

SOPAC NEWS

SPC Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC)



Setting up Trimble R10 GPS for Real Time Kinematic Survey to measure inundation extent and wave run up

POST-CYCLONE RAPID ASSESSMENT ASSISTS TONGAN EMERGENCY AUTHORITIES

A rapid post-disaster assessment recently conducted by specialists from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's (SPC) Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) will help Tongan emergency managers better understand the impacts of Cyclone Ian and prepare for future storms.

In early January, Cyclone Ian devastated parts of Tonga, particularly in the Ha'apai Group. The category-five storm killed one person, injured 14 others, displaced more than 4,000 people, and destroyed food crops and infrastructure.

In the wake of this storm, Tongan authorities requested assistance from SPC's Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) to assess damages on the island of Lifuka in the Ha'apai Group.

'They wanted us to provide technical data on the extent of inundation and erosion in

coastal zones as well as water supplies and groundwater contamination in Lifuka,' SPC Senior Technical Assistant and Oceanographer Zulfikar Begg explains. 'They also asked us to train their geology staff so that they could do the same rapid assessments in the outer islands.'

Having previously completed extensive baseline surveys of Lifuka's coasts and water resources in 2011 as part of the Pacific Adaptation Strategy Assistance Programme (PASAP), the SPC team arrived in Lifuka on 28 January ready to hit the ground running.

What did they find? According to Begg, 'There was a lot of inundation – up to 94 meters measuring from the base of the beach. Because of that inundation impact, now at spring tides and high tides, the water moves further inland than it used to. At high tide, the water moves up to the road or sometimes into the compound of

the government buildings.'

'Lifuka has faced serious coastal inundation challenges since the island shifted following an earthquake in 2006. Much of the island's key infrastructure, including the hospital and government buildings, is now very vulnerable to flooding. The seawalls, sandbags and structures built to protect the coast in the last few years were scattered by Cyclone Ian', reports Begg.

Data collected by the SPC team will be used to generate an animated wave model, allowing emergency managers to visualise how the waves impacted the coast during the storm. This will help authorities better anticipate future cyclone events.

In addition, says Begg, 'The Tongan government will use our data to decide whether to build houses in the same area with improved building codes or to move them elsewhere.'

THE PACIFIC EXPLORES THE LINKS BETWEEN WATER AND ENERGY ON WORLD WATER DAY

Did you know that 8% of global energy generation is used for pumping, treating and transporting water to various consumers? Did you also know that most of the electricity generated in the Pacific Island countries and territories is from water?

The links between these two scarce yet important resources, water and energy, is the theme of this year's World Water Day, celebrated globally on 22nd March.

Each year, World Water Day is acknowledged throughout the Pacific with the support of awareness materials prepared and distributed by the SOPAC Division of SPC. This year's theme draws attention to the vital role of water and energy sources to the sustainable development of Pacific Island countries and territories.

While energy is needed to pump, treat and distribute water to Pacific households, water is also an important energy source in several Pacific Island countries and territories, where the energy of rivers and streams is harnessed by hydro-electric facilities at the municipal, village and even household scale.

Solomone Fifita, head of the SPC Economic Development Division's Energy Programme, noted the close linkages that exist between the conservation of water and energy resources. "The choices we make every day on our water and energy use are closely related, and decisions on the supply, distribution, price and use of water and energy impact one another," he said.

"In the Pacific, we're making some great progress in developing renewable energy sources and demonstrating innovative



SPC staff distributing World Water Day 2014 awareness materials to invited students during the celebration of World Water Day in Korovou, Tailevu

water-saving technologies such as eco-sanitation, yet many Pacific communities still struggle to secure safe, sustainable and affordable energy, water and sanitation solutions."

"This is why international events such as World Water Day are important to celebrate our achievements, while at the same time advocate on the need for greater efforts to improve the sustainability of our precious

resources such as water and energy."

World Water Day is being celebrated across the Pacific in a variety of ways. In Fiji, activities kicked off yesterday in the town of Korovou, Tailevu, where local communities and students from nearby schools joined in games and exercises designed to explore the links between water and energy and the importance of these resources to future generations.

