

The theme, **Revive and Unite**, chosen for this year's Special Project is a light for our path in the year ahead. It encourages us to look beyond ourselves and with others.

At Christian World Service we treasure our relationship with Methodist and Presbyterian women through the Special Project. You have stood with us for a very long time, making sure more people have Water, Food and Justice.

Thank you for once again inviting us to join you...
To Revive and Unite...
In the world that God loves.



Report Back: Pacific



Promoting Family Well-being in Covid Times

Thank you for supporting last year's Special Project, **Promoting Family Well-being in Covid Times**. Your donations have helped families get through Covid. The Methodist Women's Fellowship raised over \$14,150 – thank you. The virus has not gone yet but we hope and pray that the worst is over.

In the Pacific, Christian World Service partners have worked closely with their communities.

In Fiji where the infection rate was much higher, SEEP kept in regular contact with distant communities and provided support in the informal settlements. Staff provided regular updates and distributed hygiene kits, ration packs and backyard garden kits as well as an outboard motor to assist with local transport to one community. SEEP is working to strengthen local economies by purchasing food from rural communities to share with urban communities. Additional funding was provided from donations to the Coronavirus Appeal.

In Tonga, Ama Takiloa members supported each other and their communities.



This year's Special Project is focusing on Tonga. This image is of Tongatapu. The group is made up of around 170 islands of which about 36 are inhabited. There are three main groups: Vava'u, Ha'apai and Tongatapu. 100,209 people live across these islands as recorded in the 2021 Census.

Would someone be interested in sharing a story from Tonga?

- 1. Perhaps share a story of growing up*
- 2. Describe their favourite activity or special food*
- 3. Talk about a family member*
- 4. Describe an adventure they had*
- 5. Or share a Tongan word.*

In advance, you could invite people to bring Tongan crafts and/or food to share.



On January 15, much of Tonga was devastated by the massive eruption of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, the largest since Krakatoa in 1883. Sadly three people lost their lives. The combination of ash and debris from the volcano and the tsunami that reached up to 15 metres inland, destroyed homes and livelihoods.

After such a terrible disaster, Tonga was anxious to protect its people from Covid-19. Tonga closed its borders and remained largely Covid free until February 2022. The country stayed in lockdown for much of 2022. The triple whammy of eruption, tsunami and Covid has been especially challenging for people who have experienced frequent disasters.

The Special Project is a practical way to share our love and concern for our neighbours - thanks for sharing the love.

Image Top: 'Eua home and garden damaged by the tsunami.

Image Bottom: Tsunami damaged water tank at Kanokupolu.



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

Mrs Kaiveletu



The Tonga Community Development Trust’s Amatakiloa programme has 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 possible disaster. Members share gardening knowledge and skills, repair rainwater systems, produce traditional products like fine mats, and know how to get things done. They work closely with the Town Officer and other government officials.

This year Amatakiloa is assisting communities to recover after the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai disaster and the arrival of Covid-19, with support from Christian World Service’s Tonga Appeal. Members are restoring and expanding home and community gardens. They will set up chicken coops and fencing for some of the more vulnerable families. The funds you raise in the coming year will make sure this work continues.

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:

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



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

Asinate



Mrs Asinate 'Utaatu lives on Kanokupolu, one of the villages worst hit by the tsunami that followed the eruption. It was a day she won't forget. She says her family continues to feel the impact of this double calamity both physically and mentally. Asinate looks after her family's welfare - cooking, washing, gardening and caring for her bedridden husband.

Community development is Asinate's passion. 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.

