

Micro-Mobilities as Adaptive Strategies in Climate-Affected Communities in the South Pacific

Andreas Neef

**Arts, Education and Law Group
Griffith University, Brisbane,
Australia**

**IASC 2025 Regenerating the Commons
20th Biennial Conference
University of Massachusetts,
Amherst, USA, 16-20 June 2025**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

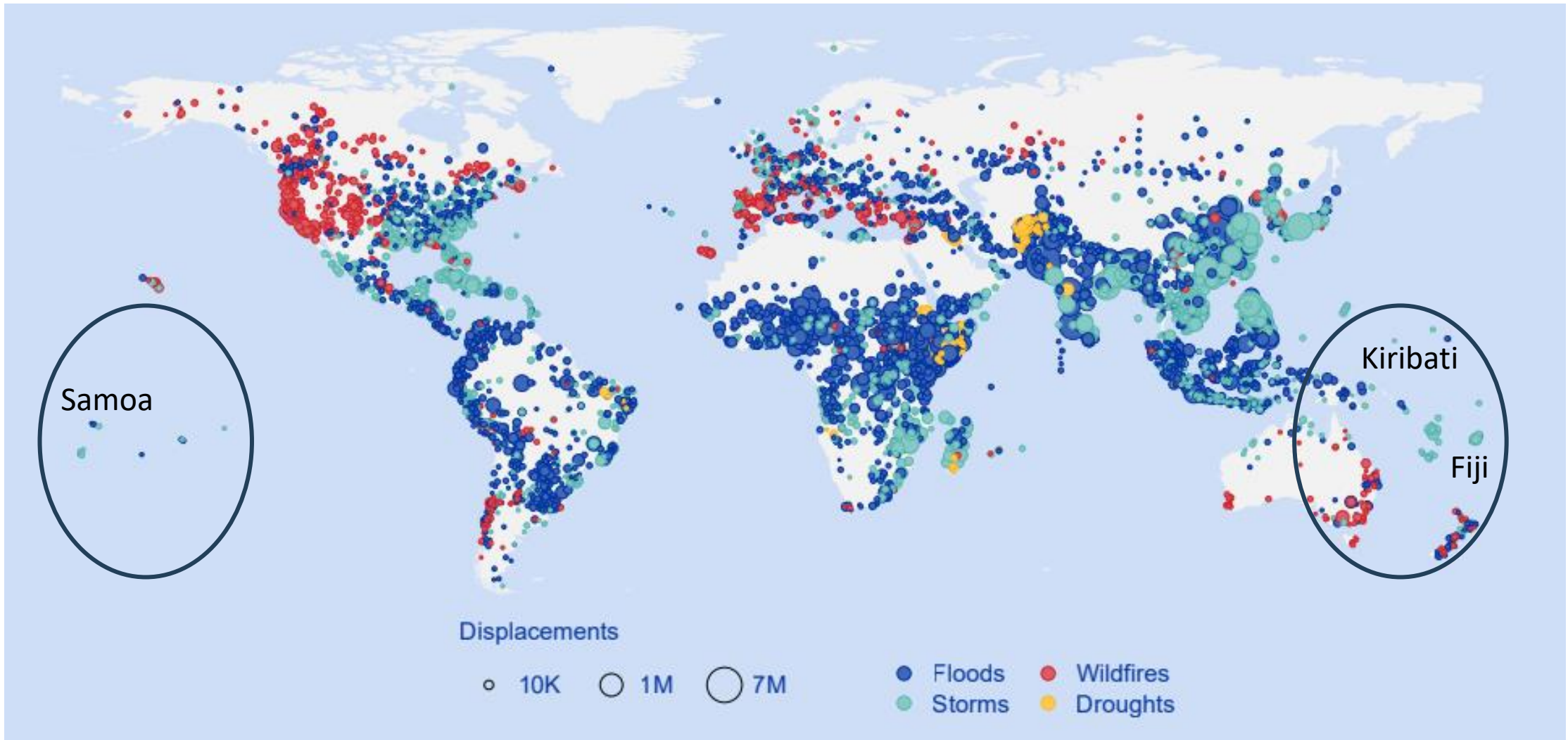
Griffith University acknowledges the people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land. We pay respect to the Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Together, Sid Domic

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Figure 2. Weather-related Internal Displacements between 2018 and 2024



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IOM (2024), based on data from IDMC

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The First ‘Climate Refugee’?