SURVEY ON CHANGING WAVES AND COASTS IN THE PACIFIC TO SUPPORT BETTER COASTAL MANAGEMENT



The foreground shows an oceanographic instrument anchored to shallow rocks at Maui Bay, Fiji and recording temperature, water levels, waves and water flow

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2007) lists wave climate as one of six major climate drivers for coastal systems. The wave climate around individual islands varies according to the nearshore water depths and reef shape. As yet, however, there has been no formal assessment of baseline wave climate or climate change effects on wind-waves at scales relevant to Pacific Island countries. This represents a key uncertainty for climate change adaptation.

This major knowledge gap will be addressed by the Changing Waves and Coasts in the Pacific (WACOP) Project. Developed under the ACP Caribbean & Pacific Research

Programme for Sustainable Development and funded by the European Union, the WACOP Project seeks to improve our understanding of regional wave dynamics and their influence on shoreline processes. The outcomes will contribute to regional and global understanding of potential climate change and climate variability impacts with respect to wave climate and provide information for improved understanding of coastal vulnerability and adaptation

responses in Pacific Islands.

Using state of the art open source models that can compute wind-waves from the offshore (Wavewatch III model), through to nearshore wave transformations (SWAN model), to coastal erosion and overtopping (the XBeach model), the project will provide solutions at small island scales, and at scales where decisions about adaptation and energy security need to be made.

Efforts to collect data have commenced since December 2012 with the preparation and deployment of oceanographic instruments in two pioneering field sites in Tuvalu (Fatato Island) and Fiji (Maui Bay). This will eventually lead to stakeholder being better informed on the management of coastal areas that have shallow fringing reefs.

SOPAC COMPENDIUM PROJECT WRAPS-UP FIRST TASK

Wondering what's transpiring down at the databank? Since our first and only update many moons ago, we now have our very own climate-controlled databank room housing numerous documents and charts, meticulously manned by a team of 5 dedicated data management staff.

The SOPAC Compendium is a digital collection of the entire body of knowledge of SOPAC data holdings in the Pacific region from the time of its inception in 1972 to 2010. The project is of a special nature due to the consequences of the Forum Leaders decision to merge the functions of SOPAC into the Secretariat of the Pacific Community as of January 1, 2011. This database was thus set up to facilitate the bringing together of the final dataset of the Division into a formal repository before packaging and delivering respective data to member countries.

The Compendium Console is populated with metadata descriptions of activities/tasks/projects carried out in the 21 countries (17 member countries and 4 associate countries) during the SOPAC "Commission" days since 1972. Research for the compendium content has been completed for all countries with due completion also of the quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) process.

To date, the Compendium now holds a total of 4282 entries in the system. Metadata entries are linked to relevant reports from the Virtual Library; maps and images on GeoNetwork (an interactive portal for maps); and GIS datasets, satellite imagery and related coastal applications. The team have also digitised more than 2300 large format charts and its subsequent data entry into the GeoNetwork. Furthermore, the portal also has a photo database with more than 34,400 registered photos of the Division. Archiving of SOPAC material is well underway including financial documents. Miscellaneous materials which were stored in boxes are also sorted and registered. The cleaning and refining of the compendium entries describing the digital products to enable detection and retrieval from search engines, is a major undertaking that will most likely continue beyond the life of the Project.

of 2013. This data comprised reports, maps and seismic sections and petroleum potential information of the southwest Pacific countries of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga. The team will proceed to georeference and archive this data in a database available for the users. Hard copy maps of the following countries have been shelved into their respective repositories: Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, FSM, Marshall Islands and Fiji Islands.

Staff exchanges in the past year included the farewell of our former Project Supervisors Ms Lala Bukarau and Ms Kata Duaibe several Project Officers and the welcoming of our new Project Supervisor Mr Leonard Wong.

The compendium exercise is a once-in-a-lifetime project and has potential to act as a digital home for other activities of the SOPAC Division post-2011. Retrieving records from different places can be difficult and time-consuming. This exercise has laid a platform that other SPC Divisions can follow through with their respective data holdings and management. This project has given the SOPAC Division a "best shot" chance at putting the Commission records in order, for the new custodians at the greater SPC.



