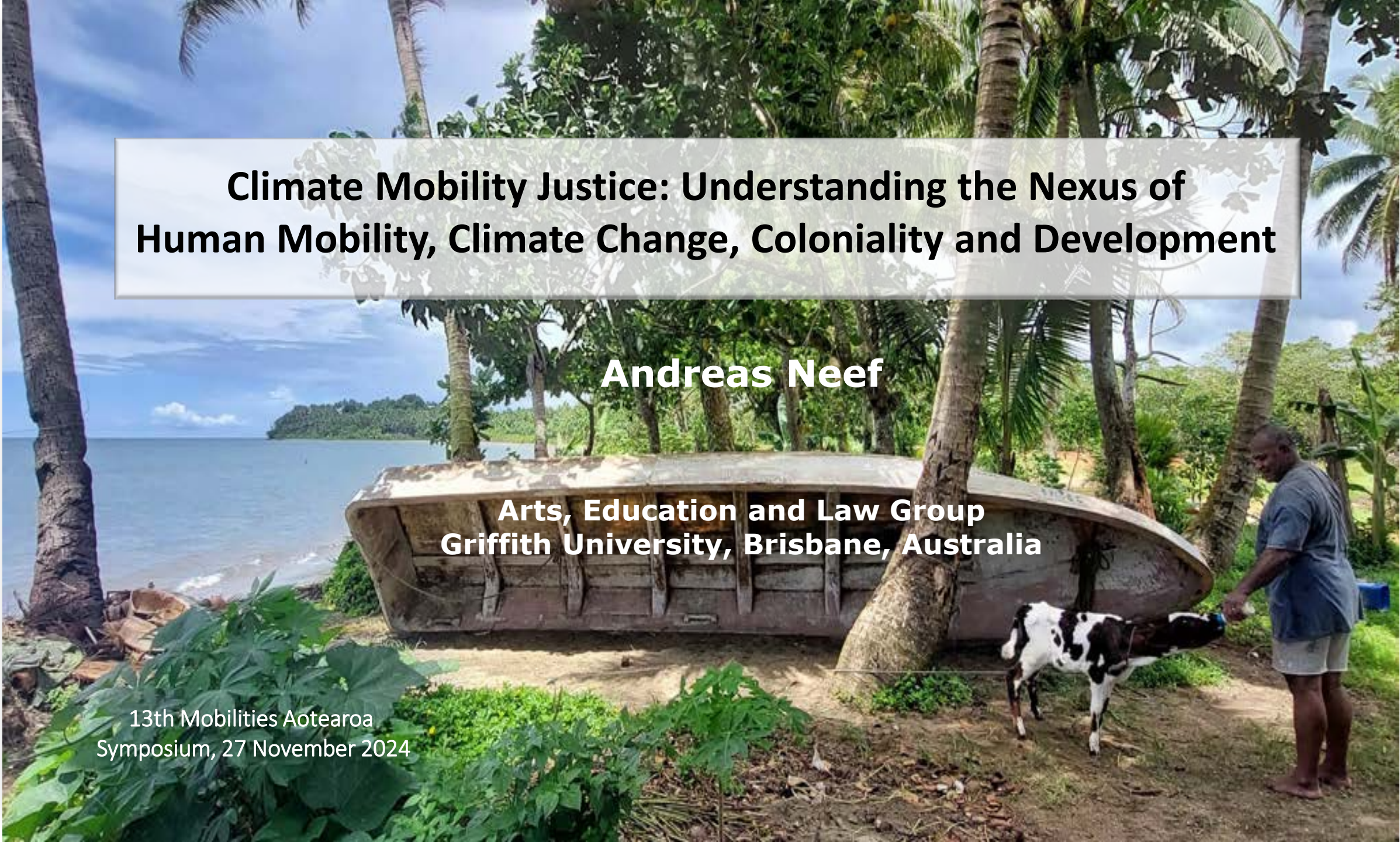


Climate Mobility Justice: Understanding the Nexus of Human Mobility, Climate Change, Coloniality and Development

Andreas Neef

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

13th Mobilities Aotearoa
Symposium, 27 November 2024



My Recent & Current Research – Climate Mobilities

Collaborative Research Project (2023-25)

Moving to Remain in Place: Micro-Mobilities and Circular Migration as Adaptive Strategies to Gendered Climate Risks in Fiji and Samoa

Project Partners

Griffith University, University of Auckland, University of the South Pacific, National University of Samoa



Funded by the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN)

My Recent & Current Research – Climate Mobilities

Climate-Induced Migration: Global Scope, Regional Impacts and National Policy Frameworks



Photo: courtesy of Vanua Votua, Fiji.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, globally more than 24 million people were displaced annually between 2008 and 2018 due to climate-related hazards, within and across borders. Large-scale migration in response to sudden-onset climate-related disasters and slow-onset environmental degradation and sea-level rise will place increased pressure on livelihoods, public health systems, infrastructure, and social services.

ACADEMIC LEAD

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Professor Pedro Alfonso Elizalde

Monteagudio

Funded by the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)



My Recent & Current Research – Climate Mobilities

- ❑ 17 out of 24 WUN members have announced emissions reduction targets, with 15 of those having committed to achieve either carbon neutrality or carbon-zero in the next 10-30 years.
- ❑ Only 9 out of 24 WUN members included air travel in their carbon neutrality/net zero goal.
- ❑ Key justification for academic air travel: it is crucial for internationalisation and career advancement.
- ❑ Evidence suggests that the most frequent academic flyers are already well-established within their given field.
- ❑ Most disadvantaged:
 - Early career researchers
 - (Women) academics with caring responsibilities
 - Academics in the Global South

*"15% of academics globally
are responsible for 70%
of conference air travel"*

(Higham & Font, 2020, p. 3)



My Recent & Current Research – Climate Mobility Justice



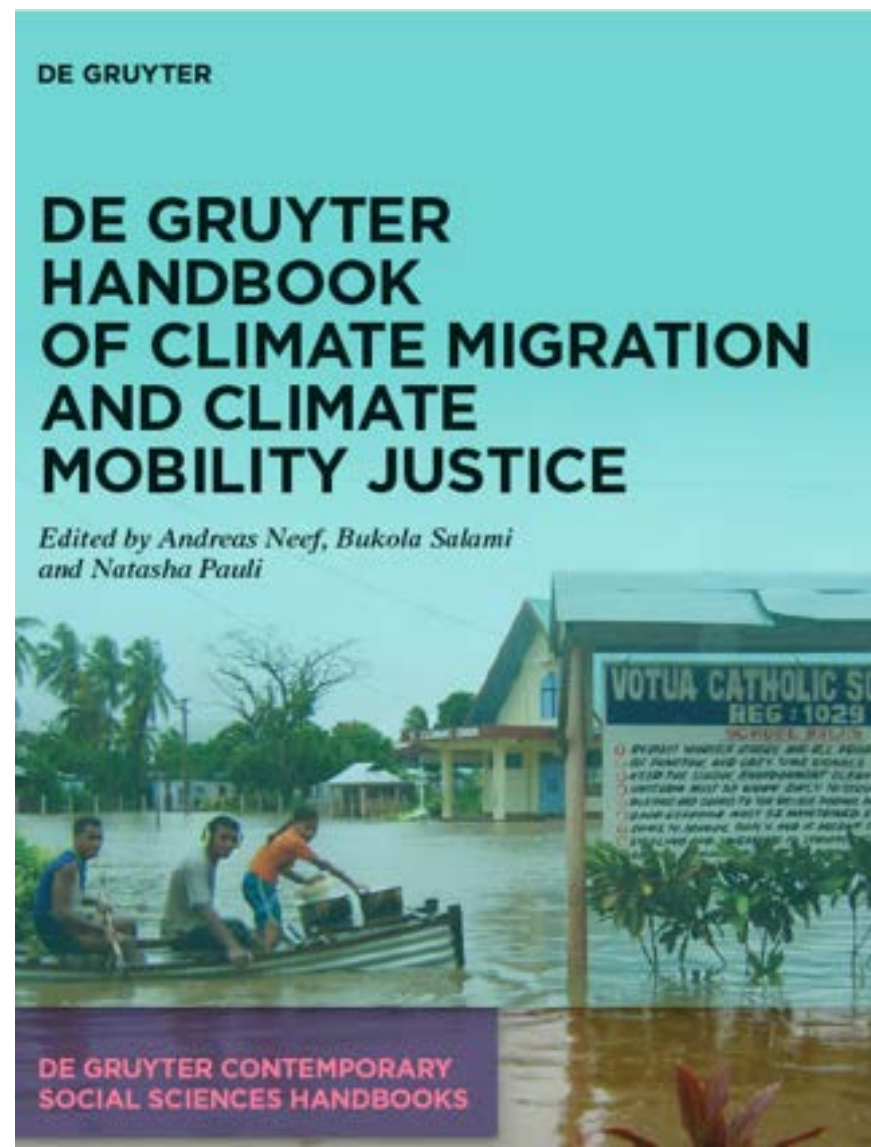
 **Andreas Neef**
 Professor Andreas Neef is from Development Studies in the University of Auckland's Faculty of Arts.

