

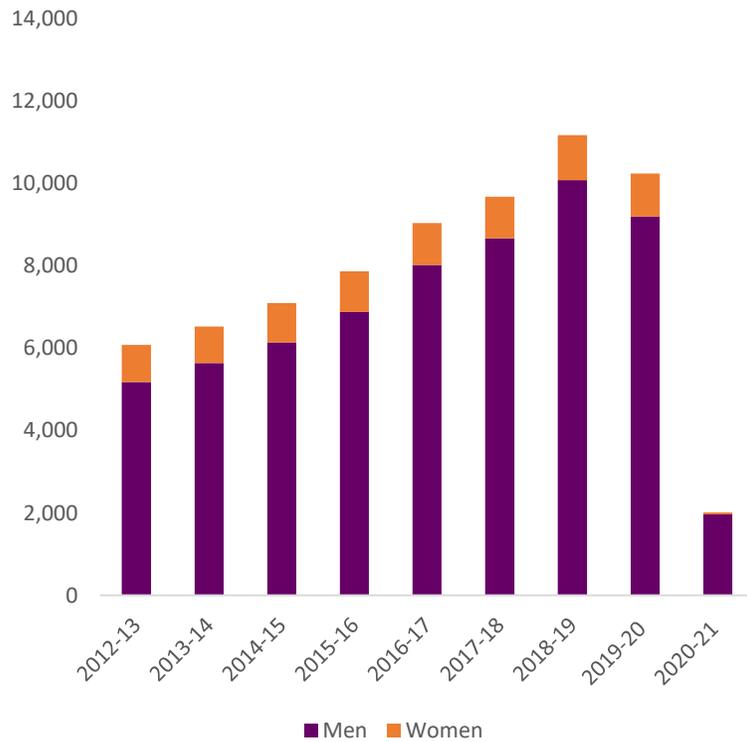


The Gendered and Social Impacts of Labour Mobility in Pacific Island Countries

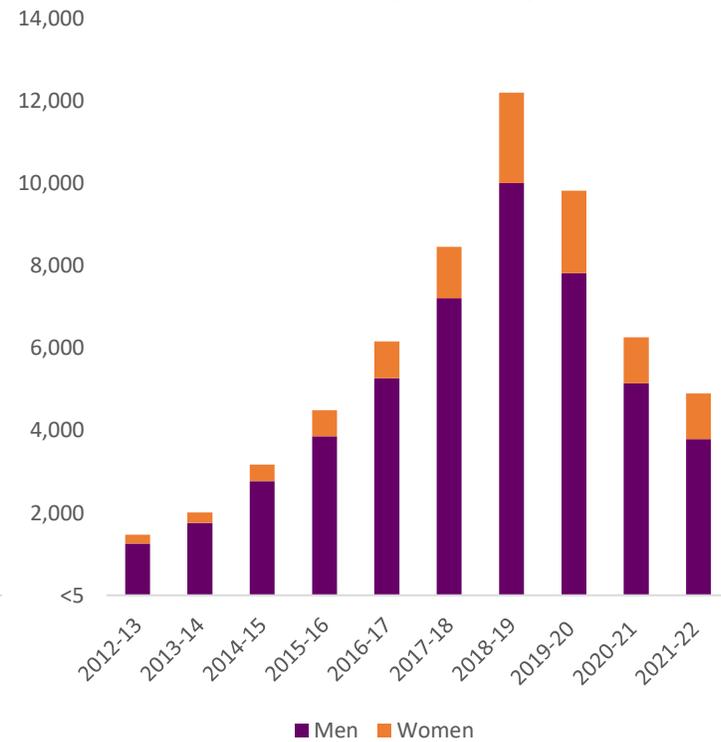
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Participation in Pacific Labour Mobility Schemes by Gender

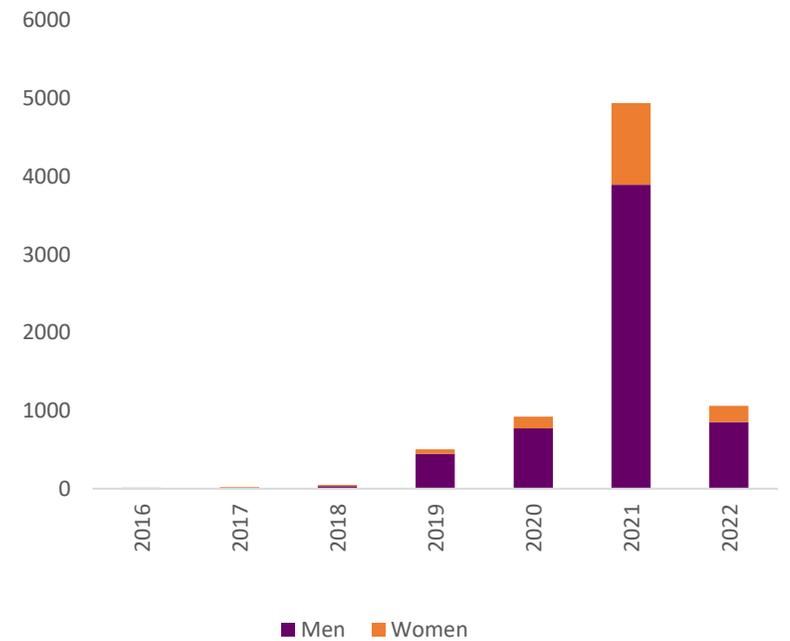
New Zealand's RSE (2012-2021)



Australia's SWP (2012-2021)



Australia's PLS (2016-2021)





Why should Pacific women participate in labour mobility?