Map stickers and shelving
 Insert top Left: Screenshot of the compendium console
 Insert bottom left: Registration of maps

IWRM IN SOLOMON ISLANDS: EXPLORING INNOVATIVE OPTIONS FOR CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

When the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project started, there was no committee or group to organise the development or management of the Kovi/Kongulai Catchment. There was a trusteeship who received money from lease agreements but they did not undertake any works on the ground or develop management strategies. To inspire new thinking on how to manage the catchment and see its ecological value as a potential benefit, the IWRM with the communities developed an eco-tourism plan for the Kovi/Kongulai Catchment.

The IWRM Project began to liaise with the community through the two chiefs of Kongulai and Kovi. Through their role as community representatives, the chiefs were able to improve the projects understanding of the community's needs and incorporate their traditional knowledge into the project. The chiefs would also facilitate community consultations and workshops with the IWRM to create a two-street of information and understanding. Through the work of these men, the project began to raise awareness on the values of the water catchment with representatives of each village, about 20 people including women, youth and chiefs.

Mr. Kalisto Ngao was appointed as a casual staff member to operate the hydrological installations in the catchment. His appointment increased community involvement in the project and improved people's understanding and ownership of the technical aspects of catchment management. Mr Ngao goes out each week to take readings and reports to the IWRM project office. These data are used to monitor the Kovi stream's water level and flow behaviour. During other catchment investigations and assessments, members of the community went out and assisted consultants to undertake biodiversity, water quality and health surveys.

Through their involvement in the surveys, community members gained experience

in survey techniques, technical knowledge about their water catchment and how we can impact upon it. Participants in turn provided the project with extensive and essential traditional knowledge about the ecology and biodiversity of the area. People are now starting to understand the value of the natural assets in their area. As Mr. Peter Pukuvati said, "I used to see the insects and everything as creatures of no value. When I saw the results of the bio-diversity survey I see now that they are integral parts of the environment and are valuable for themselves".

From the assessment of what is actually in the catchment the community has become interested in the idea of an eco-tourism plan as they now recognise the richness of their environment and how this might be interesting to other people. Through partnership with IUCN the project secured funding from the Kiedanrem Nature Conservation Fund of Japan who funded the development of the Kovi/Kongulai eco-tourism plan. Currently tourists can come to the area and pay a local person to be their guide however there is no formal mechanism for this and no management plan, the eco-tourism plan seeks to formalise all these activities so they can be limited and monitored.

"I am currently involved in another association that links culture and the environment from a traditional context and I see this as the next step for our catchment, eco-tourism could be the idea to venture into", said Chief Primo Pukukesa, when asked about the significance of moving toward eco-tourism.

The community and IWRM Project hope this will be an example for other communities to explore options for sustainable financing to take care of their catchments and generate money for their communities. By venturing into eco-tourism the catchment can be preserved and the community will have some incentive to manage and look after their land and water resources.

The eco-tourism plan was completed through local consultation and will now be used to leverage additional funding from other line government ministries and donors to support its implementation. These interventions include camping, bushwalks along the streams, and caves in which was found some early cave paintings. Further works need to be undertaken to identify the cultural value of the area, in particular the newly discovered cave painting and locations of cultural importance for preservation purposes.

Through the development of the plan I have realised the importance of learning from community what their aspirations are for their area and together discovering ways to use the unique biodiversity to the advantage of both the environment and the communities livelihoods.



One of the "insects of value" discovered through the biodiversity survey

IWRM IN FIJI: EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH COMMUNITY DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Prior to the implementation of the GEF Pacific Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project in the Nadi Basin, there was a fragmented approach to disaster management in the catchment. The Nadi IWRM Project helped 27 communities establish Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMC's) and plans. The

process involved women from the villages, many of which became the chairpersons of the CDMCs. This has helped to empower the women of the communities and to formally recognise their important and often overlooked role in disaster response and recovery.

The previous fragmented approach to disaster management was typified by a lack of coordination among the communities, and between the communities and response agencies. This led to lives lost during flooding events, delayed response times and the recurrence of slow and costly recovery. Normally in the villages of the Nadi

Basin, women bear the brunt of a disaster and are at the centre of recovery, working to handle the situation and take care of families.

In many of the villages where the committee has been established, women have been chosen as the chairperson. Mrs Rafik, chairperson of the Wailoaloa CDMC, says “This is significant in a male dominated area and has given us an active role in the decision making of the community”.

