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**Social Development Outcomes of Participation in the New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme for Ni-Vanuatu Seasonal Migrant Workers**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Development Studies at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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*For my sister*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is focused on the New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme which enables low-skilled seasonal migrant workers, primarily from the Pacific Islands, to work temporarily in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries. This study examines how seasonal work schemes contribute to the social development of participating workers and their families, and therefore links to previous research that tended to focus on the positive economic development outcomes for workers, their families and communities.

The primary focus of this study is on the experiences of ni-Vanuatu migrant workers. Fieldwork, utilising qualitative research methods, was conducted in two field sites – vineyards of Blenheim, New Zealand, and Tanna Island, Vanuatu. Findings suggest that the scheme is delivering social and economic benefits to participating ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families. Furthermore, migrants gain skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to their management of time and money. Although not always directly transferable to Vanuatu, the skills and knowledge gained by migrants enable their success during repeat RSE contracts in New Zealand, reflecting migrants' cultural adaptability; the ability to move and adjust successfully to the cultural settings of both Vanuatu and New Zealand.

Alongside these positive development outcomes, there are power issues at play within the RSE scheme which result in the ni-Vanuatu migrants becoming dependent on pastoral care support, and involved in a submissive relationship with their RSE employers. Positively, with the increasing independence of experienced migrants, this situation is beginning to change. Nevertheless, with the success of experienced migrants comes a caution: if a group of experienced circulating migrants come to dominate participation in the RSE scheme, opportunities for first-time migrants to participate will be reduced, and inequitable development outcomes at the grassroots level in Vanuatu may result. It would seem then, that with equitable consideration of future recruitment, the RSE scheme may continue to deliver benefits to participating migrants and their families, as well as to Vanuatu and New Zealand.



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## List of Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LDC	Lolihor Development Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSWPS	Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme
NKRM	Nalmaluien Kape Ramar Mene
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer
SAWP	Seasonal Agricultural Work Programme
TMP	Temporary Migration Programme
TTTA	Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement
UN	United Nations



## Chapter One - Introduction

New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme enables migrants, primarily from the Pacific, to work temporarily in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries. The scheme aims to achieve a 'triple win', by providing benefits to New Zealand, to participating countries, and to individual migrants and their families. This thesis will examine the third 'win'; the benefits, particularly social development impacts, that result from participation in the scheme for the participating migrants and their families. The primary focus of most research on short-term international migration for employment has been on the economic benefits of the move (Bedford, Bedford, & Ho, 2009; Piper, 2009). This study thus aims to address the social outcomes of short-term international migration for employment.

The focus of this investigation is a group of ni-Vanuatu seasonal migrant workers who have participated in the RSE scheme. Many of these migrants were in their second and third seasons of participation in the scheme, although a number of workers were participating for the first time. All workers were employed within the viticulture industry of New Zealand, primarily on vineyards around Blenheim, New Zealand. Fieldwork incorporated qualitative research techniques in Blenheim and on Tanna Island, Vanuatu. The study specifically sought to explore the social development outcomes of participation in the scheme for the ni-Vanuatu workers, with the qualitative research approach reflecting a desire for an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

The two maps on the following pages display this study's geographical setting. The map of New Zealand (Figure 1.1) shows Blenheim, the main city in the Marlborough wine region of New Zealand. Tanna Island can be seen on the map of Vanuatu (Figure 1.2), towards the southern end of the archipelago. Tanna has a population of around 21,000 people (Connell & Hammond, 2009, p. 84), and contributes a large number of migrant workers to the RSE scheme.

Figure 1.1 – New Zealand fieldwork location: Blenheim



Source: (CIA - The World Factbook, 2011a)

Figure 1.2 – Vanuatu fieldwork location: Tanna Island



Source: (CIA - The World Factbook, 2011b)

Moving on from the description of the research participants and geographical setting of the research, as discussed above, this introduction chapter will now present a brief conceptual framework for the study. This framework aims to provide an overview of the research topic, with the points discussed being examined in more detail in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

## **Background**

Migration can be considered part of a wider concept of ‘movement’, covering a diverse range of forms of human mobility (Cloeke, Crang, & Goodwin, 2005) which can range from a daily commute to work, up to permanent emigration from one’s country of birth. Massey et al. (1998, p. 1) state that “a careful examination of virtually any historical era reveals a consistent propensity towards geographic mobility among men and women, who are driven to wander by diverse motives, but nearly always with some idea of material improvement”. Contemporary international migration is increasingly becoming recognised as a complex and broad issue, affecting states and other stakeholders on a growing scale. International migration presents multidimensional challenges and opportunities for stakeholders involving economic, social, political, and cultural factors. According to the report of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM, 2005, p. vii), there is currently a world-wide “understanding that the economic, social and cultural benefits of international migration must be more effectively realised, and that the negative consequences of cross-border movement could be better addressed”. The UN Secretary-General’s Report on International Migration and Development describes a “new era of mobility” (as cited in Agunias, 2006, p. 5), indicating an increased awareness of the circulatory nature of contemporary migration patterns. As part of the circulatory nature of contemporary migration, increased emphasis is now being placed on examining the return dynamics of migrants to their home communities, and analysing how these returns can facilitate development at the individual, family, community, and country levels. Reinforcing the circulatory nature of migration patterns, developed nations are increasingly turning towards Temporary Migration Programmes (TMPs), which aim to provide workers from lower-income countries with access to the labour markets of wealthier countries. At the same time the wealthy countries meet labour market shortfalls through the mobile labour force. These schemes are viewed as contributing to economic

development in host countries, as well as supporting social, economic and human development in origin countries (De Haas, 2005; United Nations, 2006). Proponents of TMPs argue that these schemes can deliver a ‘triple win’, bringing benefits to receiving countries, to sending countries, and to participating workers (Martin, 2003).

Aiming to achieve the ‘triple win’, the New Zealand RSE scheme is a contemporary TMP, established in 2007. The scheme allows workers, predominantly from the Pacific, to work temporarily within New Zealand’s horticulture and viticulture industries, for periods of between three and seven months. With a focus on the Pacific, the scheme also aims to maintain New Zealand’s foreign policy, which is broadly to support development within the region.

New Zealand has recently experienced a shortage of workers available to meet seasonal demands within the horticulture and viticulture industries (Ramasamy, Krishnan, Bedford, & Bedford, 2008; Spoonley & Bedford, 2008). At the same time, Pacific Island countries generally have a young and fast-growing population, and hence an excess number of work-capable people without access to employment opportunities (Department of Labour, 2010). As a result many people are either underemployed or unemployed. The RSE scheme looks to fill this gap, at least partially, by providing access to the New Zealand labour market for thousands of Pacific workers each year. Significantly, the RSE scheme prioritises the selection of those people at the grassroots level, primarily low-skilled rural workers, who would otherwise lack the opportunity to migrate overseas for employment. As such the scheme has been labelled as ‘pro-poor’ (Department of Labour, 2009b) and thus has the potential to bring developmental benefits (World Bank, 2006).

In relation to these potential benefits, preliminary research on the RSE scheme has been largely positive, with observable benefits for participating workers, participating Pacific countries, and New Zealand’s horticulture and viticulture industries (Connell & Hammond, 2009; Department of Labour, 2009b, 2010; Maclellan, 2008). Although this research on the RSE scheme has been largely positive, previous research on TMPs has identified the restrictions on migrants’ rights inherent to such schemes as presenting cause for concern (Vertovec, 2007). In this regard migrants participating in TMPs are restricted in their movement in the receiving country’s labour market, in effect ‘tied’ to their employer (Ruhs, 2005). This opens up the potential for migrants to become trapped in

dependent and exploitative relationships with their employers. However Ruhs (2005) suggests that migrant workers from low-income countries will accept some degree of constraints on their rights in order to gain access to schemes such as the New Zealand RSE scheme.

Mindful of these issues, the New Zealand government chose five 'kick-start' states to participate in the RSE scheme from its inception; Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu (MacLellan, 2008). These states received New Zealand government assistance in establishing the scheme and recruiting workers. A particular focus was on ensuring migrants were aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the RSE scheme, with pre-departure briefings and induction meetings in New Zealand providing relevant information for participating migrants.

Of these kick-start states, Vanuatu provides the largest number of workers, and enjoys an excellent reputation within the scheme (Department of Labour, 2010). Vanuatu is a small island nation situated in Melanesia, northeast of Australia. Seventy five per cent of its population of 243,000 people are rural subsistence farmers (Simmonds & Chan, 2009; Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009), who face a shortage of domestic employment opportunities (Department of Labour, 2010). With its pro-poor focus the RSE scheme provides an opportunity for ni-Vanuatu people at the grassroots level to take advantage of the possibilities presented by participation in the scheme.

Preliminary research on the outcomes for ni-Vanuatu migrant workers involved in the RSE scheme has been largely positive, with financial and social gains reported in the New Zealand Department of Labour's 'Final Evaluation Report of the Recognised Seasonal Employer Policy (2007-2009)' (2010), which provided a comprehensive evaluation of the RSE scheme. Overall, research has shown that the RSE scheme has begun to bring benefits for participating ni-Vanuatu workers and their families, with workers remitting money home to their families as well as returning with lump-sum savings. Workers are also returning with skills and knowledge gained from their time living in New Zealand and working within New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries (Department of Labour, 2010).

The economic gains of workers have been relatively clear to measure and observe. However, the social gains are less obvious, particularly the social development impacts of remittance and savings transfers, and the social outcomes arising from the use of skills and knowledge gained in New Zealand and transferred by migrants returning to Vanuatu. Thus, this thesis will aim to contribute to the growing body of literature on the developmental benefits of the RSE scheme, with a focus on social development impacts. It was within this framework that the overall research aim, and subsequent research questions, were formulated.

### **Research aim and research questions**

My overall research aim is:

**To examine the social development outcomes of participation in New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme for ni-Vanuatu seasonal migrant workers**

In order to meet the research aim, four specific research questions are asked:

1. What skills and knowledge do workers gain from participating in the RSE scheme?
2. How are skills and knowledge utilised by workers on their return to Vanuatu?
3. In what ways do the relationships between ni-Vanuatu workers and the New Zealand RSE team (including employers, supervisors and pastoral carers) contribute to a situation of possible ni-Vanuatu dependency on the New Zealand RSE team?
4. What specific benefits do experienced circulating migrants bring to the RSE scheme?

The first and second research questions aim to gain an understanding of the specific skills and knowledge workers gain through participation in the RSE scheme, and the subsequent

utilisation of the skills and knowledge by workers on their return to Vanuatu. A focus will be on whether the skills and knowledge gained by participating migrants are useful from a development point of view.

The third research question relates to the fact that the ni-Vanuatu workers do not have a large diaspora community within New Zealand and rely to an extent on the support of their RSE employers and pastoral carers. This question thus aims to identify whether the relationships between the workers and their RSE team is helping or hindering the workers' social development outcomes, and if so, how.

The fourth research question seeks to identify the specific benefits that experienced workers circulating between Vanuatu and New Zealand bring to the overall running of the RSE scheme. With some workers completing their third and fourth seasons in New Zealand, there is significant potential for benefits for the workers themselves, as well as benefits for RSE employers, pastoral carers and first-season ni-Vanuatu workers.

## **Methodology**

In an attempt to address the research aim and answer these research questions a qualitative research approach was applied, which incorporated fieldwork in Blenheim, New Zealand, and on Tanna Island, Vanuatu. Methods used to gather primary data included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation. Research participants included ni-Vanuatu RSE workers, RSE employers, vineyard supervisors, pastoral care workers, ni-Vanuatu migrants' wives and other family members, Tanna Island community members, and a representative from the Vanuatu Department of Labour. Although interviewing family members, this thesis will not examine the experiences of households left behind, which is beyond the scope of this study. A further point to note is that this study focuses on the experiences of male ni-Vanuatu RSE participants. While the RSE scheme has attracted considerable research attention, much of this, as mentioned above, has been in relation to economic impacts and outcomes of the scheme. Little in-depth attention has been paid to social effects. Moreover, there is also a significant gap in the literature which looks at social impacts, and to some extent, economic impacts, from a gender perspective. That is, no explicit gender analysis of the

RSE scheme has occurred. This research acknowledges the importance of a gendered perspective in relation to short-term migration for employment, however this is not the intention of this thesis. A more comprehensive account of this gender issue, as well as the research methodology and details of my reasoning behind using a qualitative approach, will be provided in Chapter Four.

## **Outline of the Thesis**

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research topic, a background to the key issues that frame the topic, a description of the overall aim, objective and research questions of the thesis, and a brief description of the research methodology.

Chapter Two establishes the theoretical framework of the thesis, providing a review of the literature concerned with international labour migration and development. The chapter is divided into three main sections: the first section will focus on international circular labour migration; the second section will examine the links between return migration and development; and the final section will discuss the re-emergence of Temporary Migration Programmes (TMPs) and examine the preliminary research on New Zealand's own TMP, the RSE scheme.

Chapter Three provides some background on the two countries this study focuses on, New Zealand and Vanuatu. Beginning with an overview of historical and contemporary Pacific migration, the chapter will then move on to describe New Zealand's migration history. Following that a description of New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries will be provided. The chapter will conclude by presenting a background to Vanuatu – its people, history, geography, and economy, as well as an overview of the outcomes for Vanuatu of participation in the RSE scheme.

Chapter Four provides a description of the research methodology, including the qualitative research methods used, ethical issues related to the research, fieldwork experiences, the limitations of the study, and the data analysis methods employed.

Chapter Five describes the research findings, first providing a general introduction to the ‘actors’ involved in the RSE scheme and their roles, before focusing on the four key themes that emerged from the data. These include: time management and changing concepts of time; money management and changing concepts of money; power issues and ni-Vanuatu worker dependence on the RSE team; and, experienced workers’ contribution to the success of the RSE scheme.

Chapter Six examines the social development outcomes of participation in the New Zealand RSE scheme for the ni-Vanuatu migrants engaged in this study. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the key research findings, before moving on to discuss key findings in relation to the theoretical framework of the thesis.

Chapter Seven will conclude the thesis, beginning with an overview of the major findings of this study, before drawing some conclusions on the future development impacts of the RSE scheme. The research aim and research questions will then be addressed, before closing with some final thoughts.

## **Chapter Two – Labour Migration and Development**

### **Introduction**

This literature review aims to provide a deeper understanding of how international circular labour migration, as well as the return of international migrants to their countries of origin, is seen to enable the social and economic development of the migrants themselves, as well as their families, communities and home countries. Migration and development literature generally focuses on the economic impacts of international migration; however the review presented in this chapter will be centred on the social impacts of international circular labour migration and return migration, which relate more closely to the overall research aim and objective; to establish the social development outcomes of participation in the New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme for ni-Vanuatu migrant workers. A further focus of this literature review will be on Temporary Migration Programmes (TMPs), which provide an avenue for circular migration flows, as the issues relating to TMPs are closely linked with discussions on New Zealand's RSE scheme, and thus also relate to the overall research aim and objective.

As such, this chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section will include an introduction to circular labour migration, outlining the development potential of circular migration, with a particular focus on the transfer of remittances, skills and knowledge, ideas and behaviours, and social capital gains by circular migrants. The second section will then discuss the literature's examination of return migration; specifically, factors influencing return, experiences of return, and the impacts of return migration on the social and economic development of migrant origin countries. The third section will then discuss the re-emergence of TMPs, which aim to deliver developmental benefits to both origin and destination countries, followed by an analysis of a recently launched TMP: New Zealand's RSE scheme. The chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of overall findings, identify what is missing in the current literature, and thus reiterate the importance of this research.

## **Circular Labour Migration**

The United Nations considers the current migration era as being characterised by migrants' increased mobility (United Nations, 2006), with the IOM adding that the geographic origin, direction and form of migratory flows continues to change, reflecting the growing diversity and complexity of labour mobility (IOM, 2008b). Reflecting the diversity of contemporary migration flows, international labour migrants include highly skilled and educated people, as well as low-skilled workers who can earn far more abroad than they can at home (Taylor, 2006). It is argued, however, that while today's globalised world has made it easier for capital, knowledge, skills, information, and goods to move freely within global networks, the same cannot be said for people (Conway, 2006; Iredale, Hawksley, & Castles, 2003; Massey & Taylor, 2004).

Some believe that these restrictions on the movement of people within global networks may contribute to the developmental potential of migration remaining unfulfilled (De Haas, 2005; Skeldon, 2010). In this regard, a growing recognition of the value of circular labour migration has emerged, both in terms of providing economic opportunities for migrants, their countries of origin, and their countries of destination, as well as mitigating the challenges that are associated with international labour migration, including the 'loss' of productive members of migrant-sending communities.

Accordingly, this section will begin by providing an overview of contemporary circular migration patterns, describing circular migration policies, and the developmental impact circular migration may have on migrant sending and migrant receiving countries. Circular migrants maintain strong links to their countries of origin, particularly to their families and communities, and so remittance transfers, including financial flows and flows of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, will also be discussed in relation to the impact such flows can have on development, particularly at the family and community level, in migrant-sending countries.

## **Circular migration**

In the past migration was considered a permanent move away from one's homeland, however more recent understandings view migration as being more temporary and circular in nature (GCIM, 2005). From this perspective contemporary migration is characterised by people's mobility, which allows migrants to move repetitively between their countries of origin and destination relatively freely. While circular forms of mobility have a long history, contemporary international circular migration is occurring on an "unprecedentedly large scale", involving a variety of forms and a greater cross-section of people than ever before (Hugo, 2003, para. 1).

Reflecting this complexity, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has defined circular migration as "[t]he fluid movement of people between countries, including temporary or long term movement which may be beneficial to all involved, if occurring voluntarily and linked to the labour needs of countries of origin and destination" (IOM, 2008b, p. 492). Agunias and Newland (2007) further assert that circular migration is based on a long-standing and flexible relationship among countries that occupy what is now increasingly seen as a single economic space.

Moving beyond the economic space, Vertovec (2007) states that migrants' social networks now cross international borders, with migrants utilising, extending and establishing social connections between their countries of origin and countries of destination. Through these connections migrants learn and transfer knowledge to other migrants, including where to go, how to find jobs and how to live in countries of destination. The migrants also maintain social connections with their families and communities, and retain economic, cultural and political ties to their countries of origin (Vertovec, 2007). As Hugo (2003, para. 5) discusses, modern transportation and communication links have reduced the "friction of distance" between origin and destination countries, with increasingly cheaper forms of communication meaning migrants can remain in contact with their family and community at home in real time, and increasingly cheaper international travel costs meaning migrants can return home more frequently. These connections and networks can be seen as facilitating circular forms of migration, in that migrants are able to maintain strong ties to their country of origin, in particular with their own family and community, while taking advantage of social and economic opportunities abroad (Newland, Agunias,

& Terrazas, 2008). In maintaining these social, economic, cultural and political connections to the country of origin, circular migrants have a strong incentive to return, either temporarily or permanently in the future, to their home country.

Newland et al. (2008, p. 1) suggest that contemporary forms of circular migration fall into the following categories: seasonal labour migration; non-seasonal low-wage labour; and the mobility of professionals, academics and transnational entrepreneurs. These categories include both regulated and unregulated migration flows. Regulated flows involve employers and states collaborating to recruit and employ workers from overseas in formalised systems, while unregulated flows involve migrants themselves establishing connections between their homelands and countries of destination and moving within that space (Vertovec, 2007).

Facilitating these circular flows, Vertovec (2007) points out that migrants develop knowledge, experience, and social connections through their mobility which can be labelled as 'migration-specific capital'. These gains may support the skills and knowledge migrants already possess from their own cultural backgrounds (Levitt, 1998). These social connections, as well as migrants' knowledge and experience, can decrease the risks and lower the costs of migration, and increase the chances of success, both for migrants in regulated and unregulated migration flows. As Williams and Balaz (2008) argue, skills and knowledge gained by migrants specific to the destination country may lead to an increase in potential earnings. Additionally, there is evidence that migrants are able to adjust their cultural practices to suit both their country of origin, and their country of destination. For example, I-Kiribati seafarers have developed "cultural flexibility" in order to successfully adjust to different cultural settings (Borovnik, 2003, p. 292). Likewise, Ossman (2004, p. 112) labels migrants that have moved multiple times between their country of origin and countries of destination as "cultural chameleons". In view of these points, circular labour migrants may now be considered "not just passive participants but active agents of their own mobility" Agunias and Newland (2007, p. 3). However, although circular migrants may be considered active agents in their own mobility, their movements across international borders are still dependent on the migration policies of both sending country and receiving country governments (Skeldon, 2010). These migration policies can either promote or restrict mobility, and as such have important

implications for the developmental potential of migration in general, and circular migration in particular.

