Overarching research question two:</i> <i>What are the social and economic impacts of RSE for PIC workers and their island-based families?</i></p> <p><i>(Note: the first two sections relate to and address aspects of workers' experiences in NZ. The second two sections relate to impacts on workers and their island-based families).</i></p>
<p>ECONOMIC IMPACTS FOR WORKERS IN NZ</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent are the industry's productivity gains over the period 2008-2018 reflected in RSE workers' pay rates? Terms and conditions? Promotion/advancement opportunities? 2. What is the effect of rising accommodation and living costs on the amount of earnings that workers can save or remit home? What trade-offs are workers prepared to tolerate? 3. What are the impacts (actual and potential) for RSE workers that are contractually-tied to work with specific employers (a 'compliant' workforce)?¹⁶¹ 4. To what extent do RSE workers raise disputed employment issues? What mechanisms/avenues do workers use? How effective are these? What additional avenues/mechanisms are required? 5. What barriers exist for workers to raise employment issues?
<p>SOCIAL IMPACTS FOR WORKERS IN NZ</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. To what extent is workers' wellbeing supported by RSE employers and pastoral care providers while they are in New Zealand? (i.e. faith-based and cultural activities; maintaining contact with home; mental and physical health)? 7. To what extent do RSE workers experience support from the local NZ community they are living in? 8. To what extent do RSE workers need support from island-based kin or NZ-based kin to cover their initial costs during the early months of their employment in NZ (e.g. while repaying loans from their employers for half their airfares, accommodation costs and other deductions for transport and insurance)?
<p>ECONOMIC IMPACTS FOR WORKERS AND FAMILIES AT HOME</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. To what extent, and in what ways, has the RSE scheme impacted on RSE workers and their families? 10. In what ways have RSE remittances changed the economic behaviour of RSE households? 11. What are the other major sources of monetary incomes, aside from RSE remittances, for participating households? 12. What are the positive economic impacts (actual and potential), for RSE households, arising from participation/repeated participation in seasonal labour migration overseas? 13. What are the negative economic impacts, for RSE households, arising from participation/repeated participation in seasonal labour migration overseas? 14. What are some of the unintended economic impacts for RSE households arising from participation/repeated participation in seasonal labour migration overseas? 15. What challenges (economic and / or social) face workers when they return to their communities after an absence/repeated absences overseas undertaking seasonal work? 16. To what extent, and in what ways, are skills gained through workers' employment and living in New Zealand contributing to economic and social wellbeing of workers and their families back in the village?
<p>SOCIAL IMPACTS FOR WORKERS AND FAMILIES AT HOME</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. What are the social impacts on families of the absence/repeated absence of adult male and/or female RSE workers for lengthy periods overseas? How significant/important are these social impacts for Pacific families? 18. To what extent do community-based infrastructure and services support the wellbeing of families with workers absent? (i.e. faith-based and cultural activities; assisting with meeting household needs; providing support at times of crisis)? 19. What gaps/deficiencies exist in the provision of support services for RSE families? 20. What strategies have been developed to mitigate any adverse social impacts on the family?

¹⁶¹ This term refers to the limitations placed on RSE workers as a result of their temporary work visa in NZ which restricts their employment to a particular RSE employer.

Overarching research question three:

What are the social and economic impacts of RSE on, and for, Pacific communities?

(Note: these questions focus on impacts on communities, not specific workers or families)

ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON PIC COMMUNITIES

21. How has the temporary withdrawal of labour from the village for seasonal work overseas changed economic behaviour and practices of the village, including sustainability of the village economy?
22. In what ways have RSE remittances changed the nature of the village economy?
23. What are the other major sources of monetary incomes, aside from RSE remittances, for participating communities?
24. What are the positive economic impacts, for communities, that can arise from participation in seasonal labour migration overseas?
25. What are the negative economic impacts, for communities, that can arise from participation in seasonal labour migration overseas?
26. What are some of the unintended economic impacts, for communities, that have arisen as a result of participation in seasonal labour migration overseas?

IMPACTS ON PIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

27. What are the effects of the annual circulation of RSE workers on community services (including the church) and facilities (schools, medical services, social support)?
28. What strategies have been developed to mitigate any adverse effects on community-based services and facilities due to the repeated absences of RSE workers?

SOCIAL IMPACTS ON PIC COMMUNITIES

29. What are the social impacts on communities of repeated absences of male and/or female RSE workers overseas? How significant/important are these social impacts for Pacific communities?
30. To what extent, and in what ways does repeated absence of RSE workers affect the social fabric/dynamics of the local community (positive and negative effects)?
31. What are the effects on the maintenance of community cohesion and social control of the annual circulation of RSE workers?
32. What strategies have been developed to mitigate adverse effects for community cohesion?

Out of scope topics

As agreed with MBIE, the following topics were determined to be out of scope for the Pacific stream. An initial list of out of scope topics was contained in the RSE Impact Study Research Plan (dated 5 November 2018).

- A quantitative analysis of the economic impacts of the RSE scheme for participating workers, households and communities.¹⁶²
- Effectiveness of the operation of Labour Sending Units.
- Effectiveness of RSE worker pre-departure training, health and police checks.
- Visa processing for RSE workers.
- Detailed examination of RSE worker earnings.
- Detailed examination of the financial costs associated with RSE worker participation.
- Evaluation of the nature and quality of RSE pastoral care provision.
- The operation and effectiveness of Vakameasina.

¹⁶² At the time the Impact Study was scoped, a separate economic analysis of impacts, similar to the World Bank-funded longitudinal surveys of development impacts of the RSE scheme in Tonga and Vanuatu (2007-10), was proposed. This economic analysis was not deemed feasible because of costs.

- RSE operational requirements/processes. (This topic was addressed in an Operational Review of the RSE scheme recently completed by MBIE).
- Detailed examination of the barriers for Pacific women to participate in the scheme. (Further work is being considered by agencies to understand how best to provide support for Pacific women's participation in labour mobility).

The research team

The study's three principal researchers were joined by seven research associates for the Pacific stream. They included locally-based indigenous associates as well as New Zealand-based Samoan, Tongan and I-Kiribati associates. One of the key areas examined in the Pacific stream is the impact of RSE on mothers/wives/daughters when a male member of the household is absent for lengthy periods of the year, potentially over successive seasons. Researching themes relating to these impacts required female research associates with links into the villages where the RSE workers reside.

The Pacific research associates undertook a range of tasks including facilitating introductions at the village-level and organising interviews, introducing the researchers to informants in a culturally appropriate manner (discussed below),¹⁶³ providing interpreting services, and, in four communities, conducting and writing up records of interviews.

Involving Pacific research associates in the interviews enhanced the quality and diversity of the information obtained from respondents. In Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati, the research associates often conducted the interviews, speaking in the informant's lingua franca which helped to establish trust and build a rapport. Interviews with women (female RSE workers, workers' partners and other female household members) were largely conducted by female Pacific research associates/ community-based assistants to help encourage open dialogue on topics that may have been deemed too sensitive to discuss with a male present. In Vanuatu, the principal researcher spoke the lingua franca and conducted the interviews. A community-based assistant (described below) was present in all interviews in Vanuatu, and was able to provide additional interpreting services if required.

In addition to the research associates, there were community-based assistants in all communities who also supported the principal researcher with fieldwork. These assistants, who were often RSE team leaders at home in their villages between seasons, helped the principal researcher to locate RSE workers and family members for interviews, provided transport (driving the principal researcher to/from interviews) and, where appropriate, facilitated introductions to community leaders and other informants.

Pacific country sample

Selection of Pacific countries

The five countries participating in the Pacific stream were selected in conjunction with MBIE and MFAT for the following reasons.

¹⁶³ For example, in Samoa there is a particular format required for the introduction to a matai that is different from introductions to untitled men and women.

- Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa were selected because as suppliers of the highest numbers of RSE workers, these PICs would provide the most evidence of impact (positive, negative, intended, unintended, actual and potential) on participating households and communities.¹⁶⁴
- Kiribati faces barriers to participation in the RSE scheme associated with distance and high travel costs for workers and employers. Over the years MBIE has made considerable efforts to facilitate Kiribati's participation in the scheme, starting with a series of small, targeted recruitment drives of women in 2009. As a result, Kiribati has consistently had the highest female participation rate (as a percentage of the total number of RSE arrivals). In 2018/19, 36 percent (95 workers) of all I-Kiribati RSE arrivals (263) were women. In addition, I-Kiribati workers have often been employed on joint ATRs where workers are shifted between employers, regions and crops, and may be in New Zealand for up to nine months. These longer periods of employment may present particular challenges for I-Kiribati workers and their families as they cope with extended periods of absence.
- Fiji was a late entrant to the RSE scheme, formalising their engagement in 2014 and sending their first workers to NZ for the 2014/15 season. Fiji is included in the study for two reasons: (i) as a relative latecomer to RSE, the impacts of the scheme on Fijian families and communities may differ from those in countries that have been involved in RSE since its introduction in 2007; and (ii) Fiji has adopted a model of recruitment that has a strong pro-poor focus, targeting isolated rural communities with agricultural farming experience. The group of Fijian RSE women workers involved in the study were an example of this pro-poor focus. The women were selected by the National Employment Centre in Savusavu from 10 different villages on the eastern side of Vanua Levu. The villages had populations ranging in size from 47 residents to 348 residents in 2017,¹⁶⁵ and while two villages were located relatively close to the main town and port of Savusavu, the remaining eight villages were in remote locations, 2-2.5 hours' drive from town. The women were all involved in agricultural work, and some are developing their own kava plantations for household income generation.

Linking of the NZ and Pacific streams

In order to link the NZ and Pacific streams of the study and a previous study on RSE worker earnings,¹⁶⁶ RSE employers involved in the NZ stream were selected on the basis of established relationships with specific PIC villages in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. In the case of Kiribati, where government-led recruitment of RSE workers is done via an island-based quota system (rather than from specific islands or communities), RSE employers that have established recruitment relationships with particular groups of I-Kiribati workers were selected. Table A2 shows the Pacific countries and villages that were identified for the sample.

¹⁶⁴ In the 12 years (2007-2019) there have been 82,144 RSE arrivals on approved visas from the Pacific. Of those, 46 percent (37,747) have been for workers from Vanuatu, with 22 percent (18,230) from Tonga and just over 19.5 percent (16,158) from Samoa. It should be noted that some of these RSE workers have returned to New Zealand multiple times. Data from MBIE covering the period 2007-17 indicates the RSE worker return rate is around 60 percent. Data from the RSE worker engagement database (covering the period 2013-2017) indicates the worker return rate is slightly higher, at almost 70 percent.

¹⁶⁵ Fiji Bureau of Statistics (2018). *2017 population and housing census*. Suva: Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

¹⁶⁶ Bedford & Bedford (2017).

Table A2. Pacific countries and villages

PIC	PIC villages
Fiji	10 villages across two provinces near the main town of Savusavu, eastern Vanuatu Levu
Kiribati	RSE households in various locations on South Tarawa
Samoa	Poutasi, Upolu Neiafu, Savai'i Papa Palauli, Savai'i
Tonga	Kolonga, Tongatapu Ha'alaufuli, Vava'u RSE households in Nuku'alofa
Vanuatu	Lamen Bay and Lamen Island, Epi Lounapkamei and surrounding villages, Tanna

Following the completion of the NZ stream, members of the research team made a return visit to workers from the above villages at their NZ accommodation to provide information about the Pacific stream and to ask whether they would agree to be interviewed if they were back in the village at the time of the planned fieldwork. For workers that would still be in New Zealand during in-country fieldwork, they were asked whether their partner, parent or other household member could be approached for an interview in their place. Those workers who agreed either to participate personally in the study in the village or to advise their family members in the village about the study, were asked to sign a research consent form and to brief their family member about the study prior to the research team's arrival.