In 2015, Ioane Teitiota was deported from NZ to Kiribati after a lengthy legal battle in various courts

Mr Teitiota had (unsuccessfully) argued sea-level rise in Kiribati has resulted in "the scarcity of habitable space, which has, in turn, caused violent land disputes" that he said endangered his life, and that it made it difficult to access safe drinking water.



ABC: Rimon Rimon

➡ took his case to the UN Human Rights Committee

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The Ruling by the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC)

The HRC upheld the earlier arguments made by New Zealand’s judicial authorities that Mr. Teitiota had failed to provide sufficient evidence that he faced an “imminent risk of being arbitrarily deprived of his life when he was removed to Kiribati” and there was “no evidence that his situation is materially different from that of all other persons in Kiribati”.

“The timeframe of 10 to 15 years [...] could allow for intervening acts by the Republic of Kiribati, with the assistance of the international community, to take affirmative measures to **protect** and, where necessary, **relocate** its population.”

- ➔ **no mention of climate (in)justice**
- ➔ **no mention of colonial injustices**
- ➔ **no mention of (in)effectiveness of past adaptation measures**

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Protect how?



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Make it matter

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‘Migration in Dignity’?

Relocate where?



Kiribati’s land purchase in Fiji: does it make sense?

January 21, 2016 · 3 Comments · by James Ellsmoor, Zachary Rosen · 6 min read



In Fiji, villages need to move due to climate change

As Cyclone Gita leaves Tonga battered, neighbouring Fiji has started moving some of its villages to higher ground.

