PACMAS
Pacific Media Assistance Scheme

Tuvalu
STATE OF MEDIA & COMMUNICATION REPORT
2013

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Tuvalu Meteorology Service photo by David Arfon Jones

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Any opinions represented in this report are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government or the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The findings are presented in three sections:
1. Country Context
2. State of Media and Communications
   • Media and Communications Platforms
   • Media and Communications Landscape
3. Summary of Findings

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Tuvalu Country Context

The Polynesian nation of Tuvalu is made up of nine coral atoll islands. With a population of just under 10,000, Tuvalu is one of the smallest independent nations in the world. Tuvalu gained independence from Britain in 1976 but remains a member of the Commonwealth. The strongest transnational ties are to New Zealand and Fiji, as well as to Kiribati, one of its nearest neighbours, with many residents moving between the two. Tuvalu is perhaps best known internationally as the 'sinking nation', or home to the world's first climate change refugees, but issues like these are not dominant in Tuvalu's national identity. Tuvalu benefits financially from the sale of rights to the top level internet domain '.tv'. Other sources of income include the Tuvalu Trust Fund, fishing licenses, foreign aid, the sale of stamps by the Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau and remittances from Tuvaluans living in Australia and New Zealand as well as from Tuvaluan seamen workers who contribute over 20 per cent to the national GDP (US $35.8 million in 2011)[1].
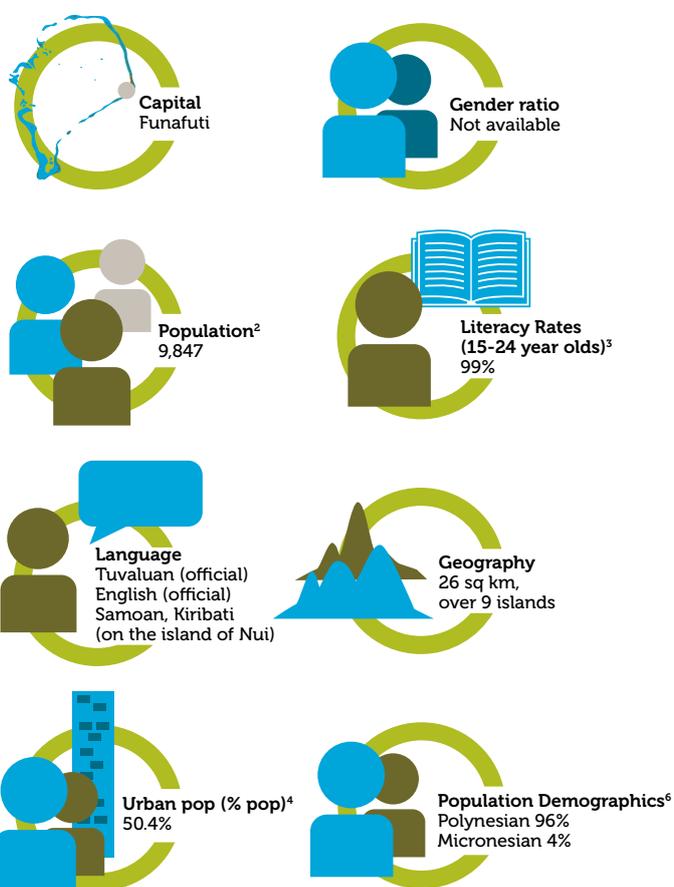
Key Insights

Runway Culture

A unique feature of Tuvalu's communicative ecology is the role the airport runway plays in local socialising. Twice a week the runway on Funafuti island ensures the safe landing of visitors and returning residents, but from 5pm every night it is the social hub of the island. Rugby teams use the 10 metre patch of grass that runs alongside the runway for training. Women sit in circles discussing the day's activities. The volleyball net endures a beating as church teams battle it out before the Saturday finals. Alongside the volleyball area, girls play netball and going through their drills. The runway is the place to gain information and stay up-to-date with community news.

