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Ronald Ravinesh Kumar

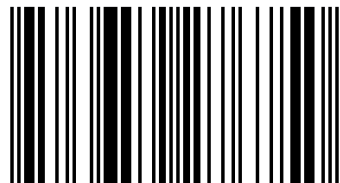
Development Impacts Of Short-Term Migration In The Pacific

A Case Study Of Vanuatu



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978-3-659-27675-0

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LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing

Impressum / Imprint

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek: Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek: The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

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Coverbild / Cover image: www.ingimage.com

Verlag / Publisher:

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AV Akademikerverlag GmbH & Co. KG

Heinrich-Böcking-Str. 6-8, 66121 Saarbrücken, Deutschland / Germany

Email: info@lap-publishing.com

Herstellung: siehe letzte Seite /

Printed at: see last page

ISBN: 978-3-659-27675-0

Zugl. / Approved by: Suva, University of the South Pacific, Diss., 2012

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**DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS OF
SHORT-TERM MIGRATION IN
THE PACIFIC**

A CASE STUDY OF VANUATU

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ABSTRACT

The New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme is a New Zealand Government initiative that officially commenced in 2007. In this programme, five developing Pacific Island countries (PICs), namely Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu – referred to as the kick start countries, participated in short-term labour migration. The objectives of this Scheme are at least two fold. Firstly, the scheme was initiated to address seasonal labour shortage in New Zealand and second, to give employment opportunity to selected PICs.

Since 2007, the RSE Scheme has undergone significant changes primarily addressing issues and concerns that emerged along the way. The RSE initiative therefore, from the employers' perspective was designed to provide a readily available and consistent pool of workers every season; from the migrants' perspective, the scheme is considered an opportunity for employment and community development – particularly benefiting the migrants and their families with remittances utilised, inter alia, housing, education, small business, and the migrant communities as a result of migrant contribution to community work.

This thesis sought to explore the development impacts of RSE, particularly the changes in the lives and livelihood for migrants as well as the expected gains to employers. The field research was carried out in the months of August and September, 2010. Epi Island in Vanuatu was selected as a case study for the field research. A few of the RSE employers in New Zealand who had recruited

Ni-Vanuatu in the horticulture and viticulture industry were interviewed as well. The snow ball method was used to identify respondents in Vanuatu. Semi-structured interview questionnaires were used to collect information from the labour migrants (Ni-Vanuatu) and RSE employers. The field research spanned six weeks – one month in Vanuatu and 2 weeks in New Zealand.

From the findings, it is clear that the RSE Scheme generally benefitted both the Ni-Vanuatu labourers and their employers. Although there are some issues that need to be addressed, overall, the scheme ensures that dual objectives of creating a win-win outcome are being met. The migrants interviewed reported benefits in terms of income (including sending remittances), new skill transfers, and greater productivity consciousness, improvement in education and housing and start-up of small businesses in the community. The employers have also realised productivity gains from migrants who participated in consecutive contracts, and have been assured a reliable and readily available pool of workers. The latter has heightened confidence in the horticulture and viticulture industry.

However, in terms of ensuring sustainability of the scheme, it is recommended that greater inclusivity needs to be in place in the recruitment process. The recruitment process needs to include all people who are willing and able to participate in the scheme. Effective communication between stakeholders, that is, between host and home countries is needed. There is a need for greater emphasis in resolving some conflicting issues caused by migrants in their home country. It is also recommended that concerns raised by employers in relation to improving the RSE scheme and highlighting the significance of

RSE scheme as employer-led demand-driven initiative are addressed. Other areas needing attention are migrant communities facing internal conflicts and unfair recruitment; returned migrants concerns regarding tax refunds and tax procedures, wage rates and accommodation costs. Also, it is essential that both the employers and the migrants understand each other's culture and environment to maximise benefit from the scheme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance and guidance of many individuals to whom I am sincerely grateful.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Vijay Naidu (principal supervisor) and Associate Professor Manoranjan Mohanty (co-supervisor), for their guidance and willingly commenting on earlier draft of the thesis. I am equally thankful to Professor Richard Bedford from New Zealand for his guidance during the initial phase of the research. Professor Bedford helped me in getting in touch with RSE employers.

I sincerely thank former Minister for Justice, Hon. Ms. Isabel Donald, her son, Kolika (USP student), Sister Janet and Liah, Hon. MP Ioane Simon Omawa (Epi Constituency), Hon. MP Ralph Regenvanu and Mr. Michel Kalworai (Secretary General SHEFA Province) from Vanuatu for their support during the field research.

I am grateful to the Sasakawa Foundation for funding the major component of the research and the School of School of Government, Development and International Affairs for giving me the opportunity to pursue this research. Without the support of the Foundation, my study would have been difficult.

My gratitude is extended to the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of the South Pacific for approving the generous research grant and the research proposal. I would also like to thank the secretary and office assistant of the School of Government, Development and International Affairs,

Ms. Asenaca and Ms. Mere respectively for their support in administrative matters and Ms. Roshila Singh for final proofreading. Finally, I would like to thank my parents (Mr. and Mrs. Ravind Kumar), sisters (Raveena Kumar and Radika Kumar) and wife (Vu Thi Thu Hang), for their patience, encouragement and prayers.

talem tangkyu long evriwan!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This thesis researches the social and economic impacts of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme initiated by the New Zealand government in conjunction with the selected developing Pacific Island countries (PICs). Firstly, the impact of the scheme on the migrants, migrants' families and the community are explored. Secondly, the impacts of the scheme on the RSE employers are reviewed.

Migration has been an integral part of the PICs from early days, not only for survival but also to extend and strengthen social and economic ties among settlers and communities. As highlighted by Bedford (2010: 4) during his keynote address at the conference on *Future Challenges, Ancient Solutions: What can we Learn from the Past about Managing the Future in the Pacific*, the nature of movement of people within and outside Oceania has been fluid and relatively effective in strengthening ties:

[i]n the pre-colonial world there were boundaries both between groups of islands as well as between groups in the larger islands, but these boundaries were fluid and functional – crossing them depended more on long-standing relationships with neighbours and mutually beneficial economic exchanges than the rules and regulations of some central authority administering a particular state from within or afar.

In the post independence period and especially over the last decade PICs have been faced with a number of challenges hindering their development. The high population growth for countries like Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and

Vanuatu; climate changes resulting in sea-level rise, particularly for small island countries like Tuvalu and Kiribati; and the natural disasters like the recent tsunami that struck Samoa and cyclone Thomas that hit Fiji, are some examples. Besides these, growth in urbanisation is also putting greater pressure on urban resources at the cost of rural productivity decline. Therefore, the temporary migration scheme is a timely response to some of the issues the developing PICs are facing.

The people of developing PICs in the past had very little opportunity to migrate to Australia and New Zealand. The primary beneficiaries of the previous migration schemes, such as the Pacific Access Category (PAC), provided permanent residency to migrants who were skilled and reasonably wealthy to establish a decent livelihood in these countries. Quotas with strict conditions were allocated to Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu in the PAC. Unlike these countries, Vanuatu had no avenues for migration under the PAC.

In this regard, the RSE scheme of New Zealand is a more inclusive scheme given that the opportunity to migrate on work-based short-term basis is extended to unskilled and to developing PICs like Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands.¹ The benefits from this scheme go beyond the remittances that the workers from this country earn.

The temporary seasonal migration scheme (RSES) officially introduced by New Zealand in 2007, therefore, if nothing else, is a timely response to some of the burgeoning employer and industry issues faced by the developing small

¹ Fiji is excluded because of the sanction over the 2006 coup.

island states. Currently the RSE scheme includes five-kick start countries – Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. The scheme is expected to provide, at minimum, a win-win outcome where the participating countries' migrants benefit from employment and remittance inflows and the employers benefit from productivity gains and a reliable supply of workers for their horticulture and viticulture industry.

The thesis focus is on Vanuatu and the study is primarily based on Epi Island. A large number of RSE workers in Vanuatu are from Epi Island. The central aim of the thesis is to gain insights from the migrants, the communities within which the migrants live, the government officials in Vanuatu, the RSE employers in New Zealand and the government officials in New Zealand who are associated with this scheme in an effort to capture broad-based impact and sustainability of the scheme.

1.2 Aim of the Research

The central aim of this research is to find out the impacts of RSE scheme on the migrants (the Ni-Vanuatu who participate in it), the migrant household (family), the migrant community, and the RSE employers.

1.3 Rationale

The relationship of development and migration in general is complex. Migration for work abroad is not a new phenomenon in the Pacific and other parts of the world (Bedford and Hugo, 2008; Hau'ofa, 1998). However, the benefits and otherwise from migration have been impacting the development of Pacific in different ways. Therefore, to explore the effects and

consequences of the recently established seasonal work programme of short-term labour migration (RSE) would be useful, both to the people involved in the programme as well as for policy makers and researchers.

Notably, the RSE Scheme is unique in its own right. It is a bi-lateral arrangement between individual Pacific countries and New Zealand. One of the characteristics of the scheme is that the employer pays half of the air-fare and arranges visa for workers. The scheme at the least, assumes a triple gain.² However, it is in the interest of this research to find the extent and the context within which these gains can be observed. A better understanding of these aspects will be possible when the views and voices of those participating in the scheme, particularly the seasonal workers and employers, the community in the source country, and the respective government departments of the countries are taken into account. Therefore, the research aims to be relatively inclusive in studying the perception of various groups of people associated with the scheme.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The overarching research objectives are to:

1. Determine the motivations for participation of Ni-Vanuatu in the RSE scheme;
2. Identify financial and economic benefits besides changes taking place as a result of the scheme on the lives of RSE workers, their families and communities;

² Gain to the employer, seasonal workers and community back home.

3. Understand the role of RSE employers and the effect of the scheme on them.
4. Obtain views of key informants and government officials which are critical in managing the operational aspects of the scheme;
5. Document the views and perceptions of migrants, employers, community, and government officials in regards to the social issues emerging as a result of the RSE scheme.

The above objectives were formulated as questions in a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 1). The responses were expected to provide pointers that will be critical for policy making and migration related deliberations. A qualitative research, using a social constructivist approach was conducted.

1.5 Methods of Data Collection

A two phased research plan was used to conduct the field research. This included Vanuatu and New Zealand. The duration of the field research was six weeks. The first phase of the research fieldwork was conducted in Vanuatu which lasted for four weeks. In this phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with migrants from Epi Island in Vanuatu, government officials in Port Vila who were directly involved with the RSE programme, and the community leaders and village heads in Epi. In the second phase, two weeks were spent in meeting up with and interviewing employers, government officials and key informants in New Zealand, in Auckland, Wellington, Hastings, and Nelson.³

³ The researcher is very grateful to Professor Richard Bedford for pre-arranging the interviews in these centres prior to his arrival in New Zealand.

1.6 Research Questions

The central research question is to explore the social impacts of RSE both on country of origin and the country of destination that is, New Zealand. Therefore, the targeted questions that the research aimed to answer included:

- In what ways is the RSE scheme benefiting the migrants and their families?
- What are some of the social impacts of the RSE scheme on the community, in the lives of individual migrants and their families, and at a national level?
- What are the attitudes of returned migrants towards the scheme?
- What are the challenges the migrants faced in the process of migration?
- What are the attitudes of the employers towards the scheme?
- How is the RSE scheme benefiting the employers?
- What do employers look for when recruiting?⁴
- What are some of the concerns or issues arising from or as a result of the scheme in the host and sending countries?

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2, a conceptual framework and literature survey is discussed. The nexus between migration and development and recent research on seasonal labour migration within the Pacific context is discussed. Chapter 3 is on methodology. In this chapter, the methodological

⁴ This question was included to ascertain the factors contributing to the demand-driven aspect of the Scheme

and philosophical aspects of the research are discussed, primarily focusing on the constructivist paradigm. The approach taken to collect and analyse the rich qualitative data based on the emerging and ensuing themes and patterns, the researcher's experience and ethical considerations are discussed. In Chapter 4, the research findings are discussed paving the way to policy discussions. In the final chapter, conclusion and recommendations are provided. This section besides summarising the key points from the research also looks at some of the burgeoning issues that are emerging and affecting the key stakeholders in the RSE scheme. The aim of this chapter is to provide a discussion on the social effects resulting from the scheme that are of relevance to Pacific migration and development.

1.8 Limitations of the research

The fieldwork part of research was conducted over a 6 weeks period. The findings of the research are reflected from the view of respondents: migrant workers, selected employers in New Zealand, community leaders in Epi, Vanuatu, and the government officials in Vanuatu and New Zealand. However, Vanuatu has a heterogeneous socio-economic structure – economy, political structure, culture, language and lifestyle. While some generalisations are applicable to short-term migration in other PICs, there are also Vanuatu specific findings that do not have wider applicability. Moreover, the field research was conducted over a period of six weeks and because of time and budget constraints not all aspects of the scheme could be captured.

1.9 Summary

This introductory chapter provided an overview of the topic and outlined the aspects that will be covered in the remainder of the thesis. The next chapter provides a literature review with an attempt to establish theoretical and conceptual links between migration, remittance, and development.

CHAPTER TWO: MIGRATION IN THE PACIFIC – CONTEXTUALISING SEASONAL LABOUR MIGRATION

2.1 Introduction

The chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part, a literature on the historical aspects of migration is outlined. In the second part, the chapter links migration to seasonal labour migration.

2.2 Conceptual framework and literature review

The genesis of migration is as old as humanity itself. Individuals and groups have moved over millennia from one location to another in exploration or in search of a better life and sustainable livelihood (Bakewell, 2008; Chand, 2005; Massey, et. al., 1998; McDowell and De Haan, 1997). The start of migration studies, however, is usually traced back to Ravenstein's 1885 article that described laws of migration in which the relationship between distance and volume of migration played a key role (De Haan, 1999: 10).

More recently, in the Todaro Model, a prospective migrant weighs the difference between the expected earnings of staying home and expected earnings from formal sector employment elsewhere – this aspect is also closely linked to the push-pull model of migration developed by Lee (1966) (c.f. in De Haan, 1999 and Goldscheider, 1987). The neo-Marxist, however view migration as structural phenomenon within the context of both permanent and temporary labour migration. Rubenstein (1992: 147) argues that remittances are a small part of gain in exchange for labour resources. Furthermore, in a historical-structural framework, labour migration

predominantly benefits the developed countries at the cost of the under-developed.

Recent theories have emphasised the need to consider both the individual motives and structural factors which drives migration processes, hence stressing the need to analyse migrants motivation, attitudes and understanding of the structures within which they act, as well as recursiveness and historical patterns of behaviour (De Haan, 1999: 12). Some scholars have produced various models and theories to explain migration and development. For instance, according to the World Systems Theory (WST) pioneered by Immanuel Wellerstein and deeply rooted in Marxism, a country's development conditions and prospects are shaped by economic processes, commodity chains, divisions of labour, and geopolitical networks at international levels (Desai and Potter, 2006; Massey, et al, 1993), and therefore these conditions contribute towards one's decision to migrate. Other views on migration are explained by 'structuration theory', the 'push and pull', and the differential gains that emerges through consideration of gender dimension.⁵ However, connecting these theories to the development concept is not only complex and controversial, but also results in ambivalent results due to the much contestable meaning of development per se (Bakewell, 2008; Curran and Rivero-Fuentes 2003; De Haan, 1999; Massey, 1990; Goldscheider, 1987).

Cowen and Shenton (in Bakewell, 2008: 1343) 'argue that the notion of 'development' emerged as an attempt to address the perceived chaos caused

⁵ Structuration theory refers to the notion that migration is predominantly a structural phenomenon.

by the rapid technological, social and economic change of the industrial revolution in the 18th century. From an interventionist perspective, development is considered as a vision for progressive change, an idea of a desirable future state while striving to bring about such a change or simply striving to make life better for all (Bakewell, 2008; Peet and Harwick, 2009: 1).

Despite these complexities, the relationship between migration and development has moved to the centre stage of academic interest, policy, practice and discourse (Bakewell, 2008). This renewed interest has generated for various reasons, which includes (a) the seemingly high growth in the 1990s of migration from the developing regions to the Western world (Bakewell, 2008; Ellerman, 2005); (b) the massive growth of remittances, which are considered relatively more stable than other inflows, surpassing the level of official aid and foreign direct investment in many developing countries (Gupta, 2010; Ratha, Mohapatra, Silwal, 2010; Ratha, 2007; Kapur, 2004); and (c) the importance of transnational practices and the role of diasporas in development (Bakewell, 2008).

Over the last three decades, economic globalization has sped up the process of migration as well (Bedford, 2008; Lilywhite, 2008; MacLellan, 2008; Mohanty, 2007; Kaur, 2007; Morris-Suzuki, 2007; Castles and Miller, 2003; and Naidu and Pillay, 2001). Migration is viewed as a process of innovation, adoption and diffusion (Stark and Bloom 1985), and is further described as non-sedentary in nature, a privilege of the relatively wealthy (Bakewell, 2008), and also a safety valve for many underdeveloped and developing countries.

Migration not only benefits the receiving countries but also the sending countries, thus implying a reciprocal relationship between migration and development, with a ‘diffusing effect’ influencing non-migrants, community, politics, socio-economic activity, demography, international relations and networking aspects with deep connection to the human behaviour and anthropology (Horevitz, 2009; Curran and Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Goldscheider, 1987). Furthermore, migration is ‘viewed as a vehicle or mechanism of moving “traditional” people into contact with “modernity”’ (Goldscheider, 1987: 677). Much of the recent studies have indicated that the economic benefits of migration are particularly associated with the amount of remittances that flows in as a result of migration (Gupta, 2010; Arslan, et al 2009; Ratha, 2007). Moreover, migration does not necessarily result from absolute poverty, but a certain level of socioeconomic development, combined with relative deprivation in the form of global inequality of development opportunities (Bakewell, 2008; and De Haas 2005).

The welfare improvement effects from migration and remittance inflows have been widely discussed. Remittance expenditure on such things like housing, sanitation, health care, food and schooling results in improvement in welfare and human capital, which in turn have the possibility to increase productivity, freedom of choice and capacity to participate in public debate (De Haas 2005) thus reflecting the lexicon of development-as-freedom posited by Sen (1999). According to Bakewell (2008: 1354):

‘Migration can be a rite of passage for the young. It may not be a comfortable process, it may be dangerous but will remain a very important option for people who are looking to improve their lives and move out of poverty.’

However, remittances alone do not translate into nor is a significant booster for take-off stage of development (De Haas, 2005). For instance, Ellerman (2005: 624) argues that migrant remittances ‘could jump-start the local engines of development but should not supply the ongoing fuel’. Similar sentiments are expressed by Bakewell (2008) who argues that the continuity of the remittance inflows for development is much dependent on the sustainability of the migrant’s prospects and his or her choice to remit and return (Bakewell, 2008).

Nevertheless, in the context of development Bakewell (2008: 1355) highlights that negative views on migration are changing: “[t]he negative view of migration is [now] changing and the hunt is on for the win-win-win scenario where migration is good for countries of origin, countries of destination and migrants themselves.”

Therefore, the notion of migration exuding a triple win situation towards development is primarily via remittances, skill transfer and skill-acquisition. This is based on the assumption that all actors involved in the process have a common view of the ‘good’ ends. This refers to the generic state of human beings often viewed as sedentary, which needs to be questioned in the light of migrants’ behaviour, gender dimension, the opportunities associated with migration, and migrants’ authentic desire to return, which are also often

influenced by migrants' education, exposure and opportunities available outside their status quo (Bakewell, 2008; Ramasamy, et al, 2008; Vanwey, 2004).

Equally important to a positive reciprocal causality between migration-development nexus are such factors as having good infrastructure, elimination of corruption and red tape, sound macroeconomic stability, making appropriate public policies (inter alia, schooling, health care, land reform), avoiding market failures, having access to international markets without adverse trade barriers, healthy political climate and trust in government and good economic institutions (Mohanty, 2007; De Haas, 2005; Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2005; Voigt-Graf, 2003; Naidu and Pillay, 2001;).

It has been further argued that although migration and development are complex notions, they need to be weaved and understood in the context of (a) domestic economic development and international trade; (b) international economic development; (c) humanitarian works; (d) family welfare improvement; (d) demographic change; (e) domestic politics that relate to social equity, the absence of conflict, achieving social cohesion, and constructing national identity; and (f) geopolitical and diplomacy which involves relations with regional neighbours and migrant sending countries (Bakewell, 2008; and Inglis, 2007). Massey (1990: 19) sums up well in saying that to understand migration effects, the role of integrating method of analysis, data and theory are vital:

[i]n the end, what is needed is not better methods, better data, of different theories, but a simple realization that the fragmented way social scientists have pursued the study of human migration What is needed now is ... to spend more time thinking about how to integrate their theories and findings.

The aim of the discussions this far was to reflect the close relationship between migration and development. In the following section of this chapter, a discussion on migration within the Pacific context is provided. This is later linked to the short-term migration scheme.