### **Circular migration policies**

One of the main benefits of circular migration, as seen by policy makers and development academics alike, is the potential it has to provide a ‘triple win’; contributing towards the economic and social development of both migrant sending and receiving countries, as well as providing economic and social benefits to the migrants themselves (Vertovec, 2007). As Newland et al. (2008) assert, while most wealthy receiving countries welcome the circular movement of highly skilled and educated migrants, acknowledging this form of migration as being of economic benefit, at the same time they wish to discourage the permanent settlement of low-skilled migrants and their dependents, and therefore circular migration programmes for low-skilled workers are a priority for governments (Newland et al., 2008). Accordingly, policies designed to facilitate managed circular migration for low-skilled migrant workers are becoming increasingly common (Castles, 2006; Martin, 2003). As the impacts of such policies on low-skilled migrants are a primary focus of this thesis, this section of the literature review will focus on regulated circular migration policies aimed at low-skilled migrant workers.

With regulated circular migration policies such as the New Zealand RSE scheme becoming more prevalent, Vertovec (2007, pp. 6-7) raises some points regarding the implementation of such policies for low-skilled migrant workers, and poses a number of questions, including:

1. Will migrants get ‘locked-in’ to dependent and exploitative relationships with employers?
2. Will work permits be non-portable, restricted to specific employers or industry sectors, further increasing the risk of employer exploitation?
3. Will regulated circular migration programmes become closed labour markets, with fewer opportunities for new migrants to access the labour market?
4. Will circular migrants receive opportunities to integrate into the receiving society, or will a lack of integration strategies make migrant

workers more vulnerable and socially excluded from the receiving country? and,

5. As circular migrants may not be integrated into the host society, will there be no opportunities for migrants to naturalise and become dual citizens in the future?

As a result, Vertovec asserts that while regulated circular migration policies may be presented as a win-win-win initiative, such policies, particularly highly regulated circular migration policies aimed at low-skilled workers, may not be as mutually beneficial as imagined (Vertovec, 2007, p. 7). From this perspective, the benefits of regulated circular migration programmes may in fact be distributed unevenly, with migrant destination countries receiving the most benefit from such programmes in the form of macroeconomic development, and the participating migrant workers remaining unable to integrate into the host society and trapped in exploitative relationships with employers.

These restrictions on migrant workers are seen by policy makers in receiving countries as being necessary to ensure that participating workers do not become permanent settlers in the destination country. However, although circular migration programmes may enforce strict measures to prevent migrants becoming permanent settlers (Agunias & Newland, 2007), these measures may not in fact be necessary, as studies have shown that many migrants intend to return to their countries of origin, either temporarily or permanently (Agunias & Newland, 2007). O'Neil (2003) supports this assertion, arguing that many migrants are naturally circular in nature, and tend to retain close ties to their homelands. Therefore the strict enforcement of measures discouraging the permanent immigration of low-skilled workers may be counterproductive, as studies have shown that contemporary international labour migrants are more likely to retain close ties with their home countries and thus do not intend to become permanent settlers in the destination country, but rather become circular migrants, moving between their country of origin and their country of destination (Hugo, 2003). Furthermore, Hugo (2003) suggests that it is not necessarily the case that migrant workers always wish to settle permanently in destination countries, but that restrictive migration policies and barriers to entry or re-entry in effect push the migrants into permanent settlement. From Hugo's perspective, if migrant workers can see that there are policies in place that allow workers the freedom to move between their country of origin and the country of destination on their own terms, for example through

dual citizenship rights or by easing the availability of re-entry visas, then they are likely to become circular migrants. If, on the other hand, migrant workers can see that there are policies in place that restrict movement between the country of origin and the country of destination, they are more likely to want to become permanent settlers, as they are not guaranteed re-entry into the destination country if they return to their country of origin.

Consequently, De Haas (2005) argues that instead of trying to prevent inevitable migration, immigration policies that allow for free circulation should be implemented by developed countries, which would thereby enhance the contribution of migrants to the development of their home communities, as will be discussed in the following section.

### **The development potential of circular migration**

As discussed, circular migration is seen to enable a ‘triple win’, bringing developmental benefits to the migrants, to sending countries, and to receiving countries. The ‘win’ for circular labour migrants involves the benefits gained from their engagement in circular migration, in the form of social, human and financial capital, which they may then use to further their own development aspirations. From the sending country’s point of view, this ‘win’ consists of the developmental possibilities offered by migrants’ remittance flows, as well as the return of both highly skilled and low-skilled migrant workers, who may bring valuable financial and human capital back with them (Vertovec, 2007). Proponents of circular migration also point to the fact that circular migration is seen to reduce the disruption to social cohesion within families and communities, as migrants constantly return home (Martin, 2003). Finally, from the receiving country’s point of view, the ‘win’ consists of filling gaps in the labour market, ensuring that temporary labour migrants return to their countries of origin, and alleviating illegal migration flows by providing labour migrants opportunities to legally access the country’s labour market (Vertovec, 2007).

Agunias (2006), in a review of migration literature found increasing optimism about the developmental potential of circular migration. Regular circular migration between countries of origin and destination is seen to provide a conduit for money and material goods, as well as skills, knowledge and ideas, which may contribute to development in migration sending countries (Skeldon, 2010). While there is optimism, Agunias also notes

a degree of caution among scholars, with concerns that “the impact of policies encouraging more circular migration is still very much conditioned by the political, economic and social conditions in the countries of origin and destination”, as well as concerns regarding migrants’ characteristics and the dynamics of their return (Agunias, 2006, p. 5). This can be seen in the two categories of return that dominate discussions on circular migration: the temporary return of permanent migrants (for example permanent migrants returning to conduct business in their home country); and the temporary return of temporary migrants (for example the return of workers participating in TMPs) (Agunias, 2006). It would seem that, according to Agunias, permanent migrants returning home on temporary visits are more likely to contribute to local development, in that they are seen to return with valuable capital, skills and knowledge, while on the other hand, the temporary returns of temporary migrants were found by Agunias to have a limited impact on development. From this perspective, as temporary labour migrants are likely to be remittance providers, their return represents a break in the financial flow of remittances, which may cause the remittance receiving family social and economic hardship (Agunias, 2006, p. 16). Thus remittances, particularly remittances sent by low-skilled circular migrants, are seen as one of the main components in both maintaining social cohesion within migrant sending families and communities, and facilitating the developmental benefits of circular migration.

### **Remittance transfers**

Remittance transfers have been identified as having the potential to contribute significantly to development in migrant-sending countries (Bedford et al., 2009; Connell & Brown, 2005; De Haas, 2005; IOM, 2008b). After foreign direct investment, and trade related earnings, remittance transfers make up the largest financial flow into developing countries, and far exceed official development assistance flows (O’Neil, 2003). When it is considered that financial remittance flows into developing countries are considered to be greatly underestimated, the true impact of remittance transfers on social and economic development may indeed be much larger (Ratha, 2007).

Ratha (2007) further asserts that remittances can play an effective role in reducing poverty in developing countries, and as remittance transfers usually go directly to the families of

migrants, these transfers are targeted to the specific needs of the remittance receivers. Research has established that remittance transfers are mainly spent on housing, education, health care, and everyday expenses (De Haas, 2005; O'Neil, 2003). Borovnik (2006, p. 158) found that the families of I-Kiribati seafarers used remittances to pay children's school fees, and meet basic living needs. Once basic needs were met the families constructed permanent houses and established small stores. In the past such uses were considered unproductive and representative of a consumption attitude rather than an investment attitude, although De Haas (2005) challenges this notion, arguing that such improvements enhance people's capabilities and well-being. This sentiment is also expressed by Gegeo (1998, p. 291), who states that an investment in permanent housing may provide "comfort, and a sense of confidence, dignity and rootedness". Similarly, Connell and Brown (2005, p. 32) assert that the construction of a permanent house symbolises achievement, and contributes to migrants' welfare, security and prestige. Ratha (2007) concurs and goes on to affirm that remittances invested in health and education can lead to a high social return for the household. This view also reflects that of Yang (2009, p. 10), who asserts that an investment in education represents an investment in children's human capital, and Borovnik (2006), who suggests that an investment in education represents an investment in the future of the child, and in turn the future of the parents. In addition, Borovnik (2003) states that the families of migrant seafarers have gained respect and status within their local communities as a result of their enhanced capability to share wealth. In this sense, remittances can be seen to represent a 'bottom-up' form of development finance, which may prove more effective in enhancing social and economic development at the grassroots than traditional forms of development aid (De Haas, 2005).

The enormous potential for remittance transfers by circular migrants to contribute to development is highlighted by the fact that circular migrants tend to remit a greater percentage of their earnings to their home country (Vertovec, 2007), mainly due to the fact that the migrants have strong connections to their home localities and moreover plan to return in the near future. Chimhowu, Piesse and Pinder (2005) further assert that a migrant's decision to remit earnings back to their family and community depends on a combination of two factors: risk management and obligation. In this regard, remittances may be part of a risk-management strategy for the migrant and their household, providing security in the event of external shocks such as a loss of employment, or a natural disaster. In countries prone to natural disasters, Yang (2009) suggests that remittance transfers may

alleviate the consequences of weather-related impacts on households. At the same time, remittances also fulfil an obligation to the migrant's household, and as Chimhowu et al. (2005) state, "while migrants are motivated by self interest, that self interest is usually conceived within the context of existing kinship ties." Indeed, studies show that migrants who have left their immediate family behind remit a much greater amount than when their family accompanies them, and an intent to return home to the family is a primary factor in encouraging high savings and remittance transfers (Katseli, Lucas, & Xenogiani, 2006). With regards to low-skilled migrant workers, Katseli et al. (2006) assert that when these migrants leave their immediate families behind, and intend to return home to them, then remittance transfers may be very high.

Despite the fact that some believe a focus on migration and remittances as a development path can lead to a passive dependence on remittances, (as discussed by De Haas, 2005), others, including De Haas, question this perception. Hau'ofa (1993) contends, in the Pacific context, that the relationship between migrant sender and receiver is actually one of interdependence. From this point of view remittance receivers reciprocate with locally produced goods, as well as with the maintenance of ancestral roots and lands for the migrant worker, and a warm and welcoming environment to return to at the end of the migrant's journey (Hau'ofa, 1993). Others state that while remittances can provide financial support to families and communities, and in doing so help to maintain kinship ties, they can also lead to an increase in inequality in receiving communities if some households receive remittances and others do not (Chimhowu et al., 2005). Some question this assertion, however, arguing that non-remittance receiving households may still gain from remittance transfers indirectly, for example through the multiplier effects of remittance spending within the community (De Haas, 2005; Katseli et al., 2006; Ratha, 2007).

As well as financial transfers, remittances may also include gifts in kind; material possessions migrants send back to their families and communities while abroad, or transfer directly upon their return (Potter, Conway, & Phillips, 2005). Reysoo (2008) states that migrants may gain prestige by transferring gifts in kind back to their families. Cliggett (2003) argues that Zambian migrant workers send gifts to home-based family members to maintain and develop alliances and in doing so ensure that the migrant's future is secure in the event of external shocks. This action would appear to be a form of

risk management on the part of the migrants, as discussed by Chimhowu et al. (2005), in that the migrants send gifts primarily to ensure their own security. The transfer of gifts may also represent an obligation to family members, and in this manner the outcomes of gift transfers may reflect the transfer of financial remittances, strengthening the kinship ties and social networks of migrants, while maintaining obligations to the migrant-sending family and community (Chimhowu et al., 2005).

Although remittances present opportunities for development, De Haas (2005, p. 1269) claims that the “remittance euphoria” may not be entirely justified, due to unattractive investment climates in migrant-sending countries, and restrictive immigration policies in migrant-receiving countries which disrupt circular migration flows and prevent the developmental potential of migration from being fully realised. From this perspective the developmental impact of remittances is contextually dependent. Although financial remittance transfers provide perhaps the most obvious contribution to development in migrant sending countries, circular migrants may also gain and transfer valuable non-monetary assets which can enhance development opportunities in their home communities, which will be discussed next.

### **Skills and knowledge transfers**

In addition to financial gains, migrants may also acquire non-monetary resources from their time abroad, including skills and knowledge, which may be transferred either while migrants are in the destination country, or on migrant’s return to their country of origin. As Gammeltoft (as cited in Chimhowu et al., 2005, p. 84) states, most research on the impact of remittances on poverty has been focused on financial transfers, while ignoring non-financial transfers, meaning that the true developmental impact of non-financial gains such as skills and knowledge is difficult to assess.

Migrants learn skills and gain knowledge during their work and non-work experiences overseas, through their participation in social, cultural and economic activities. The knowledge and skills migrants gain may then be transferred back to their home communities. As Billett (2004, p. 111) asserts, this learning can be understood as permanent or semi-permanent changes in how individuals, in this case migrants, think and

act. According to this view, learning is inherent in everyday thinking and acting, and as such all experiences either reinforce what is already known, or contribute to new knowledge and skills.

However, while often held as a benefit of circular migration, there is debate on the value of knowledge and skills gained by migrants overseas. Illustrating this point, the skill levels of low-skilled guest workers employed in European guest worker schemes in the 1960s and 1970s did not increase in ways that were beneficial for their home countries (House of Commons, 2004; Millbank, 2006, p. 9). Other scholars observe that migrants working in low-skilled employment gain few skills, while those working in highly skilled jobs acquire skills but then find those skills difficult to utilise upon their return, due to geographical or institutional constraints (Ammassari & Black, 2001). It would seem that from a development perspective, most literature focuses on skills and knowledge specific to the industry in which the migrant worker was employed in while overseas, and as skills and knowledge are highly contextual, they may not be readily transferable to migrants' home communities (Bedford et al., 2009). This may explain the pessimism surrounding the developmental potential of the transfer of knowledge and skills by circulating low-skilled migrants. However, Bedford et al. (2009, p. 25) rightly point out that this focus on industry-specific skills can risk ignoring non-industry-specific skills migrants may gain, including financial skills such as money management, language skills, and intangible skills such as time management. As such, Bedford et al. (2009) state that there is a need to further investigate the developmental potential of skills and knowledge transferred home by short-term labour migrants.

As well as geographical or institutional constraints, a further barrier to the developmental potential of skills and knowledge transfers can include the social obstacles migrants face, and literature is starting to emerge on the potential benefits of enhanced social relations accrued through the migration process. Collectively, these benefits are referred to as 'social capital'.

### **Social capital and social remittances**

Social capital is built on “mutual obligations and expectations, norms of reciprocity, trust and solidarity”, and is an outcome of the potential wealth that can be drawn from social relations (Ammassari & Black, 2001, p. 29). Migration can be seen as one way of building social capital, and increasing migrants’ competence in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relations in varied situations, including socio-economic, political and cultural contexts (Ammassari & Black, 2001). As such, social capital may be equally beneficial to the migrants in both the destination and the home country. When migrants return to their home communities and countries they may have increased access to resources, improved information and knowledge, and increased authority within their communities (Bebbington, 2008). In destination countries, migrants’ social capital may translate into increased access to employment opportunities. The transfer of social capital has largely been ignored in the migration literature (Ammassari & Black, 2001). This may be due to criticisms that social capital, as a concept, is too loose, allowing the term to refer to so many different social dimensions that it loses its value (Bebbington, 2008).

An addition to literature on social capital in the context of migration is the concept of social remittances. Social remittances are the transfer of new attitudes, behaviours and ideas through communication between origin communities and migrants, visits by non-migrants to family members living overseas, return visits by migrants, as well as the permanent return of migrants (Castles & Miller, 2009; Levitt, 1998). Potter and Conway (2008, p. 216) describe social remittances as “local-level, migration-driven forms of cultural diffusion and exchange”. Studies on social remittances report both positive and negative impacts for development, depending on the context of migrants’ experiences overseas (Castles & Miller, 2009; Munck, 2008).

The transfer of social remittances also depends on the social and economic context within the sending country, with returning West Indian migrants reporting feelings of jealousy towards them, as well as resistance to their new ideas (Gmelch, 2004). As Levitt (1998) states, if the value structures, behaviours and ideas are similar to the existing norms, then social remittances are more likely to be assimilated into sending communities. If on the other hand the ideas and behaviours represent completely new forms, then there are likely

to be greater barriers to assimilation and acceptance. Levitt (1998, p. 926) further asserts that the ideas, behaviours and social capital migrants gain from their migration experiences are remoulded in receiving countries, and promote migrant entrepreneurship, community and family formation, and political integration. At the same time however, non-migrants in Levitt's study reported that migrants returning from the United States also brought back some negative attitudes and behaviours. These negative attitudes included individualism and materialism, with some returning migrants perceived as being more committed to their own well being, than to the well being of their community (Levitt, 1998). As Levitt concludes, there is nothing to guarantee that the ideas and knowledge migrants learn and transfer back to their home communities are constructive, or will have a positive impact on migrants' home communities (Levitt, 1998, p. 934).

### **Section conclusion**

As discussed in this chapter section, circular migration has emerged as an important component of contemporary migration flows, presenting social and economic development opportunities for sending countries, receiving countries, and for migrants themselves. Specifically, circular migrants transfer money and material possessions back to their countries of origin, as well as transferring non-material assets including ideas, attitudes and behaviours (social remittances), and skills and knowledge, back to their home communities. These transfers, particularly financial remittance transfers, may be productively invested by migrants and their families, for example in health, education and housing, and as such are seen to enhance the well-being and capabilities of migrants and their families.

In response to the recognition of circular migration's potential to provide benefits for sending countries, receiving countries and migrants, policies facilitating circular migration are becoming increasingly common, particularly for low-skilled workers. These circular migration policies are restrictive in nature, mainly due to the fear among migrant-receiving countries that low-skilled migrants will become permanent settlers. As also discussed, however, these fears may be misplaced, as circular migrants by nature maintain strong social, economic, cultural and political ties to their families and home communities, and as such are naturally inclined to return to their countries of origin. It would seem that

the key to fulfilling the developmental potential of circular migration lies in the implementation of migration policies that promote circulation, rather than policies that restrict the mobility of migrants. As outlined in this section, barriers to circulation may encourage migrants to settle permanently in destination countries, rather than circulate between their country of origin and destination.

Circular migration presents opportunities for migrants to take advantage of employment opportunities overseas while still maintaining social, economic, cultural and political interests in their countries of origin. By maintaining these ties circular migrants have an incentive to transfer financial remittances and non-monetary assets back to their families, facilitating development at a grassroots level. Also inherent in the process of circulation is the return of migrants to their countries of origin, either temporarily or permanently, which in itself presents opportunities for social and economic development. The dynamics and implications of the return of migrants to their countries of origin will be examined in more depth in the following section.

### **The Links between Return Migration and Development**

Whereas in the past the cross-border movement of migrants was effectively seen as a permanent move away from one's homeland, recent emphasis has shifted to a more complex view of the migratory process which considers multiple movements across transnational spaces. As illustrated in the previous section, circular migration has made flows more complex, and included in the multifaceted nature of contemporary migration flows is return migration.

Return migration and its complex, multidimensional nature has emerged in the literature as being a significant factor in enhancing the development potential of origin countries (United Nations, 2007), although the link between return migration and development has been criticised (Van Houte & Davids, 2008). This may be partly due to the "relative lack of research, until recently, on the multi-faceted processes of return migration and on the selectivity and diversity of return migrants, their changing character, their experiences, and societal interactions" (Potter et al., 2005, p. 2). Faist, speaking about migration and transnational social spaces challenges the traditional concepts of migration research,

arguing that they “may not be adequate to capture more fluid lifestyles, modes of action and collective behaviour” (Faist, 2008, p. 36). Faist also argues against the simplistic dichotomous distinctions that have been a feature of migration discourse in the past, such as ‘origin’ versus ‘destination’ and ‘temporary’ versus ‘permanent’. Piper (2009, p. 95) argues there is a “lack of comprehensive and sustained dialogue between migration and development experts”, with migration research employing an overly simplistic concept of development, and development research failing to account for the complexities of migration. Previous research on return migration has instead tended to focus on factors that contributed to or discouraged return (Iredale, Guo, & Rozario, 2003), and elderly retirees returning home after emigrating in their youth (Conway & Potter, 2009). Conway and Potter further state that:

[r]eturnee’s stocks of human and social capital, when added to remittances and the transnational transfers of knowledge, information, capital in goods in kind and services, are seriously undervalued, in part because of a general dearth of international migration information that is specific enough to provide valid estimates and in part because numerical assessments [minimise] temporary and short-term circular flows, return visits, transnational sojourns, and flexible mobility (Conway & Potter, 2009, p. 15)

The difficulty in accurately measuring flows of return migrants is shown by the United Nations (2007, p. 27) report on measuring international migration flows: only one-fifth of countries include questions in their censuses to detect return migrants. A further barrier to assessing the implications and impacts of return migration appears to be the lack of a single, definitive definition of return migration, reflecting its complex nature. The OECD (2008, p. 163) defines return as “the situation where a migrant goes back to his [or her] home country after living in another country for some period of time”, a definition which the authors admit fails to account for more complex situations. The 2008 IOM report includes a time frame in their definition: “[t]he movement of a person returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after at least one year in another country” (IOM, 2008b, p. 498). From a critical view, this definition excludes returnees such as temporary migrant workers, who often spend less than twelve months abroad. However, this definition is significant because it also distinguishes between a person’s country of

origin and habitual residence; contemporary return migrants may not necessarily return to their original homeland, but rather to a country the person has previously emigrated to or migrated from. On the subject of homelands, Van Houte and Davids, (2008) criticise the notion of 'home' as used in return migration discourse, pointing out that some returnees such as former refugees in extreme scenarios may not feel that the term is appropriate in their situation.