Through active inclusion of women in the development of the CDMC and plan, the project has been able to provide recognition of the important role that women play in disaster response and recovery. It has been a source of great pride for many women and as Mrs Rafik says “This is the first time I have had any recognition of my hard work and we had a great feast to celebrate!”

Mrs Rafik was running the Wailoaloa Women’s Group which the IWRM project

approached to be the foundation for the CDMC. This came about because Mr. Vinesh Kumar, the IWRM Project Manager, had previously run separate consultations with the Wailoaloa Women’s Group, discussing the issues in the area, in particular the major problems that flooding causes. As a result, the women became confident in their understanding of disasters in the area and asked for the CDMC training in Wailoaloa village.



Wailoaloa community discussing high risk areas during floods



Community members being trained in disaster response

Through involvement in the establishment of the CDMC and the subsequent management plan, Mrs Rafik says of the experience “I now have the confidence to facilitate the community in a disaster and am much more confident to talk in front of a group about our disaster situations”. Mrs Rafik went on to discuss the powerful ripple effect CDMC has had on people, particularly women, that now people are starting to see disaster response and recovery as everybody’s business and that they need to be part of the solution. “We discuss with other women in other communities the benefits of using this system to respond to disaster and we are proud of our role in looking after the community”.

Since the establishment of the CDMCs, there has been no lives lost in the villages during flooding events. The Nadi IWRM Project continues to provide support to these communities and was instrumental in the establishment of the Nadi early warning flood system.

PROJECT TO BUILD DISASTER AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

The project entitled 'ACP-EU Building Safety & Resilience in the Pacific' is the Pacific component of the 10th EDF Intra-ACP envelope for Disaster Risk Reduction. It corresponds directly to priorities identified under the 2009 EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in developing countries and its implementation plan. The project's purpose is to strengthen the capacity of PICs to address existing and emerging challenges with regards to the risks posed by natural hazards and related disasters, while maximising synergies

between Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). The overall objective of the project is to reduce the vulnerability as well as the social, economic and environmental costs of disasters caused by natural hazards, thereby achieving regional and national sustainable development and poverty reduction goals in the Pacific Island countries and territories. Recent appointments were being made to the Project's Team and they are as follows:

Project Manager – Mr Taito Nakalevu



Mr Nakalevu holds a Masters in Geography and has extensive experience in project management at the national and regional level, has worked in all the countries in the Pacific and is very familiar with the inter-relationship between Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and DRM. Prior to joining SOPAC, Mr Nakalevu served as Manager of the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change project based in SPREP.

Mr Nakalevu will be responsible for all project planning; developing project documentation; implementing the DRM and CCA project initiatives at the regional, national and sub national levels in the 15 Pacific ACP States; as well as monitoring, evaluating and reporting on project deliverables.

He commenced service at SOPAC, SPC the beginning of March 2014 and is based at the SOPAC Division of SPC in Suva, Fiji.

Officer, North Pacific – Mr Noa Tokavou (returning staff member, ex EDF9 NDF project)



Holds a BA in Management/Public Administration & Land Management/Development. He also holds a graduate Diploma in Development Studies and other tertiary qualifications. He is currently pursuing an MA. He has extensive experience in DRM having recently been a part of the EU EDF 9 NDF project supporting DRM capacity building in Pacific Island countries. He has worked extensively with Governments in the Pacific in mainstreaming of DRM into planning and resource allocation processes and also at the community level where he has significant knowledge and experience. In this regard, he has worked in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tonga on JNAP and related initiatives.

He is also a trained DRM instructor in the TAF/OFDA suite of courses and has assisted a few countries in the reviews of their national DRM governance arrangements.

Mr Tokavou will be responsible for project oversight of the DRM and CCA priorities in the target countries in the North Pacific of Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Marshall Islands and Palau, including developing and implementing DRM capacity building strategies and the provision of high-level technical advice and support.

Mr Tokavou commenced service in the project in the month of January 2014 and is based at the SPC regional office in Pohnpei, FSM.

Officer, DRM Regional – Mr Waisale Naqiolevu (returning staff member, ex EDF9 NDF project)



Holds a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science and a Post Graduate Diploma in Development Studies. Over the past 4 years he has built up a significant knowledge and experience base working with Pacific Island countries and has been the focal point for DRM mainstreaming work for SPC/SOPAC in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Nauru. In addition, he has provided project coordination support for the EDF9 NDF and

AusAID National Action Plan Facility projects.

