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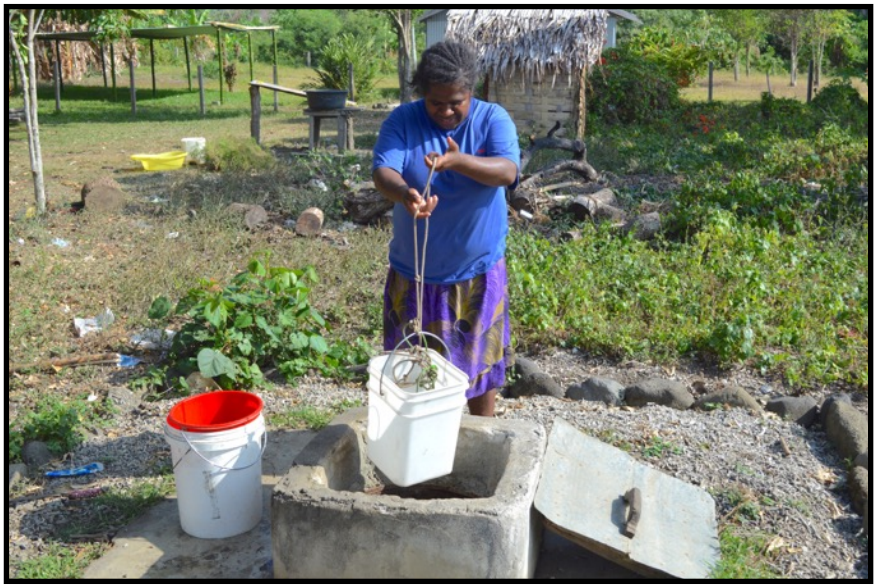
UPLAND RESOURCES & EPI VCAP SITE

Results & Recommendations from Vulnerability Assessments & Community Engagement

Recommendations for Upland Resources: Epi VCAP Site

- Improve water security of Ponkovio community as a priority due to high population through provision of gravity feed system or drilling to install additional wells or pumps not affected by salt water intrusion
- Work in partnership with PWD to compliment hard measures for road and drainage improvements with soft measures to control erosion and Soft measures to be planned in coordination with PWD engineer
- Empower DARD field officer, Mr. John Willie, currently stationed near Epi VCAP site to lead agricultural trainings and to establishment community based Agro-Forestry nurseries with climate resilient species to address food security
- Water supply specialist to perform scoping mission & deliver list of possible interventions to improve source or storage of gravity feed system supplying Malvasi, Ruwo & Yopuna; small-scale assistance to households in Rovoliu & Ruwo with no convenient access to safe water
- Promote "inter-cropping" of gardens with forestry species to control erosion through training and the inclusion of forestry species and vetiver grass to in Agro-Forestry nurseries
- Training relating to proper livestock practices to control the amount of erosion caused by livestock, particularly cattle in the area



(Woman accessing ground well in Ponkovio, one of few water sources in community during dry season)

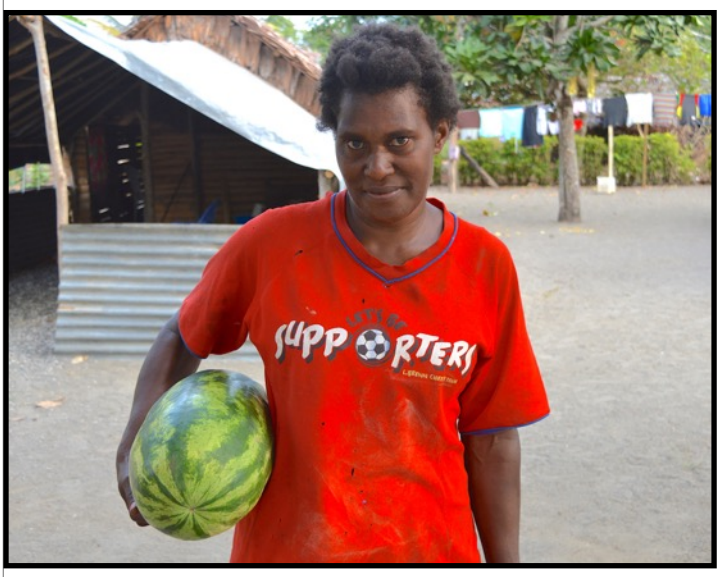
Water Security

Ponkovio reports **severe water shortages** affecting its population, especially during periods of drought, when rain harvesting can no longer be relied upon. There is no gravity feed water supply system available for Ponkovio's population of over 600 people and the community's 10 rain water tanks are reportedly insufficient during the dry season. There is **one ground well used primarily by the community** during periods of drought and other wells reportedly suffer from salt-water intrusion along the coast. VCAP should attempt to **improve water security conditions in Ponkovio** as a high priority.