by Loes Witschge 15 Feb 2016

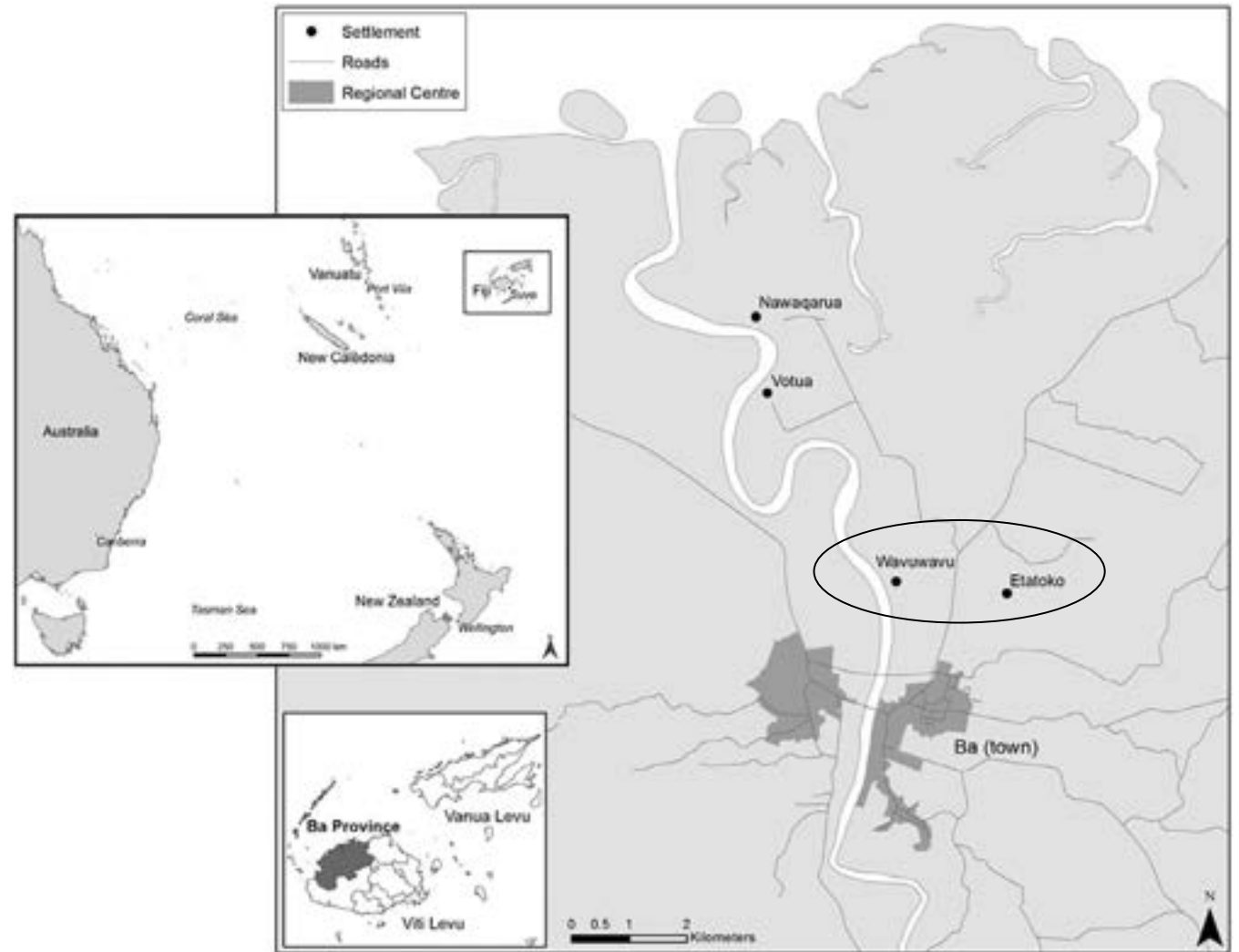


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Case Study: Etatoko in northwestern Viti Levu

Community resettled after the 2012 floods

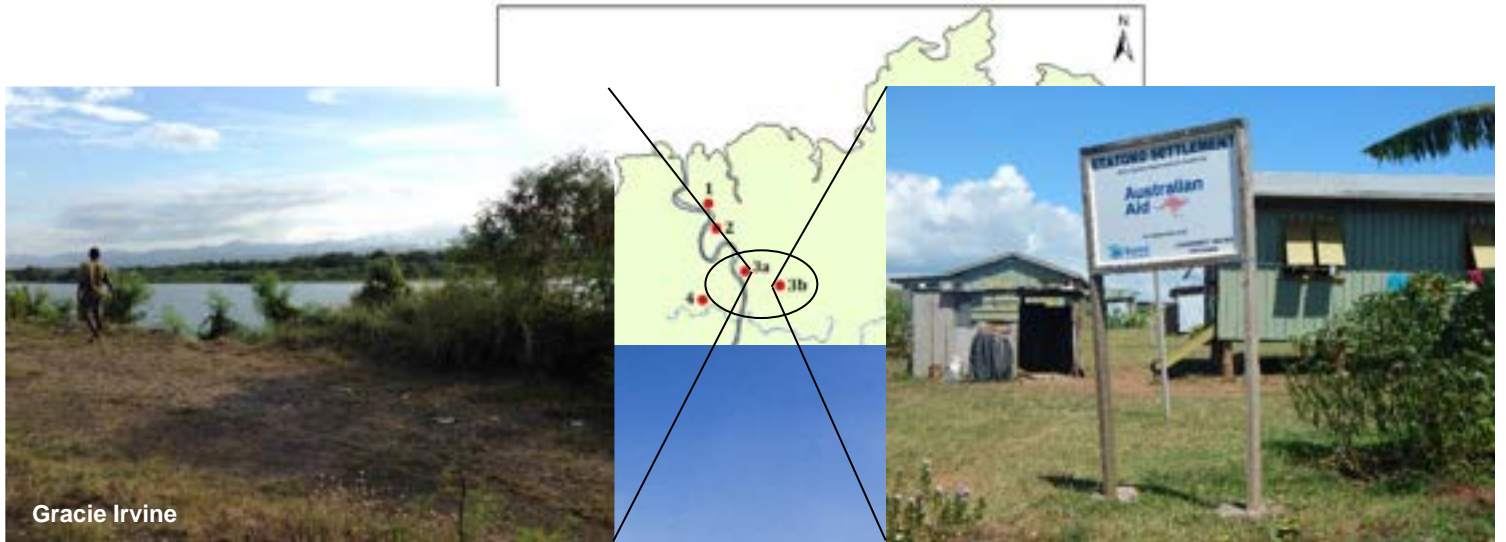


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Etatoko – 17 households relocated after their houses collapsed into the Ba River during intense flooding

