



# Special Project Backgrounder 2022-23



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# INTRODUCTION



**"Finally brothers and sisters, rejoice. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."**

**2 Corinthians 13:11**

**Thank you for your  
partnership with CWS**

On January 15, much of Tonga was devastated by the massive eruption of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai. The combination of ash and debris from the volcano and the tsunami that followed destroyed homes and livelihoods. Tonga closed its borders and remained largely Covid free until February 2022. With the country in lockdown for much of 2022., the combination of eruption, tsunami and Covid has been especially challenging for people. **The Special Project is a practical way to share our love and concern for our neighbours in Tonga – thank you for being such an important part of this work..**

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# IN A NUTSHELL



“This is the first disaster I had ever encountered in my entire life...I don't want to experience anything like this ever”

Mrs Kaivelata. (pictured)

## Revive and Unite

Amatakiloa is a programme of the Tonga Community Development Trust with nearly 3,000 members. Village-based women's groups work together to improve family livelihoods and their community's well-being as well as prepare for future disasters. Members share gardening knowledge and skills, repair rainwater systems, produce traditional products like fine mats, and know how to get things done. This year Amatakiloa is supporting communities to recover after the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai disaster and the arrival of Covid-19.

The Special Project will support this locally-driven work and explore ways to diversify income and strengthen livelihoods in the face of the climate crisis by:

1. Expanding programmes to Vava'u
2. Holding workshops to identify and confirm income-generating activities, followed up with a feasibility study.
3. Trialling and providing support to establish income generation activities.



**Improve Resilience in Tongan Communities by Empowering Amatakiloa 'a Fafine Women's Group Network**

# ASINATE TELLS HER STORY

Mrs Asinte 'Utaatu lives on Kanukupolu, one of the villages worst hit by the tsunami that followed the eruption. It was a day she won't forget, "It was a normal Saturday. Things were running as usual but....it was like a lightning strike when we heard the shouting and yelling to flee because a tsunami was coming from the eastern coastal side of our village," said this 69-year-old mother.

Fortunately no lives were lost but the damage was extensive, affecting their house, personal belongings, vehicles and home gardens. Asinate says her family continues to feel the impact of this double calamity both physically and mentally.

Asinate is a very active, self-reliant and goal-driven woman. She is passionate about working for her community and its development, encouraging others wherever she can. She has been a member of Amatakiloa for eight years now and is the leader of her group. The members are tsunami survivors like herself. Her village is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and everyone worries about how they will manage when the next one comes.

Asinate is a wife and mother of five adult children – some of whom live overseas and others in Tonga. She looks after her family's welfare – cooking, washing, gardening and caring for her bedridden husband.

Asinate's front garden is flourishing. Eight months after the tsunami, it is filled with taro, banana, sugarcane, pawpaw, and other plants. For her, it is a food basket for her family, insurance in case of unpredictable natural disasters, and an investment in her Ala Tonu experience from Tonga Trust. She works very hard but like many Tongans, needs extra assistance to restore her family's well-being and in particular repair the rainwater system that no longer supplies drinking water.

**"Regardless of my age, it will not be an obstacle to prohibit myself from striving to do something better every day."**

**Asinate**



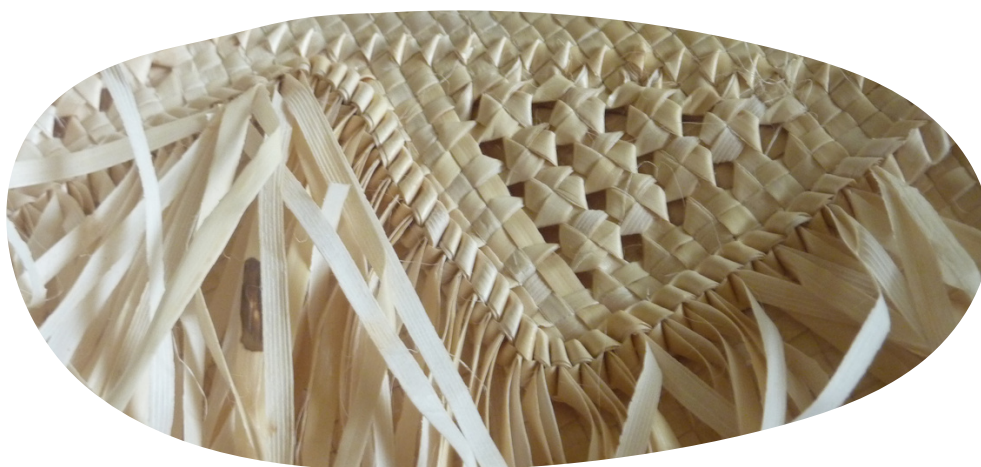
# CWS AND TONGA TRUST

## A LITTLE HISTORY

The partnership between CWS and Tonga Community Development Trust (TCDT) goes back to 2004. The Amatakiloa 'a Fafine Tonga or "lighting the torch for women in Tonga" is TCDT's longest-running programme. It is a membership based women's group network mainly found in rural villages and the outer islands. It started in 1978 under the name Village Women in Development (VWD) with a mission to engage and empower village women's groups to drive the process of development in their respective villages. Geography can make communication challenging and workshops expensive to run.

