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IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES

ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries
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List of abbreviations and acronyms

APTC	Australia–Pacific Training Coalition
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUD	Australian dollar
BLA	bilateral labour agreement
COFA	Compact of Free Association
DESSFB	Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Australia
DHA	Department of Home Affairs, Australia
DIIS	Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Australia
DLIR	Department of Labour and Industrial Relations, Papua New Guinea
FICs	Forum Island Countries
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
ILMS	International Labour Migration Statistics
ILO	International Labour Organization
INZ	Immigration New Zealand
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LMAP	Labour Mobility Assistance Program, Australia
MEPIR	Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Fiji
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand
MIC	Ministry of Information and Communications, Tonga
MIRAB	Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPP	Ministry of Pacific Peoples, New Zealand
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NAWPP	Pacific Microstates–Northern Australia Worker Pilot Programme, Australia
NZD	New Zealand dollar
OSH	occupational safety and health
PAC	Pacific Access Category, New Zealand
PACER	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
PIC	Pacific Island country
PICTA	Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PLMAM	Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting
PLS	Pacific Labour Scheme, Australia
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PQF	Pacific Qualification Framework
PSWPS	Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme, Australia
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer (scheme), New Zealand
SMS	Skills Movement Scheme
SPBEA	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment
SWP	Seasonal Worker Programme, Australia
TMNP	temporary movement of natural persons
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNTFHS	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security

Executive summary

There is a long history of migration in the Pacific Islands region. In the past, migration flows have consisted mostly of permanent migration to the Pacific Rim, which created large Pacific diasporas mostly in New Zealand, the United States, and Australia. More Cook Islanders and Samoans currently live permanently in the Pacific Rim than in their island homes. New Zealand grants residence to 1,100 Samoans annually under the Samoan Quota Resident visa, and also grants residence to 250 Fijian and Tongan citizens and 75 I-Kiribati and Tuvaluan citizens under the Pacific Access Category (PAC) Resident visa. Cook Islanders, Niueans, and Tokelauans are New Zealand citizens with full residential and work rights. Additionally, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau have open access to the United States, having signed Compacts of Free Association (COFAs).

Over the last decade, seasonal labour migration opportunities for Pacific Island countries (PICs) have emerged, with the launch of New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme in 2007 and Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) in 2012 (which followed a 2008–12 pilot). These schemes are designed to fill seasonal labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries (with other industries such as the broader agriculture industry and accommodation recently added to the SWP). In the 2017–18 season, a total of 9,673 Pacific Islanders arrived in New Zealand on the RSE visa, and 8,457 SWP visas were granted by Australia to workers from PICs. The RSE, which is open to nine PICs, is currently capped at 12,850 workers; while the SWP was opened to all PICs and uncapped in 2015. The SWP initially had modest worker numbers due partly to the wide availability of backpackers as largely unregulated agricultural labour in Australia. More recently, with reforms of the SWP and a decline in the reliance on backpackers as a result of greater awareness of and measures to prevent farm worker exploitation, the number of SWP participating workers has rapidly grown. The RSE and SWP have become major labour mobility avenues for PICs, but the greatest beneficiaries have been Vanuatu, Tonga, and Samoa; while Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Tuvalu have had fewer opportunities. Access has been uneven within PICs as well. It is estimated that only 11.5 per cent of the RSE- and SWP-participating workers in 2013–14 were women. Remote and rural communities may also be disadvantaged in accessing information and infrastructure needed for participation.

The main temporary labour migration pathway to New Zealand for Pacific Islanders is the Essential Skills visa. In 2016, under New Zealand's Canterbury Reconstruction Pilot, carpenters from Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga were employed to work in the Christchurch rebuild, leading to a new Pacific Trades Partnership initiative that currently recruits trained Pacific Island carpenters for short-term employment in New Zealand's construction industry. Australia's new Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) was launched in 2018 to fill low- and semi-skilled jobs in rural and regional Australia. The scheme, which builds on the SWP and the Pacific Microstates–Northern Australia Worker Pilot Programme (NAWPP), is uncapped, and open to citizens of nine PICs and to all sectors and industries.

Labour migration flows from PICs have become more diverse in recent years with the inclusion of non-traditional destination countries. These include small but consistent flows of Fijians, Tongans, and other Pacific Islanders to Japan as students and rugby players. Fijians, with their long history of serving in the British Army and as peacekeepers in various UN missions, have also been attracted to private military and security work in the Middle East and other high conflict areas since around the early 2000s.

There has also been increased intra-Pacific labour migration. Since Fiji has the most advanced education and skills training systems in the Pacific Islands region, Fijians have found employment in several PICs and in various occupations including as teachers, nurses, skilled trades people, various managerial positions, as well as in the tourism and hospitality industry. While all PICs are destination countries for some skilled, professional, and managerial workers, the largest numbers of foreign workers are employed in Papua New Guinea and Fiji; while the proportion of migrant workers in terms of the local labour force is largest in Palau and the Cook Islands. In Papua New Guinea, the majority of foreign workers are from Australia and other developed countries, as well as from various Asian

countries. This suggests that PICs have not been able to take advantage of opportunities in Papua New Guinea, with the exception of a relatively recent labour flow of Fijians, including as hospitality and tourism workers. The Forum Island Country (FIC) governments have indicated interest in exploring greater opportunities for intra-regional labour mobility.

Notably, labour migration opportunities have been unevenly distributed among PICs. Melanesian countries (except Fiji) and the atoll States have had few migration outlets. The main overseas employment opportunity for Kiribati and Tuvalu in recent decades has been as seafarers on German merchant ships and Asian fishing boats; however, seafarer numbers have declined in the wake of the global economic crisis. Among PICs, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji have the largest proportions of their populations living overseas; whereas less than 10 per cent of the populations of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu live overseas.

One new form of migration that has emerged in the Pacific Islands region in recent decades and is likely to become more prominent in the future is climate change-induced migration. As an atoll nation, Kiribati is one of the most affected countries. In the context of the projected loss in habitable land due to climate change, the lack of migration opportunities has serious implications.

There are several barriers to maximizing labour migration opportunities for PICs:

1. There is a lack of skills and qualification recognition to facilitate migration. For instance, skills training at Australian and New Zealand standards is not sufficient to gain skilled migrant entry into Australia or New Zealand.
2. The geography and remoteness of some PICs, which entail not only higher travel costs but limited availability of relevant information, result in uneven access to migration opportunities.
3. The existing trade agreements, namely the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), have not made significant impact on maximizing migration opportunities. As for the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus, while regional labour migration was a core component of free trade negotiations, in the end, a non-binding side-arrangement on labour mobility was agreed on with the aim of strengthening labour migration cooperation between the parties.
4. While many employers in labour-receiving countries use employment agents to recruit workers, few agencies have offices in PICs and few Pacific Islanders have registered in their databases, which limits their chances of being recruited.
5. PICs have not had a chance to build networks and a good reputation in major destination countries other than Australia and New Zealand, which disadvantages them against workers from other countries.
6. Within the region, skill shortages exist largely in the same areas across most PICs, which limits the scope for meeting skill shortage needs with intra-Pacific labour migration.

Labour migration has brought considerable development benefits to PICs including: employment; remittances that support households and services provided in communities; increased education; and skills development. Remittances are arguably the main economic benefit of migration: in 2018, remittances into ten PICs (Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) amounted to US\$689 million, with Fiji receiving the largest sum, followed by Tonga and Samoa. Due to the huge out-migration flows, particularly from Polynesia, the smaller island States have been characterized as MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) States.

One of the major costs of permanent migration in PICs is skill loss. Permanent migration of skilled workers has entailed negative effects of brain drain, especially in the Polynesian countries and Fiji. The migration of nurses and doctors from PICs is a growing concern, and has affected the provision of health services in many PICs. Other areas, including the construction industry, tourism management, and a range of professional services, have also experienced reduced capacity.

Skill loss is less severe in the case of temporary and seasonal migration. Temporary and seasonal schemes are also known to have better economic impacts for sending countries in general. However, gaps may be identified in the end-to-end processes of seasonal/temporary migration. For instance, under New Zealand's RSE and Australia's SWP, the arrangements for pre-departure training differ greatly among PICs, which may result in considerably different degrees of preparedness of their workers. Recruitment regulations similarly differ among PICs, with private recruitment agents often involved in the process. Unfair worker selection practices have been pointed out in some cases. Upon seasonal/temporary workers' return to their own countries, little or no reintegration support is currently provided for them.

While the focus of the temporary and seasonal migration schemes has often been on economic benefits for participants and their communities and countries of origin; however, the social implications of these schemes, which are different from those of permanent migration, warrant close attention. The social and health impacts of seafaring have been researched for Kiribati and Tuvalu, but those of seasonal and temporary migration to Australia and New Zealand are less well documented. For instance, the protection of the rights of seasonal and temporary migrant workers needs to be scrutinized, especially given that the existing seasonal/temporary migrant visas available for Pacific Islanders are tied to specific employers. Indeed, concerns have been raised about the working conditions and pastoral care of seasonal workers under both the RSE and SWP. Cases of exploitation among RSE- and SWP-participating workers have been highlighted by researchers and the media, prompting both the Australian and New Zealand governments to begin to take measures to address them. Some seriously harmful working conditions and physical and psychological impacts have been documented in the case of Fijian private military and security personnel. Relatedly, greater information is needed on the flows and impacts of the migration of Pacific Islanders as domestic workers, since migrant domestic workers are known to be particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Finally, studies have identified broader impacts that the absences of seasonal and temporary workers have on their communities, ranging from the loss of able-bodied young men for community work to marital dissolution, family abandonment, and cultural transgressions.

In this context of multiple benefits and challenges – which Underhill-Sem et al. (2019) describe as the “quadruple win-loss” of labour mobility – state and non-state actors have taken up initiatives for partnerships and regional cooperation to maximize the benefits of labour mobility and monitor its impacts. Examples include the establishment of the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM), which provides PICs with an opportunity for high-level regional cooperation, not only in strengthening the existing mobility schemes and exploring new opportunities with Australia and New Zealand, but also enhancing intra-Pacific labour migration. The Fiji Volunteer Scheme is an example of a successful intra-Pacific labour migration initiative. Non-governmental stakeholders, such as seasonal labour employers and regional training institutions like the Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), may also play increasingly important roles in improving the existing migration schemes like the RSE and SWP and in facilitating new ones like the PLS.

The following recommendations emerge from the above:

Improving labour migration governance

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

- Since it is in the interest of PICs as migrant-sending nations to ensure safe migration and fair work for their migrant workers, it is recommended that they consider signing and ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions governing labour migration, especially the:
 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1947 (No. 97);
 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143); and
 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

- PICs that have not developed national labour migration policies could learn lessons from the experiences of Kiribati, Samoa, and Tuvalu with developing and implementing their policies, and based on the lessons learned, start a process of developing their own national labour migration policies.

Improving existing temporary and seasonal schemes

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

- Pacific Island governments could lobby for including opportunities for seasonal and temporary workers to change employers in Australia and New Zealand, with the view of reducing workers' dependence and vulnerability. There are examples of best practices in the world.
- The Kiribati and Tuvalu governments could lobby for the consideration of “vulnerability to climate change or natural disasters” within the selection process for the RSE, SWP, and Pacific Labour Scheme, giving workers from these countries a small advantage.
- Regarding women's participation in seasonal work schemes, PICs could try to understand and replicate good practices from Kiribati in order to increase the proportion of women participating in the schemes.
- Regarding improving labour governance in origin countries, research studies could determine what kind(s) of reintegration assistance for returned workers would be most useful (e.g., training, micro-credits, savings schemes, or others) to assist returned workers to build sustainable livelihoods in their island countries without the need to return to Australia or New Zealand for many seasons. This would then limit the negative social impacts of repeated absences on themselves and their families, and would create opportunities for newcomers to participate in seasonal work schemes.

Moving to new destination countries and into new occupational areas

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

- PIC governments in collaboration with the ILO could instigate a public debate involving social partners over the preferred levels and types of labour migration in all PICs.
- After determining the preferred levels and types of labour migration, Pacific Island governments could become more active in gathering and disseminating information on potential labour migration opportunities in non-traditional destinations and new occupational areas. They could proactively negotiate bilateral labour agreements/memoranda of understanding with potential destination countries.
- After identifying overseas employment opportunities, training efforts have to be concentrated in areas of labour demand.

Recommendations for the ILO:

- Given its global experience, the ILO could provide important technical support to PIC governments in their identification of overseas employment opportunities and their negotiations with destination countries.
- The guide on overseas employment for I-Kiribati developed by the ILO (2015) represents good practice, and similar guides could be developed either for individual PICs or for the region as a whole. Guides could focus on skilled work (as in the case of Kiribati) or could also include semi- and low-skilled work.

Increasing understanding of the social impacts of migration

Recommendations for the ILO:

- Given the lack of understanding of the social impacts of seasonal and temporary migration on migrants, their families and their communities, the ILO could commission research into this area.
- The particularly severe impacts of the migration of Fijian private military/security officers also warrants in-depth research that could be organized by the ILO.
- Given the ILO's expertise in working in the area of protecting women migrant domestic workers, including through legislation and policy advice, a first step would be to conduct a comprehensive research study on migrant domestic workers from Pacific Islands, as there currently is little knowledge about them.

Collecting consistent labour migration data to ensure evidence-based policy-making

Recommendations for the ILO:

- Using the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) template from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, it is recommended that ILO develop a similar database for the Pacific region.
- In addition, the ILO could provide technical support to line ministries in the PICs (Labour, Immigration) to enable them to make better use of the data that is collected by these ministries.

Increasing intra-Pacific labour migration and localizing selected positions

Recommendation for the ILO:

- The ILO could commission research into the labour markets of the main Pacific migrant-receiving countries (Cook Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea) to explore opportunities: (a) for localization; and (b) for Pacific Islanders from neighbouring countries taking up these positions rather than migrants from more distant countries.

1. Introduction

The Pacific Islands region has long been characterized by large migration flows. Tens of thousands of Pacific Islanders have permanently resettled in the Pacific Rim, and sizeable Pacific diasporas are found in New Zealand, the United States and Australia. New Zealand and the United States grant permanent residence rights to the residents of selected Pacific Island countries (PICs). Among some smaller PICs, the overseas population far outnumbers the population in the island home. Over the last decade, new temporary and seasonal labour mobility opportunities have opened up through New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP). These schemes attempt to fill seasonal labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries. More recently, other industries (such as hospitality, aged care, fisheries) have also been opened up for Pacific Islanders.

Labour migration flows have become more diverse, both geographically – with new flows directed at non-traditional destination countries, such as Japan, and increased intra-Pacific migration – and in terms of the occupations involved, such as nurses, teachers, caregivers, rugby players, and security personnel. In some countries, like Kiribati, labour migration has become an increasingly important climate change adaptation strategy.

Labour migration has brought considerable development benefits to PICs in the form of employment; remittances that support households and services provided in communities; and increased education and skills development, to name just a few. At the same time, there are concerns about the social impacts of temporary labour mobility wherein one family member is absent for considerable amounts of time, and concerns about violations of the rights at work and general human rights of labour migrants in destination countries.

At the International Labour Organization (ILO) High Level Tripartite Forum on Climate Change and Decent Work in the Pacific Islands Countries in Papua New Guinea on 24–26 July 2019, the current state, challenges, and future strategies for labour mobility in the Pacific will be discussed. This Working Paper will serve as a starting point for discussion at the Forum on labour mobility.