Contested climate change narratives

Tuvalu has become the 'poster child' of global climate change[5]. However, many authors have critiqued the global narrative of Tuvaluans as the first climate refugees, finding that locally, awareness about climate change is low, and that economic reasons and family reunion are the key motivations for the high rates of migration, rather than fears of climate change[6]. Many Tuvaluans reject climate change due to their Christian beliefs (a notion shared with their i-Kiribati neighbours), which include a promise from God to Noah that the land would never be flooded again. However, some churches in Tuvalu are taking the lead on climate change advocacy, with regular visits to the outer islands to bring religious and scientific

Table m.1   Basic Country Data

Capital
Funafuti

Gender ratio
Not available

Population[2]
9,847

**Literacy Rates
(15-24 year olds)[3]**
99%

Language
Tuvaluan (official)
English (official)
Samoan, Kiribati
(on the island of Nui)

Geography
26 sq km,
over 9 islands

Urban pop (% pop)[4]
50.4%

Population Demographics[6]
Polynesian 96%
Micronesian 4%

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1   UNICEF. 2006. Tuvalu: A Situation Analysis of Children, Women and Youth. Suva, Fiji: UNICEF Pacific Office, p. 6.
2   The World Bank. 2013. Country Data Report: Tuvalu. http://data.worldbank.org/country/tuvalu, Accessed 19 April 2013.
3   UNESCO. 2006. Millennium Development Report. http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Tuvalu/Tuvalu%20MDG%202006.pdf, Accessed 19 April 2013. Perrottet & Robie (2011) state the literacy rate is 93%.
4   World Bank. 2013. Tuvalu: Urban Population. http://www.quandl.com/WORLDBANK-World-Bank/TUV_SP_URB_TOTL_IN_ZS-Tuvalu-Urban-population-of-total, Accessed 19 April 2013.
5   Chambers, A. & Chambers, K.S., 2007. Five Takes on Climate and Cultural Change in Tuvalu. Contemporary Pacific, 19(1), pp.294–306.
6   Farbotko, C. & Lazrus, H., 2011. The first climate refugees? Contesting global narratives of climate change in Tuvalu. Global Environmental Change, 22(2), pp.382–390.; McNamara, K.E. & Gibson, C., 2009. "We do not want to leave our land": Pacific ambassadors at the United Nations resist the category of "climate refugees". Geoforum, 40, pp.475–483; Shen, S. & Gemenne, F., 2011. Contrasted Views on Environmental Change and Migration: the Case of Tuvaluan Migration to New Zealand. International Migration, 49(S!), pp.e224–e242.; Paton, K. & Fairbairn-Dunlop, P., 2010. Listening to local voices: Tuvaluans respond to climate change. Local Environment, 15(7), pp.687–698.

Figure 1: Runway culture in Tuvalu. Photo by Marion Muliaumaseali'i, October 2012

messages and by publishing sermons on the topic. Some people interviewed were fearful of the consequences of climate change. In one instance, this has led to escalations of early warnings based on rumours. Climate change in Tuvalu is, therefore, far from a straightforward issue, and ongoing dialogue between Western sciences, traditional knowledge and religious faith are contested in local communication spaces in complex ways.

Gender & Governance

The traditional governance structure of Tuvalu, Falekaupule, was recognised in legislation in 1997[7]. A recent study identifies a number of gender-based impediments to participation in decision-making through these governance structures, as the traditional and patriarchal Falekaupule serves to exclude women and youth from these fora[8]. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and communication for development (C4D) organisations have come to serve as an outlet for women to express their views. The gendered dimensions of civic participation, particularly with respect to issues such as climate change[9], may therefore have implications for outreach, awareness campaigns and other efforts.

State of Media and Communications

Media and Communications Platforms

The Tuvalu Media Department (TMD), under the Office of the Prime Minister, is the only media outlet in Tuvalu. This department was corporatised for a short time and became the Tuvalu Media Corporation, but the situation was reversed in 2008 as it was not viable as a commercial corporation.

In 2011 the TMD received funding from Japan for a new building, although staff indicated in our interviews that their priority is new equipment. Japan also provided funding for the AM transmission to be fixed, which means that Tuvalu now has more reliable transmissions. Tuvalu Echoes, a local newspaper produced by the TMD, is no longer in operation, making radio the main form of information delivery.

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7   http://www.tuvalu-legislation.tv/tuvalu/DATA/PRIN/1997-008/FalekaupuleAct1997.pdf
8   Paton, K. & Fairbairn-Dunlop, P., 2010. Listening to local voices: Tuvaluans respond to climate change. Local Environment, 15(7), pp.687–698.
9   Paton and Fairbaine-Dunlop (2010) found that women are more likely than men to believe in climate change.