Faist (2008) identifies three main phases in the history of migration, return, and development. The first phase, during the 1960s, focused on the potential for migration to enable remittance flows and facilitate the transfer of human capital from the global North to the global South. The second phase during the 1970s was characterised by conflict between modernisation theorists and dependency authors (Schuurman, 2008). The outward-migration of skilled and educated individuals was then seen to contribute to a 'brain-drain' in developing countries (Faist, 2008), with migration seen as the 'failure' of development (Black & King, 2004). Whereas the first period was characterised by the perception that migration would facilitate development, the second phase was marked by the perception that outward-migration was a result of underdevelopment. The third and current phase, which has its origins in the 1990s, has seen a move back to a more optimistic view of migration, and reflects the general development paradigm, including community-focused bottom-up approaches (Faist, 2008). Financial remittances and the transfer of skills are once again seen as important factors in promoting development, and are supplemented by knowledge flows and social remittances (Castles & Miller, 2009). The current phase has seen a shift away from attempts to alleviate the 'root causes' of migration, which characterised the second phase, through to trying to understand how migration can be used to facilitate development in sending countries, particularly development at the grassroots (Black & King, 2004).

This emerging focus on development at the grassroots level reflects the increasing support for alternative development approaches, which have their origins in the 1970s (Mohan, 2008). These alternative forms of development have emerged largely in response to critiques of the top-down, technocratic nature of the previous modernisation approach. Alternative forms of development are also seen as bringing more equitable developmental benefits, as opposed to previous modernistic approaches which resulted in the benefits of development being distributed unevenly (Parnwell, 2008). In contrast to the modernisation

approach to development, which involved countries following a pre-defined (Western) path to development, alternative development approaches recognise that ‘development’ can be seen as having different meanings to different people, and that what may be useful in one particular context is not necessarily so in another. As Brohman (1995, p. 138) states, “we need to unlearn our preconceived notions and reconsider development in terms of particular sociocultural, political, economic and environmental conditions.” In this regard alternative development advocates call for a more bottom-up, people-centred, and participatory approach to development, in which people at the grassroots are not ‘objects’ of development, but are ‘actors’ in the overall development process (Mohan, 2008). McEwan (2009, p. 213) further states that the perception of *active* development agents and *passive* development recipients must change, and participatory approaches to development provide a conduit for this change. The sense of control that people can gain from participating as actors in the development process can contribute to their empowerment. The empowerment of those at the grassroots ideally involves people and groups gaining power: *power to* act and exercise rights; *power within*, to gain a sense of self identity and confidence – a precondition for action; and *power with* others, to form partnerships for collective action (Gaventa, 2006, p. 24). Positively, empowerment and participatory approaches can mean that development outcomes are more relevant and more suited to the needs and priorities of those in the local context.

This focus on the local context reflects the consideration of the diverse nature of development as it exists today. Just as development itself is considered complex and contextual, return migrants, in their capacity as development actors, are equally complex and diverse. According to Potter et al. (2005, p. 2) return migrants are:

demographically selective, behaviourally diverse, they possess differing stocks of human capital, they have divergent attitudes, divergent images of their ... homelands, divergent backgrounds, and consequently their experiences, adaptations, and behaviours will rarely be commonly shared

The subsequent lack of uniformity which arises from return migrants’ diverse backgrounds has meant that broad societal change has historically been difficult to achieve through return migration alone (Potter et al., 2005). Reflecting return migrants’ diverse

backgrounds and experiences, the factors that motivate return are correspondingly diverse, which will become apparent in the following section.

### **Factors influencing return**

Return can vary across a wide spectrum of experiences: temporally from brief visits to permanent return; spatially from one's original homeland through to a reconstructed homeland (within the original country); and legally from voluntary movements to forced or coerced return (Long & Oxfeld, 2004). The decision to re-emigrate back to one's homeland is determined by a multitude of factors and influences. Generally, unless forced or coerced, the decision to return depends on whether the social, economic and political situation in the home country is stable and attractive to potential returnees (OECD, 2008).

The OECD (2008) offers four main reasons to explain return migration: the failure of migrants to integrate into the receiving country; individuals' desire or preference for their home country; the achievement by migrants of a planned saving objective; and the opening of employment or business opportunities in a migrant's home country, utilising knowledge and experience gained abroad. Nell (2008), for example, identifies among some Surinamese return migrants the desire to influence politics in their home country, and thus contribute to their country's overall development. These returnees, according to Nell are highly skilled and contribute to a 'brain gain'.

The collection of research on the experiences of Caribbean return migrants in Potter et al. (2005) stress the importance of 'pull factors' in encouraging return migration. These motivating factors include the Caribbean climate, family connections and availability of opportunities (Potter & Conway, 2005). Return visits can be used by individuals wanting to assess social, economic or political change in their homelands, leading to a decision on whether permanent return is a viable option (Duval, 2005).

At the receiving-country level a distinction can be drawn between high receptivity countries and low receptivity countries. Elliot et al. (2010) have found that countries of high receptivity are likely to have policies in place that facilitate the integration of new migrants. On the other hand, countries of low receptivity are characterised by a lack of

government funding for integrating migrants and limited policies in place for the protection of new migrants. The receptivity of host countries can be viewed as being on a continuum from high to low receptivity: where the entry of immigrants corresponds to a labour shortage, immigration policies and integration practices are receptive and inclusive, and where immigrant populations are rapidly increasing and labour shortages have been met, immigration policies and integration practices become increasingly restrictive (Elliot et al., 2010). Undoubtedly, the receptiveness of a host country's policies, institutions and people can influence migrants' decisions on whether to return to their home countries, or migrate to a different country. At the same time, receptive policies for returnees in sending countries can also motivate migrants to return. This can be seen, for example, in the Philippines, where the government runs several economic and social reintegration programmes for returnees, aiming to offset any negative effects of overseas employment on individuals and their families (IOM, 2005). Other countries have also initiated similar programmes, which aim to assist returning migrants through training schemes, as well as provide support in managing their human, social and financial capital gains (De Haas, 2005; Newland et al., 2008; Ruhs, 2005).

### **Experiences of return**

As the above examples demonstrate, migrants may be well supported on their return to their home countries. However, return migrants may also face difficulties on their homecoming, including a lack of employment opportunities, having to work at a lower level, a lower income, social rejection, a lack of health and education services available, and security concerns (IOM, 2005).

In this context, John Connell (2009), discusses the return of skilled health professionals back to Niue and the Cook Islands, reporting a degree of dissatisfaction among returnees, largely due to the slow pace of life, restrictive hierarchical structures and the migrants' own inability to bring about economic and social change. Due to these factors returns are usually temporary, reflecting a perceived lack of opportunities available to returnees. Furthermore, Vili Nosa (2009), studying Niuean migratory patterns, has highlighted a lower standard and higher cost of living, pay disparities, and limited employment opportunities as common negative experiences of returnees to Niue. However, the laid-

back lifestyle and stress-free environment meant that for some the experience was preferable to living overseas (Nosa, 2009). This seems to demonstrate that for some return migrants, the social benefits of returning home can outweigh the negative economic issues.

Among further negative experiences, some overseas workers arriving home in the Philippines experienced a cold reception from family members upon their return, after being estranged from them for long periods of time (IOM, 2005). In this regard relations between returnees and non-migrants within communities is an issue that has been identified as requiring careful management (IOM, 2008a). Conflict has arisen in some cases due to resentment and suspicion of returnees by local populations, adding to social tensions (Potter, 2005). All of these factors have implications for the developmental potential of return migrants; if return migrants are not accepted by their communities, or are met with suspicion, the developmental impact of their return will be minimised, not to mention the social strain on the returning migrant, their family, and their community.

Even when return migrants have the support of their local community, Bedford et al. (2009, p. 25) assert that in areas where there is very little opportunity for productive investment, the chances of workers being able to successfully utilise skills and knowledge gained abroad is “severely restricted”. Millbank (2006, p. 9) and De Haas (2005) support this view, stating that the underdevelopment of workers’ home communities frustrates returning migrants’ efforts in establishing small businesses. As a result some have called for a more cooperative approach to community development. Migrant community associations, which involve a group of migrants from a community forming an association and contributing funds to development objectives, aim to achieve the benefits that may come from this cooperative approach (Faist, 2008; GCIM, 2005).

The experience of return for migrants can either present barriers to development, or provide opportunities. What is clear is that returning migrants have the potential to contribute positively, economically and socially, to their home communities, and it is these contributions that have implications for development.

### **Implications of return migration for development**

Return migrants are increasingly seen as important actors in supporting development in their countries of origin. The human, social and financial capital migrants gain abroad and return home with are considered valuable, and can include increased knowledge, skills, experience and savings which are capable of furthering individual, family and community development goals and aspirations (Bedford et al., 2009; GCIM, 2005; United Nations, 2006). On a broader scale return migrants can also be seen to bring benefits at the country level, for example in the case of returning medical professionals strengthening the capabilities and capacity of a country's health sector. As low-skilled migrants often originate in poorer, rural areas, the human, social and financial capital these migrants return with can bring benefits directly to those at the grassroots. This can mean that the migrants, their families and communities have the opportunity to decide how to apply the human, social and financial capital gains, in order to meet their own development objectives.

As discussed previously, although the role that return migration can play in a country's development has been identified as an important issue, according to the IOM (2005, p. 287) it remains "insufficiently researched". A number of strategies have been put in place by countries wishing to facilitate the return and support the reintegration of their nationals in order to aid development (De Haas, 2005; Newland et al., 2008; Ruhs, 2005). Generally these strategies focus on highly skilled and educated workers rather than unskilled or low-skilled workers, as it is assumed that they lack the experience, education and contacts highly skilled workers gain abroad (IOM, 2005). Non-state actors such as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) can also have a part to play in supporting the reintegration of returnees, particularly those that are considered unskilled or low-skilled. De Haas (2005) argues that the development potential of return migration is dependent on the possibilities provided by contextual factors at the social, political and economic level, indicating governments have an important role to play.

As discussed, government policies facilitating the development benefits of return migration are common. There are two main forms of policies adopted by states to support development goals: incentives to encourage migrants to return, and reintegration

assistance to ensure return migrants' well-being on their return (IOM, 2005). As discussed, returnees can experience social, cultural, political and economic barriers when they return home, which can have an impact on their ability to facilitate development. Gmelch (2004, p. 221) in his study on West Indian return migrants observed that "because of jealousy and resistance to new ideas, the influence of returnees at the local level is much less than it could be". These adverse impacts can be mitigated to an extent by government reintegration policies.

Although countries often have policies in place to encourage return and facilitate reintegration, bilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries, facilitating return, are less common (GCIM, 2005). To this end, the GCIM report (2005) calls for continued efforts to ensure the portability of pensions, ensuring return migrants have the ability to access resources needed for both consumption and investment. This type of policy seems primarily aimed at returning retirees; however it can be argued that retirees bring valuable savings and knowledge back with them, benefiting the broader community.

Although return migration has been identified as a vehicle for the economic, social and political development of origin countries it can also be seen as a convenient way for destination countries to control or reduce migrant populations, especially if those countries have low receptivity towards immigrants. Van Houte and Davids (2008) and Munck (2008) have pointed out that European policy makers have been quick to adopt return policies, encouraging return and holding the measures up as a form of development cooperation. This appears to be less a form of development cooperation and more a form of migration control on the part of European countries however, as little is known about the true impacts of return migration on development (Conway & Potter, 2009; Potter et al., 2005; Van Houte & Davids, 2008).

There is also a danger in assuming that the human, financial and social outcomes origin countries gain from returning migrants is 'right' or 'good' (Castles & Miller, 2009). Gmelch (2004, p. 223) has stated that "in the Caribbean context 'development' means becoming Western". This can be seen to be perpetuating the view that developed countries possess the appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours, which must be transferred from the developed to the developing world in order for those countries to develop (Briggs & Sharp, 2004; Chand, 2004; McEwan, 2009). As McEwan (2001) states,

this transfer can reinforce the belief that the West is 'advanced' and the developing world is 'backwards'. This view reflects an approach to development that assumes that Western knowledge, skills and values are superior to those of indigenous people. From this perspective indigenous knowledge, skills and values are seen as obstacles to development (Brohman, 1995; McEwan, 2009). However more recent alternative development approaches, such as bottom-up and participatory development instead see indigenous knowledge, skills and values as a valid body of knowledge (Briggs, 2008) and thus an important facet of community-led development approaches.

### **Development outcomes of return migration**

The transfer of skills and knowledge by returning migrants has been identified by some as having the potential to contribute to the social and economic development outcomes of migrants, their families, and communities (Ammassari & Black, 2001; Basok, 2003; Chand, 2004; De Haas, 2005; Dos Santos & Postel-Vinay, 2003). Advocating for a complementary approach to the transfer of skills and knowledge to developing countries, Gegeo (1998, p. 291) asserts that development, particularly at the rural level, involves learning, modifying and adapting introduced knowledge and skills into the local context.

Lucas (2005) reports mixed results in studies on whether skills, knowledge and experience gained overseas can enhance earnings and therefore contribute to development. For example, the experiences of Filipino migrant workers appear to have made little difference to their earning potential on return, while on the other hand, Albanian return migrants earn more than non-migrants on their return (Lucas, 2005). In comparison with non-migrants in the country of origin, return migrants are often better educated, reflecting the skills and experience migrants gain overseas (OECD, 2008). However, this is also a reflection of initial migration patterns, where studies show that although international migrants vary in socioeconomic backgrounds, they are less likely to come from poorer rural communities that lack access to education and employment opportunities (Segal, Elliot, & Mayadas, 2010). Return migrants are also considered to be more productive members of society, compared to those individuals who lack international work experience (Massey et al., 1998). In terms of development this may benefit individuals and their families, but could lead to greater inequalities at the community and country levels.

As discussed, there is debate on the value of knowledge and skills gained by migrants overseas, with some scholars asserting that migrants working in low-skilled jobs gain few skills, while migrants working in highly skilled jobs acquire skills but find it difficult to take advantage of those skills upon their return, due to internal constraints (Ammassari & Black, 2001). Further barriers can include social constraints, although as outlined, migrants' enhanced social capital has been identified as having the potential to mitigate these challenges.

Studies that have focused on social capital have investigated the extent of return migrants' participation in networks, and the multiplier effects that result from such participation (Ammassari & Black, 2001). Whereas the development outcomes of increased social capital among return migrants is difficult to quantify, social capital has the potential to support return migrants' goals and ambitions with regards to their use of human and financial capital. Return migrants can also contribute economically to their home country through savings brought back on their return. A number of return-migrants will use savings to establish businesses or arrange independent employment on their return, as shown in several studies (OECD, 2008).

Black et al. (2003) focusing on small enterprise development among returnees to Ghana, found evidence to support the notion that migration, return, and small business development can represent a strategy for poverty alleviation among poor and low-skilled return migrants. Basok (2003), studying Mexican seasonal migration to Canada found that participants invested in agricultural land and established small businesses on their return to Mexico, showing clear development outcomes. Although less likely to establish small businesses on their return, Zhao (2002) found that return migrants to rural Chinese areas were more likely to invest in farm machinery, improving labour productivity. Return migrant families were also found to own a higher number of household assets than migrant and non-migrant families.

Although these examples show the positive impacts of return migrants on their home communities there is debate on the role and importance of migrants' savings transfers. While some academics hold the view that migrants' savings have positive implications for migrants, their families and their countries, others have argued that the impacts of savings

are insignificant, and can increase inflationary pressure (Ammassari & Black, 2001). The amount of money that can be saved and transferred home upon return obviously also depends on the migrant's type of job, income level, duration of employment while overseas, as well as subsistence costs, such as food and transport, involved in living abroad.

### **Section conclusion**

As this section has discussed, the developmental potential of return migration is dependent on a number of factors. The success of a migrant's return can depend upon the level of support received at the government, non-government, and community level. Governmental support can assist returning migrants to reintegrate more successfully, for example by providing opportunities for productive investment. Non-governmental organisations can also assist returning migrants, providing both social and economic support on their return. As discussed, challenging social dynamics within home communities can present barriers to successful reintegration; therefore community support of returning migrants is essential if developmental benefits are to be realised. The key to achieving developmental benefits through return migration ultimately rests with returning migrants. By utilising the savings, skills and knowledge gained through living and working abroad, in conjunction with support from the government, non-governmental sector, and local community, return migrants have the potential to bring both social and economic benefits to their families and communities, at the grassroots level.

This thesis argues that TMPs are one way in which international migrants can take advantage of overseas employment opportunities, enabling them to gain new skills and knowledge, to remit money home while overseas, and transfer savings upon their return. These issues will be discussed in the following section. Migrants participating in TMPs circulate between their home and host country, and it is in their return home, with savings, skills and knowledge, that the potential for social and economic development lies.

## **Temporary Migration Programmes – Opportunities and Costs**

Temporary migration programmes, as the name suggests, aim to add workers to a country's labour pool on a temporary basis, without the workers becoming permanent migrants (Martin, 2003; Martin, Abella, & Kuptsch, 2006). Through initiatives known variously as guest worker schemes, seasonal worker programmes and seasonal agricultural worker programmes, these schemes are becoming an important feature of modern trends in international migration (OECD, 2008). An emphasis of these temporary programmes is the circular nature of the movement of migrants, where migrants are expected to work for an agreed period of time in the host country and then return to their countries of origin (Martin, 2003).

Contemporary guest worker programmes trace their origins to the large-scale European schemes of the 1950s and 1960s, when hundreds of thousands of migrant workers were recruited to work in sectors such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing (Martin et al., 2006). However, these schemes were largely perceived to have failed, particularly from the receiving countries' points of view, due to factors including: migrants and their families becoming dependent on foreign jobs; overstaying; a large number of the migrants becoming permanent settlers; distortion of the local economy in the receiving countries; and strains on receiving countries' social welfare systems (Castles, 2006; Martin, 2003). These apparent failures resulted in a virtual halt to the recruitment of foreign workers in 1973-4 (Castles, 2006). It was not until the 1990s that guest worker schemes began to re-emerge, largely due to demographic factors and labour shortages in destination countries (Martin et al., 2006). As well as those factors, a greater understanding of the role migration can potentially play in development, particularly through remittance transfers has emerged (Goldin & Reinert, 2007), and more recently guest worker programmes have been seen as a means of supporting the foreign policies of governments (Ramasamy et al., 2008). As mentioned, it is widely believed that migrant workers gain valuable skills, knowledge, and experience abroad which can be used to further their developmental aspirations on their return home (Bedford et al., 2009; GCIM, 2005; United Nations, 2006). According to the IOM, however, much empirical evidence does not support the extension of this optimistic vision to temporary migrant workers, stating that the majority of migrant workers employed in TMPs do not learn any new skills because "they only [do] unskilled work" (Amassari & Black, 2001, p. 27). This dismissal of 'unskilled' work as

providing no useful skills appears somewhat unjustified, as it is evident from many studies that workers are in fact gaining valuable skills and knowledge from their experiences living and working overseas (Agunias, 2006, p. 43; Bedford et al., 2009).

The OECD (2008, p. 18) has identified three reasons for the re-emergence of temporary migration programmes: i) highly skilled migrants are seen as a response to concerns regarding the ‘brain drain’, with their circulation between origin and destination countries having beneficial effects; ii) a greater understanding of the scale and scope of remittance flows, and how these flows can benefit origin countries; and, iii) the fact that low-skilled migration suffers from a bad image in many destination countries, with temporary migration of low-skilled workers being seen as preferable to permanent migration.

Along with the resurgence in interest in temporary migration programmes, there has been a corresponding argument that such schemes are “both unfeasible and undesirable in a liberal democracy” (Ruhs, 2005, p. 1). Ruhs holds the view that the majority of academic studies and policy discussions on migration and development do not acknowledge the importance of migrant rights (Ruhs, 2009). Ruhs further states that there may be “a trade-off between the number and some of the rights of low-skilled migrants admitted to high-income countries” (Ruhs, 2009, p. 2). Stephen Castles (2006, p. 742) further argues that a restriction on migrant workers’ rights may lead to negative social outcomes in both receiving and sending countries. A recent NGO committee on migration agrees with Ruhs and Castles, and goes further, stating that the increasing reliance of developing countries on temporary migration programmes to meet labour market needs is a “disturbing trend” (NGO Committee on Migration, 2008, p. 4).