In the villages in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, samples of RSE households were invited to participate, along with a range of community informants including village leaders, town clerks/district officers, church leaders, teachers, small business owners and others involved in community-based activities that might be impacted by absences of seasonal workers overseas. In Tonga, a very small number of SWP workers and households also participated (Table A4, pp.138-139).

Other RSE stakeholders were invited to take part in the study, including government ministers, ministry CEOs, officials in Labour Sending Units and other officials in relevant ministries (e.g. ministries of labour, trade, agriculture and women), recruitment agents, officials in the New Zealand High Commission and Immigration New Zealand and, where relevant, businesses and agencies/NGOs that have links with seasonal work schemes.

Methods and data sources

The methods and data sources used in the Pacific stream are summarised in Table A3 and described below.

Table A3. Methods and data sources

PIC	Face to face interviews	RSE worker engagement data	Commissioned expert reports	Literature review	Secondary data analysis	Document review
Tonga	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Samoa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vanuatu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fiji	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Kiribati	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓

Face to face interviews

Face to face interviews undertaken between April and September 2019 were the primary method of data collection. A total of 228 interviews were conducted across the five countries, with over 300 informants. Of the 103 RSE workers interviewed, 62 percent were male, and 38 percent were female. Of the 55 RSE households interviewed, the ratio was reversed - 69 percent were female family members and 31 percent were male.

The interviews were based on the following considerations.

- During the research design phase, we decided it would be preferable for the worker interviews to be conducted when the workers had returned home from NZ. Talking with workers in their home environment would elicit more free and frank responses than via interviews conducted in the workers' NZ workplace or accommodation.
- The decision was made to interview workers and their households individually (rather than using a talanoa approach) due to the personal nature of the information being sought e.g. RSE earnings, information about other income sources, issues or concerns about NZ employment, and life for the family during the worker's time in New Zealand. Interviews with RSE workers and household members were conducted in their village, either in their home, family fale, village/town hall or another local venue. Interviews lasted between half an hour and two hours, especially when the informant presented food. In addition to the one-to-one interviews, there were instances where village members convened as a group to share their experiences and views about the RSE scheme, such as in a meeting organised by the village leader.
- The interviews were conducted in the informant's lingua franca or in English, as preferred.

The interviews were semi-structured, based on a topic guide developed for the informant type. The purpose of the interview was not only to identify changes (positive and negative) that have occurred for households and communities of RSE workers, but also to understand what other factors (micro, meso, macro) may have influenced such changes.

For the purposes of classifying and counting interviews, each informant was classified in their primary role and counted only once. Table A4 shows the number of interviews by Pacific country and informant type. A number of the people interviewed had different roles, enabling them to provide wide-ranging perspectives about the RSE scheme. For example, we interviewed a church leader who had spent one season as an RSE worker some years ago. His unmarried daughter is currently working as an RSE

worker. Experiencing the scheme as a church leader, RSE worker and RSE family member enabled the pastor to provide insightful reflections on the impacts on his community, and the ways in which RSE could be improved to better meet the needs of Pacific workers and families.

Table A5 (pp.140-145) provides information about the research approach in each of the communities visited, together with background information about the community. Interviews were conducted in different ways - by the principal researcher(s) together with a Pacific research associate/community-based assistant, or by a locally-based female research associate (particularly interviews with women). The research team followed appropriate cultural protocols when entering the village, as follows. In each case, a person with links to or associations with the village facilitated the request to work in the village and the introduction of the researcher(s).

- Tonga: Introductions and meetings were held with village leaders including, where appropriate, the Noble.
- Samoa: Introductions were made to matai and senior members of households to explain the purpose of the work in the village.
- Fiji: Sevusevu was presented to the Turaga ni Koro (senior official of the village).
- Vanuatu: Interviews with workers/households were conducted across different villages. In some instances, the village chief attended the interview. In others, kava was shared with village leaders in an informal setting.
- Kiribati: Interviews with workers/households were spread across the urban area of South Tarawa. They were not conducted in specific villages so the usual protocols associated with introductions to the village elders (unimane) in the maneaba were not possible.

Overall, the interviews went very well. In most cases where an RSE team leader assisted with locating workers or their families, they did not stay for the interview because there were questions relating to their role as intermediaries between workers and employers. Family members (partners, parents, adult siblings) of workers absent in New Zealand at the time of fieldwork in their villages were given advance notice of an intention to approach them for an interview. Workers in New Zealand gave informed consent for the interviews at briefing meetings held in Kerikeri, Hastings, Motueka and Blenheim before field work commenced in the islands. These meetings were facilitated by local assistants who spoke the lingua franca of the workers. The workers undertook to contact their family members after giving their consent for a member of the research team to visit their homes in the islands. The consent of village leaders and family members was also sought in the village before any interviews were conducted.

The realities of undertaking research in a Pacific community context meant that, at times, interviews did not go to plan. For example, the dates the research team had arranged to stay in one of the villages clashed with the death and subsequent funeral of a village member, resulting in some village leaders and people organising the funeral arrangements being unavailable to meet with the research team. In a number of cases, despite having arranged to talk with an RSE worker's female partner, mother or other female household member, a male family member was present in the interview and answered questions on the woman's behalf.

Table A4. Number of interviews by Pacific Island country and informant type (in order of countries visited)¹

	Tonga		Samoa		Vanuatu		Fiji		Kiribati		TOTAL PICS	
	Interviews	Informants										
Workers												
RSE workers*												
Male	13	18	28	29	7	7	-	-	10	10	58	64
Female	-	-	-	-	3	3	10	13	23	23	36	39
Total	13	18	28	29	10	10	10	13	33	33	94	103
Households												
RSE households**												
Male	3	3	5	5	9	9	-	-	-	-	17	17
Female	23	23	6	6	9	9	-	-	-	-	38	38
Total	26	26	11	11	18	18	-	-	-	-	55	55
Community informants												
Village leaders (incl. Town Officers, Tonga)	1	5	3	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	13
Church leaders***	1	2	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	7
Economic informants (e.g. private sector, commercial farmers, businessmen)	7	8	3	6	3	3	1	1	1	1	15	19
RSE recruitment agents			-	-	3	4	-	-	-	-	3	4
Other community****	3	6	-	-	2	9	1	4	-	-	6	19
Total	12	21	6	17	8	18	2	5	1	1	29	62
Government officials												
LSU	1	2	2	3	1	2	3	5	2	3	9	15
Gov. ministers, CEOs, others	5	6	2	7	1	1	2	3	1	4	11	21
INZ	1	2	1	3	-	-	1	2	-	-	3	7
NZ High Commission	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	6	11
Australian High Commission*****	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	6
Other (e.g. international agencies, training institutes, academics,	3	3	1	2	2	2	4	5	3	5	13	17

	Tonga		Samoa		Vanuatu		Fiji		Kiribati		TOTAL PICS	
	Interviews	Informants										
consultants, Pacific Labour Facility Advisers)												
Total	12	17	8	19	5	7	11	17	9	17	45	77
SWP												
SWP workers												
Male	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Female	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	3	3	-	3	3							
SWP Households												
Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Total	2	2	-	2	2							
TOTAL	68	87	53	76	41	53	23	35	43	51	228	302

¹ The number of informants differs from the number of interviews because, at times, there was more than one informant participating in the interview.

* Interviews in Tonga included 6 x interviews with former RSE workers who no longer participate in the scheme.

** In Samoa and in Vanuatu, some family members were spoken to in more than one capacity. E.g. In Neiafu, 4 x fathers of RSE workers are also matai. In Lamenu Bay, 3 x household members are also ex-RSE workers. They have been recorded as household members, as that was the capacity in which they were identified as informants.

*** In Samoa and in Vanuatu, there were interviews held with RSE workers and/or family members where the local pastor was present and participated in the interview. Accordingly, the pastors have been listed separately as informants.

**** Other community includes interviews with teachers, and talanoa held with local people in the village in Tonga, Vanuatu and Fiji e.g. local farmers and other community members.

***** In two countries there were no interviews at the Australian High Commission. In Vanuatu an appointment with the Deputy HC and the PLF adviser was arranged, but the DHC was unable to attend on the day. In Fiji, Australian HC officials were in Tuvalu at the Pacific Islands Forum meeting at the time of fieldwork. An interview was held with the PLF adviser in Suva and that covered relevant information.

Table A5. Research approach and background about each community (in order of countries visited)

Community	Background information and research approach ¹⁶⁷																								
TONGA																									
Village(s): Kolonga Island: Tongatapu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kolonga is a large village with a population of 1,145 residents (214 households) at the time of the 2016 census.¹⁶⁸ The village is located in north-east Tongatapu, approximately 45 minutes from the capital of Nuku'alofa. The land of Kolonga is owned by Lord Nuku, Noble of Kolonga Estate. While agricultural production remains at the heart of the Kolonga economy, there has been a decline in recent years that informants attribute, in part, to participation in RSE and SWP. - Kolonga was selected as a community for the Pacific stream because it is one of the largest predominantly rural villages in Tongatapu with a resident Noble who encourages agricultural development. One of the principal researchers had stayed in the village before and had contacts there that would facilitate the field work. The village is a place of recruitment for several RSE employers, and the workers interviewed came from more than one employer in Hastings and Motueka. - Kolonga was the first village in which fieldwork was conducted and three sets of interviews were undertaken: 1) with RSE workers; 2) with RSE households; and 3) with community informants. - Interviews with RSE workers and household members were undertaken by locally-based Pacific associates, while interviews with community informants were undertaken by a principal researcher. A small number of SWP workers and households with an SWP worker absent were also interviewed. - At the start of the fieldwork, a group meeting was held with community leaders to explain the purpose of the research. Subsequent interviews were held in informants' homes. - The fieldwork in Kolonga was disrupted by the funeral of a community member, which made it difficult to schedule interviews. However, this did not have a noticeably detrimental impact on the research. <table border="1" data-bbox="491 1115 1506 1462" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Informant type</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No. of interviews</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RSE workers</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSE households</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (e.g. academics, consultants)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SWP workers</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SWP households</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: center;">27</td> <td style="text-align: center;">33</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	8	8	RSE households	8	8	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	5	11	Other (e.g. academics, consultants)	2	2	SWP workers	2	2	SWP households	2	2	TOTAL	27	33
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants																							
RSE workers	8	8																							
RSE households	8	8																							
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	5	11																							
Other (e.g. academics, consultants)	2	2																							
SWP workers	2	2																							
SWP households	2	2																							
TOTAL	27	33																							
Village(s): Ha'alaufuli Island: Vava'u	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ha'alaufuli is a relatively small, rural village, with a population of 372 residents (84 households) in 2016.¹⁶⁹ The village is located on the island of Vava'u, Tonga's richest agricultural region, where commercial agriculture and cattle farming are common enterprises. - Ha'alaufuli was selected as a community for the Pacific stream based on a connection with a NZ-based recruiter of Tongan labour who has been involved in recruiting Tongan workers from Vava'u since before the RSE scheme's inception. The recruiter has a pro-poor focus to his selection of RSE workers, focusing on those that have limited opportunities for waged employment at home. RSE workers selected by this recruiter are employed in Motueka. 																								

¹⁶⁷ Data are unavailable about the number of people participating in RSE (or SWP/PLS) from each of the villages visited.