Tuvalu island inhabitants rely on a satellite dish for communication and internet access. Irregular internet connections through the government's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) service hamper the ability of news staff to source regional and international news stories. Several research participants reported that the internet can be down for days, even weeks at a time.

Television

There is currently no local television service in Tuvalu, but the TMD is keen to seek funding to begin operations in this area. There is access to cable television via satellite run by SKY Pacific. Subscribers access Sky Pacific TV through the local Sky Pacific distributor, the Tuvalu Telecommunication Corporation, however, SKY Pacific recently decided to move the satellite closer to the Solomon Islands and Nauru. Unless a larger satellite is provided (which could potentially increase costs from AUD$400 to AUD$2,000 per year, according to a recent report[10]), the signal to Tuvalu will become too weak for subscribers to pick up.

Table m.2   Media and Communication Platforms: Television

Platform	Organisation	Ownership/ Funding	Language/ Content	Sector
Television	No local television service, but satellite television	SKY News Pacific	English receives Radio New Zealand International Reports	Commercial

Radio

The TMD operates Tuvalu Radio, the only radio station in Tuvalu, and broadcasts from the main island of Funafuti. Radio Tuvalu has three broadcast periods throughout the day (morning, noon and evening) for two to three hours each (except in the case of disaster warnings). Broadcast periods are limited to these hours due to the high electricity costs of AM transmission. Government departments and other groups can access radio time slots in the morning for a fee (cost not stated). When Radio Tuvalu is off air, programming from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is transmitted. Japanese funding in 2011 enabled the construction of a new FM broadcast studio. The installation of upgraded transmission equipment allows Radio Tuvalu to be heard across each of Tuvalu's nine islands[11].

Table m.3   Media and Communication Platforms: Radio

Platform	Organisation	Ownership/ Funding	Language/ Content	Sector
Radio	Radio Tuvalu	Tuvalu Media Department, government-owned and funded	Music (Pacific and Western), NGO and government content. English and Tuvaluan	Government

Newspaper/ Newsletter

The only newspaper in Tuvalu, Tuvalu Echoes, recently ceased publication due to the high cost of printing and ink. The TMD did not report any plans to revive this publication.

Online and Mobile Media

Use of online platforms is constrained by unreliable internet connections. Younger staff are said to be interested in social media and engage in social networking in their personal lives but so far, the TMD has not started using these platforms as part of its core work. Use of social networking is also impeded by the fact that Facebook is blocked in the government's network due to concerns that the site may impact on productivity.

Since the closure of Tuvalu Echoes, the TMD has started an unofficial digital newsletter, which is, essentially, a reproduction of radio news and content. This newsletter is emailed to national and international groups including the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), PacNews, as well as Tuvaluans living abroad.

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10   Drageset, Daniel. 2013. TUVALU: SKY Pacific satellite move may end prime television broadcasts. Pacific Media Centre. Wednesday, April 17, 2013.
       Item: 8260. http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/pacific-media-watch/tuvalu-sky-pacific-satellite-move-may-end-prime-television-broadcasts-8260
11   Endou, Shuuichi (30 December 2011). "New AM Radio Station in Funafuti". Tuvalu-News.TV.

Platform	Organisation	Ownership/Funding	Language/Content	Sector
Email/internet	Unofficial digital newsletter	Initiative of staff at the Tuvalu Media Department	Reproduction of radio content	Government

Other Communication Platforms

The airport runway on Funafuti island is the key social space in Funafuti, used for sports and leisure and for community contact each night from 5pm.

Table m.5   Media and Communication Platforms: Other Communication Platforms

Platform	Organisation	Funding	Language/Content	Sector
Public spaces (runway)	Airport	NA	Tuvaluan	Community

Media and Communications Landscape

This section of the report focuses on Tuvalu's media and communication sector across four key areas: policy and legislation, media systems, capacity building and content. It provides an overview of the state of media across the four areas and aligns them with Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), program components, as defined by the six PACMAS strategic areas: Technicians, Pacific Emergency Broadcast Systems, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs), Media Associations, Climate Change and Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs). Media Systems includes a focus on Technicians and Pacific Emergency Broadcast Systems (PEBS); Capacity Building includes TVETS and Media Associations; and Content looks at Climate Change and NCDs. It provides an overview of media and communication across these areas and aligns them with PACMAS program components.

