Nature-based solutions in Pacific urban environments

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UN ESCAP expert group meeting
1) Research Professor in urban climate resilience at RMIT since 2009.

2) Research interests focus on the intersection of climate change, DRR, and rapid urbanisation.

3) Involves close working with informal settlements and local civil society groups.

4) Leads a large multi-disciplinary team and have been working in Melanesia since 2014.

5) The main current programme of work is ‘Climate Resilient Honiara’, funded by the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund and administered by UN-Habitat (2019 – present).
The CRH programme involves projects at city, ward, and community scales.

**Community level (5 settlements):**
1) Climate action plans.
2) Community profiles (surveys, integrated with geospatial maps and analysis).
3) Climate resilient community development plans.
4) Local engineering interventions (flood protection, drainage, water and sanitation, and waste management).
5) Inclusive, disaster resilient, housing.
6) Community awareness raising and capacity building.
Ward / city level NbS:

1) Student design studios: conceptual designs for NbS at landscape and site-specific scales.

2) NbS workshops with local students and GIS training workshops with government officials to build local capacity.

3) Run community workshops to co-produce NbS designs informed by local knowledge (such as a linear park along the Mataniko River).

4) Detailed designs for an Urban Greening Master Plan for Honiara.
Other Honiara projects

1) Inclusive and disaster resilient shelter guide (Habitat for Humanity).
2) Women, urban gardens, and local food security (SPC Pacific Community).
3) NbS for enhanced climate resilience and community wellbeing in informal settlements (SIDA).
Koa Hill:

1) Koa Hill informal settlement highly vulnerable to flooding and landslides.
2) Importantly, project was led by local project partners, including staff and students from the national university.
3) 3 months of face to face engagement to actively engage community members, raise awareness of NbS, and build trust prior to implementation, resulting in ‘whole of community’ involvement.
4) Local workshops to identify priorities and co-produce NbS actions.
5) 4 pilots were chosen: a community urban garden (plus plant nursery), riverine flood protection (vetiver grass and bamboo), and two sites for landslide mitigation.
6) Training workshop on how to propagate vetiver grass for longer term sustainability.
1. NbS can reduce disaster risk (landslide and flood mitigation), support climate adaptation (community garden for local food security), provide sustainable livelihoods (plant nursery), and contribute to settlement upgrading and community wellbeing.

2. NbS are more affordable than hard interventions and therefore more accessible to poorer urban communities (materials and training).

3. NbS can re-instil a sense of self-determination, community cohesiveness, and sense of pride in the place they call home – ‘Together as a strong community, we can save our life and our future generations through NbS’.
NbS in the urban environment: lessons learnt

1. A lengthy period of committed engagement prior to implementation led to widespread community buy in and a sense of ownership.

2. Inclusive planning, co-production, and implementation of actions allowed for local and traditional knowledge to inform actions, mobilised a ‘whole of community’ programme of actions, and enhanced the community’s satisfaction with the outcomes of the project.

3. Showcasing the project outcomes to other informal communities can act as a catalyst for action.

4. Small scale, community-led, NbS initiatives in cities can have multiple benefits for residents, and should be supported by international and regional funders. This includes accounting for preparation activities (before), monitoring and evaluation (after), and assessments need to acknowledge the ‘Pacific Way’ and how local people value their local environment.
New projects 2023-24

New CRH projects (2023 - 24):
1) Local disaster plans, and community training on resilient housing.
2) Install water tanks (led by NGO).
3) NbS drainage upgrades (4 informal settlements).
4) Gender responsive DRR (learnings from the impact of Covid-19).
5) Urban gardening best practice.
6) Climate risk communication (comics, women, and people with disabilities).
7) Designs for Urban Greening Master Plan.
8) Governance mechanisms for addressing cross-border resilience challenges (HCC and Guadalcanal province).
9) Technical support for the 5-year review of the Local Planning Scheme.
10) Gender and land rights.
11) Urban climate action planning: training with ward councillors.
12) Short professional course (SIG).
13) Knowledge transfer platform.
YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION 2022

Seeking Honiara’s Artists

Do you have creative talent and want to help communities adapt to climate change? Enter this artist’s competition to help create comic-style story books for climate change.

STAGE 1
- Apply to be part of the artist’s competition workshop (email: harryjames602@gmail.com).
- Selected participants will attend a 2-hour workshop facilitated by the RMIT team. This will be held at Honiara City Council Youth Hub on the 23rd August at 2pm.
- First hour: explanation of the project and the activities; second hour: individual participants will sketch a partial storyboard as directed by the RMIT team. Drawing materials will be provided and travel costs will be paid at the end of the workshop. All participants will receive a workshop certificate.

STAGE 2
- The winner(s) of the competition, as judged by the RMIT team, will be contracted from Sep - Dec to create the artwork for a climate change comic book. Maximum 4 winners, comprising a mix of male and female entrants.
- The comic books will be promoted in the Solomon Islands and internationally.

THE WINNER(S) WILL BE PAID A DAILY RATE FOR A 3-MONTH PERIOD TO CREATE THE ARTWORK FOR A CLIMATE CHANGE COMIC BOOK.