COP26

No climate justice without migration justice



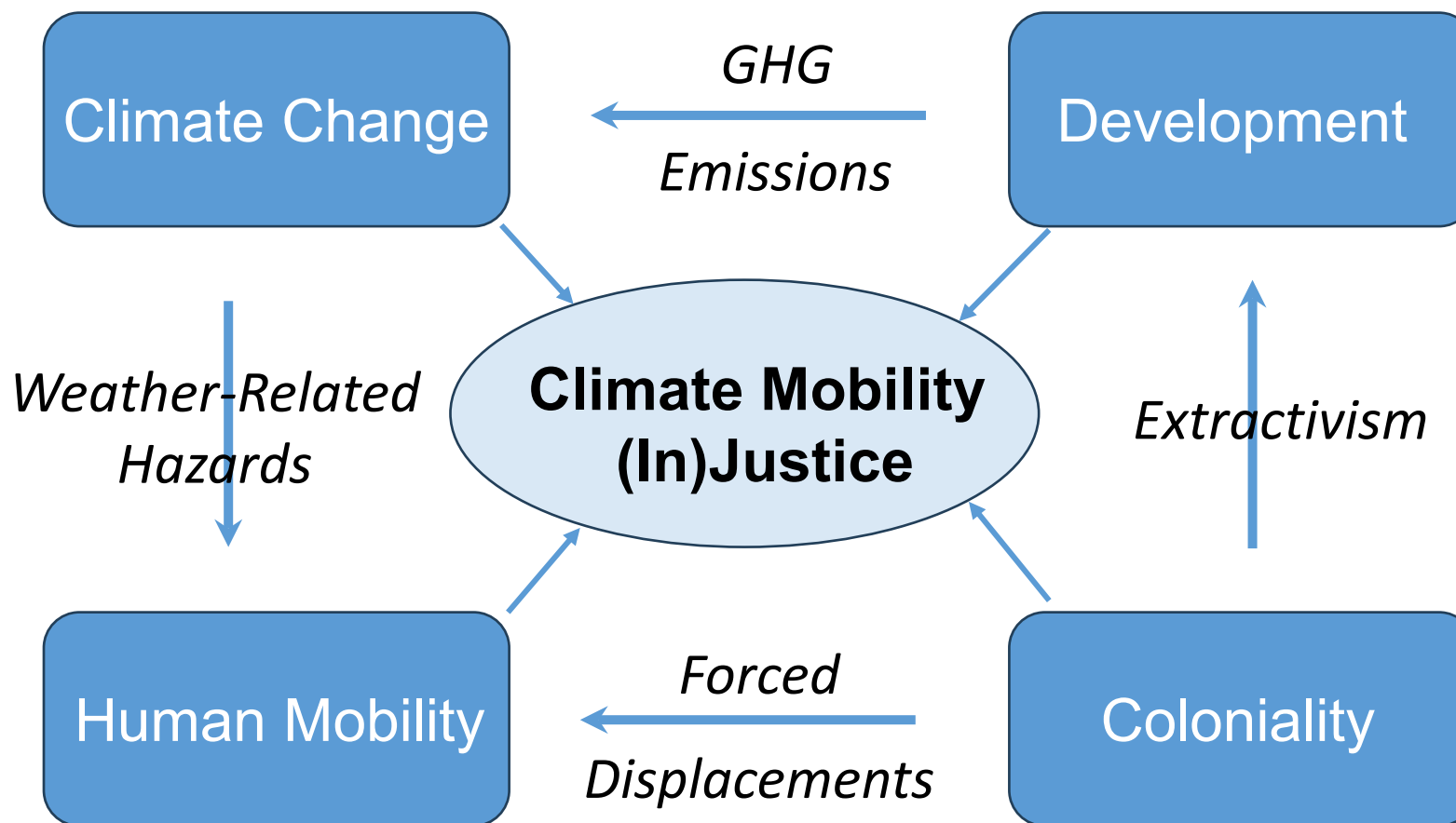
Andreas Neef looks at what a failure of the negotiations at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow could mean for climate migration in the Pacific and beyond



Published in 2024

Climate Change, Human Mobility, Coloniality & Development

Figure 1. Conceptualising the Nexus



Climate Change, Human Mobility, Coloniality & Development

Colonial forced mobilities and mobility injustices

- ❑ Blackbirding in today's Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, ...
- ❑ Indentured labourers from India to today's Fiji
- ❑ Forced displacement through phosphate mining in Nauru, Banaba, Gilbert and Ellice Islands

Contemporary development and (climate) im/mobilities

- ❑ Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme (Aotearoa New Zealand) and Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme
- ❑ Tourism flows from Australia and New Zealand to Pacific Island countries
- ❑ Uneven immigration regimes in Australia and New Zealand to control migration from Pacific Islands
- ❑ Climate change-driven migration from Pacific Islands