¹⁶⁸ Tonga Statistics Department (2017). *Tonga 2016 census of population and housing. Volume 1: Basic tables and administrative report*. Nuku'alofa: Tonga Statistics Department.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*

Community	Background information and research approach ¹⁶⁷																		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Ha'alaufuli, all interviews were conducted by a principal researcher with the assistance of a Nuku'alofa-based businessman who has connections with the NZ-based recruiter. - At the start of the fieldwork, two meetings were arranged with community leaders to explain the purpose of the study. - Interviews were conducted primarily with family members of RSE workers, as workers were still in NZ at the time of fieldwork. Four ex-RSE workers were also interviewed, as well as one female SWP worker. - Interviews were either held at the Ha'alaufuli Town Hall, or in informants' homes. <table border="1" data-bbox="493 517 1501 797"> <thead> <tr> <th>Informant type</th> <th>No. of interviews</th> <th>No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RSE workers</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSE households</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td>4</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SWP workers</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>17</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	4	4	RSE households	8	8	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	4	7	SWP workers	1	1	TOTAL	17	20
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants																	
RSE workers	4	4																	
RSE households	8	8																	
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	4	7																	
SWP workers	1	1																	
TOTAL	17	20																	
Village(s): Nuku'alofa (main centre) and surrounding area Island: Tongatapu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 interviews were conducted with RSE family members living in villages around Nuku'alofa, the main urban centre of Tongatapu. A talanoa was also held with six RSE workers, at the home of one of the workers. - This group of RSE workers and households is unique in that they are recruited for RSE by a NZ-based charitable trust¹⁷⁰ that has developed a fānau-centric model of recruitment for RSE. Those selected for RSE come from an extended family group, and are employed by a subsidiary of a Māori incorporation in Motueka. - The 10 interviews with RSE households were undertaken by a locally-based Tongan who is a former RSE worker and team leader. The talanoa with the six male RSE workers was led by a principal researcher, alongside the Tongan research associate. - Three interviews were also conducted with local business people in Nuku'alofa. <table border="1" data-bbox="493 1227 1501 1469"> <thead> <tr> <th>Informant type</th> <th>No. of interviews</th> <th>No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RSE workers</td> <td>1</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSE households</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>14</td> <td>19</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	1	6	RSE households	10	10	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	3	3	TOTAL	14	19			
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants																	
RSE workers	1	6																	
RSE households	10	10																	
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	3	3																	
TOTAL	14	19																	
SAMOA																			
Village: Neiafu Island: Savai'i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neiafu village is in two parts: Neiafu Tai on the coast and Neiafu Uta which is inland. Neiafu's total population in 2016 was 904 residents (127 households).¹⁷¹ Of those, 307 residents (40 households) live in Neiafu Tai on the coast, and 597 residents (87 households) around Neiafu Uta. Neiafu is a relatively wealthy village, with good opportunities for agricultural production. - RSE workers from Neiafu were included in the study as an example of a community that has only been engaged in the RSE for a short time (two seasons; 2017-19) and that sends a small number (20) of workers to NZ. 																		

¹⁷⁰ The Indigenous Māori and Pacific Adult Education Charitable Trust (IMPAECT*) was founded to assist in the betterment of Indigenous, Māori and Pacific people's lives through cultural, economic and educational development (Vaiioleti et al., 2019).

¹⁷¹ Data from the Samoa Population and Housing Census 2016 provided by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Apia.

Community	Background information and research approach ¹⁶⁷												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews in Neiafu were conducted by a NZ-based Samoan community liaison officer who accompanied one of the principal researchers to Samoa for the fieldwork on Savai'i and who was his interpreter. All interviews were held in informants' homes. - Prior to the commencement of interviews, introductions were made to matai or senior members of households by the NZ-based Samoan community liaison officer to explain the purpose of the work in the village. - The Neiafu interviews were with RSE family members of workers who were still in New Zealand at the time of the fieldwork. - The household interviews were held with five men and six women, and many informants were spoken to in more than one capacity e.g. as a father and a matai. - The amount of time allocated for interviews in Neiafu and Papa Palauli was short – only two days in each village. Consequently, interviews focused on RSE workers and households, rather than on community informants. <table border="1" data-bbox="491 680 1500 857"> <thead> <tr> <th>Informant type</th> <th>No. of interviews</th> <th>No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RSE workers</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSE households</td> <td>11</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>12</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	1	1	RSE households	11	11	TOTAL	12	12
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants											
RSE workers	1	1											
RSE households	11	11											
TOTAL	12	12											
Village(s): Papa Palauli Island: Savai'i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Papa Palauli, with a population of 357 residents (48 households) in 2016,¹⁷² is a relatively small village compared to Neiafu, and has limited opportunities for agricultural development. - The Papa Palauli workers are a small group of approx. 20 men, employed by an RSE in Hastings, and they have been involved in the scheme since 2011. - As in Neiafu, interviews in Papa Palauli were undertaken by the NZ-based Samoan community liaison officer, accompanied by a principal researcher. - Prior to the commencement of interviews, introductions were made to matai or senior members of households by the NZ-based Samoan community liaison officer to seek permission to work in the village. - Interviews were undertaken with eight RSE workers in their homes. Other family members were often present and, at times, participated in the interviews. - A number of church and village leaders were also spoken to in Papa Palauli. Some of these informants were present in interviews with the workers, while others were spoken to in an informal capacity e.g. following church on Sunday. <table border="1" data-bbox="491 1417 1500 1621"> <thead> <tr> <th>Informant type</th> <th>No. of interviews</th> <th>No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RSE workers</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td>1</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>8</td> <td>14</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	7	8	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	1	6	TOTAL	8	14
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants											
RSE workers	7	8											
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	1	6											
TOTAL	8	14											
Village(s): Poutasi and eight surrounding villages, Falealili District Island: Upolu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poutasi, with a total population of 406 residents (62 households) in 2016,¹⁷³ is the sixth largest village in Falealili district, located on the southern side of the main island of Upolu. - The village has been involved in RSE since the outset of the scheme. Recruitment for RSE is overseen by the senior matai of the district who has a clear vision for the development of Samoan families to enable them to build sustainable, resilient livelihoods at home. To this end, participation in the RSE is simply one tool that can be used by families to achieve self-sufficiency in Samoa. Workers recruited from Poutasi and surrounding villages are employed by two RSE employers in Hastings. 												

¹⁷² ibid.

¹⁷³ ibid.

Community	Background information and research approach ¹⁶⁷																				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews in Poutasi were conducted by two principal researchers. Access to informants was through the senior matai of the district and the Falealili RSE Committee that oversees all of the district's recruitment for the RSE. - Interviews with RSE workers were held in an office at the Poutasi Village Hall. Access to informants was closely managed by Tuatagaloa, and no interviews were held in workers' homes. - A small number of interviews were also conducted with village leaders and with other community informants 																				
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Informant type</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No. of interviews</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RSE workers</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: center;">23</td> <td style="text-align: center;">27</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	20	20	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	3	7	TOTAL	23	27						
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants																			
RSE workers	20	20																			
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	3	7																			
TOTAL	23	27																			
VANUATU																					
<p>Village(s): Eight villages including the main town of Lenakel Island: Tanna</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanna island, located in Taefa Province, had a total population of 32,280 at the time of the 2016 mini census, making it the third most densely populated island in Vanuatu.¹⁷⁴ The island has over 100 villages and limited opportunities for economic development.¹⁷⁵ The eight villages where RSE workers and households were interviewed are in the region administered by West Tanna Area Council where 8,545 people were resident in 2016. - The Tanna RSE workers identified for the study (who were in NZ working at the time of fieldwork) are employed by two RSE employers in Te Puke. The group of workers interviewed are connected with a Te Puke-based charitable trust that has been involved in providing training to RSE workers while in NZ, and undertaken a range of development initiatives on Tanna to help improve workers' livelihoods at home. - Interviews on Tanna were conducted by two principal researchers, with the assistance of two RSE workers that were home on Tanna at the time of the fieldwork. They played a critical role in locating informants and driving the researchers to/from interviews. - Interviews were conducted with 10 RSE households, located in eight different villages in and around the main centre of Lenakel. Interviews were conducted in the homes of RSE families, or at the earthship house in Loukatai. In two interviews, village leaders were also present, and participated in the interviews. 																				
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Informant type</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No. of interviews</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RSE workers</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSE households</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Government officials</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: center;">13</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	2	2	RSE households	10	10	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	0	2*	Government officials	1	1	TOTAL	13	15
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants																			
RSE workers	2	2																			
RSE households	10	10																			
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	0	2*																			
Government officials	1	1																			
TOTAL	13	15																			
	<p>* These were informal discussions rather than formal interviews.</p>																				
<p>Village(s): Lamén Bay and Lamén Island Island: Epi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lamén Bay and Lamén Island are located towards the northern tip of the island of Epi, in Shefa Province. At the time of the mini census in 2016, Epi had a population of 6,280 and 																				

¹⁷⁴ The two islands with larger populations than Tanna are Santo (48,000) which includes the urban centre of Luganville (15,865), and Efate (84,000) which includes the capital of Port Vila (48,335). Vanuatu National Statistics Office (2017). *2016 Mini Census (Post Tropical Cyclone Pam). Volume 1, Basic Tables Report*, Port Vila: National Statistics Office.

¹⁷⁵ Connell, J. & Hammond, J. (2009). Iso Iso: the first ni-Vanuatu guest workers in New Zealand. *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 24(1):83-95.

Community	Background information and research approach ¹⁶⁷																	
	<p>Vermail, the Area Council that includes Lamén Bay and Lamén Island, had a total population of 1,870.¹⁷⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The workers and households selected for the study from the Lamén Bay area are recruited by an RSE in Motueka who has a longstanding connection to the area. Lamén Bay is considered an ‘RSE stronghold’, with extensive engagement in the seasonal work scheme since its introduction in 2007. - Interviews in the Lamén Bay area were undertaken by a principal researcher, with the assistance of an RSE team leader who helped to locate informants and arrange interviews. - Interviews were conducted with eight RSE workers, and with eight household members. - A number of community informants were also spoken to, including two talanoa with men and women from the Lamén Bay area. 																	
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="497 622 1098 680">Informant type</th> <th data-bbox="1102 622 1294 680">No. of interviews</th> <th data-bbox="1299 622 1505 680">No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 685 1098 719">RSE workers</td> <td data-bbox="1102 685 1294 719">8</td> <td data-bbox="1299 685 1505 719">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 723 1098 757">RSE households</td> <td data-bbox="1102 723 1294 757">8</td> <td data-bbox="1299 723 1505 757">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 761 1098 819">Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td data-bbox="1102 761 1294 819">4</td> <td data-bbox="1299 761 1505 819">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 824 1098 857">TOTAL</td> <td data-bbox="1102 824 1294 857">13</td> <td data-bbox="1299 824 1505 857">15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	8	8	RSE households	8	8	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	4	11	TOTAL	13	15
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants																
RSE workers	8	8																
RSE households	8	8																
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	4	11																
TOTAL	13	15																
FIJI																		
<p>Village(s): 10 villages located in four Tikina (districts), three in Cakaudrove Province, one in Bua Province Island: Vanua Levu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The focus of the interviews in Fiji were on women RSE workers. The Fijian women interviewed came from 10 villages on the eastern side of Vanua Levu. The villages had populations ranging in size from 47 to 348 residents at the time of the 2017 Census.¹⁷⁷ Two villages were located close to the main town and port of Savusavu, while the remainder were 2-2.5hrs drive away from town. The numbers of RSE women from each village are very small – one or two women from each. - The Fijian women have been involved in the RSE scheme since 2016, and they are employed as a group by an RSE employer in Kerikeri. - A principal researcher conducted all of the interviews in Fiji with the assistance of an RSE team leader. In the five villages where interviews took place, the principal researcher presented sevusevu to the Turaga ni Koro (senior official) to gain permission to undertake the research. - Interviews were held in informants’ homes, and in some cases the women travelled to a different village to be interviewed, so that several women could be talked with in sequence at the same place. 																	
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="497 1456 1098 1514">Informant type</th> <th data-bbox="1102 1456 1294 1514">No. of interviews</th> <th data-bbox="1299 1456 1505 1514">No. of informants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 1518 1098 1552">RSE workers</td> <td data-bbox="1102 1518 1294 1552">10</td> <td data-bbox="1299 1518 1505 1552">13</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 1556 1098 1615">Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)</td> <td data-bbox="1102 1556 1294 1615">1</td> <td data-bbox="1299 1556 1505 1615">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 1619 1098 1653">Government official</td> <td data-bbox="1102 1619 1294 1653">1</td> <td data-bbox="1299 1619 1505 1653">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="497 1657 1098 1691">TOTAL</td> <td data-bbox="1102 1657 1294 1691">12</td> <td data-bbox="1299 1657 1505 1691">18</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants	RSE workers	10	13	Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	1	4	Government official	1	1	TOTAL	12	18
Informant type	No. of interviews	No. of informants																
RSE workers	10	13																
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)	1	4																
Government official	1	1																
TOTAL	12	18																
KIRIBATI																		
<p>Village(s): Households across main urban</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South Tarawa is a densely populated urban environment, with a total population of 56,388 residents (7,877 households) at the time of the last census in 2015.¹⁷⁸ 																	

¹⁷⁶ Vanuatu National Statistics Office (2017).