The Working Paper begins with the overview of major labour migration flows in the Pacific Islands region, providing an overview and statistical summary of permanent, temporary, and seasonal labour migration flows and a discussion of the economic impacts of migration (chapter 2). The focus of chapter 3 is on the seasonal and temporary labour migration schemes, opportunities for intra-Pacific migration, and barriers to labour migration. In chapter 4, the protection of the rights of seasonal labour migrants in destination countries and the often precarious situation of seafarers and military/security migrants are discussed, followed by a summary of social issues, especially in temporary migration. Chapter 5 provides an overview of existing partnerships and initiatives in the space of labour migration in the Pacific. In the final chapter, the successes and challenges of labour mobility in the Pacific are discussed and recommendations are made to Pacific Island governments and to the ILO to improve the rights of migrants and increase the development benefits for Pacific Island countries.

The Working Paper is based on a comprehensive desk review of available documents, publications, and statistics.

2. Overview of major labour migration flows in Pacific Islands region

The Pacific Islands region has long been characterized by substantial migration flows. In the past, they have mostly consisted of permanent migration flows directed to the Pacific Rim. Recent years have seen an increased diversification of migration flows and increasing temporary and seasonal labour migration. Labour migration opportunities have been unevenly distributed among PICs, with the large Melanesian countries of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, as well as Kiribati, which is already affected by adverse climate change impacts, having few migration outlets.

In general, migration is primarily a response to real and perceived inequalities in incomes, education, training, socio-economic opportunities, and health care (Voigt-Graf, forthcoming), as well as demand for skills and labour in destination countries. With the exception of countries with high emigration rates (Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga), population growth remains high across the region, increasing migration pressures. Climate change and environmental degradation have further increased migration pressures, especially in the atoll States of Kiribati and Tuvalu. The presence of relatives overseas is also a factor, particularly when permanent migrants make decisions about destination countries.

In this chapter, an overview of different types of labour migration is presented with a focus on permanent migration to the Pacific Rim, migration to new destinations, and migration into the Pacific Islands, together with a statistical overview. Chapter 3 focuses on temporary and seasonal labour schemes and intra-Pacific migration.

2.1 Overview of different types of labour migration

2.1.1 *Permanent migration to the Pacific Rim*

Migration has been significant in Pacific Island development over the last decades, particularly for the smaller island States of Micronesia and Polynesia. The population balance of some of the smaller PICs has been shifted to the Pacific Rim. Today, more Cook Islanders and Samoans live permanently in the Pacific Rim than in their island homes, and Auckland (New Zealand) is deemed to be the largest Polynesian city in the world.

The Pacific Islands region can be divided into three cultural regions:

1. Melanesia, which includes four ILO member States (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu);
2. Polynesia, which includes four ILO member States (Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu); and
3. Micronesia, with three ILO member States (Kiribati, Palau, the Marshall Islands).

In post-colonial times, several PICs have continued to maintain close relationships with either New Zealand or the United States, and these relationships have resulted in special residency and work rights. Cook Islanders, Niueans, and Tokelauans are New Zealand citizens with full residential and work rights in New Zealand. Cook Islands records a resident population of about 20,000, compared to some 62,000 Cook Islanders in New Zealand (see table 2 below). New Zealand's immigration policy recognizes the special relationship between New Zealand and Samoa and the Pacific Access Category (PAC) countries of Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, and Tuvalu. Each year, up to 1,100 Samoan citizens are granted residence in New Zealand under the Samoan Quota Scheme via a lottery; while up to 250 Tongan and Fijian citizens and 75 Kiribati and Tuvaluan citizens are selected by ballot to be considered for residence in New Zealand under the PAC scheme. With these visas, migrants can include their partner and dependent children aged 24 and under (INZ, 2019a). Migrants or their partner must have a job

offer (skilled or unskilled work) from a single New Zealand employer.¹ Samoans are the largest group of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, comprising some 144,000 persons in 2013 (see table 2 below).

With the partial exception of Fiji citizens who have had migration opportunities through skilled migration and family reunion schemes in Australia and New Zealand and elsewhere, New Zealand's scheme is currently the best opportunity for many citizens of Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu to permanently migrate overseas.

The Compacts of Free Association (COFAs) between the United States and the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau allow citizens of the freely associated States to live and work in the United States with some restrictions.² Under the COFAs, the per capita development assistance for these three small countries is very large, each receiving more than US\$1,000 per capita per year (ILO, 2017b). There has been significant out-migration from these countries, which is likely to continue due not only to economic pressures but also to increasing impacts of climate change. From 2005 to 2009, roughly 56,000 migrants – or nearly a quarter of all citizens of these countries – were estimated to be living in US areas. Approximately 58 per cent of these migrants lived in Hawaii, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (US Government Accountability Office, 2016).³ While accurate data are not available, the Marshallese population in the United States is reported to have increased in the last decade by over 300 per cent, from 7,000 to 22,000, and now accounts for nearly one third of the Marshall Islands population worldwide (Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, 2015). COFA migrants are legally allowed to work in the United States and pay taxes, but are currently not eligible for many federal benefits (such as the federal Medicaid programme).

Like New Zealand and the United States, Australia is linked to the Pacific Islands region through a special historical and political relationship and by close geographical proximity. However, this is not reflected in any special permanent migration arrangements. Australia's migration programme is largely built around skilled migration, and few Pacific Islanders (with the exception of Fiji citizens) have had opportunities to meet the skills requirements. Since New Zealand residents are entitled to live and work in Australia (and vice versa) through the Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement, some New Zealand citizens of Pacific Islander origin use New Zealand as a stepping stone to migrate to Australia.

Melanesian countries (except Fiji) and the atoll States have had few migration outlets, with the exception of Kiribati's and Tuvalu's small allocations under the PAC scheme with New Zealand. The main overseas employment opportunity in recent decades has been as seafarers on German merchant ships and Asian fishing boats. In the wake of the global economic crisis, seafarer numbers have declined and there is currently an oversupply of trained maritime workers in both countries.

2.1.2 Statistical overview of Pacific Islander migration

Table 1 shows the number of Pacific migrants in major destination countries and other destination regions in 2017. The number of migrants differs from the number of Pacific Islanders abroad because the latter also includes the overseas-born subsequent generations. As such, the number of migrants

¹ The lottery winners have six months to secure a job in New Zealand in order to stay in New Zealand. If they fail to find a job, they have to leave New Zealand. The PAC scheme is a self-funded scheme, and many workers draw on their pension funds to meet their expenses. According to the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the number of successful PAC applicants from Kiribati (including both visa applicants and their dependents) who were able to secure a job offer was 61 in 2013–14 and 69 in 2014–15, indicating that I-Kiribati are unable to fill the already low quota of 75 per year (Voigt-Graf and Kagan, 2017).

² The compact between the United States and Palau is up for renewal in 2023, and the compacts with the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia are up for renewal in 2024.

³ Please note that this increase is not reflected in table 1 below.

from the Cook Islands in New Zealand is fewer than 14,000 even though the Cook Islander community in New Zealand numbers some 62,000. In New Zealand, the largest migrant groups from the Pacific are from Fiji and the three Polynesian countries of the Cook Islands, Samoa, and Tonga. In Australia, the largest migrant groups are from the same four countries. This is noteworthy because Australia is geographically and historically closer to Melanesia, but this is not reflected in migrant numbers. The United States and Canada also host a considerable number of Fijian migrants. Since the 1990s, care giving has become an important source of employment for Fijians seeking opportunities abroad. In the United States, some of these migrants are “undocumented” in the sense that they enter on a “visitor’s visa” with no work rights.

Table 1 shows that Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States are home to the majority of Pacific Islander migrants. In Europe, the former (and present-day) colonial powers of France and the United Kingdom have attracted some Pacific Islanders. In Asia, India hosts the largest number of Pacific Islander migrants.⁴ Intra-Pacific migration flows are briefly summarized below.

Table 1. The number of Pacific migrants by major destinations, 2017

Pacific origin countries	All countries	Major destination countries				Other destination regions				
		Australia	New Zealand	Canada	United States	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	Pacific Islands
Cook Islands	22 249	8 372	13 818	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	10	45
Fiji	215 120	75 575	56 274	28 241	46 064	76	174	6 102	10	2 604
Kiribati	4 903	685	1 573	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	168	104	2 371
Marshall Islands	7 504	44	n/a	n/a	7 072	5	n/a	6	n/a	377
Palau	2 598	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	35	192	29	2 334
PNG	4 400	n/a	1 436	476	n/a	111	61	1 628	6	682
Samoa	117 511	27 408	54 041	127	18 405	27	n/a	813	n/a	16 690
Solomon Islands	3 913	2 466	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	n/a	328	1	1 107
Tonga	60 258	12 354	23 911	103	19 334	944	n/a	421	287	2 904
Tuvalu	3 546	199	1 513	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	651	4	1 179
Vanuatu	8 785	1 648	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1 013	231	5 893

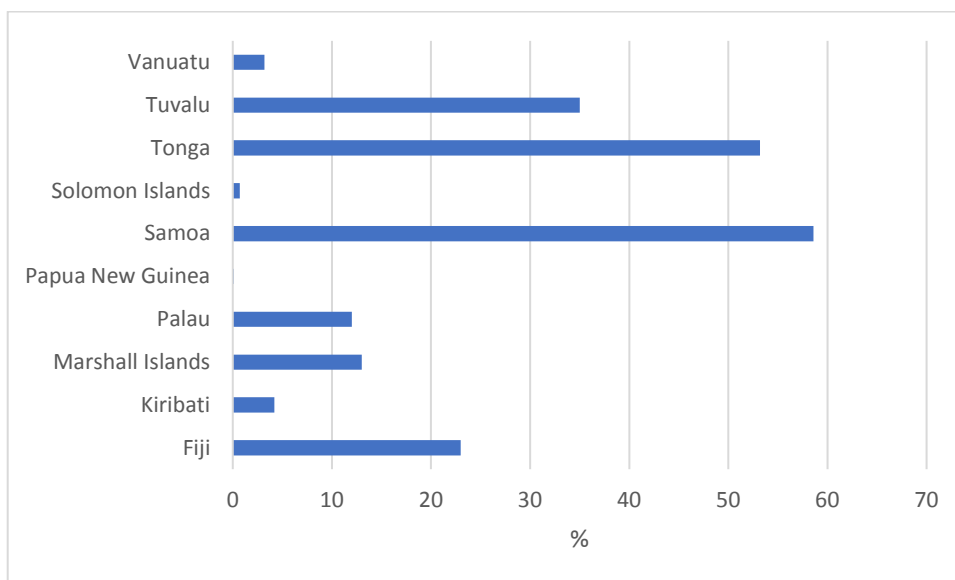
n/a = not available; PNG = Papua New Guinea

Source: UNDESA, Population Division

Figure 1 shows that Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu have the largest proportion of their population living overseas; while the share of emigrants is under 10 per cent in the case of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

⁴ Some figures recorded in the UNDESA database are difficult to explain, such as their being 944 Tongans in Guinea (West Africa), 184 Palauans and 440 Samoans in Greece, 104 I-Kiribati in Brazil, 287 Tongans in Chile, and 221 ni-Vanuatu in Colombia. Some of these figures might be erroneous.

Figure 1. Percentage of emigrants by population, 2015



Source: UNDESA, Population Division, n.d.

2.1.3 Temporary and seasonal labour opportunities in Australia and New Zealand

In addition to permanent migration flows, seasonal and temporary migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders have opened up over the last decade under New Zealand’s Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and Australia’s Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), which attempt to fill seasonal labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries. These will be discussed in detail in chapter 3, together with more recent opportunities for temporary labour migration introduced by the Australian and New Zealand governments.

2.1.4 Pacific Islanders in Australia and New Zealand

Table 2 shows the number of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand at the time of the 2013 Census. In the Census, people stated the ethnic group or groups they belonged to. They could select ethnic groups from a list or write additional ethnicities, and hence could be counted in more than one group.

As table 2 shows, many New Zealand-born descendants of migrants identified with the ethnic groups of their parents or grandparents. For instance, of the 62,000 Cook Islanders in New Zealand, 77 per cent were born in New Zealand. Hence, only a minority of them were actual migrants. The largest ethnic groups in New Zealand were Samoans, Cook Island Maoris, and Tongans. The large number of New Zealand-born members of these groups indicates that migration has been going on for long enough to establish a sizeable overseas-born population. The smallest ethnic groups of Pacific Islanders were ni-Vanuatu, Solomon Islanders, and Papua New Guineans.

Table 2. Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, 2013

Ethnic group	Total number	% born in New Zealand
Cook Island Maori	61 839	77.4
Fijian	14 445	39.9
Fijian Indian	10 929	17.0
Kiribati	2 115	32.8
Niuean	23 883	78.9

Papua New Guinean	807	31.1
Samoans	144 138	62.7
Solomon Islander	603	34.5
Tongan	60 336	59.8
Tuvaluan	3 537	46.5
Ni-Vanuatu	492	26.1

Source: StatsNZ, n.d.

Australian Census data shows both birthplace and ancestry. Table 3 shows an increase in the number of Pacific Islanders from all countries for which data is available between 2011 and 2016, and this is true both for the number of individuals born in the Pacific Islands and those claiming Pacific Islander ancestry. For Samoans, Cook Islanders, and Tongans, ancestry numbers are larger than birthplace numbers, indicating the presence of Australian-born generations among these migrant groups. This is different for Fiji and Papua New Guinea, where ancestry numbers are smaller than birthplace numbers. In the case of Papua New Guinea, this is likely related to the fact that many Australians were born in Papua New Guinea, particularly before Papua New Guinea gained independence in 1975, and these are counted as born in Papua New Guinea but not of Papua New Guinean ancestry. In the case of Fiji, it is possible that some Indo-Fijians who were born in Fiji have not indicated Fijian ancestry in the Census.

Table 3: Pacific Islanders in Australia, 2011 and 2016

PIC	Birthplace		Ancestry	
	2011	2016	2011	2016
Cook Islands	6 091	6 832	16 183	22 230
Fiji	56 980	61 480	39 927	50 510
Kiribati	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Marshall Islands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Palau	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Papua New Guinea	26 784	28 812	15 463	18 799
Samoa	19 095	24 026	55 863	75 755
Solomon Islands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tonga	9 209	9 964	25 088	32 698
Tuvalu	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vanuatu	1 105	1 151	n/a	n/a

n/a = not available
Source: Id.community, n.d.

2.1.5 Non-traditional destination countries

Pacific Islander migration flows have become considerably more diversified in recent years with the inclusion of non-traditional destination countries. Among the non-traditional destination countries of Pacific Islander migrants are some Asian countries. For instance, there has been a small but consistent flow of Fijians, Tongans, and other Pacific Islanders to Japan, which largely consists of students and rugby players (see e.g., Esau, 2007; Kanemasu and Molnar, 2013; 2014). Fijians also have a long history of serving in the British Army and as peacekeepers in various United Nations (UN) missions. Employment in private security companies has lured thousands of Fijians to countries like Iraq (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). Due to the considerable numbers involved, the temporary nature of the migration, the separation of families, and the risky nature of the work, the implications of this migration flow are different from other forms of temporary labour migration. While there are economic benefits, social and psychological costs are high. These will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

2.1.6 Intra-Pacific mobility and labour mobility into the Pacific Island region

Traditionally the main focus in analysing labour mobility in the Pacific has been that of Pacific Islanders moving to the Pacific Rim. The substantial intra-Pacific movements as well as considerable labour migration into PICs have received less attention from researchers and policy-makers. Intra-Pacific migration is discussed in chapter 3, while an overview of labour mobility into PICs is provided here.

