SUMMARY:
AFL activities are implemented in the rural and urban communities of South Tarawa, which is the capital of Kiribati, with a population of 50,182 as of 2010, more than half the population of Kiribati. South Tarawa is a narrow strip of land between the lagoon and the ocean and host to most of the Government offices, commercial and education facilities in Kiribati.

This AFL case study in Kiribati focuses on one community which is Tebikenikora, Eita on South Tarawa which is mostly affected and prone to impacts of climate change and disaster risks issues. Tebikenikora is situated on the narrow coastal area and communities and disabled persons manage to survive in the everyday challenges they face living in this community. The increase of sea level rise, king waves and increase in temperature pose threats to this community and leaves them with limited land space to build homes, causes water salinity, and leaves poor soil to plant crops, mostly vulnerable to disease. Most of the communities have little or no understanding of disaster risks and climate change but admit that they are experiencing a shift in the environment and weather.

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The Republic of Kiribati is an atoll nation that is made up of some 32 small atoll islands, situated right on the equatorial line. Elevated just a 2-3 meters above sea level, it is prone to the impacts of climate change and national disasters such as sea level rise, coastal erosion and inundations, droughts, saltwater intrusions and habitat degradation. With a population of more than 100,000, all of them coastal dwellers, the exposure to risks of such impacts is extensive. The degree of vulnerability between individuals or communities may vary depending on accessibility to resources and infrastructure and their socio-economic status. However, the most vulnerable within these already vulnerable communities are people with disabilities, who are usually the poorest of the poor as well, and their everyday problems are heightened during disasters. While there are lots of documented materials on the impact of climate change on vulnerable people around the world, very little is available on the vulnerabilities of disabled people.

Read in this case study

- how little understanding by the communities on disaster risks and climate change, an increase in population unmatched to economic development, little space for relocation within a small island with few employment opportunities and a lack of government policies for disabled persons compound into a much bigger impact on the disabled people of the island, in comparison to other vulnerable groups;
- how the community identified their problems and possible solutions;
- and how a dialogue with other stakeholders and developing a multi-stakeholder partnership helped with a successful implementation of some of the solutions identified.

Who are the key actors who are involved in this case study?

- Youth Community Leaders from South Tarawa;
- National Disaster Management Officer from Office of the Beretitenti;
- Disaster Officer from Red Cross;
- Coordinators for KiGenderC, Disability Tetomatoa Community;
- Community Elders for South Tarawa;
- Village councils for Bikenibeu Ward, Teaoraereke ward, Temwaiku Ward, Eita ward
- Director for Curriculum Department within the Ministry of Education.
- Community members from different communities on South Tarawa.
OVERCOMING CHALLENGES:

The Tebikenikora community has been suffering from the increase of sea level and king tidal waves. During high tide their houses are flooded with sea water, forcing their household belongings to float to their neighbours and cover their underground well water. They even built sea walls to raise it up to the level that would prevent sea water coming into their homes, but unfortunately, the strong waves damaged the sea walls. Disabled persons of Tebikenikora community have to be taken by members of their household to the upper floors in houses as well as old people. The community do know that there is something happening to their land and environment but are not aware of these kind of disasters and changes in weather that have affected their lives.

RISK PROFILE:

During the AFL consultation with Tebikenikora community, they have identified some of the priority risks that are very crucial to their livelihood:

| Priority Risks                  | Men: Men are forced to take things into their own hands. A land with 2-3 meters above sea level forces men to rebuild a sea wall and more but still sea water laps onto their houses. Taanu Maketara, aged 38, has lived on the water’s front in Eita village since 1989. He often has to roll large boulders into the water in what appears a forlorn exercise to prevent it from returning.
|                                | Women: Women are forced to live in an overcrowded area. An area full of houses built close to each other causes more stress for women because an increase in health issues creates more tasks for them. Without knowledge on the changing climate, Tiani Tiaon aged 29 is still witnessing the shift in her community but still has to find ways to support her family.
|                                | Youth: Being an out of school young boy, Mataio Tierata aged 16 helps his uncle in his business of sand and gravel mining as the main source of income to support their family daily needs. Mataio says: “the business has to stop as we cannot fill up the bags with sand if the beach is too close to our house. Our land area is getting narrow each time we fill up our bags.”
|                                | Disabled persons: Ms Riria Kobebe aged 52, a lady with crippled legs stated that: “experiencing extensive coastal erosion threatens me most as my family and I are being displaced from our traditional house plots we occupied since
my childhood and have lost coconut trees, papaya trees and breadfruit trees we have relied upon.