¹⁷⁷ Fiji Bureau of Statistics (2018).

¹⁷⁸ Kiribati National Statistics Office (2016).

Community	Background information and research approach ¹⁶⁷		
centre of South Tarawa Island: Tarawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The I-Kiribati workers involved in the study all live on Tarawa, either temporarily or on a permanent basis, and this setting provides a clear contrast to the other rural communities selected for the impact study. In Kiribati the focus of the interviews was on the impacts of RSE at the household-level. The workers were not selected from a single community on Tarawa; they come from different islands across Kiribati. Thus, no community-level impacts could be identified. - The 33 workers who were interviewed are employed by two RSE employers: one in Blenheim and one in Kerikeri. Of those, 23 interviews were with RSE women, and 10 with RSE men. - The fieldwork in Kiribati was done with assistance of an I-Kiribati woman who is a former government official in Kiribati now living in NZ. The research associate played a critical role in organising and conducting interviews in workers' homes. Three RSE team leaders also assisted with locating workers for interview. - Several of the respondents were located in villages that are now part of the urban area where they have access to customary land. Others were living on land they are renting or leasing from traditional owners or from the two town councils in South Tarawa. 		
Informant type		No. of interviews	No. of informants
RSE workers		33	33
Community informants (e.g. village / church leaders, commercial farmers, businessmen, teachers)		1	4
TOTAL		34	37

RSE worker engagement data

The study examines temporal patterns of RSE worker engagement based on analysis of arrivals data for 16,222 individuals that were employed on RSE visas at some stage between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 (the period for which MBIE data were provided). A primary focus of the study is on patterns of worker engagement in the RSE as assessed by the presence/absence of RSE workers in the seasonal workforce in each of the four financial years).¹⁷⁹ In the database, patterns of movement can be identified for RSE workers by gender, country of origin, region of work and employer in New Zealand to reveal the incidence of return workers, and movement patterns during the four years.

Expert reports

To support and triangulate the in-country data collection, three reports were commissioned from researchers with in-depth knowledge of the different cultural contexts within which seasonal labour migration is situated in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. Researchers were asked to focus on the social impacts of the RSE scheme at village-level. The reports were also part of a strategy for mitigating potential problems in obtaining information at the household and community-level.

¹⁷⁹ Bedford, R. (2020). Patterns of seasonal employment. RSE workers in New Zealand, 1 July 2013 - 30 June 2017. Unpublished report for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Wanaka: Bedford Consulting.

Literature review

During the scoping phase of the study, the literature was reviewed to identify impacts of seasonal work on Pacific countries, households and workers. This information was summarised into impact summary tables which were used during the analysis phase (described below).

Other secondary data

A range of secondary data at PIC and village-level were examined for the purpose of identifying potential influencing factors or rival explanations for changes (impacts) as required by contribution analysis. This included academic theses and research papers, Pacific government documents, reports commissioned by Pacific governments, non-government and private sector agencies, census and household labour force survey and other statistical data.

Media review

A review of mainstream Pacific-based media sources relating to the RSE scheme in the five years 2014-2019 was conducted.

Coding and analysis of interview data

The interview data were coded into NVivo10 software which provides for cases to be established for each informant type. The cases enable information obtained from different informant types and Pacific countries to be linked and compared through iterative stages of analysis. Twenty-two cases were established by informant type and gender e.g. RSE male worker current, RSE male ex-worker, RSE female worker current, RSE household of male worker, RSE household of female worker, etc. The use of NVivo also allowed data from the Pacific streams and NZ streams to be linked and examined concurrently. A coding frame was developed based on the research sub-questions (a 'top-down' approach) and developed further with the addition of themes emerging from the data as it was being coded (a 'bottom-up' approach).

An iterative process of analysis was used in which the interview data was "cut" and examined in three ways so as to provide differing perspectives, as follows.

Village-level focus: The data from each village was summarised and examined. This included comparing the data from the perspective of different informants in the village. Factors unrelated to the RSE scheme that may account for observed changes were noted and considered. The summarised village-level findings within the country were then compared, enabling similarities and differences between villages to be identified.

Country-level focus: We considered country-level changes and factors contributing to those changes. This information was drawn from the village-level data plus interviews with Pacific government officials and other informants who provided a national-level perspective, as well as secondary data (e.g. census data) and information from the RSE worker engagement database.

Analysis by theme: We identified and examined five substantive themes that emerged from the interview data: Participation in RSE - deciding who goes and who remains at home; Use of RSE workers' earnings and skills at home; Impacts on participating communities; Working and living in New Zealand; Women's participation in RSE. These themes were written up for examination by the Pacific research associates on day one of the Fiji workshop (see no. 2 below).

The findings of this initial analysis were written up, scrutinised and developed further using a three-step process:

1. Following completion of fieldwork in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, the three principal researchers met for a day-long analysis session on 15 August 2019. The purpose of the session was to compare emerging impacts from the fieldwork data with RSE impacts recorded in the literature. This literature had been summarised as part of the study’s scoping phase in mid-2018. We compared the emerging findings against each impact type identified in the literature. This process enabled us to reflect on the data collected in the three Pacific countries, identify new emerging impacts, and highlight areas needing further examination during the remaining fieldwork.
2. Following the analysis of data from the five Pacific countries, an analysis workshop was held with the Pacific research associates involved in fieldwork plus members of the RSE Impact Study Expert Panel in Fiji on 19-20 November 2019. On day one, the initial findings from the fieldwork and expert reports were presented to the workshop for scrutiny and further development by participants. At the beginning of day two, participants identified seven negative impacts deemed to be the highest priority for Pacific Island countries which were examined further during the rest of the day.
3. The NZ research team developed contribution claims describing how and why the RSE scheme is contributing to these seven “priority” negative impacts, plus eight positive impacts of a substantive nature. These contribution claims were scrutinised by the RSE Impact Study Expert Panel at a meeting on 9 December 2019 in Wellington.

Ensuring the validity of the findings

Triangulation serves to strengthen a study by examining the research subject “from more than one vantage point” (Schwandt, 2007, p.298), thereby generating different perspectives.¹⁸⁰ Denzin (1989) has identified four basic dimensions of triangulation for qualitative research (Table A6).¹⁸¹ We have added an additional dimension describing the need for Pacific worldviews and perspectives to be fundamental foundations of the study.¹⁸²

Table A6. Dimensions of triangulation

Triangulation dimension	How dimension was addressed
Methodological: Combining of methods in a study.	The Pacific stream included qualitative interviews, research literature, document review, and descriptive statistical analysis. The data were analysed using contribution analysis.
Investigator: The use of more than one researcher in a study.	The research team consisted of three NZ-based team members, and seven NZ- and Pacific-based Pacific research associates.
Theory: The use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data.	Dr Richard Bedford is an expert on population movement within the Pacific region, as well as to countries on the Pacific rim. Dr Charlotte Bedford has extensive knowledge of RSE since its inception and has conducted research on a range of RSE-related topics. Dr Heather Nunns has undertaken evaluation and design of Pacific labour mobility initiatives. She also provided

¹⁸⁰ Schwandt, T.A. (2007). *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

¹⁸¹ Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The Research Act, 3rd ed.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

¹⁸² Wehipeihana, N., Davidson, E. J., McKegg, K., & Shankar, V. (2010). What does it take to do evaluation in communities and cultural contexts other than our own? *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, 6(13): 182-192.

	a research methodology focus. The seven Pacific research associates brought a range of perspectives to the research – lived experience of RSE, academic knowledge, and other relevant professional roles.
Data: The use of a variety of data sources.	The study collected primary qualitative data, and drew on secondary information such as statistical data, and research literature.
Cultural: The cultural lens of the specific Pacific country informs the collection, analysis and reporting of data.	The seven Pacific research associates contributed Pacific Island-specific worldviews, perspectives and context to the research process. Their participation in the Fiji workshop added strength to the internal and cultural validity of the research as data were examined from multiple perspectives and through different Pacific Island cultural lenses.

Research limitations

The Pacific stream research has a number of limitations including.

- The Pacific stream report does not cover all PICs participating in the RSE scheme. The research design provides in-depth information about specific communities in five Pacific countries selected to shed light on aspects or issues relevant to the research questions.
- The research has a strong qualitative focus by design. It is not possible to generalise the findings across the populations of participating PICs in ways that inquiries conducted with experimental research designs can sometimes allow. However, the insights from the study's findings have relevance for, and are transferable to, similar contexts and conditions.
- The study does not contain a systematic economic analysis of impacts of RSE participation on workers, their families and communities. Some data of relevance for the assessment of economic impacts were collected from RSE employers, workers and family members. The data obtained through self-reporting has limitations such as participant recall issues, and response and social desirability bias.
- The communities in the study were selected purposively, rather than at random, on the basis of their links with the RSE employers participating in the NZ stream.
- The RSE worker and household samples consisted of workers and households who agreed to participate in the study. They were not a random sample.
- RSE workers and household informants who were interviewed were often reluctant to criticise the RSE scheme for fear their criticisms might be shared with their employer and they could lose their opportunity to participate in RSE.

Ethical protocols

This section summarises the ethical protocols undertaken in the Pacific stream, some of which are referred to elsewhere in this appendix.

Prior to the commencement of the Pacific stream:

- MBIE briefed government officials from the relevant Pacific government agencies about the RSE Impact Study, sought consent from the PIC to participate in the study, and for in-country fieldwork to be undertaken.
- The Head Office of the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade briefed the posts in each of the participating PICs about the purpose and nature of the study.

Prior to the commencement of in-country fieldwork:

- RSE workers were visited while they were in NZ inviting them to be interviewed if they were back in the village at the time of the in-country fieldwork. Workers who would still be in New Zealand when the in-country fieldwork was scheduled were asked whether their partner, parent or other household member could be approached for an interview in their place. If written consent was given, the worker was asked to brief their family member(s) about the study and the interview.
- Prior to leaving NZ, the principal researcher(s) contacted key PIC government officials to introduce themselves and brief officials about the planned fieldwork.