Gender inequality is high in the PICs and women have lower labour force participation than men.

Global evidence demonstrates positive impacts of female migration including:

- Improved self-worth and self-esteem via contributing to household finances.
- Increased entrepreneurship.
- Increased bargaining power in household decision making.
- Increased land ownership.
- May also lead to delayed marriage and extended periods of schooling.



Objectives of Study

To explore the impacts of temporary labour migration from PICs to Australia and New Zealand on migrants, their partners and families.

Scope of research:

- Enablers and barriers of women's participation in temporary migration programs.
- Positive and negative impacts of women's/men's participation in temporary migration programs.
- Perspectives from employers on factors that affect the recruitment of female and male seasonal migrant workers and their experiences.

Gender-Centred Ecological Framework

DEMAND-SIDE

PIC actors involved in the recruitment process of seasonal workers.

Australian and New Zealand actors involved in the recruitment process of seasonal workers

At each level of the ecosystem (individual, household, community, societal and institutional, which is cross-cutting), we will answer the question: 'how does gender influence opportunities, impacts and decision making in temporary mobility'.

PARTICIPATION
IN TEMPORARY
LABOUR
MIGRATION

SUPPLY-SIDE

Individual (personal characteristics)

Household

Community

Macro

Research Sample

Location of interviews	Women who participated in SWP/RSE	Partners or family members of female LM participants	Women who did not participate in LM	Partners or family members of women who did not participate in LM	Men who participated in LM	Partners/family members of men who participated in LM	Key Community Informants	Key informants involved in recruitment	Total	
Kiribati	TOTAL	12	7	10	8	11	13	4	0	65
	URBAN	9	7	7	5	9	11	1		
	RURAL	3	0	3	3	2	2	3		
Tonga	TOTAL	36	27	18	18	36	24	9	4	172
	URBAN	12	11	6	6	12	8	6		
	RURAL	24	16	12	12	24	16	3		
Vanuatu	TOTAL	36	22	21	16	35	29	12	5	176
	URBAN	17	10	10	6	10	12	3		
	RURAL	19	12	11	10	25	17	9		
Australia (Current PLS workers)		15	0	0	0	14	0	0		29
Employers in Australia and New Zealand									8	8
Total		99	56	49	42	96	66	25	17	452



Enablers and Barriers to Participation

Individual level

- Personal attributes including education, language skills, access to information and finance (men and women).
- Women's motivation to participate primarily linked to helping family. Men were more interested in excitement of travel and earning money.
- Marital status: participation was more accessible and acceptable for single women.
 - Women more interested in travel if accompanied by family.
 - Deterred from participating by concerns over family separation.

Enablers and Barriers to Participation

Household and community level

- Encouragement and support of immediate household was critical to women's participation.
 - Support from community leaders also important.
- Wider social and cultural norms about role of women discouraged their participation.





Enablers and Barriers to Participation

Institutional level

- Access to information
 - Community forums (men), other female participants (women).
- Predeparture process timely and expensive (men and women).
- Gender bias in recruitment favours men.
 - Physical fitness tests, perception that recruiters 'only want men', physical attributes (e.g. height in some industries).
 - Concerns over pregnancy (medical insurance).
 - BUT many employers recognise value of employing women.



Enablers and Barriers to Participation

Institutional level

- Accommodation
 - Employer difficulties in providing.
 - Women feel unsafe in mixed accommodation.
 - Men do not like 'temptation' of mixed accommodation.
- Contracts too inflexible and lengthy.

Impacts of Participation

Individual level

- Improved living standards (men and women).
 - Disaster resilience via improved housing.
 - Small business establishment.
- Increased control of income and household decision making (some women).
 - But ingrained belief among some women that men should be 'in control'.
- Women considered better at managing finances than men.
- Increased workloads for those at home (but no complaints).



Impacts of Participation

Individual level

- New skills learned (men and women).
- Increased self confidence, self esteem, agency and independence (women).
 - Ability to leave abusive relationships (Vanuatu).
- Gender violence?
 - Reluctant to discuss within own community.
- Homesickness while away (women).
 - Exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdowns.
 - Weakened relationships with children (mainly women).





Impacts of Participation

Household and Community Level

- Financial support to families and communities (men and women).
 - Women more focused on family needs than men.
- Some concerns over substance abuse (men).
- Localised labour shortages due to male absences (Vanuatu).
- Perceived loss of *kastom* (culture) in Vanuatu.
 - Linked to increased reliance on imported foods.

Impacts of Participation

Household and community level

- In some cases, strengthened family relationships.
 - Decreased financial stress.
 - Regular communication while worker is away.
- Sharing of domestic responsibilities when women migrate (Tonga and Kiribati).
- Family breakdown.
 - Affairs more problematic when women have them.



Emerging Policy Themes

- Expand range of employment sectors to address gender bias in hiring.
 - Recent expansion of industries eligible for SWP under PALM.
- Encourage family friendly approaches.
 - Recent announcement by ALP that families may be able to accompany workers.
- Community level awareness raising around benefits of women's participation.
 - *Famili i redi* program sponsored by IOM in Vanuatu.
- Address issues around accommodation.
- Facilitate access to medical insurance and health services appropriate to women.
- Important role of sending governments and LSUs in promoting female participation.
 - Increased female participation in Tonga.





Thank you