2.3 Labour Migration and Pacific Island Countries

The Pacific is classified into three sub-regions (Crocombe, 2007: 4) – Melanesia (Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu), Polynesia (American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Pitcairn, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Wallis and Futuna Islands), and Micronesia (Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau).⁶ Countries within these regions have their own history of migration, where individuals and relatives migrated and created their own world in New Zealand, Australia, United States, and Canada among other countries (Hau’ofa, 1998). However, apart from Fiji, the other five Melanesian countries had very limited outlets for emigration⁷ (Bedford and Hugo 2008). Parts of Micronesia have their links with United States Military, largely due to its long-standing American military

⁶ The three main Pacific Islands regions have geographic, cultural, linguistic, economic and political significance. The first Melanesians arrived about 50,000 years ago; the first Micronesians up to 5,000 years ago; and the Polynesians evolved from the Austronesian migration and sailed into the Eastern Pacific about 3,200 years ago (c.f. Crocombe, 2007)

⁷ However, this was not the case in the period 1840s to 1980s.

interests that were strengthened during the period of colonial administration following the First World War. Polynesia has particularly strong links with New Zealand given the fact that: some of the island countries were colonised by New Zealand; the actions of Christian churches had significant influence; and after the Second World War, there was an increased demand for cheap unskilled labour to work in New Zealand's primary and secondary production sectors which were sourced from Polynesia.

The Pacific Access Category, introduced by New Zealand provided permanent migration opportunities for selected countries in the Pacific as well (Bedford and Hugo 2008; Bedford, Ho, Krishnan and Hong, 2007). New Zealand provides greater access to its Pacific neighbours relative to other developed countries in the Oceania region perhaps because of its historical strong ties with the region (Bedford and Hugo 2008) as mentioned earlier. The most recent migration programme that attempts to respond to the youth bulge in some of the developing Pacific states (Chan et al. 2004) is the temporary seasonal migration scheme for selected countries in the three sub-regions which is anticipated to yield a triple-win outcome (Ramasamy, et al, 2008).

2.4 Seasonal Labour Migration

2.4.1 Temporary Migration Scheme in the Pacific

Seasonal labour migration is a form of temporary migration and has at least six typologies. These are (a) seasonal legal labour migration; (b) seasonal informal labour migration; (c) seasonal irregular migration; (d) temporary irregular migration; and (e) long-term temporary irregular migration and (f) circular legal labour migration (Triandafyllidou, 2010). Seasonal legal labour migration, mostly common to agriculture based work, is a bilateral agreement

between specific member states and specific countries of origin.⁸ Seasonal informal migration is also called shuttle migration because of the frequent back and forth movement of migrants. This type of migration is particularly concerned with jobs related to construction, domestic work, tourism and catering where the migrant enters a country on a tourist visa and does not have legal right to work. Seasonal irregular migration refers to where the migrant enters illegally, i.e. without the necessary documents and finds jobs in the informal labour market in seasonal jobs (particularly in agriculture and tourism sectors). Temporary irregular migration is where a migrant enters without necessary documents and is temporarily employed in any sectors of the economy. Long-term temporary irregular migration refers to migrants who enter without necessary documents and stay for a period between 6 and 12 months. Circular legal labour migration is primarily focussed on skilled labour that may have the permit to stay because of their nature of employment in another country (e.g. IT experts, business persons, traders, etc.).

In regards to seasonal labour migration schemes in general, they have various characteristics distinguishing them from other forms of migration. The US and Canada rely heavily on seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico and the Caribbean. Similarly, Thai labourers work in Israel, Moroccans in tomato farms in Spain and Chinese in apple fields in Japan. These indicate the increasing demands for seasonal workers (Ellerman, 2005). Various countries have different characteristics for seasonal work schemes (see Table 2.1). For instances, in the UK, workers are allowed to work for a maximum of 6 months, in the US, between 12 to 24 months, Germany, up to 3 months and Canada, a

⁸ The RSE scheme is therefore considered within the purview of seasonal legal labour migration.

maximum of 8 months. In all these countries, each worker is employed by a single employer during the period of employment. Moreover, for transportation cost in the for UK scheme, the workers have to meet all the expenses; in US, the employer pays, in Germany the cost is negotiated. However, in the case of Canada, the cost is shared evenly between the employer and the worker (this model is used by the New Zealand RSE Scheme).

Table 2.1: Models of temporary migration schemes

Characteristics	Scheme Criterion			
	UK SAWS	US-H2A	Germany	Canada SAWP
Maximum Stay	6 months	One year (can be extended to two years)	3 months	8 months
Annual numbers	16250 (2005)	45,000 (2002)	260,000 (2001)	18,000 (2004)
Recruitment	At least 18 years old full-time students from non-EU countries	No restriction on country of origin	12 bilateral agreements with central and eastern European countries	Bilateral agreements with Mexico and Caribbean
Workers tied to one employer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Who pays transport cost	Worker	Employer (depending on the length	Negotiable	Cost shared, roughly

		of contract)		50-50.
Free housing	Yes	Yes	No. Employers must provide adequate housing and adequate rental	Yes

SAWS– seasonal agricultural work scheme; SAWP– seasonal agricultural work program; and H2A refers to formal visa for seasonal work.

Source: World Bank (2006: 116, Table 4.3)

As shown in Table 2.1, in UK, US and Canada, the employer provides the accommodation (free housing) whereas in Germany, although the employer arranges for adequate housing, the workers have to meet the rental cost (New Zealand uses this criterion in its RSE scheme).

The labour market in the Asia-Pacific region can be divided into two systems. The first is predominantly low-skilled workers who are employed as guest workers in low-status and low-paid occupations where the key features of the system includes employment on a temporary rotation, recruitment through intermediaries, and employment with a specified employer on a fixed-term basis. Moreover, the guest workers are also admitted under a variety of arrangements, usually memoranda of agreement or some form of bi-lateral arrangement among countries. The second system involves knowledge and skilled professionals (Kaur, 2007).

Seasonal labour migration within the context of international migration has been favoured because of the advantages it provides to (unskilled) migrants (Khadria, 2007). The gains come when financial benefits associated with returning migrants are directly transferred to rural sectors; and seasonal migration allows for a better use of labour, because those underemployed during the agricultural season can find work in towns or other areas, thereby increasing their incomes (Vargas-Lundius and Villarreal, 2008). Consequently, the remittances and savings of returnees (those who return from a season's work and are ready to go back again for the next season) 'provides the capital for a development lift-off in the less developed regions.' (Ellerman, 2005: 618).

Despite the positive effects noted from temporary and seasonal work schemes, unskilled workers are amongst the most vulnerable in the global economy.⁹ A number of studies (Castles, 2006; Ruhs and Martin, 2008; Anderson, 2010) pointed out that temporary labour migration schemes provide a flexible, non-unionised labour force which can be easily laid-off and is cheaper than local workers because they are not entitled to welfare benefits. Therefore, these factors make migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation, xenophobia, social isolation, violation of their basic rights and freedoms because they are primarily less educated, have difficulties in communicating, particularly in a foreign language, and come from rural and remote villages with limited or no exposure to formal employment and foreign environment. Sometimes there are barely any mechanisms available to workers to raise issues or solve disputes in the country they are working (Lilywhite, 2008; Kaur, 2007). These

⁹ There are also many illegal labour migration practices resulting in exploitation of unskilled labourers.

workers face health, well being and occupational safety risks when they are involved in dangerous industries, such as agriculture especially when they lack familiarity with hazardous chemicals and use of machinery, and when they are living in a different social and cultural environment where potential exposure to gambling, HIV-AIDS and substance abuse is high (Lilywhite, 2008). Seasonal migrants are also often excluded from policies designed to provide adequate health care and nutrition, and primary education, therefore, having less access to government provision of health services when away for work than others in the destination areas (Rogaly, et al, 2002). Expensive services in the host countries also limit their access to goods and services.

In regards to employment, the choice of recruitment of a migrant worker is influenced by the employer's perception of the worker. Hence the factors that shape an employer's recruitment decision includes a migrant worker's age, sex, attitudes, bodily expressions and images, national origins, class, both countries migration policies, and the profit maximisation goals (Anderson, 2010; Dunn, 2010; MacKenzie and Forde, 2009; Wills et al, 2009).

Ellerman (2005: 617) argues that temporary or semi-permanent migration schemes may be a developmental trap for the South (developing countries), where "the South forgoes self-development in favour of being a long-range bedroom community to supply the labour for dirty, dangerous and difficult jobs in the North." Subsequently, Ellerman (2005: 625) cautions that "it is important in such schemes that the latter [North] countries not be too advanced, otherwise the experience will have little applicability back home [South]."

In reviewing New Zealand's seasonal worker schemes, MacLellan (2008) emphasised the need to consider aspects like community development, modernization, infrastructure development and skills acquisition. One of the aims of existing seasonal worker programmes (such as the New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme¹⁰) is to boost remittance inflows that can develop rural communities and villages as well as support education, housing and small business initiatives. In most cases seasonal workers are required to finance their cost of securing seasonal work overseas (also shown in Table 2.1). These additional costs include recruitment, airfares, visa costs, transportation, accommodation, health insurance, and medical checks that the workers have to pay from their own pockets, which can be difficult especially when workers have no cash to start-off with or the cost of travel increases due to geographical disadvantage (Bedford, Bedford and Ho, 2010).

The role of financial sectors (including insurance, pensions and superannuation funds) in mobilising remittance inflows will be of benefit to the migrants (Lilywhite 2008) as well as the economy as a whole. Empirical evidence highlighting the critical role of remittances in growth and development for developing countries like Tonga, Samoa, Fiji (Jayaraman, et al, 2011a, 2011b) and Vanuatu (Kumar, Naidu and Kumar, 2011; Kumar, 2012) has been established. In all these studies among others, the role of

¹⁰ However, characteristics of RSE scheme are detailed in section 2.5. The scheme is unique in many ways and the intention of the scheme spans three levels: (i) national level – to assist the growth of horticulture and viticulture industry in New Zealand; (ii) regional level – to provide employment Pacific Islanders participating in the Scheme; and (iii) community level. Given this three dimensional framework, the success at all levels by and large depends on the effective participation of the stakeholders at each level. This makes the RSE scheme structured unique, goal-oriented (where the gains should be apparent at all levels) and subject to regular evaluation and assessment for ongoing refinement of the scheme.

financial services is underscored. In regards to the business conduct in seasonal migration schemes, the financial sector can provide: (a) affordable and accessible products and services to assist with managing remittances; (b) financial literacy training; (c) affordable and accessible loans; (d) microfinance products and services; (e) responsible informed investment (through superannuation and pension funds) in the horticulture sector; and (f) affordable and accessible medical and travel insurance products.

Human and social dimension of seasonal labour migration should not be overlooked. The negative effect on children's education and welfare, extra burden on elderly relatives left in the village and family members shouldering most of the responsibilities otherwise assumed by those who migrate, and change in the traditional gender roles in the communities are all pertinent issues (Rohorua, et al, 2009, Smita, 2008; MacLellan and Mares, 2005)

The importance of migration management and monitoring migrants and agents are vital (Dacuycuy, 2009; Skeldon, 2009). Luthria (2008) argues that a careful design and implementation of RSE scheme *per se* is not sufficient for any significant development impact to ensue. A lot depends on the characteristics of the participants and the extent to which the scheme is made accessible to the poor. The focus also needs to be on the design of monitoring and regulating the schemes to ensure that unskilled workers are not exploited and they do not overstay. An evaluation of the impact of labour migration on a sending country should also include, (a) the number of workers who emigrate relative to the size of the domestic labour force and their length of stay; (b) in the industrial context, the degree of difficulty encountered in

replacing lost workers; (c) in the rural context, the effect of emigration on rural productivity; (d) in the case of temporary migration, evidence of skills gained during the work experience abroad and whether those skills are transferable back home; (e) the level of remittance inflows and its effects on investment, output and employment; and (f) the effect of migration on savings, investment, population growth and the subsequent long-run development (Appleyard and Stahl, 1995).

A recent study by Rohorua et al (2009) on RSE migrants' households in Tonga and Vanuatu found that households in Tonga have been able to adjust relatively easily when the members of the family were away despite some minor changes in diet. This was due to the regular flow of remittances and good communication among the migrants and their household, back at home in Tonga. However, in the case of Vanuatu, the results suggested the adjustment process (of members living without the migrant) has been a challenge as evident from the less variety of food intake of households while members were away, health problems faced by household members, poor flow of regular remittances and delayed communication between seasonal workers and family members back at home. Consequently, for evaluation of the RSE scheme, one needs to have (a) a clear understanding and dialogue between host and sending governments in the scheme; (b) a fair, transparent and cost-effective application and selection process; (c) a proper legislation framework for effective regulation of schemes and recruiting agencies particularly where there are potential sources of abuse; (d) an adequate pre-departure training, awareness and sensitisation; (e) an agreement over responsibilities for monitoring employers and employees to ensure the rights of workers abroad

are upheld; (f) a way of ensuring that remittances can be easily and cheaply transferred from host to sending countries; and (g) an additional development-focused measures to improve the flow of benefits back to sending countries. Moreover, other factors such as: (a) the impacts of seasonal labour migration from rural areas on local agriculture and cash-crop markets; (b) the extent to which remittances will offset if not exceed the loss of income from cash cropping; (c) the type of employment found by returning migrants; and (d) the standard of living pre and post RSE scheme, need to be considered for sustainable development and sustainable livelihood (Gay, 2008; Chand, 2005). In the next section, we look at some of the developments in RSE Scheme.

2.5 A background on RSE Scheme

The New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, a bi-lateral agreement with selected countries in the Pacific region, is viewed at three levels (Bedford, et al, 2010). First, at the national level, it is an integrated strategy involving employers, unions and the government to address the persistent short-term horticulture and viticulture industry labour shortage and rectifying the problem of increasing number of temporary migrants who did not have approval, through their visa status, to work in New Zealand (Ramasamy, et al, 2008). Second, at a regional level, the scheme is expected to provide employment opportunities to citizens of PICs which was also considered a response to the burgeoning need to provide greater access for Pacific Island countries to New Zealand and Australia for short-term employment (c.f. Chan, et al, 2004). Thirdly, at a community level, the scheme is expected to create positive social and economic development impacts both in the host and home countries.

Before the 1970s, New Zealand had a range of temporary work schemes operating at different times targeting recruitment from countries in the Pacific (Bedford, et al, 2007). At different times since the mid 1970s, temporary work schemes have been a feature of New Zealand's relation with Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu. In 2002, all these counties were included in the new scheme that allowed small numbers of their citizens to be balloted each year for residence in New Zealand under the Pacific Access Category thus replacing a host of other existing arrangements with these countries.

The 2000 coup d'état in Fiji and the civilian unrest in the Solomon Islands signalled to Australia and New Zealand the emergence of social and political instability in Western Pacific. Furthermore, observation of the different demographic situations in the island countries of the Western and Eastern Pacific, and the absence of any migration outlet for Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu were becoming contentious and a focal issue among policy agencies in New Zealand (Bedford, 2005; c.f. Chan, et al, 2004).

Simultaneously, a major study by the World Bank on population change, labour markets and migration in the Pacific (World Bank 2006) was carried out followed by "The Pacific Labour Market" conference held in June 2006 by the Pacific Foundation Cooperation in Wellington, New Zealand (Plimmer, 2007). These events added to the voice of Pacific and hence duly supported the view that developing countries in the Pacific need to be given opportunities for greater access to temporary work in Australia and New Zealand.

In 2004, in response to real pressure for more access to workers for the horticulture and viticulture industry, the New Zealand Labour Government introduced temporary policies to allow employers to recruit labour on seasonal work permits. This was seen as a temporary measure while the New Zealand Department of Labour, in association with the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sketched a more comprehensive policy response to the seasonal labour shortage problem that ensured that unemployed New Zealanders were given first preference, the Pacific Island countries second, followed by all the other countries.

In essence, the 2004 seasonal labour strategy, which was subsequently endorsed by the Horticulture and Viticulture Seasonal Working Group in 2005, gave a clear message that RSE policy was part of a planned approach to support the industry growth. Therefore, both the industry and the government agencies had to position themselves to welcome the new scheme and also improve labour market conditions, workforce development and industry productivity in New Zealand. In addition to the Pacific island nations leaders lobbying for the opportunity for their citizens to work in New Zealand, increasing productivity and sourcing reliable labour to work in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries was the main reason for the development of the policy. Another argument was that very few New Zealanders wanted to work in these industries given that the work is "dirty", "difficult" and "dangerous" (Mares and MacLellan, 2006).

In 2005, an immediate temporary migration policy – the Seasonal Work Permit – initiative was introduced for the 2005-2006 season as a pilot programme. The policy enabled employers to recruit people who were in New Zealand from visa-waiver countries on valid temporary visitor permits to work for periods up to nine months in areas where there was labour shortage. This pilot project later paved the way for a longer term strategic response. Part of the reason for this response was that the pilot project showed benefits to the employers, in ways not anticipated at the outset. In consultation with industry and closer examination of the programme resulted in New Zealand government introducing the new Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, allowing up to 5,000 workers to be employed at any one time initially, then rising to 8,000 for 2009 (Gibson and McKenzie, 2008; Gibson, McKenzie and Rohorua, 2008; Ramasamy et al., 2008).

The RSE scheme therefore was an outcome of this multi-ministry approach to the problem of seasonal labour shortages in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industry. On 16 October 2006, the New Zealand cabinet decided to implement a temporary seasonal work policy, beginning with workers from the South Pacific. The initial countries to start off were: Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu (in Polynesia), Kiribati (in Micronesia) and Fiji and Vanuatu (in Melanesia). After the military coup in Fiji, in December 2006, Fiji was removed from the list as part of the sanctions against the military regime. The five remaining countries were subsequently termed as the 'kick-start' states to pilot the RSE programme.

The scheme very strictly ensured that New Zealanders were sought first prior to considering people outside to work in the industry. This scheme also provided a response to the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in the UN General Assembly in September 2006. The Dialogue acknowledged the potential for policies regulating international migration flows to make major contribution to promoting co-development (UN, 2006).

In summary, various issues gave rise to the emergence of the RSE policy. These include: (a) a long-standing problem facing employers in the horticulture and viticulture industries in meeting their seasonal labour demands from local sources; (b) the current immigration policies that were used by the employers were not sustainable or sufficient to manage risks for migrants, for local labour supply and for the integrity of New Zealand's policies relating to right to work and reside in the country; and (c) it was accepted that improved temporary work access for Pacific nationals could contribute to New Zealand's broad objectives in the region as supporting economic development, regional integration and stability and giving the 'edge' to island states within the Pacific Islands Forum to strengthen their economies (World Bank 2006; Bedford 2005). Similar to the general demand-driven feature of seasonal labour migration highlighted by Triandafyllidou (2010: 2), the RSE scheme, according to Bedford, et al (2010: 426) is an employer-led-scheme. It is not a quota system for any particular PIC country in the scheme seeking temporary semi-skilled or unskilled work in New Zealand.

2.5.1 RSE Scheme's Operational Aspect

The RSE scheme is unique in New Zealand's recent immigration policy initiatives. It involves three core government agencies sharing responsibilities for delivering the programme – the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Department of Labour (DoL) and New Zealand Aid (NZAid), which is responsible for assisting with negotiation of the appropriate inter-agency understandings with governments in the Pacific that cover arrangements for recruiting workers and ensuring that those selected meet the requirements for a Seasonal Work Visa. Moreover, NZAid is also monitors the outcomes of the scheme on the islands in the context of poverty alleviation impact assessment through this programme. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is charged with registering employers and ensuring that there is a genuine need to recruit overseas labourers in the specific areas. It is the task of the employers to substantiate that no New Zealanders are available for the required tasks and the Work and Income New Zealand (which works closely with the Ministry of Social Development) checks each employer's claims carefully against the records of potential labour in the region. The DoL monitors and evaluates labour policies and conducts assessment of the RSE scheme in the context of short-term migration to New Zealand. The pilot phase implementation and evaluation of the RSE programme also received support from the World Bank. Initially the scheme involved a group of about 200 Ni-Vanuatu workers employed on vineyards in Central Otago in early 2007.

To achieve accreditation as a Recognized Seasonal Employer, an employer has to meet several criteria relating to good work practices such as (a) ability

to provide accommodation and pastoral care (food, clothing, and transport to and from work, access to banking facilities, necessary translation support and opportunities for recreation and religious observance); (b) willingness to meet the health and safety standards stipulated by the Department of Labour; and (c) agreement to pay half of the return air fare for the workers and to ensure the return tickets are acquired at the time the workers are recruited.

The RSE employer status is valid for two years. Once an employer is granted RSE status, she is required to apply for an Agreement (Approval) to Recruit (ATR) from the Department of Labour. The ATR application contains details of the number of workers an RSE employer requires, the countries these workers will be sourced from, and further details about the terms and conditions offered to workers as part of the employer's responsibilities. Employers are required to submit applications for an ATR every season and to advise the Ministry of Social Development regarding their labour requirements on the understanding that New Zealanders were sought first. It is the employer's responsibility, in every season, to adhere to this requirement and ensure that off-shore recruitment follows only in case of inadequate labour supply in New Zealand.