Mr Naqiolevu will provide high-quality technical advice and support to the Project Manager in addressing the requirements of the regional component of the BSRP project. These include supporting: the strengthening of partnerships and collaboration between those involved in DRM and CCA; the mainstreaming of disaster risk within the policies and plans of agency members of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP); coordination of activities to enhance DRM capacity at the regional level and; the 'Roadmap' process for the development of a regional strategy on Disaster and Climate Resilient Development by 2015. In addition to supporting the implementation of the regional component of the project, Waisale will also carry responsibility for supporting a group of countries in implementing their EDF10 priorities.

Mr Naqiolevu commenced work in the project in the month of January 2014 and is based at the SOPAC Division of SPC, in Suva, Fiji.

Officer, Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance – Mr Anthony Blake



Is currently pursuing a Post Graduate Certificate in Disaster Risk Management with the Fiji National University and has very extensive experience in DRM capacity building in the Pacific having recently managed an AusAID-funded multi country project covering 4 countries addressing issues of vulnerability and risk at a community level. He also has significant experience in disaster response

coordination and preparedness capacity building during his tenure with the Fiji National Fire Authority and as a member of the UN Disaster Assessment & Coordination Team. He is a trained DRM instructor in the TAF/OFDA suite of courses and has conducted training in almost all Pacific Island countries.

Mr Blake will be responsible for providing technical advice and secretariat support to enable the development of the Pacific Island

Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA). PIEMA was established to support improved interoperability and cohesiveness between key response agencies in Pacific Island countries and territories. He will typically assist the target agencies (NDMO, Fire & Emergency Services, Police, etc) in the Pacific to develop and implement twinning arrangements with members of the Australasian Fire & Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) with a view to strengthening emergency/disaster preparedness and response capacities. He will also support the development and strengthening of interoperability and strategic guidance towards improved response preparedness.

Mr Blake commenced his service with the project in the month of January 2014 and is based at the SOPAC Division of SPC in Suva, Fiji.

Officer DRM Suva – Ms Suzanne Paisley



Holds a Masters degree in Disaster Management and Sustainable Development. She has worked in DRM in the Pacific for 6 years serving with the UNESCO/IOC in Samoa, UNOCHA in Suva and more recently with the World Bank as a GFDRR DRR and CCA Specialist. She is very familiar with the DRM and CCA issues in the Pacific and has supported mainstreaming of DRR in the Solomon

Islands context.

Ms Paisley will be responsible for providing oversight of the DRM/CCA priorities of a selected group of target countries. She will also be responsible for developing and implementing capacity building and institutional strengthening strategies in the selected countries.

Ms Paisley will commence her service with the project mid-April and will be based in the SOPAC Division of SPC in Suva, Fiji.

Project Assistant – Mrs Asenaca Tawanikaimaro



Mrs Tawanikaimaro is currently pursuing a degree in Information Systems and Economics at the University of the South Pacific. Mrs Tawanikaimaro is not new to SOPAC having carried similar responsibilities for the Disaster Reduction Programme years before. She will be responsible for providing administration and finance support to the project.

Mrs Tawanikaimaro commenced work in the project on 1st April 2014 and in the SOPAC Division of SPC in Suva, Fiji.

BON VOYAGE DR ARTHUR WEBB



Dr Arthur Webb departs this month after more than 10 years at SOPAC, first as a Coastal Processes Adviser and then as Manager of the Oceans and Islands Programme since 2007. Arthur started his career in tropical agriculture and agroforestry in Kiribati, later specializing in coastal management and earning a PhD in sediment biogeochemistry from

Southern Cross University in Australia. Arthur is a lead author on the IPCC 5th Assessment Report- Chapter 29 (Small Islands) and is one of the region's foremost experts in coastal processes. He will be sincerely missed at SPC, but we look forward to crossing paths with him in Tarawa again soon.

Where are you from?

That's complicated! I was born in Germany to British parents and my early childhood was back in the UK and Ireland. I moved to Australia for primary and secondary school and then most of my working life has been here in the Pacific. I feel like I'm from the Pacific these days.

Were you always interested in the sciences as a kid?