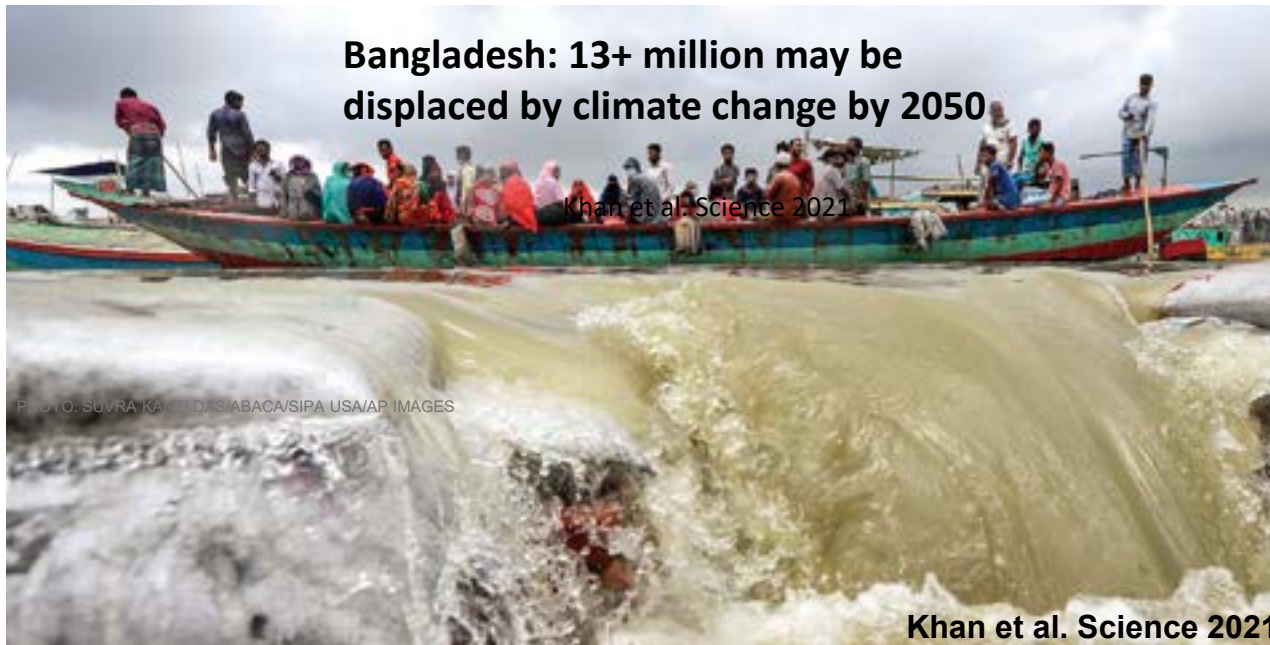
Climate Change and Human Mobility – A Global Perspective

News | Climate Crisis

Climate migration predicted to rise in India amid extreme weather

Study says droughts, floods and heatwaves are fuelling climate migration as nation's poorest are forced to abandon their homes.

Al Jazeera, 26 Oct 2021



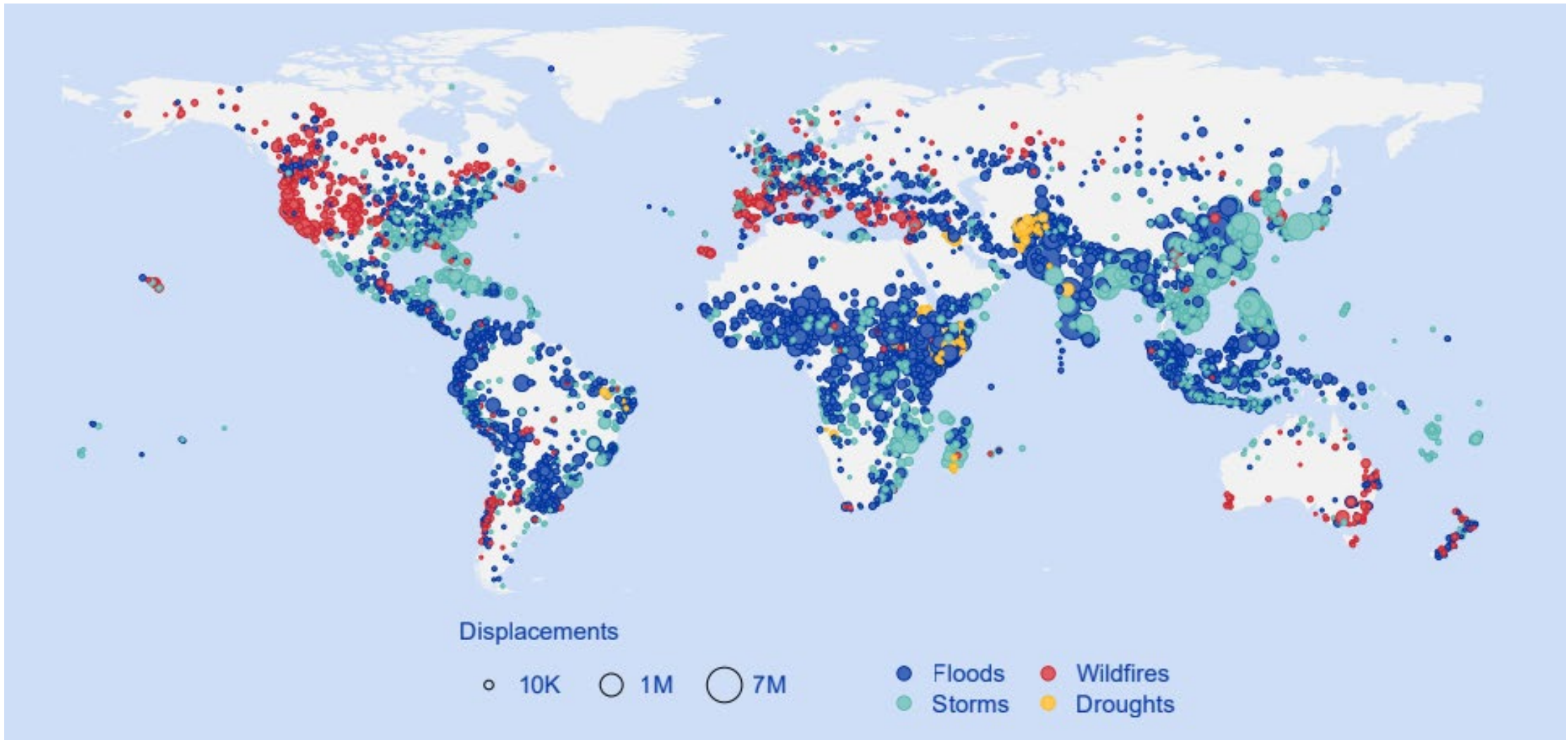
150-300 million people worldwide live on land that could be vulnerable to sea-level rises by 2050 (Kulp & Strauss, 2019)

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Climate Change and Human Mobility – A Global Perspective

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



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IOM (2024), based on data from IDMC

Climate Change and Human Mobility – A Global Perspective

Americans are fleeing climate change — here's where they can go

PUBLISHED THU, APR 21 2022 7:50 AM EDT | UPDATED THU, APR 21 2022 5:06 PM EDT

Lindsey Jacobson
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Possible Climate Havens

CNBC, 21 April 2022

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Climate Change and Human Mobility – A Global Perspective

Relocating Australian Communities at Risk: Strategies and Actions in Time

- ❑ 243,000 internal displacements between 2008 and 2022
- ❑ No overarching framework guiding planned relocation
- ❑ The Insurance Council of Australia has proposed the establishment of an ongoing fund of \$250 million per year by the Australian Gov't to buy back and raise homes exposed to extreme flooding

Climate Change and Human Mobility – Pacific Islands

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

Climate Change and Human Mobility – Pacific Islands

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**



Climate Change and Human Mobility – Pacific Islands



Protect how?



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Climate Change and Human Mobility – Pacific Islands

‘Migration in Dignity’?

Relocate where?



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

January 11, 2016 · 3 Comments · by James Ellsmoot, 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.