When an ATR is granted, the employer can initiate a recruitment programme either by sending someone to the Pacific country from which the employer wishes to select their recruits or using an agent in New Zealand to recruit on her behalf. For instance, a company called Seasonal Solutions has been setup to obtain the labour required in the local orchards and vineyards. This company recruits Ni-Vanuatu for work in New Zealand. One feature of the

new ATR is that it prioritises Pacific Islands Forum countries, especially the five kick-start countries (Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) when employers are looking for off-shore workers. The Department of Labour in New Zealand facilitates the RSE recruitment through the development of pre-departure programmes and setting up of work-ready pools of labourers (Bedford, et al, 2010).

Workers also have certain requirements to fulfil. For instance, workers selected for employment in New Zealand under an approved ATR have to apply for a Seasonal Work Visa. To obtain this, they need to provide a valid passport, a temporary entry chest x-ray which screens for tuberculosis, a medical certificate, police clearance and a return air ticket. The employers are required to pay half the return air ticket cost in advance. The workers are also required to attend a pre-departure orientation workshop before leaving for New Zealand. In this orientation, the workers are briefed on such matters as climate in New Zealand, clothing and footwear requirements, taxation, insurance, remitting and budget advice, and emergency contact information. The strict penalty clauses for overstaying are emphasised as well, where workers are made aware that overstaying will result in no further recruitment of the worker as well as other members from the worker's village (Ramasamy et al., 2008). The employers have the choice to re-employ the same workers once they successfully finish the contract and return to their home country.

The five kick-starters have slight variations in the implementation of RSE. The differences are due to the terms set out in the Inter-Agency Understanding (IAU) between New Zealand's Department of Labour and the respective

Labour Ministry in the Pacific country. For example, in Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Samoa, the minimum age for participation is 18 years but in case of Vanuatu, it is 21 (McKenzie, et al, 2008). While there are some differences between individual countries selection process, the outcomes for Pacific island states' public service agencies broadly relate to: (a) maintaining the integrity of the RSE policy; (b) developing and maintaining reputation as a reliable source of seasonal labour; (c) securing a fair portion of seasonal work opportunities for their citizens; and (d) enabling their citizens to generate savings and acquire relevant experience (Ramasamy, et al, 2008).

In late 2007, the first batch of workers recruited from Tonga and Vanuatu under the RSE policy announced in April began to arrive in New Zealand and by February 2008, workers from all five of the kick-start states were in employment in New Zealand. By June 2008, 5,079 RSE workers were recruited and 6,969 people were approved on ATRs. The majority (91 percent) were working in three regions: Hawke's Bay (1,874) and Bay of Plenty (1,802) in the North Island, and Nelson/Marlborough (952) in the South Island (Ramasamy, et al, 2008). The number of Ni-Vanuatu participants has escalated from 343¹¹ in 2007 to 1,855 in 2009, to 2,049 in 2010 and 2521 in 2011. A projection of 2900 is set 2012 (Vanuatu Daily Post, 2012).

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, the concept of migration and development were discussed within the context of seasonal migration scheme in the Pacific region, particularly the New Zealand's Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme. A

¹¹ This number includes the 36 workers who were part of the initial RSE pilot programme.

background of the RSE Scheme was provided with some operational aspect of the scheme. The key players participating in the Scheme are the workers, employers, community leaders and respective government departments. There are benefits and costs of migration, the latter is primarily the result of illegal migration, or when the migration schemes are exploited and mismanaged at the detriment of the workers who participate in them. Therefore, seeking their perspective on the Scheme will provide valuable information on the developmental aspect of both Vanuatu and New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industry.

Besides giving a brief historical overview of migration in the Pacific in this chapter, recent literature was referred to identify some of the benefits and costs of migration.

The following chapter (Chapter 3) discuss the methodology, methods of data collection aspects of the research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the concepts of migration and development were discussed with a focus on the seasonal labour migration scheme in the Pacific region, particularly in regards to the New Zealand's Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme. A narrative on how the RSE scheme came about and some operational aspect of the scheme were provided. In this chapter, the methodological approaches on the sources of data, methods of data collection, study area and limitations of research are discussed.

3.2 Methodological Approach

Various definitions for research have been identified. For instance, Walliman (2006: 15) using the Oxford English Dictionary defines research as: "the systematic investigation into the study of materials, sources etc. in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions; an endeavour to discover new or collate old facts etc. by the scientific study of a subject or by a course of critical investigation." According to David and Hodges (2010: 3), a research project is "defined as a systematic effort to learn about a selected topic, problem or issue ... [and is] more focused, time-limited exercise with an identifiable purpose and a largely pre-planned set of research procedures." Miles and Huberman (1994:6-7) explain that a qualitative research "is conducted through intense and/or prolonged contact with a "field" or life situations A main task is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations." In this regard, qualitative research takes an iterative form.

The researcher hence avoids linear approach of fact-finding and uses an active research method, the latter requiring him or her to move back and forth between design and implementation. The ultimate goal in the process is to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, data collection, and analysis. (Morse et al., 2002: 17; Dick, 2002).

To set the stage on this section, a brief literature survey on the methodological/philosophical approach is provided. To begin with, a research paradigm is defined as a basic set of beliefs that govern actions and is rooted in the philosophical elements of epistemology (how we know and the relationship between the inquirer and the known), ontology (is the nature of reality) and methodology (how we gain knowledge about the world). These paradigms form the basis for positivist and non-positivist theories, the latter including the constructivism and critical theory. The epistemology, that is, how we know things and what we can regard as acceptable knowledge in discipline, is very much dependent either on the notion of empiricism (knowledge gained through sensory, inductive reasoning), or rationalism (knowledge gained through deductive reasoning). The former was advocated by Aristotle and the latter by Plato (c.f. Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 99-100).

Furthermore, an epistemology is characterized with various broad approaches. These include the positivism, interpretism and realism. Positivism is inclined towards natural science in an attempt to study social reality, test theories and establish scientific laws, with an aim to establish cause and effects. The view is that reality is objective and measurable and therefore knowable with precision. On the other hand, interpretivism is subjective and therefore

important in understanding social actions, reveal interpretations and meanings of a given phenomenon. Walsh (1996: 91-92) highlights that reality is socially constructed and therefore is only partially comprehensible and not definitive per se. Realism posits that knowledge is gained through structures that underpin social events and discourses, and hence are provisional in nature. With an understanding of how we gain knowledge, it is important to know as to what can be regarded as legitimate knowledge. This refers to the ontological aspect of epistemology. Ontology refers to social entities and what there is that needs investigation to reach a legitimate knowledge. Therefore, the ontological viewpoint of the researcher will shape the way the social research questions are formulated and the research conducted. Objectivism considers social phenomenon and their meanings as separate from social actors, and exists independently. On the other hand, constructivism looks at the dynamic nature of social phenomenon, and accepts that they are totally reliant on social interactions, and therefore social knowledge is constructed with the influence of the social actors and the researcher as well. Walliman (2006: 18) highlights that it is practically not possible for a researcher to apply these two extremes and therefore needs to find a balance or use a combination of the two. This is often referred to as the hypothetico-deductive method.

As much as there is a distinction between research into the natural world and research into the habits, traditions, beliefs, and organisations of human beings, there is also a standpoint that there is no eternal truth, thus truth is relative in nature, and cannot be established as unique through some single set of facts. Therefore, one can only strive to provide interpretation and understanding of the social world in a relativistic manner (Walsh, 1996: 91-92).

Understanding that humans are reflective beings, and therefore cause-and-effect relationship will be complex and difficult to determine, a less deterministic approach, such as the interpretivist view is undertaken to explain social reality. Within this continuum, a relatively more deductive approach is undertaken where the research took the path of general to specific. However, a better framework would be the constructivist, applied research and traits of ethnographical approach describing the richness of qualitative data collected. Furthermore, Walsh (1996: 105-106) points out that qualitative information, when used has greater explanatory power to the findings often quantified in tables.

Data is an essential raw material of any kind of research. However, data is both elusive and ephemeral, and therefore can only provide a fleeting and partial glimpse of events, opinions, beliefs or conditions. Furthermore, primary data is obtained through field research and it is the researcher's personal responsibility to ensure the reliability and authenticity of his or her information (Walliman, 2006: 51-53). Moreover, in the field, the data is collected through observation, participation, measurement, and interrogation. Therefore, in light of this, the research outcome is predominantly based on the effort of the researcher. In other words, it is up to the researcher's creativity, sensitivity, flexibility, perseverance, critical outlook, as well as skill in verifying the reliability and validity of the evolving information (Kuper, Lingard and Levinson, 2008: 243; Morse et al, 2002).

3.3 Research design

In this research, constructivist-pragmatic approach is taken. Constructivism accepts that all knowledge is constructed at least in part through a process of reflection, and that there exist cognitive structures, which are amorphous, and are activated in the process of construction (Kinsella, 2006). Therefore constructivism adapts a three structures – a relativist ontology (where realities are understood in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature), transactional and subjective epistemology (where the researcher and the research object are interactively linked with the values of the researcher influencing the research) and a hermeneutic and dialectical methodology (where the interaction between and among the researcher and the research object elicit and refine individual construction of reality). In the constructive-pragmatic approach, knowledge is hence acquired and constructed within local and specific realities, and the traditional criteria of validity are replaced by trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is measured by such criteria like credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and authenticity. Authenticity is considered through fairness, and ontological, catalytic, and tactical authenticity, making the paradigm rich, deep and to some extent, complex and interestingly scientific (Mores at al., 2002; Lincoln 1995; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 110-111; Walsh 1996). Further, hermeneutical phenomenology is concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived. It is an interpretive process that seeks to bring understanding and disclosure of phenomena through language - written or verbal communication, visual arts and music (Lavery, 2003). Consequently, the methodological questions are not reduced to questions of methods, however, methods are fitted within a predetermined methodology. As such,

the qualitative researcher is uncomfortable with methodology and prefers to capture the lived experience of participants in order to understand their meaning and perspectives (Swhandt, n.d. in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 100 and Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 108-109; 216-218), thus reflecting the relational nature of qualitative research.

This research is primarily conducted where the researcher goes into the field (or location) to collect information.¹² The research, being qualitative and situating itself under the paradigm of humanism (c.f. Desai and Potter, 2006: 8) is therefore, influenced by various factors like the researcher's age, ethnic background, over-identification, rejection, factionalism, personality, appearances, bureaucratic obstacles, accidents and good fortunes (Punch, 1994 in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 87-88 and Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 363).

Further, a contextualized-consequentialist approach, which also lies within the sphere of constructivism, entails various factors that are central to this research. More specifically, this approach is characterized by flux and innovation (Anderson, 2006). Some of the characteristics of this approach are: (a) a sense of mutual respect, non-coercion, and non-manipulation, (b) the support of democratic values and institutions, and (c) the belief and ethical

¹² It is important to highlight at the outset that the aim of methodological coherence, at least in theory, is to establish agreement between the research question and the component of the method. Although it is important that the questions asked in the field need to match the method and that from the method, the procedure required to analyse the data will follow, the response from the participants will also guide the method of research. The latter becomes more practical particularly when the researcher has no idea what will be expected in the field. In such cases, it is the data that will be required to be treated differently and hence the question may have to be changed or methods modified. Therefore, the researcher is at liberty (if not pressured) to adapt to the changing research environment. Nevertheless, if the methodology chosen remains inclusive (such as constructivist-pragmatism), the researcher is quick to re-design the method of analysis.

aspects – all woven in the context of the research (Lincoln, 1995; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 21).

Another approach used in the field work was a ‘just-do-it’ approach highlighted by Punch, (1994 in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 83). However, Punch cautions a researcher on the cultural, human and environmental sensitivities during research. Subsequently, much of the field researcher’s perception is shaped by his/her personality and the nature of the interaction with the researched. This makes the researcher his/her own research instrument. Another inevitable aspect of the research approach is the use of the ‘go-along’ approach (c.f. Kusenbach, 2003), where besides doing static ‘sit-down’ interviews, the researcher accompanies individual informants on their ‘natural’ outings and – through asking questions, listening and observing – actively explores his/her subjects’ stream of experiences and practices as they move through and interact with their physical and social environment. This enables a more modest and outcome-oriented version of ‘hanging-out’ with key informants to take place in the field.

Consequently, in a constructivist pragmatic paradigm, the researcher, is more explorative, and follows a path of discovery. There is some degree of ambiguity in research design, as evidenced by reduced emphasis on formal grant proposal, well-formulated hypothesis, tightly defined sampling frames, structured interview schedules and pre-determined research strategies, methods and forms of analysis (c.f. Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 200; Thomas and Hodges, 2010; Kumar, 2011). The aim therefore is to neither confirm nor

disconfirm earlier findings but to contribute to understanding of a given phenomenon (Lincoln 1995).

Having this paradigm and approach to research, a researcher confines his/her study to a particular case as he/she constructs knowledge while being cautious not to generalise too much on the information gathered. As Stake (n.d. in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 236) describes, a case may be simple or complex, however, is a functioning specific, and is a bounded and integrated system, where its behaviour is patterned, consistent and sequential. As such, a qualitative researcher is at a liberty to bound the case, conceptualize the object of study, select phenomenon, themes or issues (research questions), seek pattern of data to develop the issues, triangulate key observations and bases for interpretation, select alternative meanings to pursue and develop assertions or generalisations about the case where possible. The purpose of the case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case (Stake, n.d. in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 245; Miles and Huberman, 1994: 16-25) Under the interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is seen as the best understandings we have been able to produce thus far, not a statement of what is ultimately real, with more emphasis between the knower and the known. Hermeneutic research is interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels. The aim of participant selection in phenomenological and hermeneutic research is to select participants who have gone through the experience. The focus of the study would be to select groups or individuals who are willing to talk about their experience and are diverse enough from one another to enhance

possibilities of rich and unique stories of a particular experience (Laverly, 2003).

Another important aspect is that the sample must be appropriate, consisting of participants who best represent knowledge of the research topic. This ensures efficient and effective saturation of categories, with optimal quality data and minimum dross. Seeking negative cases are essential in ensuring validity by indicating aspects of the developing analysis that are initially less than obvious. By definition, saturating data ensures replication in categories; replication verifies and ensures comprehension and completeness (Morse et al., 2002: 18).¹³

3.4 Data collection methods

In this research, interview was the main means through which data was collected. Interview is a conversation, and requires the art of asking questions, listening, and a certain degree of interaction. The researcher in the process creates the reality of the interview situation, expecting answers from informants (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 353).¹⁴ Semi-structured interviews were done, where the interviews in most occasions were carried out with individuals and on occasions group interviews were undertaken. Group interview is where individuals are questioned systematically in a formal or informal setting, unlike the individual interviews where the researcher questions a single informant at a time. Within a semi-structured interview, a

¹³ In the interview, I realised the degrees of saturation when participants gave similar (converging) responses to the certain questions asked to them, both in groups and as individuals.

¹⁴ Sometimes, the questions need to be rephrased should the respondent find it ambiguous and requests for meanings of the question.

field-formal (directive, semi-structured with phenomenological purpose) and a field-natural (informal spontaneous, moderately non-directive, relatively unstructured with the purpose of exploratory- phenomenological) approach was taken (see Table 22.1 by Fontana and Frey, n.d. in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 365). Observational method, which involves, in a natural setting, going to a social situation and looking to understand the social world and visual method was used. In visual method, often taking pictures of the social world described by the informant was carried out that because “photography takes the researcher into the subject’s world ...” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 354-355).

3.5 Research Ethics

Research ethics are standards of professional conduct which a researcher is expected to uphold throughout the research. The ethical standards therefore require that a research project is designed and conducted safely, fairly and with integrity (Thomas and Hodges, 2010: 83). Qualitative research is often times seen as volatile and hazardous, especially when an unprepared researcher’s action, attitudes and non-communitarian nature brings turbulence in the field (Punch in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 83). This particularly arises when the researcher is unprepared or insensitive to the informants. Furthermore, a qualitative researcher is a guest “in the private spaces of the world ... their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict” (Stake in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 244).

Kuper, Lingard and Levinson (2008) highlight the following attributes necessary to assess a qualitative research: (a) criteria for assessing qualitative

research; (b) clarification (of research question and aim); (c) justification (why the qualitative approach is the best design); (d) procedural rigor (techniques of data collection well documented and data analysis completely transparent); (e) representativeness (what sampling technique used and does it support conceptual generalisability; (f) interpretation (any negative cases included and discussed; and findings and linkage to existing theory done); (g) reflexivity and evaluative rigor (researcher and the data and the ethical aspects); (h) transferability (critical evaluation of the application of findings to other similar context been made and policy relevance).

In this research I ensured that ethical aspects of the interview were made clear. Although sometimes the participants were less bothered about my recording or note taking during the interview, I made sure to ask permission from the participants to use their information in my research. In other cases, I informed them that I would be using this information in my research and obtained their approval for it. Although some of the research participants requested their names to be mentioned in the research, I chose to maintain anonymity.

However, in a qualitative research, there are conflicts, dilemmas and trade-offs that need to be accounted by the researcher, such as the conflict between the demands for validity versus harm, anonymity versus visibility, scientific understanding versus individual rights, among other dilemmas (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 295). Therefore, Miles and Huberman (1994:296) advises researchers to be (a) aware about the research and be able to logically reason for a balance; (b) able to anticipate what to expect in the field; (c) have a preliminary agreement of the research with participants; and (d) able to

document and reflect on the research. Thomas and Hodges (2010: 86) highlight that in ensuring ethical principles are adhered, at the minimum the following need to be kept in mind: (a) the risk of research participants being harmed or upset are minimised; (b) potential research participants are identified, contacted and selected for participation in the research without infringing their rights to privacy; (c) research participants are properly informed about the objectives and methods of the research project and what they will be expected to do when taking part in the project; (c) research participants at all times retain the option to freely choose whether or not to continue to take part in the research project, without coercion or pressure; and (d) all personal information supplied by research participants is protected.

In light of the above, this research looks into the following categories as part of the research's ethical aspect adapted from Thomas and Hodges (2010) and Miles and Huberman (1994).

3.6 Worthiness of the research work

Initially, the research focus was to get the views of returned seasonal workers on their experiences and attitude towards the RSE scheme; and also to seek information from community leaders and government officials in Vanuatu on whether the scheme is benefiting them in any way. I prepared a small pilot questionnaire and asked some students from Vanuatu studying at USP about the Scheme, and found that they had virtually no knowledge about the scheme and was told to visit the migrants for information.

The initial proposal was presented at the *Talanoa* session organised by the School of Government, Development and International Affairs (USP). After the presentation and feedback received from the participants, it was decided that interviews need to include perspectives from RSE employers, the returned migrants, respective government officials and some experts in the RSE scheme. Including these, the research became somewhat complete.

3.7 Competence Boundaries

In this category, one ethical consideration is that the researcher needs to be competent and experienced in field research. Understanding my position as a graduate research student, I resorted to seek guidance from friends, colleagues, subject matter experts and mentors. This gave me greater confidence to pursue the field work with minimal intellectual constraints.

3.8 Informed Consent

One ethical concern is that all participants must be willing, not coerced to participate in the research. In all cases, I informed all participants the purpose of my research and told they can pull out of the interview at any time if they wished.

There were situations where some of the participants, despite agreeing to participate were not so comfortable later on, or did not feel like responding to few questions I asked. In such cases, I did not pursue the interview respecting the right of the respondents. In some instances I told them I was there to learn from them about their experiences. Furthermore, in cases where informants were not willing to talk for some reasons, I respected their right. In some cases,

where the information was sensitive to the respondent, I switched off the tape recorder and ensured that the information will be off-the-record. Doing this made the respondents comfortable with sharing their responses and the flow of the conversation was not disrupted. I remember two instances where the informants were happy to talk about certain issues because I did not record them. I could also recall that some of the informants reminded me to turn on the recorder after they had finished talking on a particular sensitive subject. I learnt few things in the process. Firstly, I was able to build a rapport with the participants, who were also willing to share few things about the research even after the formal interview setting, and they were more comfortable and confident. Secondly, I learnt a valuable part of qualitative research, especially given my position as a graduate student. I learnt that I needed to understand people and be willing to 'go-with-the-flow' and appreciate and accept sensitive matters which they want 'off the record'. This process makes field research more engaging, people oriented and put the researcher in a psychologist position where the aim is to find solutions and not get bogged down on problems and people. Another aspect I learnt was that I needed to understand that some information which the participants shared was sensitive and they trust me to keep confidentiality. In such cases, which occurred rarely, I assured the respondents I will not use information against them.

3.9 Benefits, costs and reciprocity

In this category, I learnt from the interview that the principal benefiter is me, and some of the information I received, I needed to keep them safe and confidential so as not to incriminate or jeopardize any participant's career or position. Therefore, the least I could do was to impress on confidentiality

clause and ‘no-harm at any cost to participants’. I gave the participants the opportunity to talk as they wish based on the questions I asked, with minimal interruption even in situations where they digressed from the topic of discussion. I allowed this to show that I appreciated what they were saying, and understood that this is the least I could do for the valuable information they were giving me in few places. I also thanked the participants and reminded them that the information will be used with care and the main aim is to identify areas for improvement and not hurt anybody.