2. Increase in temperature

**Men:** In the last 10 years fishing in the lagoon had not been a problem. Kaute lobi says: “I can only spend 1-2 hours for fishing and I get plenty big fish to feed my family and to share the extras with our neighbours. But nowadays, it is hard to get enough fish in 2 hours to feed the family. Our marine life have been influenced by rising sea acid and that threatens me most as fish is our main diet and way of income generation as well. We cannot go without it in our everyday life. Coral reef life is affected, small fish cannot live without corals and big fish depend on small fish to eat, therefore the increase in temperature has slowly damaged our livelihoods.”

**Women:** “Being a mother of 5 children in a rural community such as Tebikenikora, my family depend on underground well water for drinking, as we do not have water tanks. Therefore my main task is to boil water for consumption everyday to prevent my children from getting diarrhoea” says Roota Takoto aged 37. However, having our underground well water exposed to the hot sun, we experience saltiness of water, especially when we have boiled it. We feel that the hot temperature has caused the well water lose its freshness, leaving us to drink salty water. We have been sharing the rain water from our neighbours to complement the salty water but this is not sustainable as the water tank is very small.

**Youth/Children:** Having two days of heavy rain and flooding in the neighbourhood makes potholes in the main road. The next day the sun shines and dries up the area in just half a day. Dust is all over the place and transportation problems arise, and children cannot get in school in time. Children or school kids have to walk a long distance to school everyday and the hot sun has made them sick of sore eye and become dehydrated. Tio Rakuna complains; “what shall we do to reduce the impacts of high temperature? Can we live for a long life like our ancestors or have to die soon because of this dust affecting our human system?”

**Disabled persons:** As a blind man, the only thing that he can do to help the family with the house cores is weeding around the homes. He used to ask his family the time he has spent in weeding when he feels the hot sun and they always say it is10am, but now whenever he finishes weeding and asks what the time is, the answer is 8am. The heat from the increase in temperature has decreased the amount of output that he can do.

3. Drought

**Men:** “I don’t get employed as I did not get to school and I depend on cutting copra and fishing as my main income to support my family. We used to have plenty of space to plant coconut and have enjoyed the use of our coconut but now the coconut trees do not produce enough coconut fruits. It is only enough to eat but not for copra. The land infertility through saltwater intrusion have affected the life of our coconut trees.”
"I cannot earn money through cutting copra, therefore I cannot afford to send my children to school but allow them to stay at home and help with little cores." says Tanaua Robuti

**Youth:** Gardening is one of the activities that Tebikenikora youth is doing. The land is narrow and the underground well water is salty. Doing our garden is a big challenge, says Bauro Timi. Everyday, we have to bring bucket of water to water the garden to maintain the plants especially during long period of drought. However, when the king tide wave comes during the high tide, it washes away our garden leaving us with dead plants the next day. We try to raise our garden beds but the need to have fresh water is still a problem. What should we do to help with the situation..please help....”

**Disabled persons:** The area we live in is close to the main road and the sea shore. Fresh water scarcity is our main problem together with no big trees to give some shade during hot temperature. The underground well water is too shallow to get as we have no electrical water pump to use. Also the water looks stale sometimes but we cannot help it as we depend on our young boys to go down the well and clean the water.

**4. Limited fresh water**

**Men:** “Life is so hard to go without fresh water in the community. We have to go and fetch water from a distance using bucket to bring water into the family. We try digging our own well water near our house but the water is so bad to be used. My family is more important to have fresh water than my plants therefore I quit home gardening”. Henri Taom aged 56 an elderly man from Tebikenokora community.

**Women:** “Looking after the welfare of my family, limited fresh water is our main concern now. Ten years ago we only have three of us in our house to look after but now we have family coming to stay with us as they do not a place to live so the need for fresh water has increased. I have to spend most of my time now in an open fire to boil water to supply the family’s daily needs. I cannot do anything at the end of the day after being in a hot area everyday.” says Takobu Riao aged 53 a mother and grandmother.

**Youth/Children:** Good water is needed everyday at Tebikenikora community. “Three years ago we use to have water for our bath and cooking from our underground well but now we cannot use the water as it is not good. Because of that I sometimes did not attend school as I have to help my mother to fill up our fresh water from ration water provided by Government to the community.” Says Torah Pita.

**Disabled persons:** Rationing water is a new phenomenon at the moment. We feel we are in a risky environment with limited land area to use and blackish water to use. We have to pay for the water every time we finish and our income is only enough to support small things as we do not have a steady income. I am a wife with crippled legs and I depend
mostly on my children and husband to get me what I want. It threatens me to think of what would happen in a few years’ time with the status of our water whether we will be able to afford ration water or find no cost opportunities.” Mareta Tongaia a wife of 37 years.