From this perspective, TMPs are seen as perpetuating the dominance of more powerful developed countries over the comparatively less powerful developing countries. It is believed that the majority of benefits that come from participation in such schemes are distributed unequally, with the developed country reaping the majority of the gains in the form of ensuring the productivity of their industries. With many of these industries geared towards the exportation of primary goods, TMPs can be seen as supporting the macroeconomic development of the developed country as a whole by providing a reliable labour force and hence greater productivity. With migrant workers often ‘tied’ to individual employers, TMPs are considered a restrictive migration policy, in that migrants

are restricted in their freedom of movement within the labour market, and hence their earning potential is largely dependent on their employer (Martin, 2009). With one of the primary aims of current approaches to development being the empowerment of people at the grassroots level, often recognised as the poor and marginalised (Parpart, 2008), it would seem that the dependence of low-skilled workers on employers in TMPs is contrary to an empowerment approach to development. However, this is not to say that migrant workers are powerless; the skills, knowledge, experience and financial capital workers may gain from participation in TMPs can lead to their empowerment, both in the receiving country and within their home country and community. Furthermore, migrants possess skills and knowledge from their own cultural experiences and backgrounds, which they can also bring to their migration experience, easing their transition into the receiving country (Levitt, 1998).

Although TMPs can be considered a restrictive migration policy, Ruhs (2005) points out that migrant workers from low-income countries, which may lack sufficient opportunities for economic and social development, are likely to accept some form of restrictions on their rights, in order to gain and maintain access to a high-income country's labour market. These restrictions on workers' rights do not mean that migrants will necessarily be exploited, however, as there are strong calls for temporary migrant workers' rights to be protected (ILO, 2007). Moreover, as discussed by Faist (2008), restrictive migration policies may in actual fact be conducive to financial remittances being transferred home by migrant workers. This is due to the perception that temporary migrants remit a greater percentage of their earnings than permanent migrants (Faist, 2008; Portes, 2007).

Nonetheless, certain restrictions on migrant workers' rights can be seen as necessary to ensure the ongoing success of a TMP. For example, it can be argued that the restriction on movement within the receiving country's labour market is necessary to ensure that migrant workers remain in targeted industries, and do not transfer across industries. Ruhs (2005), a staunch advocate for protecting the rights of migrant workers, supports this view, although calls for an easing of restrictions on workers' movement within targeted industries. The protection of migrant workers' rights, including the right to pay parity with local workers, access to healthcare providers, and the protection of legal rights, is widely seen as a pre-requisite of a successful TMP (GCIM, 2005; ILO, 2007; NGO Committee on Migration, 2008).

Therefore, due to migrants' rights issues and the past failures of Europe's Guest Worker schemes, as outlined previously, there is agreement that contemporary programmes must minimise the potential for failure (Martin, 2003). Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (SAWP), for example, is considered by many to be a blueprint for successful guest worker schemes (Millbank, 2006; World Bank, 2006). Established in 1966, the SAWP brings workers from the Caribbean and Mexico to work in Canada's agricultural industry and employed 15,979 workers in 2001 (Bauder, 2006). The success of the scheme can be seen in the fact that virtually all SAWP participants return home, and the rate of repetitive participation in the scheme is high (Newland et al., 2008). Studies have also shown that positive development outcomes are occurring through participation in the scheme; as mentioned, Basok (2003) found that Mexican workers who participated in the scheme were able to purchase land and invest in small enterprises in their home communities upon their return.

However, there have been some negative outcomes associated with the SAWP: in 2001 around one hundred Mexican workers protested against poor living and working conditions, including safety concerns, overcrowded accommodation, and long hours (Bauder, 2006). After this incident, concerns were raised over the dehumanising consequences of participation in the work scheme, with one worker quoted as saying "[w]hat I've realised here in Canada is that employers don't hire us as human beings. They think we're animals...The first threat that they always make is that if you don't like it, you can go back to Mexico" (Bauder, 2006, p. 163).

The threat to send workers home demonstrates that employers have great power over workers, and given that the supply of low-skilled workers far outweighs the demand, migrant workers can potentially be vulnerable to exploitation during their employment period (IOM, 2008b). As discussed earlier, this can mean that workers are dependent on their employers and will accept restrictions on their rights. Hau'ofa (1993, p. 3) sees this relationship, which is one of employer dominance over employee, as being somewhat self-perpetuating, stating:

The views held by those in dominant positions about their subordinates could have significant consequences on people's self-image and on the

ways that they cope with their situations. Such views, which are often derogatory and belittling, are integral to most relationships of dominance and subordination, wherein superiors behave in ways or say things that are accepted by their inferiors who, in turn, behave in ways that serve to perpetuate the relationships.

McEwan (2009, p. 162) further argues that Western media and development organisations have distorted the view of the developing world, painting it as a world of poverty and insecurity. McEwan goes on to state that these views are internalised by citizens of developing countries, who come to see themselves as impoverished, and in need of assistance. There is a need to address these issues of power imbalance, as there is a risk that the failures of past TMPs, namely that workers become dependent on foreign employers, will be repeated.

As such, advocates of contemporary temporary work programmes acknowledge the past failures of such schemes, and recognise that issues such as the aforementioned protests can occur even in so-called 'best practice' schemes. Proponents argue that through innovative policy design temporary guest worker programmes can be utilised to deliver benefits to migrant workers, their countries of origin, and the countries in which they are employed (Martin, 2003). New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme, which will be discussed next, is one such programme that is aiming to achieve these goals.

### **New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme**

The New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme brings temporary migrant workers from Pacific Island and South East Asian countries to work in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries. The scheme has been evaluated from its inception, with academics and policy makers viewing it as a valuable and unique programme (Newland et al., 2008). Introduced in April 2007, the scheme has been presented as a win-win initiative (Gibson, McKenzie, & Rohorua, 2008; Ramasamy et al., 2008), enabling Pacific Island countries to address excess labour issues, while at the same time filling gaps in the New Zealand labour pool. The New Zealand government chose five 'kick-start' states to participate in the scheme: Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati and

Tuvalu (MacLellan, 2008). These states have received New Zealand government assistance in recruiting workers and setting up the scheme (Gibson et al., 2008).

Recognised seasonal employers must meet certain obligations in order to be eligible for the scheme. The employers are required to: have human resource policies and practices of a high standard; have attempted to recruit and train New Zealand workers prior to recruiting overseas workers; pay market rate to their employees; meet the pastoral care needs of their employees; supply a minimum of 240 hours of work; and, pay half of the employee's airfare (Department of Labour, 2010; Immigration New Zealand, 2009). RSE workers must meet health and character requirements, pay half of their airfare to New Zealand, and be at least eighteen years of age (Department of Labour, 2009b). Under the scheme, 8000 workers are eligible to enter New Zealand each year<sup>1</sup>, and are able to stay for a period of up to seven months (Department of Labour, 2010). While in New Zealand, workers are required to remain with their original RSE employer, although the RSE employer can decide to transfer workers to other accredited RSE employers (Department of Labour, 2010). Therefore, although the New Zealand government has allowed workers some degree of mobility within the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries, the fact that the decision to transfer employers is ultimately made by the employers, and not the workers, means that workers remain dependent on employers, and are open to exploitative employer-employee relationships. In this regard the New Zealand government has gone some way towards lifting restrictions on workers' mobility within the New Zealand labour market, although it is apparent that this initiative does not meet Ruhs' (2005) expectation for easing restrictions on migrant worker mobility within the domestic industries in which they are employed, in that workers still remain powerless to initiate movement between employers.

Although these restrictions on worker mobility open up the potential for dependent relationships to develop between migrant workers and RSE employers while in New Zealand, the New Zealand government's publicly stated intentions for the RSE scheme are naturally positive. The RSE scheme was designed to contribute to New Zealand's foreign policy in the Pacific (Ramasamy et al., 2008), with the (then) Foreign Minister, Winston Peters stated during the that "first and foremost [the RSE scheme] will help alleviate

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<sup>1</sup> The RSE scheme was capped at 8000 workers in the 2008/09 season, but is subject to change in future seasons.

poverty directly by providing jobs for rural and outer island workers who often lack income-generating work. The earnings they send home will support families, help pay for education and health, and sometimes provide capital for those wanting to start a small business” (Gibson et al., 2008, p. 187).

From a cynical viewpoint, the New Zealand government may have ulterior motives in introducing the RSE scheme; in alleviating poverty and providing employment opportunities for people who lack similar access to formal employment opportunities in their home countries, the RSE scheme can also be seen as a way of alleviating security concerns in the Pacific (Chand, 2004). These security concerns may include unrest in the participating countries, as well as potential illegal flows of migrants in the future (Stahl & Appleyard, 2007).

Nevertheless, Temporary Migration Programmes, such as the RSE scheme, have been endorsed by a number of development actors, including the World Bank, who suggest that the pro-poor nature of such schemes, targeted at low-skilled rural workers, allow migration opportunities to be “extended beyond the skilled and elite to the poor and unskilled who are unlikely to find such opportunities domestically” (World Bank, 2006, p. ix). As outlined in the first section of this chapter, temporary migrant workers circulating between their country of origin and country of destination are perceived to remit a greater percentage of their earnings back to their home country, primarily because they expect to return to their country of origin, and because they hold strong economic, cultural and social ties to that country, and in particular to their home communities and family. Thus the pro-poor nature of the RSE scheme appears to reflect a more alternative model of development, in which the benefits of participation, including the acquisition of human, social and financial capital, are transferred directly to rural communities, presenting opportunities for bottom-up development initiatives. However, the pro-poor nature of the RSE scheme may be counteracted somewhat if workers are trapped in dependent or exploitative relationships with employers, in which case the benefits of participation are off-set by the restrictions on migrant workers’ rights while in New Zealand. Nonetheless, as discussed earlier, Ruhs (2005) points out that temporary migrant workers may accept some restrictions on their rights in order to gain the financial benefits that may result from participation in a TMP.

Although involving some restrictions on workers' rights, the RSE scheme has been labelled a success by the New Zealand government, Pacific Island leaders, and the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries (Connell & Hammond, 2009; Department of Labour, 2009b, 2010; Maclellan, 2008). Pacific Island officials are pleased with the economic and social success of the scheme so far, with one official stating: "It's made a difference to people's lives. You can see tangible things, like buildings going up for young families" (as cited in Maclellan, 2008, p. 2). Industry leaders in New Zealand are also satisfied with the outcomes of the scheme: "For the first time the fruit was picked on time across all the industries, and the grapes were pruned on time at the right time. That is an unbelievable achievement" (Department of Labour, 2009b, p. 8). Obviously there are benefits for the New Zealand economy too, as can be seen in the fact that RSE workers are not only improving the productivity of the horticulture and viticulture industries (Department of Labour, 2009b), but are also purchasing products locally, supporting local economies. This productivity is mainly due to the fact that workers returning in their second and third seasons bring industry knowledge, skills and experience back with them (Department of Labour, 2010), and as Roorda and Nunns (2009) have demonstrated, return workers are an integral part of the RSE scheme and contribute towards its success. One of the real positives of the RSE scheme is the fact that most Pacific states give priority to poorer members of their communities, and those living in rural areas (Department of Labour, 2009b), meaning that the pro-poor, bottom-up focus the New Zealand government was aiming for is succeeding. However, Bailey (2009) found that in order for workers to succeed in the RSE scheme they essentially had to sacrifice certain rights, and these constraints led to the workers being what Bailey referred to as an 'unfree' labour source (Bailey, 2009). Bailey found that the overall success of the RSE scheme was largely dependent on the constraints on worker freedom; this is backed up by Ruhs' findings (2005), who argues that participation in temporary worker programmes inevitably involves a trade off between migrants' individual rights and economic gains.

From the five 'kick-start' states, Kiribati and Tuvalu have experienced limited benefits from participation in the RSE scheme (Department of Labour, 2010). Workers from Vanuatu, Tonga, and Samoa, on the other hand, have experienced a number of financial and social benefits (Department of Labour, 2010; Maclellan, 2008; McKenzie & Gibson, 2010). In terms of financial outcomes, workers' savings were used to pay for school fees, renovate or build new homes, purchase land, buy vehicles and start or expand business

ventures (Department of Labour, 2009b). Workers also reported gaining new skills, such as improved time management, improved English, and better financial management skills (Department of Labour, 2010) which may be transferred on their return.

While there have been positive social and economic outcomes, studies have shown there are concerns regarding aspects of the scheme. These include: a lack of engagement with unions, the community sector and Pacific diaspora communities; a need for an increased awareness and provision of pastoral care for seasonal RSE workers; and a need to link the RSE scheme to broader development objectives, maximising the effectiveness of remittance transfers into Pacific communities and rural villages (Maclellan, 2008). In the Pacific, there has also been evidence of a deterioration in social cohesion among communities who have sent migrants (Department of Labour, 2010). This could be due to the loss of those members of the community who are fit and strong; have children or other dependents; or who hold positions of power within communities. Additionally, Connell and Hammond (2009, p. 93) warn that “equity might be less well served in future if the same workers return repeatedly in subsequent years”, demonstrating that while workers returning on repeat contracts bring benefits, there are also drawbacks from a development perspective. As the Department of Labour (2010, p. 47) points out, “the opportunities for new workers to come to New Zealand are lessening. Employers’ first choice is for return workers who are trained and familiar with New Zealand life”. Employers quoted in Martin (2009, p. 69) support the Department of Labour’s findings, stating that because the majority of RSE migrants have no experience in the horticulture and viticulture industries employers must invest in training. Therefore, in order to justify these expenses, eighty per cent of the workers must return year after year.

Within New Zealand there have been some teething problems with the RSE scheme, particularly in the area of pastoral care, considered to be the weakest component of the scheme (Maclellan, 2008). However, the recent Department of Labour evaluation report of the RSE scheme has found that pastoral care arrangements are improving, due to new measures introduced such as contracting New Zealand-based Pacific people or returning RSE workers to provide pastoral care to workers (Department of Labour, 2010).

A further issue was the amount of money the workers were able to save and send home as remittances, although with 143 accredited Recognised Seasonal Employers in 2009

(Department of Labour, 2010, p. 60) representing a number of diverse job types in different parts of the country, there are bound to have been individual successes and failures. Some workers were more successful than others, with the average net return per worker between September 2007 and July 2008 ranging from \$1,704 to \$16,413 (Department of Labour, 2010, p. xi). This wide range could be due to the uncertain nature of the horticulture and viticulture industries, which are seasonal by nature and affected by weather. Furthermore, workers' earnings are dependent on the length of time spent in New Zealand, with longer contracts potentially resulting in higher net returns to workers, and shorter contracts potentially resulting in correspondingly lower net returns. This is due to the fact that workers on longer contracts (such as 6 or 7 months) are usually able to pay off loans within the first couple of months (Department of Labour, 2010), and then begin saving, while workers on shorter contracts (such as 3 months) do not have the same opportunity to save, as once they have paid off initial loans they may only have a further month in which to save for their return. Workers are also dependent on the amount of work provided to them by their employers while in New Zealand. The minimum number of hours employers are legally required to provide to RSE workers under the RSE policy appears low, at 240 hours over a six week period, although the Department of Labour (2010, p. xi) reports that the average number of hours worked by RSE workers during the first season was in fact close to 660 hours. The minimum number of hours (240) employers are required to provide to workers may mean that RSE workers do not have sufficient opportunity to repay loans and compile savings. On the other hand, if workers are able to work for 660 hours or longer, this would be equivalent to around sixteen weeks of work, at 40 hours per week, and would present much greater saving opportunities. In this regard, Ruhs (2005) and Agunias (2006) have stated that the minimum contract length of workers participating in TMPs such as the New Zealand RSE scheme should be increased to allow for greater saving opportunities, and by inference, the minimum number of hours employers are required to provide should also be increased correspondingly.

One further issue that has been raised is the fact that many RSE workers come from South East Asia (Maclellan, 2008), with workers from non kick-start countries making up 27% of RSE workers in the 2008/2009 season (Department of Labour, 2010). Some consider this to be against the initial focus of the RSE scheme which aimed to give priority to Pacific people.

## **Section conclusion**

As has been discussed in this chapter section, temporary migration programmes have become an increasingly important aspect of contemporary migration flows, allowing for the circular movement of migrants between home and host countries. With a recognition of the failures of past TMPs, there is now widespread agreement that present-day TMPs must reduce the possibilities for failure. Although migrants participating in TMPs are generally restricted in their movement within the receiving country's labour market, advocates of temporary migration programmes argue that such schemes can deliver a 'triple win'. The 'triple win' aspirations of New Zealand's RSE scheme considers the benefits for the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries, the benefits for countries participating in the scheme, as well as the benefits for participating workers. In particular the return of RSE participants to their home communities can bring both economic and social developmental advancement, as has been discussed in the literature. Clearly, temporary migration programmes, such as New Zealand's RSE scheme have the potential to have profound impacts on the social and economic development of the home countries, communities and families of international migrants.

## **Chapter Summary**

This literature review, focusing on international circular labour migration, the return of migrants to their countries of origin, and temporary migration programmes has shown that international migrants are increasingly maintaining social and economic ties in more than one country. Circular labour migration has been viewed as an important element of overall economic development in countries of origin, and return migration is also emerging in the literature as a significant factor in enhancing social, human, and economic development in countries of origin. Facilitating circular migration, temporary migration programmes such as the New Zealand RSE scheme are becoming increasingly common, and aim to achieve a 'triple win'.

Circular migration is a complex, changing, and challenging facet of international migration, with far-reaching consequences for countries of origin and destination, as well as for migrants themselves. The increased fluidity of movement among migrants between

countries of origin and destination opens up the potential for returning migrants to enable social, human, and economic development in their countries of origin (OECD, 2008; United Nations, 2007; World Bank, 2006), particularly at the grassroots level. However there is disagreement over the exact extent of development outcomes (Van Houte & Davids, 2008) and according to the IOM (2005) the role of returning migrants in facilitating development in their countries of origin remains inadequately researched.

What does seem to be universally acknowledged is that the specific social, political and economic circumstances in both countries of origin and countries of destination, as well as the social and economic circumstances of migrants, determine the extent to which circular migration can contribute to development. Furthermore, even though TMPs have been identified as having the potential to deliver benefits for both migrant sending and receiving countries, there is widespread agreement that contemporary schemes must acknowledge the failures of past schemes, and work towards addressing those potential issues. It is with these points in mind that governments, policy makers, CSOs, NGOs, industry representatives and migrants themselves must work together to take advantage of the unique developmental opportunities circular migration in general, and TMPs in particular, present to migrant sending and receiving countries.

While this chapter has broadly examined labour migration and its impacts on social and economic development, the following chapter in this thesis will move on to examine migration in the Pacific region, and describe the economic, cultural and historical position of Vanuatu within the context of the dynamics of Pacific migratory flows.

## **Chapter Three - Migration in the Pacific: Vanuatu and New Zealand**

### **Introduction**

As discussed in the previous chapter, contemporary migration flows are characterised by migrants' increased mobility, as links across national boundaries become stronger, incorporating information, communication and transport networks (Willis, 2008), all of which can ease the migration process for circular labour migrants. In addition, countries that require labour are increasingly allowing the entry of both skilled and low-skilled workers to meet specific shortages (Iredale, Hawksley, et al., 2003). As outlined, the New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme provides low-skilled migrant workers with the opportunity to enter New Zealand's labour market on a temporary basis, opening up the potential for the circular migration of Pacific people to benefit both their country of origin and New Zealand at the macro level, as well as individuals, their families and communities at the grassroots level.

The benefits at the grassroots level, including economic and social gains, are a central focus of this thesis: specifically; examining the skills ni-Vanuatu RSE workers gain through participating in New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme; establishing how the workers utilise those skills to improve social development upon their return to Vanuatu; and the positive impacts experienced workers have on the RSE scheme. Before coming to these points, however, it is necessary to begin with a general overview of migration and development in the context of the Pacific, with specific emphasis on New Zealand's migration history, including the close contemporary links that have developed between New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. These connections have played a part in the establishment of the RSE scheme, as New Zealand's development policies increasingly involve facilitating the access of poor and marginalised Pacific workers to the New Zealand labour market. To this end, this chapter will begin by briefly examining Pacific migration; specifically its historical and contemporary flows. An overview of migration in New Zealand will follow, focusing on the important role that migration, and immigration in particular, has played in shaping New Zealand into the country as it stands today. More specifically related to the RSE scheme, New Zealand's horticultural and viticultural

industries, which play a vital role in the nation's economy, will then be introduced. An overview of the industries will be provided, linking the need to address industry labour shortages to the establishment of the RSE scheme. Finally an outline of Vanuatu's history, culture, and geography will be presented, along with a summary of Vanuatu's emerging economy. The chapter will conclude by examining Vanuatu's experience of the RSE scheme, as described in the literature, specifically looking at outcomes for the RSE participants, as well as their families and communities, outlining the positive and negative outcomes of their involvement in the New Zealand RSE scheme.