While all PICs are destination countries for some skilled, professional, and managerial workers, the largest numbers of foreign workers are employed in Papua New Guinea and Fiji (see table 4); while in Palau and the Cook Islands the number of migrant workers is highest in relation to the local populations. Few Papua New Guineans have had an opportunity to migrate overseas while large numbers of migrant workers are in Papua New Guinea, making it primarily a migrant-receiving country.

In Papua New Guinea, the majority of foreign workers are from Australia and other developed countries, as well as various Asian countries, particularly the Philippines and China. In May 2015, the total number of active work permits held by non-citizens in Papua New Guinea was 41,096, only 511 of which were held by Pacific Islanders (Voigt-Graf, 2016b). Papua New Guinea has witnessed an enormous increase in the number of foreign workers since 2005, which was partly due to the increased demand for skilled workers during the construction of the liquified natural gas (LNG) project. Numbers have dropped since their peak in 2012. The industries most reliant on non-citizen workers are construction and infrastructure; agriculture, forestry, and fishing; and mining. Most non-citizens work as managers, technicians, and skilled trade workers (Voigt-Graf, 2016b).

In Palau and the Cook Islands, most migrant workers are employed in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Table 4. Number of migrant workers in Pacific Island countries, 2017

Pacific Island State	Total	Male	Female
Cook Islands	4 213	2 109	2 104
Fiji	13 911	7 508	6 403
Kiribati	3 022	1 594	1 428
Marshall Islands	3 292	2 016	1 276
Fed. States of Micronesia	2 785	1 489	1 296

Palau	4 988	2 831	2 157
Papua New Guinea	32 389	20 558	11 831
Samoa	4 879	2 444	2 435
Solomon Islands	2 532	1 421	1 111
Tonga	4 952	2 691	2 261
Tuvalu	143	79	64
Vanuatu	3 245	1 612	1 633

Source: UNDESA, Population Division, n.d.

2.1.7 Climate change and migration

Recent years have seen increased migration due to climate change. In the Pacific, climate change can cause a reduction in land, livelihoods, or habitat security for some communities (UNESCAP, 2014).

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has identified five so-called hotspots that are likely to become source areas for climate change-related migrants (UNESCAP, 2014). These are urban areas; urban atolls; non-urban atolls; coastal, delta, and riverine communities; and communities prone to drought. While it is impossible to estimate the number of people likely to be involved in climate change-related migration, it is evident that the impacts of climate change on migration will differ among various countries and places.

According to UNESCAP (2014), climate change is likely to increase the demand for both internal and international migration opportunities where migration initially follows current patterns towards labour market opportunities both internally (leading to increased urbanization) and internationally towards the Pacific Rim. Voluntary migration can enhance the adaptive capacity of the migrant-sending community through the generation of remittances; reduced population pressure; and in the case of circular migration, the transfer of knowledge and skills. At the same time, the economic costs (loss of livelihoods and economic viability of communities) and the social, cultural, and psychological costs (loss of tradition, language, identity) can be high. In this regard, Fornale (2017) warns that the persisting challenges in using existing or emerging forms of labour mobility to address the effects of climate change may result in tools with only a limited ability to absorb the human rights implications for those who are marginalized.

As an atoll nation, Kiribati is one of the most affected countries in the Pacific. Findings from a 2015 household survey in Kiribati (UNU-EHS and UNESCAP, 2016), which included 377 households with 2,799 individual members, suggest that only 1.3 per cent of the people had migrated internationally, including as seafarers, for more than three months in the last ten years. Almost 8 per cent of the people migrated internally within Kiribati in the last ten years. Importantly, climate stressors were the second most important (23 per cent) motivation for migration after work (41 per cent), and were more important than education (19 per cent). Nine percent of the respondents reported that they had attempted to migrate but were unable to do so. In 80 per cent of cases, this was due to lack of funds. As many as 94 per cent of all households had been impacted by a natural hazard in the ten years preceding the survey, with 81 per cent of the respondents saying they had been affected by sea level rise. When asked if they would need to migrate in the case of environmental changes, more than 73 per cent of the households said that migration would be a likely response if either agricultural production became more difficult, sea levels rose, or flooding or saltwater intrusion worsened.

The lack of migration opportunities is serious in light of the projected loss in habitable land due to climate change. The former President of Kiribati – Anote Tong – was a strong advocate of “migration with dignity”, which supports education and training to create opportunities for the permanent migration of skilled migrants in order to ensure that the population remains at a level that supports Kiribati’s climate change adaptation effort (Voigt-Graf and Kagan, 2017).

The Government of Kiribati implements its National Labour Migration Policy, which was adopted in 2015 (Voigt-Graf and Kagan, 2017). The Policy’s long-term vision is to “provide I-Kiribati with increased opportunities to migrate with dignity by accessing decent work opportunities abroad”. The Policy recognizes the important role of international labour migration in addressing the lack of local employment opportunities and acknowledges that the permanent relocation of some of its citizens is part of Kiribati’s long-term climate change adaptation strategy.

2.2 Economic impacts of migration

Due to the comparatively small population bases of most PICs, particularly in Polynesia and Micronesia, migration from many PICs has been enormous proportionate to their home population sizes. The negative and positive impacts of migration are therefore potentially more pronounced in PICs compared to other regions of the world. The World Bank has argued in its Pacific Possible series that expanding labour mobility has the potential to bring enormous development benefits to PICs and is vital for the future of the Pacific region, not only to alleviate population pressures and unemployment in PICs but also because the advanced countries in the Pacific Rim will increasingly need migrants to fill gaps in their domestic labour markets, especially in sectors that struggle to attract domestic workers, such as aged care (Curtain et al., 2016).

2.2.1 Remittances into and out of the Pacific

Remittances are arguably the main economic benefit of migration. In 2018, remittances into the ten PICs included in table 5 amounted to US\$689 million, albeit with large variations among countries. Fiji received the largest sum, followed by Tonga and Samoa. In Tonga, remittances were worth more than 35 per cent of GDP; while they amounted to a mere 0.02 per cent in Papua New Guinea. Remittances have raised the living standards of many households. Studies in PICs show that remittances and migration have led to increases in household income, assets, savings, educational attainment, and knowledge sharing, while there is less evidence of remittances being used for productive investments.

Table 5. Migrant remittance flows into Pacific Island countries, selected years

Pacific Island State	Migrant remittance inflows (US\$ million)									Remittances as a share of GDP in 2018 (%)
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018	
Fiji	5	28	22	33	44	203	176	251	288	5.51
Kiribati	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16	16	18	8.89
Marshall Islands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24	22	27	30	12.95
Palau	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	2	2	2	0.81
Papua New Guinea	5	6	5	16	7	7	3	10	4	0.02
Samoa	19	24	43	41	n/a	82	139	131	142	16.12

Solomon Islands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	7	14	19	17	1.17
Tonga	n/a	22	24	n/a	n/a	69	74	150	165	35.17
Tuvalu	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4	4	4	8.99
Vanuatu	n/a	9	8	14	35	5	12	24	19	2.03

n/a = not available

Note: No data for the Cook Islands is available.

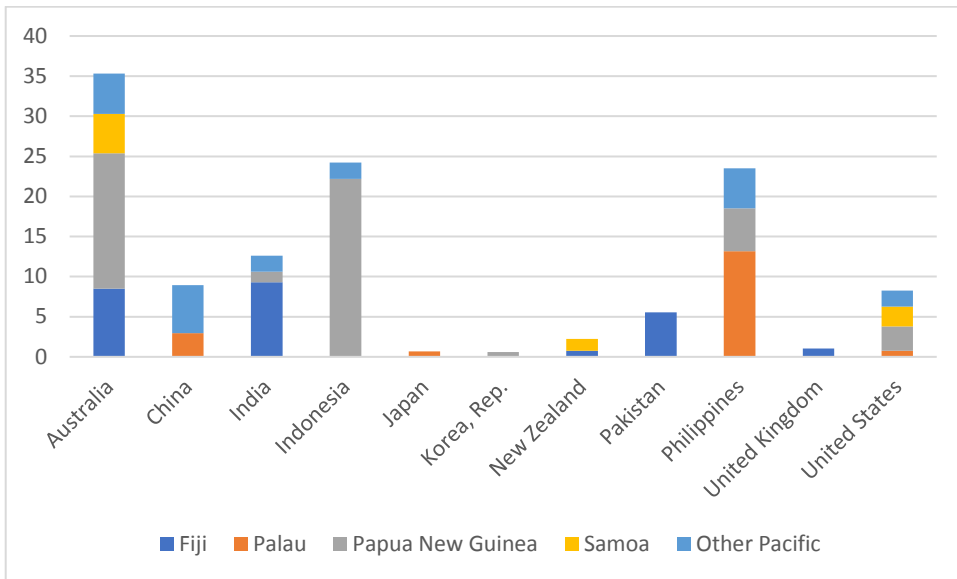
Source: World Bank, n.d.

Due to the huge out-migration flows, particularly from Polynesia, the smaller island States have been characterized as MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid, and Bureaucracy) States. The MIRAB model suggests that external sources of financing that do not leave a residue of debt are the key to economic performance of small islands. MIRAB States depend on migration, which stimulates substantial remittance flows. Alongside remittances, aid is a significant source of income, and these sources have contributed to the emergence of an urban bureaucracy (Bertram and Watters, 1985). In many Polynesian countries, remittances represent the main source of foreign income and reach levels rarely found in other parts of the world.

It is also important to emphasize that monetary remittances are only part of the overall remittances, as contributions in kind in the form of consumer goods sent by family members overseas are not counted in the official statistics.

Given the migration flows into the Pacific Islands include professionals and skilled workers from Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and various other countries discussed above, it is not surprising that substantial sums of money are transferred out of the Pacific Islands region in the form of remittances. Figure 2 shows the main countries that received remittances sent from PICs in 2017. Overall, an estimated US\$121 million was transferred out of the Pacific Islands. Receiving US\$35 million in remittances, Australia was the largest recipient. About half of the remittances received by Australia (US\$17 million) were transferred from Papua New Guinea; while in return only US\$3 million was sent from Australia to Papua New Guinea. This makes Australia a net remittance recipient from Papua New Guinea – the result of the large Australian expatriate community working in Papua New Guinea.

Figure 2. Main remittance-receiving countries from PICs, 2017, in million US\$



Source: World Bank, n.d.

2.2.2 Impacts on skills

With long-term migration opportunities in metropolitan States largely targeting skilled workers, permanent migration flows from the Pacific have consisted of professionals and technical workers from various sectors, including health (Connell, 2009) and education (Iredale, Voigt-Graf, and Khoo, 2015). The negative effects of skill loss or “brain drain” are particularly obvious in PICs experiencing high rates of permanent migration, i.e., the Polynesian countries and Fiji. The migration of nurses and doctors from PICs is a growing concern, and has affected the provision of health services in many PICs. The migration of health professionals has come at a considerable cost to the island States because of the high costs of training and the reduction in the effectiveness of health care (Connell, 2009). In sports, the loss of some of the best rugby players abroad (who contribute to the success of the national teams of Australia and New Zealand, and company teams in Japan) has meant that both national and regional teams in the Pacific do not have their best representative sides (Esau, 2007).

While education and health services have declined, other areas such as the construction industry, tourism management, and a range of professional services have reduced capacity. PICs are also characterized by a shortage of competent tradespersons. Island countries have sought to attract personnel in these areas from other countries with mixed success and frequently at considerable cost. The impact of outbound migration is particularly damaging because it is often unpredictable and happens with the employer having no notice that the workers are planning to leave. Moreover, migration represents a loss of public investment in human capital through public expenditure in the health and education sectors.

There is no evidence that the emigration of professionals and skilled workers, including teachers and health workers, and the resulting shortage of staff in these areas has led to a substantial increase in wages or working conditions. Instead, skilled workers have often been replaced by labour migrants from other countries, such as Indian doctors and Filipino handymen in Fiji.

Skill losses are mostly associated with permanent migration, and they are less severe or non-existent in the case of temporary and seasonal migration. In temporary and seasonal migration, some migrants return with new skills acquired overseas, potentially resulting in skill gains if these skills are useful in their home communities. For instance, general pruning skills that workers might acquire in Australia

or New Zealand might be transferable to their home countries; whereas apple picking skills may not be. Some seasonal workers acquire new qualifications while in Australia or New Zealand, such as licenses to operate forklifts or similar equipment. Whether or not returnees can use these skills in their home countries depends on the local economy to which they return.

3. Existing labour migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders

Over the last decade, new labour migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders have opened up, with New Zealand and Australia introducing schemes to fill labour shortages in targeted industries and sectors. These schemes – especially the seasonal migration schemes – have become major labour mobility avenues for PICs. This chapter discusses the opportunities and challenges of these schemes. It also outlines intra-Pacific migration flows and key barriers to Pacific Islander labour migration.

3.1 Existing seasonal and temporary labour mobility schemes

3.1.1 New Zealand: Seasonal (RSE) and temporary migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders

In 2007, New Zealand launched the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme to fill seasonal labour shortages in its horticulture and viticulture industries. Under this scheme, employers can apply for RSE status and fill vacant seasonal positions for which there are no New Zealand applicants. The annual cap has grown from the initial 5,000 to 12,850 in 2019 (INZ, 2019b). Unless employers can demonstrate pre-established relationships with workers from other countries, they may only recruit workers from nine PICs (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu). The scheme allows seasonal workers to stay in New Zealand up to seven months in any 11-month period; while citizens of Tuvalu and Kiribati who also live there can stay an extra two months. Workers may be re-employed in subsequent years, either with the same or a new employer.

Evaluation studies have found the RSE to be a generally successful seasonal labour migration scheme. In addition to significant benefits for the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries and the New Zealand economy identified by a study conducted by the New Zealand Department of Labour (2010), a World Bank study based on surveys in Tonga and Vanuatu (which make up about 70 per cent of the PIC workers under the RSE) found multiple positive development impacts on the sending households (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). These include increased incomes, increased household savings, increased ownership of durable goods, and an increase in subjective standards of living for participating communities. For instance, the median after-tax income earned in New Zealand by the migrants was approximately 12,000 New Zealand dollars (NZD), with an average of NZD5,500 remitted or transferred in savings. There was a more than 30 per cent rise in the per capita income of participating households relative to the comparison groups, and per-capita expenditure and savings also rose (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). At the regional level, it is estimated that RSE-participating workers have remitted a total of NZD34–41 million each year since 2008 (MFAT, n.d.). The scheme has been described as “a model for a compassionate migration policy – bringing workers to New Zealand in a so-called triple win for employers, employees and states” (Winters, 2016, pp. 13–14).