A singular gravity feed water supply system supplies Malvasi, Ruwo, Yopuna and the sub-district headquarters in Rovo Bay. Users of this gravity feed system report that it is **vulnerable to sedimentation in rain times and low water pressure in dry times**. Possible improvements to the source and storage tanks for this system should be explored.

In **Ruwo**, **some villagers must walk up to 400 meters** to access water each day, especially during dry periods. **Rovoliu** does not have access to the gravity system that supplies nearby Burumba and locals must **carry containers of water over 200 meters** for access. Small scale assistance in improving water security for these smaller stations would strengthen climate resiliency for these coastal communities.

The gravity feed system in Burumba reportedly works very well and does not experience sedimentation during rainy times or low pressure during the dry season.



(Woman from Burumba holding water melon)

Food Security

Food security has recently become more of a challenge as reported by local communities due to recent impacts caused by **Cyclone Pam** in early 2015 followed closely by prolonged periods of **drought associated with El Niño** weather patterns. Dependency on rice and other store-bought foods has grown due to poor crop yields associated with the ongoing drought.

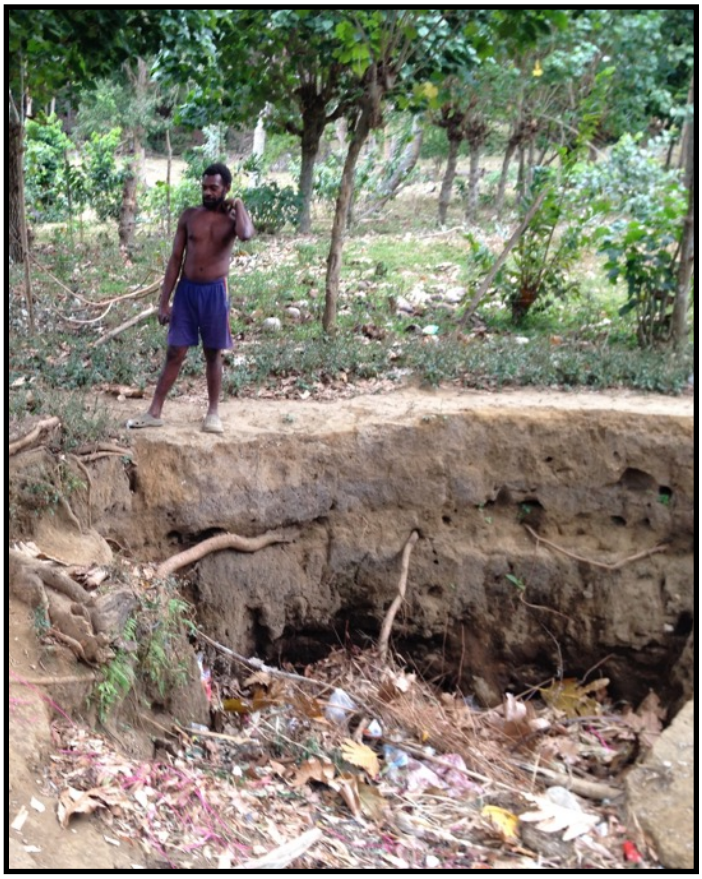
All communities within this site reported that it was an urgent priority to improve their current food security levels and assistance in the form of **agricultural training and the establishment of Agro-Forestry nurseries with climate resilient species** was desired. Recommended that a large Agro-Forestry nursery be established in Rovo Bay (demonstration plot where full island population goes to access services at Sub-District); and smaller nurseries are established in Malvasi, Ruwo / Yopuna, Ponkovio, Burumba and Mabfilau where climate resilient species can be distributed to community members.

The Epi VCAP Site is fortunate to have an **Agricultural Field Officer** based near the project site (just north of Rovo Bay) who **should be utilized to provide technical assistance**. The field officer indicates a willingness to implement agricultural trainings and establish nurseries; previous budget constraints have not allowed for these activities.

Upland Erosion Control

Communities indicated there are **severe erosion problems** in almost every community assessed, however no action has been taken yet to address these problems. There is limited inter-cropping of gardens with forestry species, resulting in erosion of top soil from gardens and sedimentation of rivers and coastal areas. **Malvasi Village** is experiencing the most extreme erosion in the area and some community members have even recommended relocating the village to a safer location in the upland area. No erosion control activities have taken place here to date.