### **The Pacific – A Dynamic Migratory Space**

The Pacific region is a dynamic migratory space, with Connell (2003, p. 55) stating that “the life courses of island people ... are increasingly embedded in international ties”. The Pacific's island states are marked by relatively low population levels and population densities, reflecting the small land area, scarcity of water resources and unproductive soils that characterise the region's individual islands, which number over 10,000 (IOM, 2005, p. 129). The total population of the Pacific region is around 34 million, of which 5 million are international migrants; the highest proportion of migrants to non-migrants globally (IOM, 2008b, p. 481; Martin & Zurcher, 2008). The Pacific is divided into three island sub-regions: Melanesia, with a population of 8 million people; Micronesia, home to just half a million people; and Polynesia, with a population of around 650,000 (Bedford, 2008, p. 3). Australia and New Zealand have populations of 21 million and 4 million respectively, and are considered the only ‘developed’ countries in the region. According to Connell (2006, p. 61), until relatively recently there was a belief that poverty did not exist within the Pacific, due to the nature of Pacific island societies which involved extended families acting as ‘safety nets’ for people in economic difficulty. These ‘safety nets’ are starting to break down however, and while there is not really any absolute poverty in the Pacific there are households that do not have adequate access to water, sanitation, health services or basic education (Connell, 2006).

The limited access to education and health services have been cited as drivers of migration in the region (Connell, 2003, 2006), and it is likely that predicted climate change impacts and demographic changes will affect migration patterns and the scale of movement in the

future (IOM, 2005). Furthermore, Connell points to the wide disparities in economic development between vulnerable Pacific Island states and wealthy countries such as the United States, Australia, and New Zealand as a further factor leading to migration in the region (Connell, 2003, 2006). While some may see the migration of Pacific people as largely being a modern phenomenon, this is not the case, with Pacific peoples having a long migratory history.

Bedford et al. (2009, p. 18) state that the movement of Pacific people within and between islands was part of the rhythm of indigenous societies, which involved historically circular patterns of migration. Alefaio (2008) in the Polynesian context, states that the journeys of modern Pacific people reflect an historical migratory past. Lilomaiava-Doktor (2009, p. 2) reports that, while the conventional academic view of migration may imply a severance of ties with the home community, in the Samoan context such movement is quite different, with the Samoan concept *malaga* or 'movement' implying circulation back and forth. Narokobi (1983, p. 6) points to the intricate trade links that connected the islands of Melanesia long before the arrival of Westerners, demonstrating that Melanesian people have always been mobile. In this sense, the Pacific Ocean provided not a barrier to mobility, but a means in which to move between islands in the region for trade, and marriage, which expanded the social networks of Pacific people (Hau'ofa, 1993), in effect creating a 'sea of islands', a "world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled unhindered by boundaries" (Hau'ofa, 1993, p. 8).

In describing the Pacific region as a 'sea of islands', Hau'ofa challenges the Western-held view of the Pacific region as being tiny areas of land separated by large expanses of ocean. Indeed, Hau'ofa uses the term 'Oceania' to describe the Pacific region, symbolising the importance of the Pacific Ocean for people of the Pacific (Hau'ofa, 1993).

As outlined above, mobility has historically been part of the Pacific way of life, although contemporary migration in the Pacific region increasingly includes internal movement from rural areas to coastal regions and urban centres (Connell, 2003; Maclellan & Mares, 2006). The resulting reduction in service delivery to rural areas encourages further migration to central urban zones, perpetuating the concentration of populations in urban areas (Connell, 2003). Connell labels these internal migratory movements as "the forerunner of international migration" (Connell, 2003, p. 56). The primary international

destinations for contemporary Pacific migrants include the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand. New Zealand in particular has a large Pacific population and has close links with the Pacific region, as will be discussed later in this chapter. New Zealand and Australia are considered to be the primary migration centres of the Pacific region, for visitors, international students, and temporary and permanent labour migrants (Bedford, 2008; IOM, 2005).

This international migration from Pacific states has affected population levels for some countries. Although all three sub-regions have high birth rates, Polynesia is actually experiencing negligible population growth, partly due to a high level of out-migration to countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America. Melanesia and Micronesia on the other hand, apart from some exceptions (Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands) are not experiencing the same levels of out-migration (Bedford, 2008). This out-migration is seen as lessening the negative impacts of high population growth, including limited domestic employment opportunities, and consequent security issues, particularly in Melanesia.

Although opportunities exist for Pacific migrants to enter New Zealand and Australia, (as will be discussed in further detail within this chapter), there are still calls for New Zealand and Australia to further open up opportunities for Pacific Island people to access the labour markets of both countries. At a gathering of Pacific leaders, at the 2004 Auckland-hosted Pacific Islands Forum meeting, the following Vision was adopted to assist the Forum in guiding regional actions and policies:

Leaders believe the Pacific region can, should and will be a region of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity, so that all its people can lead free and worthwhile lives. We treasure the diversity of the Pacific and seek a future in which its cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed. We seek a Pacific region that is respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources, and the full observance of democratic values, and for its defence and promotion of human rights. We seek partnerships with our neighbours and beyond to develop our knowledge, to improve our communications and to ensure a sustainable

economic existence for all (Chan et al., 2004, p. 8, as cited in Bedford, 2008, p. 6).

This Vision statement demonstrates, particularly in the last sentence, that Pacific Island governments are determined to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in partnership with other nations in the Pacific region to build knowledge and skills, increase social and communication linkages, and ultimately promote economic and social development. The Pacific region has been a source of immigration to New Zealand for many years, and provides an important market for New Zealand's goods and services (Ramasamy et al., 2008) This relationship reflects the importance of the Pacific region as a whole to New Zealand socially and economically, particularly since the end of the Second World War (Bedford, Ho, & Lidgard, 2000; Stahl & Appleyard, 2007). Part of the emphasis on economic development involves the easing of access restrictions to the New Zealand and Australian labour markets, which many Pacific leaders believe will assist their countries' paths to social and economic growth (Bedford, 2008; Chand, 2004; Maclellan & Mares, 2006). This belief has provided some of the impetus behind calls for New Zealand and Australia to introduce temporary labour migration schemes. Perhaps as a result of these increased calls to open up their labour markets, New Zealand established the RSE scheme in 2007, and Australia implemented the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (PSWPS) in August 2008.

The following section will provide a more detailed examination of migration in New Zealand, with some mention of Australian migration policies relevant to this study also included.

## **New Zealand**

New Zealand is frequently referred to in the literature as a “country of immigration” (Bedford & Poot, 2010, p. 257), and defined by its immigration history: from the first Maori settlers around the 12<sup>th</sup> century; through to the arrival of Europeans in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; and the later arrivals of Polynesians and Asians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (King, 2003). Polynesia in particular has strong traditional and contemporary links with New Zealand – New Zealand's indigenous people, the Maori, originated from the Polynesian islands, and

New Zealand also had colonies in Polynesia during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a country formed and shaped by immigrants New Zealand's recent migration history has continued this historical trend.

### **Migration in New Zealand**

Bedford and Poot (2010) and Merwood (2008) summarise New Zealand's complex migration flows from the late 1970s through to the present day. Bedford and Poot describe three major periods in New Zealand immigration policy. The first period from the late 1970s until the late 1980s saw a shift from drawing migrants from traditional source countries to a more inclusive policy which did not show bias towards certain countries over others. The second period from the late 1980s through to the late 1990s saw the introduction of the National government's points-based migrant selection system, while the third period from the late 1990s through to the present day has seen the introduction of new migration policy initiatives. These measures include changes to family category policies and an increased focus on policies designed to meet New Zealand labour shortages. These policies have changed the dynamics of migrant flows into New Zealand (Bedford, 2004; Bedford & Poot, 2010; Merwood, 2008).

There were just under 1.3 million permanent and long-term arrivals to New Zealand from April 1, 1990 to March 31, 2008, demonstrating the scale of immigration to New Zealand (Bedford & Poot, 2010, p. 257). Permanent and long-term arrivals are considered to be people entering New Zealand for 12 months or more (Bedford & Poot, 2010). Department of Labour Statistics show that 86 per cent of permanent migrants had been in New Zealand before migrating, and over half had worked in New Zealand for a period of time (Department of Labour, 2009a, p. 16).

New Zealand is increasingly being referred to as a country of emigration as well as immigration, with around 1 million people leaving for 12 months or more between April 1, 1990 and March 31, 2008 (Bedford & Poot, 2010, p. 257). While the majority of people departing New Zealand will return, 63,400 people left New Zealand permanently in the 2009-2010 period (Statistics New Zealand, 2010a, p. 6). During the same period there

were 84,300 permanent arrivals to New Zealand, representing an overall net gain of 21,000 people (Statistics New Zealand, 2010a, p. 6).

While the immigration and emigration of permanent and long term migrants is high, these movements are low in comparison to the number of short-term and temporary arrivals to and departures from New Zealand (Bedford & Poot, 2010). Short term emigration from New Zealand includes the temporary emigration of citizens wishing to work overseas, as well as tourists. Short term immigration to New Zealand refers to the temporary migration of non-New Zealand citizens for employment purposes, as well as foreign students and international tourists (IOM, 2005). There are over 4.6 million arrivals and departures each year in New Zealand, the vast majority of them temporary movements (Bedford & Poot, 2010). Bedford and Poot (2010, p. 257) refer to New Zealand's net migration as "the tip of the iceberg", as the numbers of migrants come to more than the entire population of New Zealand.

New Zealand and Australia have generally provided opportunities for labour migrants to enter temporarily; New Zealand granted nearly 28,000 temporary work permits over the 2003-2004 period to fill identified labour shortages, while Australia also has a high intake of temporary labour migrants (IOM, 2005, p. 130). However these migrants are often considered skilled, as opposed to low-skilled. Both Australia and New Zealand are opening up opportunities for temporary residents to stay on a longer-term basis, with a view to granting permanent status through job opportunities (IOM, 2005). This situation does not, however, provide lower-skilled migrants with much opportunity to enter on a temporary basis, and while New Zealand has had a range of temporary work schemes since the 1970s targeting recruitment from the Pacific, the RSE scheme is seen as "the first significant attempt to develop an international migration policy that explicitly attempts to achieve the triple win for migrants, their countries of origin and the destination countries" (Ramasamy et al., 2008, p. 172). As discussed in the previous chapter, the RSE scheme is targeted at Pacific Island countries, reflecting the close historical and contemporary links that exist between the region and New Zealand.

### **Pacific migration to New Zealand**

In New Zealand, 7.2 per cent of the population (from New Zealand's total population of 4.18 million) is made up of people of Pacific Island decent, and this percentage is set to increase to almost 10 per cent by 2026 (Statistics New Zealand, 2010b, p. 5). These figures reflect the importance of New Zealand as a destination for migrants within the Pacific region, both in contemporary and future migration patterns. Although New Zealand has a large Pacific population, there are relatively few migrants of Melanesian decent, the majority being of Polynesian decent. This has had some implications for Vanuatu workers employed in the RSE scheme, as they have not had a New Zealand-based expatriate community that could support them during their stay in New Zealand.

While New Zealand does not have a large number of people of Melanesian descent, the country is home to a large transnational Polynesian population, and facilitates the access of Polynesians with a range of migration programmes (Bedford, 2008; Merwood, 2008). Part of the reason for the large Polynesian population is the fact that New Zealand has a particularly close relationship with Polynesia, largely due to its colonial-era links with the region. Due to these close connections, New Zealand offers the citizens of Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau special concessions regarding entry to New Zealand (Bedford, 2008; Bedford et al., 2000). People of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau have New Zealand citizenship, and as such are able to enter and exit New Zealand as they wish. Samoa has a long-standing arrangement in place with New Zealand, the Samoan Quota scheme, which allows 1100 Samoan nationals to enter the country each year, and become permanent residents. Citizens of Tonga, another Polynesian country, are also provided with opportunities to enter New Zealand through the Pacific Access Category (PAC).

The Pacific Access Category allows people from not only Polynesia, but also Micronesia and Melanesia, opportunities to enter New Zealand and become permanent residents (Stahl & Appleyard, 2007). Citizens of Fiji (Melanesia), Tonga and Tuvalu (Polynesia), and Kiribati (Micronesia) are eligible for the scheme, which can admit up to 250 people each year from Fiji and Tonga, and 75 people each year from Kiribati and Tuvalu (Stahl & Appleyard, 2007, p. 30). One of the important aspects of these schemes, from a development perspective, is the fact that the majority of people entering these schemes are considered low-skilled, in that they do not have the skills or qualifications needed for

entry under the skilled/business migrant category (Stahl & Appleyard, 2007). These people, as well as other Pacific migrants to New Zealand who gain New Zealand citizenship, are also eligible to enter and live in Australia without having to qualify under Australia's immigration programme, thanks to the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA) between Australia and New Zealand (Bedford, 2008). Accordingly, people who may have been denied the possibility of migrating abroad for employment on the basis of their skills are granted an opportunity to live and work overseas, and in doing so remit money and goods home to their families and communities in the Pacific. As discussed in the previous chapter, remittances, both financial and social, have the potential to contribute greatly to development.

For New Zealand, many of the policies encouraging temporary migration have been driven by labour shortages, including shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries, caused by rapid growth in those sectors and exacerbated by New Zealand's comparatively low unemployment rates (Connell & Hammond, 2009). The next section will discuss these issues in more detail.

### **New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries**

While New Zealand's seasonal labour demands were met in the past by students, casual workers, people in New Zealand under the Working Holiday scheme and the unemployed/underemployed, this pool of labour has been unable to meet demand since the early 2000s, constraining growth (Ramasamy et al., 2008; Spoonley & Bedford, 2008). The Labour Government began introducing temporary policies from 2004 to allow employers to recruit workers on seasonal permits, seen as a temporary measure to address labour shortfalls, before the establishment of New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme in 2007 (Ramasamy et al., 2008).

RSE workers primarily work in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries, employed in such jobs as: apple pruning, thinning and harvesting; kiwifruit pruning and harvesting; grape pruning and harvesting; and various pack house tasks including grading and packing. Many of these jobs are paid on a 'contract rate' or 'piece rate', which means that workers are paid according to the volume of work they do, as opposed to an hourly

rate. For example, vineyard workers may be paid per vine pruned, or apple pickers paid per bin picked. New Zealand workers often choose not to participate in agricultural work, which is considered by many to be “too demanding, unpleasant, remote and poorly paid” (Connell & Hammond, 2009, p. 84). There is no doubt though that horticulture and viticulture are vital to New Zealand economically, and RSE workers are vital in filling gaps in the labour market.

New Zealand’s horticultural exports for 2008 totalled more than 2.9 billion dollars, which constituted 6.9 per cent of New Zealand’s total merchandise exports (Plant and Food Research, 2008, p. 1). This figure includes wine exports; in some publications the horticulture and viticulture industries are considered separate (Catley, Personal Correspondence 7/5/10). Overall the value of the horticulture and viticulture industries to New Zealand is 5.5 billion dollars, including domestic market sales (Plant and Food Research, 2008, p. 3), demonstrating the importance of the industry to the economy. This figure does not include the contribution to the domestic economy of the 50,000 people employed in New Zealand’s horticulture industry (Horticulture New Zealand, 2009b para. 1), or the 6000 people directly employed in the viticulture industry (Ballingall & Schilling, 2009, p. 7). Obviously the industries provide significant flow-on effects, with benefits to supporting industries also seen: it is estimated that the wine industry alone provides employment for more than 6000 people outside the industry in supporting roles (Ballingall & Schilling, 2009). The wine industry has also carved out a niche for itself in New Zealand’s tourism industry, attracting domestic and international visitors, further broadening positive impacts and flows into the wider economy (Ballingall & Schilling, 2009).

Horticultural work is by its nature seasonal and temporary. Of employment positions in New Zealand’s horticulture industry, 82 per cent are short term and last between one and nine months (Statistics New Zealand, 2009, p. 9). Two-thirds of those short-term jobs were held by casual workers living in New Zealand, with the remaining one-third of short-term jobs held by overseas workers in New Zealand, or New Zealand workers in a seasonal arrangement with the horticultural sub-industry (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). The table listed below (Figure 3.1) presents the seasonal demand for labour in New Zealand, showing demand for workers is highest from late summer through autumn, (February to May), peaking at almost 41,000 workers required in April. This time period



New Zealand labour force cannot meet. Consequently opportunities have arisen, through the RSE scheme, for Pacific countries, including Vanuatu, to access this labour market.

## **Vanuatu**

Vanuatu was chosen by the New Zealand government as one of the five ‘kick start’ countries in the RSE scheme, allowing it access to extra assistance from the New Zealand government in setting up the programme. A small Melanesian island nation of 241,400 people (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009 para. 1), Vanuatu is situated in the Pacific Ocean, northeast of Australia. It is made up of around 83 islands, which are characterised by mountain peaks, plateaus, as well as narrow coastal lowlands, tropical rainforests and some grasslands (Watters, 2008, p. 236). Vanuatu’s dramatic geography has undoubtedly led to the diversity of cultures and languages within the country; with over 100 different languages Vanuatu has the greatest density of language forms on earth (Watters, 2008).

### **History, culture and economy**

Vanuatu’s history, like that of many countries, is marked by the influences of Europeans. From the first European sailors in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Captain James Cook, who named the territory New Hebrides in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Vanuatu has constantly experienced European influence, including interaction with missionaries, black-birders, whalers, sandal wood traders and colonists (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010). In 1906 the territory was known as the ‘Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides’, reflecting the equal influence of both Britain and France as colonial powers. This mixed system was “cumbersome and divisive, and often frustrated development efforts” (Watters, 2008, p. 237). Calls for independence from Britain and France began after World War Two, and the New Hebrides became the Republic of Vanuatu on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1980 (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010).

With the granting of independence, Vanuatu looked to move forward positively as an independent country within the global community. Prospects for social and economic development seemed encouraging, and their leader, Prime Minister Father Walter Lini, stated at the time that “the future of Vanuatu is bright, and it is important that we should

be allowed to develop in the Melanesian way on our own. As a nation we must put our colonial past behind us and step confidently into a new future” (Lini, 1980, p. 63). Lini acknowledged the importance of external aid in supporting economic development in Vanuatu, however he stressed the need for ni-Vanuatu to make decisions on how that aid was utilised within the country (Lini, 1980). In this regard, God, Melanesian culture, and custom were seen to be most relevant to guiding and supporting Vanuatu social and economic development. As Lini (1980, p. 62) eloquently stated shortly after independence, “we are moving into a period of rapid change rather like a canoe entering a patch of rough water: God and custom must be the sail and the steering-paddle of our canoe”. Vanuatu culture and custom were thus seen as providing the direction for ni-Vanuatu in choosing what they wanted and did not want in their future (Institute of Pacific Studies, 1980). Despite the fact that Lini sought to preserve Vanuatu culture, he emphasised that to preserve it blindly and without reference to change would not benefit Vanuatu (Lini, 1980). In this sense there was an acceptance that there would be outside influences on Vanuatu’s development, but also an acknowledgement of the need to ensure that any changes made were decided on Vanuatu’s terms.

The differences between Vanuatu and Western cultural values may explain the calls made by leaders such as Walter Lini for Vanuatu to develop in a Melanesian way, and to accept external change on their own terms. The cultural values of Vanuatu reflect the cultural principles of Melanesia. These include values such as reciprocity, respect, honour, unity, self-sacrifice, cooperation, common ownership of resources, and strong kinship networks (Gegeo, 1998; Hau'ofa, 1993; Institute of Pacific Studies, 1980; Lini, 1980; Narokobi, 1983). In the Vanuatu context helping others is seen as honourable, and community cooperation wise (Institute of Pacific Studies, 1980, p. 290). Furthermore, as Narokobi (1983, p. 14) professes, “to work for others is part of the Melanesian spirit of caring for others”. As these examples demonstrate, Melanesian values tend to be family- and community-focused, and may not be entirely compatible with Western values, which are perhaps more individualistic and capitalistic in nature.

Economically, Vanuatu is considered by many to be at a crossroads, looking to make a shift from a mainly self-sufficient, agriculture-based economy towards a system that is more market orientated (Stice, 2009, p. 5). However, in a country where 75 per cent of the population are rural subsistence farmers, economic growth is still struggling to keep up

with population growth (Simmonds & Chan, 2009; Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009). This situation has contributed to high and rising rates of unemployment, as well as under-employment (Connell & Hammond, 2009). Vanuatu has experienced continued GDP growth over the last five years and had a GDP of US\$554 million in 2009 (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010), but even though GDP is growing, per capita income levels have not increased at the same rate, and more than 40% of the population still live below the poverty line (Connell & Hammond, 2009, p. 84). There have been positive economic signs in recent years, and opportunities opening up in areas such as tourism and construction (Howes & Soni, 2009; Islands Business, 2007; Simmonds & Chan, 2009). The challenge facing Vanuatu now is in creating a balance between the traditional community reciprocal support systems and the rising expectations among ni-Vanuatu for employment opportunities, education, health care, and other public services (Stice, 2009, p. 5). Perhaps in response to these rising public expectations, in early 2010 the Vanuatu government implemented fully subsidised primary schooling for all children; an encouraging step.