3.10 Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity

In every interview, I ensured that the names of participants will be kept confidential. I remember few instances, especially in Vanuatu where the participants were willing to have their name mentioned and their views quoted. However, while conducting the analysis, I ensured that all participants were assigned an identification code and no names were mentioned. In cases where there was only one participant in a particular group dominating the interview session, I checked if the information provided by the participant was accurate by comparing the views with other groups and individual interviews. To do justice to the research, if the views were important (personal judgment) for the research, I paraphrased and highlighted them in a polite way as a recommendation thus avoiding any identification of participants.

I also transcribed all recorded interviews and kept them safely and securely. Some respondents were not worried about the confidentiality clause.¹⁵

¹⁵ In particular, most of the respondents in Vanuatu were willing to have their names mentioned in the thesis.

However, in all cases, as a researcher, I ensured that I would keep the names and identity of participants as confidential and anonymous as possible.

3.11 Harm and Risk

A qualitative research can bring harm or risk to the participants, and it is a challenge if not a dilemma for the researcher to ensure no-harm and no-risk. I ensured the participants that I would do all things possible to ensure the information used is accurate and to the extent that does not hurt or put anyone at risk, including me.

3.12 Honesty and Trust

Another aspect of research is honesty and trust. I learnt this can be maintained when I am willing to learn and appreciate what the participants share and discuss with me. My stay with the community, mutual respect for things I came across – food, lifestyle, communication, friendship with different age groups, participating in kava ceremony in the *nakamal*,¹⁶ being with the host family, eating and living their life for a while, and being part of the family gave me the wisdom to appreciate the people and their views. I was welcomed with a garland in Epi, by my host mum and was told the garland is made from flowers that denote chiefly status. Further, on the first day, I was welcomed with the dish made from yam, called *lap-lap*, which signifies a chiefly welcome. My host mum (Mrs. Isabel Donald) treated me like her elder son and I addressed her as mum who was also the former MP (Member of Parliament) of Epi. I addressed my host dad as ‘daddy Donald’) who also

¹⁶ Nakamal is a place where chiefs and community elders meet to drink kava and discuss community related issues.

participated in the RSE Scheme. This established tie therefore gave greater significance to my research and the field work. I had really good *brata* (brother) Jack and *sista* (sister) Janet who also took good care of me. Mum Isabel and Daddy Donald introduced me to many people in Epi – the chiefs, teachers, government officials and some of the RSE migrants. Fortunately, I was welcomed as one of the invited guests at the Independence Day celebration opening, which made me more attached to the community. I felt that the community appreciated my stay in the village, and the research I was doing. I also built memorable relationship with the MP of Epi when I participated in the Independence Day celebration. Through this connection, I was able to meet up with other MPs in Port Vila to discuss the RSE Scheme.

3.13 Field work preparation

I used the snowball method to collect data for my field research.¹⁷ Appendix 1 provides a list of questions which I used as a guide in conducting a conversational style semi-structured interview. First, I sought assistance from the host family where I was staying. They assisted me in identifying few returned migrants and who (the migrants) in turn identified others who could speak reasonably good English and were willing to share their experiences.

I met some migrants in Vanuatu who were shy and somewhat reserved. However, I was able to talk to them, maybe given the fact that English is my second language was an advantage as they were able to respond to the questions I asked them in somewhat grammatically incorrect sentences.

¹⁷ The use of personal pronoun is deliberate to make my field experience meaningful and interesting, and avoid being remote or detached.

However, my limited understanding of the cultural aspects of the society made it somewhat difficult for me to understand certain responses like ‘why the migrants laughed when they were discussing serious matters’, and ‘why some of them were more confident to talk when in pairs or groups, than as individuals’. Nevertheless, I was able to get responses to most of the questions posed to them. For questions they did not answer, I felt obliged not to pursue further so as to allow the interview to flow smoothly and also to show respect and appreciation for participant’s views and willingness to participate.

The interviews were relatively straight forward and therefore, there were almost no major interpretive skills needed for the field work. However, I ensured I had help from the local people where needed. I also observed the local culture (*kastom*) and made lots of friends who helped me gain better perspective on the responses and also to meet key informants in Vanuatu.

I wrote a lot of field notes. In the field notes, I captured my emotions in the field and some of the things that went wrong in some of my interviews (such as forgetting to switch on the recorder after changing the cassette or the recorder had malfunctioned). I also had difficulties in interviewing some of the migrants because they were not available or busy organising the Independence Day celebration at Rovo Bay (Epi, Vanuatu). Some of them were willing to talk to me for a few minutes so I ensured that I was able to get answers on specific questions and avoided in-depth interviewing.

In the field, when I started interviewing, I received mostly positive views, but I was more interested in the negative (opposite) views as well. Thus I decided

to select migrants from different villages of the islands. I also interviewed community leaders and government officials in this manner. I was able to get contrasting views as a result.

I also interviewed government officials. In few cases where I received contrasting views from the participants, I scheduled another interview to seek clarification. For instances, I interviewed Vanuatu Workers Union and Labour Office representatives twice. Both sets of respondents were willing to express their side of the story because in the initial interviews, I gained their trust and showed a lot of interest in what they told me.

My stay in Port Vila was memorable as well as putative kinship ties and relationships were established. The care-taker lady was my 'aunty', and I had a *sista* who was from Epi and who received me at the airport, introduced me to the top-government officials and impressed them of the important research I was doing. Furthermore, my contact with the current MP of Epi, who was very appreciative of my research, also opened doors for me to meet key people to interview and talk to.

My field work in Epi and Port Vila was very humbling as I found the people friendly, generous with their time, respectful and easy going.

In New Zealand, initially I was somewhat uncomfortable during interviews because my questions were relatively broad and the interview was largely unstructured. However, after conducting the first interview, I was able to better structure the questions based on the themes identified from the first

interview. On one hand, I realised that keeping the questions broad also resulted in various themes emerging which I used to further narrow the questions for later interviews. On the other hand, if the questions were not controlled, it resulted in discussions which were not relevant to the research or views shared that digressed from the core objective of the research. Here was the risk of getting information which would become unmanageable. Therefore, I had to balance the two tactfully, something which I learnt in the field. Furthermore, I ensured that there were some specific questions I needed to get answers for as the core part of the conversation with the respondents. I used similar methods in Vanuatu when interviewing government officials and community leaders.

Most of the participants in New Zealand gave positive views on the scheme. To identify negative cases, I used literature (such as newspaper, and my personal experience from Vanuatu) to ask questions along the negative aspects, being cautious not to project negativity on the scheme as a whole to the research participants. I learnt that at times I needed to rephrase the same question to verify the earlier answers received and also to seek more information on some other questions.

In New Zealand, I interviewed employers, government officials and subject matter experts. Employers and government officials seemed somewhat uncomfortable to talk on the negative aspects. I assured them that any information they provided will not be used in any way to harm anybody. I also took the position of being a researcher for the participants and not against them. I ensured this by asking questions in terms of challenges and constraints faced by the respondents and what solutions they recommended. I formulated

follow-up questions from those being asked during the interview. I was also quick to pick up some of the 'jargon' and slangs from the participants in both Vanuatu and New Zealand and used them during the interviews, which made the respondents more forthcoming. In cases where the participants provided negative or critical views, I took a sympathetic stance to indicate I respected the emotions of respondents. In doing so, I was able to ask follow-up questions and discuss certain matters of concern to them. In cases where I requested for second round of interview, the respondents were happy to allocate time to me.

I always carried a small notebook, a digital camera and the recorder with blank cassettes and few pairs of batteries in my backpack during the field research in Vanuatu and in New Zealand. In Vanuatu, I was prepared to interview anybody identified as a 'good' research participant. When I was not interviewing, I would spend my time travelling in the island, visited people, took pictures of migrant houses and community projects to which the migrants contributed, or took a walk to de-stress myself and reflect on my purpose as a researcher. I carried my notebook with me to document some of the things I overheard or came across during the expedition or to write what I saw happening as a result of the RSE scheme. I found this useful when probing respondents in unstructured interviews as I could recall my own observations and ask sensible questions.

In using a recorder, I avoided handling the recording device too much. I turned it on and let it run, even though at times some of the things spoken by the respondents were not relevant to the research. I used this approach, although it

cost me few more cassettes and batteries, because I did not want to disrupt the conversation or show any form of disrespect by pausing the recorder in between (unless requested by the participants) and making the participants feel that some of the things they said were not important to me. I realised few things in this way. The participants were eager to talk and shared information without worrying about the recorder, and they seemed happy when expressing themselves. I realised that the recorder was quite helpful in capturing stories of these participants who were more than willing to do so.

On few occasions, the tape recorder malfunctioned because the battery had run out. This happened once in Vanuatu and once in New Zealand. In Vanuatu, I usually went back to my host family's house and reviewed the interview from the field notes. I recall in one case, I used the same tape twice which overwrote part of the previous recording. I was worried but with some of the field notes and reflection, I was able to remember key information and managed to review a reasonable amount of information. However, I was not able to retrieve all the information because the interview was in-depth and the participants gave information that was not directly related to the research. Therefore, I did not lose much information, however, I learnt a valuable lesson along the way.

I remember another instance, when interviewing a respondent in New Zealand, I did not notice that the record-button on the recorder had not been switched on, so I lost the first half of the interview. However, I could recall, from my memory some of the key points that were mentioned. After coming to my room feeling exhausted and worried, I called the respondent and explained

what had happened. The participant was generous to offer another 40 minutes to be re-interviewed. I kept the interview short and asked key questions that had been asked in the earlier part of the interview. Fortunately, the response was not any different from the earlier answers. However, I found the information much richer this time as I realised the respondent was eager to share. It was a good learning experience.

For the New Zealand segment of the field research, Professor Richard Bedford of the University of Waikato helped me in arranging meetings with government officials and employers. It was my first time in New Zealand but having gained some experience in Vanuatu, I felt I was prepared. I followed the necessary ethics of research such as maintaining participant confidentiality and anonymity and ensuring that information was used with care. I had multiple correspondences through emails with the research participants to build rapport and gain their trust before meeting them in the field. I also explained the objective and research intent clearly to them to gain their confidence and trust.

I gained good insights from qualitative field research experience. I learnt that communication, appreciation of different cultures and being with the people to get information, and the need to build rapport and trust in participants are very important for a field researcher. I also realised that when I was honest to admit my inexperience in field research, respondents and community were very helpful and forthcoming. The respondents were eager to teach me about my research topic. This also put participants at ease or made them comfortable

to share their views.¹⁸ Furthermore, in Vanuatu, I also emphasised politely to the research participants, particularly the migrants interviewed who were shy because of their English proficiency that English is my second language as well.

3.14 Research Design

I used the snow ball method to identify participants. This method proved useful for in-depth interviews. The snowball method is where a researcher contacts a small number of members of the target population and gets them to introduce others. Apart from this method, I also did investigative-explorative sampling. This is where I built contacts with people who were not the target group, but who guided me to the target and key people to interview. At times, I also had *small* conversations with potential interviewees to identify their potentiality as interview candidates.

The primary data was collected through face-to-face interviews. The interviews could be ranked along a continuum from semi-structured to unstructured. This was because I wanted to get the most of what the participants had to say about the research topic. I realised that in cases where I had minimum control or interference with the responses, the respondents were able to express their views freely and more confidently about their experiences. I also used field notes to capture observations. Communications over the emails were used as well. All face-to-face interviews were recorded and later transcribed with the help of the field notes. I took the role of observer-as-participant as I was mainly interviewing and when I got opportunity to

¹⁸ During my interviews, I ensured that I projected myself as a learner.

participate, I participated in the activities of the observed. I found the latter role to be very helpful in building rapport within the community I researched.

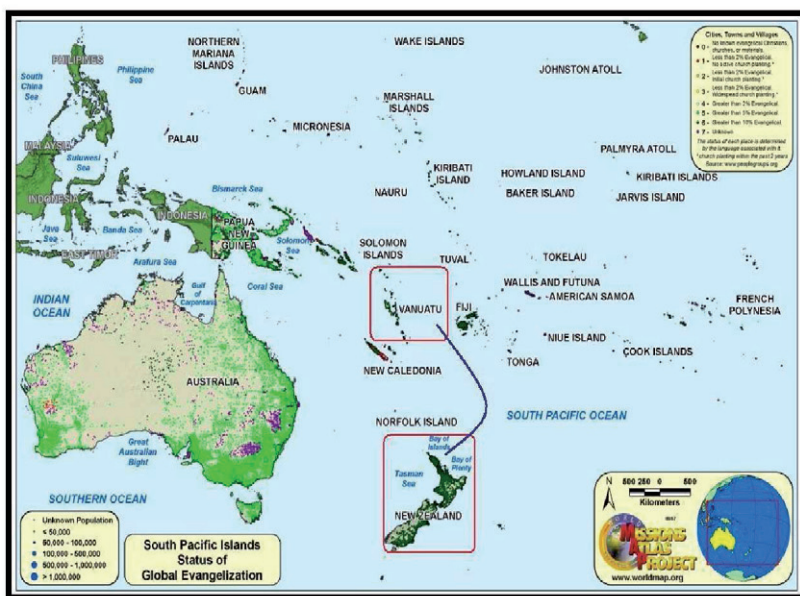
3.15 Field work preparation

Prior to commencing the fieldwork, an initial presentation was done during the *Talanoa* organised by the School of Government, Development and International Affairs. Some valuable feedback emerged from the discussion.¹⁹ The research focus was then to conduct interviews with four main groups – the returned migrants, the community leaders, employers and government officials.

3.15.1 Vanuatu July 20 – August 21, 2010

The field work in Vanuatu was for four weeks. Two weeks was spent in collecting information on Epi Island. During this time, the Island was celebrating the nation's 30th Independence Day, which lasted for a week. Another two weeks was spent in Port Vila, the capital city of Vanuatu. Here, mostly the government officials were interviewed, and some government departments, such as the Labour Office, the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, the Statistics Office, Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute based at USP-Emalus Campus, Television Vanuatu, Vanuatu National Workers Union, and the Pacific Institute of Public Policy office were visited.

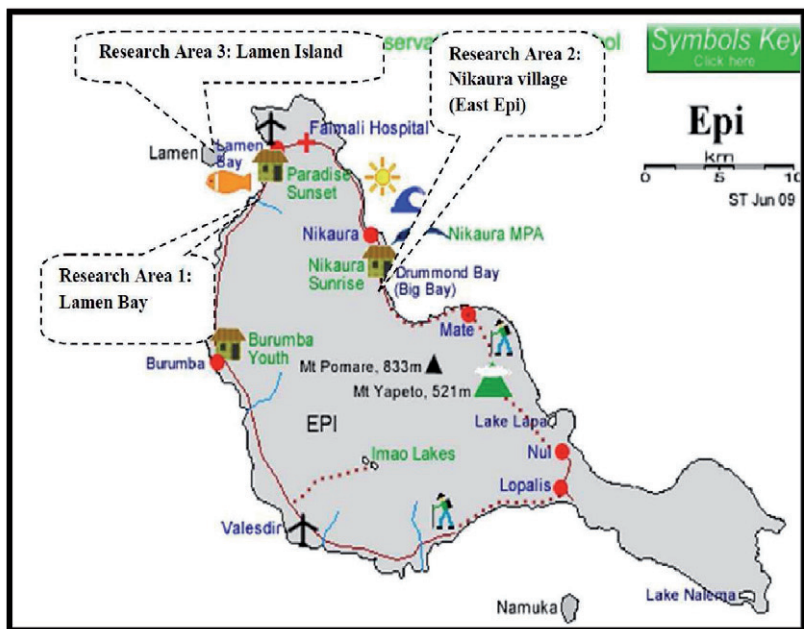
¹⁹ The researcher would like to thank Professor Kamal Siddiqui and Professor Warden Narsey who suggested the importance of looking at the demand aspect of the Seasonal Labour Scheme.



Map 3.1a. The map of Pacific Island countries. The red square shows the map of Vanuatu and New Zealand.
Source: www.worldmap.org

The primary method of data collection was conversational style semi-structured interviews. Field notes and pictures relevant to the research were also taken. I started his interview in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu. On the day I arrived in Port Vila, I went to Mele village (the biggest village of all the provinces in Vanuatu). Here, I interviewed a respondent, late in the evening, and also took pictures of some of the changes that were taking place in the village, and had an informal chat with one of the migrant family members. The following day, I visited the Labour Office, conducted an interview, before travelling to Epi Island, where most of the research on migrants and

community was conducted. Map 3.1b shows the areas where field data was collected in Epi.



Map 3.1b. Map of Epi Island. The figure show locations where of field research.

Source: <http://www.positiveearth.org/bungalows/SHEFA/epi.htm>

I stayed with a host family for two weeks in Epi Island. The primary reason for staying with the host family was to get a better understanding of the people and the community environment and also not to project myself too much as an outsider, though I was one. Being with the host family also helped me in building network and rapport with key people, especially during the 30th July Independence Day Celebration held at RoVo Bay, in Epi. All these activities

helped me to gain acceptance and trust by the people. The host family members also helped me in identifying returned migrants, and government officials on the island. The network I built was beneficial when I came to Port Vila, as I was able to seek their assistance to meet up with various government agencies. In Epi, the host family helped me by taking me around to meet with people of different groups, such as the community leaders in the *Nakamal*, the returned migrants, and some government officials. I also travelled to the East and North of Epi Island, to conduct interviews and observe the changes that were taking place (Map 3.1b).

I used the snowball method which entailed relying on newly established acquaintances for identifying key informants. Although I was mindful not to discuss the research in great length to people I met along the way, I informed my friends briefly as to why I was in Vanuatu. I found this to be really helpful, as some people who were not directly associated with the scheme, identified other people whom I found invaluable to interview. In all cases, I reminded the respondents that my visit to Vanuatu was to learn from them (Goffman, 1989).

I also sought help from school children in directing me to the location where a chief and community leader stayed. One of the key aspects of identifying respondents was being able to associate with highly respected people in the community. My host mum was a former parliamentarian and Minister for Justice who took me around to meet people. This gave further prominence to the research and people were willing to talk and raise issues of concern

regarding the changes happening as a result of the scheme. I also learnt a great deal about their culture, and learnt to appreciate people's hospitality.

3.15.2 New Zealand: September 11 – 25, 2010

As indicated earlier in New Zealand, I interviewed employers and government officials. An interview was first carried out with a key informant, an academic and a prominent researcher in the field of migration during my short stay in Auckland upon arrival. After that, I travelled to Napier-Hastings and Nelson-Motueka to interview RSE employers and government officials at the labour office in Napier, Wellington and Hawke's Bay. All these interviews were pre-arranged when I returned from my field research in Vanuatu.²⁰ I contacted Professor Richard Bedford from Waikato University via email and requested if he could put me in contact with some RSE employers. I gave an update of my research progress from Epi and Professor Bedford connected me with RSE employers in Hastings (Napier) and Motueka (Nelson). He was also very helpful in arranging for my accommodation in these locations.

²⁰ The researcher thanks Professor Richard Bedford of Waikato University for helping in arranging for interviews as well as the travel and accommodation. His help was crucial in completing this phase of the field work.



Map 3.1c shows the field research areas in New Zealand. Locations 2 and 5 represents RSE Employers and locations 1, 3 and 4 represents the areas where government officials and key informants were interviewed. Source: <http://www.backpack-newzealand.com/images/new-zealand-map.gif>

The selection of location for employers was also influenced by the interviews I conducted in Vanuatu. The returned migrants told me about the employers they worked for. Most of the migrants I interviewed were employed in these locations. I spend two weeks travelling, meeting and talking with employers, and government officials. I was fortunate to meet up with the RSE workers in Motueka, though they were packing-up to return to Epi the following day.

I used mostly semi-structured conversational type in-depth interviews where most of the interviews, on average, lasted for 30-45 minutes. I used this

approach because I wanted to learn and understand the perspectives of the people in the scheme.

3.15.3 Sources of Data

Data gathered from semi-structured interviews are mainly text that describes the informants' views and attitudes towards the RSE scheme. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Each interview was coded to protect the identities of individuals participating in the study. Though, some of the informants in Vanuatu were quite happy and willing to have their names mentioned in the analysis, I decided to keep all names anonymous.

3.16 Difficulties, constraints, and limitation of the research – The Researcher's personal account

3.16.1 Difficulties and constraints

All research has some challenges and I expected that from day one. I also knew that I needed to be patient, and keep motivating myself, especially when people gave me time for interview but for some reasons, could not make it.

I could recall one of my experiences in Epi Island, where transportation is a major problem because of poor road conditions and transport availability. It took me three hours on foot to reach Nicaura village from Lamén Bay to conduct group and individual interviews. I returned the same day. I realised the task was a painful one. However, I could later relate to other people who come from that village all the way to the mainland (Lamén Bay) to apply for RSE work and most of them do not get selected. I could relate to the frustration of some of the community leaders who said that some youths from

Nicaura travel a long distance to Lamén Bay to attend interviews for the RSE work but are not selected.

Also, when I was staying with the host family heads, I was treated as one of their important guests at the Independence Day celebration. However, I had to stay-up a few late nights while waiting for my host family members to finish their kava drinking during these times before returning home. I took this time as an opportunity to make field notes and also document some of my experiences during the day, especially about the lifestyles, culture and *kastoms*.