Policy and Legislation

Relevant media and communication legislation in Tuvalu includes the Tuvalu Media Corporation Act 1999, the Television License Regulation Act 2005, and the Tuvalu Telecommunications Corporation Act 1993. Although the Tuvalu Media Corporation Act supported the Tuvalu Media Corporation, in 2000 this body was de-corporatised and reintegrated into the ministry in 2008. There is no newspaper licensing system. The Television License Regulation of 2005 allows for allocation of commercial, non-commercial and temporary licenses.

The Constitution protects freedom of expression subject to other laws relating to defense, public safety, public order, public morality, public health, reputations, rights and freedoms of others, privacy, independence of the judiciary and so on. Freedom of the Tuvalu Media Corporation is specifically included in the Media Corporation Act 1999, but since de-corporatisation, the TMD, in practice, is not free from the government. No cases of direct censorship or threats against media professionals have been reported in recent years, however, the Public Order Act was used in 2011 to ban political meetings of more than 10 people, which attracted criticism from the Pacific Freedom Forum[12]. There is no independent media council, and no locally developed code of ethics being used by media outlets.

Telecommunication services are governed under the Telecommunication Ordinance of 1979 and the Telecommunications Corporations Act 1993. The government's Tuvalu Telecommunication Corporation has a monopoly on the provision of telecommunications services. Although there has been some outsourcing of mobile services, reports suggest that more liberalisation and reforms are required[13].

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12   "the government said that rumours of threats to burn down lawmakers' residences had made the ban necessary. The emergency order was revoked after four weeks, with the provision that public meetings could be held only with permission from the police commissioner", http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/tuvalu, accessed June 2013; Perrottet, A. & Robie, D., 2011. Pacific Media Freedom 2011 : A status report. Pacific Journalism Review, 17(2), pp.148–186

13   Pacific Island Forum Secretariat. 2010. Final report for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat: Review of Pacific Regional Digital Strategy; Part A: Technological Capacity http://www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Review%20of%20Digital%20Strategy_PartA.pdf Accessed April 2013

Media Systems

Media systems take into consideration technical skills, support and infrastructure. It also explores emergency broadcast systems and experience from past disasters and crises in Tuvalu.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Technicians

Japan recently funded significant equipment upgrades for the Tuvalu Media Department, including a new transmitter. However, technicians interviewed expressed concerns about the costs associated with maintenance if equipment breaks down after the one year warranty expires. If this occurs, technicians from overseas will need to be called in to fix the problem. The TMD attempted to allocate funds in the budget for maintenance; however, the allocation was not approved by the government, which considered maintenance funds unnecessary for new equipment.

The internet in Tuvalu is provided by the government's ICT Department. There are reported to be serious problems with internet connections on the islands, with research participants repeatedly stating that the internet can be down for days at a time.

Technicians interviewed were keen to be involved in a technical support network but have concerns about fees and funding: *'Yeah, I mean we are desperate to have organisations ... that can provide training for technicians but then it's another, again, the problem of money'* (TUVALU04). The TMD is hoping to recruit new technicians in 2013.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Emergency Broadcast System

Tuvalu's National Disaster Plan was developed in 1997 and revised in 2010 and 2011. When talking about the plans, interviewees usually refer to tsunamis and cyclones. According to the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC), the plans only apply to natural disasters, and the NDMC does not see itself as having a role in the event of a political crisis. Political unrest or riots are said to be the role of the police, but when asked, the police were not able to comment on plans for political crises. Staff at the Tuvalu Media Department said they would treat riots like any normal news event.

The National Disaster Plan does not include a communications section and, although all interviewees seemed to have a clear understanding of the information flows in a disaster (eg: Meteorology to NDMC, NDMC to Radio Tuvalu), none referenced an official written procedure. Most interviewees suggested they *'automatically know what to do'* (TUVALU04), rather than refer to a specific document. There has been some progress in this area, as a representative from the TMD attended a PACMAS conference on the issue and has since developed some protocols and an unofficial plan. This plan has yet to be formally integrated into the overall National Disaster Plan. Warnings and alerts of pending disasters generally come from Hawaii. The NDMC forwards warnings on to Radio Tuvalu but a Disaster Task Force conducts the majority of the information dissemination themselves via radio; the TMD announcers are reportedly not involved. In addition to the radio announcements, police cars with sirens and loudspeakers drive around and alert the public. An SMS alert system was trialed, but it took –three to four hours for the message to be received.

