

Chapter 23

Promoting Peace Through Climate Change Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

Climate change has affected people's peace in the form of impact on livelihoods, health, and/or well-being. Most of these peace impacts, however, are felt significantly by people who are living in the low-lying communities in the Pacific, who are within and/or close to the Ring of Fire. This chapter is based on a study of peace and climate change adaptation that was conducted in the Pacific island region in 2016. It took place in five communities in Suva, Fiji: Vatuwaqa, Raiwaqa, Raiwai, Samabula, and Toorak. It highlights the impact of climate change on peace, and then it indicated how peace can be promoted in the form of climate change adaptation for these communities. Based on the results of this research, the author recommends that peace should be incorporated into the Pacific islands national adaptation plan.

INTRODUCTION

Evidence suggests that climate change impacting factors such as sea level rise, temperature rise, heavy rainfall, seasonal variation, drought and other Extreme Weather Events (EWEs) have been affecting peoples' and communities' livelihoods, health and well-being (IPCC, 2001; 2007a; 2007b; 2013; 2014a; 2014b). Most of these impacting factors are already experienced by low-lying communities in the Pacific such as those in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu (Bell, Johnson, Ganachaud, Gehrke, Hobday, Hoegh-Guldberg, . . . Waycott, 2011; Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) & Ministry of Agriculture Food Forests and Fisheries (MAFFF), 2014; Government of Tonga, 2009; Government of Tonga & UNDP, 2009; IPCC, 2001; 2007a; 2014b; McIver, 2016; Ministry of Environment Energy Climate Change Disaster Management Meteorology Information and Communications, 2014; Nunn, Mulgrew, Scott-Parker, Hine, Marks, Mahar, & Maebuta, 2016; Oli, 2013; Reardon & Oliver, 1983; Reddy, 1983; Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), 2013; UNEP-WCMC, 2015; Vatukela, 2013; WHO, 2015; Woodroffe, 1983). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3001-5.ch023

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(IPCC, 2001; 2007a; 2007b; 2013; 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2014d) these negative impacting factors are expected to increase in the future if not addressed properly.

These negative features may include, but not limited to:

- Loss of agriculture and vegetation;
- Fishing and fishery impacts;
- Impact on education;
- Impact on churches and religious activities;
- Damages and destructions to housing and building environment;
- Coastal erosion and inundations;
- Human-induced impactful activities (e.g. sand mining and deforestations).

The sum of all these impacts leads to a diminished well-being of the population (Brown & Murray, 2013; Havea, 2014; Havea, Jacot des Combes, Hemstock, Gee, Han, Khan, & Moore, 2017; Kuruppu, 2009; Kuruppu & Liverman, 2011; Luber & Hess, 2007; Maeke, 2013; Magee, Verdon-Kidd, Kiem, & Royle, 2016; McIver, Woodward, Davies, Tibwe, & Iddings, 2014; O'Brien, 2013; Oli, 2013; UN News Centre, 2009; UNEP-WCMC, 2015; Vatukela, 2013; WHO, 2015).

This chapter intends to highlight the link climate change challenges has with the peaceful livelihoods of 400 people across five communities in Suva, Fiji. It has been driven by anecdotal evidence and the possibility of using climate adaptation as a regime for peace (United Nations, 2009; 2010a; 2012; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992; 2015). In other words, this chapter hopes to shed light on the nexus of climate change and peace in an attempt to motivate people to consider their environmental footprint and the toll it might take on their lives given the uncertainties that climate change may have on people's future.

The work presented here is based on a study of peace and climate change adaptation that was conducted in the Pacific islands region. It is an attempt to explore and unravel the relationship peace and climate change adaptation have together. This study involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. The analytical strategy included descriptive statistics, correlation and binary regression. The impact of climate change on peace were measured using Likert scale rank from very low to very high and nominal data. The levels of unit of analysis the study embraces are: peace at the individual level as well as peace at the community level.

For the purposes of this study, the definition of peace that was used was related to being accessible to a clean water supply or hydrological system and better health and well-being care services via climate adaptation strategies. Increasingly, this has become the norm – with Johan Galtung's (Galtung, 1969; 1996) idea of "positive peace" (as also incorporating socio and economic justice and equality) being able to be used here, but earlier, Mahātmā Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Gandhi, 1983; 2001) already spoke about hunger and poverty, as the worst form of violence, peace is, therefore, significant not only to understand it, from a climate change point of view but as well as, to assist people to achieve their positive and negative peace through community led adaptation or climate change adaptation of the people.

As a result, peace may not mean a total absence of any conflict, rather it may mean, the absence of violence in all forms, and the unfolding of conflict, in a constructive manner. By accepting both definitions by Galtung and Gandhi, peace can, therefore, be found when people or a community are interacting with each other non-violently, and are managing their conflict positively – with respectful attention to the legitimate needs and interest of all parties involved.

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