Access to river and marine resources compromised; new location exposed to strong winds and drought



Gracie Irvine

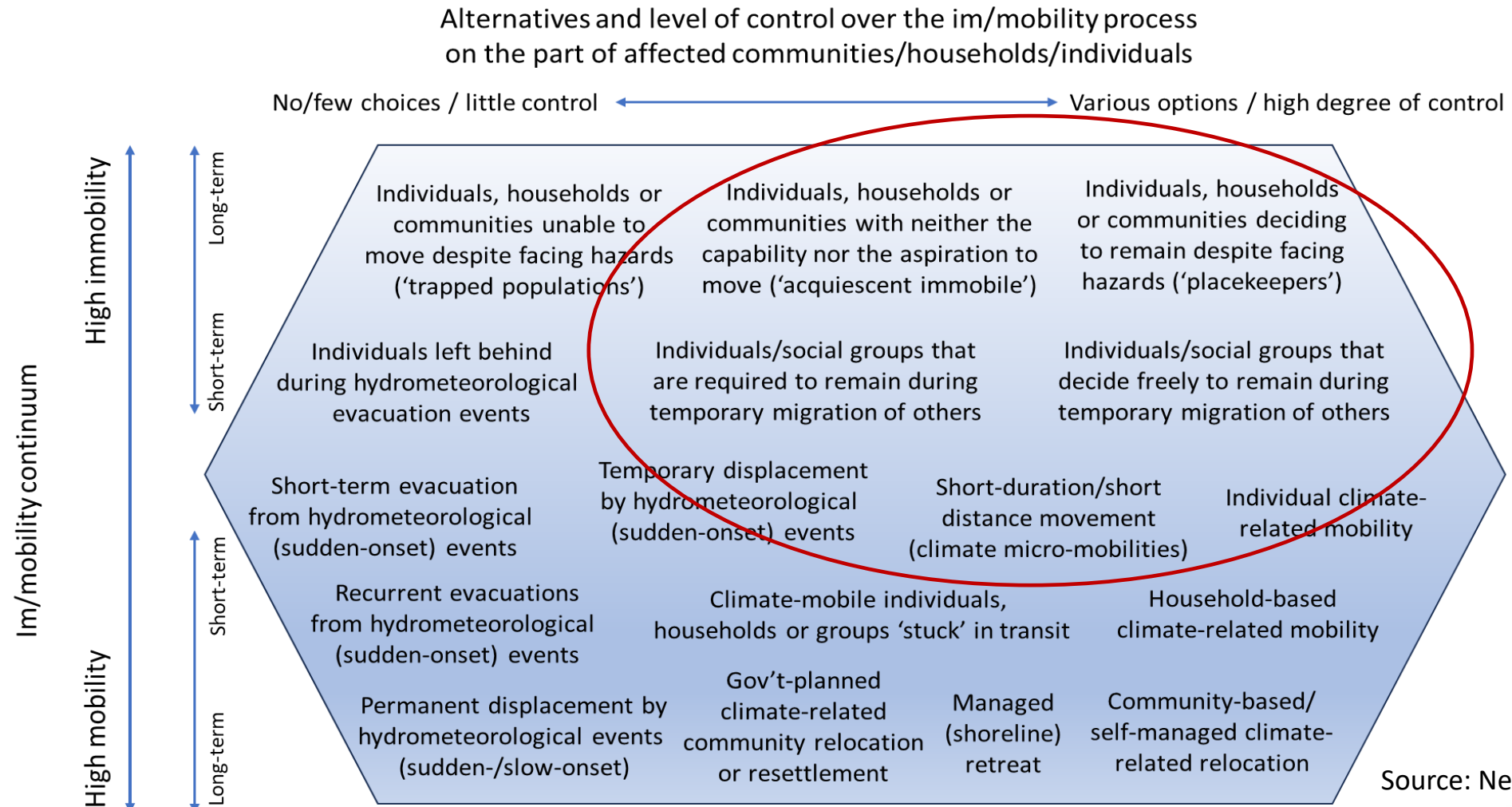


Juan Parada Diaz

“We are safer here but we miss our old location, we are too far from the river and ocean.”