The Tuvalu Telecommunications Corporation has its own internal document for disaster procedures. Again, this plan does not seem to be integrated into the overall National Disaster Management Plan. The ICT director is not part of the Disaster Committee. However, few believe that the internet would be useful in a disaster because of its unreliability. Like all of Tuvalu's islands, Funafuti has very low elevation, and research participants say the radio station is likely to be at high risk in the event of a tsunami. One interviewee even suggested that the only option would be to evacuate everyone by helicopter. There are no generators available on Tuvalu.

Several barriers to achieving effective disaster responses have been identified. First, the TMD seems at odds with other stakeholders in terms of the correct procedures to alert the public in the event of a tsunami warning. In a recent false alarm, one interviewee felt that he could not wait for official warnings from the NDMC, and instead decided to turn on the radio transmitters after hearing rumours of a tsunami warning. The TMD believes they should broadcast a message telling people to stay calm and wait for official announcements. The TMD

representative interviewed believes there is no time to wait for official procedures for tsunami warnings. Secondly, there are potential challenges associated with the radio's limited broadcast hours. Currently, some of those interviewed believe that if the radio started playing music out of normal transmission hours, people would know something was happening and would then alert their neighbours. This process assumes that people leave their radio on all the time, which could not be verified in this research. In addition, it was noted that the NDMC does not meet very often outside of disaster warnings.

There are significant challenges associated with communicating with the outer islands in the event of a disaster. Each island has a disaster committee with a satellite phone and can also receive radio broadcasts. Interviewees expressed a fear of becoming isolated; both inter-island and international communication breakdowns were of serious concern. Face-to-face communication is a key strategy for disaster preparedness messages. This involves visits to outer islands to talk about disaster preparedness, and often this message finds its way into other environment-related talks and workshops. Other times, disaster committee members on outer islands are invited to the main islands. These activities do not appear to be regular or planned.

One interviewee identified a problem communicating with the small (est. less than 100) immigrant Chinese population, given that all community awareness and warning communication materials are in Tuvaluan. In addition, the Chinese community is quite isolated from mainstream Tuvaluan networks. Finally, one interviewee noted problems with responding to slower disasters such as drought. This was an area suggested as being in need of review.

Capacity Building

Capacity building includes an understanding of the level of qualifications among existing media and communication practitioners; training and capacity building support and organisations providing such support. It also takes into consideration media associations and TVETs in Tuvalu.

Although the TMD is a member of the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), there have been some frustrations about access to training. One interviewee clearly articulated the discontent and confusion about who qualifies for training and how information is circulated amongst members of PINA, which provides most of the regional training: '*I don't know how PINA does the selection, but there are grievances... people ... get information... from elsewhere, they said, oh, there was this training held in Vanuatu, something like that... and why weren't we involved, included? And I said, well I don't know, so we get in touch with the Suva PINA office and they said, oh, that's mainly geared for Melanesia. Why differentiate, you know, we are all journalists, I don't know*' (TUVALU07).

Interviewees also conveyed a general lack of access to training for technicians. Technicians usually need to travel to New Zealand or Fiji for training. Funding to cover travel is always a barrier. Technicians can apply for scholarships from the government for formal education and qualifications, but the need for training funds outweighs the availability of scholarships. The noted exception was a recent training event run by PACMAS in Samoa, which was very well received. As a result, senior technicians quite often run in-house training and mentoring for junior technicians.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Media Associations

There is no separate organisation for journalists and media staff nationally, as the TMD is the only media organisation in Tuvalu. The TMD is a member of PINA, the regional media association. That PINA only provides support to reporters is said to be a problem, as there are many other staff members who could benefit from regional training. The TMD has also sought advice on freedom of information from UNDP in Fiji in the past. One interviewee has begun investigating the possibility of setting up a 'small islands' media organisation, which would include media personnel from Tuvalu, Palau and Kiribati, as they recognise that the needs of smaller islands in the region are unique and need to be addressed differently: '*We want to set up our small islands media ... organisation so that we can look into our own needs and challenges and how we can voice ... we don't have much voice ... because we have a lot of our own problems that might not be regarded as problems in other countries of the Pacific*' (TUVALU07).

