

Module 5 Animation

When extreme weather events occur, communities may be temporarily displaced.

However, when impacts of climate change make life unsustainable in the longer term, relocating an entire community can be an option of last resort.

In such cases, it is essential to understand what matters most for the people who have to move.

The Pacific Island State of Fiji and its population are threatened by rising sea levels, prompting the government to relocate communities located on the coast.

Let's hear the personal accounts of two villagers about their experience with planned relocation.

Selena is 70 years old and she has lived in the same coastal village all her life.

“When seas started rising 40 years ago, the men in the village got together and built a seawall.

“I remember watching my husband joining other men, piling up rocks not far from our house.

“Now that it's getting worse, we thought it would be a good idea to build another seawall, better and stronger.

“That's why we asked for help from the government.

“But the government told us it would be safer to move our village to higher ground, and they offered support.

“It is not easy for us to relocate because the land is part of our culture and identity.

“It connects us to our ancestors.

“We are also worried that our community may have to break up and move to different places because the relocation site is too small for all of us.

“Actually, since the start of the relocation there have been quite a few problems, but we hope that the government will listen to us and that our concerns will be heard.”

Katarina is 35 years old and she lives in another coastal community in Fiji.

Three years ago, this community was relocated to a safer place 500 metres inland.

“Our house was the closest to the sea.

“At high tide, parts of the house would be underwater.

“Having to face this situation made us really scared and worried.

“We had only five to ten years until the whole house would be gone.

“And we knew that moving was the only option.

“It was an emotional day when we moved to the new site.

“I was sad to leave the home that I grew up in.

“My family has lived there for generations.

“But at the same time, I was grateful that we are now safe and that my children and the next generations are protected.”

Planned relocation can be an effective response when climate change impacts threaten people's safety and homes, especially in situations where adaptation is increasingly difficult.

Taking into account the needs and views of the affected communities is crucial as it ensures sustainability and ownership in the long run.

Planned relocation processes should be undertaken without compromising the social and cultural values of the community involved, and provide a better life for them.