During in-country fieldwork:

- The Pacific research associates who accompanied the principal researcher(s) facilitated introductions with village leaders and other community informants, and ensured relevant cultural protocols were followed at all times.
- Written consent was obtained from all informants.
- Interviews were conducted in the informant's lingua franca or in English, as preferred.
- At the end of the interview, RSE workers and community-based informants were given a small me'a'alofo (gift) for their time.

At completion of the study:

- A communications strategy is being coordinated by MBIE and MFAT to ensure that appropriate information about the study findings is available to all informants.

Appendix B. Application of contribution analysis in the Pacific stream

This appendix explaining how contribution analysis was used in the Pacific stream should be read in conjunction with the Methodology appendix (Appendix A).

Introduction

A critical task for the impact study is to assess the extent to which observed impacts are related, directly or indirectly, to the RSE scheme. Determining whether observed impacts can be *directly attributed* to RSE is impossible given the complexity of the policy, the number of stakeholders involved, the dynamic environment in which the scheme operates, and the range of Australian labour mobility arrangements operating in the same PICs and providing similar employment opportunities.

The attribution problem inherent in complex policy environments is widely recognised (Mayne, 2012).¹⁸³ An analytical approach - contribution analysis - addresses this challenge. Contribution analysis provides a systematic and rigorous approach to establish (or inversely, to discount) a *plausible association* between a particular input (or group of inputs) and observed changes: “Contribution analysis provides an argument with evidence from which it is reasonable to conclude with confidence that the intervention has made a difference and why” (Patton, 2012, p.367).¹⁸⁴ It addresses cause and effect by demonstrating contribution rather than proving causality. It is well suited for examining complicated policies: “Contribution analysis works well for understanding and interpreting results in complex systems where a variety of factors and variables interact dynamically within the interconnected and interdependent parts of the open system”.¹⁸⁵

In brief, contribution analysis examines research findings to:

- establish the existence (or not) of an association between an intervention and an observed change(s),
- systematically discount any other plausible explanations for the observed change (e.g. about the internal and/or external environment), and
- where an association is established, understand the nature of the contribution.

The intended end-result of this process is to establish a plausible association between an intervention and an observed result that will withstand scrutiny and critique (or inversely, to discount such an association).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Mayne, J. (2012). Contribution Analysis: Coming of age? *Evaluation*, 18: 370-380.

¹⁸⁴ Patton, M.Q. (2012). A utilization-focused approach to Contribution Analysis. *Evaluation*, 18: 384-377.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Mayne, J. (1999). Discussion paper: Addressing attribution through Contribution Analysis - Using performance measures sensibly. Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

Logic underpinning contribution analysis

The logic underpinning contribution analysis is summarised below. This summary outlines the ‘theory’ behind the process used in the Pacific stream as described in the rest of this appendix.

The logic underpinning contribution analysis is to reduce uncertainty about the contribution an intervention is making to observed results through an increased understanding of why results occurred (or did not occur), and the roles played by the intervention and other influencing factors. It is a structured analytical reasoning process, as follows.¹⁸⁷

- i. The intervention is based on a reasoned theory of change (i.e. the assumptions about why the intervention is expected to work are explicit and plausible).
- ii. The complexity of the context within which the intervention is being implemented is acknowledged.
- iii. The intervention is confirmed as being implemented as planned.
- iv. Factors unrelated to the intervention that are ‘at play’ in the wider context are identified, examined and their influence understood.
- v. Data are collected about observed results/changes.
- vi. Data relating to the intervention are collected and analysed.
- vii. An initial contribution claim(s) is developed in light of v. and vi.
- viii. Rival explanations about why the observed results/changes have occurred are identified, and either discounted or included in the analysis.
- ix. The initial contribution claim(s) is modified (if necessary) in light of viii.
- x. In light of the above analytical process, it is concluded that the most likely explanation for the observed results/changes is that the intervention has made a contribution.* Alternatively, it is concluded that the intervention is not contributing to the observed results; or that further data is required to determine contribution.
- xi. If it is concluded that it is likely the intervention has contributed to the observed change, the nature of and reason for this contribution are described.

* In summary, a contribution claim addresses the following questions:

- Has the intervention made a difference (contribution) to the observed change (impact), and/or are there other factors (unrelated to the intervention) that have influenced the observed change (impact)?
- If the intervention is deemed to have contributed to the observed change (impact):
 - o How/why has the intervention made this contribution?
 - o What other factors (if any) support this contribution?

Existing RSE theory of change revised

A theory of change identifies the change(s) that an initiative or intervention is intended to bring about. It describes the mechanisms that are designed to make such change occur, the assumptions that underlie how and why the intended change is supposed to happen, and identifies the risks that may impede the intended change from occurring as expected. The theory of change acts as the key reference point for the research project. Data that are collected about observed changes are

¹⁸⁷ Mayne (2012); (2001). Addressing attribution through Contribution Analysis - Using performance measures sensibly. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 16: 1-24.

compared to the theory of change, divergences identified, explanations sought, and the theory of change revised.

The high-level theory of change developed for the 2010 evaluation of the RSE scheme was based on the notion of the scheme as two interacting sub-systems: one sub-system referring to New Zealand stakeholders (principally RSE employers, the horticulture and viticulture industries and officials in the Department of Labour); and the second sub-system referring to PIC stakeholders (principally RSE workers and officials in the relevant Labour Sending Units). While the principle underpinning this theory of change is still relevant – the need to balance benefits for New Zealand with benefits for PICs – the original theory of change fails to account for two stakeholder groups whose significance has emerged over time, namely, RSE communities in New Zealand, and PIC workers’ families and communities. These two stakeholder groups were included in an expanded high-level theory of change for RSE (refer RSE Impact Study Research Plan, Appendix A). This expanded high-level theory of change will be developed further in the Synthesis stage of the study in light of the NZ and Pacific stream findings.

Application of contribution analysis in the Pacific stream

One of the challenges of the Pacific stream is to “unpack” the contribution that the RSE scheme is making to households and communities, particularly in those countries that also send large numbers of workers overseas for similar forms of seasonal employment in Australia under their Seasonal Worker Programme. There is also migration from many Pacific countries for other forms of employment as well as residence in Australia and New Zealand. Isolating the specific impact of RSE employment on families and communities is complicated by the fact that the scheme is just one of several options for mobility in many participating countries.

At the household level, information was gathered on the specific impacts of RSE participation for the family. At the community level, observed changes may be more broadly associated with the absence of temporary workers overseas. This is particularly the case in Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati which have long histories of offshore migration. Vanuatu, on the other hand, has historically had little exposure to international migration opportunities since the early 20th century, especially opportunities in New Zealand and Australia.¹⁸⁸ Consequently, the impacts of overseas labour migration may differ for ni-Vanuatu families and communities as they adjust to migrants’ absence and changing allocations of labour and agricultural production.

This process of “unpacking” the contribution that the RSE scheme is making (or not making) to positive and/or negative impacts for households and communities proceeded as follows:

Identify potential alternative explanations

Contribution analysis requires the researcher to systematically seek out and identify factors (unrelated to the research subject) that may account for any observed change. Based on a review of literature

¹⁸⁸ There was extensive contract labour migration from Vanuatu to Australia in the late 19th century, but those opportunities were terminated in 1901 with the passing of the Pacific Islands Labourers Act. It was not until 2007 and the initiation of the RSE that ni-Vanuatu had an opportunity to seek temporary work as seasonal labourers in NZ. In the case of Australia, ni-Vanuatu gained access to temporary seasonal work in 2009 with the commencement of the Pacific Seasonal Workers Pilot Scheme.

conducted during the research scoping stage, potential factors unrelated to the RSE scheme that could influence the impact of the RSE scheme at the national and village-level were identified. We sought out additional potential factors (unrelated to RSE) during fieldwork, as follows.

- Village-level:
 - o In the interviews with workers, households and other village-members, we asked questions about social and economic changes in their community and the reasons/ explanations for such changes.
 - o In countries where the research team interviewed RSE workers and household members from a single village, a 'village profile' was developed using secondary demographic, economic and social data.
- Country level:
 - o In the interviews with government ministers, ministry CEOs and other government officials; business and NGO participants, we sought more general information on the impacts of RSE (and, where relevant, other forms of temporary offshore employment e.g. SWP), on participating communities, as well as broader social and economic changes at the macro level that may be contributing to change within village economies.

Identify potential influencing factors (unrelated to the RSE scheme)

Using the literature and fieldwork we also identified factors that may work together with the RSE scheme by either enabling positive impacts or reinforcing negative impacts, or that have influenced the nature and extent of the scheme's effect at the local village level. Having identified potential influencing factors, we sought to understand the nature and extent of their influence on RSE. For example, an influencing factor that helps to mitigate potential negative impacts of RSE participation on the village is the village leadership and their involvement in recruitment decisions.

Develop contribution claims

Developing claims about the contribution of the RSE scheme to observed impacts is an emergent process. Following the deliberations at the Fiji workshop with the Pacific research associates, the NZ research team developed initial contribution claims describing how and why the RSE scheme is contributing to the seven "priority" negative impacts identified by workshop participants, plus eight positive impacts of a substantive nature.

Test and refine contribution claims

These initial contribution claims were scrutinised by the RSE Impact Study Expert Panel at a meeting on 9 December 2019, specifically (i) the associations between RSE and seven substantive negative impacts and 10 positive impacts, and (ii) the evidence underpinning such associations. The panel brought their expertise to check and further strengthen the research team's interpretation of the data and the contributions identified.

Understand different types of contribution

The literature on contribution analysis describes identifying the strength or magnitude of a contribution claim e.g. great, substantial, some, little, none. Our initial analysis of the data revealed that we needed to adopt a more descriptive approach to contribution claims. This is because the

impacts of RSE on, and for, individual villages and Pacific communities are nuanced and contingent. The impacts are influenced by a range of contextual/influencing factors as discussed above. Therefore, when we make a claim about the contribution of RSE to an observed impact, we need to describe the nature of the contribution and any influencing factors. Using a system-lens, we developed a typology of types of contribution listed below.