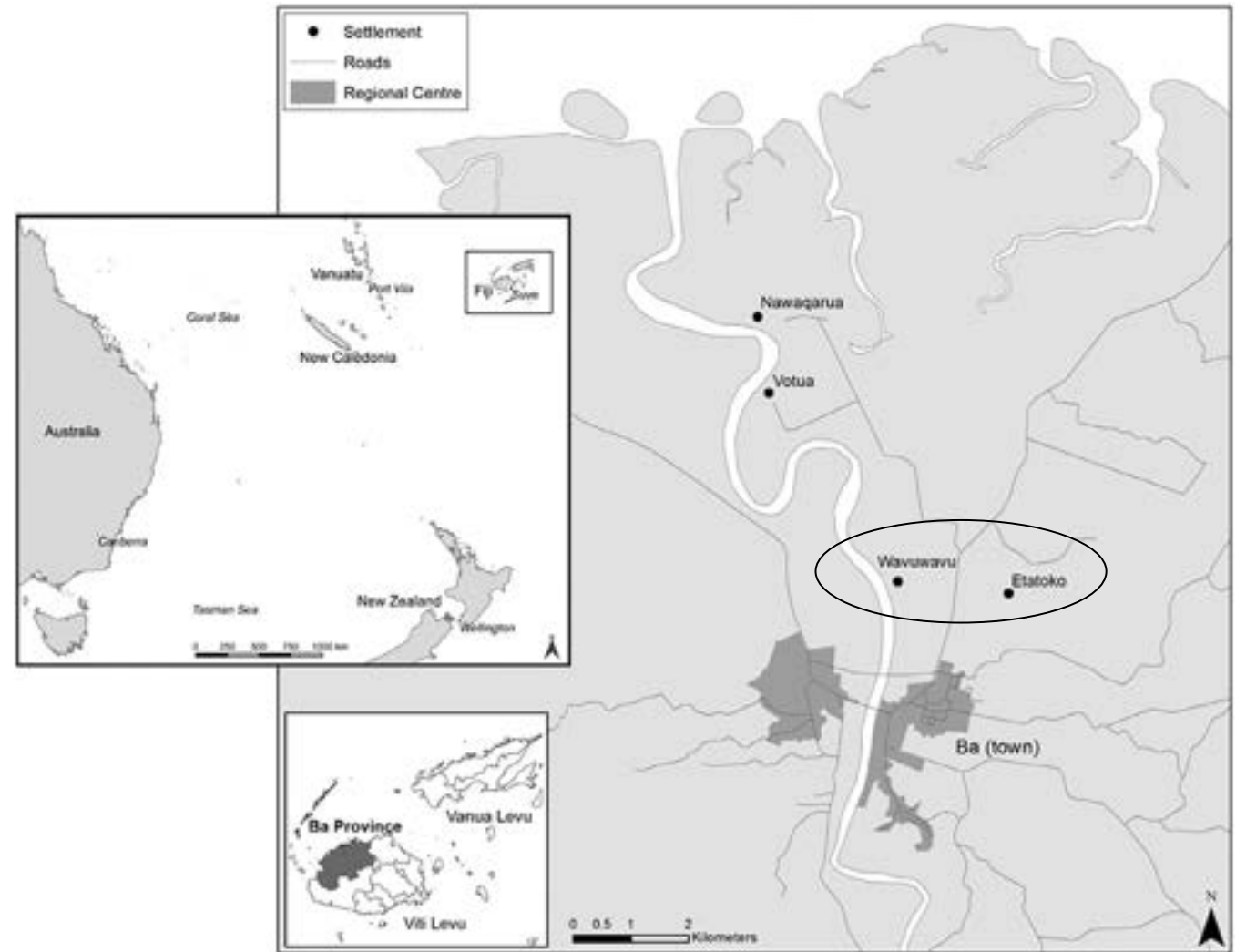
by Loes Witschge 19 Feb 2016



Climate Change and Human Mobility – Pacific Islands

Case Study: Etatoko in northwestern Viti Levu

Community resettled after the 2012 floods

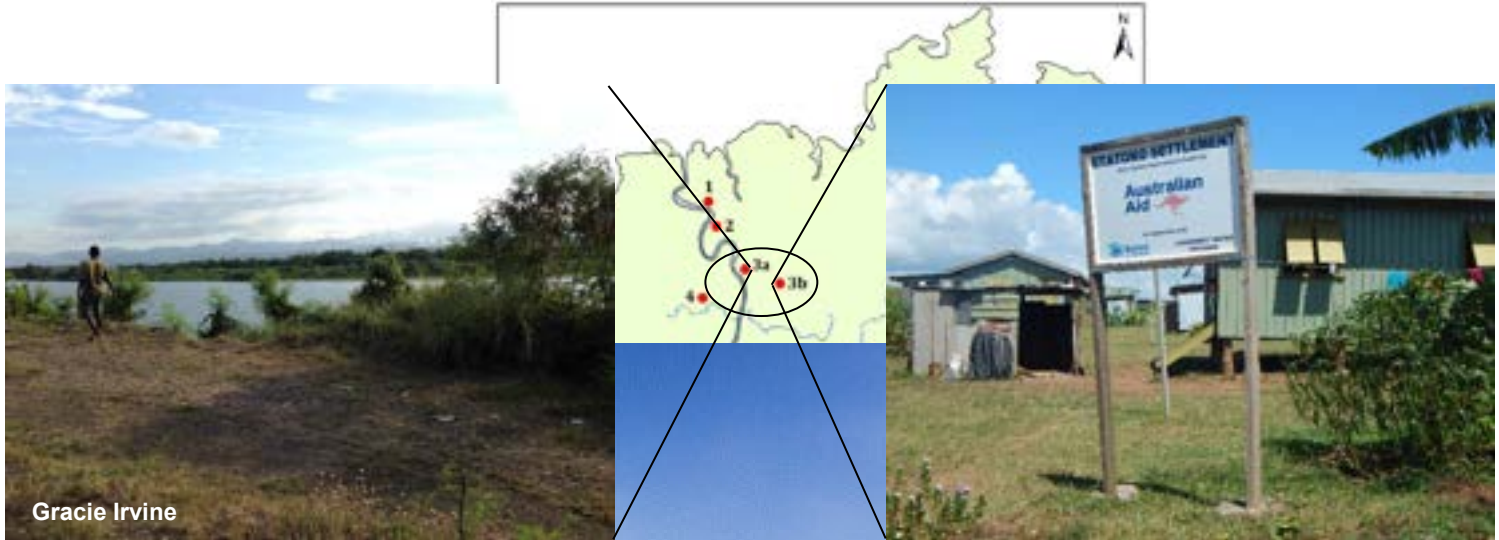


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Climate Change and Human Mobility – Pacific Islands

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 Díaz

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

Climate Change and Human Mobility – Pacific Islands

Dissenting views of two HRC members

Both members argued that the risk threshold for irreparable harm to the lives of Mr. Teitiota and his family had already been met.

Dr Vasilka Sancin argued that it would fall on the State Party (i.e. New Zealand) not the alleged victim to provide evidence that the latter would indeed be able to enjoy access to safe drinking water.

Mr Duncan Laki Muhumuza argued that it would be “counterintuitive to the protection of life” to wait until frequent deaths would occur to acknowledge that the risk threshold is indeed met.

“New Zealand's action is more like forcing a drowning person back into a sinking vessel, with the 'justification' that after all, there are other voyagers on board.”

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time.com

Framing the 'Climate Migrant' – The Policy Influencer's View

- ❑ The majority of populations affected by wildfire and storm displacements live in coastal regions
- ❑ More than half of drought-affected areas is grazing land
- ❑ Storm and flood displacements disproportionately affect farming populations
- ❑ In Africa, 44.1% of the population affected by weather-related displacement are children
- ❑ Populations affected by wildfire displacements tend to have advanced education and are predominantly urban

Source: IOM (2024)

Framing the 'Climate Migrant' – An Academic Perspective

Climate Migrants as Passive Victims

- Vulnerable
- Failing to adapt
- Helpless
- Forgotten



The Guardian

Climate Migrants as Political Subjects

- Raising voice
- Power difference
- Changing laws
- Getting justice



ABC

Climate Migrants as Security Threats

- Mass migration
- Overwhelming
- Dangerous
- To be contained



The Independent

Climate Migrants as Adaptive Agents

- Adaptable
- Self-determined
- Remittances
- To be supported



A..Neef

Towards Climate Mobility Justice

Current situation of 'climate migrants/refugees':

The 'migration as adaptation' narrative – framing climate migrants as 'adaptive agents' – risks drowning out notions of justice, rights and (historical and current) responsibilities in the climate mobility debate.

