



## Cash for Work Programme — Beyond Money

*How the GCF Vaisigano Catchment Project in Samoa is giving people more than just wages*



*Figure 1: Fou Alatina at the WRD Nursery, Vailima.*

Fou Alatina is a 49-year-old mother of eight from Vailima. She was one of the first group of people to be hired under the Cash for Work Programme (CfWP) of the Green Climate Fund's Vaisigano Catchment Project (GCF-VCP) in Samoa, when the CfWP began in 2019. The CfWP is implemented under the leadership and collaboration of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).





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Three years later, Fou is still working under the CfWP at one of MNRE's nursery operated by the Water Resource Division (WRD) at Vailima, which was also funded and built under the GCF-VCP. She said this is more than just a job for her to earn money. It has also given her hope and a sense of belonging.

"I'm grateful for this job not just for the money that I receive as wages which is used to take care of my children and family, but also for the joy that I get out of being with the other workers here, especially the other women I work with. I have learnt so much from this job — skills that I can use in my own home and community," said Fou.



*Figure 2: Some of the CfWP staff under the WRD preparing soil for seedling propagation.*

She said this was her first 'real' job, and it has made her realize that she has the potential and the desire to 'do more'.





Fou is one of 10 women in total who joined the CfWP under the GCF-VCP.

Her sentiments were echoed by another Cash for Work colleague, who, like Fou, was there right from the start of the CfWP.



*Figure 3: Misimoa Tafili inside the Forestry Division's Nursery at Vailima.*

Misimoa Tafili, is a 51-year-old father of two from the nearby village of Magiagi, and he is one of the ten CfWP staff employed under the Forestry Division (FD) of the MNRE. He said this is more than just a job for him.

“Whilst I am very thankful for the money I am able to make from this programme which has enabled me to look after my family, I am also grateful for the chance to find work. I have also used my new-found knowledge and skills gained from this programme for the benefit of my family, as well as my village,” said Misimoa.

He is part of a group of men from his village who are replanting the *Fale o le Fe’e* landmark at Magiagi, and Misimoa’s new understanding of plant propagation has come in handy for this task.



Misimoa is one of the 35 male workers who have remained under the CfWP, from close to a 100, who have gone through the entire programme since its inception.



*Figure 4: First Aid Training for all CfWP staff with the Samoa Red Cross Society (SRCS) in 2021.*

Both Fou and Misimoa are also certified first aid responders now after they went through the training provided for all CfWP workers, with funding from the GCF-VCP.

The workers also received basic English communication skills training, followed by a refresher First Aid Training in 2022, thanks to the CfWP.

The contribution of the CfWP workers were recognized by MNRE's Principal Parks and Reserves Officer, Su'emalo Talie Foliga, who testified of how critically important this programme is to the work of the Ministry.

"This programme has helped tremendously with the Ministry's restoration efforts at our key parks and reserves. The Cash for Work participants have also contributed greatly to the enhancement of our catchment areas and key water and biodiversity networks at Malololelei and Vailima," said Su'emalo.

In addition, Moira Faletutulu, Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the Environment Sector Coordination Division of MNRE, expressed her appreciation for the great support rendered by the CfWP staff in the demarcation and restoration of upland watershed reserves (including the Government Reserve at Afiamalu under the WRD), which is one of the main milestones achieved by the Ministry under the GCF-VCP.





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*Figure 5: Su'emalo Talie Foliga, Principal Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.*

The rehabilitation works done by the CfWP employees covered about 100 acres of land in various key locations at Vailima, Malololelei, the Bio Park Reserve, Magiagi, Lelata and along the perimeters of the Vaisigano River. The Cash for Work Programme covers the greater area of the GCF Vaisigano Catchment Project which sees the operationalizing of a comprehensive flood management solution to the likely consequences of extreme flood events in the town of Apia and in the Vaisigano River Catchment Area (VRCA).

The multi-million Tala project brings together a multitude of stakeholders across the government spectrum, implementing various strategic activities with one goal in mind: to boost the ability of the people, and the areas, around the Vaisigano River to be resilient to the effects of extreme natural flood events.



*Figure 6: Tree planting at the Malololelei Reserve.*

Under the CfWP initiative, local community members were engaged and contracted as field assistants on watershed rehabilitation, environmental protection and reforestation of critical and vulnerable sites and reserves in the VRCA.

The CfWP provided jobs and a source of income, not just for the 35 community members (youth, men and women) who were part of the programme, but for their families as well. Since the beginning of the programme in 2019, the CfWP has employed a total of 95 community members made up of 85 males and 10 females, with more than 50% of them being youth.

In accordance with the Samoa Umbrella of Non-Government Organizations (SUNGO's) profiling report of 2021, and subsequent follow-up profiling for new staff by the MNRE, total direct and indirect beneficiaries in the VRCA from the CfWP is 583, comprising of 350 males and 233 females.

"This is a good achievement, and I am pleased that the CfWP, under the GCF-VCP, has made a valuable contribution in building the resilience and enhancing the livelihoods of CfWP workers, their communities and families, but also the positive and direct benefits to the natural environment within the Vaisigano River Catchment Area," said Tevaga Pisaina Leilua-Lei Sam, Project Manager, GCF-VCP.

The CfWP also provided the workers with life skills that will go beyond the programme's end date of July 2023.

"It's a blessing for me to see how the workers under the CfWP have evolved from the beginning of the programme until now. Some had never worked before so this was their first formal employment experience. Some had low self esteem as they were school dropouts and didn't think they had what it takes to work. Now, they are more confident thanks to the new skills and knowledge they have gained under the programme, and are more hopeful for the future. We developed good relationships with them from the beginning, and have strived to





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build their capacity under the programme,” said Faiiletasi Elaine Seuao, Cash for Work Officer, GCF VCP.



*Figure 7: MNRE's Principal Officer, Su'emalo Talie Foliga (right), with Cash for Work Programme Officer, Faiiletasi Elaine Seuao (middle), and Tagata Faitasia, Project Officer, Flood Management of the GCF Vaisigano Catchment Project Management Unit (GCF-PMU).*

***Written by Laufālē'ainā Lesā, Communications Analyst, UNDP Samoa Multi-Country Office***

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