The registration for the Amatakiloa women's groups is updated annually and ranges between 250 – 300 women's groups. Some of the strength of the Amatakiloa network comes from the Extension Officers appointed for the Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua island groups. Each officer:

- sustains communication, engagement and coaching of local groups, e.g. initiating and driving development initiatives in each village
- develops self-reliance, helping groups work towards their goals with or without funding, year by year
- fosters a spirit of teamwork and commitment with high levels of cooperation and collective effort before individual concerns
- organises groups to actively participate in national, regional or community events e.g. showcase the products of their group in the bi-annual Royal Agricultural show
- share their wealth of knowledge and experience in community development and initiatives, including publications..





# INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

## SUSTAINABILITY AND DISASTER

Sustainability has always been a challenge but the Amatakiloa network has considerable experience in managing the maintenance and repair of rainwater harvesting systems and strengthening food security. Currently, local groups are repairing damaged rainwater systems and rebuilding gardens after the disaster. The network supports families to grow traditional crops, like bananas, pele, taro (including the more drought-resistant giant taro – pictured below) but has faced a number of challenges because of the high demand for good quality topsoil, seedlings, chickens and ducks for example. Community nurseries will increase the supply of food crops, including mango and breadfruit trees. High commercial value crops including sandalwood, kava, and vanilla will be distributed to participating Amatakiloa members as part of securing long-term sustainable income. Donations to the CWS Tonga Appeal are already helping to fund this vital work, including the employment of skilled staff.

Amatakiloa has helped members expand income generation activities, such as selling traditional fine mats and tapa to Tongans living overseas.

Members will continue to improve disaster preparedness, by improving evacuation plans, learning first aid and producing their own cookbook.

Tonga is currently ranked as the second most vulnerable island state in the world to natural disaster (World Risk Report 2020:58). It is vulnerable to climate change. Data collected in the last 50 to 60 years has shown a steady increase in temperature, lower rainfall and more droughts. Sea levels have risen by 6mm annually since recording began in 1993. Climate Change has contributed to an increased frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones – between 1969 and 2010 71 cyclones passed through Tonga. The cyclone season in Tonga is between November and April.



# PŌPOAKI MEIA SIONE

**SIONE LANIVIA FAKA'OSI**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**TONGA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST**  
**TALEKITA PULE**



'Oku fakahoko atu heni 'ae fakamalo lahi 'ae Talasiti Langa Fakalakalaka 'a Tonga (TCDT) kiate kimoutolu ki he ngaahi tokoni moe popou kotoa pe. Na'e kamata e ta'u 2022 'aki ha fakatamaki lalahi 'e ua ne hoko 'i Tonga. 'Uluaki, koe peau kula moe efu ne fakatupunga mei he puna 'ae mo'ungaafi Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai he 'aho 15 Sanuali. Ua, koe kamata ke mafola 'ae mahaki pipihi koe Covid-19 'i Fepueli. Na'e kau 'ae Talasiti 'i hono fakaivia mei he ngaahi polokalama tokoni ke tufaki e me'atokoni moe naunau malu'i mei he mafola 'ae covid-19. 'Oku hoko atu e ngaue 'ae Talasiti ki hono tokonia e ngaahi kulupu 'ae Amatakiloo 'ae Kakai Fefine 'a Tonga ke malu 'enau ma'u'anga me'atokoni 'o kau ki ai hono fokotu'u 'oe ngaahi ngoue faka'api pea pehe ki he 'aa moa tonga. 'I he tafa'aki ki hono mapule'i e mafola 'ae Covid-19, 'oku 'amanaki ke fili 'ehe Talasiti ha toko 60 ke nau fakafofonga'i 'ae ngaahi kulupu 'oku tu'u lavea ngofua, hange koe kakai fenfine, finemui, toulekeleka, moe faingata'ia ke nau kau ki he polokalama ako moe savea fekau'aki moe uesia 'o 'enau mo'ui faka'atamai, sosiale, ekonomika mei he fakatamaki ne toki hoko. 'E fa'u mei ai ha ngaahi fakamatala 'o taumu'a ke fakatupulekina e 'ilo 'a kakai ki he ngaahi me'a ke fakasi'isi'i 'aki e uesia mei he ngaahi fakatamaki. 'I he loto faka'apa'apa, Sione Lanivia Faka'osi



# MESSAGE FROM SIONE

**The Tonga Community Development Trust (TCDT) wishes to thank you for your kind donation and ongoing support.**

Tonga started 2022 with two major disasters. Firstly, the tsunami and black ash generated by the eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai underwater volcano on January 15. Secondly, the community transmission of Covid-19 in early February. TCDT was enabled by donors' support to reach out and distribute food and Covid-19 relief packages to affected families in Tongatapu and Ha'apai.

TCDT is continuing to support some of the affected Amatakiloa women's groups to secure sources of food by setting up home organic gardening and domesticating chickens. These activities are starting to improve the lives of the participating families.

In responding to Covid-19, sixty representatives – women, young girls, older people and people living with a disability – will participate in a combined participatory awareness workshop and survey to share their experiences on the psycho-social and economic impacts of disaster. The information collected will be used to develop awareness campaign materials to build community resilience.



**Thank you for your support and partnership.**