Since the research was more an attempt to learn the experiences of the RSE workers and how the scheme was developing and influencing the community, I could not look into the greater cultural aspects of the community in Vanuatu. I was constrained by time and budget. Furthermore, as an outsider, everything I saw seemed new and worth investigating, but I had to be careful not to lose focus of my research goal. However, when I was not conducting interviews, I spent that time either observing the lifestyle or talking to people and asking questions about their culture and beliefs (some of which I found very intriguing and helpful in understanding the informants). In New Zealand, the field work was pre-arranged, so I could not return to the informants after the first interviews when I thought I needed more clarification. Though I was able to do that once, I realised that time was of greatest essence and the informants had a very tight schedule so I did the best I could to get as much information as possible in the first interview.

In Vanuatu, I remember a situation where I was waiting to conduct an interview with a participant who gave me a specific time and date. Unfortunately, the participant did not come. This happened more than two times, and upon asking few people, I was given different reasons for cancellation of the meeting. I was frustrated. Luckily, I was fortunate to have a research buddy, who called me *brata* (meaning brother), and was a researcher as well, so understood the frustration I was going through. I was happy to share the experience with this person. I learnt that as a researcher, I needed to be patient. My greatest enjoyment in the research was when I was with the research participants – the migrants, community leaders and chiefs, and government officials in Vanuatu, and the RSE employers and government officials in New Zealand. I had the opportunity to understand and appreciate their perspectives on the social world much better when I considered myself as one of them.

3.17 Limitations

In this research, the major constraints were time and funds. Therefore, the research was limited to certain parts of Vanuatu and New Zealand. I could not speak to everyone involved in the research and therefore I do not have the liberty to generalise everything. My lack of knowledge of language and culture in Vanuatu constrained me from comprehending some of the views expressed by the returned migrants and community leaders. Since I did not have any knowledge of practical working environment of RSE Scheme in New Zealand, I could not ask more in depth questions related to the operations of the scheme.

CHAPTER FOUR: MIGRANT WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS PERSPECTIVES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses research findings from the field. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the snow ball method was used to collect information. The chapter discusses the findings based on the themes and patterns that emerged during the field research.

4.1.1 Migrant Profile

The research was conducted in Epi Island in Vanuatu and in New Zealand.

In Epi, Vanuatu, a total of twenty-three returned migrants were interviewed.²¹ The maximum duration of a stay in New Zealand per migrant was seven months, and the minimum was two months. Of the total number interviewed seventy percent represented males. Most of the migrants (48%) interviewed were from North of Epi Island (that is, Lamen Bay and Lamen Island), while 26 percent were from West Epi (around Burumba, and Valestia), 17 percent from East Epi (around Nicaura, and Morio) (see Map 3.1b) and 9 percent from other areas (Port Vila and Pentecost).

In New Zealand, three RSE employers and four government official involved in managing the RSE Scheme were interviewed.

²¹ The views of migrants are coded to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

4.2 Part I - RSE Workers' (Migrants') Perspective

This section is an effort to thematically analyse responses to question (see Appendix 1 for questions) addressed to the migrants. The aim was to identify themes from the semi-structured interviews with the respondents.

4.2.1 Awareness about the Scheme

The migrants came to know about the programme through the coordinators or agents and through people who came to Epi to spend holidays.

Migrant 2: 'The agent (coordinator)²² here in Epi went around asking people who sent messages around the island. She sent messages around the island, but at first, some people didn't believe it. They thought it won't happen, but just few of us, we went and did everything [referring to the paper work] and we went there [to New Zealand]. So everybody now wants to go [with a small laughter].'

Migrant 4: 'We arranged it with one of our friends in New Zealand when we first hear this on radio that there was such a programme organized by the Vanuatu Government. We asked about this to our friends from New Zealand who came to spend holidays in Epi.'

Migrant 9: 'I went up North which is far up in Kerikeri. It's a nice place. I work for a friend of mine, he owns an orchard.'

Therefore, migrants largely received information regarding RSE work opportunities from agents and their friends.

²² The coordinator is the person who facilitates the scheme. In Epi, migrants call the coordinators "agents", but according to the Labour Office in Vanuatu, a coordinator is appointed by the RSE employers to facilitate on their behalf whereas agents are independent people who approach the employers with the list of interested migrants wishing to participate in the scheme. In both cases, the coordinator and the agents charge fees for their services.

4.2.2 Motivation to participate in the Scheme

In this question, the migrants were asked to provide reasons for their participation in the scheme. Some said that they wanted to see New Zealand as they were travelling out of Vanuatu for the first time, while others said that they wanted to earn money to build houses, and to pay for school fees. The following responses reflect return migrants views on why they participated in the scheme.

Migrant 7: ‘The first time I heard about this programme, the main thing I wanted was to go. I wanted to see New Zealand. That’s the first thing that came to my mind. It is because we never go out to another country, so I thought this is a chance for me [*laughing a little*]. In the second time, it was all about money. I wanted to earn money [*laughing*].’

Migrants 11, 12, 13, 14 (Group): ‘It is because when we live here, we don’t earn money. We have short term income from planting crops here. It takes around four to seven months to harvest. But in New Zealand, it’s just three months and you can earn, short term, good money.’

Migrants 15 and 16: ‘We go to New Zealand because we wanted to build a new house. We had no money.’

Migrants 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 (Group): ‘You know, for us, because we live in the island, we cannot have that money if we stay on the island. We need to work in New Zealand to earn that money.’

Migrant 23: ‘We come from Epi which is far from town. We need money to build good houses for ourselves. It is because during cyclones seasons, we have to move our kids to some stronger houses. But it is a little embarrassing for us to move our kids to

someone else' house. So we find it better when we go to New Zealand, earn enough money and go back and build better houses, permanent houses that can keep out families, our children safe during cyclone seasons'

Migrant 3: 'I'm from a different province. But I am married to a girl in Epi. So I made use of the opportunity while I stayed in Epi. The first priority the company is the people of Epi, so I said to myself, while I'm here in Epi, I can take this opportunity.'

Migrant 6: 'I go to New Zealand because I have no money, but I wanted a new house.'

Migrant 7: 'I left my job and went to New Zealand because I hear there is good money there.'

Migrant 8: 'I go to New Zealand, just only for school fees because I find very difficult to pay for school fees and my kids like to go to school.'

It is apparent that migrants are motivated to participate in the scheme because they wanted to build good and permanent houses, pay for their children's school fees, and desire to travel overseas.

The picture (Figure 1) shows the temporary houses (thatched houses) which some people stay in. The aim of many returned migrants is to build permanent houses which are cyclone proof and comfortable (Figure 2 below).



Figure 4.1: A picture of a thatched house of one of the returned migrants before participating in the scheme. The migrant was building a permanent house at the time of interview which is shown in Figure 2. [Picture taken: 22 July, 2010]

Source: Author's field research

4.2.3 Migrants work before participating in the scheme

The migrants' interviewed were asked about the type of work they did before participating in the scheme. Most of them stated that they were working in their small gardens, doing subsistence farming. They planted crops and vegetables like taro, *maniok* (tapioca), *island cabij* (wild cabbage) yams, bananas among some other vegetables. Some also supplemented these food sources by hunting and fishing occasionally.

Migrants 11, 12, 13, 14 (Group): Before we joined in the RSE scheme, we did gardening, plant crops that's all.'

Migrant 7: 'I've done planting. I planted yams and bananas. Before I leave for my next contract, I make sure I get all these crops planted so that they could bear fruits. My family back home can feed on this crop while I'm out.'

4.2.4 Migrants work in New Zealand

The type of work the migrants did in New Zealand was mainly picking kiwi fruits, pruning, cleaning, and raking, among other outdoor chores.

Migrant 1: We work from 7am to 8.30am. Then we break for 30 minutes; then we start again from 9am to 12.30pm, then we break for another 30 minutes. Then we start work from 1pm to 3pm and break for 30 minutes. Then we work from 3.30pm to 4.30pm and we finish for the day.'

Migrant 9: 'We just pick kiwi and then pruning the orchard, and anything else like cleaning and raking.'

Migrant 4: 'We start at 7 am and finish at 7 pm and sometimes 5 pm on a normal day with a flat rate of \$12.75 an hour'

Migrants 15-16: 'We work for more than 8 hours. We start at 7pm and finish at 8pm. Sometimes start at 7.30am and finish at 11.30pm.'

Migrant 7: 'Okay. We start 7am, and then have our first work break at 10am. We break for 10 minutes. So you go out for coffee or two slice of bread or an apple. Then you start again and finish at 12pm. Then we have a 30 minutes lunch break. Then from 12.30pm to 3pm we work. Then we have a second tea break for 10 minutes. Then we start again and finish at half 4, sometimes 5pm.'



Figure 4.2: An RSE Migrant worker building a permanent house in Lame Bay, Epi. The worker stayed in a thatched house (Figure 4.1) while completing a house from his income earned from the RSE scheme. [Picture taken: 22 July, 2010]

Source: Author's field research

4.2.5 Skills acquired by the returned migrants

The migrants interviewed were asked if they learnt any new skills whilst working and staying in New Zealand. Most of them responded positively, saying that they learnt new job skills in the work they were doing. They also gained confidence and were happy to go back to New Zealand. The migrants also said that they learnt the importance of time management, handling money, and to communicate in English. Some also said that they learnt to socialise and make new friends as valuable skills.

Migrant 8: 'I learnt some fruit picking tricks in the pack house; packing fruits in the trays, into the boxes; I learnt to do things which

I never learnt before in my life. Things are very fast in the pack house’

Migrants 11,12, 13, 14 (Group): ‘The most important things I learnt is time management, because we must work at time when in New Zealand, picking apples, picking kiwis, and pruning.’

Migrant 7: ‘What we really learnt in New Zealand was the importance of time. Timing is very important in New Zealand. Like in here [in Vanuatu], you can waste time because we feed only on our gardens, so we can rest about six hours a day and work one hour, no problem, you won’t face any difficulties, but in New Zealand, because we feed on money, we have to work from 7 to 4 o’clock, in order to pay for housing, loans and everything.’

Migrant 9: ‘I learnt to talk to people in English. I’m happy because I can speak English; communicate with different people in any part of the world.’

The above responses show that returned migrants realised gains beyond remittance income. The migrants learnt to value time and learnt some skills in time management, being productive, and ability to speak English and develop their communication skills. Therefore, the culture of killing or wasting time (*kilem taem*) as a way of leisure, which was more common among male youths (c.f. Mitchell (2004) is changing. This pattern of change is noticed in most of the returned RSE migrant workers who have gained better appreciation of time. These migrants spent their time in productive activities such as building houses for their family, doing small business such as running shops, keeping busy in their *garen* (garden), selling produce from their garden, and/or preparing for the next seasonal contract.

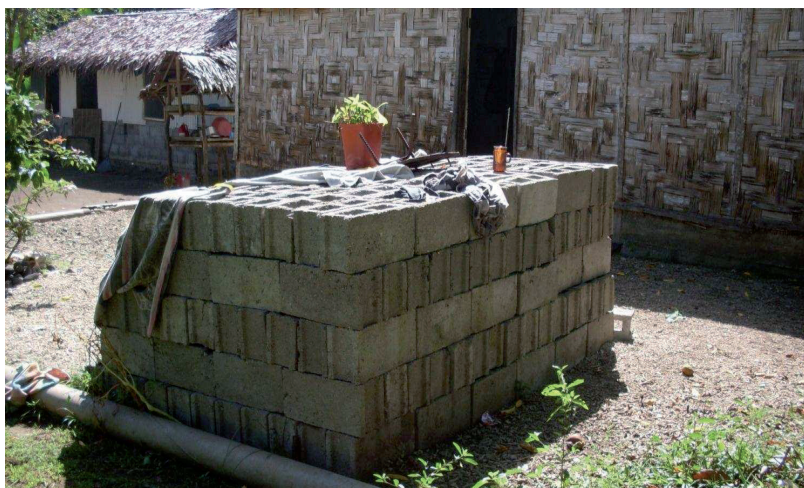


Figure 4.3: One of the migrants purchased building materials ready to construct a new house. The migrant was not in New Zealand during the time of research. According to the neighbours around, the migrant went to earn some more money to buy all the materials and is expected to complete the house upon his return. [Picture taken: 22 July, 2010]

Source: Author's field research

Therefore, migrants felt that they have gained greater consciousness of time management and being productive, were able to speak in English with confidence besides learning the hands-on skills (pruning, fruit picking, etc,) whilst working in the pack house and/or the orchards.

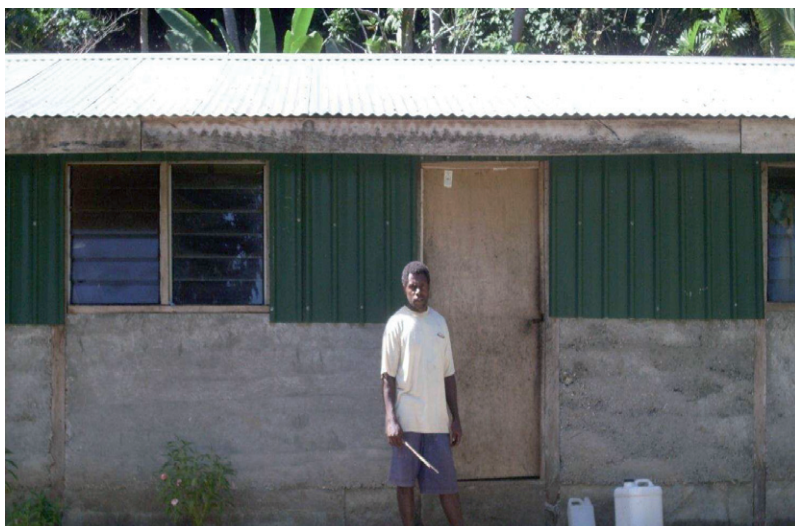


Figure 4.4: A proud RSE worker at Lamén Bay, Epi, in front of his finished house. He built the house from income earned by working in the RSE scheme.

[Picture taken: 22 July, 2010]

Source: Author's field research

4.2.6 Usefulness of the acquired skills at home

As a follow-up question, the migrants were asked whether the skills acquired were useful to them when they returned home. There were mixed responses. Some said that the skills they acquired on the farm, such as pruning, fruit picking and fruit selection can be used on the island however there needed to be some government support to have similar industry. Few migrants were positive about the skills applicability as they could better manage their small gardens and fruit trees now.

Migrant 2: 'Pruning is very useful because many of our trees here, fruit trees, we can prune them. Yes, I tried and I see the results, good fruits and many fruits. There's a special way to prune and they teach us in the field.'

Migrant 23: 'I learnt just one thing. Back home, we have our fruit trees, like oranges and mandarins, but they've got new shoots growing up. But we did nothing about it. When we went to New Zealand and saw how we pruned the trees. So when we go back to Vanuatu, we have to prune our oranges and mandarins as well. We have to train branches, that is, tree training. If we do this in Vanuatu with our fruit trees, that will be good. We learned to train the branches to grow, to get sunlight to give fruits.'

Migrant 5: 'We mainly plant sandalwood, do pruning, look after the trees, plant sandalwood, and sell in Vila and for export.'

Migrant 6: 'I learnt to do piping. I did my own piping in my house here in Epi.'

Migrant 8: 'Time is very fast in New Zealand. So it's very difficult. When you're at home, you know that you are your boss but when you stay in New Zealand, time is the boss. When it's seven o'clock, you know that time is the boss. You have to go and make what you can from the work.'

Some migrants however saw the situation a little differently. They indicated the skills acquired were not relevant at home because they do not have similar orchards and farms, and machines or even high volume production as in New Zealand. Therefore, the perception was that the skills could not be used back home.

Migrant 3: ‘No, the skills cannot be used because we don’t have the same plants here. It’s different and here in Vanuatu, we mostly grow root plants, root crops.’

Migrant 4: ‘It’s something very strange because we work with the machine in New Zealand. So everything we do, we have to be careful. Back in Vanuatu, there are no machines [*sighing*]; we just use our *lokal* hands to do things. When we are in New Zealand, we learn to perform to the maximum. But here, we can’t, because we don’t have machines.’

Migrant 7: ‘Yeah, this is one thing that if we do time management here, we don’t have the market, so you just lose all those hard work.’

Migrant 9: ‘No, because it’s different in there and when you come in here, it’s different. Like when I go there, I work on picking kiwis and all those, just everyday kiwis, come back, no kiwi, you see? So it’s a bit different when you come back. So we just have to adapt to the life here again, do normal thing, go to the garden or just stay home, all those things.’



Figure 4.5: A confident RSE worker in his newly built shop in Mele village in Port Vila selling groceries to the whole village. He indicated that his management skills acquired from RSE has helped him to operate a shop in the village. He also invested some of his earning from RSE scheme in starting-up this shop. [Picture taken: 21 July, 2010]
Source: Author's field research



Figure 4.6: A RSE worker in front of his shop in Lamén Bay, Epi showing his store which he built from savings from working in New Zealand. [Picture taken: 22 July, 2010]

Source: Author's field research

4.2.7 Accommodation conditions for RSE workers in New Zealand

In this question, migrants were asked their views on their housing conditions. Some of the migrants interviewed told that when they went for the first time, the accommodation was not so good, but after raising complaints, the accommodation was improved in their second trip.

Migrant 1: 'In the beginning, accommodation was not so good. But after discussing with the boss, the accommodation was improved. I wanted to work more because I liked the accommodation, how they accommodated people. Sometimes when the accommodation was not good, I can see the boys [workers] were complaining. Then the employer improved some of their accommodations. They provided

everything, things like TV, phone, phone lines. That's why I said, I want to work more in New Zealand.'

Migrant 2: 'The first time we went there, the accommodation was not really good, because the kitchen is separate from the sleeping house, and it's not too close. In the morning it's not very good when you go out and it's very cold. The second time was good. Everything was inside the house. The company bought a new house.'

Although there were some issues with the accommodation as highlighted by the migrants, it gradually improved in successive years.

Some migrants said they paid between NZD115 to NZD120 a week and shared a flat with 10 workers. Another migrant said the amount he paid for accommodation was between NZD75 to NZD100. Some of the migrants found the cost of the accommodation a little high.

Migrant 3: 'We found the accommodations were too expensive. The thing is that the company didn't want us to look for other accommodation. They just want us to use theirs. So every week, we earn more money, but then the money goes back to them in paying for accommodation. The thing is that we didn't know every place in New Zealand so the company didn't look for cheaper accommodation and we paid \$115 per week each person and \$120 a week for ladies.'

Migrant 7: 'For the housing, we were paying about \$115 to \$120 a week, which is a lot. But we don't have any options to choose from other motels which are much cheaper than what was given to us. We didn't have the choice. We all have to stay in that motel and pay the amount. Other workers in different company were paying \$70 a

week, \$80 a week and \$60 a week, which was much cheaper. But we didn't have the option to choose from. We've to stay and pay \$115 and \$120.'

Migrant 1: 'I earned \$75/week, the first time I went in 2008. I worked as a fruit picker. The second time, it was \$80/week. I went in 2008 and worked in fruit picking, wire lifting and irrigation work. The third time, I earned \$100/week and I worked as a fruit picker.'

Migrant 2: 'I paid \$115 a week for accommodation and \$10 a week for transportation.'

However, when discussing the variation of prices in accommodation with one of the researchers in New Zealand, it was found that prices varied because of the location. Some areas were relatively more expensive than the others. Also, it was noted that employers' preferred to keep their workers in a certain place as they received concession rates for that.

Independent Researcher (NZ): 'Well, you'll have to sort of assess this [accommodation aspect]. The thing is that the accommodation costs are assessed all the time by department of labour. Accommodation costs vary from different parts of the country, so if you've got a Ni-Vanuatu working in, say Motueka, they might be paying ninety or hundred dollars a week. If you've got that same worker working in Tauranga, they might pay hundred and twenty or hundred and thirty dollars; if they are working in Hawke's Bay, on a small orchard, where they are sleeping in the caravan, which is actually on the orchard site, they might pay eighty dollars. So accommodation costs are not that variable, I mean there is a variation depending on locations and the quality of the accommodation.'

4.2.8 Migrants adaptation to climate in New Zealand

The migrants said they missed their *lokal* food, however had no complaints regarding the food. They said they mainly ate rice, bread and meat as their daily diet intake. Cold weather was another thing most migrants talked about. However, those who had been to New Zealand more than once were positive in saying that they were used to the weather conditions since they had been to New Zealand under RSE more than once.

Migrant 7: ‘Yeah, actually we live in a warm climate, but when we go to New Zealand, because the temperature is warm right till in the afternoon, we got used to it easily.’

Migrant 23: ‘Because we’ve been to New Zealand last year, so we got used to the climate so we’re okay. Last year was cold but this year was much better.’

4.2.9 Wages earned by workers

The migrants were asked about their earnings.

Migrant 5: ‘We’re getting paid on minimum wages while other companies from other parts of New Zealand, they are paying \$17, \$18, a different rate. The company should adjust the rate. We are getting \$12.75 an hour but the other company is paying \$17 an hour, it’s a \$5 difference.’