From a regional viewpoint, the RSE scheme can be seen as alleviating the social and economic pressures accompanying the high unemployment rate in Vanuatu. A recent report from AusAID (Stahl & Appleyard, 2007) sees short term labour mobility in the Melanesian region as a “safety valve” (p. vii), a way of relieving pressure on local governments. The AusAID report sees temporary labour migration schemes from the Melanesian countries, including Vanuatu, to Australia and New Zealand, as providing the answer to a “concerning security situation” (Stahl & Appleyard, 2007, p. vii). The New Zealand Department of Labour (2010, p. 4) also points to the need for increased temporary labour mobility among Melanesian countries, including Vanuatu, stating the region is experiencing “rapidly growing populations and limited domestic opportunities for employment, particularly among young people”. The concerns of Australia and New Zealand regarding security in the Pacific region raise some questions as to the objectives of temporary work schemes in the region; while they overtly aim to deliver the ‘triple win’, with benefits for sending countries, participating countries and participating workers, their primary aim may in fact be addressing these security concerns. In any case, with the limited domestic employment opportunities available, the RSE scheme provides an opportunity for ni-Vanuatu migrants to travel overseas for employment, gain skills, knowledge, experience, and savings, and send remittance money home to family in order

to meet those rising expectations, as well as create, maintain, and reinforce social networks.

### **Vanuatu's experiences of the RSE scheme**

Vanuatu provided the largest labour group of RSE workers among the participating countries, with 1,067 ni-Vanuatu workers participating in the RSE scheme over the 2007-2008 period (Department of Labour, 2010, p. 47). Of the workers recruited in the first season 22.3 per cent were female (McKenzie, Martinez, & Winters, 2008, p. 10). This comparatively small number reflects a bias towards male workers. Female workers who did participate in the scheme were more likely to be single (Ericsson, 2009). Of the male workers, participants were predominately in their late 20s to early 40s, married, subsistence farmers with children (Ericsson, 2009). Over the 2008-2009 period 2,523 workers from Vanuatu participated in the RSE scheme, including 524 workers returning to New Zealand on repeat contracts, representing a return rate of 49 per cent (Department of Labour, 2010, p. 47).

Regarding this return rate, the Department of Labour report (2010) noted a ni-Vanuatu respondent who stated that there will continue to be a consistently high rate of turnover among ni-Vanuatu RSE participants. According to the report "long-term planning for investment is foreign to ni-Vanuatu villagers – most needs are immediate ones and once these are satisfied there is little imperative to go on earning money" (p. 54). This could partly explain the return rate of 49 per cent in the second season, in that migrants may have already achieved goals, although the respondent indicated that two or three seasons would be the normal lengths of time workers participate in the scheme to meet income targets. However, part of the reason employers were in favour of the RSE scheme was because they did not want high levels of turnover of labour, due to training costs and financial losses through low-quality work (Ramasamy et al., 2008). This would seem to indicate the existence of a conflict of interests, particularly in regards to ni-Vanuatu recruitment and selection for the RSE scheme.

The recruitment of ni-Vanuatu workers during the first season of the RSE scheme was mainly done through licensed recruitment agents, although in the second season

employers themselves travelled to Vanuatu and recruited directly from communities (Department of Labour, 2010). This change in recruitment practice could be due to the feeling among employers that workers who come from the same community are more likely to work well together, as well as have recognised leaders from the community who can help manage the group (Department of Labour, 2010). Although RSE employers have the final say over worker selection, initial selection decisions are made by those in the community, in effect giving the community direct power over who goes and who does not. Some things however are non-negotiable when it comes to selection for the scheme; successful applicants must be 21 years of age or older, not hold a university degree or other professional qualification, and not have a criminal record (McKenzie et al., 2008). Additionally, in order to travel to New Zealand, workers must possess a valid passport, provide a medical certificate, have a copy of their employment agreement with a Recognised Seasonal Employer, and hold a return air ticket (McKenzie et al., 2008).

Research suggests that workers from Vanuatu have generally benefited from participating in the RSE scheme, with both financial and social gains reported. Workers have been able to return with savings, which they have used to pay school fees, purchase school uniforms, modify or construct new homes, buy land and livestock, support family members, purchase consumer goods, and repay loans (Department of Labour, 2010, p. xv). There have been anecdotal success stories of workers doing very well in the RSE scheme. One worker earned \$15,000 over five months, which is equal to an amount that would take around ten years to make in Vanuatu (Hawke's Bay Refugee and Migrant Forum, 2009, para. 6). The same worker received a free ticket to return again for the next season, and was part of a group from his village that was travelling home with three container loads of goods, purchased in New Zealand. Another worker stated that: "I was one [of those] that came last year. I came purposely for making money for my children's school fees and I found that I met that expectation for my family. And now I'm back in New Zealand with the same purpose and I'm happy" (Department of Labour, 2009b, p. 6).

The remittances sent home by RSE workers are one of the biggest earners of foreign exchange in Vanuatu, second only to the emerging tourism industry with impacts ranging from benefits to individual families, up to broader benefits for whole communities (Department of Labour, 2010). Workers also reported gaining new skills through participating in the scheme, including time management skills, English language skills,

and financial management skills (Department of Labour, 2010). Significantly, some workers reported that the skills they were learning on the vineyard or orchard could be transferred, along with financial gains such as savings, to their farms back in Vanuatu, as well as to new business ventures some workers were considering on their return (Department of Labour, 2010). However, McKenzie et al. (2008) report that the practical skills learnt on vineyards and apple orchards in New Zealand are specific to those crops, and may not be directly transferable to Vanuatu crop production, as the crops in Vanuatu (for example coconuts, island cabbage and taro) are quite different.

Positively, the Vanuatu Department of labour has identified a need to assist returning migrants in their reintegration into their home communities. To this end, some training and support initiatives have been implemented, providing assistance to migrants wishing to establish small business enterprises (Department of Labour, 2010). The Vanuatu Department of Labour's Employment Service Unit has applied for funding from organisations such as the World Bank, NZAID, and the ILO to support these initiatives (Department of Labour, 2010). In addition, community associations have been utilised by some regions to take advantage of the development opportunities the RSE scheme presents (Department of Labour, 2010; Maclellan, 2008). The Lolihor Development Council (LDC) of North Ambrym is one such association. Established in 1993, the community cooperatively plans interventions addressing issues including security, education, health, and income generation (Maclellan, 2008). The emergence of the New Zealand RSE scheme in 2007 re-invigorated the association, and the council has sought to link migrants' RSE earnings with community development goals. Positively, the LDC has asserted that the nature of its engagement with the RSE scheme allows the community to come to a collective decision on "where, when and how to engage with globalisation" (as cited in Maclellan, 2008, p. 18), suggesting the council seeks to establish clear community ownership of development outcomes.

Connell and Hammond (2009) provide a further positive example of an NGO, Nalmaluie Kape Ramar Mene (NKRM) which operates in a similar manner to a community association. NKRM was set up on Tanna Island in 2007 to develop income-generating activities for people on the island. Assisting RSE migrants, NKRM organised workshops on issues such as cultural aspects of New Zealand life, financial responsibility and health. Participants were required to set up bank accounts in Tanna which meant that earnings

were brought back to the local economy. It was mandatory for each participant to contribute \$250 to a community fund which was then matched by World Vision New Zealand. This community fund was then targeted towards constructive activities such as repainting and re-roofing local primary schools and other public buildings (Connell & Hammond, 2009, pp. 87-88).

Although economic benefits have been observed, some negative outcomes for ni-Vanuatu RSE workers were also identified. There was a feeling among some migrants that the amount of potential earnings they had been promised during the recruitment period in Vanuatu compared to the actual amount they were able to earn in New Zealand was a “huge disappointment” (Ericsson, 2009, p. 30). This lack of earning opportunities impacted negatively on remittances and savings. Factors that influenced the ability of ni-Vanuatu workers to earn and save money included deductions for accommodation, income tax, and work down time. The breakdowns in communication over pay deductions led to negative impacts on employer-employee relationships, including a feeling of “distrust and disillusionment” on the part of some RSE workers (Department of Labour, 2009b, p. 6). Improved pre-departure briefings in the second and third seasons, as well as improvements in pastoral care in New Zealand, have meant that some of these issues are being resolved (Department of Labour, 2010). In general, workers now have a more realistic understanding of what their potential earnings may be, and what kinds of working and living conditions they will encounter in New Zealand (Department of Labour, 2010). This improvement has been partly due to enhanced pre-departure briefings, but mainly due to information passed on by returning workers (Department of Labour, 2010). Rohorua et al. (2009), focusing on the coping strategies of Pacific communities and families dealing with seasonally absent members, found that generally the RSE scheme has the potential to enhance the wellbeing of participating individuals, as well as the wellbeing of their families and communities. However, the authors note that the coping strategies of families and communities with seasonally absent members can have either a positive or negative effect on overall development impacts (Rohorua et al., 2009). Overall feelings regarding the success or failure of the scheme from a ni-Vanuatu perspective can also depend on the perspective of researchers – for example the research from Ericsson (2009) provides a more negative, pessimistic view of the scheme, while the research from McKenzie et al. (2008) is more positive and optimistic.

A further point to note is that RSE workers from Vanuatu, while coming from poorer rural areas, are more likely to come from the relatively affluent households in those areas, as well as have higher English literacy skills, and be in better health (McKenzie et al., 2008). This situation shows that although the scheme can still be considered as being pro-poor, in that it sources workers from poorer, rural areas of Vanuatu, it is missing those members of the community who perhaps most need access to the opportunities presented by the scheme. McKenzie et al. (2008) argue that the main barriers preventing poorer members of a community from participating in the scheme appear to be a lack of knowledge about the scheme and the prohibitive costs of applying. This state of affairs could be changing however, due to increasing transfers of information between ni-Vanuatu about the scheme, as well as community initiatives facilitating the access of people to the scheme in the form of community loans (Department of Labour, 2010).

Overall the impact of the RSE scheme has been largely positive for participating ni-Vanuatu workers, their families and their communities. The issues that affected the success of the scheme, including a lack of pre-departure information, deficiencies in pastoral care in New Zealand, and difficulties in sending money home have been acknowledged and steps have been undertaken to address these issues.

## **Chapter Summary**

The close historical and contemporary links between the island nations of the Pacific and New Zealand have undoubtedly contributed to the establishment of the RSE scheme. With their historic migratory past, Pacific migrants are well placed to take advantage of the opportunities presented by gaining temporary access to the labour market of New Zealand, while retaining close connections with their families and home communities in the Pacific. New Zealand immigration policies have generally encouraged the entry of highly skilled migrants, however the RSE scheme presents perhaps the greatest opportunity for large numbers of low-skilled Pacific migrants to gain temporary access to the New Zealand labour market, and its associated benefits. In granting this access, the scheme also provides benefits for the horticulture and viticulture industries of New Zealand. These industries are benefiting from a reliable supply of workers, and productivity and profitability are rising accordingly.

Furthermore, participating Pacific countries including Vanuatu are benefiting from their involvement in the RSE scheme; addressing excess labour issues, and enabling an in-flow of remittances, savings, skills and knowledge. Vanuatu, with its emerging economy, seems ideally positioned to take advantage of the opportunities such economic and social gains present. Government reintegration initiatives, as well as community associations and local NGOs, provide further support for returning ni-Vanuatu migrants, and may assist in ensuring the continued success of the RSE scheme for migrants, their families, and their communities at the grassroots level in Vanuatu.

To broadly summarise, Chapters Two and Three have provided a conceptual foundation for this study; specifically for the research results which will be described and analysed in Chapter Five, and the discussion of those results, which will be examined in Chapter Six. The next chapter, Chapter Four, provides something of a 'bridge' between these two broad sections. In this sense the chapter represents the beginning of the research-based section of this thesis, describing the methodological approach of the study, as well as ethical considerations.

## **Chapter Four - Research Methodology**

### **Introduction**

As discussed in Chapter One, this study examines the social development impacts of New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme on participating ni-Vanuatu seasonal workers and their families. Using qualitative research techniques, including semi-structured interviewing, focus group discussions and participant observation, the study was conducted over a period of six weeks during June and July 2010 in two separate field sites: Blenheim, New Zealand, and Tanna Island, Vanuatu. The study focused mainly on the viewpoints of ni-Vanuatu RSE participants, and incorporated the perspectives of other important actors including employers, pastoral care workers, migrants' family members and Tanna Island community members.

This chapter will discuss the methodological considerations and qualitative methods used during the course of the research. As such it will consist of two main sections. The first section will begin by discussing motives for exploring this particular topic, and outlining the theoretical framework of the research. The reasoning behind using qualitative research methods and examine issues of validity in qualitative research will then be explained. Finally, the ethical considerations which guided this research will be covered, and preparations for fieldwork will be described and discussed. The second section will focus on fieldwork experiences in Blenheim and on Tanna, discussing the effectiveness of the research approach, obstacles faced during the research process, and the data analysis methods.

### **Preparing for Fieldwork**

As discussed in Chapter Two, circular migration is increasingly being viewed in the literature as having significant potential in facilitating the social and economic development of origin countries (United Nations, 2006). Furthermore, contemporary seasonal migration schemes involving low-skilled workers have been seen to bring benefits for both origin and destination countries (Basok, 2003; Martin, 2003). While previous research on seasonal agricultural work schemes has emphasised the economic

benefits that come from participation in such schemes (Bedford et al., 2009), this thesis instead focuses on the skills and knowledge gained by participating workers, and the social implications of the transfer of skills and knowledge upon their return. The study also seeks to explore the benefits experienced workers bring to the overall running of the RSE scheme, as well as examine the social relationships of ni-Vanuatu workers, particularly their relationships with the RSE employers and pastoral care workers. Thus, as discussed in Chapter One, this study is guided by four key research questions:

1. What skills and knowledge do workers gain from participating in the RSE scheme?
2. How are skills and knowledge utilised by workers on their return to Vanuatu?
3. In what ways do the relationships between ni-Vanuatu workers and the New Zealand RSE team (including employers and pastoral carers) contribute to a possible situation of ni-Vanuatu dependency on the New Zealand RSE team?
4. What specific benefits do experienced workers bring to the RSE scheme?

These research questions lend themselves more towards a qualitative methodological approach, in that the social impacts of new skills and knowledge by their nature are not easily quantifiable, and are subject to different interpretations. The same can be said of research focusing on social relationships. While economic outcomes may be more easily measured in quantitative terms, social outcomes such as skills and knowledge are not as quantifiable, and thus qualitative research techniques may provide a deeper understanding of the magnitude of social impacts and the direction of social change (Nair, 1999). Therefore qualitative research methods are used in this study in order to gain a broader understanding of the social development outcomes of participation in New Zealand's RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu seasonal migrant workers. As qualitative research is, by its nature, subjective, part of ensuring the credibility of research findings involves providing a description of the researcher's position in relation to the research topic; the researcher's positionality.

### **Positionality and reflections on research approach**

Qualitative research emphasises subjectivity, recognising that people have different subjectivities and interpret the world in different ways (Angrosino, 2010). A researcher also brings his or her own personal values, biases and subjectivities to the research process, and these should be acknowledged during fieldwork and in the writing-up stage when back from the field. By acknowledging these values, biases and subjectivities, researchers can ensure that their research experiences and results have a greater degree of credibility.

With regard to my positionality as researcher, I am a New Zealand-European male, with experience in the viticulture industry, having worked for a number of seasons on vineyards around Blenheim – my home town. Thus I feel I have some empathy for what the workers experience when they travel to New Zealand, particularly in regards to the practical experiences of working on a Marlborough vineyard. Also, as a Development Studies student the potential benefits the RSE scheme provides for grassroots people in the Pacific is of great interest, and the pro-poor approach of the RSE scheme fits within my philosophy of how development should be achieved. My background and philosophical position in relation to the research topic have undoubtedly influenced my motivation for exploring this topic. Therefore my approach to research methods and interpretation of research results may reflect this cultural and philosophical background.

As discussed above, a qualitative research approach requires the researcher to identify potential biases or situations that may influence the reliability of the data collected, with the validity of qualitative research being subject to some scrutiny. Part of maintaining this reliability and credibility involves reflexivity.

Qualitative researchers should aim to be actively reflexive during all stages of research, in the field as well as during the writing up process. This involves the researcher critiquing his or her own research processes and identifying potential biases that may affect the validity of the data (Mason, 2002). Fife (2005) asserts that while a little reflexivity during research and the subsequent writing up of results is a good thing, too much can distract from the overall research and research findings. While reflexivity involves reflecting on

biases that affect the validity of data, it also entails reflecting on how the research impacts upon the research participants. An example of reflexivity during fieldwork in Blenheim will be discussed during part two of this chapter, where the procedure for gaining consent from ni-Vanuatu participants was adjusted.

A further means of ensuring validity, particularly in research findings and results involves the triangulation of data. In qualitative research, by using a variety of methods, such as interviewing, participant observation and secondary data analysis, findings can be compared to determine the soundness of the results (Lewis, 2009). Additionally, results can also be compared with previous research literature, with commonalities and differences pointed out. In this way the credibility of research findings and results can be strengthened.

An additional method for ensuring the credibility of research is in the presentation of the research data. Qualitative researchers aim to transport the reader of their report into the “environment, setting and situation” of their research (Lewis, 2009, p. 12), and endeavour to capture the emotions, feelings and experiences of the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000, cited in Lewis, 2009, p. 12). In this way a rich picture can be provided of the research participants and setting, adding further credibility to the research.

My research approach reflects a desire to achieve this ‘rich picture’, or depth of understanding of the research subject. In focusing on achieving a depth of understanding, and recognising that there is no single ‘answer’ to the research aim, the research approach chosen for this study falls within the interpretivist paradigm, which stresses the importance of interpreting people’s thoughts, emotions, actions, and experiences within their specific context (Mason, 2002).

The research methods of this study, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, were chosen for their potential to produce rich data. Likewise, the keeping of a fieldwork journal allowed raw data and emerging themes to be examined in depth. The next section will explore in more detail the qualitative methods used to gather data during this study.

## **Research methods**

Qualitative research techniques such as semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions aim to gain an understanding of people's experiences, feelings and motives, or in other words an understanding of their 'world' (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003, p. 57). This understanding can be achieved by encouraging respondents to discuss their experiences and opinions in conversation. Thus semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were chosen to gain access to this information.

Semi-structured interviews aim to provide a balance of control between the researcher and the research participant. This balance of control is seen in the sense that the researcher can bring a list of questions to an interview, and the research participant can in turn guide the researcher's questions depending on his or her responses. Semi-structured interviews have been likened to guided 'conversations' (Babbie, 2010, p. 320) as interviews usually take place in informal or semi-formal locations, for example people's homes, and are driven by open-ended questioning that allows for flexibility and a more natural conversational flow (Fife, 2005). Focus group discussions aim to allow a group of research participants the opportunity to explore research topics together within a social environment. Similar to semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions are led by the researcher, who can bring a list of open-ended questions or discussion points to the meeting. However unlike semi-structured interviews, focus group participants are able to discuss issues amongst each other, and unexpected or unanticipated aspects of the research topic can emerge (Babbie, 2010). Likewise, participant observation techniques allow the researcher to observe research participants in a natural setting, engaging in conversation with them, observing their interactions with others and the environment, and constructing meaning from these experiences (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003, p. 59). Participant observation requires the researcher to immerse themselves within the physical and social environment of the society they are studying, and in doing so empathise with how the members of that society view and interpret their world (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003, p. 57).

Absolutely essential to the process of all research is a consideration of its ethical implications (O'Leary, 2010, p. 40). In particular, ensuring the well-being of research

participants is of paramount importance. The ethical considerations of this study will now be examined.

### **Ethical considerations**

Carrying out research, especially research that is people-focused, invariably raises some ethical considerations which must be addressed before, during, and after the research process. These considerations include:

- Obtaining informed consent from research participants
- Ensuring the anonymity of research participants
- Ensuring the confidentiality of research data
- Identifying potential risks to the research participants
- Identifying cultural or gender concerns related to the research project

In this sense, ethical research, argues Madge, (as cited in Scheyvens & Storey, 2003, p. 139) “should not only ‘do no harm’, but also have potential ‘to do good’, [and] to involve ‘empowerment’”. This is particularly important when one considers the inherent power imbalances between researchers and research participants that characterises many research settings (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003). Massey University has strict ethical guidelines for conducting social research, and a number of set ethics requirements were completed before beginning fieldwork. To begin the process, the possible ethical issues that could arise from this research were discussed with a group of my peers. A comprehensive written discussion on ethical issues was then completed, and submitted to my thesis supervisors. Following that a meeting with supervisors and staff of the Development Studies programme was conducted to discuss ethical issues that could arise during fieldwork, as well as how to manage those issues. As required, a screening questionnaire was completed which indicated that my research was low-risk. A low-risk application to the Massey University Human Ethics committee was then submitted, the project was judged to be of low risk, and permission to commence fieldwork was granted.