Under current legal frameworks and migration/refugee policies, climate migrants face a dual disadvantage:

- (1) global climate injustice forces them to abandon their homes and livelihoods, and
- (2) they are subjected to various forms of 'legal violence' through non-recognition of their particular migrant status and – as a consequence – social suffering.

Combination of climate injustice and mobility injustice

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Adapted from Skillington (2015) and Neef & Bengtsson (2022)

ceneews.net



Towards Climate Mobility Justice

Major argument:

Rather than framing them simply as ‘victims’ of climate change, **climate migrants** need to be recognised as ‘wronged parties’ which requires an understanding of – and acceptance of responsibility for – climate (mobility) injustices for which they are owed redress.

Migration pressures are impositions that high-GHG-emitting countries have placed on people in low-emitting countries for which they owe redress, e.g., by accepting a fair share of climate migrants and increasing financial assistance for climate migration taking place within the Global South.

Adapted from Saad (2017) and Neef & Bengé (2022)

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Policy Implication

Countries like Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia need to acknowledge their historic and contemporary responsibilities for climate-related dislocation of Pacific Island people

Solutions?

Climate passports (Clare Heyward & Jörgen Ödalen)

‘Radical hospitality’ (James Bhagwan)

Climate reparations (Mimi Sheller & Andreas Neef)

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – Climate Passports?

Managing climate change-induced migration to Germany: three instruments

Situation in country of origin

Instrument

Country is uninhabitable

CLIMATE PASSPORT
Permanent, unconditional right to remain

Massive destruction in country of origin leading to temporary migration

CLIMATE CARD
Temporary, limited right to remain

Gradual environmental changes significantly impact quality of life in country of origin

CLIMATE WORK VISA
Residence permit conditional upon employment contract – no qualifications needed

Source: The Expert Council of Integration and Migration, Germany (Annual Report 2023)

Illustration: SVR/Keskin

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – Climate Passports?

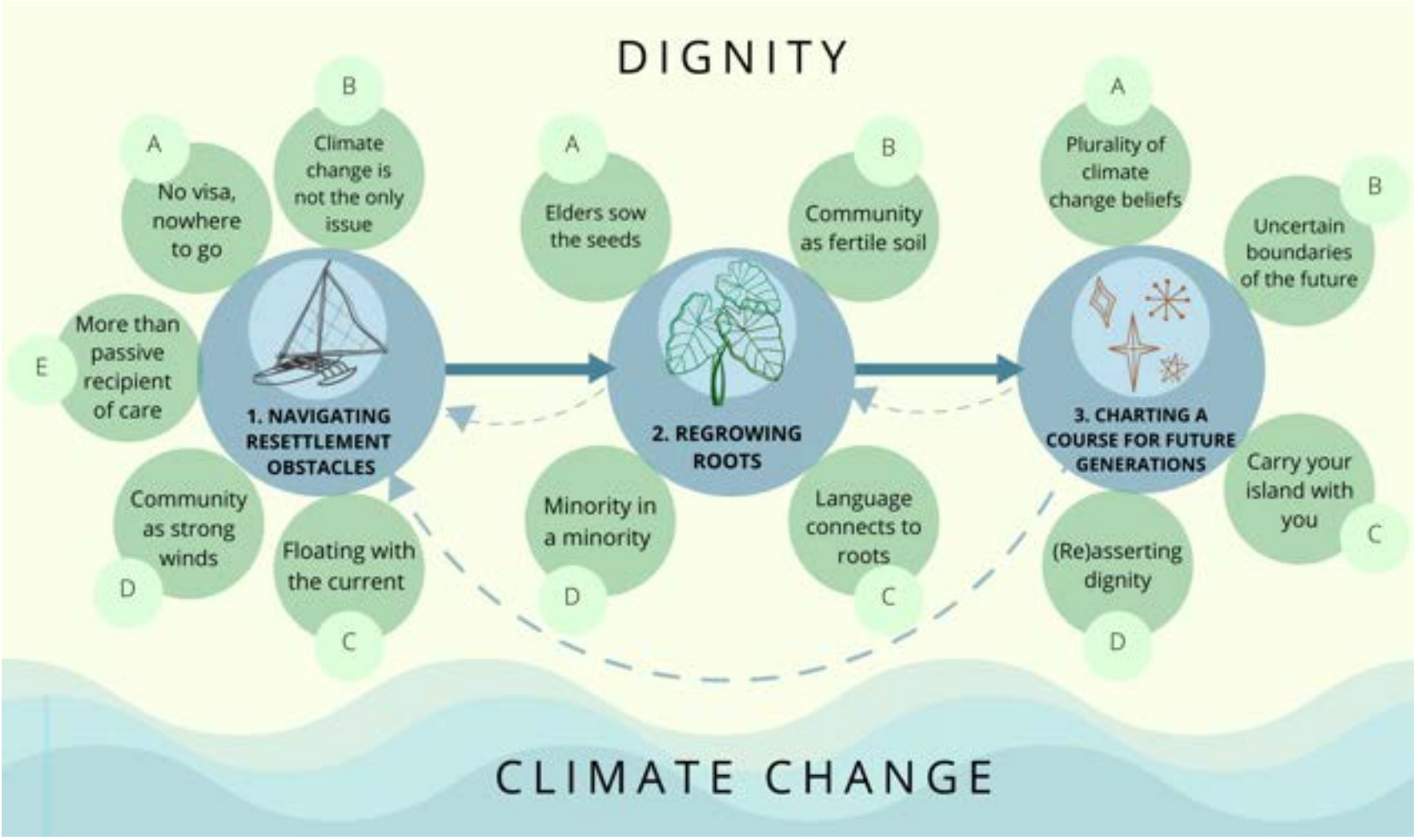
- ❑ In 2017, New Zealand's Green Party proposed a humanitarian visa for 'climate refugees'
- ❑ Rejected by Pacific Island leaders who expressed discontent with the notion of 'Pacific climate refugees'
- ❑ A World Bank report (2017) proposed a new "Australia-New Zealand Atoll Access Agreement" to allow free labour market access for citizens from Pacific atoll countries
- ❑ The UNHCR (2020) suggests in a position paper that "[p]eople seeking international protection in the context of the adverse effects of climate change or disasters may have valid claims for refugee status" (p. 11)

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – Radical Hospitality?