Migrants 11, 12, 13, 14 (Group): ‘When we go to New Zealand to work, the rate we are paid is too low. Other companies paid their workers 30 dollars for one bin for the same work we do. Our company pays us 23 dollars.’

Migrants 18, 19, 21, 22 (Group): ‘Before we go to New Zealand, the company told us that when we return from working in New Zealand, we’ll get a lot of money. But when they go there and come back, no. No, it’s not what the company has said. That’s one of the bad things.’

Most of the workers interviewed were satisfied with the money they earned, however few had some reservations. According to one of the migrants interviewed, the wage rate he received was low compared to what other companies paid their workers for doing the same work.

4.2.10 Other issues raised by migrants

In this section, further categories that emerged as issues, problems and challenges were discussed by the respondents.

4.2.10.1 Tax refunds

Most of the migrants interviewed had little or no knowledge about tax refunds, while a few of them did manage to apply and get a refund. Those who got refunds were mainly assisted by friends in New Zealand or those migrants who had been in the scheme for more than once. According to the respondents, the companies employing them did not explain the tax refund procedure and arrangements.

Migrant 4: ‘We are trying to get the refunds, but the company is not helping, so we just try and ask some of our friends.’

Migrants 11, 12, 13, 14 (Group): ‘The employer didn’t let us know about the tax refunds when we were about to come home.’

Migrant 9: 'One of my friends, he went in the first year, and he applied for tax refund. He has already got it. There's a guy from New Zealand, he's our friend and he's the one helping my friend to get tax refunds. Now he's leaving end of this month to New Zealand and he told me he will help me too.'

4.2.10.2 Recruitment Process

Another issue raised by some of the returned migrants was the recruitment process. According to them, the recruitment of workers in the scheme is not carried out in an equitable manner. They said that most of the people joining the scheme in Epi are from North Epi (Lamen Bay and Lamen Island), and they want to see equity in distribution of workers from all parts of Epi (East, South and West). Those respondents raising this issue blame the agents who are in the Northern part of Epi. According to some of the returned migrants, not everybody on the island of Epi is getting a fair chance of being selected in the scheme.

Migrants 11, 12, 13, 14 (Group): 'Our island is divided into four parts, but the most people going to New Zealand are only from the Lamen Bay. It is because the agent is from there and he agent is doing 'family business''.

Moreover, the group agreed that more people should go from other areas besides Lamen Bay.

Migrants 11, 12, 13, 14 (Group): 'Seven months is better than three months. When when we go there, we want company to provide accommodation but we want to cook our own food. Yes! We also want to see more people from Nicaura and the other villages and not just Lamen Bay because right now, most of them going are from Lamen Bay which is not fair.'

4.2.10.3 Marital Problems

According to some of the respondents, extra-marital affairs are one of the major problems arising among Ni-Vanuatu when they participate in the scheme. Such cases reported so far are low, however they are of a grave concern to the community.

Migrants 15 and 16 (Group): ‘One problem is when Ni-Vanuatu go, some of them, when they live on their own, they decide to take another wives, so another new family. This creates a problem when they return home.’

4.3 Use of remittances

The migrants were asked about their view on the income they earned whilst working in New Zealand. Most of the migrants said that the money they earned was good and much better than what they could earn back home. In their response, they also told that they were able to earn relatively more when they went the second time because they knew how to manage money better and also they were able to work faster since they knew the work required of them very well.

Some of the respondents also said that the amount of money earned is very much dependent on each person’s ability to work hard and manage his or her finances. There were few migrants who said that the money earned was not good because they saw other employers paying a better rate.

Some of the views captured in this regard were:

Migrant 9: ‘Yes, money earned in New Zealand is better than staying home, and since I’m young, I worked hard and saved lot of money when I was in New Zealand. When I returned, I brought the money back home.’

Migrants 11, 12, 13, 14 (Group): ‘In the first trip, we didn’t know how to work, so we only did two or three bins [referring to fruit picking]. However in the next time, I we learnt from our first experience and did much better. But the money we earned was not so good because we had to pay for travel and other deductions, buy things from shops, and pay for taxes.’

It was found from the interview that migrants used the money earned for different purposes. It depended very much on the initial motivation of the migrants to participate in the scheme. Some migrants said they spent their money on buying things like clothes, food, phones, iPods, MP3 players, CD players and other electronic gadgets, while others said that they saved most of their income and bought solar panels, and brought money home to build houses and/or pay for their children’s and relatives’ school fees.

Most of the returned migrants interviewed had a clear plan as to why they were participating in the scheme. The views below capture how the migrants spent their earnings from the scheme.

Migrant 4: ‘Something that I found out is that it is good to use the money in New Zealand especially to buy things like chainsaws, videos and solar because it is cheaper than here.’

Migrant 7: 'I bought a solar panel, two bikes and a chainsaw [from New Zealand] which are more expensive here in Vanuatu. I'm going to use the remainder of the money to buy cement and bricks from here and start building my house. I will go back to New Zealand again to earn some money and then come back and complete the house.'

Migrant 9: 'I bought a chainsaw, phones, CD players, and MP3 players. The money I earned in New Zealand, I also bought solar from Port Vila and build a shop. I also used the money from my second trip to build a kava *nakamal* to expand my business.' [Figure c.f. 4.6]

Migrant 10: 'I buy a generator for myself and it is also used by the village, so I help the community also.'

Hence, it is clear that most of the migrants spent their earnings in useful projects which helped them and the community to develop. They used the money to build permanent houses, to pay for their children's school fees, and to purchase generators and solar panels for lighting. Some migrants used their earnings to start small businesses. However, some also used their money to buy gadgets like video and CD players, and mobile phones.

Field Note reflection – 30 July, 2010: 'On the last day of the Independence day celebration at Rovo Bay in Epi, the MC called out names of the people who contributed to this function. I heard some of the names of the migrants whom I just interviewed. This indicates that returned migrants also contribute financially towards events in Epi.'

The field note reflects on the fact that some of the returned migrants financially contributed to community events.

The picture below (Figure 4.7a) was taken during the field research. The ship (Tina 1) brought goods including groceries, gadgets, solar panels, clothes and other household items from Port Vila. Some of the items were shipped from New Zealand while others were purchased in Port Vila by the returned migrants.



*Figure 4.7a: Shipment from vessel Tina 1 with goods sent by RSE workers from New Zealand. The picture shows relatives and friends waiting eagerly at Lamen Bay to receive the goods.
Source: Author's field research*

The second picture (Figure 4.7b) shows people in Epi transporting the goods to Lamen Island and also to other parts within Epi (to Lamen Bay, Nicaura and West Epi).



*Figure 4.7b: Shipment from vessel Tina 1 with goods sent by RSE workers from New Zealand. The picture shows relatives and friends transporting goods in small boats to Lamen Island.
Source: Author's field research*

Figure 4.8a shows some of the items from Tina 1 that people put on the beach ready to be picked up by families and friends of the returned migrants. All items were labelled with either the name of the returned migrant or their family and friends' names. Items included solar panels, mattresses, clothes, groceries among other household items.



*Figure 4.8a: Some of the items shipped from New Zealand by the RSE workers. Items include bags of clothes, solar panels, coffee tables among other things.
Source: Author's field research*

In Figures 4.8b and 4.8c, we see people at Lamen Bay are assisting in transporting goods to different places. Some of the items include a table, groceries, and some household items. In Figure 4.8c items like television set, wheel barrow, mattresses, solar panels, clothes and other household items are ready to be transported to different locations in Epi.



Figure 4.8b: Relatives and friends in the early morning helping in transporting goods sent by the RSE workers. Items in the picture include tables and food items.

Source: Author's field research



Figure 4.8c: Some of the items shipped from New Zealand by the RSE workers. Items include solar panels, wheel barrow, television, mattresses and food items.

Source: Author's field research

4.4 Developments in the Community

The migrants were asked on the specific types of developments in Epi that have resulted from the RSE scheme. The migrants interviewed saw various changes happening as a result of their participation in the scheme. There are permanent houses being built by the migrants, and some of them are able to afford school fees for their children up to tertiary education. One of the migrants interviewed told that school fees in Vanuatu are very high, and for secondary level, it is between 20,000 Vatu to 30,000 Vatu (200 FJD to 300FJD) per term and there are three terms in a year. The secondary school in Vanuatu has a boarding system where the students are required to stay in the school for each term.

Some of the migrants also reported that there were various changes happening at community levels, such as solar lights were now available in the *Nakamals*, enhanced houses, shops and transportation becoming prevalent in the island of Epi.

4.4.1 RSE scheme and development of Epi

The migrants were asked about the changes they saw as a result of workers participating in the scheme. One of the returned migrants reflected as follows:

Migrant 7: ‘There are a lot of changes you can see at the moment. People are building houses and using solar panels for lighting. Before the RSE scheme, Lamen Bay was just dark and no permanent buildings as you can see now, in Lamen Bay and Lamen Island.’

Figure 4.9 (below) shows the traditional thatched house connected to the solar panel for lighting. This is becoming common in many places around Epi since the RSE scheme started.



Figure 4.9: The picture shows solar system connected to thatched houses of some RSE workers at Lamen Island, Epi. Similar developments are taking place in other parts of Epi.

Source: Author's field research

Figure 4.10 (below) shows an RSE worker's permanent house that is connected to a solar system and two water tanks. Both water tanks have clean water storage and provide water to the house. Similarly, the solar system provides lighting and electricity for mobile phone charging and television sets.



*Figure 4.10: A newly built permanent house of a RSE migrant worker with two solar systems (one in front and another at the back right side) and two water tanks (one in front and another on the left side) installed for clean water and reliable energy supplies.
Source: Author's field research*

Migrants interviewed also said that there were some changes happening at individual levels, particularly that some of the returned migrants were more productivity conscious and prefer spending their time doing some work that would help them and their family grow.

According to one of the migrants, she reported:

Migrant 7: 'It's how I manage my time, using my time wisely. I wake up in the morning and get busy all the time and I see big outcome later. I think we should do more things in the land here like growing crops.'

Another migrant said:

Migrant 4: ‘You know, back in Vanuatu, we say we *waste time*, but you know, back in big countries [like New Zealand], we say time is money, so we cannot waste time. So when I came back from New Zealand, I found a big difference here.’

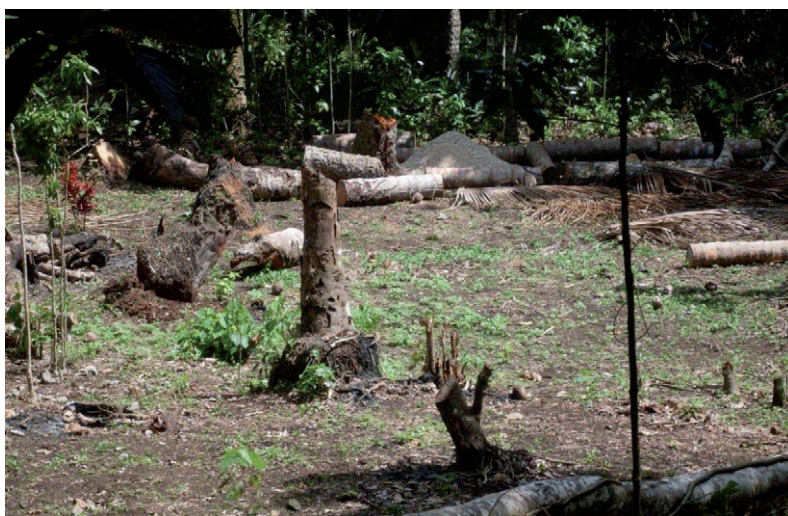


Figure 4.11: This piece of land was cleared by a migrant worker who wished to build a new house in Lamén Island, Epi. While development is evident, land clearing threatens the environment.

Source: Author's field research

In terms of an overall perspective of the scheme, it was reported by a migrant that the scheme is helping the economy to grow. One of the migrants said:

Migrant 7: 'So to my view, the RSE scheme is changing the village a lot. I think its developing the islands. I mean the whole country is benefiting because people are bringing money back into the country and you could see when people coming from New Zealand, they're buying, they're spending, so that means the economy is growing with the money.'

To sum up, it can be seen that there were some concerns raised by the migrants regarding the high tax deduction, lack of information on tax refund procedures, unfair recruitment processes resulting in uneven changes happening in the islands, and some emerging problems of extra-marital affairs that is creating some tension in the community. The latter is discussed later on by the community leaders as well.

4.5 Part II - RSE Employers' Perspective

In this section, the views of employers were analysed. Three Recognized Seasonal Employers were interviewed. The views of employers in regards to various themes that emerged during the semi-structured interviews are looked at. The set of open-ended questions used during the interview with employers is provided in Appendix 1.

4.5.1 RSE scheme and its benefits to the employers

The employers interviewed were confident that the scheme was contributing to the growth of their business. Some of the clear benefits identified included productivity gains from returned seasonal workers as these workers were more experienced and efficient in their work, and also they did not need to go through the basic training process. One of the employers stated that due to high number of returnees (returned seasonal workers) participating in the

scheme, their company had experienced smoother operations in the orchard and pack house as well as also growth in exports and sales.

For instance, one of the employers informed that the RSE scheme was very instrumental in his company's operation. Through the scheme, according to the employer, the company was able to harvest and export the targeted amount of fruits and vegetables.

RSE Employer 1: 'The RSE scheme, to sum it up, we wouldn't be without it. It is a reliable source of labour in such a short time frame that we have to harvest and export our fruits and vegetables. So yes, our season has changed a lot.'

Another employer informed that his company realised growth in exports.

RSE Employer 2: 'The Company grew this year. The company exported some four-hundred and sixty thousand cartons of apples, ten thousand cartons of pears, five-hundred and fifty thousand trays of kiwi fruits and one-hundred and ten thousand trays of gold kiwi, and we got rapid growth coming in the next two years or three years, and for next year, it may be twenty-to-twenty five percent increase.'

Another employer informed that RSE workers comprised a significant number in their workforce (about forty percent). This share of workforce greatly supported their production and harvesting.

RSE Employer 3: 'The RSE scheme for us obviously is extremely important because RSE makes up about a share of three-hundred workers. That's about forty percent of the workforce. Without this forty percent of workforce, we will struggle big time, and we would

never get fruits packed and we would never get it harvested. So it's hugely important for us, yes, hugely.'

Moreover, one of the employers stated that although there was a lot of cost in recruiting the workers, the benefits of recruitment outweighed the costs.

RSE Employer 1: 'On average, probably it costs about, just the air fares, because that's the only thing we've to pay for, it's our half of the air fare, on average the air fare costs about New Zealand five hundred dollars. What we get in return is tenfold, we get a reliable workforce, that turns up for work every day that we require of them.'

Moreover, one employer also informed that RSE scheme had reduced the recruitment cost that his company used to bear because of high job turnover in the industry. Therefore, reliable workforce led to cost-saving and also productivity gains.

RSE Employer 2: 'It's been fantastic in terms of reliable workforce, a workforce that isn't changing every other day. If you looked at our payroll in the past, we would have... where our payroll would turnover three and half times to four times in a season just to get through. So you can imagine the poor old supervisor in the pack house here. Every day, they were training new people, not unheard of to be retraining six, eight, ten people in a day because the group had put in a notice that they were leaving the next day. So it got very difficult to get past base one! I never get the improvements because I'm always starting from scratch. Whereas now, we have in the pack house for example, forty RSE, fifty-five to sixty staff and when you get a same return rate, they already know the job. The returned RSE workers get better each year which makes picking more productive, better quality fruits off on time. So there's an economic value gain and there's improved production. It makes life easier for my managerial staff too.'

Another RSE employer interviewed also had similar views:

RSE Employer 3: ‘I did a quick calculation for budgeting next year. If you work out the basic rate of what it costs us here to have RSE people compared to Kiwis, but Kiwis won’t work. It all worked out to be sixty-five cents an hour extra for us for each person, so it’s a reasonable cost, but if we can get the productivity and when you put some training to someone also, for them [RSE workers] to come back next year and just work straight in, then you can save. The productivity each year is growing through confidence and understanding. We spend sixty-five cents, and we get the job done and proper.’

As part of improving the scheme, the employers were asked on some of the challenges they faced as an RSE employer. One of the challenges highlighted was that it took quite some time to get the agreements or approval for recruitment (ATRs) finalised, which left very little time for employers to plan and calculate logistics.

According to one RSE employer:

RSE Employer 1: ‘The delay in getting the ATRs approved. Like we put our applications in June and July and we are still waiting for the ATRs [September]. Well, as you can appreciate that in our industry, our seasons start in November, so we’ve got basically six weeks to get the visa applications completed, submitted, visas issued and flights arranged, accommodations sorted in order for our season to start. So six weeks is not a long window to get all these organised.’

One of the employers interviewed also raised concern on alcohol consumption by the RSE workers. It is still considered as one of the biggest problems.

RSE Employer 2: ‘Oh, the biggest problem is alcohol and we have basically banned alcohol consumption while the RSE workers are in New Zealand, but it still happens. So the RSE workers need to be squeaky clean, they need to be squeakier [laughing], cleaner than a Kiwi which is a bit unfair, but that’s life and we just can’t have any negative stuff, so we get on the alcohol pretty quick.’

Another employer interviewed raised concern on driving stating that RSE workers who are assigned to drive need to have proper driving licence and understand the road rules in New Zealand.

RSE Employer 1: ‘One of the biggest challenges, for the whole Scheme going ahead is driving. We’ve implemented three years ago that all RSE drivers that come to New Zealand have to go through an AA driver assessment so that we’re confident that the driver could drive on New Zealand roads and that they understand New Zealand road safety because they’re carrying passengers.’

There were some sentiments expressed in regards to conducting business in Vanuatu, particularly with the agents and the Labour Office. The main problems were the miscommunication and the difficulties in maintaining regular communication due to remoteness of the island. Consequently, the employer interviewed said he would directly recruit with the help from experienced RSE workers instead of going through agents.

RSE Employer 1: ‘Doing business in and with Vanuatu is challenging, time difference, speed, resources, communication, and just the process.’

4.5.2 Wage rates and worker experiences might result in high wage demand

While on one hand, the employers were very positive about the returnees (workers who participated in consecutive contracts) since they are more experienced thus reducing the cost of training and up-skilling, on the other hand, some employers were concerned that experienced workers could demand higher wages. Moreover, differentiating the wage rate with the level of experience is not part of the contract and therefore employers needed a clear guideline on it.

Another aspect highlighted during the interview was the promotion of returned workers. Since the returnees have experience and they know the operation as well as the company they work for, they can be considered for a higher position, such as supervisory roles. However, the current bilateral agreement and the contractual documents do not have any provisions for this. As mentioned by one employer:

RSE Employer 2: ‘At the moment, they [the RSE workers] are being paid minimum wages, irrespective of the first year, second year, third year. We have to now grapple with what happens if they are third year or fifth year, what happens if you start to use them as supervisors or positions of responsibility, what you do, do you pay them more, or do you do it in some other way. We’ve got all that ahead of us.’

4.5.3 Employers' perception of RSE workers

Another aspect of the interview was to obtain employers perception of the RSE workers. One of the employers interviewed highlighted that culture shock, getting used to the accommodation, food and lifestyle were some of the challenges the RSE workers faced. These were workers who came for the first time to work in New Zealand. However, those who were returnees gradually adapted to the life in New Zealand.

As mentioned by one employer:

RSE Employer 2: 'Oh, they [RSE workers] are good. They're getting better every year. From the first year, that is 2008, there was a huge cultural shock for both, not only language but expectations as well, their ability to work long hours, the whole cultural change, the western way of living, food, the accommodation, the rules, quite a shock I think. Everyone thought they knew what to expect, but in reality, it's a different thing. So the first year was quite challenging, but every year, it got better and better. In the harvest, return rate of seventy to eighty percent, and in the pack house, last year, we had about fifty-five percent return-rate.'

It was also noted from the interview that most of the workers recruited from the Pacific countries were not used to working long hours and there was decline in productivity as a result. However, the employers noted improvement in productivity when the same workers returned the next season. One of the employers mentioned that:

RSE Employer 2: 'The thing that they [the RSE workers] did struggle with was the hours of work, not so much now, but in the

first year. That is, getting used to working fifty-five, sixty hours a week was quite hard for them. They get to forty hours and see their performance drop-off because they're just not used to working those hours.'

4.5.4 RSE workers and their earnings

One of the employers reflected on the ways RSE workers who came the first time spent their hard-earned income. Most of the items purchased were consumption goods which however did not add any value back to the islands. This impulse buying behaviour slowed down especially for workers who had been participating in the seasonal work for more than once. According to an employer:

RSE Employer 3: 'Initially, which is to be expected I guess, it's [the environment] all new to everyone [RSE workers]. They've never been out of Vanuatu before and it's all very exciting and they've got a lot of money which they're not used to, and a lot of money is spent on booze and rubbish items to take home, that sort of thing. Everyone had a big splurge on that first year and we organised containers and things to get them out, but since then, it's slowed right down. The alcohol problem is slowly drifting away, still a little bit of an issue but no way near where it was before.'

