



HMCCC Stories from the Ground:

From Relocation to Dignity

Embedding Participation in Voluntary Planned Relocation Processes

The Reality of Planned Relocation in Fiji

In Fiji, planned relocation has already become a reality for communities facing the impacts of climate change. These processes are not only logistically complex, but profoundly affect people's lives, identities, and connections to land. The HMCCC Programme supported the government in developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Voluntary Planned Relocation that guide future relocations in a structured, inclusive, and most importantly dignified way for affected communities.

Learning from Past Experiences

To ensure these principles are translated into practice, trainings were conducted for government officials involved in relocation. These sessions created a space not only to introduce the SOPs, but also to reflect openly on past experiences and their impacts. During one training, a previous relocation case before the development of the SOPs was discussed in depth. The affected community reported that they had not been included properly, and their cultural protocol had been overstepped. The absence of agency left the community feeling disempowered and distressed.

The discussion made visible how decisions made under pressure, especially in the context of sudden onset climate events, can unintentionally overlook critical social and cultural dimensions. For one government officer who had been directly involved in an earlier relocation, this reflection became a turning point. He stated:

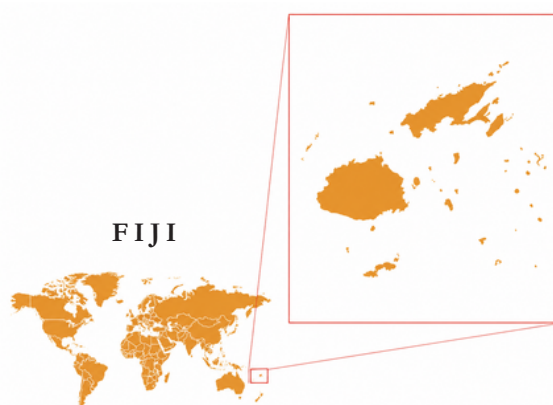
"That was really eye opening. I finally understood what we did wrong during that relocation and why it was wrong and what effect it had on the people and the community as a whole."

This statement demonstrated a strong willingness to learn and explore why different, more participatory and culturally sensitive approaches are essential.

Strengthening Resilience through Proper Relocation

Rather than justifying past decisions, the officer embraced the opportunity to reflect and carry these insights forward. This moment captures a key strength of the HMCCC approach: acknowledging that how relocation is done matters as much as the relocation itself. When done poorly, it can exacerbate vulnerability. When done well, it can support communities in navigating difficult transitions with dignity and strengthen their resilience.

Looking ahead, these shared learning processes are helping to ensure that future relocations are not only more effective, but also more inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the needs of communities.



This factsheet presents implementation experiences from the GIZ Global Programme Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change