The main temporary migration pathway for Pacific Islanders is the Essential Skills visa. In 2016, under New Zealand’s Canterbury Reconstruction Pilot, 24 carpenters from Fiji (13), Samoa (10), and Tonga (1) were employed to work in the Christchurch rebuild. The carpenters were employed on an Essential Skills visa for an initial one-year trial period (MFAT, n.d.; ILO, 2017b). As a result of onsite training and skills assessment during the programme, the recruits were awarded with a certificate in New Zealand Level 4 Carpentry (Tradestaff, 2017). Building on the success of the Canterbury Reconstruction Pilot, a new Pacific Trades Partnership initiative is currently in place, which recruits trained Pacific Island carpenters for short-term employment in New Zealand’s construction industry. The initiative is initially focusing on the recruitment of carpenters from Tonga and Samoa, with a view to providing work placements for 40–50 Pacific Island workers (MFAT, 2018; MIC, 2018). Additionally, there is an ongoing

labour mobility fisheries pilot, which offers opportunities for graduates of the Pacific marine training centres to work on New Zealand fishing vessels (MFAT, n.d.)

Future temporary migration opportunities may be found in New Zealand industries with significant skills/labour shortages. Dairy farming is a recognized skills shortage industry with chronic staffing recruitment and retention issues (Callister and Tipples, 2010), and which already employs approximately 27,800 migrant workers (Tipples, Trafford, and Callister, 2010). Similarly, the construction industry, which employs over 245,000 people or about 10 per cent of New Zealand's national labour force (INZ, 2019c), faces severe skills shortages. It has one of the lowest vacancy fill rates in the country (Lobo and Wilkinson, 2008), and has consequently seen a rapid increase in migrant workers on temporary skills visa since 2011 (Lamm et al., 2017). Finally, migrant workers have already been employed to meet labour shortages in the care industry, with the largest proportion being from PICs. Further opportunities are expected in this industry, given the rapid ageing of the New Zealand population (Callister, Didham, and Badkar, 2014). These industries may offer PICs avenues for enhancing their access to temporary labour migration, although issues of working conditions and worker exploitation in these industries also require close examination if they are to become viable migration options for PICs.

3.1.2 Australia: Seasonal (SWP) and temporary (PLS) migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders

The Australian Government implemented the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (PSWPS) from 2008 to 2012. The PSWPS was largely modelled on the success of New Zealand's RSE scheme. It had a total cap of 2,500 workers, although there were just 1,623 arrivals over the duration of the pilot. In 2012, the PSWPS was subsumed by the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), which initially allowed workers from eight PICs and Timor-Leste to work in the Australian horticulture industry for up to six months. In 2015, the scheme was opened to all PICs, and the annual cap, which was initially 12,000, was removed, allowing employers to determine the number of workers to be recruited (World Bank, 2017). From November 2018, the maximum duration of employment in Australia is nine months per year; while previously only workers from Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu could be employed up to nine months. The SWP was subsequently expanded to the broader agriculture industry and the accommodation sector (in selected locations), as well as offering trials in the aquaculture, cotton, and sugarcane sectors. A 2017 World Bank study found that the SWP had delivered approximately 144 million Australian dollars (AUD) in net income gains to the region since 2012. The study also estimated that over the six-month employment period¹ the average PIC seasonal worker remitted approximately AUD2,200 and transferred AUD6,650 in savings home (World Bank, 2017; see Voigt-Graf, 2017, for impacts on Papua New Guinea).

Seasonal worker numbers have been considerably higher in the RSE than in the SWP (table 6). However, with the removal of the annual cap and several other reforms (Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2016), the SWP arrivals have grown rapidly in recent years (Howes and Curtain, 2019). It is estimated that the SWP numbers may soon exceed those of the RSE (which is currently capped at 12,850) (Howes, 2018a). In addition, while the SWP has had to compete with the availability of backpackers as a primary source of seasonal labour, the reliance on backpackers has been diminishing in recent years due to a comprehensive crackdown on illegal labour practices, which renders cheap unregulated labour less available and attractive to employers. Thus, "something of a revolution in the horticultural labour market" may be taking place, with potentially significant implications for seasonal labour migration opportunities for PICs (Howes and Curtain, 2019).

¹ The study was conducted prior to the employment period being extended to nine months.

A new temporary migration pathway for Pacific Islanders has opened up recently. In 2015, the Australian Government released *Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* (DIIS, 2015), from which the Pacific Microstates–Northern Australia Worker Pilot Programme (NAWPP) emerged. Through the programme, approved employers who are unable to fill positions from the Australian labour market can recruit workers from Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu. The programme provides a five-year window of opportunity for a total of 250 citizens from these countries to access a two-year microstate visa, with the option of applying for a third year. The microstate visa permits migrants to work in lower-skilled jobs in Northern Australia in non-seasonal occupations in any industry, such as tourism and hospitality.

Subsequently, in July 2018, the Australian Government launched a new Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), which builds on the NAWPP and the SWP. The PLS initially allowed 2,000 citizens from Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu access to the scheme, but it has since been uncapped and opened to citizens of nine PICs (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) and Timor-Leste (DFAT, 2019a). Under this scheme, workers can take up low- and semi-skilled jobs in rural and regional Australia for up to three years. The scheme is open to all sectors and industries but initially focuses on: the accommodation and food services industry; health care and social assistance industry; and non-seasonal agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries. Notably, the scheme does not allow workers to bring their families to Australia, which has been pointed out as a potential source of social costs (Howes, 2018c).

3.1.3 Distribution of seasonal migration opportunities across Pacific Island countries

In the 2017/18 season, over 17,000 Pacific seasonal workers travelled to New Zealand and Australia under the RSE and the SWP (table 6). Vanuatu (7,793) and Tonga (4,689) provided by far the largest numbers. In Tonga, the number of SWP- and RSE-participating workers is reported to have reached 13 per cent of the eligible sending population (those aged 20–45) (Howes, 2018a). Larger PICs have better resourced Ministries or Departments of Labour to promote their workers; better end-to-end processes; and cheaper air linkages to Australia and New Zealand (ILO, 2017b). As such, it is not surprising that they have been more successful than other PICs, such as Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu. Some countries have also benefitted from so-called first- and second-mover advantages. For instance, Vanuatu had an initial advantage in the RSE due to employers' desire to recruit from a country without a large diaspora in New Zealand as an attempt to reduce absconding (Curtain, 2018; ILO, 2017a). As a result, Vanuatu later enjoyed a secondary advantage as employers subsequently displayed a preference for returning workers (Maguire and Johnson, 2017).

Among the countries that have largely “missed out” on the temporary labour mobility schemes is Papua New Guinea. In 2017–18, Papua New Guinea's share of the seasonal work in Australia and New Zealand available to PICs stood at just 1 per cent (and at less than 0.01 per cent of its population aged 20–45 years) (Curtain, 2018). This has been attributed to the absence of recruitment intermediaries with strong connections in both the sending and receiving countries; the absence of direct recruitment by employers; and mismatch between selected workers and required attributes (Curtain, 2018; see also ILO, 2017a). Participant numbers from countries with otherwise few migration outlets (Kiribati, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) have been much larger in New Zealand (although there has recently been a rise in the number of I-Kiribati and Papua New Guinea workers in Australia). The RSE thus provides workers from these otherwise disadvantaged countries with valuable opportunities to work overseas.

It may also be noted that seasonal labour mobility does not hold equal significance to all PICs. In the case of Fiji, for instance, the number of temporary migrants on Essential Skills visas in New Zealand

and Australia and of other professional migrants elsewhere greatly exceed the number of seasonal workers (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019). In addition, as noted above, there are a growing number of Fijian migrants to non-traditional destinations, such as those participating in the UN peacekeeping forces, security personnel in the Middle East, and sports people. In private military and security labour migration alone, there were over 1,000 Fijian migrants every year from 2006 and 2011 (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). A growing number of rugby players also emigrate, often temporarily but sometimes permanently, to New Zealand, Australia, Europe, and elsewhere – 450 Fijian athletes were estimated to be involved in foreign competitions in 2011 (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2013).

Table 6. Number of seasonal workers under RSE and SWP by country of origin, 2012–13 to 2016–17

PIC	2012–13		2013–14		2014–15		2015–16		2016–17		2017–18	
	RSE	SWP	RSE	SWP	RSE	SWP	RSE	SWP	RSE	SWP	RSE	SWP
Fiji	–	–	–	–	30	<5	92	160	355	190	359	247
Kiribati	138	34	127	14	136	11	162	20	189	124	231	364
Nauru	–	10	–	–	20	–	20	17	17	–	14	–
PNG	31	26	58	26	96	35	68	42	121	139	124	92
Samoa	1 137	22	1 169	162	1 238	185	1 454	140	1 690	309	1 878	527
Solomon Islands	423	42	491	9	511	21	590	61	593	87	643	175
Tonga	1 573	1 200	1 538	1 497	1 750	2 179	1 687	2 624	1 822	2 691	1 899	2 790
Tuvalu	56	–	71	20	70	7	64	<5	80	–	80	–
Vanuatu	2 829	119	3 070	212	3 435	567	3 726	1 198	4 171	2 149	4 445	3 348
All PICs	6 187	1 453	6 524	1 940	7 286	3 005	7 863	4 262	9 038	5 689	9 673	7 543

– = nil; PNG = Papua New Guinea

Source: New Zealand Immigration (n.d.) for RSE; Howes (2018) for SWP.

3.1.4 Challenges and good practices in regard to migration cost, recruitment, access for women

“Quadruple win-loss” of seasonal labour mobility

A recent study by Underhill-Sem et al. (2019) reviews the often-cited “triple-win” concept of seasonal labour mobility (Ramasamy et al., 2008), whereby migrants, the sending country, and the receiving country are all deemed to benefit. Focusing on data from Fiji, Kiribati, and Tonga, the study argues that a “quadruple win-loss” framework offers a more nuanced analytical lens for understanding the multi-faceted nature of contemporary labour mobility in the Pacific region. Multiple benefits as well as shortcomings are emerging, and thereby present a more complex picture of seasonal labour mobility, although the study observes that the benefits still outweigh the shortcomings (table 7).

Table 7. “Quadruple Win-Loss” framework using example of New Zealand’s RSE

Who wins/loses?	What are wins/losses?			
	Economic imperative	Demographic imperative	Political imperative	Development imperative
Country of origin (including community)	Wins	Increases remittances, which improves national income.	Eases strain of “youth bulge” on wage employment. Opportunity for off-shore training of citizens.	Provision of key leverage point in PACER ¹ Plus discussions with Australia and New Zealand. Spreads effect of remittances and eases pressure on government services.
	Losses	Family and community in home villages require cash to purchase food because of absent family member who usually provides garden or ocean resources.	Loss of able-bodied people for gardening, building, fishing, cultural, and social obligations when adequate plans are not made prior to workers leaving.	Continued reliance on New Zealand and Australia as development partners. Increased consumption of costly imported goods.
Country of destination	Wins	Improved viability of horticulture/viticulture sector.	Responsiveness to shortage of readily available unskilled labour in rural areas.	Consolidation of historical relationships with Pacific neighbours. Responsiveness to internal employer demands.
	Losses	Reliance on imported labour alongside continued high unemployment among low skilled (mentioned in PLMAM ²).	Reduces incentives to improve rural appeal and rural work for New Zealanders.	Various forms of backlash against increasing reliance on temporary migrants in New Zealand economy. The risk of impeding development of rural New Zealand for all New Zealanders.
Seasonal worker (including family)	Wins	Increased income, though only seasonal. Opportunity for training.	Reduction of tension with underemployed young people in home village.	Offers chance of being a good employee to ensure continued seasonal work for self or community. Provides personal empowerment, work experience, community leadership, and local business development.
	Losses	Opportunity cost of work not done at home.	Delayed/interrupted parenthood in worker’s household.	Shift in leadership structures. Reduction in community engagement in home community.
Ancillary services	Wins	Increased revenue from services such as transport, accommodation, food suppliers.	Increase in employment opportunities for rural New Zealanders (skilled and low-skilled). This also applies under the first row – country of origin.	“Reciprocal” international trade and employment agreements for the mutual benefit of both New Zealand and Pacific countries. Development of services in rural New Zealand to support RSE.
	Losses	Increased pressure on health services in both origin and destination countries.		Increased pressure on Labour Sending Units, especially linked with increasing complexity and diversity of temporary employment opportunities overseas.

¹ PACER = Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations; ² PLMAM = Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting
Source: Underhill-Sem et al., 2019.

The economic returns of seasonal and temporary migration haven been widely recognized, but there are also costs to these types of migration. Concerns have also been expressed over the working conditions and welfare of participating workers, which are discussed in more detail in chapter 4. Among the less publicized “losses” of seasonal and temporary labour migration are social impacts on sending households and communities. For instance, the age and gender composition of seasonal workers is highly skewed towards men aged 20–39 years, which is likely to impact on domestic labour markets as well as on sending households (Bedford and Ingram, 2018). Related impacts include: “marital dissolution or family abandonment, domestic violence, poor nutrition of workers and/or those who remain at home, disciplinary problems with children, cultural transgressions, and extreme emotions felt by workers and those who remain at home” (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019, p. 36; see also Maclellan and Mares, 2006). In this regard, the fact that the new PLS, under which workers may remain in Australia for up to three years, does not allow them to bring their families may exacerbate some of the social costs if appropriate measures are not taken.

Competition with backpackers in Australian seasonal labour market

The number of Pacific seasonal workers under the SWP has been growing but remains small in the context of the Australian horticulture industry’s annual workforce, which stands at 75,000–175,000 (Doyle and Howes, 2015). The limited access has been due, among other things, to the availability of other foreign workers, especially backpackers (Bedford, Bedford, and Ho, 2017; Doyle and Howes, 2015; Hay and Howes, 2012). Until recently, employers preferred backpackers as a more flexible, much less regulated option; employment of backpackers does not require government approval or reporting, whereas stringent approval and reporting requirements are imposed on the SWP. This is despite a 2013 study by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences indicating that Pacific seasonal workers were on average 22 per cent more efficient than backpackers (Doyle and Howes, 2015). As noted above, more recently, there has been a decline in the reliance on backpackers as a result of greater awareness of and measures to prevent farm worker exploitation, which are transforming the horticultural labour market into a more regulated one. The seasonal worker–backpacker ratio has changed from 1:23 in 2013–14 to less than 1:4 in 2018–19 (Howes and Curtain, 2019). However, starting from 1 July 2019, Working Holiday Maker visa holders who carry out six months of specified work in regional areas while on their second visa may be eligible to apply for a third visa, making it possible for them to spend up to three years in Australia (DHA, 2019). With the 2018 lifting of the maximum period of employment with one farmer from six months to 12 months, and the pre-existing rule that any employer limit restarts on a visa extension, backpackers can now work for the same farmer for up to three years (Howes, 2019b). These changes may pose new threats to SWP numbers.

Recruitment: distribution of seasonal labour mobility opportunities within sending countries

The RSE- and SWP-participating countries have different worker recruitment mechanisms, such as recruitment from a work-ready pool, recruitment via agents, and direct recruitment by employers. Depending on the mechanisms employed and challenges faced in recruitment, seasonal work opportunities may not be equally accessible within each country. For instance, in Tuvalu, 60 per cent of the SWP workers who participated in the 2017 World Bank study felt that migrating internally to Funafuti was a critical factor in improving their chances of selection. Forty-three percent of the I-Kiribati participants and 26 per cent of the Ni-Vanuatu participants felt similarly about internal migration (World Bank, 2017). In Papua New Guinea, a recent study (Curtain 2018; see also Voigt-Graf, 2017) reports that many applicants for the work-ready pool are drawn from urban areas, even though the programme website states that applicants must be from rural areas. Seasonal workers from most

PICs are also more likely to be in formal sector employment prior to participation than national averages. Furthermore, remote communities in many PICs that still rely on newspapers and the mail service as their primary sources of information face barriers in accessing relevant information about the programme (World Bank, 2017; Voigt-Graf, 2017). Limited participation by women in many PICs has also been highlighted widely (see below). Thus, ensuring greater access to seasonal labour mobility opportunities for rural and remote communities, for women, and for other communities who have thus far tended to miss out on the schemes is an urgent task.