Root Causes of Priority Risks:
1. Building a sea wall is not done the way it should such as the builder should consider the effect of his sea wall to his neighbour. Some areas are too affected especially from those long big sea wall as instead of preventing their land from erosion the neighbour lands suffered more. There is no standard building code for sea wall and therefore human destruction has contributed to the impacts of disaster risks and climate change.
2. Communities do not understand what disaster risks and climate change issues as there is low educational material to promote the issues.
3. The increase in population and economic development does not match. In addition most of the industries, projects and business are all based on the main island which is South Tarawa and less opportunities for outer islands communities for employment. Therefore migrating to South Tarawa has contributed a lot to the issues of overcrowding, crime and poverty.
4. As most communities are coastal dwellers, they are forced to relocate by the impact of sea level rise as resulted in land erosion and limited of space to use.
5. The climate is changing and everything surrounded by this environment is also affected. Communities experience strange things happening such as sea level rise, high temperature, droughts and limited fresh water, but lack the knowledge and skills to adopt in order to adapt to the exists environment. Out of school children have
increased in numbers because parents cannot afford to send them to school and that has contributed to the increase of crime.

6. The government does not have special policies for disabled persons to engage them in some form of income generating or in office employment. Therefore they are seen to be neglected and have been blamed for using up government funds in whatever activities they do.

LESSONS LEARNT:

1. Inclusion of marginalised groups and dealing with multiple risk perspectives

In referring to the term "marginalised groups" we can say that those with insufficient resources to self-support themselves. From the results of knowledge, attitude, and practice surveys and focus group discussions, the findings assist AFL program in Kiribati to identify these marginalised groups that is those with special needs and issues relating to disaster risks reduction and climate change. Dealing with multiple risk perspectives requires that those marginalised groups' interests in participating and contributing towards the solution. Moreover, FSPK does not work on its own to achieve its goals but working together with those institutions and groups that have the resources and capacity to work with.

In our efforts for a more inclusive approach, FSPK engaged with the Tetoamatoa – a disabled persons’ community to deliver the AFL disaster risk reduction and climate change awareness program. The Tetoamatoa group is made up of more than 100 disabled men, women and children, all living with disabilities. FSPK through AFL program, has given the
group an opportunity to demonstrate their talents and capabilities, which has rarely shown or supported by other organizations in Kiribati. Most importantly, the group has been provided a platform to raise awareness on climate change and disaster risks factors, to strengthen their capacities in disaster risk reduction and climate change related tasks, and a chance to engage so that they may develop the necessary attributes and skills needed to help safeguard both the environment and their own health and livelihood.

Within AFL target communities we are able to identify community facilitators where they will be point of contact in their various communities. This process is done through community consultation to allow communities to nominate whoever they believe to be a good model. The facilitator has to facilitate meetings and follow up on what should be implemented according to the community development plan. For instance, Tetoamatoa Disabled Group members think that they are useless and cannot contribute or participate in any DRR/CCA activity seeing that they have disabilities. However, after being involved in the AFL activity they feel that they can contribute to reduce the risks of disasters and the impact of climate change.

FSPK provides an opportunity for Tetoamatoa Disabled Group to tell the general public that they are not what they think of them. In this way, after identifying their risks in terms of income generating to support their daily lives, they are able to work on drama awareness on DRR/CCA. While delivering the message they do in drama, they get to understand the message at the same time. Awareness program using drama performances by Tetoamatoa group enhanced more participation of other communities in the campaign. The general public is more interested to attend performances from this group. They start to see their potential in the communities and realise that they not just disabled but able in contributing to activities in relation to DRR/CCA.

To balance power differences is a big challenge. In Kiribati society women are regarded as nothing when it comes to decision making. Each community has a communal hall where they hold meetings related to the communities issues or needs. Men are the main speakers in the sense that they are head of family and should be the ones to make all decisions for the sake of the family while the women have to depend on house cores and baby care. With our AFL communities we try to promote human rights which uphold more of equal rights to speak or expressions and how the modern world recognizes women’s capability. We invited certain Government ministries to be part of our community consultation in areas related to the issues of our communities. For instance, Ministry of Works and Energy to provide technical advice on how to build sea walls, Ministry of Agriculture to talk on new garden techniques related to the changing climate and in this way we are able to establish linkages to department and external organizations which are able and willing to continue to motivate community action.

We organized the community group according to their genders in order to undertake the responsibility for identifying their risk problems and solutions. We also trained our communities on background information and techniques for risk profiling and prioritizing, and helping the group to define their goal and boundaries, and developing their realistic expectations. We allow different groups to do their own risk profiling and prioritizing. In this way each group has its own goal, priority and has a development plan to guide them through its implementation stage. As a result each group identified its own problems and proposed solutions as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disabled persons</td>
<td>Discrimination – the public always think of negative things about them.</td>
<td>Involvement in the training and promotion awareness programmes related to disaster risks reduction and climate change to prove to the</td>
</tr>
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The process that we use in prioritizing risks included participants to name the threat to which their area is prone and a discussion was done to clarify the cause of disaster risks or climate change. We invited our communities to arrange the threats in a row and column headings and allow different groups to consider every threat in turn and decide by consensus which is the most critical. They enter into the table we developed and at the end of this task they compare the number of ticks that number of threat was chosen is added up. These scores then suggest which threats are the greatest priorities.