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – The Right to Remain

Figure 1. The Climate Change – Human Im/mobility Continuum



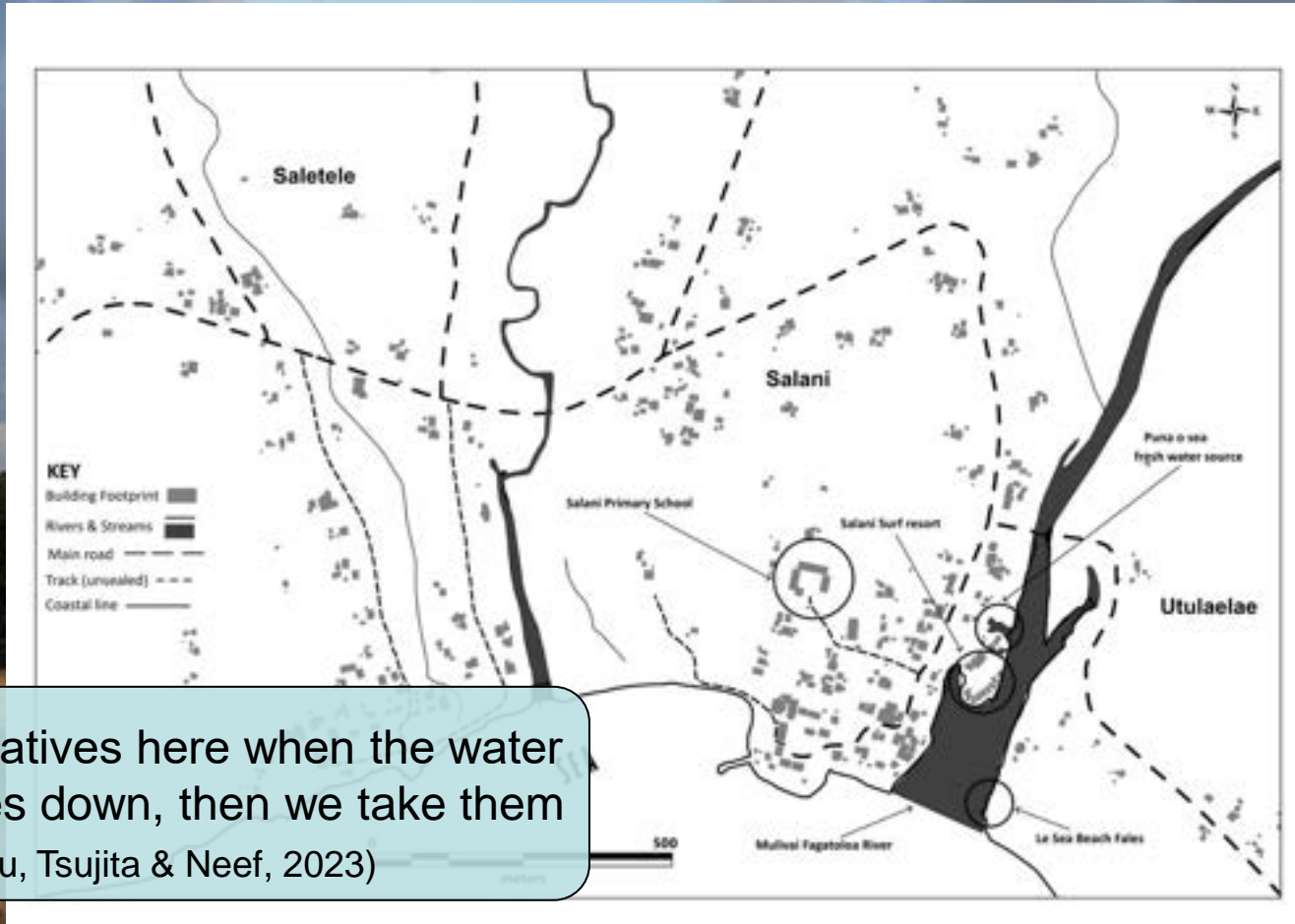
Source: Neef et al. (2024)

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Samoa's Cultural Practice of *Fa'a-āigalua* (living with two families)

“My older brother still lives at the coast but when it is close to the rainy season they come here, then afterwards they move back.”
(Latai-Niusulu, Tsujita & Neef, 2023)

“We bring our relatives here when the water floods until it goes down, then we take them back.” (Latai-Niusulu, Tsujita & Neef, 2023)