Relatedly, reliance on the re-engagement of previous years' workers in the RSE and the SWP has been debated by commentators. Some have observed that the predominance of return workers may be rendering these schemes unequalizing in the Pacific (Winters, 2016). Regular migrants with advantageous access to migration opportunities may become an elite within their communities; while others are unable to access such benefits provided by work abroad (Cameron, 2009). It has also raised concerns that "what was meant to be a temporary migration program is becoming, *de facto*, a permanent one" (Howes, 2018b). However, Australian data shows that, on average, workers participate in the SWP for fewer than four seasons, which has been described as a "reasonable outcome" for the SWP (Howes, 2018b). Furthermore, under New Zealand's RSE, many Pacific workers are recruited by return workers who operate as informal agents, which has worked favourably in increasing recruitments from countries like Samoa and the Solomon Islands (Curtain, 2018).

Access for women

Limited access for women to seasonal labour mobility opportunities has remained a challenge, although there are significant subregional differences. In 2013–14, only 11.5 per cent of the workers who participated in the RSE and SWP were women (Ball et al., 2015; see also Chatterier, 2015; INZ, 2015). A World Bank study provides similar data and also points out that female workers in the SWP earn slightly less than men, although they remit more than men (World Bank, 2017). This is despite them having a higher mean level of education than their male counterparts (World Bank, 2017). Cultural norms and perceived vulnerabilities in terms of safety and wellbeing have been pointed out as possible contributing factors (Bailey, 2013; Ball et al., 2015). Employer demand for workers with particular attributes also contributes to gender disparity, as women are prohibited from undertaking specific types of work in some cultures (Ball et al., 2015).

There are also examples of good practice in enhancing women's participation. The Kiribati Government has a dedicated RSE Unit, which has made considerable effort to secure new employers, especially for women. As noted by Underhill-Sem et al. (2019), a distinctive feature of Kiribati's RSE workforce is a high proportion of women. Since 2011, women have comprised almost half of the country's seasonal workers in New Zealand every year, and in some years more than half. This is attributed largely to special support given by the RSE Unit as well as employer preferences, and is particularly significant in light of the fact that Kiribati's temporary migration has in the past been dominated almost entirely by men (Kagan, 2016).

3.2 Opportunities for intra-Pacific mobility

Given the demand-driven nature of the RSE and the SWP, regional labour markets need to be considered for migration opportunities. Despite an absence of reliable data, intra-regional migration flows are known to already exist. Before seafarer employment began in the late 1960s, much of Kiribati's overseas labour migration was to other PICs such as Nauru (phosphate industry), Vanuatu (copra industry), and Fiji (students finding work). Workers from Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga have also been known to migrate within the region (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019).

Since Fiji has the most advanced education and skills training systems in the Pacific region, Fijians have been able to find employment in several PICs and in various occupations and industries. Table 8 shows that Fijians have moved to the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and other countries where they work in various skilled and semi-skilled occupations. Fijian citizens have been known to be working as domestic help and in the hotel industry in the Cook Islands, and also as nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers, pilots, mechanics, electricians, and technicians in Guam, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Vanuatu (Rokoduru, 2006). Since the retirement age was lowered to 55 in Fiji's public service in 2009, many retirees have also looked for opportunities abroad – for instance, under the Fiji Volunteer Scheme (Pacific Dialogue, n.d.). More recently, Fijians have been known to migrate to Papua New Guinea as security officers. In 2017, 42 Fijian security personnel were hired to provide security at the closure of the Australian immigration detention centre on Manus Island (Chanel, 2017). Simultaneously, Fiji attracts a considerable number of migrants from other PICs. Some come to Fiji to study at the regional University of the South Pacific, while others are employed by the many regional and international organizations based in Fiji.

It is noteworthy that the colonies and dependent territories that continue to exist in the Pacific region also attract considerable numbers of migrants from neighbouring countries. These flows include Palauans in Guam, ni-Vanuatu in New Caledonia, and Samoans and Tongans in American Samoa.

On the other hand, the Skills Movement Scheme (SMS) under the sub-regional Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) comprising Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, which was introduced in 2012, has attracted few workers to move to SMS member countries. This is due to a number of reasons, including a low level of awareness of the SMS among recruitment agencies and companies (Voigt-Graf, 2016a). This is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Table 8. Intra-Pacific migration flows

Country of destination	Country of origin										
	Cook Islands	Fiji	Kiribati	Marshall Islands	Palau	PNG	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu
Melanesia (total)	33	417	1 043	–	–	617	299	1 064	1 404	415	5 423
Fiji	33	–	784	–	–	–	299	711	1 347	415	186
New Caledonia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5 069
Papua New Guinea	–	88	–	–	–	–	–	232	28	–	104
Solomon Islands	–	100	259	–	–	552	–	–	–	–	64
Vanuatu	–	229	–	–	–	65	–	121	29	–	–
Micronesia (total)	–	819	1 284	377	2 334	–	21	32	18	569	–
Guam	–	–	–	239	1 485	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kiribati	–	514	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	302	–
Marshall Islands	–	118	275	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Fed. States of Micronesia	–	–	–	92	282	–	21	–	18	–	–
Nauru	–	187	1 009	–	–	–	–	32	–	267	–
Northern Mariana Islands	–	–	–	46	567	–	–	–	–	–	–
Palau	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Polynesia (total)	12	1 368	44	–	–	65	16 370	11	1 482	195	470
American Samoa	–	332	–	–	–	–	15 845	–	1 290	–	–
Cook Islands	–	154	–	–	–	19	10	–	–	–	–
French Polynesia	–	30	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	214

Niue	–	44	–	–	–	–	19	–	117	76	–
Samoa	12	135	14	–	–	46	–	11	75	73	16
Tokelau	–	–	–	–	–	–	193	–	–	46	–
Tonga	–	625	–	–	–	–	287	–	–	–	–
Tuvalu	–	48	30	–	–	–	16	–	–	–	–
Wallis and Futuna Islands	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	240
Pacific Islands	45	2 604	2 371	377	2 334	682	16 690	1 107	2 904	1 179	5 893

– = nil; PNG = Papua New Guinea

Source: UNDESA. Population Division, n.d.

Greater opportunities for intra-regional labour migration are expected to emerge in the future. For instance, there will likely be increasing shortages of labour to care for older populations in PICs with a history of heavy emigration, such as the Cook Islands, Niue, and Samoa (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019). There is regional interest in exploring the PIC labour markets, as demonstrated by the first and second Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM), which agreed that discussions on intra-Pacific labour mobility opportunities should continue with a view to introducing mechanisms to bring them to fruition (PIFS, 2018).

3.3 Barriers to labour mobility

There are multiple barriers that prevent individuals from migrating abroad for employment purposes. In this section, some factors – including skills recognition, geography, and trade agreements – are discussed. This is followed by a section on the barriers to increased intra-Pacific labour migration.

3.3.1 Skills and qualification recognition

The existence of a regional qualification framework through which skills and qualifications obtained in one country can be assessed in another country through benchmarking against appropriate international standards and qualifications is an important step towards skilled labour migration.

In the Pacific region, the Pacific Qualification Framework (PQF) was developed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), and includes school education; technical and vocational education and training (TVET); tertiary or higher education; and community-based training (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2011). The PQF is aligned with the national qualification frameworks in Australia and New Zealand.

At the country level, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu have made progress in their development of national qualifications agencies and national qualifications frameworks aligned with the PQF. Cook Islands is aligned with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The Northern Pacific Countries, including Palau and Marshall Islands, seek accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges of the United States. Kiribati and Tuvalu continue to work with SPBEA to explore options most appropriate for their needs, and may adopt the PQF as their qualification framework.

One challenge that has to be addressed if labour migration is to be facilitated is that having internationally recognized qualifications is often a necessary but not sufficient condition for gaining entry to a country. For instance, if Pacific Islanders receive training at Australian and New Zealand standards (which the PQF is aligned with), this is often not sufficient to gain entry into Australia or New Zealand under their respective skill migration programmes. Australian and New Zealand employers usually look for migrants not only with Australian or New Zealand qualifications, but who also have high-level English language skills; come from comparable, high-quality education systems; and who have the right workplace skills to easily and quickly fit into the workplace.

3.3.2 Geography and remoteness

Another barrier resulting in unequal access to migration opportunities is linked to geography and remoteness, which is associated not only with higher travel costs (in a region with already high travel costs) but often with a lack of access to information about migration opportunities.

Kiribati, for instance, has faced competition from the larger PICs in the RSE and SWP schemes. These larger PICs not only have better resourced Departments of Labour and better end-to-end processes, but also cheaper air linkages to Australia and New Zealand. For employers, the additional costs of

bringing seasonal workers from Kiribati to Australia or New Zealand are often prohibitive, and mean that workers from Kiribati are disadvantaged compared to workers from other countries.

At the same time, distance can disadvantage potential participants within a given country of origin. In Papua New Guinea, for instance, most participants in the SWP are either from the capital city of Port Moresby or the neighbouring province (Voigt-Graf, 2017). Few Papua New Guineans in other provinces are even aware of the existence of the scheme, let alone have the means to pay for their pre-departure costs (in terms of travelling to Port Moresby to apply for their visa, undergoing medical and police checks, and participating in pre-departure training).

For intra-Pacific migration, the high intra-regional travel costs mean that it is often cheaper for employers to bring in workers from outside the region – such as from the Philippines to Palau – than to bring Pacific Islanders to Palau.

3.3.3. Trade agreements and bilateral schemes

In 2001, Pacific Island Countries signed the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) in order to promote regional integration among the 14 Forum Island Countries (FICs). In the same year, the FIC Trade Ministers decided to broaden the scope of PICTA to cover trade in services, including a scheme for the temporary movement of natural persons (TMNP). In March 2009, a framework for a TMNP scheme was developed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). In 2012, the PICTA Trade in Services Protocol was opened for signature. It has since been signed by ten FICs, with four ratifications completed to date by the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Samoa, and Tuvalu. Once completed, it can be expected that skilled labour mobility within the Pacific region will be facilitated.

Negotiations on Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus between the FICs on one side and Australia and New Zealand on the other commenced in 2009 and concluded in April 2017. The agreement aims to foster economic integration through increased trade and investment. Regional labour mobility was a core component of discussions surrounding the free trade negotiations. While the FICs had initially argued for the inclusion of a chapter on low-skilled labour mobility in the Agreement, the parties later agreed to deal with low-skilled labour mobility in a side-arrangement on labour mobility outside of PACER Plus. The binding agreement on labour mobility in PACER Plus is provided in the “Movement of Natural Persons” chapter, where Australia’s and New Zealand’s schedules are essentially limited to highly skilled professionals.

The side-arrangement on labour mobility outside of PACER Plus took the form of the non-legally binding Labour Mobility Arrangement, which aims to enhance and improve the existing labour mobility schemes (i.e., the SWP and RSE) to maximize their development benefits (Kautoke-Holani, 2018). The Arrangement established the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM), which is a mechanism to advance the areas of cooperation identified in the Arrangement. As evidenced by the first and second PLMAMs in 2016 and 2018, the meetings provide an opportunity for the FICs to continue to lobby for increased labour market access for low-skilled and semi-skilled workers and to enhance further regional cooperation.

Eleven countries have signed PACER Plus and the accompanying Labour Mobility Arrangement (Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu). The two largest Pacific Island economies – Fiji and Papua New Guinea – have not signed PACER Plus. New Zealand and Australia ratified PACER Plus in late 2018. The Agreement will enter into force after 60 days when eight countries have ratified it. However, the entering into force of PACER Plus is not expected to impact on labour migration, as the Labour Mobility Arrangement is already being implemented.

The Skills Movement Scheme (SMS) under the sub-regional Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) comprising Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu was introduced in 2012 and allows 400 workers from each of the members to work in another MSG country. The overall objective is to facilitate the temporary movement of skilled MSG nationals within the region for the purpose of taking up employment. Procedures and administrative mechanisms have been established, and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) provides for the recognition of certain qualifications awarded in the MSG countries. The four participating countries in the SMS have identified occupations for which they will admit workers from the other countries, a numerical cap, required qualifications, the maximum duration of employment, and any additional commitments. The MSG Secretariat coordinates and monitors the implementation of the MOU and makes information accessible on its website. However, few workers have moved under the SMS. The only evidence that could be found was for some teachers and nurses from Fiji who have moved to Vanuatu under the SMS (Jayaraman, 2016). The low uptake is due to a number of reasons, including the private sector not having demanded any workers under the scheme and the low level of awareness, especially among recruitment agencies and large companies (Voigt-Graf, 2016a).

Overall, with the exception of the seasonal and temporary schemes in Australia and New Zealand, Pacific Islander labour migration has largely occurred on an individual basis, rather than under the PICTA or MSG SMS. For instance, the movement of Pacific labour migrants to Papua New Guinea has not occurred under any of the regional schemes or under a bilateral agreement, and this has also been the case regarding migration of other occupational groups, such as that of Fijian caregivers to the United States or of Fijian security personnel to the Middle East. In this regard, the governance of labour migration in the Pacific region differs from that in other regions of the world where labour migration is often regulated through bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) or MOUs. This is, for instance, the case in the Middle East as a major labour migrant-receiving region. Most African and Asian labour-sending countries have BLAs/MOUs with Middle Eastern destination countries that regulate labour migration between the two parties.

In the case of PICs, few countries have negotiated BLAs/MOUs with labour-receiving countries. One exception is Kiribati, which has signed an MOU on Labour Cooperation with Taiwan, China, in 2007. According to the MOU, Taiwan, China, permits the employment of I-Kiribati in Taiwan, China, in certain roles (manufacturing workers, construction workers, domestic helpers, caretakers, and crews on ships or fishing boats). Taiwan, China, also welcomes vocational trainees and undertakes to protect female labourers from sexual exploitation and physical abuse. However, no labour migration from Kiribati to Taiwan, China, has taken place under this MOU.

3.3.4 Recruitment agencies

Many employers in labour-receiving countries use recruitment agents to recruit workers. This is as much the case with large mining companies in Papua New Guinea, as it is with households in the Middle East looking for domestic workers. Some recruitment agencies operate internationally with offices in major labour-sending and labour-receiving countries. Alternatively, recruitment agencies in labour-receiving countries cooperate with recruitment agencies in sending countries. Few such agencies operate in any of the PICs outside of Papua New Guinea. In Papua New Guinea, recruitment agencies often source migrant workers through established channels – such as from the Philippines where some agencies maintain sub-offices – while not looking in the neighbouring PICs. Few Pacific Islanders have registered in the databases of internationally operating recruitment agencies, and therefore have little chance to be recruited through an agency.

3.3.5 Size and reputation of migrant community

Workers from countries with a sizeable number of migrant workers, such as workers from the Philippines and China in Papua New Guinea, have developed networks along which additional workers are recruited. For instance, employers already employing Filipino workers frequently use their existing Filipino workforce to recommend additional workers. Filipinos in particular have gained a reputation among employers in Papua New Guinea as being competent, qualified, hard-working, and relatively affordable. Filipinos are therefore often the first choice, especially for technical and trade worker roles. Fijians and other Pacific Islanders have not been able to establish similar networks or a similarly good reputation.