4.6 Overall Perception of the RSE scheme

In addition to the benefits and challenges experienced by employers, their view on the overall sustainability of the scheme was also addressed. Question focused more on (a) the demand for the RSE workers in future, (b) employer expectation from the RSE workers, and (c) threat of competition in the

horticulture and viticulture industry within as well as that from the Australian Seasonal Work Programme.

All employers interviewed were confident that the scheme would continue to be in existence and they would continue to recruit workers from the selected Pacific Island countries. Similar views were also expressed by the government officials who worked in the Labour Office in New Zealand (see next section).

According to one of the employers:

RSE Employer 2: 'Oh, for me, this [RSE scheme] is an ongoing programme. I think we'll get to that stage, like in ten years time, that we'll have this pool of people, experienced labour. It's definitely a win-win; it's absolutely a win-win. Helen Clark [former Prime Minister of New Zealand] was quite clever. New Zealand has a responsibility to the Pacific, and we probably have the responsibility to assist in their development and economically for us, there's nothing but good out of it, but the bottom line is, it will improve their [RSE workers] life and it will have to.'

4.7 Choice of Recruitment Pool

The employers preferred their current choice of the countries from which they recruited and showed little interest in diversifying their selection pool, primarily because the existing workers have gained experience and a relationship which has both economic and social benefits has been created.

However, one of the employers mentioned the option of diversifying or extending his selection provided there was initiative from other Pacific

countries, and support was available. When asked for the type of support, the employer mentioned the need for country liaison officers to be based in New Zealand, particularly in the areas where their respective country workers were based, to facilitate the recruitment process.

According to another employer, having liaison officers would help them to communicate effectively with labour officials and agents back in the islands and also discuss any issues regarding the workers.

As mentioned by an employer:

RSE Employer 3: 'Another asset I guess for some of the countries is about putting liaison officers in place. The Tongan people have one in here and the Samoan people are going to put one in, so that's quite an advantage for us. It makes pastoral care a lot easier. Quite often it's miscommunication which the liaison officer can fix, before it even becomes a problem. So a country that offers that sort of service is going to be looked upon a little better. Vanuatu doesn't have one, but then we have enough experience with Ni-Vanuatu now ourselves, but not other new employers.'

Employers also find that workers from different countries are more productive in different aspects of the seasonal work. According to an RSE Employer:

RSE Employer 3: 'We are learning. In Vanuatu, people from different islands or different villages have a between approach to that work compared to this work [referring to the different types of work in the orchard]. Different islands are bit better for different jobs. That's why we are experimenting more than with one country. Tongan ladies for the pack house, not necessarily men and we're

going to try Samoan men this year for the orchard and just see how it goes, so just experimenting how it goes.’

4.7.1 Demand for RSE workers

Another question the employers were asked was whether they saw the demand for RSE workers growing in future. The employers’ responses converged into four categories: (a) the future availability of jobs; (b) growth in production which is influenced by favourable weather and investment in the orchards; and (c) employers’ preference for Pacific workers; and (d) employers’ confidence in the RSE scheme.

RSE Employer 1: ‘We may have the right amount of RSE workers that we want to bring in but our season may change which means that we don’t need to bring them in. We don’t bring them [RSE workers] in for the sake of bringing them, but then also if we know it’s going to be a big yield year for the apples, so we need more workers or we’ve increased our lands for our growing so we need more harvesters to pick our produce.’

RSE Employer 2: ‘I would expect in the next, probably two years, expect maybe twenty percent more RSE workers to come in and that will grow to thirty percent more in five years time. It will grow to a level because it’s only a certain amount of overall. Our industry is quite tough. There’s not lot of money made in our industry yet, but one day it will be, but as we’re planting trees and expanding so to speak as a company, there are more orchardists that are giving up, so total production is probably not going to change a lot in the next ten years. I think two thousand nine hundred and eighty workers are recommended in this area. I think I can see that number to grow in the next five years to four thousand workers, but then it will probably level out because I don’t think we’ll go wild planting trees.’

RSE Employer 3: ‘We would exist without RSE scheme, but we couldn’t expand and we have expanded in the last four years. We have planted lot of trees. We wouldn’t have planted even half of what we’ve planted if we didn’t know we’d have people to harvest them and pack it. So if they took the scheme away from us, or cut the number of workers in half, you wouldn’t see investment in horticulture, people wouldn’t do it. It’s too risky. They [the companies] wouldn’t be throwing lot of money to set it [plants] up if they can’t harvest it, and it’s not just harvesting, its optimum harvest. You’ve got to get it through the right quality as well.’

4.7.2 RSE workers’ preferred choice for employers

The employers mentioned that although high unemployment in certain areas of New Zealand meant they could recruit local people instead of RSE workers, the RSE workers were still their preferred choice. The reason for this is because RSE workers were considered more reliable. According to one employer:

Employer 3: ‘I think we’re finally getting through that it doesn’t matter. Experience has shown that unemployment in the 1990s was extremely high in this area however we still couldn’t get people to pick the fruits. So I think it doesn’t matter what your employment is because some of those people will not pick apples whether you want. You think they will, but they will not. We can’t rely on that.’

Moreover, the employer also expressed that given the baseline of RSE workers available, they are confident to invest in orchards.

RSE Employer 3: ‘If you can consistently give us a baseline of RSE workers, we will invest in orchard and expand, and if we expand, I would expect RSE workers to expand with it because the Kiwis

won't do the job. So I think we're in that stage now. Since we know we are going to get three hundred RSE people, we'll spend some money out there and we'll plant some more orchards and get more other investors. So I expect the RSE numbers to creep up.'

4.7.3 Employers' expectations of RSE workers

The employers were also asked to discuss their expectations of the RSE workers. Their views converged to worker productivity, willingness of workers to work long hours and being available to work on any day that is required, good working relationship and having a good image in the New Zealand community, good communication skills and good behaviour and attitude.

It was also mentioned in the interview that for the scheme to be successful, the workers needed to take enough money home to help their families and communities in the islands.

However, employers also raised some concerns regarding the excessive use of alcohol problem by some of the RSE workers which threatened the safety of workers and people in the community.

RSE Employer 3: 'The scheme is getting better because of the fact that we got returnees now, and we understand that they're going home. Each year they go home, they talk to the new people. So, the new people have the understanding before they come to New Zealand, and so the whole thing is just getting better and better. Alcohol seems to be getting less of a problem, but it is still regarded as a problem.'

One employer interviewed accepted the need for him to get involved in the community in the source (Pacific Island) countries, particularly from countries where most of the migrant workers are coming from. However, the employer mentioned that in order to do this, they needed to have significant presence of migrant workers in the host country and also understand the cultural aspects of Pacific countries.

RSE Employer 3: 'As a company, it will help us if we do get more involved in the community in the Pacific countries from where we recruit, rather than just Vanuatu. Maybe we can do this in the three islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa, from where we recruit most of the Pacific workers.'

As much as it was important to ascertain RSE workers' views on skills they attained from participating in the scheme, the employers too were asked if they had observed any change in skills in the RSE workers. All employers agreed that there were significant skills and developments in the lives of RSE workers which in turn would be used by the workers when they returned to their islands. However, one employer added that the workers needed confidence to start a large scale business.

RSE Employer 3: 'The RSE workers need confidence. If we can get involved and get them [RSE workers] started, I think they'll take the skills out there in the orchards especially to their home. They're all very good gardeners anyway. They're horticulturist by nature, aren't they? That's how they live. But to actually organize that into a business, to export, I think it's difficult.'

The RSE employer 3's concerns were understandable considering that existing RSE workers' skills transferability to large scale production and farming for export is difficult as there are complexities in meeting world standard and compliance. Furthermore, extensive awareness on proper marketing for commercialising agriculture would be needed. As mentioned by the employer:

RSE Employer 3: 'A lot of productive or fertile land is there in Vanuatu that could be used. I've been approached couple of times by individuals, but it's got to be collective. But then there are a lot of other skills that are needed. How to get through the compliance issues and stuff like that? Marketing is the biggest problem. But to get the stuff through the [standard and compliance] board, it's the biggest hurdle and that's an expensive hurdle.'

4.7.4 RSE employers' perception of Australian Pilot Worker Programme

The employers see no immediate threat of competition from the Australian Seasonal Pilot Worker Programme (ASPWP). However, the employers interviewed raised some concerns on wage rate differential. The employers mentioned that the wage rate in Australia is relatively higher than New Zealand and therefore, experienced seasonal workers from the Pacific may choose to work in Australia. This would mean a loss of productive workers from the existing pool of returned workers.

RSE Employer 2: 'Australian Seasonal Worker Programme is a potential competition, no doubt about it, but we are in competition with other RSE employers in New Zealand who are trying to do the same business.'

RSE Employer 3: 'I suppose in ten years time, the hourly rate will mean something but it doesn't mean a lot now. But we have our

core people now from Vanuatu and I think as long as we keep them happy and they keep us happy, they'll keep coming back, and they'll bring their friends, their families, other members of the village. Sometimes we have a brother who works this season and he doesn't want to come the next season, then the sister comes. It's that type of thing here, that sort of thing, so they're happy. And because Ni-Vanuatu people are not confident going elsewhere, I think they're happy here so they'll keep coming.'

On the other hand, one employer mentioned that the ASPWP was progressing very slowly and that the RSE employers had built a good working relationship with the Pacific workers who may prefer to work for horticulture companies in New Zealand. Moreover, the ASPWP had a rigid structure with \$18 per hour wage rate, maximum of forty hours of work per week and a fixed six month contract while the RSE scheme was more flexible.

RSE Employer 3: 'In Australia, the wage rate is \$18 per hour, and forty hours per week and the contract are for six months, so it's not a threat.'

4.8 Community Perspective on RSE Scheme

This section describes interviews with the RSE migrants' community (Epi Island in Vanuatu) representatives. The community representatives included school teachers who taught in that area, government officials,²³ village heads (chiefs) and church elders.

²³ I used 'VN' to indicate the views are from government officials in Vanuatu. I felt this distinction was necessary because I also interviewed some government officials in New Zealand. I indicated the latter with 'NZ'.

A broad question eliciting views of the RSE scheme was posed to church elders and chiefs. The responses were positive since they impressed upon apparent developments. For instances, RSE workers were able to build a permanent house (concrete and wooded) and were no longer living in their thatched houses. Some migrants were also able to support their children's education (which was, pay for school fees, provide books, bags, and uniforms).

Furthermore, one of the village elders noted that some people (the returned RSE workers) had started small businesses like shops, bought boats and trucks for transportation services and were also contributing to church and community events.

Community Leader 1: 'Sometimes when the RSE workers come, they come in a ship. The ship is loaded with cement and iron sheets, and many things. They buy these to build their houses. I think it's very good because when people, boys and girls go there, they earn more money and they can earn, therefore they can make their living a little bit better.'

One of the church elders remarked that RSE workers were able to buy items like television, housing materials among other things which were apparently not possible before the scheme started.

Figure 4.12 is an example of a community hall that was built in Lamén Island. According to community leaders, RSE workers also contributed financially towards the construction of this hall. The hall is used for village functions.



Figure 4.12: This is a community hall in Lamén Island (Epi) which was built with contributions from RSE workers.

Source: Author's field research

On the other hand, another community elder said that although changes were happening in the lives of the Ni-Vanuatu who went and worked abroad, he expressed that there were not many changes in the migrants' behaviour or lifestyle in his area (Epi)

Community Leader 1: 'I don't know about other islands in Vanuatu but in here in Lamén Bay, when people come back, they are just like the same. They know they are coming to the culture.'

However, this view was in contradiction with one of the community leaders and village chiefs who said that the island of Epi faced labour shortage given

that they lived in a communal type system where they worked collaboratively on various things as a village.

Community Leader 3: ‘Although there is not much change in migrants’ behaviour, but when some of them go, they forget all about the community. Here, everybody lives in a community and we depend on each other. So when people go there [to New Zealand] to work, there’s no power, manpower in the community. They don’t bother to do anything. So the community is trying to set up law for people to return and contribute financially to the community. If everybody can abide to this law, then it will be okay, but if they decide not to listen to the community, then we’ll be facing another problem in coming time.’

One of the government officials appraised the scheme in saying that the scheme provided an opportunity for unskilled people in rural and island communities to obtain formal employment and earn income that was reasonably high compared to local standards. Moreover, he said that the scheme enabled unskilled workers to be employed. Such workers had little chance of earning cash income through formal employment.²⁴

Government Official (VN) 2: ‘Well, the RSE scheme is bringing more money into the economy and it is bringing money into the hands of people who don’t normally have money. These are grassroots I would say. I call them grassroots. These are people who are from the islands and who are unskilled people from Port Vila and around Vanuatu, people who wouldn’t get a job.’

²⁴ Government officials from Vanuatu and New Zealand were interviewed. To distinguish the respondents, I indicate ‘Government Official (VN)’ for Vanuatu and ‘Government Official (NZ)’ for New Zealand respondents respectively.

Moreover, the government official also pointed out that the scheme is helping low skilled workers as they get an opportunity to work and earn money.

Government Official (VN) 2: ‘The RSE scheme, I think, on general is good for the people of Vanuatu because people can’t get that much money in Vanuatu. Wages in Vanuatu are very bad. Working conditions are very bad too. Therefore, for unskilled people going to New Zealand offers a much better pay for the work they can do. They get much better return than any job they can possibly get in Vanuatu with the skills they have, so it’s a good deal.’

Similar views were shared by one of the community leaders. According to one community leader:

Community Leader 1: ‘As for me, I think it’s really good, because in Vanuatu, when people go from the island to work in Port Vila for a month, they can only earn twelve thousand Vatu and all those money is used in paying for bus fares and food, so no money is left until the next pay day. But when I see people going to New Zealand to work in the RSE Scheme, when they come back after seven months, some come with six hundred thousand of Vatu or five hundred something thousands of Vatu which is very good. It is much better than working in Port Vila. Many of them return and build houses, pay school fees, pay for solar systems and many things.’

The government official also raised the point that the scheme had greater influence on economic growth than other sectors like tourism. Therefore, the scheme was a pro-development initiative and had a broader impact.

Government Official (VN) 2: 'I think the scheme is something that is of more benefit to Ni-Vanuatu than many of the kind of economic activities that are happening in the country, for example, like tourism, where money comes to the top levels of the society and then goes out again. However, in the RSE scheme, money reaches the bottom levels of the society and is spent in the communities to enhance their well-being. So I think it has a better economic effect on poor people than many of the development projects that we have had in the country that are primarily to do with foreign investors.'

Another government official interviewed said returned RSE workers were easily distinguished from those who work in Vanuatu. The differences were notable in their dressing. He laughingly said that:

Government Official (VN) 3: 'Basically, you could just realize the RSE workers dressing code has been changed. Just see the people who walk around in the town, especially when there's a group that just arrived with all these rugby jerseys. They buy mobile phones and all these electronics, TV, videos, CD players, DVD players, and they do travel with these things. Some of them, if they go in a big group, they come with containers of stuffs from New Zealand.'

One of the Government officials shared similar views with village elders and chiefs regarding changes in Epi due to the RSE scheme. According to him, only the returned migrants were more cautious about money, however, they also wanted to find a job where they could earn money for the work they did.

Government Official (VN) 6: 'The good thing about people going to New Zealand to work is that they are coming to a stage where they are thinking of ways of making money. When I walk around in Lamén Bay (Epi Island), I see people who are going to New

Zealand and coming back, they are living in good houses and they have adapted some new ways, which is a good thing.'

The government official gave an example by reflecting on her recent visit to the island of Epi.

Government Official (VN) 6: 'I walked around in Lamen Bay and I saw some of the RSE workers building shops, selling benzenes and other things like kerosene. I've also seen one of the returned workers make a very big store, just by the road close to the market house.'

However, two of the community leaders interviewed said that although RSE workers earned money while working in New Zealand, much of their earnings were dependent on their ability to manage time and money in New Zealand, having a good plan for the use of their money, and the willingness to share the benefits with the community.

Community Leader 2: 'I've a son who went to New Zealand under the RSE scheme. He has been there two times, and by the look of everything, my view is that it all depends on the people who go. It depends on how they manage their time. A few of them returned and didn't do much. I don't see much change in their lives. Therefore, it's mainly up to their ability to manage, how they manage themselves.'

Community Leader 3: 'The RSE scheme is very good. Like I said, it's a very good Scheme but the thing is that they've to share the opportunity to travel and work, they've to share among each other. That's the best thing. If they do that, then everything is okay.'

On the other hand, there are some negative views regarding this scheme. It was mentioned during the interview with the elders and chiefs of the village in Vanuatu that there were cases of marital affairs. This has created some tension within different communities in the islands. However, the chiefs are using traditional means (such as dialogues and reconciliation methods) to resolve these issues. According to one community leader:

Community Leader 3: ‘We’ve already solved some problems last year, and this year, we’re waiting for another case that’s coming and we’re still looking forward. Unless the RSE workers decide to work and cooperate with us (the chiefs), the problem will continue in the future. We’re going to the *Nakamal* with the chiefs. We can talk and give them some punishment and tell them not to go to New Zealand for three or four years.’

One of the community leaders hesitatingly said that women should not participate in the RSE scheme due to social problem (particularly the marital affairs) that arose when they were there. According to one community leader:

Community Leader 1: ‘As for me, I tell many people here that I don’t want women to participate. Because when the women go with more men, they go together, work together and they create problems in New Zealand. The community back in our islands have to deal with these problems.’

However, one of the government officials interviewed had a slightly different view.

Government Official (VN) 6: ‘I think more single men and women should go, which will be good. It is because if something happens,

it's their business. However, when married couples go, and such things happen (referring to marital affairs), then there is a separation in the family. Right now, more married people are going.'

This argument was opposed by one of the government officials. According to him, the scheme was demand (employer) driven and if the employers needed more female workers then that was what the labour office would have to supply.

Government official (VN) 3: 'It's mainly up to the farmers, the employers to decide who they want to employ. It's a demand driven thing. If the farmers want to recruit more males, then we give them more males and if they want more females, then more females need to go. It's not really on us to decide who should go or not go. We are here to facilitate the process.'

Another community leader saw this problem as putting additional burden on chiefs when it came to solving problems of this nature. However, he blamed both men and women who were involved such situations. He said that people should go as a community from the village. The rationale behind this is that when they went as a community, they would know each other's culture and lifestyle and there would be respect and mutual understanding amongst the village group members.

Community Leader 3: 'I think the people who go there, the women live close to men so that's why we have this kind of problems. They enjoy their time and do everything and when they return, they make the chiefs to work very hard to solve their problems. Sometimes they deny themselves and try to make the chiefs work hard to find

out the truth and the solution. Sometimes the chiefs try to make them tell the truth but they never tell, they lie every now and then.’

The government official disagreed with the idea of sending only men or restricting women to participate in the scheme. However, he says there could be a better way of sending people (both men and women) which would solve the problem. He said that:

Government Official (VN) 2: ‘There are some people who say that women should not go. I don’t agree with that. Women should be allowed to go. One of the most common things people complain about is broken marriages resulting from people participating in the scheme. I think the solution is that people should go as a community with a chief, a church leader, a women’s leader and a youth leader from *one* community because they all know each other. The chief will be there and also everybody knows each other and since no one is a stranger, you have little possibility of forming a relationship of such nature.’

There was another benefit highlighted when people went as a community.

Government Official (VN) 2: ‘I think going as a community from one village or island is good. One of the dangers of RSE is that it can possibly lead to individualisation. In our society, we need to maintain our communities. They are the basis of our society and we would not like to see too much individualisation which is happening with the higher paid people in the society.’

The fear of the society becoming more individualistic was also mentioned by one of the community leaders (also a village church elder).

Community Leader 3: ‘When the RSE workers return, I don’t see many of them coming to work in the school or in the community. They seem to be only thinking of themselves, helping themselves. Some of them have got houses half built and when they come back, they stick onto their houses, they continue building. They don’t come out to say, ‘oh, what can I do for you teacher, is there anything I can do’, or ‘chief, what can I do here’. I see them just working for themselves. It’s not a good thing because that style of life is not our style. We cooperate together every time, we go to chiefs and so on. When the RSE workers come back, they have their good homes and sometimes they don’t want to come out and give a hand to the chiefs. We see some changes happening now.’

According to one researcher in Vanuatu, the solution of many problems lay with the level of education of the people who participated in the scheme. The people who participated needed to develop themselves in terms of skills and education, particularly on managing money.²⁵

Researcher (VN) 1: ‘In my opinion, if someone wants to go New Zealand to work, he must develop his education well because when he returns home, the chiefs don’t have the right to direct or control his money. I think someone who wants to go to New Zealand must develop his education well.’

4.8.1 Migrants’ contribution to the community

Two of the government officials interviewed said that the migrants contributed in different ways to the community. Some contributed money towards

²⁵ Two researchers were interviewed, one from New Zealand and one from Vanuatu. To distinguish the respondents, I indicate ‘Researcher (VN)’ for Vanuatu and ‘Researcher (NZ)’ for New Zealand respondents respectively.

fundraising activities and community events, and some bought goods from the *lokal maket*²⁶ which helped the people.