Figure 2: The Tuvalu Media Department. Photo taken by Marion Muliaumaseali'i, October 2012

PACMAS Strategic Activity: TVETs

There is a TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) but it only offers four subjects, none related to media training. Media and communications-related students (including technicians) are usually sent to the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Fiji, for which the government provides some scholarships.

Content

This discussion of media content focuses on communication platforms and programs and ways to address issues related to climate change and NCDs. Climate change and NCDs are two long-term strategic activities in the PACMAS program.

Hayes (2008) describes in detail the local journalistic practices, or *Tino Tusitala*, which literally translates as 'person who writes stories or tales'[14]. Importantly, he notes the significant isolation between the islands of Tuvalu, where islands do not have resident journalists, and communication is only possible via satellite phone. Hayes says, 'Quite rarely do journalists actually travel to outer islands as part of their duties, an expensive trip on one of Tuvalu's two cargo boats, unless they are sent to report on a major event' [15]. This centre-periphery divide is an important consideration in the context of content production, as well as reception.

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14   Hayes, M., 2008. On Being a Tuvaluan Tino Tusitala: Reporting from the frontlines of global warming. In E. Papoutsaki & S. H. U., eds. South Pacific Islands Communication: Regional Perspectives, Local Issues. Singapore, Aotearoa, Suva: Asian media Information and Communication Centre, pp. 261.
15   Hayes, M., 2008. On Being a Tuvaluan Tino Tusitala: Reporting from the frontlines of global warming. In E. Papoutsaki & S. H. U., eds. South Pacific Islands Communication: Regional Perspectives, Local Issues. Singapore, Aotearoa, Suva: Asian media Information and Communication Centre, pp. 264.

'We explained the drought and then we also tell them how to be cautious. Because in our ancient days our own people they are very smart. They are very smart in preparing foods that can be stored for long. And then once they feel that it's going to be a wet season they start to prepare. When they experience drought season they also store water and everything. Nowadays, those experiences were buried with our ancestors [...] they did not share it; they just take it with them. Only a few are skills that we have these days.' (TUVALU05)

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Climate Change

Although Tuvalu figures frequently in Western news stories and documentaries in association with climate change, and despite the continual arrival of foreign journalists, the awareness of climate change among Tuvaluans is low and information does not filter through to local people[16]. This is especially true for people living on the outer islands. Those interviewed for this report also agreed with this assessment of the general level of awareness: *'You know, the world is more aware about Tuvalu and climate change than most people, like the local people here, you know... I mean, this sort of makes me worry too'* (TUVALU09). On the other hand, all the interviewees included in the research for this report who were asked about climate change, had high levels of awareness and expressed a degree of fear about climate change.

Public awareness is often complicated by belief in Christian narratives[17], a point echoed by many interviewees. One person pointed to the blind faith many people demonstrate in terms of divine protection from natural disasters: *'...[in the] last two years a lot of awareness on climate change and the impact, [but] people still ignore and they, you know, the Bible when Noah's Ark, when God says, I'll give you a sign that there will be no more flood, and that is in the back of their mind today. They always refer to the Bible'* (TUVALU05). Another said: *'I mean they're still, you know, the people saying no, okay, God give us this land, yeah, and you know, he gave us this land, he will look after us as he's always done'* (TUVALU09).

Some churches are taking a stance on this issue and play a leading role in climate change communication. Church representatives report visiting communities on outer islands to present biblical and scientific information about climate change. One such person regularly writes a sermon in a monthly newsletter on climate change. In addition, the Church has sent an employee who is involved in climate change advocacy to do communications training in Papua New Guinea.

By contrast, the local mass media does not seem to have been a key part of climate change engagement so far. No interviewees suggested that there has been a strong role in climate change communication from Radio Tuvalu and, when asked, the Tuvalu Media Department said NCDs receive more attention. Government departments and other groups (ie: NGOs) can access the radio but need to pay a fee.

Specific engagement (including camps) with youth was mentioned, and the government has included this strategy as an objective in relation to planning. The lack or loss of traditional knowledge, as a barrier to adaptation, was mentioned by participants who lamented the disappearance of indigenous knowledge about how to deal with natural phenomena, and the impact on contemporary living practices.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

Although there are some suggestions in reports and websites that Tuvalu completed the STEPS survey of NCDs in 2008, the results have not as yet been published on the World Health Organisation's website. The key NCDs mentioned by interviewees were diabetes, high blood pressure and hypertension. Diet is said to be the key cause of problems, especially as Tuvalu has a reduced capacity to grow food locally.