The fact that ni-Vanuatu and Tongans are very successful in the seasonal work schemes in Australia and New Zealand is partly linked to their first-mover advantage. Workers from these two countries participated from the beginning and have thus had the opportunity to build a good reputation among employers. Workers from other PICs have been at a comparative disadvantage. Looking beyond the seasonal work schemes, Pacific Islanders have not had a chance to build networks and a good reputation in any of the major migrant destination countries outside of Australia and New Zealand.

3.3.6 Barriers to intra-Pacific labour migration

Most PICs have small populations and workforces. Their labour markets are characterized by skill shortages particularly in the technical and trade areas. Since skill shortages exist largely in the same areas across most PICs, there is generally limited capacity to supply skills from within the region.

Despite the existence of regional institutions and trade agreements, the economies of the PICs are not closely integrated with each other. Instead, they mostly rely on trade with and investments from the Pacific Rim countries. It is widely acknowledged that increased trade and investment flows between countries lead to increased labour mobility between them. In Papua New Guinea, which hosts the highest number of labour migrants among all PICs, this is also the case. Many foreign-owned companies in Papua New Guinea employ workers from the countries where their headquarters are located. Many overseas contractors from Australia, China, the United States, or other countries that work on specific projects in Papua New Guinea bring part of their workforce from these countries.

The gradually growing economic links between Papua New Guinea and Fiji is the main exception to a lack of economic links between PICs. As the largest economies and the two most populous countries in the region, Papua New Guinea and Fiji have taken regional leadership roles. There has been growing Papua New Guinea investment in Fiji, particularly in the tourism industry. There have also been some notable Fijian investments in Papua New Guinea. It is possible that these investments have already impacted the flow of labour, and there is potential for more labour migration in the future. One relatively recent labour flow is that of hospitality and tourism workers who have moved from Fiji to Papua New Guinea, which can be linked to Fiji's developed tourism industry and the existence of good hospitality and tourism training in Fiji, as well as increased economic links between Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

4. The situation of labour migrants in destination countries

As discussed in chapter 3, seasonal and temporary labour migration is known to offer some significant economic benefits for migrants as well as their households, communities, and countries of origin. At the same time, the protection of the rights of seasonal and temporary labour migrants in destination countries and the social impacts of their absences are issues of critical interest to PICs. This chapter discusses these issues with particular attention to the RSE, SWP, seafaring, and private military/security labour migration, as well as to the role of labour-sending countries in ensuring safe migration and fair work for their migrant workers.

4.1 Protection of the rights of migrant workers

While PICs and New Zealand have adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), PICs and Australia have not ratified the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) or the ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). The UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990, has yet to be signed or ratified by any of the PICs, Australia, or New Zealand. This section outlines the status of the protection of migrant workers in the cases of the existing seasonal labour mobility schemes (the RSE and SWP) and temporary labour migration (focusing on I-Kiribati seafarers and Fijian security personnel).

4.1.1 Seasonal migrant workers: Experiences of RSE- and SWP-participating workers

The two seasonal labour mobility schemes – the RSE and SWP – have regulatory provisions for the protection of migrant workers. In terms of wages, under the RSE, seasonal workers are entitled to the same minimum rights as permanent employees, including at least New Zealand’s minimum adult working wage (INZ, 2019). Similarly, SWP-participating workers are covered by the minimum entitlements under Australia’s National Employment Standards (World Bank, 2017).

As noted earlier, the World Bank evaluation of the RSE indicated generally positive socio-economic benefits for participating workers, households, and communities (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). Nonetheless, it needs to be noted that an earlier study (Bedford, Bedford, and Ho, 2010) highlighted potential vulnerabilities in the RSE design, such as the minimum remuneration provision (payment for no less than 240 hours of work at the per hour rate), which translates into only six weeks (at 40 hours per week) of minimum work, which may not be enough to justify the costs associated with migration. Among the Tuvaluan RSE participants in the study, for instance, the costs of participation and the returns from earnings were not always balanced: some in fact returned home with very little money, or in debt.

Similarly, although, on average, 78 per cent of the SWP participants in the 2017 World Bank study felt that their net earnings met their expectations, less than half of the workers from PICs (other than Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu) felt the same. The changes made to the SWP in 2015–16 included the removal of the (previously 14-week) minimum stay requirement, while still requiring that workers receive a net financial benefit of at least AUD1,000 and a minimum average of 30 hours’ work per week (MacLellan, 2017; Hepworth and MacLellan, 2017). Many SWP workers who participated in a tracer study in Papua New Guinea reported not receiving sick pay, which reduced their income or forced them to work despite being sick (Voigt-Graf, 2017). Additionally, many seasonal workers struggle to access their accrued superannuation in Australia, which has been noted by the second PLMAM (PIFS, 2018). According to the World Bank’s 2017 study, there is an estimated AUD11.4 million in superannuation contributions that SWP participating workers have not been able to access (World

Bank, 2017). Thus, while the “bigger picture” points to significant income gains for participating workers and households, there may also be considerable variations among countries and individual cases on closer examination.

A similar situation appears to exist in terms of pastoral care. Under the RSE, employers are required to:

- provide a work induction programme;
- ensure access to suitable accommodation at a reasonable cost;
- provide information on medical insurance, banking services, and money transfers;
- provide transport to and from work;
- make occupational safety and health (OSH) provisions; and
- provide opportunities for recreation and religious observance, among other things (INZ, 2019d).

Similar employer requirements exist in the SWP (DESSFB, 2018). Under both schemes, employers must attain Recognised Seasonal Employer/Approved Employer status, which makes them liable to government monitoring for compliance. However, since the responsibility of pastoral care provision lies with employers rather than the government, monitoring may pose challenges (Bedford, Bedford, and Ho, 2010). In the case of New Zealand, when the RSE started in 2007, six labour inspectors and six compliance officers were responsible for monitoring and supporting up to 5,000 workers. Ten years later, no additional labour inspectors or compliance officers had been employed, although there were now over 9,000 seasonal workers (Lees-Galloway, 2017). Furthermore, the requirement for employers to attain Recognised Seasonal Employer/Approved Employer status binds workers to specific employers, since their visa cannot be transferred to new employers. This in turn creates fears among workers that actions against their employers will lead to the cancellation of their visa by the employers, rendering them vulnerable to exploitation (Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2016; Hepworth and Maclellan, 2017; Maclellan, 2017; Mildura Independent, 2017).

Indeed, researchers and the media (Braae, 2018; Doherty, 2017; McKenzie and Toscano, 2017; RNZ, 2018; Stringer, 2016; 2017) have documented cases of worker exploitation. Despite the RSE’s positive reputation, there have been reports of:

- RSE-participating workers being subjected to underpayment (non-payment in some cases);
- unverified pay deductions;
- denial of toilet breaks; and
- verbal and physical abuse by employers and “gang masters” (Stringer, 2016; 2017; Lees-Galloway, 2017).

Relatedly, concerns have also been raised about dangers of human trafficking: 2016 saw the first human trafficking conviction in New Zealand, which involved the trafficking of Fijian workers (Stringer, 2017; see also Braae, 2018). The New Zealand Government itself has recognized an “increasing number of Pacific Peoples being victims of human trafficking and worker exploitation in New Zealand” (MPP, 2019).

There are similar reports concerning the SWP in Australia. The National Union of Workers has reported cases of exploitation such as:

- unlawful deductions from seasonal workers wages;
- working excessively long hours without proper compensation/overtime, or a guaranteed hourly rate of pay;

- overcrowded accommodation and unreasonable above-market rate charges for accommodation and transport;
- racism and discrimination at work; and
- employer non-compliance with pre-departure and on-arrival briefing requirements (Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2016; see also Maclellan, 2017).

Indeed, worker exploitation has been identified as a widespread problem across the Australian horticultural industry, which relies heavily on backpackers and has a low level of unionization (Berg and Farbenblum, 2017; Maclellan, 2017). The Fair Work Ombudsman's Harvest Trail Inquiry (which started in 2013) has recently highlighted widespread employer non-compliance, with inspectors recovering more than AUD1 million in unpaid wages for over 2,500 workers (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2018). It should be noted that, in comparison with backpackers, seasonal workers under the SWP face specific vulnerabilities and challenges in exercising their labour rights due to their visa conditions, as discussed above (Hepworth and Maclellan, 2017; McCarthy, 2018).

Both the New Zealand and Australian governments have begun to take measures to address these issues. In February 2017, the New Zealand Government introduced new measures for worker protection. Employers found to exploit migrant workers are now banned from recruitment for between six months and two years (Stringer, 2017). The 2018 RSE Employers' Conference included discussions of worker exploitation (Horticulture New Zealand, 2018). In addition, the New Zealand Government is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the RSE scheme (Sepuloni and Lees-Galloway, 2018). The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has been directed to undertake in-depth research on temporary migrant worker exploitation. Other initiatives include increasing the number of labour inspectors (Lees-Galloway, 2018).

The Australian Government has accepted the recommendations of the Migrant Workers' Taskforce (Howes and Curtain, 2019), and will establish a monitoring and reporting programme to ensure compliance with immigration and employment relations laws. The Government has also announced the establishment of the Pacific Labour Facility, which will provide support services for Pacific workers in Australia as well as support their reintegration into home communities and economies (DFAT, 2019b). At the private sector level, Queensland-based industry association Growcom (2019) has developed Fair Farms Initiative to enable growers to demonstrate fair and responsible employment practices. Furthermore, major Australian supermarket chains now have responsible sourcing policies in place (Howes and Curtain, 2019).

4.1.2 Temporary migrant workers: Experiences of seafarer and military/security migrants

There is limited documentation of the working conditions and welfare of Pacific Island temporary migrant workers. A few existing studies, however, identify challenges (alongside socio-economic benefits) that may be experienced by I-Kiribati seafarers and Fijian private military and security labour migrants.

In Kiribati, seafarers remain the largest group of migrant workers (750 at the end of 2015) (Kiribati Government, 2015). While the migrant numbers and remittances have declined, seafaring remains Kiribati's primary labour mobility opportunity and source of income – AUD7.6 million in 2016; AUD5.6 million in 2014; and AUD12.5 million in 2002 (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019) – with well developed training and recruitment arrangements. Consequently, reviving the demand for I-Kiribati seafarers is a key priority of the Kiribati Government (2015). Nevertheless, as indicated by the ILO (n.d.), Pacific seafarers can be vulnerable to exploitation if the migration process is left unregulated. Research has raised concerns about I-Kiribati seafarers' working conditions and their health and safety implications. Key issues identified include: exceptionally lengthy work periods at sea; frequent security controls and

speedy turnarounds leading to sleep deprivation; and decreased shore time with problematic implications for physical and emotional health (Borovnik, 2011; 2012). These pose particularly significant challenges in light of community dependence on seafaring incomes and low social protection (Borovnik, 2011; 2012). In this context, protecting the rights of I-Kiribati temporary and seasonal workers is one of the four major objectives of the Kiribati Government's National Labour Migration Policy (2015), which outlines strategies such as:

- identifying and strengthening areas related to the protection of migrant workers in existing legislation;
- ensuring that recruitment processes are fair and safe;
- providing pre-departure preparation; and
- ensuring decent work standards for migrant workers are adhered to including in the areas of minimum wage, OSH, and social security.

With its international reputation for soldiery established through participation in UN peacekeeping operations and recruitment into the British Army, Fiji became a major source of private military and security labour in the early 2000s. Thousands of ex/current disciplinary force personnel and unemployed men have since been contracted by transnational military and security companies to work in Iraq and other high-conflict areas; many engaging in armed services such as convoy security, security escorts, and personal security details (MacLellan, 2006; MacLellan and Mares, 2006; Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). While no official record exists of the exact scale of this migration, well over 1,000 military/security personnel are estimated to have migrated annually between 2006 and 2011, which is more than the number of the peacekeeping troops that Fiji sent during the period (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). In addition to the financial precariousness of this largely unregulated labour migration, research indicates that it exposes migrant workers to extreme physical risks and life-threatening situations, with serious physical and psychological repercussions. Twenty-nine Fijian private military/security personnel died in Iraq between 2000 and 2016, and many more returned with injuries (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). They are typically insured for death but not injury, and therefore not entitled to compensation or continuing medical treatment. Reported psychological impacts include: impulsive fast driving; flashbacks; anxiety; extreme alertness; sleeping difficulty; anger management problems; and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). No counselling or other psychological support is provided by employers once they return to Fiji. These point to private military and security work as one of the most consequential forms of temporary labour migration experienced by Pacific Islanders.

4.2 Role of origin countries

Labour-sending countries have an important role in making migration safe through a variety of measures. The role of pre-departure orientation, regulation of recruitment, and reintegration assistance are summarized here, focusing on the seasonal work schemes with Australia and New Zealand.

4.2.1 Pre-departure orientation

The importance of pre-departure training in order to mitigate the negative social impacts of temporary and seasonal labour migration schemes is widely known. Workers who are aware of their employment conditions, their rights at work, their human and gender rights, as well as their responsibilities are less likely to experience abuse and rights violations. Under the RSE and SWP, participating Pacific countries are responsible for pre-departure briefings to help workers prepare for overseas work. In general, the pre-departure orientation includes matters such as employment conditions, climate, clothing and footwear requirements, taxation, insurance, remittances and budget advice, and emergency contact

information. The Australian and New Zealand governments have prepared pre-departure resources for workers, including a “Get ready pack”¹ for the RSE, and *Working and living in Australia – Pre-departure guidebook*² for the SWP.

The arrangements for pre-departure training for the seasonal work schemes in New Zealand and Australia differ among PICs (ILO, UNESCAP, and European Union, 2014). In some PICs, training is provided by recruiting agents; while in others, government departments provide the training.

In the case of Solomon Islanders moving to New Zealand under the RSE, for instance, the recruiting agents are responsible for selecting the workers and arranging their pre-departure training. The Labour Mobility Unit within the Department for External Trade, which oversees Solomon Islands’ participation in the seasonal worker programmes of Australia and New Zealand, is involved in monitoring pre-departure training, but the responsibility rests with the recruitment agents.³

In Tonga, the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts the mandatory pre-departure training of workers for both schemes. Pre-departure training includes practical training to meet the identified skill needs of workplaces, and training on generic living, learning, employment, and leadership skills.⁴

In most PICs, pre-departure training is confined to one or two days, but Papua New Guinea used to require workers attend a three-week preparation programme organized by the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR) in Port Moresby, which was later shortened to two weeks due to limited funds. The reduced duration is also a reason for the deterioration of the quality of training over recent years. As a result, workers today arrive in Australia less prepared than in the past. During interviews with returned workers in 2017, participants identified that the main problem with pre-departure training in Papua New Guinea was that accommodation was not provided for participants from outside of Port Moresby (Voigt-Graf, 2017), resulting in considerable expenses, security concerns, and disadvantages compared to participants from Port Moresby.

Overall, whether conducted by recruiting agents or by government departments, pre-departure training is an important tool for preparing workers for their overseas work and to reduce their vulnerability abroad.

4.2.2 Regulation of recruitment

Recruitment regulations differ between the PICs. In many PICs, private recruitment agents are involved in the process, and the government provides licenses for recruitment agencies. Some PIC Labour Departments maintain work-ready pools of prospective seasonal workers that have been pre-selected based on fulfilling general requirements such as citizenship and age.