Table B1. Contribution types

A direct contribution	<p>RSE makes an unequivocal contribution to an observed impact which may be positive or negative.</p> <p>e.g. RSE is making a direct contribution to educational participation in those countries where fees are required for primary and/or secondary school attendance, and families do not have other sources of income that can cover these costs. The most consistently referenced contribution made by RSE earnings, outside of commodities to support basic living, was to fund school-related expenses.</p> <p>e.g. RSE employers' recruitment and selection approaches contribute to continued unequal access to participation in RSE both between and within PICs. The encouragement given by employers to their high-performing seasonal workers to return in successive years has created a privileged group of RSE workers who have access to regular wage employment. Families with workers who have been able to secure employment in the RSE and SWP are reluctant to forego the opportunity to return in a successive season. This has created two groups within most rural communities – those who have employment in the schemes and those who have not been able to get work (or who have chosen not to seek seasonal work overseas).</p>
An enabling contribution	<p>RSE (by itself, or in conjunction with something else) enables a positive impact.</p> <p>e.g. RSE income supplements other income sources to improve family wellbeing.</p>
An enabled contribution	<p>Something else has to be in place or happening (e.g. a contextual/influencing factor) in order for RSE to have a positive impact.</p> <p>e.g. To help ensure family wellbeing is not undermined while male or female RSE workers are absent, partners and children at home require access to extended family and / or village-based support networks.</p>
An inhibiting contribution/effect	<p>RSE inhibits or gets in the way of something else, resulting in a negative effect/impact.</p> <p>e.g. Long absences in NZ mean some workers may be unable to properly tend to their gardens. This can result in a decline in agricultural production which is required to support the family and to meet certain cultural obligations at times of major life-cycle events (weddings, funerals, births etc).</p>
A tipping point contribution	<p>A certain amount/quantity of something creates a tipping point for something else to happen.</p> <p>e.g. Changing consumer habits and increasing volumes of consumer goods brought back to the village by RSE workers (and others engaged in offshore work) is contributing to growing levels of rubbish and non-recyclable waste in the village. Pacific communities lack the facilities to dispose of non-recyclable waste, and rubbish is left to accumulate.</p>
A positive feedback loop contribution	<p>Something facilitates more of the same i.e. success facilitates further success.</p> <p>e.g. The completion of a village project using RSE income, such as a permanent materials house for a resident doctor in Lamén Bay, creates</p>

	new aspirations and plans for more village projects, such as improved hospital facilities and roads from the village to the hospital.
A negative feedback loop contribution	<p>A regulating mechanism that results in a reduction of a particular action, maintaining system equilibrium.</p> <p>e.g. Participation in RSE is contributing to a reduction in alcohol consumption in some Samoan villages. Village councils enforce strict rules in the village around behaviour, including restrictions on alcohol consumption that are linked to the no-drinking rules enforced by RSE employers in NZ. The opportunity to participate in the RSE – and the risk of losing your place for misbehaviour – is a major incentive for good behaviour at home.</p>

Appendix C. Recruitment and selection in the five PICs

Table C1. Recruitment options in the five PICs

Option 1: work-ready pool	Option 2: direct recruitment	Recruitment and selection processes
TONGA		
✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tonga has two recruitment options: 'Option One' via the work-ready pool administered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA); and 'Option Two' direct recruitment by NZ employers. - Under Option One, pre-screening and selection of workers is done at the village and district level by district and town officers. - Applicants for the work-ready pool must submit a letter of support from their partner/parents. An independent, third party from the applicant's local community (e.g. a town or district officer) is required to complete an evaluation form on the applicant and provide their informed assessment as to whether the applicant satisfies the selection criteria. Applicants may also attach a character reference from their church or religious leaders or other community leaders to support their application.¹⁸⁹ - Only those recruited via Option One are screened by the MIA. The MIA does not retain information on workers recruited directly by RSE employers. - Direct recruitment under Option Two is common and is often undertaken by NZ-based labour agents. Examples of two different approaches to recruitment are provided below. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A fānau-centric approach to recruitment (and pastoral care) that aims to maintain the integrity of the family unit of the RSE worker and widen RSE opportunities to as many families as possible. To be selected for RSE, the candidate needs to have the full support of the family, as well as endorsement from the candidate's church minister, former/current employers, town officer and elders. Selected workers must uphold Tongan cultural values as well as the faka'apa'apa between themselves and others in the team.¹⁹⁰ 2. A pro-poor focus to recruitment with an emphasis on providing opportunities to young men who would otherwise find it difficult to secure waged employment at home. When the labour agent has the opportunity to recruit new workers, he makes a concerted effort to select from households that have not previously had the opportunity to participate in RSE.
SAMOA		
✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ employers have two options: 1) recruitment via the work-ready pool administered by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL) and 2) direct recruitment. From the outset, recruitment via the work-ready pool has been the Government's favoured approach. - Informal recruitment agents, village chiefs and church organisations play a key role in facilitating any direct recruitment that occurs. The Falealili RSE scheme is an example of direct recruitment in Samoa. The matai of Falealili district has established close relationships with two RSE employers, and has supplied workers to both employers since 2007. - Legislation to license recruitment agents was drafted in 2008 but has not been passed to date.

¹⁸⁹ Retrieved from <http://www.tongaworks.org/selection-process.html>

¹⁹⁰ Vaioleti et al. (2019).

Option 1: work-ready pool	Option 2: direct recruitment	Recruitment and selection processes
VANUATU		
x (initially, but discontinued in 2008)	✓ (licensed recruitment agents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vanuatu is the only PIC to have introduced special legislation, Vanuatu's Seasonal Employment Act (no.23 of 2007) to regulate recruitment activities - to make it possible for ni-Vanuatu to be employed overseas on seasonal employment contracts, and to license recruitment agents. - When RSE was implemented, the then Commissioner for Labour wanted to establish a recruitment market. Two options were put in place for NZ employers: 1) to recruit directly using contacts in Vanuatu including licensed labour agents and workers from previous seasons; or 2) direct recruitment facilitated by the Employment Services Unit (ESU). - Vanuatu has not adopted an explicitly pro-poor focus to recruitment. There have been efforts by the ESU, and by licensed labour agents, to spread opportunities across Vanuatu's islands and provinces, however there is ongoing concern that many of the poorest, rural areas of Vanuatu face barriers to participation in seasonal work.¹⁹¹ - In order to be recruited for seasonal work, each worker is required to supply a letter of support from their partner/family that has been endorsed by their village chief. - The Lamien Bay Village Council has a rule that women cannot go overseas as seasonal workers if they have children under six years of age.
FIJI		
✓	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is only one recruitment path for Fiji citizens. RSE employers must recruit via Fiji's National Employment Centre (NEC). Fiji Government policy prohibits direct recruitment by employers and the use of recruitment agents.¹⁹² - Candidates are screened by the NEC against specific criteria (e.g. age, character, health) for selection. - Fiji has a pro-poor focus to recruitment and selection - applicants for the work-ready pool must be living in rural isolated and remote areas. A letter from the Turaga ni Koro,¹⁹³ District Officer or Advisory Council confirming the applicant's location is required. - Recruitment has, to date, focused on indigenous Fijians. - Team leaders who are invited by their RSE employer to recruit new workers must choose people from the work-ready pool.
KIRIBATI		
✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Kiribati Government uses an island-based quota system to select workers for the work-ready pool. Workers are required to register their interest with their island/town council, and are then nominated by the island/town councils. Candidates are screened by the Ministry of Employment & Human Resources (MEHR) in Tarawa against specific criteria, and MEHR make the final selection. - Direct recruitment is also an option in Kiribati. Employers must obtain a license to recruit directly.¹⁹⁴ - In practice, all recruitment occurs via the work-ready pool, although employers can specify workers they would like to return to NZ the following season.

¹⁹¹ Bailey, R. & Rereman, J. (2019).

¹⁹² MBIE (2014). Recognised Seasonal Employer immigration instructions. Inter-Agency Understanding: Fiji.

¹⁹³ Head of a village, who is usually elected or appointed by villagers.

¹⁹⁴ MBIE (2015). Recognised Seasonal Employer immigration instructions. Inter-Agency Understanding: Kiribati.

Vanuatu: Licensed recruitment agents¹⁹⁵

Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are the only two countries to have licensed recruitment agents for RSE and SWP. Until recently the number of registered agents in Vanuatu for RSE and SWP was small. In 2018 the Vanuatu government relaxed the requirements around registration, and by 2019 there were over 100 registered agents operating in Vanuatu. Agents have been largely unregulated, and the rapid increase in the number of agents has led to growing competition and a “race to the bottom” with respect to the fees negotiated with employers.

The Seasonal Employment Act allows registered recruitment agents to charge a fee to the employer, but not to workers.¹⁹⁶ However, the fees that can be charged to NZ and Australian employers have never been clearly determined – there are no guidelines or policy on what is considered an acceptable fee, per worker, to be paid by the employer. Fees charged to NZ employers are low, averaging around NZ\$45-50 per worker. Four recruitment agents interviewed said the fees they charge to NZ and Australian employers are not sufficient to cover the costs associated with recruitment of workers, let alone run a profitable business.¹⁹⁷

New Zealand and Australian officials have voiced concerns that some agents are regularly seeking remuneration from workers to cover their costs, either before workers depart for NZ/Australia, or on the return home. This practice contravenes the Seasonal Employment Act and the IAUs (NZ) and MOUs (Australia) that govern seasonal worker arrangements between Vanuatu, New Zealand and Australia respectively.¹⁹⁸

Informants cautioned, however, against assuming that every transfer between workers and agents is a payment for services. Small gifts of appreciation are an essential part of customary exchanges in Vanuatu, as part of the process of showing respect and gratitude to ‘Big Men’ and peers. One agent gave the example of receiving voluntary contributions from workers when they return from NZ and Australia after completing their contracts. The amounts that workers contribute are relatively small, around A\$200-\$300 out of net earnings of approx. A\$10,000. These payments are not dissimilar to the

¹⁹⁵ Information contained in this section comes from interviews with recruitment agents and community informants during fieldwork in Port Vila and Lamien Bay.

¹⁹⁶ It is a condition of the license that the licensee must not charge a person for any services provided by the licensee to the person to obtain seasonal employment for the person (Seasonal Employment Act 2007, s 6(5)).

¹⁹⁷ Agents’ costs are influenced by where they recruit from and the range of services they provide to employers, which may include some pre-departure training for RSE/SWP workers. Recruitment agents complete online applications for workers (requiring access to computers and internet), liaise with the LSU, and may provide food and accommodation to recruits who have come from the outer islands to Port Vila prior to their departure to NZ/Australia. While workers are offshore, most agents stay in regular communication with workers and may, in some cases, travel to NZ/Australia to visit workers and their employers. These are additional costs for agents that, according to agents interviewed, can go unrecognised by employers.

¹⁹⁸ The Seasonal Employment Act allows registered recruitment agents to charge a fee to the employer, but not to workers. However, Vanuatu’s Employment Act (CAP 160 s 65) is more ambiguous. Section 65 of the Employment Act covers the role of employment agencies, including the recruitment and placement of persons for employment outside of Vanuatu. The Act defines ‘employment agency’ as “an agency which acts as an intermediary for the purpose of procuring employment for a person or supplying an employee for an employer with a view to *deriving either directly or indirectly a pecuniary or other advantage from the employer or employee* [emphasis added]. In other words, employment agents, as licensed businesses, can recover their costs through fair charges for services, and these charges can be paid by the employer or the worker.

annual (non-voluntary) contributions made by Samoan workers recruited under the Falealili RSE scheme.

The issue of agents' fees has become political and is linked with the aspirations of current and former MPs seeking election in the 2020 national elections. There is external pressure on the Vanuatu government from New Zealand and Australia to address the issue linked in part to the wider context of the Labour Mobility Arrangement that is on the side of the PACER Plus Agreement. There is also pressure from the consumer end of the supply chain (e.g. Coles and Woolworths in Australia) to ensure there is no exploitation or unfair practices around recruitment of seasonal labour. This is a complex issue and one that will be difficult to resolve given common practices of customary exchange in Vanuatu.

Appendix D. Tables containing community-specific information

Table D1. Current and future uses of RSE income and opportunities for agricultural development in the village economy

Community	Current use of RSE money (main uses listed)	Future use of RSE money	Village economy - opportunities for development
TONGA			
Village(s): Kolonga Island: Tongatapu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily living incl. church donations - School fees - Home improvements - Purchase household goods - Vehicle purchase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home improvements - Vehicle purchase - Purchase land - Invest in plantations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kolonga is a large village, located in north-east Tongatapu, with a population of 1,145 residents (214 households) in 2016.¹⁹⁹ The land of Kolonga is owned by Lord Nuku, Noble of Kolonga Estate, who encourages agricultural development. - Kolonga is a land-rich village, with a mix of subsistence gardens for family production and consumption and, for those with large enough pieces of land, production of crops for sale in the village or markets in Nuku'alofa. A small number are involved in large-scale production for export. - Payment of farm labour to assist on plantations is a strategy used by some of the larger-scale producers, but wage rates are low (c.TOP\$20/day or approx. NZ\$13). - Informants noted a decline in agricultural production, linked in part to changing aspirations of youth in the village. There is a shortage of labour for farming. - In Kolonga, RSE households are focused primarily on meeting immediate needs, and purchasing vehicles, not on investment in plantations. - Not all families have access to land in Kolonga. For those that don't have land, money earned via RSE/SWP is critical to improve living standards.
Village(s): Ha'alaufuli Island: Vava'u	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily living incl. church donations - School fees - Build / renovate houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in plantations and/or cattle farming (stock, fencing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ha'alaufuli is a relatively small, rural village, with a population of 372 residents (84 households) in 2016.²⁰⁰ The village is located on the island of Vava'u, Tonga's richest agricultural region. There are plenty

¹⁹⁹ Tonga Statistics Department (2017).

