

Migration, Mobility and HIV



A rapid assessment of risks and vulnerabilities in the Pacific



SPC
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of the Pacific
Community

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List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CNMI	Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CSW	Commercial Sex Workers
DPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECREA	Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IEC	Information, education and communication
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technology
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIRAB	Migration, Remittances, Aid, and Bureaucracy
MMM	Mobile Men with Money
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NAC	National AIDS Council (PNG)
NACS	National AIDS Council Secretariat (PNG)
NCD	Non Communicable Disease
NDOH	National Department of Health (PNG)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NZ	New Zealand
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PFL	Pacific Forum Line
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PLWHA	People Living with HIV or AIDS
PNG	Papua New Guinea
POC	Pacific Operations Centre
PRHP	Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TTPI	Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
USA	United States of America
USP	University of the South Pacific
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

The objective of this report is to provide a rapid assessment of migration and mobility as key influences on the distribution and spread of HIV in the Pacific. While this has been established globally with targeted and tailored prevention programmes on mobility and HIV in a number of countries, the Pacific has yet to develop appropriate responses that take migration and mobility into consideration and ensure that HIV interventions address the drivers of mobility and the specific vulnerabilities that mobility creates. It is expected that this report will contribute to the development of multi-sectoral responses required to address the HIV epidemic in the Pacific region and provide the impetus for the development of effective and targeted interventions for people on the move.

The report establishes migration, mobility and urbanisation as key facilitating factors in the transmission and spread of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the Pacific. Although HIV was first detected in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in 1982, Papua New Guinea (PNG) has the highest recorded cases in the region today. Case numbers outside of Papua New Guinea remain low, however, the high prevalence of STIs and teenage pregnancies point to the possibility of possible higher HIV transmission in the future.

According to reported data in most Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), sexual activity, heterosexual predominantly, is by far the most common mode of HIV transmission. However, vertical transmission (from mother-to-child) and transmission through the sharing of infected needles amongst injecting drug user is also reported although the latter remains relatively uncommon in the Pacific compared to Asia and other regions.

This report reviews a number of different migration behaviours in the Pacific. Open island economies are fragile and many rely heavily on migration for economic opportunity to the point of being characterised by some as MIRAB economies (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy). There is a dichotomy between predominantly internal migration, notably urbanisation, and external migration – individuals leaving the Pacific and those entering the region. Within this broad pattern are vastly divergent mobile groups such as skilled workers, seafarers, students, traders, civil servants, military personnel and sex workers. These groups are mobile and characterised by different behaviours, access to services and risk exposure to HIV and STIs.

While the report covers all Pacific island states, some emphasis is given to Papua New Guinea where the prevalence and impact of HIV are greatest. According to country data collected by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) from the end of 2008, there were about 29,631 cumulative reported cases of HIV and AIDs across all Pacific Island Countries and Territories, of which 28,294 in Papua New Guinea alone. The high prevalence of HIV in Papua New Guinea points to the significance of internal migration, rather than international migration. Most internal migration is to the larger urban centres and to some mining towns that are “hot spots” for HIV transmission. In the Pacific, the rationale for urbanisation is consistent throughout the region as employment opportunities and services such as education and health are concentrated in the urban areas. Within PNG, the contemporary incidence of HIV is seen as having much to do with “mobile men with money” MMM- who characterise larger urban areas and are even personified as a new kind of “sugar daddy” – the dakglas kar man (dark glass car man): businessmen, landowners and politicians with plenty of disposable income (Lepani 2008a). However, international migration is also on the increase with some migrant groups vulnerable.

Workers who engage in circular migration such as working in mines, construction, plantations/forestry and military personnel are at higher HIV risk exposure due to long periods away from home, relatively high salaries and a risk-taking ethos. Another group that also exhibits risky sexual behaviour is transport workers and seafarers. They tend to be younger males who leave their families for extended periods of time, have relatively well paid employment in distant locations and are more likely to turn to commercial sex. Sex workers, both commercial and transactional, are also at-risk communities, many of whom migrate domestically or internationally. Sex workers are often some of the most marginalised members of society, thus heightening their vulnerability to HIV.