In Solomon Islands, the Labour Mobility Unit is responsible for licensing, coordinating, and managing a team of recruiting agents and maintains a registry of recruiting agents.⁵ In Vanuatu, employers can either hire directly or through an agent. Direct recruitment is facilitated by the Vanuatu Department of Labour which maintains a work-ready pool of workers.⁶ In contrast, all recruiting in Papua New Guinea is done through the DLIR, which maintains a work-ready pool.

¹ Available at: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/rse-get-ready-booklets>.

² Available at: https://docs.jobs.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/jsb19-0047_swp_pre-departure_guidebook_acc.pdf.

³ For more information, see: <http://www.mfaet.gov.sb/external-trade/labour-mobility.html>.

⁴ For more information, see Tongaworks website at: <http://www.tongaworks.org/index.html>.

⁵ For more information, see: <http://www.mfaet.gov.sb/external-trade/labour-mobility.html>.

⁶ For more information, see Department of Labour website at: <https://dol.gov.vu/>

One concern about the recruitment process is around unfair worker selection practices. Such concerns have been raised in various countries, including Vanuatu where agents, labour hire companies, and employers in Australia and New Zealand have been accused of recruiting through family and community networks in particular regions of Vanuatu (Bailey and Rereman, 2019).

In Papua New Guinea, the SWP was initially promoted through the media, but there has subsequently been no promotion. Therefore, most seasonal workers who participated in a 2017 tracer study had found out about the SWP through relatives or friends, many of whom in turn had personal connections within the DLIR. Given the small numbers of seasonal workers in Papua New Guinea, the public is largely unaware of existing opportunities (Voigt-Graf, 2017), and as such is excluded from applying.

4.2.3 Reintegration support

There is currently little or no reintegration support provided for returned seasonal workers, although this is an area that could potentially provide wide-ranging benefits for migrants and their families. The separation of migrants from their families for several months can have serious consequences, in the worst case leading to the breakup of families. Similarly, there is little support for educating returnees on how to make the best of use of their resources, whether these be in the form of investments, savings for retirement, or other options.

Asked about which reintegration assistance they would find useful, Papua New Guinean returnees said they would find training in business skills; access to loans to start a business; and training in agricultural skills, including how to use the skills learnt in Australia in the Papua New Guinea context, most useful. Moreover, some workers learn useful workplace skills overseas, such as operating a forklift, a tractor, or other heavy equipment, but find it hard to transfer these skills back to their own countries (Voigt-Graf, 2017). With the right reintegration support, these skills could be used in the PICs, which would benefit not only the returned workers but also their countries' economies.

The lack of reintegration support sometimes leads to a situation where workers try to return to Australia or New Zealand for as many seasons as possible in order to maximize their personal economic benefits (see, e.g., Voigt-Graf, 2017). Since the number of seasons that workers can participate in the RSE and SWP is unlimited and many workers return several times, opportunities for newcomers are more restricted than they would otherwise be.

4.3 Social issues

There is a lack of comprehensive data on the social costs of seasonal and temporary labour migration in PICs. However, existing information suggests that – just as there are variations in working conditions and pastoral care provisions – the social impacts of seasonal/temporary migration are also varied and varying, depending on participating countries and communities and the type of migration.

While a tracer study of SWP participants in Papua New Guinea did not identify significant adverse impacts on family life or relationships (Voigt-Graf, 2017), the World Bank's RSE evaluation listed concerns of community leaders in Vanuatu and Tonga. These concerns are related to the loss of able-bodied young men for community work; loss of contributions to church or family; alcohol consumption; and family separation, among other things (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). In the case of Tonga, as noted in chapter 3, the number of SWP- and RSE-participating workers is reported to have reached 13 per cent of the eligible sending population (i.e., those aged 20–45) (Howes, 2018a). Such a significant loss of younger male working population is expected to impact on families and communities, which has been noted by the Tongan authorities (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019). The absences of family members necessitate significant adjustments to “economic activities, social

responsibilities and engagement, and cultural maintenance and cohesion” at the family and community levels (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019, pp. 36).

Greater impacts may be experienced by I-Kiribati seafarers’ families and communities due to their longer and repeated absences. Seafarers take up contracts that separate them from their families for up to two years at a time to maximize social and economic benefits. Many circulate between their employment on ships and at home for more than ten years (Borovnik, 2007). This inevitably has implications for families and communities. Community members, and especially the elders and government workers involved in social matters, have expressed concerns about returning seafarers’ unapproved habits, such as “celebrating for too long, spending money more on immediate and individual enjoyment rather than for the long-term benefit of a family and community, and not adjusting back to the usual community lifestyle long absence and little time to spend at home with families”, which have put strains on their family and community relationships (Borovnik, 2007, p. 245). I-Kiribati seafarers’ experiences may have important implications for Australia’s new Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), which does not allow workers to be accompanied by their families, and therefore may separate them for up to three years. If PLS workers are re-engaged for a second or third time, their separation may extend to six or nine years (Howes, 2018b), potential impacts of which warrant close attention.

In the case of Fijian private military and security labour migration, the effects of untreated psychological trauma (and in some cases physical injuries) borne by migrant workers are felt by families and communities, although there is an absence of systematic research on this issue. Combined with financial insecurities and workers’ long-term absences, these have in some cases resulted in marriage/family breakdown (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017; Maclellan and Mares, 2006). Given the potentially extensive scale of this type of migration, further research is needed to identify its impacts at the community and societal levels.

5. Existing partnerships and regional cooperation on labour mobility

Having outlined the major patterns and flows of migration from/into the Pacific as well as their opportunities and challenges, this chapter discusses examples of existing (and some new) stakeholder partnerships and initiatives in the area of labour mobility, as a pointer toward the future scope for regional cooperation.

5.1 State and non-state actors

State and non-state actors play key roles in enhancing partnerships and regional cooperation around labour mobility. While relevant initiatives may be found in various forms, there are some notable examples of governments and non-government stakeholders developing forums for cooperation to maximize the benefits of labour mobility and to monitor its impacts. For instance, at the regional level, the establishment of the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM), pursuant to the Labour Mobility Arrangement of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus, provides FICs with an opportunity for high-level regional cooperation, not only in strengthening the existing mobility schemes and exploring new opportunities with Australia and New Zealand, but also in enhancing intra-Pacific labour mobility (Morgan, 2016). A recent development in this area is the proposal raised at the 2018 PLMAM to establish a regional secretariat for labour mobility initiatives with clear mandates and responsibilities (PIFS, 2018). Importantly, in addition to maximizing labour mobility opportunities within and beyond the region, such an initiative could also provide an avenue for more effectively addressing issues of the labour rights of seasonal workers.

An example of a successful national government initiative to boost intra-Pacific labour through partnerships is the Fiji Volunteer Scheme (administered by the Fiji Volunteer Services of the National Employment Centre), whereby teachers and nurses who are nearing (or after) retirement age are placed as professional volunteers in other PICs such as the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu to prolong their working life and to share their skills and experience within the region. While the volunteers are remunerated in fees and/or kind, and the Fiji Government may also receive remuneration. The scheme supports PICs in addressing their skills shortages in health, education, and other key areas; it is intended to serve as a “win-win” for all parties (Pacific Dialogue, n.d.). Most recently, in late 2018, Tonga’s Minister for Education and Training met with Fijian officials to study the legislative and operational framework of the Fiji Volunteer Services with a view to establishing a similar scheme for retired teachers in Tonga (MEPIR, 2018).

Beyond the PIC region, among New Zealand’s stakeholder forums for maximizing the potentials of the RSE is the annual RSE Employers’ Conference, which brings together most of the accredited RSEs, ancillary service providers (e.g., health insurance providers), Pacific labour liaison officers based in New Zealand, and representatives of key government agencies to discuss issues relating to their labour needs and the development of their businesses (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019; see also Horticulture New Zealand, 2018). The Conference offers an important opportunity for members of marketing and recruitment teams to network with employers and discuss possible opportunities for the employment of workers. Furthermore, the employment services sections of PICs may utilize the forum to advance a more nuanced and proactive approach to “selling” the unique qualities of their workers (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019).

Existing stakeholder partnerships may also be strengthened in line with new developments. An example is the Australia–Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and managed by TAFE Queensland, which is likely to play a more active role

in enhancing labour mobility. In APTC Stage 3 (mid-2018 to mid-2022) there is a renewed emphasis on labour mobility in light of the new opportunities opening up with the launch of the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). In this latest phase of the APTC, supporting APTC graduates seeking work overseas will receive a much higher priority, with a focus on a better gender balance. APTC students are to choose between the domestic track or the labour mobility track, and eligible students in the latter group will be provided with necessary additional training. Further support to meet migration requirements will also be provided (Curtain, 2017; DFAT, 2017). The APTC is also expected to work in partnership with the new Pacific Labour Facility (see below) to support PICs to increase the quality and preparedness of SWP and PLS workers. In February 2019, eleven I-Kiribati APTC graduates became the first I-Kiribati nationals to participate in the PLS, having received refresher training from the APTC to work in the aged care sector in Australia (APTC, 2019).

5.2 Development cooperation projects

The RSE and SWP have been supported by capacity-building projects funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), respectively. New Zealand's Strengthening Pacific Partnerships project is aimed at strengthening PICs' capacity to participate in the RSE through providing technical assistance for labour export capability and skills development, improving regional cooperation, measuring the economic benefits of RSE, and facilitating labour mobility opportunities in new sectors. Australia's Labour Mobility Assistance Program (LMAP), run by a private firm (Cardno), had the specific purpose of supporting SWP-participating countries to increase the number and quality of workers, and to increase the benefits to workers and their communities by working with PICs' Labour Sending Units over three years and four months (Cardno, n.d.).

In July 2018, the Australian Government established a new Pacific Labour Facility, which took over from the LMAP to connect Australian employers with Pacific workers and support the administration of the PLS (and the SWP). The Facility, which has an AUD16 million budget and is operated by a private company (Palladium International) (Martin, 2018), is mandated to "increase the quality of training and supply of workers; promote the [Pacific Labour] Scheme with Australian employers; provide pastoral care services for workers in Australia; support the return of Pacific workers to their local communities and economies, and monitor the social and economic impacts of the labour mobility arrangements" (DFAT, 2017). Much of the support targets both the PLS and SWP, and includes:

- strategies to increase access for women and people with disabilities;
- working with APTC and TVET institutions to link workers with employers; and
- establishing a 24/7 telephone information hotline for employers and workers (DFAT, 2019).

It may also be noted that the involvement of the private sector in aid programmes has been widely debated and often questioned (Howes, 2019a; Pryke, 2018).

In the area of climate change and migration, a new regional project has recently been launched. In March 2019, a three-year project – Enhancing Protection and Empowerment of Migrants and Communities Affected by Climate Change and Disasters in the Pacific Region – commenced. Funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), the project will target Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, with the main objectives to "support a regional human security-based response to climate change and disaster-related migration, displacement and planned relocation, ensure that migrants and communities benefit from safe labour migration where appropriate, and contribute to the evidence-base of good practices in these areas" (IOM, 2019a; UNTFHS, 2019).

Finally, international organizations also play a key role in enhancing and monitoring labour mobility at regional and national levels. Those that are particularly involved in the area of migration include the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the ILO. The IOM provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers. It works closely with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental partners with a particular emphasis on migration governance (IOM, 2019b). The ILO, on the other hand, has a rights- and standards-based approach. In the Pacific, the ILO provides technical assistance to 11 member countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) and non-member countries as required. This includes the assistance it has provided for the drafting of National Labour Migration Policies, background research, and more. A key advantage of these two organizations is that the global scale of their operations enables them to integrate lessons learned elsewhere in the world into their work in the Pacific region.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Summary of successes, problems, and challenges to labour mobility in the Pacific

The lack of domestic employment opportunities and labour demand in Pacific Rim countries have been the main drivers for migration, with climate change and environmental degradation becoming increasingly important factors. In the past, migration flows have mostly consisted of permanent migration flows directed to the Pacific Rim. Pacific diasporas have continued to grow in the main destination countries – New Zealand, the United States, and Australia – with an increasing proportion of these communities being overseas-born. Over the past decade, labour migration of Pacific Islanders has generally increased, but patterns vary among countries and sub-regions. The more populous Melanesian countries of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands and the atoll countries of Kiribati and Tuvalu have few migration outlets. The lack of migration opportunities has exacerbated the youth bulge and youth unemployment in these countries. Some countries like Vanuatu that were not previously involved in labour migration are now sending considerable numbers of seasonal workers abroad.

Similar to the permanent migration opportunities – from which particular PICs have benefitted through special access arrangements with the United States (Palau, Marshall Islands) and New Zealand (Cook Islands, Samoa) and through skilled migration opportunities (Fiji) – temporary and seasonal opportunities under Australia’s SWP and PLS and under New Zealand’s RSE are also unequally distributed. Tonga and Vanuatu have done particularly well under these schemes, while workers from Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu have had few opportunities. This is particularly unfortunate given that these are the countries most adversely affected by the impacts of population growth, youth unemployment, or climate change – or in Kiribati’s case all three.

Intra-Pacific labour migration is small but growing, and there is potential for it to grow. There is also considerable migration of professional and technical workers from Australia, New Zealand, and various Asian countries into the region. There is therefore some room to create employment opportunities for Pacific Islanders at home through localization of jobs.

In countries with large permanent emigration, the loss of skills (brain drain) resulting from the emigration of skilled workers is a concern, particularly in Fiji. An advantage of temporary and seasonal schemes is that skills are not permanently lost. On the contrary, many seasonal workers return with new skills (although these are not always useful in their home country). Since the seasonal work schemes involve low-skilled work, they primarily target low-skilled workers. In their case, it is less the lost skills and more their working power that might be missed in their households, villages, and communities. The extended schemes for hospitality workers, caregivers, and construction workers, on the other hand, target skilled workers and could result in a loss of skills that are also needed in the Pacific Islands.

Migrant remittances have increased to high levels in many countries (particularly Samoa and Tonga), and are crucial to the maintenance of consumption levels and social welfare. Migrant remittances generally reduce the proportion of the population in poverty. The future sustainability of remittance flows is in doubt in countries such as the Cook Islands and Samoa where most remittances are sent by permanent emigrants, because the commitment of second- or third-generation migrants to their families and communities in the islands weakens. This is an area where temporary and seasonal labour migration generally does better, because many labour migrants who return home after a few months tend to spend little and save much of their overseas earnings in order to send remittances and take

money and consumer goods (including clothing, shoes, electronic goods, and household appliances) back home. It is important to note that while the 11 Pacific member States of the ILO received US\$689 million in remittances in 2018, a substantial sum of US\$121 million was transferred out of the PIC region by foreign workers, Australia being the main beneficiary country.

All PIC governments are committed to increasing their number of labour migrants in order to ease local labour market pressures, increase remittances, and facilitate skills transfers. With labour migration opportunities being increasingly for seasonal and temporary work, the risk of brain drain and declining remittances are lower than under permanent migration schemes. While temporary and seasonal schemes generally have better economic impacts for sending countries, they sometimes come with severe negative social consequences as a result of prolonged absences of family members. The social and health impacts of seafaring have been researched for Kiribati and Tuvalu, but are less well understood for seasonal and temporary workers in Australia and New Zealand. In addition, there have been instances of violations of the work rights and human rights of seasonal workers in both Australia and New Zealand. Since the schemes in Australia and New Zealand are employer-driven, there is no guarantee for numbers to continue to grow as they have in recent years. Employers are the key stakeholders in these schemes as “admission gatekeepers” (Fornale, 2017), and potential Pacific workers do not have the opportunity to apply independently under any of these schemes. In addition, as few women participate in the schemes, the schemes have a negative impact on gender parity and women’s economic empowerment through employment.