Pacific Diaspora Perspectives on Climate Mobilities

Findings from Focus Groups with Tuvaluan and I-Kiribati Communities in Auckland

Figure 3. Te wa and te vaka model of climate mobility



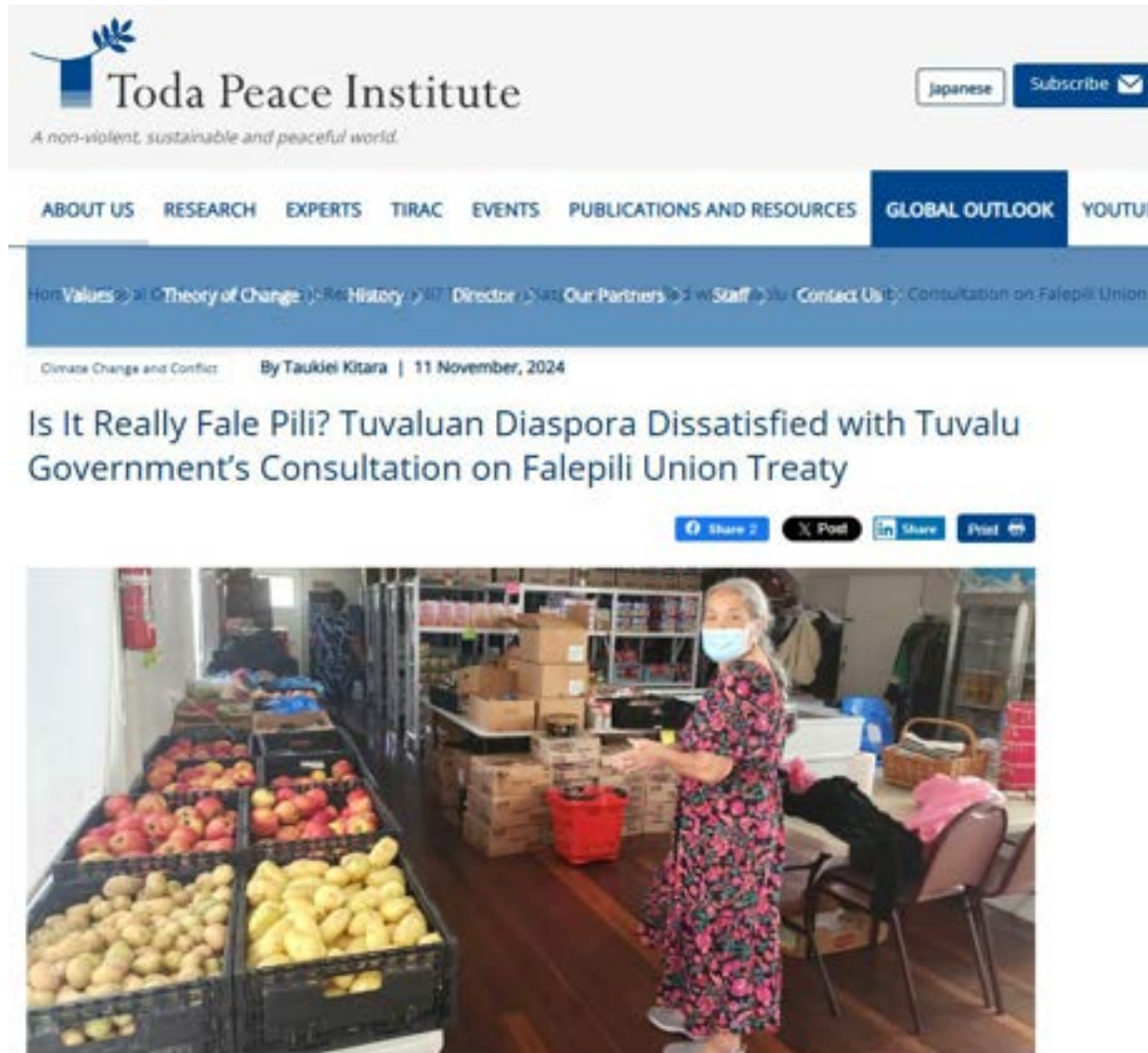
Towards Climate Mobility Justice – Radical Hospitality?

Pacific Diaspora Perspectives on Climate Mobilities

- Concerns about lack of affordable housing, lack of community meeting hall, food insecurity, etc.

Opinion piece by member of the Tuvalu Brisbane Community, Taukiei Kitara

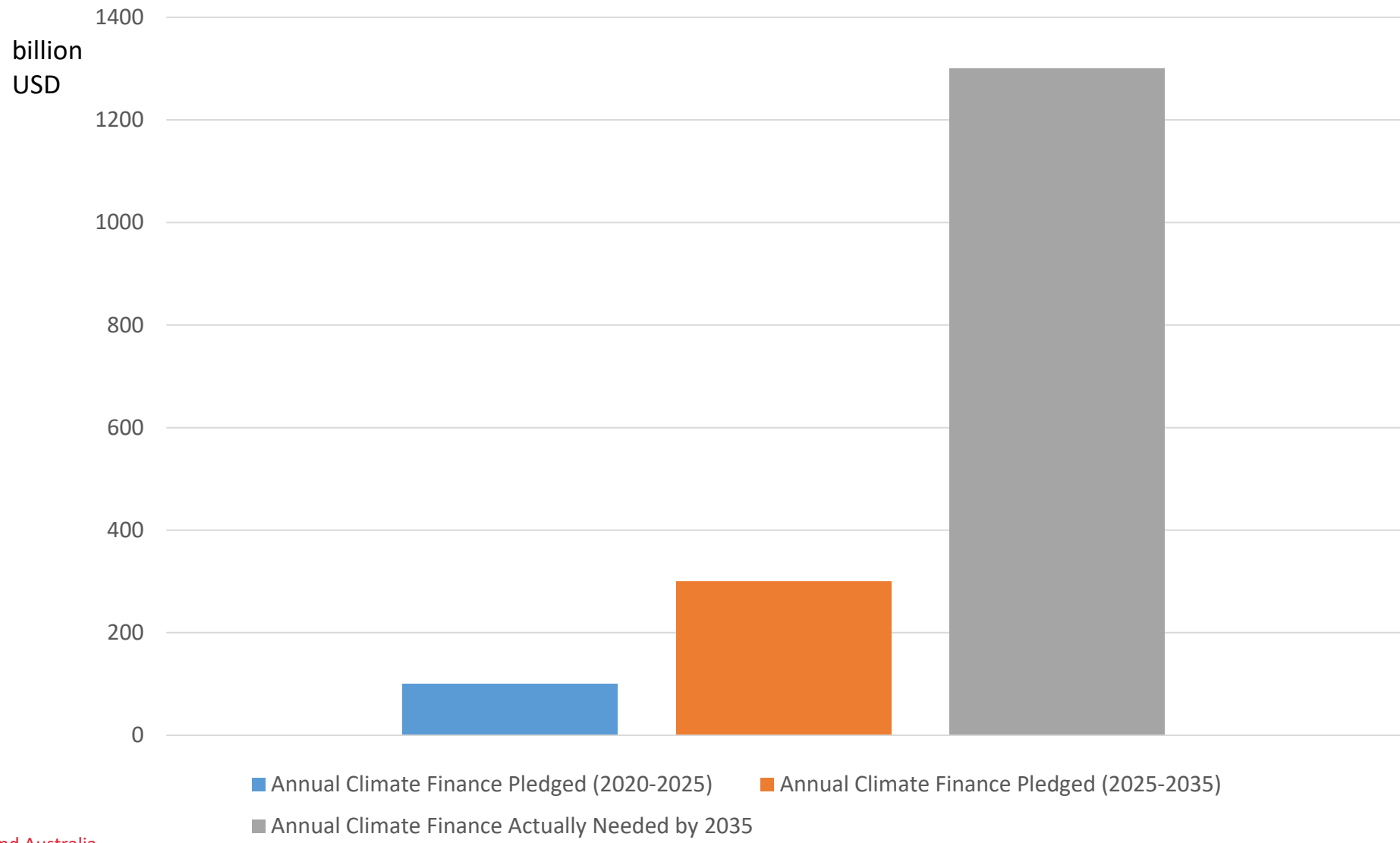
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The screenshot shows the header of the Toda Peace Institute website, which includes a logo with a blue leaf and the text 'Toda Peace Institute' and 'A non-violent, sustainable and peaceful world.' There are buttons for 'Japanese' and 'Subscribe'. The navigation menu includes 'ABOUT US', 'RESEARCH', 'EXPERTS', 'TIRAC', 'EVENTS', 'PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES', 'GLOBAL OUTLOOK', and 'YOUTUBE'. Below the menu is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home Values > Theory of Change > Re: History > Director > Our Partners > Staff > Contact Us > Consultation on Falepili Union Treaty'. The article title is 'Is It Really Fale Pili? Tuvaluan Diaspora Dissatisfied with Tuvalu Government's Consultation on Falepili Union Treaty' by Taukiei Kitara, dated 11 November, 2024. There are social media share buttons for Facebook, Post, LinkedIn, and Print. The image shows a woman in a floral dress and a blue face mask standing in a foodbank aisle, surrounded by crates of fresh produce like apples and potatoes.