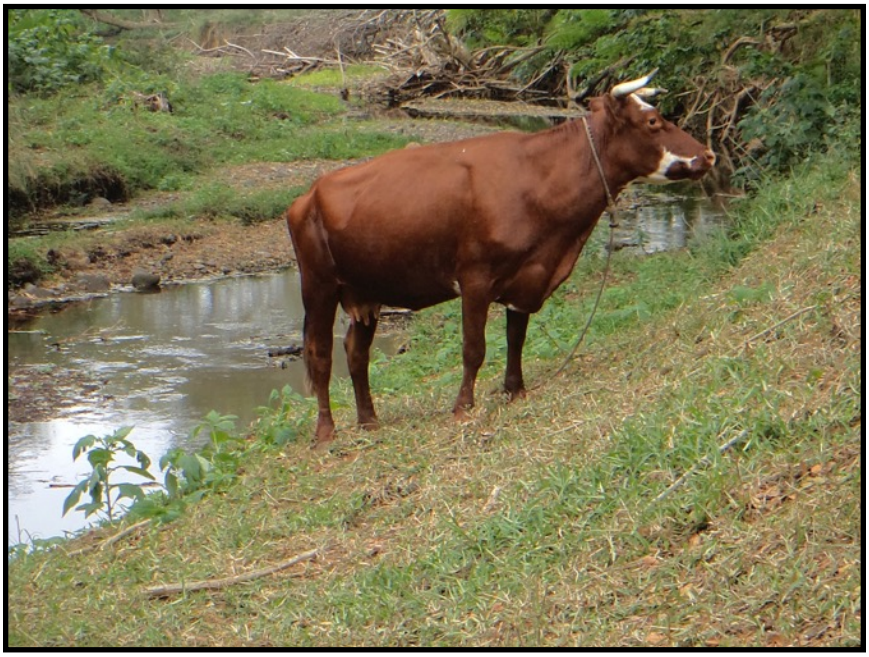
It is recommended that **inter-cropping techniques to control the erosion of top soil from local gardens** be encouraged through training and the provision of forestry species in the Agro-Forestry nurseries. Forestry Department should work in close coordination with DARD for this activity. Any species of vegetation proven valuable in controlling soil erosion, such as vetiver grass, should be made available to the community and in preparation of work intended to compliment PWD, and should be included in any all Agro-Forestry nurseries established.



(Man in Malvasi standing near area w severe erosion next to local household)

Environment - Upland

There are no upland resource / conservation areas present on Epi currently and communities do not identify the creation of protected upland areas as a strong priority for action at the moment. There are no settlements in the interior of the island and very limited agricultural activities taking place there either due to the difficult and mountainous terrain. While it may be beneficial to support the eventual creation of Upland Conservation Areas to encourage management and sustainability of upland resources, suggesting that VCAP instead focus on upland issues relating to water security, food security and erosion control instead.



(Cattle grazing near river in Ruwo, possibly contributing to upland erosion)

Livestock

While the sale of livestock generates significant income for communities located within the Epi VCAP site, communities here have not indicated this sector as a priority for action for project implementation. However, **controlling erosion relating to livestock**, particularly cattle, by improving management practices may prove necessary at this site.

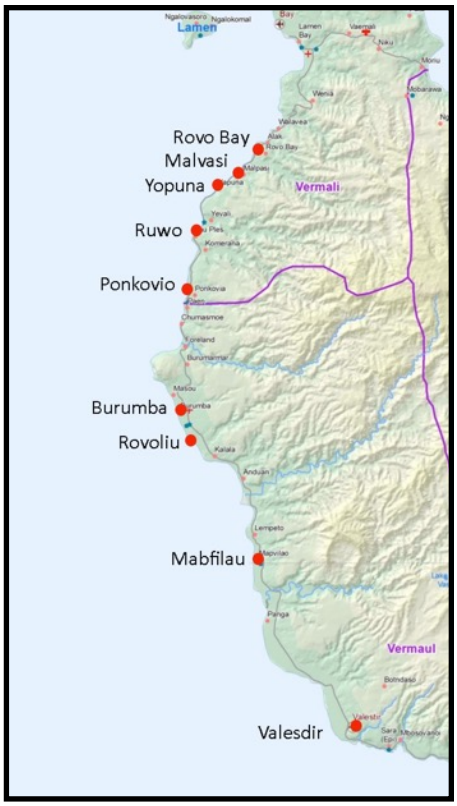
Site Coordinator & Area Secretaries

There is a field based coordinator, Basil Mael, from Masou (close to Burumba Village) helping to facilitate VCAP activities with local communities as part of the five year CCA project. Although the Site Coordinator lives in Masou, a part of the Vermaul AC, he is responsible for coordinating with communities throughout the entire VCAP site from Rovo Bay to Mabfilau, including those target communities found in Vermali AC.

The VCAP site on Epi contains communities from two different Area Councils (Vermaul & Vermali) with two responsible Provincial Area Secretaries (AS) for this area. The AS for Vermaul AC from Mabfilau is Gideon Yonah has several years of working experience in this position. The AS for Vermali AC is Graham Api lives on Lamen Island and was just recently hired in September of 2015 and has no prior working experience. Both Area Secretaries have been a part of the CCA planning process for VCAP and are available to support implementation.

Data for Upland Resources

Refer to the Vulnerability Assessment Report for Epi VCAP site from February 2016 to review data relating to upland resources.



(Communities in Epi VCAP site)