High risk sexual behaviour and high levels of migration coincide in urban areas. Urban populations grow steadily alongside a growing “floating” urban population of informal squatter settlements. Commercial sex and the unprotected sex that is associated with it is a key source of HIV and STI transmission, and is mainly an urban phenomenon. Commercial sex tends to concentrate on locations where foreign visitors can be found such as in ports, development enclaves, military installations and tourism locations. In such situations, HIV risk is indirectly linked to poverty or

hardship. Many of the mobile groups such as soldiers, seafarers and guest workers have some degree of economic foundation compared to other members of the population. Persons providing sexual services to these groups (mostly women) are, however, often driven by poverty and lack of opportunity.

The lack of specific data on the sexual behaviour and risk factors of migrant groups in the Pacific makes the development of firm conclusions difficult. Additionally, information on the number and trends of migrant groups such as guest workers and students is not currently available. Given this, more research is needed to determine levels of risk and factors that drive decision-making of mobility and sexual behaviour.

While all countries have some degree of mobility-related HIV vulnerability, a few countries stand out. As Papua New

Guinea has a large number of higher risk mobile groups, the country should be a focal point for interventions focussed on mitigating HIV vulnerability driven by mobility. Additionally, Guam, Northern Marianas, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Palau, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia and French Polynesia have relatively significant sex worker populations, growing urbanisation and other high risk migrant groups such as soldiers and seafarers. Some specific urban centres such as Suva in Fiji, Honiara in Solomon Islands, Guam, Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Tarawa in Kiribati are hotspots worthy of further/enhanced preventive interventions.

Greater recognition is needed over the present and potential significance of migration for the transmission of HIV in order to develop effective interventions specifically suited to the Pacific's social, epidemiological and behavioural context.

Table 1. Summary of Most Significant HIV Vulnerability by Migration Group

Migration Group ¹	Number of Pacific Islanders Involved ²	Countries Most Affected ³	Vulnerability to HIV ⁴	How Much is Known ⁵
Urbanisation	VL	PNG, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Guam, CNMI, New Caledonia		
Sex Work	L (little data on number of foreign CSWs)	Fiji, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, PNG, Guam, CNMI, Palau, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, FSM		
Plantation/ Forestry/ Logging	NA	PNG, Solomon Islands		
Mining	M (approx 8000)	PNG, New Caledonia		
Transport and Seafarers	L (approx 7000 PI seafarers and more than 10,000 foreign seafarers through region)	FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, PNG, Fiji, French Polynesia		
Military	L (approx 8000 domestic soldiers and 4000 overseas soldiers)	Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Tonga, Guam, CNMI, New Caledonia, Marshall Islands		
Guest Workers	M (approx 7000)	Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa		
Skilled Workers	NA			
Tourism	NA	Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Palau, Guam, CNMI, Vanuatu, Cook Islands		
Refugees and Displaced People	L (10,000 refugees in PNG alone)	PNG		
Students	NA	PNG, Fiji		
Return Migration	NA	Tonga, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Fiji		

Notes to Table 1:

1. Each of these groups are analysed in more detail in the report.
2. Using the information available, the number of Pacific Islanders involved in the migration group is assessed. VL represents very large, L large, M medium and S small. Where insufficient data is available, NA is noted for not available.
3. This column is an assessment of the few countries **most** affected or involved with the particular migration group based on the analysis conducted for this report. While other countries are certainly affected, the inclusion of countries was based on a qualitative assessment of relative levels of impact.
4. Acknowledging that all migrants have some vulnerability to HIV, the moons represent the following risk

- profile: full moon – high risk profile; half moon – medium risk profile; empty moon – limited risk profile. This is a **qualitative** assessment meant to be generally representative of overall vulnerability of the group. The assessments are done even where they are based on limited information.
5. Based on the research conducted, this is a **qualitative** assessment of how much reliable data is available specifically about the migration group and its risk behaviour in the Pacific region. A full moon represents a significant amount of information is available, a half moon represents some limited information is available and an empty moon suggests that almost no specific information is currently available. This is necessarily a relative measure; even for those that have a full moon represented, more research would certainly be beneficial.

Table 2. Summary of HIV Vulnerability by Country

Country	Major Migration Groups	Country HIV Vulnerability ¹
PNG	Urbanisation, Sex Work, Plantation, Mining, Transport/Seafarers, Military, Refugees, Students	
Guam	Urbanisation, Sex Work, Military, Tourism	
Fiji	Urbanisation, Sex Work, Military, Tourism, Students, Transport/Seafarers, Return Migration	
Solomon Islands	Urbanisation, Sex Work, Plantation	

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