



POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE MIGRATION ON NZ HOST FAMILIES

July 2009

FAMILY CENTRE, MINISTRY OF PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS,
DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

MPIA

Pacific migration is not about an individual

I am not an individual,

I am an integral part of the cosmos.

**I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas
and the skies.**

I am not an individual because

I share tofi with my family, my village, and my nation.

I belong to my family and my family belongs to me.

I belong to my village and my village belongs to me.

I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me.

This is the essence of my sense of belonging

(Tamasese Efi Tui Atua Tupua, cited: Tamasese, Peteru & Waldegrave, 1997)

Positive settlement outcomes

- *“that’s the other dream here, to bring the others we left behind..to come here for a better life”*
- *“the first person to arrive in NZ – that person will bring John and John will bring Mary and Mary will bring David and carry on and on”*
- *“one journeys from one’s home to create another home where one sources blessings of secure employment, increased earning power, increased educational achievement etc in order to share these with one’s kin at home in the Pacific”*
- *“earning sufficient income to return home”*

Host families provide support

- Before families leave through arranging travel, immigration details
 - *“it’s easier to get to heaven than jump on a plane to here”*
 - *“I got together with my cousins and we started paying to bring our other brothers and sisters and cousins to New Zealand”*
- And to families at home in the Pacific
 - *“we help our people at home building their houses and help them educate them at home as well”*

On arrival

- Sharing houses, finding (or giving) jobs, introduction to networks, social support, providing food, helping with clothing, furniture
- *“we provide transport, we provide clothing, we provide bedding”*
- *“we do help them to pay their fees for an extension and to convert from a visitors permit to a work permit”*
- *“we advise them not to go to finance companies”*

Migrant families become host families

- Supporting migrant families is part of a culture of reciprocity
- *“you reap what you sow”*
- *“we have helped settle so many people..and they in turn have hosted others”*
- *“with each person or family we settle, we have enlarged our aiga support. They in turn host their own relatives and the cycle goes on”*
- *“share accommodation, legalize stay, save money, move into own accommodation”*

There are costs



- *“they came after cyclone Heta and families were expected to take care of their families. They forgot our people need to live somewhere, need to pay rent, get to hospital, pay to see doctors. There was no emergency benefit here to help us when we came after Heta.”*

Economic costs



- Increased weekly costs from 30-60% of weekly income
- Sharing resources and jobs –
- *“the other girl worked where they make bedding so that was how I got plenty of bedding”*

Social costs

- *“one family per bedroom in a three bedroom house”*
- *“we came and lived with her brother in Otara. At the time it was three to four families at the same time”*
- *“I was the older one – I had to work – I didn’t want to. I wanted to go to school but my father said I had to work”*

Support

- Churches play a key role
- *“the importance of the church as a place of connection and a place that would ground me. It is also a place where my beliefs are nurtured”*
- *“Basically we get our culture training through our church gatherings”*

Challenges

- Language barriers – *“our children help settle our kin from home by being interpreters”*
- Maintenance of languages and culture - *“our cultures change here in NZ. There is the influence of western culture..”*
- Youth – *“some of our youth succumb to the dominant culture of individualism”*

Considerations

- Notions of home – what are the implications and support needs if ‘home’ is no longer there
- Support – *“when the government brought them here they made them work in very cold, cold, cold place”*
- Regard transitional challenges as opportunities for learning and growth
- A Pacific friendly approach
- Reducing impacts on host families

Potential impacts

- Host families face some strong demographic, social and economic challenges:
- earn on average substantially less
- have lower rates of home ownership, poorer living standards and higher rates of preventable illness and death
- are more often employed in low-skilled and low-paid jobs
- 42% live in the most deprived areas of the country

Housing – a key challenge

- March 2009
 - 2398 Pacific people on the HNZC waiting list for a State home.
 - 22.6% of the total waiting list - up 15% since March 2008
 - 50% of the South Auckland waiting list (June 2008)
- In Census 2006
 - 43% lived in households requiring extra bedrooms
 - 46% of Pacific children under 15 years lived in crowded households (28 % of Māori, 22% of Asian and 8% of European children)

Ministry Key Roles and Functions

Minister of
Pacific Island
Affairs

Government
agencies
&
stakeholders

MPIA

Pacific
communities

Flagship
Projects

MPIA