

Bernice Sarpong from WaterAid Australia facilitated the "Exploring Behaviour Change as Foundational for Water, WASH, and Climate Progress in the Pacific" session during the Climate Resilient Pathways Conference in Suva. The session addressed the crucial role of behaviour change in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) and enhancing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, water resource management and climate resilience in the Pacific region. Bernice Sarpong opened the session with a brief introduction, emphasising the importance of understanding behaviour change in water management, WASH and climate resilience.

The first speaker, Regina Souter from International Water Centre/Griffith University, provided insights into behaviour change concepts. She highlighted the necessity of moving beyond mere knowledge to foster actual behavioural changes, particularly in response to climate impacts. Regina noted that for behaviours to transform into habits, consistent "triggers" are essential, especially in environments affected by climate change. She identified various environmental and social factors that can influence individuals' intentions to adopt new behaviours.

Subsequent presentations from various organisations illustrated the diverse approaches to behaviour change interventions across the Pacific region. Suranga De Silva from the UNICEF Pacific Multi-country Office shared details about the National Sustainable Sanitation Program (NSSP) in the Solomon Islands. His presentation focused on the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach implemented in Malaita, Western, and Central Island provinces. Suranga discussed the challenges of climate change, such as unpredictable weather events that complicate fieldwork. He emphasised the importance of governance, data collection, and community engagement in successfully implementing sanitation initiatives, highlighting the need for strategic planning and capacity building.

Maloni Siga from ADRA Fiji presented a values-based approach to behaviour change communication (BCC) in Fiji. This approach aims to align community values with WASH objectives, fostering deeper engagement and commitment among community members.

Betty Amos from Live and Learn discussed a resilience-based behaviour change model developed in partnership with Plan International. This model employs a risk-informed cycle of assessing, planning, acting and monitoring to empower women and girls through skill-building initiatives, such as creating soap and reusable menstrual pads. Betty highlighted the importance of engaging institutional stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of these efforts.

The final speaker, Pamela Carlo from World Vision Vanuatu, shared insights on enhancing the operations and maintenance (O&M) of rainwater systems in Vanuatu. She emphasised the need for effective management practices to ensure the longevity and reliability of water supply systems in the face of climate challenges.

The session concluded without time for small group discussions, but participants expressed a strong interest in forming a regional learning community of practice. The interest in a regional community of practice on BCC interventions in the Pacific reflects a shared understanding that effective behaviour change requires ongoing learning, adaptability and



collaboration to overcome current and future climate change impacts to achieve meaningful progress in water management and WASH services. The insights gathered during this session emphasise the significance of behaviour change approaches in advancing water resource management, WASH services, and climate resilience throughout the Pacific, paving the way for more integrated and impactful initiatives.