During the process of prioritizing, some of the obstacles addressed were some threats are hard to decide easily between two particular threats, so as a facilitator we have to ask the group which one most affects them such as the poor and vulnerable members of the community. And this has allowed participants to agree more easily on a ranking.

AFL process has built good relationships among different social groups, in the sense each group can understand the other groups’ vulnerability in the community and can able to work together to help with the situation. The communities learned that they are experiencing threats but they do not realise it unless they discuss together and share what each group felt or affected in different ways. Our target communities have become very active in doing adaptation activities that they have learned from the trainings they get as a result of prioritizing their development plans.

2. Development of multi-stakeholder partnerships and stimulating dialogue

AFL process needs to be in line with the Kiribati Development Plans into to achieve its goal and objectives. During the process of AFL, FSPK managed to establish an Advisory Committee for its Disaster Risks Reduction and Climate Change Program. We invited members from different NGOs, church groups and government department that all work for DRR/CCA. We had a member from Red Cross Society, Caritas from Catholic Church, Children and Youth Leader from Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Women’s leader from Bahai Faith, Climate Change Officer from Office of the Beretitenti (President), Climate Change Officer from Ministry of Environment, Officer from Curriculum Department within the Ministry of Education, and a coordinator from Tetoamatoa Community group. Having these members representing different areas of institutions and ngos we are able to deliver effectively to a wide range of communities using these committee members.

This committee meets once a month and discuss the progress of the AFL program and give advice on what should be done in related to their different group role. They give support and
contribute to the promotion and awareness activities on the concepts of DRR/CCA and also act as service providers in areas where it is needed by the community.

In order to allow the activities to be implemented by the communities we had to have a community planning and action where we build capacity of groups to take action to improve their current situation. As a facilitator, using participatory learning approach is very much effective, and this is where they are enable to plan collectively execute development activities that will increase their self-reliance and improve their well-being in an inclusive manner. Local people are active participants, not just sources of information.

Having different people on the AFL Task force committee, it enables the communities to get assistance or advices from different expertise such as in doing mangrove planting activities, an Environment officer is there to assist in training or advice on where the mangrove plant should be done and they have more technical knowledge. Local councils within those wards are the main people to bring concerns to government department.

People always cooperate during the process as they know that they own the program because it is not a top down approach but actually a down up approach which gives them a feeling of ownership. They do risk profiling, analysing and developing the plan with only a guide from AFL process.

Working with vulnerable members allows them to demonstrate that they have their own capabilities that contribute to the development of their communities. With our existing communities when we first meet with them think they whatever problems they face, the only solution is getting the government assistant. But as we go along with them, they realise that they are the ones that they experience the impacts of the decisions made but realise that they are also the ones to solve it using own resources, knowledge and skills they have rather than waiting assistance.

The process that we operate with AFL is that we cannot go directly to the communities but the channel we use helped in our implementation. Firstly, we have to inform the local government/council that AFL has to work with its communities. The local government councillors representing different village wards accompanied us to visit the communities so they know what we do with the communities and they are also involved in the risk profiling process. Because they know what is going on in their communities, they are to bring the matter to the local government during their meetings and also to get support for the communities in areas that fits well with the local government development plans.

Multi-stakeholder partnership is a way of building good relationships with other stakeholders that work similarly on the same issue and try to get together to work for the same purpose. In this way, everyone in the communities or villages is not left out but able to contribute for the betterment of community.

At first, inviting other stakeholders to be part of the Task Force committee, they hesitated to attend as they think we are trying to use them for our AFL program but this does not stop us from communicating with them on areas that we need their advice on. During the process, they realise that it their communities/village they are working for, they start contributing and supporting the activities. Because we did not do the consultation alone but had village elders and councils attend, other stakeholders see that they should be part of the process too so that we can work together to improve the situation. We have to support each other also in areas that they require our assistance therefore we feel that we are not opposed or go against another stakeholder but seeing that we work as a team to help our own people using different resources.
CONCLUSIONS:

During the AFL process we learned that working alone with the community is not good but having the communities participated in every activity starting from risk profiling to problem solving gives them a sense of owning the program. They can understand what AFL is all about and having them build their own capacities in the AFL processes, they can be able to sustain the program once it’s ended.

We learned that they are able to develop their community plans and prioritizing their problems and this will give us the opportunity to continue with AFL to provide more guidance on how to go about with their priorities. Engaging different stakeholders allow AFL to have a wide range of service providers to the communities, and therefore trainings that are required can be conducted having the partners on board using their different expertise. Communities understand that using own resources and traditional knowledge will help greatly in dealing with their daily challenges instead of waiting for assistance.