Image: Tuvalu Brisbane community foodbank - Provided by author

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – Climate Reparations?



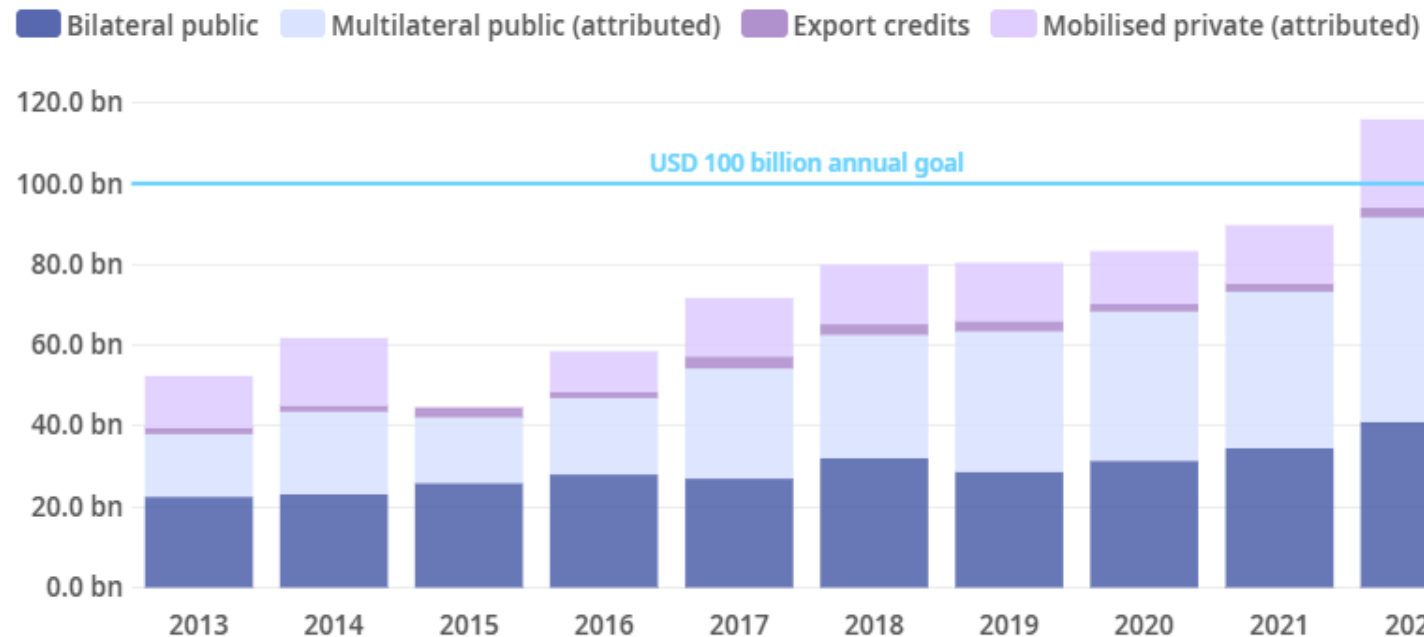
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Make it matter

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – Climate Reparations?

Climate finance for developing countries

Amounts provided and mobilised by developed countries, billion USD



The gap in the private finance series in 2015 is due to the implementation of enhanced measurement methodologies. As a result, private flows for 2016-22 cannot be directly compared with private flows for 2013-14.

Source: OECD (2024), [Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2013-2022](#).

Australia's benefits from the fossil fuel sector

Oil and gas is forecast to account for more than AUD17 billion of tax revenue in 2024

Australia's subsidies to fossil fuel producers and major users: AUD14.5 billion in 2023-24

Total income of the coal mining industry in 2023: AUD163 billion

Sources: The Australia Institute, Australian Energy Producers, Statista

Around 72% of climate finance to the Global South comes in the form of loans! (Ratuva et al., 2024)

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – Climate Reparations?



- **Displacement is one of the most significant forms of loss and damage,** but it is underreported and overlooked in loss and damage assessments.
- **It is necessary to account for displacement and its impacts in comprehensive loss and damage assessments** to create better policies and responses for displaced people and to unlock adequate resources from
- **Action and support to avert, minimise and address loss and damage must be informed by data on displacement.** Existing tools and methodologies are available to support countries in their efforts.
- **At COP29, displacement must be a priority** in decisions related to efforts to avert, minimise and address loss and damage.

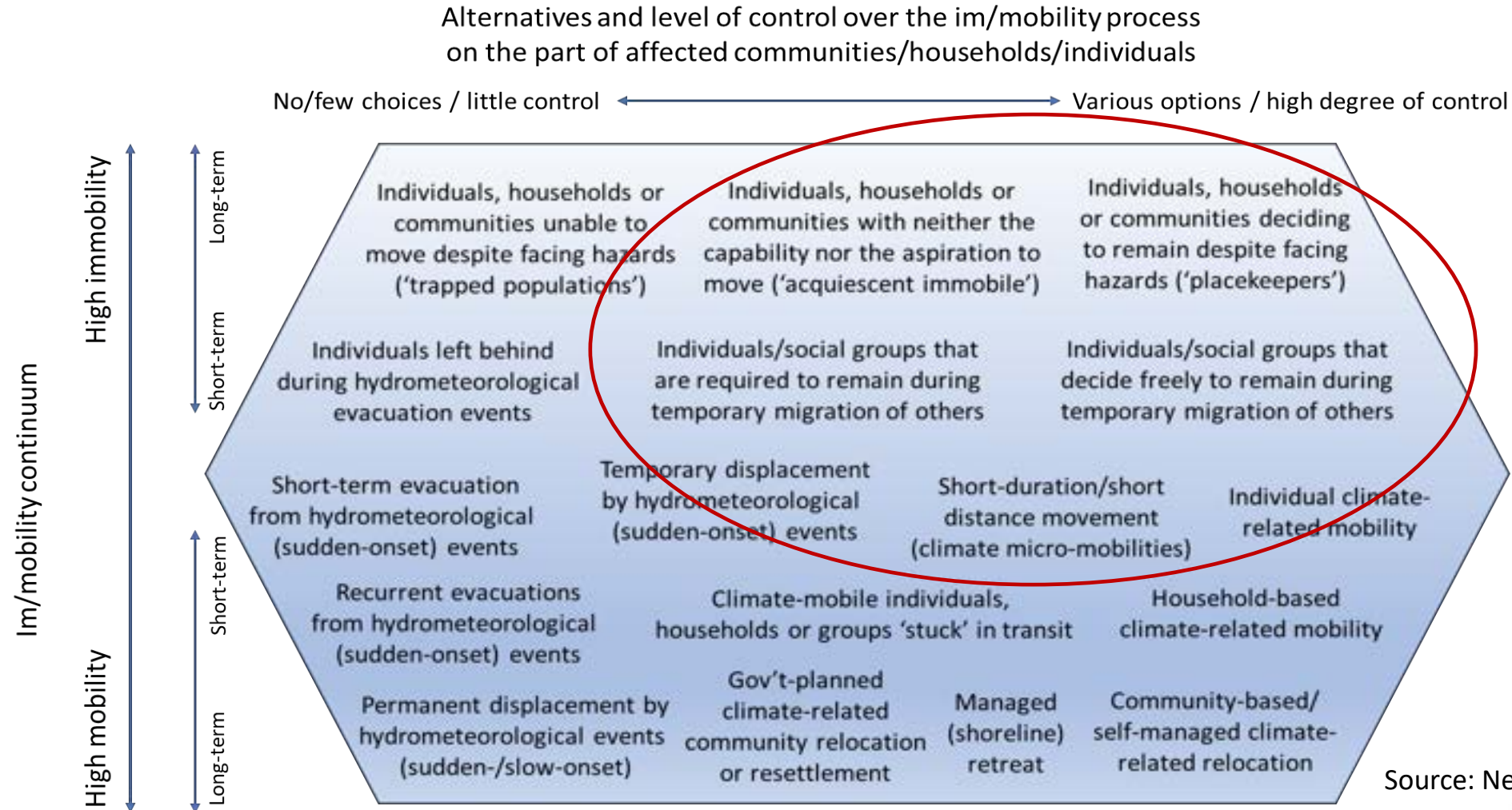
At COP29, the Australian gov't committed to USD50 million as contribution to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (which includes displacement and relocation)