## **Fieldwork Preparations**

The study was conducted in two field sites. The first involved semi-structured interviews and observation of ni-Vanuatu workers, RSE employers, vineyard supervisors, and pastoral care workers in Blenheim, New Zealand. The second field site involved semi-structured interviews and observation of ni-Vanuatu returned workers, their family members, and local community members on Tanna Island, Vanuatu. The following section will discuss the preparation carried out prior to and during fieldwork in these sites.

### **Fieldwork preparations in Blenheim, New Zealand**

Blenheim was chosen as a field site for a number of reasons. Firstly, Blenheim is my hometown, so it was felt that this would give me an advantage in terms of making contact with relevant people. Secondly, because of my involvement in the viticulture industry in the Marlborough region, I also felt comfortable making contact with people in the industry. Finally, it was clear that there would be a number of ni-Vanuatu RSE workers in Blenheim for the pruning season, so there would be a potential pool of research participants. It was decided that three weeks would be a good length of time to conduct interviews and observations, with a general plan that the first week would be used to make contact with potential research participants and arrange meetings, with the bulk of the interviews and observations being carried out during the second and third weeks.

Before travelling to Blenheim tentative contact was made with a pastoral care worker and a RSE employer, although this was through a third party who acted as a go-between between myself and the potential participants in the planning stages of my research. They were informed of my research interest and indicated they would be happy to assist me. On arrival in Blenheim meetings were arranged with the pastoral care worker, and the RSE employer. These meetings were not intended to be part of fieldwork, but were instead aimed at organising my time in Blenheim. Both people proved to be excellent contacts, and facilitated access to participants, including ni-Vanuatu workers, vineyard supervisors, and pastoral care workers. The RSE employer and pastoral care worker promised to explain my study aims to the ni-Vanuatu workers on my behalf, and to ask if they would be willing to participate in the research. The other potential research participants,

including RSE employers and pastoral care workers were contacted directly by me to arrange meetings. With these procedures in place, I was invited to attend a welcome meeting for the ni-Vanuatu workers' group leaders and chiefs. After the meeting the pastoral care worker introduced me to three ni-Vanuatu house leaders, and we then arranged to meet during that week to undertake semi-structured interviews. Similarly, the RSE employer discussed my research with his employees, but in that case the ni-Vanuatu workers were not met until observation on the vineyard block where they were working commenced. Altogether I arranged to have four focus group discussions with different groups of ni-Vanuatu RSE workers, a further semi-structured interview with a ni-Vanuatu worker, two focus group discussions with pastoral care workers, two further semi-structured interviews with individual pastoral care workers, three semi-structured interviews with RSE employers, and one semi-structured interview with a vineyard supervisor. In addition three days were spent observing a group of twenty-five ni-Vanuatu RSE workers on a Marlborough vineyard. An outline of the participants of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted during fieldwork can be seen in Figure 4.1 on page 79, along with interview codes, which will be used to identify respondents during the analysis of the results in Chapter Five. A further comprehensive overview of the participants of this study is included in Appendices One and Two.

As may be apparent, the majority of research participants were not selected randomly, but were instead selected because of their connection with the two primary contacts – the RSE employer and the pastoral care worker. This selection of participants represents a purposive approach to sampling; selecting participants on the basis of their relevance to the research topic (Mason, 2002, p. 124). Some have criticised non-random sampling techniques as not being representative of the population being studied (O'Leary, 2010, p. 168), however the participants of this study did represent a cross-section of people involved in the RSE scheme in Blenheim. The pastoral care worker and RSE employer – my initial contacts – were not known to each other and were associated with different RSE companies with different groups of ni-Vanuatu workers. The RSE employers interviewed represented three separate RSE companies, and were contacted and interviewed separately. The pastoral care workers were, again, contacted and interviewed separately and were associated with three different RSE companies. The ni-Vanuatu workers interviewed came from a variety of islands in Vanuatu, and ranged in age from their mid 20s up to their mid 50s. There are, however, a couple of points to make regarding the ni-Vanuatu research

participants in Blenheim. Firstly, the ni-Vanuatu that contributed most during focus group discussions were generally considered to be the leaders of their groups, and so may have had slightly different viewpoints than other RSE workers. This was mitigated to an extent by encouraging the other RSE workers in the discussion groups to contribute to some answers. Secondly, all the ni-Vanuatu research participants in Blenheim were men. This is due to the fact that the vast majority of ni-Vanuatu RSE workers in Blenheim are men. The two RSE companies I primarily dealt with had only ni-Vanuatu men working for them, and so it was almost impossible for me to make contact with any ni-Vanuatu women involved in the RSE scheme in Blenheim.

One of the positive aspects, among many, of meeting the ni-Vanuatu workers in Blenheim was the advice and guidance they offered me for my next stage of research, on Tanna Island in Vanuatu, which will be discussed next.

### **Fieldwork preparations on Tanna Island, Vanuatu**

Tanna was chosen as the second field site in the preliminary stages of planning for my research, after email contact with a representative of the Vanuatu Department of Labour. The Department of Labour representative indicated that the majority of ni-Vanuatu RSE workers came from two islands: Espiritu Santo, and Tanna. She informed me that both islands would be suitable as field research sites, and left it to me to make the decision on where to go. I chose Tanna because it was a tourist destination, and there would be sufficient infrastructure in place for accommodation and transport needs. Tanna was also preferred because it is one of the smaller Vanuatu islands, and as such would mean that RSE workers would probably be living in relatively close proximity to each other, whereas RSE workers on Santo might not be in such close proximity, which would have made access to participants more difficult. In agreement with supervisors it was felt that four weeks was a good length of time to spend in Vanuatu for my fieldwork. This would allow me to spend a week in Port Vila, and the remaining three weeks carrying out interviews and observations on Tanna. However, things turned out differently, with this plan having to be amended somewhat, which will be discussed in section two of this chapter.

As mentioned, contact was initially made with a representative from the Vanuatu Department of Labour. The representative was quite helpful and agreed to help me gain access to ni-Vanuatu RSE workers on Tanna. These arrangements were made before the fieldwork in Blenheim, but while in Blenheim I made contact with a number of ni-Vanuatu who were either from Tanna, or had family living on Tanna. For this reason, instead of going through the Vanuatu Department of Labour to make contact with research participants, which seemed a little ‘top-down’, I decided to use the contacts given to me by my ni-Vanuatu contacts in Blenheim. I had two primary contacts on Tanna, recommended to me in Blenheim, who assisted me with meeting RSE workers and their families. One was the owner of the guest house where I was staying, and the other was a returned RSE worker who was well-known and respected in the community. They made contact with RSE workers on my behalf, explained my research project to them, and arranged for meetings. As well as interviewing RSE workers I also planned to meet workers’ families and local community members, arranged through my primary contacts. Altogether six semi-structured interviews with RSE workers were conducted, along with three interviews with wives of RSE workers, two interviews with local community members, and one interview with a representative from the Vanuatu Department of Labour. As mentioned in the previous section, Figure 4.1, on the following page, presents an overview of the research participants of this study, including their identification codes. In addition to semi-structured interviews participant observation methods were used during the course of my stay on Tanna to try and gain a greater understanding of what life on the island entails for local people. All of my interviews and observations there took place around the main town of Lenakel, on the western coast of Tanna Island.

As in Blenheim, the research participants selected on Tanna were not chosen randomly but instead were chosen by my primary contacts on Tanna. This purposive sampling approach meant that there could have been some bias involved in the selection of research participants on Tanna. However the RSE workers interviewed on Tanna portray a small but representative cross-section of male RSE workers on the Island, coming from three different villages, and ranging in age from their early 30s to their mid 50s.

**Figure 4.1 – Research participants and coding**

<b>Research participants</b> <i>(number of participants)</i>	<b>Research Method</b>	<b>Identification Codes</b>
Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers (7)	Semi-structured interviews	<b>(W)</b> (1W;2W;3W;4W;5W;6W;7W)
Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers (25)	Focus group discussions	<b>(FGW)</b> (1FGW;2FGW;3FGW;4FGW)
Pastoral care workers (3)	Semi-structured interviews	<b>(P)</b> (1P;2P;3P)
Pastoral care workers (4)	Focus group discussions	<b>(FGP)</b> (1FGP;2FGP;3FGP)
RSE employers (3)	Semi-structured interviews	<b>(E)</b> (1E;2E;3E)
Vineyard supervisor (1)	Semi-structured interview	<b>(S)</b> (1S)
RSE workers' wives (3)	Semi-structured interview	<b>(F)</b> (1F;2F;3F)
Community members (2)	Semi-structured interview	<b>(C)</b> (1C;2C)
Vanuatu Dep. of Labour rep. (1)	Semi-structured interview	<b>(G)</b> (1G)

Overall, in relation to the characteristics of the primary participants of this study, the ni-Vanuatu migrants, a total of thirty-two ni-Vanuatu RSE workers were interviewed during fieldwork in Blenheim and on Tanna Island: seven individually in semi-structured interviews, and twenty-five collectively in four separate focus group discussions. The following table, Figure 4.2, adapted from Appendices One and Two, provides an overview of the characteristics of the ni-Vanuatu migrants.

**Figure 4.2 - Characteristics of ni-Vanuatu migrant workers**

<b>Number of workers interviewed</b>	32 workers		
<b>Average age of workers</b>	32.5 years		
<b>Married (%)</b>	84%		
<b>Have children (%)</b>	88%		
<b>Seasons in RSE scheme (%)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Season 31%	2 <sup>nd</sup> Season 22%	3 <sup>rd</sup> Season 47%

As mentioned, all the workers interviewed were male, with an average age of 32.5 years. 84 percent were married and 88 percent had children. In terms of their participation in the RSE scheme, 47 percent were in their third season, 22 percent were in their second season, and 31 percent were in their first season of participation in the RSE scheme. As such, 69 percent of the ni-Vanuatu workers in this study are considered ‘experienced workers’. In terms of their home islands in Vanuatu, fourteen of the workers were from Tanna, with eight workers from Efate, six from Ambae, and four from Epi.

## **Fieldwork Experiences**

The second part of this chapter will begin by discussing my experiences of fieldwork, focusing firstly on fieldwork in Blenheim, and then on fieldwork on Tanna. I will reflect on the methods used during the course of the fieldwork, and other factors which affected the overall outcome of the fieldwork. I will then elaborate on obstacles faced during the research process. Finally, an overview of my data analysis methods will be presented.

### **Fieldwork experiences in Blenheim**

Reflecting upon my experiences in Blenheim, fieldwork was successful in that I was able to interview a number of people and gained a more personal understanding of the research topic. Spending three days with a group of ni-Vanuatu RSE workers on a vineyard block where they were working helped me to gain a greater understanding of what their work lives entailed. I was fortunate to have the assistance of the pastoral carer and RSE

employer, mentioned above. Their help in facilitating my access to the ni-Vanuatu workers was very valuable.

Interviews with the ni-Vanuatu workers were all carried out at their homes, in the early evening. This was due to the fact that the ni-Vanuatu worked long hours, often from Monday through to Saturday, with only Sunday off. The workers indicated that the early evening suited them best in terms of meeting for interviews. The first interview turned out to be quite different to that expected. Initially, plans were made to meet with one man, at his house, but when upon arrival I was taken into the lounge where all eight of the ni-Vanuatu living at the house were sitting. I was a little surprised, but flexible with the situation. With all the men eager to participate a focus group discussion was required. Information sheets and consent forms were distributed among the men to read and to sign. Some of the men obviously could not read the consent form and so could not understand which boxes to tick, and where to sign their name. This was met with laughter from everyone in the room, because in the end the house leader signed everyone's consent forms for them. This may have caused embarrassment for those men who could not understand and sign the consent forms, so from that interview on the house leader signed a consent form on behalf of all the ni-Vanuatu workers, after having him explain my research to the others verbally. As it was an effort was made to explain to the ni-Vanuatu men that they could withdraw from the study at anytime, did not have to answer any questions they did not want to answer, and could either agree or decline to have their interview recorded.

All focus group discussions and interviews were recorded during fieldwork, except two. Those two were not recorded because in one instance a house group of ni-Vanuatu workers became nervous when I discussed recording the focus group discussion, so the subject was not pushed further. In the second instance an interview was held with an RSE employer who was very busy, so I accompanied him for part of the day and asked questions when possible. The decisions of those that declined to be recorded were respected, but recording the interviews had some advantages, including ensuring the authenticity of the data. Detailed notes were taken during the interviews that were not recorded, but the recorded interviews enabled me to hear the voice of the interviewee, pick things up that may have missed during the interview, and transcribe in detail exactly what

was said by the respondent. All these factors contribute to conveying the 'voice' of the interview participants more accurately and authentically.

Overall, my fieldwork in Blenheim set me up for the positive fieldwork experiences on Tanna in Vanuatu.

### **Fieldwork experiences on Tanna**

My fieldwork on Tanna was successful, but whereas in Blenheim a lot of interesting information was gained from focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, on Tanna a lot of interesting information was gained from the general observations made. I was made to feel welcome on Tanna, and found the people to be very approachable and willing to talk. In this way something of an understanding was gained of what life is like on Tanna for local people, and the realities of life for the ni-Vanuatu workers who had gone to New Zealand.

On Tanna I was fortunate to have two key people assisting me: my guest house owner, and the returned RSE worker. These assistants facilitated my access to research participants, and the returned RSE worker accompanied me during travels and interviews, making introductions and acting as a translator in some instances. All of my interviews were carried out at people's homes on Tanna, and in some instances at the building sites of new homes. All agreed to have their interviews recorded and seemed genuinely pleased to be able to contribute to my study. It was difficult to conduct interviews with an interpreter, who was used for two of the interviews with RSE workers' wives. These interviews were fairly brief compared to the others, and it seemed that the flow of both interviews was perhaps interrupted by having to use a translator, although there was no way of conducting the interviews differently. Another factor pertaining to the interviews held with workers' wives was the feeling of awkwardness, perhaps because of a power imbalance between me as a male researcher and the women I was interviewing. I had noticed that the women were a little reserved, and somewhat reluctant to answer questions. In hindsight it may have been better to have used a female research assistant, or to have had a female accompany me. It may also have been better to have provided a little more structure to these interviews, as the responses given were not conducive to opening up the conversation.

### **Obstacles faced during fieldwork**

There were two main obstacles faced during the process of my fieldwork. The first involved me getting sick before travelling to Vanuatu and having to rearrange my travel dates, which ultimately reduced the allocated four weeks in Vanuatu down to three weeks. The second was my difficulty in arranging to meet ni-Vanuatu women who had been involved in the RSE scheme.

The main concern regarding my decision to postpone my trip to Vanuatu was that it was to be the first time I had travelled to Vanuatu and it was unclear what the medical facilities would be like there. Having asthma and a history of chest infections, I wanted to be in New Zealand in case any complications developed with my illness. The time I lost because of this would have proven to be very useful in terms of my fieldwork outcomes, as leaving after three weeks left things somewhat ‘unfinished’ at a time when I was starting to settle in to life on Tanna and had made many good contacts with local people.

The second obstacle involved my difficulty in arranging to meet female ni-Vanuatu workers who had participated in the RSE scheme. The fact that all the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers interviewed during fieldwork were male, reflects one of the main issues faced both in Blenheim and on Tanna; gaining access to female ni-Vanuatu RSE workers. On my second night on Tanna a woman who had been to New Zealand with the RSE scheme, agreed to put me in contact with other women who had been to New Zealand. Unfortunately, even though we exchanged phone numbers, it was not possible to contact her again during the course of my stay on Tanna. However, a number of women were met informally during my observations on Tanna who had been to New Zealand with the RSE scheme. They were able to discuss their experiences, although not in any great detail. So, although a female perspective on the RSE scheme was gained from interviews with workers’ wives, my research results are somewhat biased towards the perspective of male ni-Vanuatu RSE workers. This reflects a need, in terms of future research, to focus on the outcomes of participation in the RSE scheme for female ni-Vanuatu migrant workers.

## Returning from the Field

Following fieldwork in Vanuatu I returned to Massey University where the somewhat difficult adjustment from the fieldwork stage of my research to the writing-up and analysis stage was begun. It was challenging during this time, particularly in terms of managing the large amount of data gathered during fieldwork. However, using qualitative data analysis techniques, themes and patterns soon began to emerge.

Qualitative data analysis is essentially a search for themes and patterns in the data. O’Leary (2010, p. 257) argues that the data analysis process requires researchers to organise their raw data, then code that data, before searching for meaning through thematic analysis. Following that, researchers must interpret the meaning of the results and draw conclusions. Qualitative data analysis in the form of thematic coding occurs throughout the data analysis stage of research, with new categories of coding generated as the data is reduced (Richards, 2005). The interpretation of data is subjective, so the same data can be analysed in different ways by different researchers, with different research findings (Holland, 2003).

Data gathered from semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observations were recorded during fieldwork in the form of interview transcriptions and focused observation notes. I found it useful to keep a research journal which allowed me to explore barriers faced during fieldwork, and also identify some themes that were starting to emerge. I began arranging the data according to relevant categories identified during the research process, which related back to my research questions. The four original categories were: **1) *Life in Vanuatu*; 2) *The RSE scheme*; 3) *Life in New Zealand for ni-Vanuatu RSE workers*; 4) *Outcomes of participation in the RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu workers*.**

These four categories were further broken down into subsections, which included:

### **1) Life in Vanuatu**

- a) Work and leisure activities in Vanuatu, and
- b) Ni-Vanuatu reasons for entering the RSE scheme

### **2) The RSE scheme**

- a) Employer reasons for entering the RSE scheme,
- b) Opinions on the RSE scheme

- c) Challenges facing the RSE scheme, and
- d) Recruitment

### **3) Life in New Zealand for ni-Vanuatu RSE workers**

- a) Working in New Zealand:
  - (i) Ni-Vanuatu workers
  - (ii) Skills and knowledge development
  - (iii) Challenges
  - (iv) The future, and
  - (v) Experienced workers
- b) Living in New Zealand
  - (i) Pastoral care
  - (ii) Money
  - (iii) Daily life
  - (iv) Positive experiences
  - (v) Negative experiences
  - (vi) Challenges

### **4) Outcomes of participation in the RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu workers**

- a) Community and family outcomes
- b) Worker outcomes
  - (i) Knowledge and skills transferred
  - (ii) Lifestyle changes

In addition, these subsections were further reduced to relevant categories within the subsections, which are too detailed to note within this thesis. To illustrate an example of the categories within individual subsections, the subsection of ‘experienced workers’ - Category 3, section (a), subsection (v) – was broken down to include 1) Reason for the decision to return to New Zealand 2) Positive social aspects of experienced workers 3) Experienced workers on the vineyard and 4) Future goals of experienced workers.

Following the organisation of the data into the above mentioned categories, the data was then analysed in more detail, identifying links between the different sections and searching for meaning from within the results. Richards (2005, p. 193) stresses the importance of moving from respecting, studying and responding to the data to ‘using’ the data, providing more than just a description of results, but a deeper analysis of the results.

As it stood, the categorised data provided a useful platform to describe the results. However, as Richards notes above, the key to using data effectively involves moving from a description to a deeper analysis of the results. Therefore, with the four key research questions in mind I identified and coded four key themes that corresponded to the four key research questions. The four themes identified included **1) Time, 2) Money, 3) Power and Dependency, and 4) Experienced Workers**. These themes were prominent within the data, and related closely to the research questions. The themes of ‘time’ and ‘money’ relate to the first and second research questions – identifying the skills and knowledge workers gain through participation in the RSE scheme, and how the workers utilise those skills and knowledge on their return to Vanuatu. The third theme relates to the third research question – examining the relationships between the New Zealand RSE team and the ni-Vanuatu workers, and the fourth theme relates to the fourth research question - the benefits that experienced workers bring to the RSE scheme.

Although time consuming, the data analysis process proved valuable, and the continuous reduction of data into sections, subsections and sub-categories meant that I became very familiar with the research data. Moving from a descriptive overview of the results to a more detailed analysis of key themes provided a good base from which to begin writing the results analysis chapter of the thesis.

## **Chapter Summary**

As discussed, this study aims to provide a greater understanding of the skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu RSE workers, and the subsequent use of those skills and knowledge on their return to Vanuatu. The study also aims to examine the relationships between the New Zealand RSE team and the ni-Vanuatu workers, as well as establish the benefits experienced workers bring to the overall running of the scheme. In focusing on achieving a depth of understanding on these subjects, qualitative research methods including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation were chosen to explore in detail the experiences and outcomes of participation in New Zealand’s RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu workers.