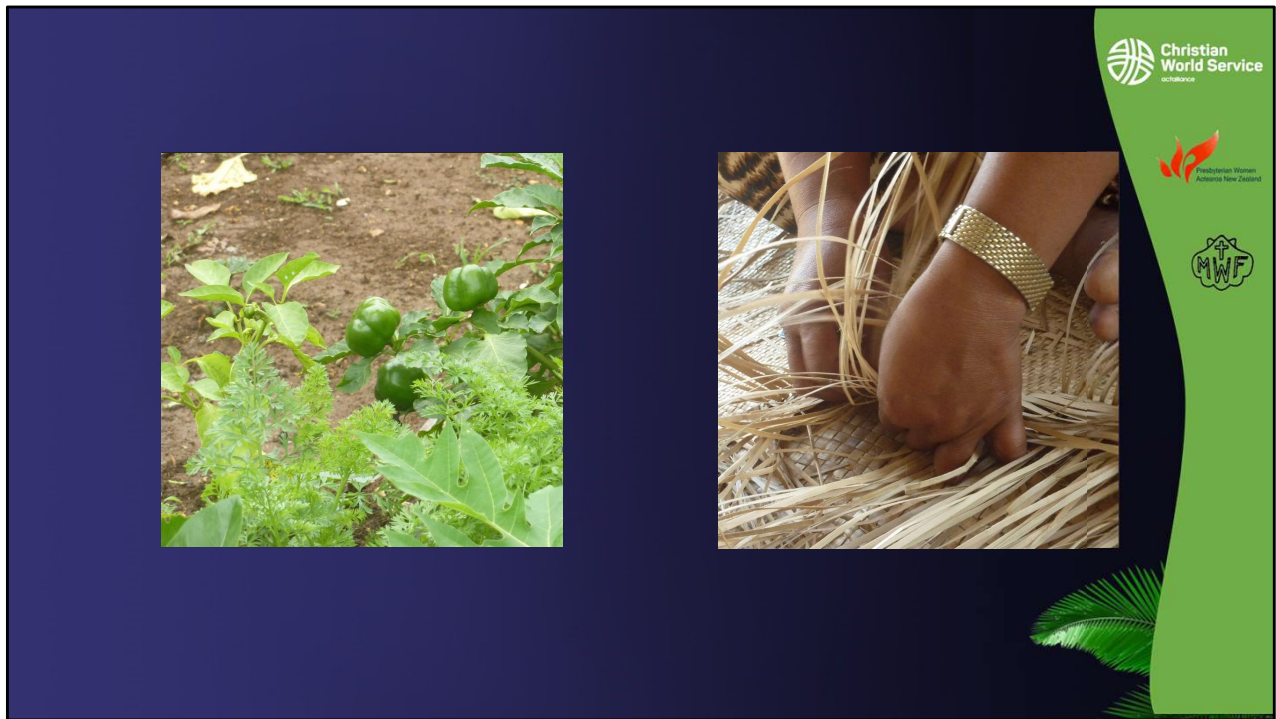
Asinate's front garden is flourishing. Eight months after the tsunami, it is filled with taro, banana, sugarcane, pawpaw, and other plants. For her, it is a food basket for her family, insurance in case of unpredictable natural disasters, and an investment in her Ala Tonu experience from Tonga Trust. 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.



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 the inverse effects of 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.

Amatakiloa members have responded to many disasters and have encouraged the planting of disaster resistant crops like Giant Taro. Members will continue to improve disaster preparedness, by improving evacuation plans, learning first aid and producing their own cookbook.

Amatakiloa has helped members expand income generation activities, such as, selling traditional fine mats and tapa to overseas diaspora. It has provided training and materials to promote home and community gardens as well as install and repair rainwater harvesting systems.



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 Tonga Trust's longest-running programme. It is a membership based women's group network mainly found in rural villages and the outer islands.

Amatakiloa started in 1978 under the name Village Women in Development 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. It has appointed Extension Officers for the Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua island groups whose role is to support and encourage the local groups, teaching them new skills and helping them prepare in case of disaster. They organise joint activities, for example a showcase their products at the bi-annual Royal Agricultural Show.

“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



In responding to Covid-19, Tonga Trust will bring sixty representatives - women, young girls, older people and people living with a disability to a combined participatory awareness workshop. Members will 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.

The members of Tonga Trust value your prayers and support as they work together for their families and communities after all they have been through this year.



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

Sione Lanivia Faka’osi
Executive Director

Thank you for once again supporting this year’s Special Project, an opportunity to Revive and Unite, and to share stories from Tonga. I encourage you to be creative in your fundraising programme so Amatakiloa has the resources they need for their communities.

Murray Overton
National Director
Christian World Service