



CLIMATE CROWD

Community-driven solutions to help people and nature in a changing climate

FIJI SUMMARY REPORT

MAY 2022

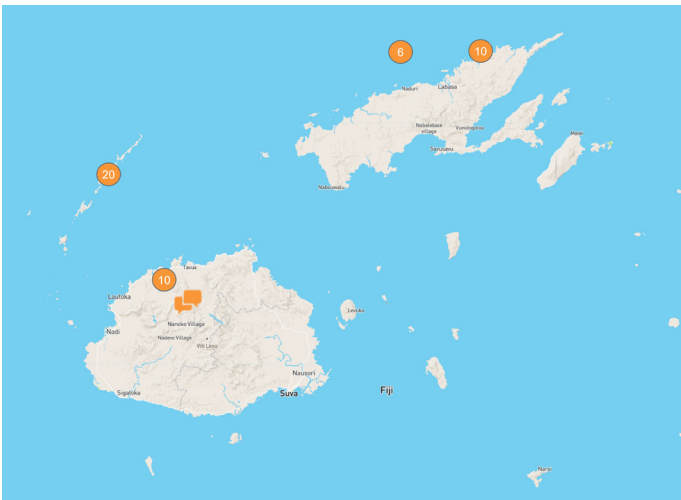
ABOUT



Climate Crowd is a bottom-up, community-driven initiative. Working with communities and local organizations in more than 30 countries, we collect data on climate impacts to communities, analyze the data, present the data back to the communities, and work with them to develop, fund, and implement on-the-ground solutions that help people and nature adapt to a changing climate.

BACKGROUND

This report summarizes what was learned from 47 interviews with key informants (21 female, 26 male) in 9 communities in rural, coastal and small island communities in Fiji. Interviews were conducted in May 2022.



The majority of respondents (87%) observed changes in the timing of seasons, with prolonged dry as well as wet seasons in recent years. Variations in rainfall were significant, with 62% of the respondents

REPORTED CHANGES IN WEATHER AND CLIMATE (n=47)

- 87% Changes in timing of seasons.
- 70% Erosion/landslides.
- 62% Sea level rise.
- 62% Drought.
- 62% Increased rainfall.
- 55% Changes in wind.
- 53% Decreased rainfall.
- 45% Heat waves/hotter days.
- 38% Loss of water source.
- 34% Flooding.
- 26% Storms.

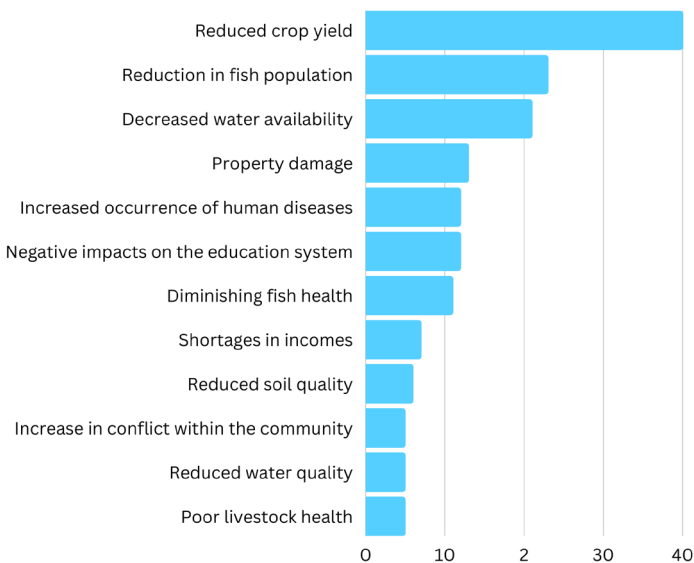
reporting an increase in rainfall and 53% of them also reporting a decrease in precipitation events. This is also reflected by high flood occurrences during precipitation events according to 34% of the interviewees. A significant percentage of those interviewed also noted warmer temperatures in recent years, with 45% of them reporting more intense and frequent heat waves. 62% of the respondents mentioned more extreme drought conditions, and almost 40% of the people interviewed reported water source losses. With Fijian communities on the front lines of sea level rise (62% of reports), people are increasingly impacted by land degradation in the form of erosion and landslides (70%). Additionally, 55% of the respondents reported changes in wind patterns

"The storm surges have increased coastal erosion and now the shorelines are getting closer to our homes"
-Community member, Malakati village, Yasawa

IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS

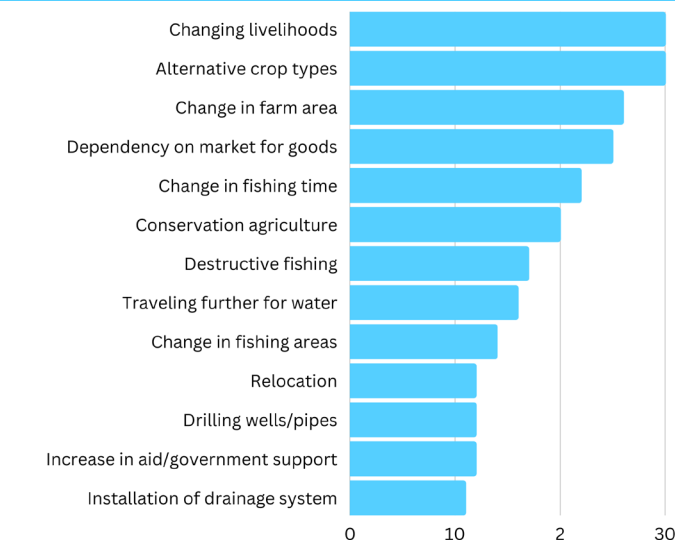
The strongest climate related impact felt by these communities was a decrease in crop yields due to changes in rain patterns and the prolonged dry and wet periods mentioned above, according to 85% of those interviewed. Additionally, declines in crop yields can be explained by decreased soil quality, as mentioned by 13% of the interviewees. Almost half of the interviewees (49%) mentioned declining fish populations, and 23% of people noticed declines in fish health seen through smaller fish size. People who rely on farming and fishing for income have in turn experienced income shortages, according to 15% of those interviewed.

Another significant impact on local livelihoods has been decreased availability of freshwater—an issue that 45% of the respondents reported to be dealing with. Along with decreased availability, 11% of people also said that the water they do have is of poor quality. Other commonly reported impacts on local livelihoods included weather-related property damage (28%), an increase in human illnesses (26%), and negative impacts on education (26%) resulting from extreme weather events that limit access to schools because of building damage or transportation issues. Less commonly reported impacts include increased conflict within the community due to resource scarcity (11%) and poor livestock health (11%).



COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In response to lower crop yields, the majority of those interviewed (64%) explored alternative livelihoods to adapt to the changing conditions, while the same percentage also reported using alternative crops which they hope will be more resilient to changes in weather and climate. Many people have adopted conservation agriculture methods (43%), increased their dependance on the market to secure basic goods (52%), and shifted their farm area to other locations (55%)—all of which is done to cope with crop losses. The fishing sector has been heavily impacted, with 47% of the respondents saying they have had to fish for longer periods of time and 30% reporting shifting their fishing to different areas. This has also resulted in people turning to marine areas not previously exploited for fishing purposes, as reported by 36% of the respondents. To combat the issue of water insecurity, 34% of those interviewed mentioned having to travel longer distances to access water while 26% reported that they have had to drill wells. On the other hand, during extreme rainfall events, communities have had to create drainage systems to prevent

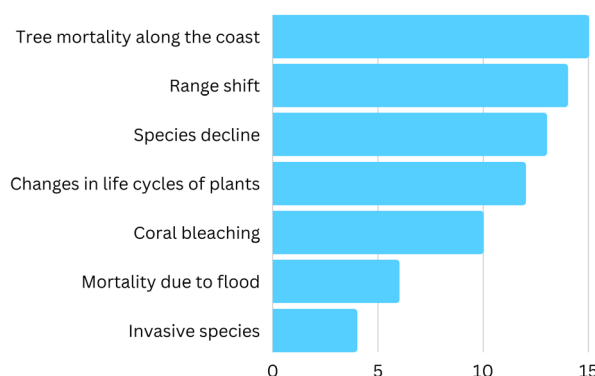


flooding, as mentioned by 23% of the interviewees. Lastly, 26% of respondents have increasingly had to rely on aid or government support or have decided to relocate to a different area entirely.

IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY



Changes in weather and climate have also impacted Fiji's biodiversity, causing tree mortality along the coastlines as a result of cyclones, stronger winds, saltwater intrusion, or flooding, according to 32% of those interviewed. 30% of respondents also reported that there have been shifts in species' ranges causing wildlife to either migrate in or out of the area, while 28% of respondents have noticed that certain species are disappearing. Additionally, increasing weather and climate variability has impacted the life cycles of plants, causing them to bloom or mature at different times than before (26% of interviewees). Sea level rise, more frequent cyclones, and warming ocean temperatures have also contributed to coral bleaching—a phenomenon reported by 21% of the respondents. Finally, 9% of respondents suggested an increase in the presence of invasive species.



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