

# FAST FACTS

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## Post Cyclone Livelihoods Recovery and Cash-for-Work

In January 2014, Tropical Cyclone Ian, a Category 5 system - the most powerful storm ever recorded in Tongan waters - passed directly over the northeast islands of Ha'apai. The Prime Minister declared a state of emergency. The cyclone caused significant damage to homes, infrastructure and vegetation in 18 villages across six islands in Ha'apai: 'Uiha, Uoleva, Lifuka, Foa, Ha'ano and Mo'unga'one. Over 5,000 people were directly affected and more than 3,500 people were left homeless. The main livelihoods in Ha'apai are weaving, small-scale tourism, fishing and agriculture, and these were severely disrupted.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported Post-Cyclone and Cash-for-Work project provided a temporary source of cash income in exchange for work related to debris clean-up, restoration of livelihoods activities and improving preparedness for future cyclones. The project partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Ministry of Internal Affairs including the Office of the Governor of Ha'apai.



*Tropical Cyclone Ian left debris, 'Uiha, Ha'apai.*

### MATTERS OF FACT

- 626 people in three islands, Lifuka, Foa and 'Uiha participated between April and June 2014 in the debris removal component with a direct disbursement of TOP\$93,750.
- 723 people participated in livelihoods recovery component in July for two weeks with a direct disbursement of TOP\$309,300.
- In the livelihoods component, 723 people formed 73 groups to participate in the project. There were 31 men-led and 42 women-led groups.
- Vegetable farms and fencing for livestock have benefitted around 4441 people at the community level.

### Debris Removal Cash-for-Work

The debris removal component involved sorting debris by hazardous and non-hazardous debris. It also promoted recovery, reuse and recycling when possible. Participants were equipped with safety equipment and tools, and first aid training provided by the Ha'apai Red Cross. Debris was cleared from public lands and private lands of some of the elderly.

Debris management activities were considered a prerequisite for the accessibility to lands for agricultural and livestock activities within the livelihood component of the UNDP recovery programme.

The 49 teams were established in Lifuka, Foa and 'Uiha for debris removal activities, and composed teams led by women and men. There were 10 women leaders (20.4 percent) and 28 women leaders' assistants (57.1 percent). A significant percentage (45.5%) of young people also (16-35 years old) participated on the cash-for-work programme, 47% of which were women. Specific provisions were considered in order to avoid the participation of children that were attending school.



Debris removal, 'Uiha, Ha'apai.

The debris removal activities raised awareness among participants on the need for a waste management strategy. Given the absence of a municipal solid waste management programme, participants constantly expressed their concern about waste and they were committed and sensitized to deal with waste problems. It reflected the necessity of connecting debris removal with waste management programmes.

### Livelihoods Recovery Cash-for-Work

Following the debris removal, another cash-for-work programme for livelihoods recovery was implemented in the same three islands. Participants were engaged in recovery activities which are directly connected to their major livelihoods such as livestock and farming.

Debris that could be recycled were used to rebuild fences for livestock and vegetable plots. Vacant plots of land were cleared to prepare for farming and seedlings ranging from cabbage, beans, tomatoes, carrots and beans provided to the groups. Pandanus plants and mulberry trees which are key materials for producing traditional Tongan mats and handicrafts, and important sources of income for local households were re-planted.

Each person was paid TOP\$7.50 per day for 20 days, totaled TOP\$150 per person. All participants were paid the same rate, based on the minimum wage in Tonga, irrespective of different types of work carried out. It contributed to meeting their immediate needs such as purchasing food items and clothing for children, many of which were lost or destroyed during the Cyclone.

The active involvement of the target communities in the planning and decision-making processes using their local structures (in the case of Ha'apai, district and town officers, church representatives, women groups) ensured a high level of interest and commitment from community members and proved to be an effective mitigation measure for potential conflict management. Regular and transparent dialogue with local communities proved as instrumental to the project success.

*"The debris removal was crucial to Ha'apai's recovery. Once the debris was cleared, this allowed people to return to their farms to recover what crops they could and start clearing the land for replanting. The connection with the cash-for-work programme to peoples' recovery was very effective"* - Kepueli Ioane, Secretary to the Governor.



A community farm, Lifuka, Ha'apai.

### For more information,

Contact:

Patrick Tuimalealiifano, [patrick.tuimalealiifano@undp.org](mailto:patrick.tuimalealiifano@undp.org)

United Nations Development Programme  
Level 8, Kadavu House, 414 Victoria Parade  
Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji  
[www.fj.undp.org](http://www.fj.undp.org)

October 2014



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