Outer Islands Study: Migration

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Migration and development

- **Migration is a rational economic strategy.** Households and individuals move to where there are economic opportunities – both between nations, and within nations.

- **Such movement is a central part of the development process.** The movement from low productivity jobs to high productivity jobs increases incomes.
  - In the USA, for example, 40% of the labour force was employed in the agriculture sector in 1900 (often in jobs with low levels of productivity and income). Today just 2% of the labour force works in agriculture.

- **Migration in the Pacific takes the form of movement from:**
  (i) rural to urban areas, and
  (ii) islands/regions that are more remote and have smaller populations to those that are less remote and have larger populations/markets.
Migration within PICs is occurring rapidly

Population annual growth rate (%)

- RMI (1999-2011)
- Solomon Islands (1999-2009)
- Vanuatu (2009-2016)
- Tonga (2006-2016)
- Tuvalu (2002-2012)

National
Main island
Migrants move to islands where there is economic opportunity and incomes are higher
Migrants move to less remote islands

Migration (% last 10 years) vs. Index of remoteness (higher values = more remote).
Migration affects population structures

RMI (2011 Census)
Majuro and Kwajalein

RMI (2011 Census)
Outer islands
Migration affects population structures

Note the missing middle – people of working age migrate to islands with job opportunities

RMI (2011 Census)
Majuro and Kwajalein

RMI (2011 Census)
Outer islands

Male  Female
0 - 4
5 - 9
10 - 14
15 - 19
20 - 24
25 - 29
30 - 34
35 - 39
40 - 44
45 - 49
50 - 54
55 - 59
60 - 64
65 - 69
70 - 74
75 - over

Note the missing middle – people of working age migrate to islands with job opportunities
Migration will continue in the future, given inequalities in economic opportunity.
It will be highest in countries where economic opportunities in outer islands are limited

Tuvalu population projection

- Funafuti
- Outer Islands (w/o migration)
- Outer Islands (w/ migration)

[Graph showing population projections for Funafuti and Outer Islands with and without migration from 1979 to 2052]
... and in countries with rapid population growth

Vanuatu population projection

TORBA (w/o migration)  SANMA (w/o migration)  PENAMA (w/o migration)  MALAMPA (w/o migration)  SHEFA (w/o migration)  TAFEA (w/o migration)  TORBA (w/ migration)  SANMA (w/ migration)  PENAMA (w/ migration)  MALAMPA (w/ migration)  SHEFA (w/ migration)  TAFEA (w/ migration)

Shefa
Fiji
What should be done?

- **Policy makers should not be aiming to stop such migration.** Movement to areas where there is economic opportunity increases incomes, both for migrants and the economy as a whole. Migration is a natural part of the development process.

- **However, policy-makers should focus on improving service delivery** in outer islands, in order to ensure that migrants are moving in pursuit of economic opportunities and not due to lack of services in their islands of origin.

- **This should not come at the expense of services for migrants** in main islands / urban and peri-urban areas. Failure to provide services to migrant communities limits the contribution they can make to the economy, and can lead to social issues.

- **Better linking outer islands with main islands** can reduce regional inequalities and increase economic opportunities in outer islands.
Thank you
Additional graphs for Q&A
Migration within PICs is occurring rapidly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>2002-2012</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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</table>
Marshall Islands

RMI population projection

- Majuro and Kwajalein (w/o migration)
- Other (w/o migration)
- Majuro and Kwajalein (w/ migration)
- Other (w/ migration)
Solomon Islands population projection

Honiara and Guadalcanal (w/o migration)  Other (w/o migration)  Honiara and Guadalcanal (w/ migration)  Other (w/ migration)

Guadalcanal island