In the following section, some major activity areas to support fair labour migration in the Pacific are proposed. Specific recommendations for Pacific Island governments and the ILO are included, where applicable.

6.2 Proposed activities to support fair labour migration in the Pacific and recommendations for Pacific Island country governments and the ILO

Improving labour migration governance

There are several international treaties and Conventions governing the protection of migrant workers. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is a UN multilateral treaty governing the protection of migrant workers and families that came into force in 2003. In December 2018, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was adopted by the majority of UN member States and formally endorsed by the UN General Assembly. The GCM includes a section on migrants who cross borders because of natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, and other precarious situations.

As a standards- and rights-based organization, there are several ILO Conventions and Recommendations governing international labour migration. These include the:

- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97);
- Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86);
- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143); and
- Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151).

The ILO’s strategy in improving labour migration governance is guided by these Conventions and the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006). The Multilateral Framework comprises non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration and aims to assist

governments, social partners, and stakeholders in their efforts to regulate labour migration and protect migrant workers. It provides a comprehensive set of rights-based guidelines and principles.

Current approaches and actions of the ILO, for example in South-East Asia, include the following:

- providing constituents with country-specific advisory services to design and promote gender-responsive and fair and effective migration policies;
- technical assistance to implement policies and operational mechanisms to protect workers' rights;
- support for developing and facilitating harmonized labour migration data collection;
- improved governance of labour mobility at the regional level;
- tripartite dialogue; and
- support for the most vulnerable migrant workers in sectors with a strong migrant labour presence, such as agriculture, construction, and domestic work.

In December 2016, the ILO's constituents from the Arab States and Asia and the Pacific adopted the Bali Declaration, which calls for enhancing labour migration policies based on relevant international standards that recognize labour market needs; promote fair recruitment; provide adequate protection to all migrant workers; and redress employer–employee relationships impeding workers freedom of movement and their right to terminate employment or change employers, taking into account contractual obligations.

In early 2019, the ILO developed the non-binding ILO *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment*. The objective of these is to inform the current and future work of the ILO and of other organizations, national legislatures, and social partners on promoting and ensuring fair recruitment. The primary sources for these principles and guidelines are international labour standards and related ILO instruments.

While PICs have adopted the GCM, none of the ILO Pacific member States have ratified the relevant Conventions on labour migration (i.e., Convention No. 97 and Convention No. 143). As such there is scope to improve labour migration governance through the adoption of international standards and Conventions.

Only three PICs have adopted a National Labour Migration Policy. In 2015, Kiribati, Samoa, and Tuvalu adopted national labour migration policies that set out protection principles for migrant workers, outline the responsibilities of the government in ensuring effective support for migrants, and develop strategies to increase safe labour migration.

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

Since it is in the interest of PICs as migrant-sending nations to ensure safe migration and fair work for migrant workers, it is recommended that they consider signing and ratifying the ILO Conventions governing labour migration, especially the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1947 (No. 97), the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

PICs that have not developed national labour migration policies could learn lessons from the experiences of Kiribati, Samoa, and Tuvalu with developing and implementing their policies, and based on the lessons learned, start a process of developing their own national labour migration policies.

Improving existing temporary and seasonal schemes

Research has found that migrant workers are more likely to be exposed to forced labour and exploitation when their employer yields power over them with respect to the right to remain and work in the country. As such, stringent restrictions on job changes for admitted migrants result in an imbalanced employer–employee relationship that may lead to abuses (Kouba and Baruah, 2019). The residence and work rights of seasonal and temporary workers in Australia and New Zealand are bound to the workers' continued employment with the employer who sponsored them (in New Zealand, employers can together sponsor a Pacific worker who can then be transferred between these employers). While the situation in regards to rights violations at work in Australia and New Zealand cannot be compared to the situation in some other migrant-receiving countries in severity and frequency, the very fact that they do occur is alarming and should be sufficient cause to look into ways to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers.

A recent ILO report (Kouba and Baruah, 2019) includes some best practices from around the world. In Canada, for instance, all foreign workers with temporary permits are allowed to change employers. Authorities and current employers cannot deport and penalize workers for looking for another place to work. Sweden, which is one of only 23 countries to have ratified Convention No. 143, has made its laws on labour market access for migrant workers consistent with international standards. This means that even though work-based immigration is employer-driven, work permits become fully portable after two years and a temporary visa can be converted into permanent residence in Sweden after four years. Even during the first two years, a foreign worker may change employers without having to leave the country, if the new employer applies for a new work permit on the worker's behalf (Kouba and Baruah, 2019).

The Australian and New Zealand governments regard the seasonal and temporary work schemes as contributing to the development of PICs (in addition to filling labour shortages in their labour markets). Both governments have started to take some actions to address seasonal worker exploitation as discussed in chapter 4. In addition to these efforts, it is suggested that they look into global best practices and consider reducing the vulnerability of Pacific workers by making the relationship between the employer and the migrant workers less imbalanced.

Some suggestions on how to increase seasonal work scheme participation among workers from countries that have so far largely missed out (Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu) are discussed above. One strategy to assist the atoll countries of Kiribati and Tuvalu, which are most threatened by climate change and have higher transport costs to Australia and New Zealand, would be to factor vulnerability to climate change or to natural disasters into the selection process for the RSE, SWP, and PLS. Alternatively, it may be time to accept that Australia and New Zealand need to give preferential access to Kiribati and Tuvaluan migrants (Kagan, 2015; see also Kelman, 2015).

Another weak area of the seasonal schemes is their gender imbalance. As discussed in chapter 3, Kiribati has achieved a large proportion of women participants; while in most PICs, women make up only a small proportion of seasonal workers.

There are several areas in which Pacific Island governments can contribute to reducing the vulnerability of their workers, including through improved pre-departure training and increased reintegration assistance for returnees.

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

Pacific Island governments could lobby for including opportunities for seasonal and temporary workers in Australia and New Zealand to change employers, with the view of reducing workers' dependence and vulnerability. There are examples of best practices in the world.

The Kiribati and Tuvalu governments could lobby for the consideration of "vulnerability to climate change or natural disasters" in the selection process for the RSE, SWP, and PLS, giving workers from these countries a small advantage.

Regarding women's participation in seasonal work schemes, PICs could try to understand and replicate good practices from Kiribati in order to increase the proportion of women participating in the schemes.

Regarding improving labour governance in origin countries, research studies could determine what kind(s) of reintegration assistance for returned workers would be most useful (e.g., training, micro-credits, savings schemes, or others) to assist returned workers to build sustainable livelihoods in their island countries without the need to return to Australia or New Zealand for many seasons. This would then limit the negative social impacts of repeated absences on themselves and their families, and would create opportunities for newcomers to participate in seasonal work schemes.

Moving to new destination countries and into new occupational areas

Given that the RSE, SWP, and PLS are demand-driven, and therefore subject to constraints on the number of workers that will be recruited each year, it is important that other possible regional markets are considered as an outlet for all skill levels of Pacific workers. Many Pacific Islanders have looked for and found opportunities on an individual basis (Fijian security officers and Pacific rugby players were mentioned earlier). However, there is potential for Pacific Island governments to become actively involved, such as by dissemination information about opportunities and negotiating access through BLAs or MOUs with destination countries. Kiribati, for instance, has signed an MOU with Taiwan, China, that opens the possibility of labour migration in specific occupation areas, but no movement has taken place as of yet.

A first step would be to instigate a public debate involving social partners regarding the preferred levels and type of labour migration that is desirable in all PICs. The debate should take into account the economic benefits for the migrants, communities, and sending countries, as well as the potentially adverse social and economic impacts of migration.

Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages associated with labour migration, PIC governments can then make informed decisions on the desired level of migration. Moreover, strategies have to be developed to ensure migrant workers' rights overseas, especially as these are threatened by increasing competition among labour-sending countries. The Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM) is currently the best forum for high-level regional discussions on labour migration, and could be used to discuss fundamental issues, including the overall desired level of migration.

At present, national development strategies in the PICS do not pay sufficient attention to the issue of international migration, and there is a need for institutional strengthening to address this.

Generally, however, awareness among governments has increased with regard to potential opportunities in non-traditional destinations (Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan (China), and others) and potential opportunities in a variety of semi-skilled and skilled occupations (aged care, hospitality and tourism, trades-based occupations, including in construction). This information has to

be disseminated to potential jobseekers. A good example in this regard is a guide on finding overseas employment for I-Kiribati graduates that was developed by the ILO (2015) and provides basic information that will help young I-Kiribati understand some of the steps that are required to find a job overseas. The focus of the guide is on skilled migration, particularly to Australia and New Zealand, where the rules of immigration can be complicated. The guide also provides information on labour migration to the Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Taiwan (China), where there may be job opportunities for I-Kiribati workers.

After identifying overseas employment opportunities, training efforts have to be concentrated in areas of overseas labour demand, including hospitality/tourism, aged care, and construction. Adopting educational and training standards that are in line with those of the main destination countries and introducing internationally recognized qualifications are important steps that could increase migration opportunities. Skills training for export should be focused on skill areas that are also potentially useful at home, so that when migrants return home their skills can be used.

Recommendation for Pacific Island governments:

PIC governments in collaboration with the ILO could instigate a public debate involving social partners over the preferred levels and types of labour migration in all PICs.

After determining the preferred levels and types of labour migration, Pacific Island governments could become more active in gathering and disseminating information on potential labour migration opportunities in non-traditional destinations and new occupational areas. They could proactively negotiate BLAs/MOUs with potential destination countries.

After identifying overseas employment opportunities, training efforts have to be concentrated in areas of labour demand.

Recommendations for the ILO:

Given its global experience, the ILO could provide important technical support to PIC governments in their identification of overseas employment opportunities and their negotiations with destination countries.

The guide on overseas employment for I-Kiribati (ILO, 2015) represents good practice, and similar guides could be developed either for individual PICs or for the region as a whole. Guides could focus on skilled work (as in the case of Kiribati) or could also include semi- and low-skilled work.

Increasing understanding of the social impacts of migration

The social impacts especially of temporary and seasonal migration are not as well understood as the economic impacts and require research.

A particular case is that of Fijian private military/security labour migration, where the negative social and psychological effects are often particularly severe and where further research is needed to identify the impacts of such migration at the community and societal levels.

Another group of migrant workers that is particularly vulnerable are migrant domestic workers. Their rights at work and their general human rights are frequently violated for a number of reasons, including: the isolation of their workplaces; domestic work not being included under labour legislation in most destination countries; and the low level of education of domestic workers. Although the number of Pacific Islander migrant domestic workers is small in comparison to the number of migrant domestic workers in other parts of the world (such as migrants from Africa and Asia moving to the

Middle East), given potential violations of their work rights and human rights, it is important to gain a better understanding of the flows of migrant domestic workers from and within the PIC region. Very limited research has been done on migrant domestic workers from the Pacific, and very little information can therefore be found. It appears that most Pacific Islander migrants in domestic work are caregivers. These include flows from Fiji to the United States (which include undocumented migrants who have overstayed their visas), and intra-Pacific flows such as from Fiji to the Cook Islands.

The area of domestic work merits particular attention because it is one of few areas where women can find employment and migrate independently. As such, it is important to understand more about these flows and whether there are cases where the rights of women migrants have been violated.

Recommendations for the ILO:

Given the lack of understanding of the social impacts of seasonal and temporary migration on migrants, their families, and their communities, the ILO could commission research into this area.

The particularly severe impacts of the migration of Fijian private military/security officers also warrants in-depth research that could be organized by the ILO.

Given the ILO's expertise in working in the area of protecting women migrant domestic workers, including through legislation and policy advice, a first step would be to conduct a comprehensive research study on migrant domestic workers from Pacific Islands, as there currently is little knowledge about them.

Collecting consistent labour migration data to ensure evidence-based policy-making

According to the ILO, ensuring accurate data on aspects of labour migration, including flows of migrants and the costs of recruitment and of sending remittances, is an important mechanism for devising and implementing targeted policies to protect the rights of migrant workers. In December 2014, the ILO launched the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) database for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. The ILMS database in ASEAN gathers together all official government data sources on international migrant workers within the region, as well as on ASEAN nationals living or working abroad. In the PIC region, a lot of migration data are available, but are not necessarily stored centrally. For instance, Papua New Guinea's DLIR maintains a huge database on migrant workers (i.e., work permit holders) in Papua New Guinea, but these data are not publicly available. Similarly, the immigration departments of many PICs gather data on arrivals and departures, but these data are not available to researchers and are often not analysed adequately.

Therefore, at present one of the most limiting factors in migration data management is analysis and reporting. There are substantial amounts of collected data that are not analysed, and few reports are compiled from these data. If all these data were analysed and published, the overall understanding of migration flows in the region would be enhanced.

Recommendations for the ILO:

Using the ILMS template from the ASEAN region, it is recommended that ILO develop a similar database for the Pacific region.

In addition, the ILO could provide technical support to line ministries in the PICs (Labour, Immigration) to enable them to make better use of the data that is collected by these ministries.

Increasing intra-Pacific labour migration and localizing selected positions

At present, many skill gaps within the Pacific region are filled by foreign workers from outside the region, with a particularly large foreign workforces in Papua New Guinea, Palau, and the Cook Islands. This indicates that other PICs have not been able to take advantage of opportunities where they present themselves within the region. If more training were directed into areas of demand – tourism/hospitality, mining, construction, forestry – Pacific Islanders would be in a better position to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves within the region.

In addition, there is some potential to replace foreign workers within the region either by local workers or by workers from other PICs, although this has to be done with a high degree of caution to ensure that the quality of work does not suffer. In Palau, limiting the presence of foreign workers has become a key component of Palauan labour law (ILO, 2017b). In 2014, 4,330 foreign workers accounted for 41.7 per cent of total employment in Palau.

In Papua New Guinea, the Work Permit System has functioned well, even during the height of the LNG construction boom. Employers were able to import skilled workers, and the LNG priority line within the DLIR for work permit applications meant that the process was relatively quick (Voigt-Graf, 2016b). However, the Work Permit System has not achieved its stated objective of ensuring skills transfer from non-citizens to Papua New Guineans. Moreover, breaches of work permit regulations (such as migrant workers working in different positions than those specified in their work permits) are widespread and are particularly rampant in remote locations, especially in the logging and mining industries (see Voigt-Graf, 2016b).

Recommendation for the ILO:

The ILO could commission research into the labour markets of the main Pacific migrant-receiving countries (Cook Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea) to explore opportunities: (a) for localization; and (b) for Pacific Islanders from neighbouring countries taking up these positions rather than migrants from more distant countries.

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Relevant international Conventions and national policies

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ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)

ILO Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86)

ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)

ILO Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151)

ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, 2006

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990

ILO General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment, and Definition of recruitment fees and related costs, 2019

Kiribati National Labour Migration Policy, 2015

Samoa Labour Migration Policy, 2015

Tuvalu National Labour Migration Policy, 2015