In contrast to Radio Tuvalu's lack of coverage of climate change issues, there have been some interesting communication initiatives relating to NCDs by the TMD. Most notable among these is a radio drama series that included NCD themes and other radio content, '... *that's our aim through the health with NCDs... my girls have tried to make radio promo and sometimes other drama. We also try to put drama and know like essence of across NCDs into a drama'* (TUVALU07). In addition, both the Department of Health and Tuvalu Family Health (TUFHA) host regular radio programs. Several interviewees identify the radio station as playing an important role in NCD awareness. Most agree that general awareness of NCDs is high, with awareness among journalists also high. The media seems well connected to the Department of Health and NCD advocacy groups.

16   Farbotko, C. & Lazrus, H., 2011. The first climate refugees? Contesting global narratives of climate change in Tuvalu. Global Environmental Change, 22(2), pp.382–390
17   Paton, K. & Fairbairn-Dunlop, P., 2010. Listening to local voices: Tuvaluans, respond to climate change. Local Environment, 15(7), pp. 687-698.

However, despite the attention, there is still a sense that it is not leading to change: *'Sometimes we do a lot of awareness program but people seem not to take notice of what we are doing'* (TUVALU07).

One of the journalists at the TMD was sent to training in Samoa (funded by PACMAS) relating to NCDs and reports positively on the value of this training.

Crosscutting Issues: Disability, Gender and Youth

Disability was not perceived as a prominent issue among those interviewed. One person made a reference to disability, describing it as a potential barrier to people logistically being able to attend climate change awareness activities. UN ESCAP's Social Development Division[18] reports that approximately 250 persons, or 3 per cent of the population, are considered to have disabilities.

Women outnumber men at the Tuvalu Media Department. Of the 20 staff, only five are males. Four of the five male staff are technicians and the fifth male staff member is an announcer. There remains, however, gender-based impediments to participation in decision-making; this emerged most explicitly in discussions about climate change. A recent study found that women and youth are excluded from the traditional governance structure (Falekaupule), and that men are less likely to believe in climate change in Tuvalu. For women, NGOs are the key forum for debating climate change and other issues[19].

Youth are a focus of climate change advocacy and government planning regarding awareness activities. However, other key issues facing young people include dropping out of school and teenage pregnancy, so other issues become less of a focus.

18   UN ESCAP. 2011. Country Overview Tuvalu. Geneva: United Nations.
19   Paton, K. & Fairbairn-Dunlop, P., 2010. Listening to local voices: Tuvaluans respond to climate change. Local Environment, 15(7), pp.687–698.

Summary of Findings

The media and communication environment in Tuvalu faces many challenges based on the country's population, size and the distances between islands. The key insights across the four areas of policy and legislation, media systems, capacity building and content are summarised below.

Policy and Legislation

- The Constitution protects freedom of expression, but there are no explicit references to freedom of media.
- Freedom of media was specifically included in the Tuvalu Media Corporation Act of 1993, but since being de-corporatised in 2008, the Tuvalu Media Department is no longer separated from the government.
- The Public Order Act was used in 2011 to ban political meetings for a short time.
- There is no market competition in telecommunications, and no liberalisation legislation in place.

Media Systems

- Tuvalu has recently had upgrades to equipment funded by Japan, but technicians are worried about how they would cope with breakdowns after the one year warranty expires.
- Internet connections are unreliable and intermittent.
- Technicians are keen to be involved in support networks.
- Emergency plans are associated with tsunamis and cyclones; they do not have a communications section, so knowledge of communication procedures is informal.
- Disaster awareness is hampered to some extent by faith-based rejections of risks.

Capacity Building

- Few media professionals, including the technicians, have formal qualifications.
- Funding is a barrier to accessing regional and international training.
- There are no separate media organisations or associations in Tuvalu, and there is only one media outlet.
- The TMD is a member of PINA, although access to training and support remains problematic.

Content

- Central-periphery divides have an impact on the news and content included in mass media.
- Media coverage of climate change is low, and despite some faith-based rejections of risks, churches have become leading advocates of climate change issues.
- Face-to-face communication is preferred for disaster awareness.
- The TMD shows great enthusiasm for covering NCD issues in a variety of formats.

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