Absolutely. I was a dreadful child at school and didn't persevere with school for very long, but I loved field trips and that sort of thing. I was really fascinated by those early nature shows- the scientists would be out in the bush with their land rovers. Now here I am, a scientist with a land rover.

How did you go from school drop out to a PhD?

I was fortunate in that the opportunities were there. When I was finally ready to study, I took it very seriously; when I went to agricultural night school I was second out of the whole college and when I completed my degree I won a Commonwealth grant to go straight into a PhD. When I was ready, I could do it.

What path brought you to the Pacific?

My path was haphazard and purely fortuitous. I was in the UK, visiting family as a young man and I met a woman who had just come back from Africa as a VSO volunteer. I was enchanted by her stories, so I went and found the VSO office and signed up. I said I would work in any branch of agricultural sciences but it had to be in Africa. They phoned me up a few months later and said 'We have a job in agroforestry in Kiribati. Is that ok?' and I said, 'Yeah, Kiribati in Africa? Sign me up!'

How did you meet your wife?

I met Luisa towards the end of my first 4 years as a volunteer in Kiribati, so I had learned Gilbertese and I was an outer island boy at that stage- I didn't live in the big city Tarawa. I like to think that I charmed her by being a very proficient toddy cutter. I'll boast and say that I could fill a 2L bottle in the morning and in the evening every day- that's good even by Gilbertese standards.

What have you enjoyed about working at SOPAC?

The people. I'll get choked up thinking about these sorts of things. I'm only 50, but I have never worked with such a devoted team. Ever. I don't suppose I ever will again. It's been a real pleasure, and surprising, the immense resource of goodwill in this place just to get the job done. I've never seen that anywhere else and it's a really magical thing here.

Do you have a favourite or fond memory?

Too many! It's hard to put any one above the others. But it was hugely exciting to stand on the deck of the MV Tekimarawa- it's been seven years since we wrote the proposal, got funding, and now we've finally managed to get the vessel operating! Also, Maritime Boundaries- the Maritime Boundaries Project has achieved more in terms of international processes and setting boundaries than any other region in the world. It is more progressive, more harmonious, and seeing that sort of progress of the treaties finally getting signed to me is just heart-warming on a level that I find it hard to describe.

Where to next for you?

Kiribati is home, my wife and girls are there so I'll be based out of Tarawa. I love my science and I do science because I love it, not because it's my job. Definitely I will continue working in the science of climate change particularly as it relates to shoreline vulnerability and community vulnerability in coastal locations and tropical islands.

Exactly how I will do that, I'm not sure. There are a lot of opportunities out there and I'm not quite sure which one is right for me, but I'll figure it out. Watch this space.

What hopes do you have for the region in terms of coastal processes and climate change?

I don't know how to answer that simply. What I hope is that there can be coordination between donors, countries, and technical entities such as ours in terms of how we're going to approach the future challenges. At the moment, we're sprinkling band-aid solutions all over the place and it gives a false sense of security to people who live in these places that they are protected. Given what we know about climate change and sea level rise, we just can't afford to be making those mistakes. So I'd love to see the donors, countries, and technical assistants come together with a true common approach so that we take long term, lasting, and appropriate actions. And we have to start now- if we wait 50 years, it's too late.

STAFF PROFILES

Jens Kruger



Jens is of a German descent, born in Africa but spent most of his life in the Pacific. Jens has had frequent contact with SOPAC since early days as a Project Assistant before resuming studies in New Zealand. Jens then worked in New Zealand and the UK as a coastal geologist and marine geophysicist before returning once again to SOPAC as an Adviser. Jens is currently the Acting Deputy Director of the Geoscience for Development (formerly Ocean and Islands) Programme.

UK as a coastal geologist and marine geophysicist. I then returned to SOPAC as an Adviser eight years ago, and currently manage a small group of exceptionally bright and enthusiastic people working on exciting projects.

What's the most memorable thing to happen whilst working at SOPAC?

I was a shy Intern when I was called into the Director's office one morning, where the then Director posed the question 'Jens, what is the Internet?' This baffled me a little, but made me realise that there is much more to leadership than just being a technical boffin. That and diving for work in shark infested waters, which is always very unnerving.

Where are you from and what was it like growing up there?