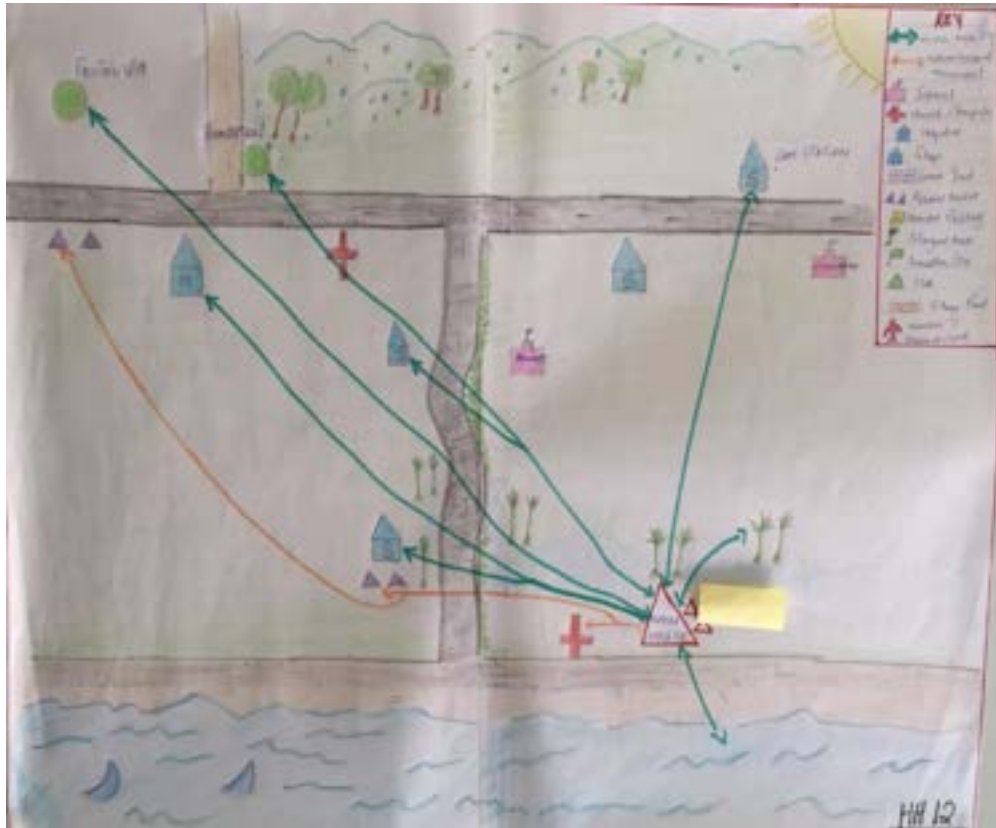
Salani



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Ongoing Research on Climate Micromobilities in Samoa and Fiji

Mobility Mapping



Q-Sort Method

Disagree -2	-1	Neutral 0	1	Agree 2
If climate change gets worse, the government should help us to relocate	Climate change will cause people in this village to move away	In times of disaster, everybody in the village can find a safe place to stay	People in this village can adapt to climate change, they don't need to move away	This land has been passed on to us by our ancestors, we should never abandon it
	The young people want to leave the village, only the older ones want to stay	In our village there is nowhere to move back to when the sea level rises	I do not want to leave this village, even if life here becomes difficult	
		Not everybody can migrate, so it's not a choice for the poor people		

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – The Right to Remain

Further research questions that need to be addressed:

What are long-term, viable alternatives to planned relocation and managed retreat in climate-risk communities in Oceania/the wider Asia-Pacific region?

Who is able to participate in adaptive mobility strategies (such as short-distance mobility and circular migration) and what are the outcomes?

What is the role of government bodies, the private sector and communities in enabling such adaptive strategies?

Who is excluded and why?

Vulnerable groups—such as those with disabilities, individuals constrained by traditional gender roles or other cultural norms — may face barriers to participation. These exclusions can leave certain individuals or groups in even more precarious situations.

Acknowledgements



UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Waipapa Taumata Rau
NEW ZEALAND



A/Prof Masami Tsujita
A/Prof Anita Latai-Niusulu

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Questions and Feedback