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Make it matter

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – The Right to Remain

Figure 4. The Climate Change – Human Im/mobility Continuum



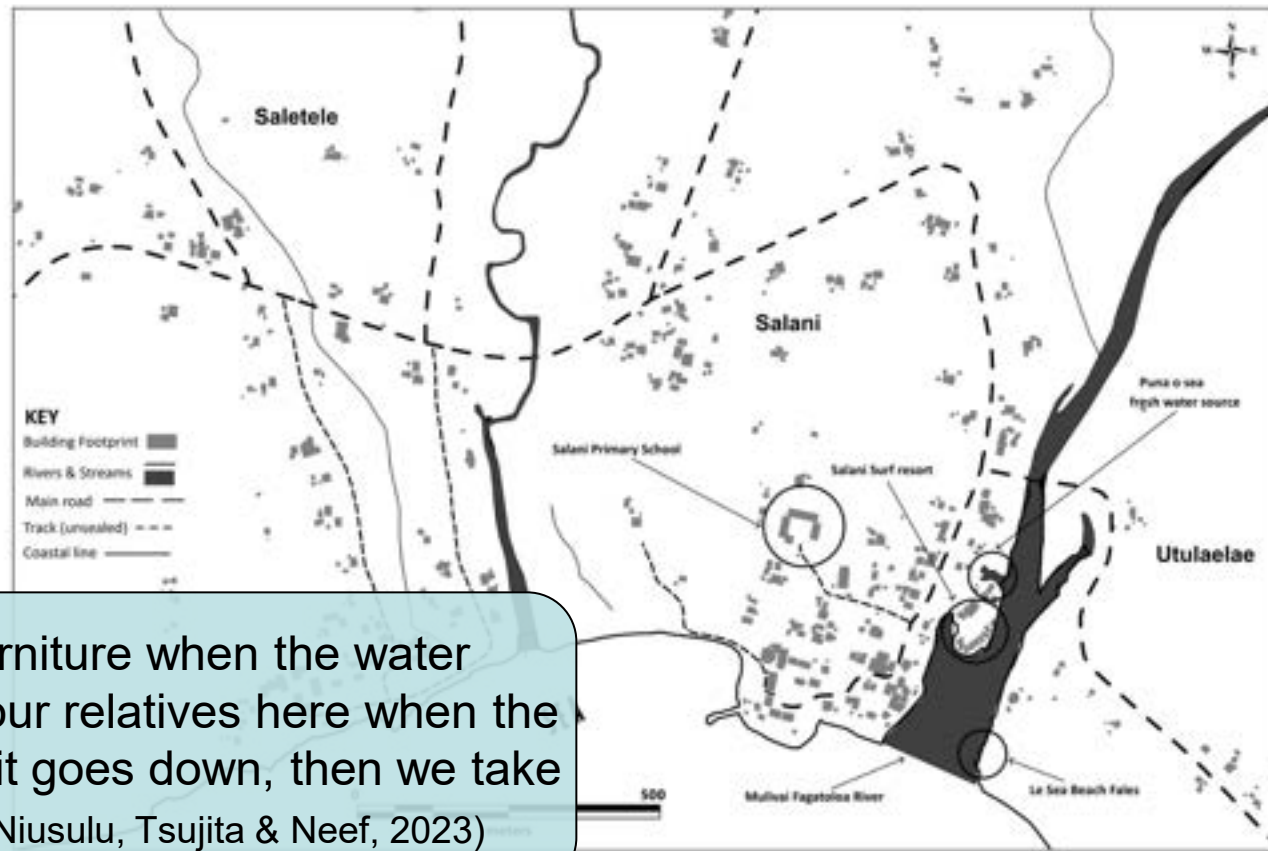
Source: Neef et al. (2024)

Towards Climate Mobility Justice – The Right to Remain

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)

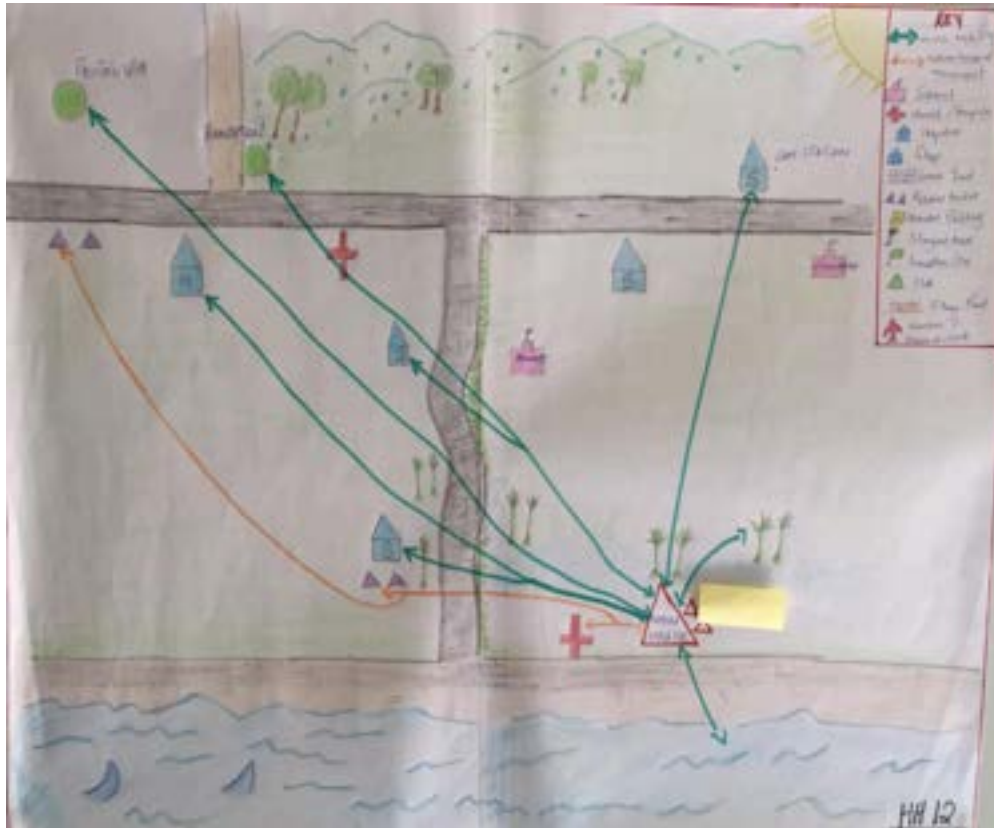
“Children lift up furniture when the water floods. We bring our relatives here when the water floods until it goes down, then we take them back.” (Latai-Niusulu, Tsujita & Neef, 2023)



Towards Climate Mobility Justice – The Right to Remain

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		

Acknowledgements



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Questions and Feedback