I was born in Africa, have a German Passport, but have spent most of my life in the Pacific Region. My teenage years were filled with adventures growing up in Papua New Guinea. My family lived in a remote part of the Finisterre Ranges for two years before moving to Lae. This enabled me to appreciate grassroots Melanesia, as well as become an expert off-roader on both two and four wheels.

What do you wish other people knew about your work or project(s)?

There is never a dull moment as the Pacific has more than 45,000 km of coastline, and these shorelines are forever changing as a result of the interplay between tides, waves and sand. It is only the human factor that seeks permanence at the time scale of generations and therefore needs managing. This keeps us busy one bite sized chunk of coastline at a time – always improving our tools along the way.

What's your first memory of joining SOPAC?

I started off as an intern doing sand analysis at the MRD soil lab. At the time the soil lab was infested with fleas, so my first memories were of battles with sand and fleas.

What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?

People are surprised that I speak Pidgin, but not French.

How has your work at SOPAC evolved over the years?

After sieving sand as an intern for several months, a project assistant job was advertised which I applied for, and at that time I was the only applicant, so I got the job and took that up for two years. After that, I went abroad to do my Masters and worked in New Zealand and the

Any advice to our younger readers?

Every individual has a wealth of knowledge and they don't necessarily tweet about it. Working at SPC lets you meet people from diverse backgrounds: always take time to get to know others and learn from their experiences and about their values, even if you disagree with them. I also don't have a Twitter account, so you would not have read this advice in a tweet.

Christine Prasad



SOPAC is happy to introduce one of our young professionals, Christine Prasad. Christine was recently appointed a Junior Geologist for the Deep Sea Minerals Project within SOPAC. She is 23 years old and is a Geology graduate from the University of Otago in New Zealand. Christine joined SOPAC fresh from college and looks forward to contributing to development work within the Pacific Island countries and territories through her current tenure.

Where are you from and what was it like growing there?

I am a kid from the burning west and I loved growing up there! I spent my primary to high school years in Lautoka. I was then offered a Fijian Government scholarship to study Geology at the University of Otago in New Zealand for three years. I joined SOPAC immediately after graduation from college and I began work as an intern for the Deep Sea Minerals Project in September 2013. I then successfully applied to the position of Junior Geologist in the month of March 2014.

What's your first memory of joining SOPAC?

I was reading deep sea minerals (DSM) brochures on my first day along with the general SOPAC induction process by our Programme Assistant.

What drew you to SOPAC and how is your work thus far?

I was drawn by the way SOPAC assists Pacific Islands in improving the livelihoods of its people of which I wanted to be a part of. I began with an internship for six months before applying and successfully obtaining the position of Junior Geologist on the 1st of March. I have thoroughly enjoyed both experiences so far.

Which aspects of the work are you looking forward to?

I see the Director's vision in developing geoscience and I am looking forward to be a part of that.

What are some of the things you do when you are not working at SOPAC?

Travel in the weekend to Lautoka to spend time with family and love cooking as well.

Any advice to our younger readers?

Work hard to be successful. If you don't know anything Ask, better to be a fool for a few minutes than being a fool rest of your life not knowing the answer. Believing in yourself is very important.

SOPAC UNITS/PROJECTS NEWSLETTER, VIDEO AND RADIO INTERVIEW LINKS

Deep Sea Minerals: The Prospect Newsletter

<http://www.sopac.org/sopac/dsm/DSMPNewsletterTheProspectIssue3January2014.pdf>

Deep Sea Minerals: Out of Darkness Video

<http://www.sopac.org/dsm/index.php/outofdarkness>

Cook Islands Completes Maritime Boundaries Negotiations: Interview with Radio Australia

http://www.sopac.org/sopac/PAB_SPC%20COOKS%20MAN_20140327.mp3



Special article contributions from the IWRM National Project Managers:
Isaac Lekelalu (Solomon Islands) and Vinesh Kumar (Fiji)

SOPAC Newsletter Team

Contributors: Molly Powers, Make Movono, Emma Newland, Lore Ratuyawa,
Amali Shaw, Rave Tiuhe'a and Leonard Wong
SOPAC Newsletter Compiler/Editor: Lore Ratuyawa
Graphic Artist: Navneet Lal

For more information visit our Website: www.sopac.org

Mead Road, Nabua, Suva, Fiji Islands. Phone: +679 338 1377 Fax: +679 337 0040 E-mail: SOPACDirector@spc.int