Government Official (VN) 1: ‘The RSE workers contribute to the communities. Sometimes we have fundraisings, to raise funds for school fees, to build a church and community activities. They contribute, they support by giving some money.’

Government Official (VN) 6: ‘Yes, in my village, Sara, the chief says that if anyone who has been to New Zealand and when he comes back, he has to contribute to the *Nakamal* of the chief five thousand Vatu. I’ve seen some of them doing that.’

Moreover, the returned migrants also contributed to the Provincial council (local government authorities). One of the government officials said that there had been an increase in the revenue as a result of an increase in the number of registration of RSE workers. The registration included providing birth certificates, police clearance and certifying documents. The money collected from workers was used in development projects in their area. Current developments included building a road and a community hall in Epi.

Government Official (VN) 4: ‘As for the Council as a whole, I think it’s helping the Council a lot. We are no longer seeing requests coming from community to help them because the RSE workers are helping them.’

²⁶ *Lokal maket* refers to the village market in the islands.

4.9 Government Officials in New Zealand

The government officials interviewed in New Zealand said that the scheme was benefitting the horticulture and viticulture (RSE) employers. Moreover they said the scheme was helping both the RSE and non-RSE employers. The benefits to the latter were a result of freeing up local workers to be employed in non-RSE companies.

Government Official (NZ) 8-9 (Group): ‘There are some benefits across the regions. Well, not only for the RSEs because let’s say farmer A gets hundred RSE workers, well that means that farmer B next door can employ any backpackers, people on seasonal work permit, Anyone else coming along looking for work, the locals, they can go and work for farmer B because they’re not going to be soaked up by farmer A.’

The government officials also identified that there had been productivity gain from the returnees (returned RSE workers). The gain was in terms of experienced migrant workers who could do the seasonal work more efficiently, and steady supply of migrant workers which in turn boost horticulture and viticulture business confidence.

Government Official (NZ) 8-9 (Group): ‘I guess if I’m running a business like an employer and you need resources to run your business, and labour is one of those resources just like you need product and plant. So if you got a good pool of steady returning labour that you know it’s going to be there when your seasons kicks in, then you know your business is going to have at least that resources functioning really, really well and then it should be a profitable business. In such cases, the businesses are going to pay, invest, expand and export. Then it’s all productive for the business, for the region and for the country.’

Similar views were expressed by one of the researchers who were interviewed. It was asked whether the scheme was achieving its objective of creating a win-win situation for the employers and the workers. The researcher said that the scheme went beyond the dual win-win type objective. He saw the scheme as multi-pronged which benefited not only the employers and workers but also the communities in both the countries (New Zealand and Vanuatu).

Researcher (NZ) 1: 'The argument is that the RSE scheme if properly managed there should be three winners in this scheme. Obviously the employer has to win because they've to feel it's worth recruiting and employing the labour. Secondly the migrant must win otherwise exploitation of the migrants would become a problem. Thirdly, the communities of the migrants' would benefit. The migrants' community would benefit from skill transfer if appropriate skills go back into the village. The other win not so often mentioned is the community of the host country, the wider community, particularly shops and churches because of the greater church attendance in the case of the latter.'

4.10 Summary

These perspectives demonstrate the scheme has in general provided a win-win outcome. The employers have benefited from productivity gains and also reduction in cost of production as far as recruitment is concerned. RSE workers have realised gains in terms of earning which they used in various ways. They used the money to build permanent houses, buy water tanks and solar panels, pay for their children's school fees, and buy groceries and other household appliances. Interestingly, some used the savings to start businesses like small shop in the village.

It was also found that workers' accommodation improved since the scheme got started in 2006. The benefits to the migrants are nevertheless clear. Migrants are able to improve their standard of living when they save money and invest in housing and education. It was also highlighted that migrants are able to buy food and other items that they were not able to afford when the RSE scheme was not in place.

Moreover, the research also identified evidence of social remittances.²⁷ This was evident in workers and their families who had acquired improved financial status, contributed towards community development and helped other relatives. The skills acquired by the workers such as time management, productive mindset and ability to confidently communicate were some of the gains seasonal workers stated.

On the negative front, it was noted that there were some unbalanced developments happening on the island of Epi as those who participated in the scheme were able to get more cash income and therefore were able to build better houses, provide good education for their children and also start small businesses compared to those who had not participated in the scheme. However, it was also evident that some workers contributed to community events and also provided some money to chiefs and churches for the development of the area.

²⁷ Social remittances are defined as qualitative gains from migration. These include skill transfer and experiences that lead to improvement in the lives of migrants and migrant families.

The RSE employers are very positive about the scheme. They perceive the programme to be win-win for both the New Zealand and Vanuatu economies. It was mentioned by the employers that workers benefit from new skills gained from participating in the scheme, however skill transfer is constrained by many factors including confidence and resources needed to start a large scale production back home. According to the employers, the issue of excessive alcohol consumption remains a problem and needed attention in order to minimise risks.

According to the community leaders and chiefs in Epi, the community is *changing* a lot. While there are some negative effects resulting from Ni-Vanuatu going to work in New Zealand, the benefits seem to outweigh the cost. Monetary gains from remittances are helping the migrants in a number of ways. These include education, building permanent houses, starting small businesses like shops, and buying foods and other materials which were virtually not possible as many of them depended on subsistence agriculture and had no avenue to gain money wages. As mentioned above, negative effects include marital problems and some returned migrants not participating in community events or the communal lifestyles which pose greater challenges for chiefs and village leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Concluding Remarks

This thesis looked at migration and development, especially the impact of short-term labour migration as exemplified by the recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. The aim was to explore out the development impacts of the scheme on the lives of migrants', migrants' home communities and employers. It was found that the outcomes are primarily in favour of all parties – migrants, the migrants' community back home and the employers.

The research was based on semi-structured interviews. The field research was carried out in Epi Island and Port Vila in Vanuatu, and in New Zealand. The study was primarily focussed on return migrants from Epi Island, although interviews were also done in Port Vila, which mainly included government officials and some returned migrants. In New Zealand, selected RSE employers and government officials were interviewed to gain host country's perspectives.

5.2 RSE Workers and the Scheme – migrants' perspectives

The outcomes from the research show that the RSE scheme had a positive effect on the lives of migrants, employers and the community leaders. The return migrants have benefitted from new skills and experience abroad, besides having an opportunity to work and earn income. It was also highlighted that the short-term migration is helping low-skilled workers to engage in paid formal employment through the scheme.

It was also highlighted that the remittance income earned by the migrants was used productively back home. The migrants used the income to pay for their children's school fees, build permanent houses, buy food, start up a small business like shops and canteens, transportation services, purchase solar systems and generators for lighting, buy home appliances, and among other things save some money for future use.

In terms of social remittances, some migrants' also reported realisation of greater productivity consciousness and were using this implicit skill in their farming activities back at home. Some also applied the skills of pruning and planting they had acquired from their work in New Zealand at home. The migrants' were also able to gain relatively better social status because of their ability to contribute (financially) to community work. The community leaders back home were also proud of the migrants' who are relatively successful as a result.

Moreover, the previously held notion of youths killing time (*kilem taem*) because of unemployment, lack of interest to work, among other factors (c.f. Mitchell, 2004) is changing particularly among the returned RSE migrants. Many of the migrants are conscious of time and money. This was not only highlighted by the migrants but also the community leaders. Hence this form of social remittances (time management and effective use of money) is evident from the types of work the migrants engage in when they return from New Zealand. Most of the returned migrants occupy themselves in activities to improve their families living conditions. This is perhaps development in its simplest form! This change in behaviour (and attitude towards life) is noticed

by the community and those who do not participate in the scheme as well. No doubt, these significant behavioural changes among migrants may radiate some positive spill over effects in terms of knowledge sharing and constructive changes in the living conditions for all.

However, Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers needed assistance and awareness on tax refund policies, clarity on wage rates offered and deductions from gross wages upon their arrival in New Zealand. The migrants had little or no knowledge of taxing systems and lodgement of application for tax refunds. One of the issues was that the migrants came back home after three to nine months contract and did not know how to lodge for tax refunds.

5.3 RSE Employers and the scheme – employers' perspective

The RSE employers' perceived the scheme as a win-win outcome. The employers interviewed responded that through this scheme, they are able to secure a reliable and consistent pool of readily available workers. This gave them confidence to invest in the horticulture and viticulture industry (MacLellan, 2008). The employers said that there would be a certain level of demand for workers from the Pacific and that the RSE scheme had enabled the employers to realise productivity gains, especially when the same workers came in subsequent seasons. One of the largest RSE employer also responded that because of the scheme, their company had planned to expand their business through purchase of new plants and machinery and additional orchard farms. Similar views were also captured by the recent survey conducted by the New Zealand Department of Labour (DoL) (IMSED, 2010).

However, the employers' interviewed highlighted that RSE workers needed to be more vigilant in terms of observing New Zealand's rules and regulations and maintain high level of productivity in order to ensure sustainability of the scheme, and country of choice when it came to recruiting from the five kick-start countries. Nevertheless, the employers' also accepted they needed to understand the home countries' culture and environment in order to ensure migrants were effectively supervised. Moreover, the active role of liaison officers acting as mediators in solving issues related to pastoral care and other worker issues were emphasised. Although some kick-start countries have liaison officers present to deal with worker issues, this was something that Vanuatu lacked.

The RSE employers' also expressed concerns in terms of the home country's willingness to communicate effectively. They highlighted that the labour officials and agents in Vanuatu needed to communicate more effectively and ensure that country representatives are available to iron out any issues that arose whilst the Ni-Vanuatu workers were in New Zealand. Employers also raised some concerns about communicating with the immigration department. The employers raised the issue that delayed responses from the New Zealand immigration in approving recruitment ATRs (ATR refers to approval to recruit which states the number of people employers need for a particular season) created further delays in arranging the logistics.

5.4 RSE scheme and the Epi Community – home country’s community perspective

The community of Epi is generally in favour of the scheme. The community leaders have witnessed significant changes happening in certain parts of the island, particularly in Lamén Island and Lamén Bay (see Chapter 3, Map 3.1b for geography of Epi). Some changes identified by the community leaders included new permanent (concrete) houses, solar energy systems lighting and water tanks for safer water, migrants’ children were able to go to school in relatively better conditions, and solar panels and generators purchased and installed by migrant family for electricity supply. The leaders also applauded the scheme because it empowered migrants to contribute to the community events more effectively. Some of the returned migrants contributed financially to community events and building of community hall in Lamén Island (North Epi) and a church in Nicaura village (East Epi). The migrants upon their return also bought goods and services (mainly crops, vegetables and meat and sea food) from the *lokal maket* thus supporting the local economy. They also bought groceries mainly in bulk for their family members and for their shops.

However, there are some social tensions arising in the community. Community leaders complained that there were issues of marital affairs, which had created conflicts between provinces, and led to family breakup among other social problems. The community leaders highlighted that this issue would be resolved through traditional means – through dialogue, punishment (banning the person from participating in the scheme) and listening to their chiefs’ advice. However, to prevent this problem from emerging, one of the government officials in Vanuatu emphasised that migrants needed to go as a

community. However, this does not guarantee that the problem will be resolved.

Another concern raised by the community leaders was that developments happening on the island were relatively biased because most of the migrants who went for work in New Zealand were from Lamén Bay (main land) and Lamén Island. The rest of the island people (in East and West of Epi) were given little opportunity, mainly because most of them found it difficult to travel long distances to Lamén Bay for recruitment. In addition, the chiefs, recommended youths from other areas, however the final short listing of workers were decided by coordinators and agents whom the employers heavily relied on for right selection. Biased selection is also reflected in the uneven developments happening in the areas identified. However, if the recruitment and job opportunities were not spread out, it could result in some tensions among the people. The community leaders interviewed in the East and West part of Epi were not happy with the way recruitment on their island was carried out.

5.5 RSE final remarks and moving towards recommendations

Finally, the win-win outcome of the RSE scheme in Vanuatu and the RSE employers is very much dependent on the two parties (the migrant workers and the RSE employers) working closely together. The support from the community leaders and government of Vanuatu and New Zealand immigration towards solving issues on respective fronts are extremely important.

5.6 Recommendations

Subsequently, noting the win-win outcome of the scheme, the recommendations will particularly focus on some of the issues that were highlighted in the research.

5.6.1 Equality of Opportunity

As stated in the earlier section, the recruitment process is relatively biased. Therefore, the Vanuatu Labour Office and the recruitment agents (co-ordinators) need to ensure that access to the scheme is opened up to all those who are willing and able to participate. However, to ensure that the benefits of the Scheme are spread out, the Labour Office needs to provide support to those who are far from the centre of recruitment. For example, in the case of Epi Island, most of the recruitment takes place on the mainland – the Lamen Bay. Therefore, those who are staying far (in the East and West Epi) are not able participate.

The cost of recruitment is a barrier to many youths in the East and West Epi since they do not have access to formal employment and hence cash income. It would be ideal for the government to subsidise the recruitment from the migrants' end or perhaps initiate a project where youths can take loans from the government to apply for the RSE scheme. This would enable youths from other parts of Epi Islands to participate.

5.6.2 Better Communication

Communication is critical in the scheme. Effective communication between RSE employers and New Zealand Immigration, particularly in expediting the

ATR approvals will ensure employers have sufficient time to prepare for the actual recruitment of RSE workers from Vanuatu. Furthermore, it is important that Vanuatu Labour office maintains regular communication and builds necessary networks as a feedback mechanism with RSE employers, New Zealand Immigration, agents and co-ordinators in Vanuatu and the Ni-Vanuatu migrant worker representatives. This is a vital role for the government in order to market the Ni-Vanuatu workers in New Zealand and also resolve any issues that may arise.

On this same note, the Vanuatu Labour Office needs to maintain an up-to-date register (database) to log issues and ensure that they are resolved in a timely and professional manner.²⁸ Furthermore, for recruitment and further research purpose, the Labour Office and the Statistics Office in Vanuatu in conjunction with the New Zealand Immigration and RSE Employers need to work closely in collecting data on (returned) migrants profiles. This will greatly help in further monitoring and evaluating the scheme, particularly for Vanuatu.

The employers also require that the workers be confident and forthcoming if they face any issues. Therefore, Ni-Vanuatu workers need to be trained and informed on this aspect.

5.6.3 Understanding the Home Environment

The RSE employers interviewed were mainly satisfied with the performance of Ni-Vanuatu workers. However, they did highlight the need to understand

²⁸ Designing and maintaining a database of workers is very important. At the time of research, the Vanuatu Labour Office was planning to design a database. However, one of the issues that were highlighted was resource constraint.

the culture and environment of the workers in order to effectively manage them. Therefore, employers need to work closely with Labour Office in organising their expedition of Vanuatu to learn about cultures and environment. It would be ideal that the employers visit the remote islands (such as Epi) where migrants come from.

5.6.4 Understanding the Host Environment

As much as it is important for the employers to understand the workers home environment, it is vital that potential RSE workers understand the cultures and lifestyles of the host country – New Zealand. This can be facilitated by the Labour Office and the agents who nominate them for work in New Zealand. Awareness and pre-departure orientation need to be done thoroughly without compromising time and to avoid rushing through critical information. This will ensure that potential RSE workers are more confident and aware of what to expect in New Zealand. It is also vital that RSE workers understand basic rules and regulations of working in New Zealand. RSE workers need to realise the importance of meeting the expectations of the employers and their home communities. Any bad record or inability to perform work in accordance to the employers' expectations will mean a worker will not have another chance to participate in the Scheme. Moreover, (negative) impacts may spill-over on to a worker's community as a result of a worker's bad behaviour or poor performance.

5.6.5 Sustaining the win-win outcome

Sustainability of the Scheme is very important. Cooperation between all stakeholders concerned – the RSE employers, the Ni-Vanuatu workers,

Vanuatu Government representatives and New Zealand Immigration, and the home and host country communities are vital.

Noting that the Scheme is mainly demand-driven and competitive, it is vital that Vanuatu is able to position itself relatively well. This can be done in various fronts – building networks with employers and the New Zealand Immigration. Resolving any outstanding issues and preparing workers ahead for recruitment would be ideal. In order to resolve some of the internal issues, such as marital affairs, the chiefs and community elders need to be well trained. The workers also need to be made aware of the consequences of bad behaviour or poor performance on their personal development and the community at large.

Furthermore, it is also important that workers are advised about the recruitment procedure. RSE employers or agents working on behalf of the employers need to be clear in terms of wage rates, tax policies, cost sharing agreements and working periods. Moreover, getting views from community leaders, particularly chiefs and elders in regards to recruitment of ‘right’ people to work in New Zealand would be critical in selecting workers with good character. The chiefs and elders of the community know the behavioural patterns and backgrounds of prospective workers quite well and therefore are in a better position to support the scheme’s success. Employers need to approach community leaders for best possible selection of workers as well.

The role of New Zealand Immigration in providing timely response to RSE employers, particularly with respect to ATR approval is important. The RSE

scheme has given greater confidence to employers to invest in the horticulture and the viticulture industry. Moreover, it is important that migrant workers are informed about the possible variations in their accommodation and pay scales and tax refund procedures. Although pastoral care was an issue when the scheme began in 2006-2007 period, it has been resolved. However, employers need to ensure that workers are given the necessary and good pastoral care in order to gain trust and increase worker morale. In the same vein, the presence and cooperation of home country liaison officers, employers and New Zealand's DoL representatives are vital in resolving any outstanding issues and streamlining processes and procedures in regards to the RSE scheme.

Although there are few sectors supporting Vanuatu's growth and development (such as tourism, fishing, and manufacturing), the RSE scheme is a valuable (trade in services) sector which brings opportunity for low skilled workers to participate in formal paid employment in New Zealand. Thus, as evident from this research, the benefits are clear. However, the success of the scheme is heavily dependent on migrant workers and employers working together. At a country level, maintaining healthy relations with the both source (Vanuatu) and host country (New Zealand) is vital. Therefore, the role of Labour ministries in both countries is critical in achieving this.

Moreover, social remittances and income earned from the scheme need to be used productively. This would only be possible when training and small projects are initiated in the migrants' home villages and communities. It is important that return migrant workers are given basic financial literacy skills and exposed to small projects through which they can further develop

themselves and benefit the communities. Although the government appraises individual and community benefits of the RSE scheme in Vanuatu, these are predominantly initiated by the returned migrants and community leaders themselves. So far, there is no evidence of government-led initiatives in this direction to magnify the benefits of the scheme.

In this scheme, besides Vanuatu, there are four other countries participating (Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Kiribati) and each country has an equal opportunity at it. Therefore, it is up to the home countries to ensure that they remain the country of choice for employers. In this regard, the government of Vanuatu, the migrant workers and the community as a whole need to be proactive in order to ensure that employers keep recruiting from Vanuatu. Building and strengthening networks and relationship with employers and respective New Zealand government agencies, marketing Ni-Vanuatu workers, effectively delivering pre-departure training and honing good character and image amongst Ni-Vanuatu workers, and effectively and professionally solving in-house issues are critical to the success and continuation of the RSE scheme from Vanuatu's perspective.

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APPENDIX 1

Although the interview was conducted in a conversational style, the key questions asked in the interview were as follows:

Thank you for making yourself available for the interview. I am doing a research on the impact of RSE scheme on the lives of migrants and their community. I have few questions to ask you. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions, you are welcome not to do so. I will tape-record our conversation for my research. Should you like me not to tape-record the conversation, I will respect that. I will keep all responses anonymous.

A. Migrants

1. Please tell me your name and age?
2. How did you come to know about the scheme?
3. What work were you doing before joining the scheme?
4. How was your work in New Zealand? [I asked probing questions if respondents gave single word answer]
5. What is your view about the RSE Scheme?
6. How much did you earn?
7. How did you use the money you earned?
8. How was the place where you stayed? [I asked probing questions if respondents gave single word answer]
9. Do you plan to go again to work in New Zealand? [Why? Or Why not?]

10. Did you face any difficulties or problems while you were in New Zealand [I asked probing questions if respondents gave single word answer]
11. What are your plans now?
12. What would you like to see different in the scheme?
13. Anything else you would like to discuss about the scheme you feel is important?

B. Employers

1. Please help me to understand the operations of your company?
2. How do you find the RSE workers? [I asked probing questions if respondents gave single word answer]
3. Has the RSE scheme benefitted your company? [How? Why? In what ways?]
4. What are some of the challenges faced by you as a RSE employer?
5. What would you like to see different in the scheme?
6. Initially, there were some issues with pastoral care? How is the situation now?
7. What are your views about Ni-Vanuatu workers? [I asked probing questions if respondents gave single word answer]
8. Do you see any competition from the Australian Pilot Worker scheme? [Why or Why not?]
9. What advice would you tell the prospective Ni-Vanuatu workers participating in the scheme?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about the scheme?

C. Community Leaders, Government Officials, and Independent Researchers

1. What is your role in terms of RSE scheme?
2. What is your view about the RSE scheme?
3. What benefits do you see from the scheme?
4. What are some of the challenges you see arising from the scheme?
5. What is your advice to the RSE employers and Ni-Vanuatu workers?



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