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

Community	Current use of RSE money (main uses listed)	Future use of RSE money	Village economy - opportunities for development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vehicle purchase - Family events / special occasions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase trucks for farm use 	<p>of opportunities for agricultural development including: kava, vanilla, yams, taro and cattle farming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most crops (aside from vanilla) are produced for both domestic consumption and export. Vanilla is grown solely for export. - Cattle are an important part of the customary exchange system for major life cycle events, church and ceremonial occasions. - RSE money is contributing to investment in agricultural production in Ha'alaufuli, both in the expansion of existing cash cropping plantations, the development of new plantations, and the purchasing of farm equipment. - Current high prices for kava are driven by domestic and international demand, and by a shortage of the crop following a drought in 2014 and Cyclone Gita in 2018. - Hiring farm labour to assist on plantations is a common strategy in Ha'alaufuli. The price of farm labour has increased from TOP\$2/hr to over TOP\$5/hr linked with rising prices for kava. - Two informants in Ha'alaufuli had not returned to NZ for seasonal work because the wage earnings opportunities from commercial agriculture were better than money earned under RSE.
<p>Village(s): Nuku'alofa (main centre) and surrounding area Island: Tongatapu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily living incl. church donations - School fees - Family events / special occasions - Vehicle purchase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build / renovate house - Purchase land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of the 10 households interviewed, half come from the outer islands and do not own their land on the mainland. - Purchasing land on Tongatapu close to Nuku'alofa for employment and access to services is a priority for these families.
SAMOA			
<p>Village: Neiafu Island: Savai'i</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributions to the new Methodist Church - Annual contribution to the Village Council - Build / renovate houses - School fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase vehicles for use on plantations - Finish partially built houses - Invest in plantations and/or cattle farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neiafu is on the north-western side of the island of Savai'i. The village is in two parts: Neiafu Tai on the coast and Neiafu Uta which is inland. In 2016 the village had a total population of 904 residents (127 households), with around 34 percent of residents living on the coast, and 66 percent living inland.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Data from the Samoa Population and Housing Census 2016 provided by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Apia.

Community	Current use of RSE money (main uses listed)	Future use of RSE money	Village economy - opportunities for development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water tanks 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neiafu is a relatively wealthy village; families have access to land and good opportunities for agricultural production. The north-western side of Savai'i has low rainfall and good soil, and the majority of families have at least one water tank for rain water collection. - In recent years there has been significant movement of families inland, away from coast, to be closer to their plantation lands and to mitigate adverse effects of storm surges and cyclones. - A wide range of crops grow well in Neiafu, including kava, taro, bananas, citrus and cocoa. Cattle farming and fishing are also viable options for income generation. - The majority of households live on land accessed through customary tenure. Using customary land carries obligations, including providing service to the matai of the village.
Village(s): Papa Palauli Island: Savai'i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual contribution to the Village Council - Vehicle purchase - School fees - Money to support extended family - Daily living incl. church donations - Purchase cattle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in plantation and/or cattle farming - Daily living and school fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Papa Palauli, with a population of 357 residents (48 households) in 2016,²⁰² is a relatively poor village compared to Neiafu and Poutasi, with limited opportunities for agricultural development. - Located on the south-eastern side of Savai'i, approx. 30mins from the main town of Salelologa, the area has high rainfall and the land is not suitable for major cash crops like kava or cocoa – both crops require a drier climate. - Main opportunities for agriculture in Papa Palauli are cash crops such as taro and bananas, and cattle farming. - Crops are grown mainly for family consumption, with small amounts sold at the local market. - Opportunities for large-scale commercial agriculture are limited.
Village(s): Poutasi and 8 surrounding villages, Falealili District Island: Upolu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual contribution to the Village Council and weekly donations to the PDT. - Build / renovate houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in plantation and/or cattle farming - Purchase vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poutasi, with a total population of 406 residents (62 households) in 2016,²⁰³ is the sixth largest village in Falealili district, located on the southern side of the main island of Upolu. This side of the island has higher rainfall than other parts of Upolu, and the land is not suitable for kava.

²⁰² ibid.

²⁰³ Data from the Samoa Population and Housing Census 2016, was provided by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Apia.

Community	Current use of RSE money (main uses listed)	Future use of RSE money	Village economy - opportunities for development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily living incl. church donations - School fees - Vehicle purchase 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main opportunities for agriculture include: cash cropping (e.g. taro, lettuces and Chinese cabbage, cucumbers, coconuts, pawpaw) and cattle farming. - Locally grown crops are sold to the local tourist hotels and resorts via the PDT.²⁰⁴ - In Poutasi, 98 percent of households are living on land accessed under customary tenure.
VANUATU			
Village(s): 8 villages including the main town of Lenakel Island: Tanna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily living incl. church donations and custom ceremonies - Building houses - School fees - Power supply – solar and/or diesel generators - Set up / maintain small businesses e.g. sewing business, guest house, motor mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finish partially built houses - School fees - Build house - Small business development e.g. guest houses, tourism ventures, local stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tanna island, located in Taefa Province, had a total population of 32,280 at the time of the 2016 mini census, making it the third most densely populated island in Vanuatu. The eight villages where RSE workers and families were interviewed are in the region administered by West Tanna Area Council where 8,545 people were resident in 2016.²⁰⁵ The island has over 100 villages and limited opportunities for economic development. - Tanna families have access to land for agricultural production, but most are producing on a small scale for family consumption and/or for sale at the local market in Lenakel. - Main opportunities for agriculture are: cash crops (e.g. yams, coffee, pineapples, citrus, vegetables), with small-scale production of kava. - Opportunities for cash cropping on a commercial scale are limited by a lack of land and resources, linked with population growth.
Village(s): Lamén Bay and Lamén Island Island: Epi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School fees - Building houses - Daily living incl. custom ceremonies - Power supply – solar and/or diesel generators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in plantations and/or cattle farming - Purchase vehicle and/or boat for transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lamén Bay and Lamén Island are located towards the northern tip of the island of Epi, in Shefa Province. At the time of the mini census in 2016, Epi had a population of 6,280 and Vermail, the Area Council that includes Lamén Bay and Lamén Island, had a total population of 1,870.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Local families can sell their produce to the PDT and the Trust then on-sells the produce to local hotels and resorts. Profits from the sale are split 50/50: 50 percent for the family / 50 percent for PDT.

²⁰⁵ Vanuatu National Statistics Office (2017).

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*

Community	Current use of RSE money (main uses listed)	Future use of RSE money	Village economy - opportunities for development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Church donations - Vehicle purchase - Invest in small businesses e.g. local store, kava bar, truck hire/taxi, guest house 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is plenty of land available for agricultural development, and crops such as kava, watermelon and peanuts are currently commanding high prices. Goods are sold both locally, and exported to Port Vila. Epi kava is highly regarded in Vanuatu. - The high prices for kava are driven by domestic and international demand, and by a shortage of the crop following Cyclone Pam in 2015. - There is strong demand for produce sold at the local market in Lamén Bay, particularly from Lamén Island families who have switched to purchasing food from the market, rather than growing their own crops.²⁰⁷ - Cattle farming is also a viable business on Epi. The large number of families in the Lamén Bay area involved in RSE has led to a decline in agricultural production and cattle farming, but cows remain important for custom ceremonies.
FIJI			
Village(s): 10 villages located in 4 Tikina (districts), 3 in Cakaudrove Province, 1 in Bua Province Island: Vanua Levu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in kava plantation incl. paying labour to assist in plantation development and maintenance - Home improvements - Purchase household goods and gardening equipment - School fees - Power supply – solar and/or diesel generators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest and expand kava plantations - Home improvements - Purchase household goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Fijian women interviewed came from 10 villages on the eastern side of Vanua Levu, located approx. 2hrs drive from the main town and port of Savusavu. The villages had populations ranging in size from 47 to 348 residents at the time of the 2017 census.²⁰⁸ - Village economies on the eastern side of Vanua Levu are dominated by production of kava, copra and dalo (Fijian taro). Cattle farming is also important with cows used for ceremonial purposes. - Cakaudrove Province in the Northern Division is the biggest producer of kava in Fiji. Current high prices for kava are driven by domestic and international demand, and by a shortage of the crop following Cyclone Winston in 2016. - Households have access to land and high prices for kava make it a viable option for a sustainable business.

²⁰⁷ Lamén Island households have their gardens over on the mainland of Epi. To access their gardens, family members must travel by boat from the island.

²⁰⁸ Fiji Bureau of Statistics (2018).

Community	Current use of RSE money (main uses listed)	Future use of RSE money	Village economy - opportunities for development
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paying labour to assist with plantation maintenance and expansion is a common strategy for local households. - Talanoa with eight men from two villages indicated that men do not consider RSE an attractive option because of the small amounts of money earned relative to the costs associated with long absences from family. Men can earn better money at home growing kava. - Fijian women currently involved in RSE are using RSE earnings to develop their own kava plantations, often paying for farm labour to maintain them while the women are away. These developments are giving women more financial independence in the village.
KIRIBATI			
Village(s): Households across main urban centre of South Tarawa Island: Tarawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase household goods e.g. whiteware, electronics - Purchase goods for use in small businesses e.g. freezers to sell frozen goods; second-hand clothes - Daily living costs - School fees - Home improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build a permanent materials house - Invest in small businesses e.g. local convenience stores, purchase vehicles to use as taxis or hire out to others, sale of second-hand goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South Tarawa is a densely populated urban environment, with a total population of 56,388 residents (7,877 households) at the time of the last census in 2015.²⁰⁹ - While the 33 I-Kiribati workers interviewed (23 women, 10 men) are all living in a densely populated urban environment, some have access to land through inheritance or marriage and opportunities for limited food production. - For I-Kiribati households participating in RSE, the money earned is used to improve standards of living (incl. housing), pay school fees, and support some small business development.

²⁰⁹ Kiribati National Statistics Office (2016).

Table D2. Positive and negative impacts of RSE on participating communities

Community	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
TONGA		
Village(s): Kolonga Island: Tongatapu	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The greatest economic benefits of RSE are at the household level e.g. improved standards of housing (e.g. flush toilets and showers), money for children’s education, more vehicles. - Money earned through RSE helped families recover following Cyclone Gita in 2018. - No positive community-wide impacts were identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in RSE/SWP has had “profound” impacts on the village economy and social fabric. - “The village was better off before the schemes [RSE/SWP] were introduced and we were all farmers” (Talanoa with village leaders). <p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing reliance on cash to cover all costs associated with living in the village, incl. purchasing of store-bought food and garden produce by returnee workers who don’t want to work their own land. Purchase of cars and ‘flashy’ material goods of no real use to the village. Dependence on cash resulting in a focus on the self and immediate family, rather than the extended family and community. - Decline in agricultural production. RSE/SWP are a “distraction” taking people away from production of cash crops at home. Evidence of this is seen in the unused or underutilised tracts of agricultural land in the village. In the 2016 census, almost 30 percent of Kolonga’s households reported that they did not grow crops; a sizeable number in a village where farming remains at the heart of the local economy. - Shortage of local agricultural labour and an associated decline in commercial farming. Large growers need more labour than extended family can provide. There is local demand for farm labour but wages are low. When RSE workers come back, they won’t work for Tongan wages. They have other priorities and farming is low down on the list. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Younger generations are not observing customs of respect that underpin Tongan village culture. According to a community informant, “there are two new addictions in the village: ‘fast money; and ‘social freedom’”. RSE/SWP offer both of these: the opportunity to earn ‘fast money’ – large amounts of money in a relatively short space of time; and living in NZ/AUS free from the social constraints and family obligations of the village. - The desire for social freedom is a shift away from:

Community	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Respect for the fundamental collective values that underpin the village’s social practices (family and community first, before self; sharing of resources when it serves the wider interests of the community); and ○ Customs of respect that are an integral part of Tongan social structure (respect for elders, for hierarchy/rank, for the church, for customary practices, and the practice of sharing resources) - Repeated participation in RSE has had the unintended consequence of ‘freeing’ Tongans from their social and cultural obligations at home. Over time repeat workers are returning with different attitudes and ideas that challenge village conventions and expectations. There’s a demonstration effect of these different attitudes on children of seasonal workers. Children are beginning to take on the views of their parents and challenge cultural norms in the village. - Increasing individualism and prioritising of self before extended family and community. This is causing marital and societal problems. - Changing aspirations among village youth. Young people don’t want to work and live in the village. This is contributing to a decline in social cohesion. Seasonal work programmes are a contributor to the problem, but not necessarily the primary cause. - Increasing incidence of petty crime – theft from houses and of agricultural produce from gardens. ‘Fast money’ is becoming a requirement of a successful life, irrespective of how it’s obtained. Inflation is pushing the cost of food beyond some families. In the past it was shameful to be caught stealing. It’s not such an issue now for young people – noticeable erosion of customs of respect and less concern about ‘shame’ for the family. - Increasing problems with alcohol consumption and drug use.
Village(s): Ha’alaufuli Island: Vava’u	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSE has had a positive impact on cash cropping and cattle farming. Money earned in NZ has supported expansion of existing plantations and the development of new plantations. Households draw on extended family or pay for local farm labour. 	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortage of labour for major events such as funerals. - Potential for workers to become dependent on earnings from seasonal work to support the continued wellbeing of their families.

Community	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSE has generated demand for local produce e.g. a NZ-based Tongan recruitment agent arranges for a container of yams and giant taro to be sent from Ha'alaufuli to Motueka each season. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved educational attainment for children in the village due to the prioritisation of RSE income for school fees. - Increased contributions to the church and for family/community events. - Village social structure and customary exchange system in Ha'alaufuli remains strong, and the village's communal work continues. - Reduction in alcohol consumption in the village linked with recruiter's rules for selection for RSE. - Disciplined work environment in NZ helps young people prepare for life as adults in the village. - A consistent theme across interviews was that the benefits of participation in RSE outweigh the costs (e.g. family separation). 	<p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No negative impacts identified.
SAMOA		
<p>Village(s): Neiafu Island: Savai'i</p>	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neiafu is relatively new to the RSE having only sent workers to NZ for two seasons (2017-19). The benefits of the scheme are at the household level. No community-wide benefits were identified. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fa'a Samoa is strong in Neiafu and there are clear rules that are enforced by the Village Council and must be adhered to by local families (e.g. restrictions on alcohol consumption). - The use of RSE money to support the building of the new Methodist Church was identified as a positive impact on the village. 	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No negative impacts specific to RSE were identified. The village sends a small number (20) of RSE workers to NZ. The loss of the taulelea is not a problem at this stage. Any work can be picked up by the taulelea that have remained in the village, and the Women's Committee. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No negative social impacts at the village-level were identified.

Community	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Village(s): Papa Palauli Island: Savai'i	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The greatest impact of RSE is at the household level. Papa Palauli is a relatively poor village, with few options for cash crops or waged employment. Participation in RSE has raised the standard of living of local families. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The main change to village social practices, identified by respondents, was the reduction in alcohol consumption, linked to participation in RSE and no-drinking rules in NZ. Village is strong in Fa'a Samoa. There are strict rules in the village around behaviour, enforced by Village Council. 	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of labour from the village has negative impacts on production and community activities. In particular, the loss of the taulelea who perform domestic duties and gardening work for the matai. Absence of the untitled men is particularly evident at times when they're needed for village activities and major events (e.g. funerals). <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No negative social impacts at the village-level were identified.
Village(s): Poutasi and 8 surrounding villages, Falealili District Island: Upolu	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSE is improving participating households' standard of living. Poutasi village has a more "prosperous" look to it now, than before RSE (Kerlsake, 2019). - RSE income is raising the social status of participating families. Men are going overseas for seasonal work who would not have had access to waged employment at home. The money earned in NZ is used to send children to school, make greater contributions to the church and to customary exchange practices and ceremonies. These activities generate upward social mobility and greater influence within the village hierarchy (Kerlake, 2019). - Redistribution of wealth among the local community – RSE workers' earnings support their immediate families as well as extended family members. - Participation in the RSE scheme helped families to recover from the 2009 tsunami, providing them with the necessary funds to build new houses. 	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of labour from the village for community activities and agricultural production, especially the taulela who perform the hard, physical jobs in the village associated with agricultural work and other communal activities. - Many of the untitled men from the district have gone to NZ. The local women's committees have to pick up the communal work traditionally performed by the untitled men and it's an additional burden for them. - Loss of young men for church and sport.

Community	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New houses are built with concrete blocks – they are more solid and of better construction to withstand natural disasters and flooding. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fa’a Samoa is strong in Falealili and there are clear rules enforced by the Village Council. - The rules men must follow while in NZ are having a positive flow-on effect to behaviour in the village especially around drinking alcohol and church attendance. - RSE workers recognise the value of time management. This is having flow-on effects into agricultural production as men are more efficient and productive with their plantations. 	<p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gradual erosion of the traditional Samoan economic system that’s based on reciprocity and redistribution of wealth. Men are earning money overseas and have increasing access to material wealth and commodities – buying into a capitalist economic system (Kerslake, 2019). - Untitled men are returning to Samoa who have outgrown their roles as taulelea. They now have disposable income, but no rank in society.
VANUATU		
<p>Village(s): 8 villages including the main town of Lenakel Island: Tanna</p>	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greatest impact of RSE is at the household level. Money from the scheme has helped lift the standard of living of participating families. - Use of RSE money for education is particularly important and is raising the standard of educational attainment as families can now afford to send their children to secondary school (and, in some cases, on for tertiary education). - RSE money has made a major contribution to the recovery of Tanna families following Cyclone Pam in 2015. RSE money has enabled families to build permanent concrete block houses, install water tanks and solar power. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shift in mentality of RSE workers and family members as households learn how to manage their RSE earnings. Doesn’t generally happen in the first 1-2 seasons because new recruits often spend their money in NZ. 	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some decline in agricultural production. Several informants noted that RSE workers return home and live off their RSE earnings, rather than going back to their gardens. They only start working in their gardens when the RSE money runs out after 2-3 months. This leaves little time to prepare gardens for family use ahead of the next season in NZ. - Over the preceding decade, as RSE money has entered the customary exchange system, the costs of custom ceremonies have risen. This is significant on Tanna - an island that retains a lot of traditional customs and values and where custom ceremonies are an integral part of life, requiring regular contributions from local families. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudes of some workers are becoming more westernised. Starting to question the authority of the chief and traditional practices and customs. Some workers are beginning to see themselves as ‘Big Men’ in

Community	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
	<p>By season three onwards workers generally see the benefits of saving and planning for the future.</p>	<p>the village because of the money they earn, even though they don't hold any real authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSE workers are not returning home during the season when a family member dies. Workers send money towards funeral costs instead. This is especially problematic if a mother dies – children are expected to come home in this instance because of the connection between mother and child. If workers don't return, this is seen as a lack of respect for elders and traditional Vanuatu custom, and an indication of a change in thinking towards more westernised views.
<p>Village(s): Lamén Bay and Lamén Island Island: Epi</p>	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSE has transformed villages in the Lamén Bay area. Most families now have 1+ members overseas on RSE (mainly Motueka, Blenheim, Kerikeri). A small number of families are now considering SWP as well. - Transformation of the built environment. Families are building permanent, concrete block houses – “the good house”.²¹⁰ Recovery from Cyclone Pam in 2015 has accelerated the shift to permanent materials houses. - The Lamén Bay area is more “developed” now. The villages are more prosperous and orderly than others on Epi that have not had extensive engagement in RSE. - Improvements in power generation for lighting and computer/mobile phone use has had positive flow-on effects for children's learning. <hr/> <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over time, workers and families are learning how to save and plan for the future. Money earned in NZ allows for big projects (e.g. houses) to be executed. Very hard to do this when living on small amounts from the sale of cash crops. 	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Households are increasingly reliant on money earned overseas to support daily living, especially those families that have several family members overseas as seasonal workers. - There is a shortage of labour in the community and an associated decline in agricultural production. Too many young working-age men are leaving Lamén Bay for seasonal work; decline in the quality and intensity of gardening – men not maintaining their gardens on their return home; plus a shortage of workers for major events/ceremonies. Families also noted a decline in livestock (cattle and pigs) for ceremonial purposes, problems with wild pigs damaging gardens (because people no longer secure their pigs or tend for them properly), and encroachment of weeds and the bush into land that was once cultivated. - Customary practices are becoming more monetised. RSE families have more money for ceremonies, but non-participating households struggle to meet costs. <hr/> <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing attitudes towards agricultural work – men view RSE as their ongoing option for income generation, and are not thinking about making their livelihoods at home. One informant referred to a growing practice among families of sending sons and younger brothers off to work in NZ as soon as they're eligible for a passport (21yrs).

²¹⁰ According to Smith (2018) construction of a 'good house' has become a preoccupation for seasonal worker families in the Lamén Bay area.

Community	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of resilience among the younger generation. Solar power has transformed electricity provision, but the downside is children spend too much time on phones and screens watching things that aren't of relevance to village life. Not learning about customary knowledge and skills e.g. they lack good gardening knowledge (don't know different varieties of yams), loss of skills in fire making (without matches), lighting pre-solar (kerosene and Coleman lamps) loss of skills in building traditional houses. These skills are still essential in communities that can be badly hit by natural disasters (e.g. Cyclone Pam). - Loss of traditional canoe building skills. Boat transport to/from Lamén Island is now by RSE-funded boats with outboard motors. - Loss of community cohesion. Younger RSE workers are becoming more independent and individualistic. Not taking as much interest in community life, less likely to adhere to village rules and questioning the chiefs' rulings.²¹¹ - Increasing emphasis on personal, material gain and wealth (incl. accumulation of household assets) rather than sharing wealth within the community. Individualism comes at a cost to village activities that have always depended on pooling of labour and resources for infrastructure that supports the community (e.g. maintaining the roads), and for village events - Shift towards a consumerist, "throw away" society. Major change in the village is the amount of rubbish – pieces of roofing iron, plastic, old bikes and other goods that are thrown into the bush. - Security concerns: 1) associated with personal accumulation of assets, households have increasing concerns about the possible theft of goods and security. Growing use of locks on houses to protect household items; 2) personal security - some women are afraid to go to their gardens alone when RSE men away.

²¹¹ Also see Craven (2015) for a discussion of changing attitudes and declining respect for traditional structures of local governance in Lamén Bay.