This chapter has presented the methodological framework which guided this research, as well as an explanation of the qualitative research methods used during fieldwork. The

qualitative methods used have enabled a rich set of research data to be gathered. However, in using qualitative methods, the importance of ensuring that results and findings are as valid and credible as possible is stressed. This has been demonstrated by maintaining a reflexive and open position during the fieldwork and writing-up stages of research, and by triangulating data from a variety of sources. As such, potential issues have been identified that may have affected the credibility of the data or findings within my results chapter, Chapter Five, which follows next.

## **Chapter Five - Ni-Vanuatu Experiences of the RSE Scheme**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will present the research findings, examining the experiences of a group of ni-Vanuatu migrant workers who have lived and worked in New Zealand as part of the RSE scheme, as well as their experiences on return to Vanuatu. The chapter will begin by providing a brief introduction to the participants of this study, including an overview of their experiences of the RSE scheme. This overview is intended to provide an understanding of the main experiences of the ni-Vanuatu workers and other key research participants before analysing the four key themes that emerged during data analysis.

These key themes include:

1. 'Time'
2. 'Money'
3. 'Power and Dependency'
4. 'Experienced Workers'

These four themes relate to the four research questions, as listed in the previous chapter. The themes of 'Time' and 'Money' relate to both the first and second research questions, the theme of 'Power and Dependency' relates to the third research question, and the theme of 'Experienced Workers' relates to the fourth research question. These themes will also be discussed in relation to the opinions, experiences and outcomes of the RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu workers, their families and home communities in Vanuatu, as well as for pastoral care workers, vineyard supervisors, and RSE employers in New Zealand.

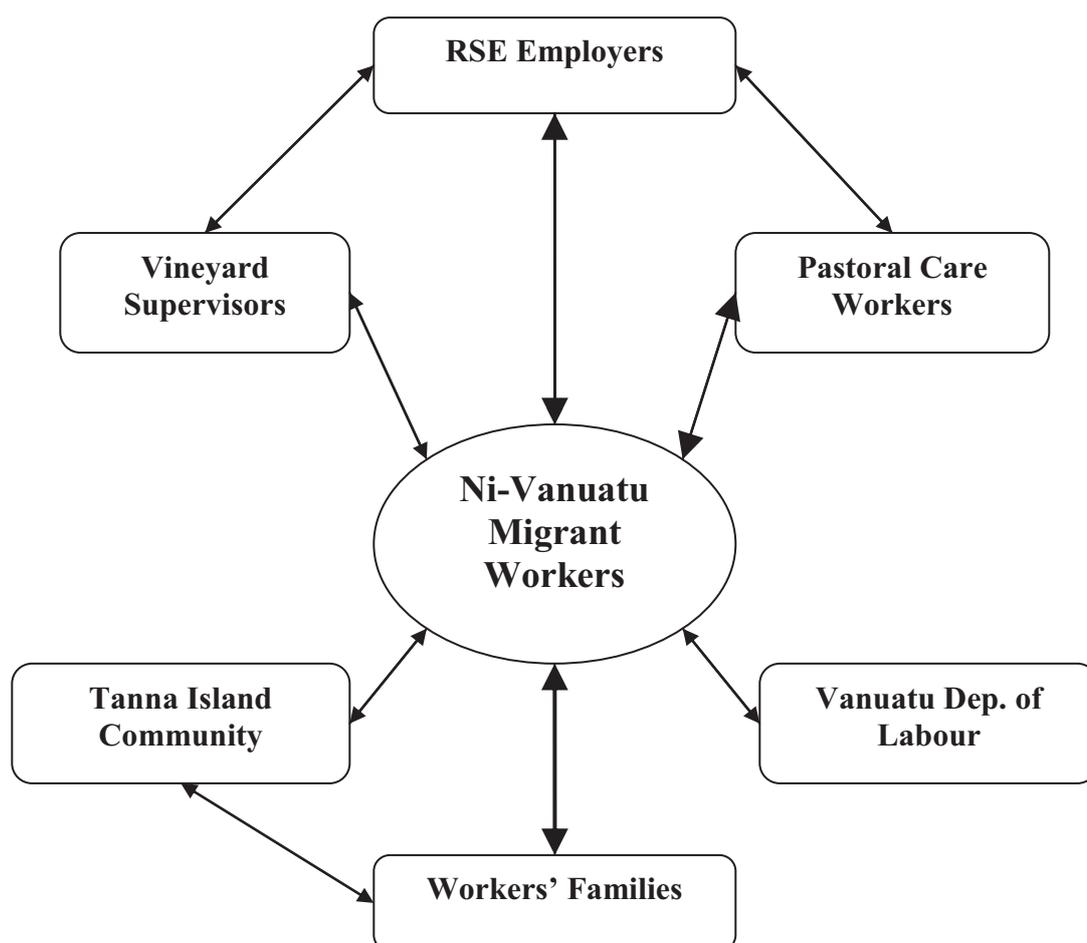
### **Introducing the Research Participants**

This section will provide an overview of the research participants, in particular the primary participants of this study; the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers. A description of the men's reasons for entering the scheme will be presented, as well as an account of their work and non-work life experiences in New Zealand. The section will then move on to briefly introduce the other research participants, including: workers' families; Tanna Island community members; RSE employers; vineyard supervisors; and pastoral care

workers. The research participants' role in the RSE scheme, as well as their perceptions and experiences of the RSE scheme will be discussed, as outlined above, particularly in relation to the ni-Vanuatu workers.

The diagram that follows (Figure 5.1) presents an overview of the research participants. The arrows within the diagram demonstrate the relationships between the ni-Vanuatu workers and other actors. Large arrows represent a primary relationship, and small arrows represent a secondary relationship. As can be seen, the ni-Vanuatu migrants' primary relationships in the RSE scheme are with their families, with their RSE employers, and with their pastoral care workers.

**Figure 5.1 – Relationships between participants of the study**



With the ni-Vanuatu migrants in the middle, this diagram provides an understanding of the nature of the relationships between workers and other principal actors in this study: workers' families; RSE employers; and pastoral care workers. Workers' families are placed at the bottom of the diagram, representing their grassroots nature. Workers' families supported migrants during their time in New Zealand by looking after children, as well as tending to livestock and gardens. Furthermore families remained in contact with migrants during their time in New Zealand through cell phone contact. In return migrants reciprocated with remittances, and returned home with savings and material goods from New Zealand. These remittances, savings and material goods benefited not only workers' families, but have had flow-on effects for workers' communities too, as will be explored further in this chapter. In this regard, migrants maintained and strengthened significant links with their families and communities through their participation in the RSE scheme.

Although migrants maintained links with their families in Vanuatu, for many, participation in the RSE scheme meant leaving the support network of family and community in Vanuatu for the first time. For this reason, pastoral care workers provided assistance to the ni-Vanuatu migrants during their time in New Zealand, mitigating some of the challenges faced by the men. Although necessary, this support was characterised by the paternal nature of the relationship between the New Zealand pastoral care workers and the ni-Vanuatu migrants.

As opposed to the paternal nature of the relationship between pastoral care workers and the ni-Vanuatu, the relationship between RSE employers and ni-Vanuatu workers was somewhat top-down in nature. RSE employers held a great deal of power over migrant workers. This power imbalance allowed the employers to control the workers during their time in New Zealand, ensuring the ni-Vanuatu were not only productive workers, but also compliant during non-work hours. A further analysis of these relationships, particularly between the migrants and the New Zealand RSE team will be provided within the section on 'power and dependency' in this chapter, as well as in Chapter Six.

The top-down relationship faced by migrants in New Zealand contrasted strongly with workers' grassroots-focused motives for participating in the RSE scheme. All the workers interviewed had similar reasons for coming to New Zealand. Men spoke about improving

their families' living standards; intending to build permanent houses, pay for school fees, and establish small businesses. Some talked about broader social goals of "contributing to the nation" and helping the "future generation" through investment in their children's education (4FGW). One migrant worker summed things up by saying "you know, here (Vanuatu) we have everything – except money" (6W). As discussed, the RSE scheme specifically aims to provide workers with opportunities to earn and save money in New Zealand. This statement and the goals of other workers, as described above, indicate that money is the driving force behind migrants' involvement in the RSE scheme. Additionally, some workers described a wish to experience life in a different culture, expressing the desire to experience the "white man's world" (1FGW, 4W).

It should be noted that all of the ni-Vanuatu workers interviewed were employed on vineyards in New Zealand, mainly around Blenheim, but also in Central Otago. Due to its nature, vineyard work can be challenging. The job is often repetitive and monotonous, and workers are exposed to the elements. Employers indicated the need to select fit, strong, healthy people for these reasons (1E, 2E, 3E). Ni-Vanuatu workers identified characteristics such as friendliness, respect for others, physical and mental strength and good behaviour as key attributes for vineyard workers.

Workers learned vineyard-specific skills such as bud rubbing, shoot thinning, leaf plucking, wire lifting, harvesting, pruning, wrapping and nailing. In addition, some workers attended pruning workshops, driver training courses, and first aid courses. Employers and pastoral care workers all noted that the ni-Vanuatu workers' work ethics improved considerably during their time in New Zealand.

Although many migrants were in their third season of participation in the RSE scheme, ni-Vanuatu workers had few formal responsibilities as employees, although some had become supervisors and others drove work vans to and from the vineyard blocks where they worked. One employer said it was not practical to have the ni-Vanuatu in supervisory positions as there was a lot of paperwork to do, and the workers were only in New Zealand for a short period of time (2E). A further point to note is that supervisors were generally paid on an hourly rate, whereas some may have felt they could earn more money by remaining a worker and being paid on a contract rate (Participant observation 22/6).

Whether working on contract or hourly rate, there is no denying that vineyard work is generally dull and tedious, as well as mentally and physically demanding. As a consequence, workers certainly valued their time away from work.

As intimated above, the ni-Vanuatu worked long hours, leaving little time for leisure activities. All men reported that in their free time they rested or slept. Many of the men belonged to local churches and attended services on the weekends. Most enjoyed watching television, and many liked to walk around town, although they did not normally buy anything. Some of the men played football socially with Kiwis and international backpackers, and others busked at local markets. Other workers enjoyed hunting and fishing with their supervisors (1FGW, 3FGW, 2W, 3W).

Workers used some of their free time to keep in touch with their families back in Vanuatu. All workers interviewed had cell phones which they used to call home, or receive calls from home. Many men actually sent money home to family so they could call from Vanuatu, as the calling rates were cheaper that way. Cell phones were an effective way of maintaining contact with families. One worker stated that if his daughter was having trouble sleeping in Vanuatu his wife would call him and he would talk to his daughter, and she would then go to sleep. He said she missed him (1W).

While migrants were able to keep in touch with family back in Vanuatu, many workers indicated that missing family was the most difficult part of living in New Zealand. As one worker stated: “it *is* hard, we find it difficult during the four to seven months when *you* are not there with them. We find it really hard to cope” (3FGW). The men indicated they felt it was more difficult for them to cope with being away from their families, than the other way around, because their families have the support of the extended family (3FGW). Another migrant worker stated that they “sacrificed” themselves in order to provide a better living for their family back home (1FGW).

Overall, workers indicated they enjoyed their time in New Zealand, even though they found the climate challenging, and the work sometimes monotonous. In their free time workers demonstrated a willingness to interact with New Zealanders within the community, particularly through local church groups. Although workers missed their families greatly, the skills and benefits gained through participation in the RSE scheme, in

particular the financial benefits, made the experience worthwhile for many migrants and their families.

The families of the ni-Vanuatu workers were happy that their sons and husbands were participating in the RSE scheme, with one mother stating that she was proud that her son was providing for his family, and was happy that he was “looking after the boys” (1F) in his position as a house chief in New Zealand. The families were grateful to the New Zealand government for establishing the RSE scheme and in so doing provide opportunities for the ni-Vanuatu men to work in New Zealand and send or bring money back to Vanuatu. The wives of RSE workers indicated they had a lot of power over this money, with one woman saying that she tells her husband “first you pay the school fees, then you build a house, then you can do some business” (2F). Indeed, during interviews with RSE workers, men indicated that the decision-making process when it came to deciding how to spend savings acquired from the RSE scheme was a “roundtable decision” (1FGW), indicating that the workers and their families cooperated in this process. While the workers were in New Zealand their families had to take on some extra responsibilities, for example, tending to livestock, and working in the gardens. While this was hard for the families at times, they felt it was worth the effort, as one woman said; “it is hard, but I’m happy he’s coming back with the money!” (3F).

Tanna Island community members during fieldwork were also very positive in regards to the impact the RSE scheme was having in Tanna. One respondent, a community leader, highlighted the social and economic gains made by migrants returning to the community with savings. He pointed out that by building permanent houses instead of traditional houses, returning RSE workers lessened their impacts on the surrounding environment, in particular the forest surrounding the village which was experiencing a shortage of traditional building materials due to population pressures. In relation to population pressures, the community leader stated that by providing opportunities for young men from his village to migrate abroad, issues such as food shortages and water shortages could be mitigated, as workers could remit money home during times of food or water shortages. On a more practical level, many RSE workers from the community leader’s village had installed water tanks, which were invaluable in collecting water during the rainy season, and holding it in store for times of water shortages. Due to the communal nature of Vanuatu society this water was shared within the community, strengthening

community bonds. The community leader also saw the RSE scheme as providing an opportunity to invest in the education of the community's children, which would enable the children to go on to further education, and ultimately find employment either on Tanna, in Port Vila or overseas. The second respondent, a local shop keeper, noticed many changes among the RSE workers, including changes in dress and behaviour. She said she could tell someone had been to New Zealand with the RSE scheme just by looking at them, saying "when you see them, you know – these people they came from New Zealand with the scheme – they're dressing good!" (2C). She also noted that in general the RSE workers were being careful with their money, but did point out, however, that the changes depended on how long the person had been in New Zealand, with people who had stayed for 6-7 months making a number of changes, while people who had stayed for 3-4 months not changing much at all.

The Vanuatu Department of Labour was also positive about the impact the RSE scheme was having on Vanuatu, with its representative pointing out that many RSE workers came from the outer islands and lacked access to formal employment opportunities. The Department of Labour representative stressed the importance of Vanuatu maintaining its excellent reputation in the RSE scheme, to enable the continued success of the scheme in Vanuatu. In this regard, during pre-departure briefings the Vanuatu Department of Labour encouraged the ni-Vanuatu RSE workers to be 'good' men during their time in New Zealand.

The desire for ni-Vanuatu migrants to be 'good men' was also certainly held by New Zealand RSE employers. Employers were generally happy with the ni-Vanuatu workers, as illustrated by this quote from a Blenheim employer: "they're keen to work, they listen, they're easy to train, they're hard workers, and they're really nice people" (2E). Perhaps most importantly the workers were seen as reliable. The issue of reliability came up in discussions with all three employers during interviews, with employers stating that a shortage of reliable workers was one of the main factors in their decision to enter the RSE scheme.

In terms of the general work ethic of the ni-Vanuatu workers, employers reported mixed feelings. One employer felt the workers had a good work ethic (2E), while the other two employers interviewed reported that some workers had poor attitudes towards work, that

they could make more money if they had a better work ethic, and that it usually took a month of working in New Zealand before their attitudes changed (1E, 3E). One employer stated that the ni-Vanuatu's work quality was above average, while their work load was below average (3E). All employers felt that the ni-Vanuatu workers were very friendly and good to work with.

These positive views were also expressed by vineyard supervisors spoken to during fieldwork. Vineyard supervisors were happy with the workload of the ni-Vanuatu workers and maintained a positive working relationship with the men. Vineyard supervisors spoken to during fieldwork stated that the ni-Vanuatu workers were very driven, and indeed in interviews with workers many expressed frustration at not being able to work longer hours.

Outside work hours, pastoral care workers provided practical assistance and guidance to the men. Pastoral care workers described their role in the RSE scheme as one of support; they were there to help the ni-Vanuatu migrants integrate into the community during their day to day lives. One pastoral care worker stated "I do it [pastoral care] because it feels like a [religious] calling" (1FGP). Indeed many of the pastoral care workers in Blenheim were members of local churches. Pastoral care workers had a positive view of the workers, saying that coming to New Zealand and working and living in a different culture required a great deal of courage (2FGP). The ni-Vanuatu men were grateful for the support of pastoral care workers, with one migrant worker saying "I think it's worth it to have pastoral carers because they care about people, they can show people where to go and what to do" (2W).

To conclude this section, it is evident that the participants of this study are mainly positive about the RSE scheme, and the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers. The following section on key themes will outline in more detail some of the key aspects of life for migrant RSE workers that emerged during fieldwork. These themes all contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors affecting the overall success or otherwise of workers' experiences within the RSE scheme.

## **Key Themes from the Fieldwork Data**

This section will examine the four main themes that emerged from the fieldwork data. These themes represent aspects of the RSE scheme, and in particular outcomes for ni-Vanuatu migrant workers, which emerged as being particularly interesting or important during fieldwork, and data analysis. Beginning with the theme of ‘Time’, the section will then examine the theme of ‘Money’, before looking at the theme of ‘Power and Dependency’, and concluding with the experiences of ‘Experienced Workers’.

### **Time management and changing concepts of time**

The issue of time management emerged as a key aspect of migrants’ experiences in the RSE scheme. The following section will outline the workers’ experiences of time management in New Zealand, their changing thoughts on the concept of time, and their changing use of time on their return to Vanuatu.

Time management has been singled out as one of the main things that the ni-Vanuatu men learned in New Zealand. During interviews with workers the issue of time was raised on a number of occasions, with men stating that they learned how to “be on time”, and how to “stick to time” (1FGW, 5W), and that their feelings and thoughts on time had changed as a result of being in New Zealand (2FGW, 2W, 7W). Employers also noted that workers’ attitudes towards time were changing, and that the workers were gaining a greater understanding of time, or the concept of time (2E, 3E).

While in New Zealand workers were responsible for managing their free time, as well as their work time on the vineyard. The majority of vineyard work was carried out on a contract rate, as opposed to an hourly rate. This meant that workers had an incentive to manage their time to optimise the amount of work they could do each day. For example, while working on contract rate almost all the workers observed during fieldwork skipped their fifteen minute morning break and continued working until lunch time. Even at lunch time many workers either only stopped for water, or only stopped for around ten or fifteen minutes. Workers could be seen running from row to row on the vineyard in order to increase their pace and in turn their earnings (Participant observation 21/6). The earning potential of a vineyard worker on contract rate depends entirely on how fast the individual

works, as although he or she cannot control the contract rate offered by the employer, they can control their own speed.

The difference in speed between an average worker and a fast worker basically came down to technique and motivation. Good technique involved good hand-eye coordination, as the job often involved making quick cuts and snips. Also, workers that were fast had a set routine that they repeated for each vine. As vineyard work is repetitive it was important to get into a rhythm, and to not ‘over think’ the job. During observations, the ni-Vanuatu workers that were quick had a certain amount of determination and focus about them, and their movements were quick and deliberate. They had a routine they used on every vine. The ni-Vanuatu workers that were slower did not have a set routine for each plant, and soon fell behind during work (Participant observation 21/6). Having a routine allowed the quicker workers to spend less time per vine overall, and over the course of a day where the workers repeated the same task hundreds of times the seconds saved on each vine soon added up.

To illustrate the importance of time management on the vineyard, if two workers each work an eight hour day (not including breaks or time between rows), and one worker spends 25 seconds on each vine and the other spends 30 seconds on each vine, the faster worker will do 1152 vines, while the slower worker will do 960 vines – a difference of nearly 200 vines. In monetary terms, if each vine is worth 12 cents on contract rate, this means the faster worker will earn \$138 while the slower worker will earn \$115. If this difference is extrapolated out over a six day week the faster worker would earn \$828 while the slower worker would earn \$690. All because one worker spends a mere five seconds less on each vine during the working day. These figures, although hypothetical, give an indication of the value of time on the vineyard. As one worker said, “you say [in New Zealand] ‘time is money’, so you have to do things more faster, more quicker, then you get more money” (4FGW). Clearly, these figures show the importance of workers being aware of their time management while on the job, as this has a direct impact on their earnings.

As mentioned above, men indicated that they were beginning to equate effective time management with making money. Statements such as “every single time you waste that’s where you lose a penny” (1FGW) and “you work on time, you make money, you waste

time, you waste money” (5W) show these changing attitudes. Migrants also expressed a desire to transfer this understanding back to Vanuatu, saying things such as “I’m trying my best to take the time from New Zealand, to work on the island, because *time*, time is money” (7W). The migrants’ focus on time and money can also be seen to reflect an awareness of their responsibilities towards their families and home communities in Vanuatu, who may also have a lot invested, both economically and socially, in the migration of the RSE worker.

Life in Vanuatu is more relaxed and laid back than in New Zealand, and this pace of life was referred to by many during fieldwork as “Island time” (Observation 9/7). One pastoral care worker who had travelled to Vanuatu said it was “like going back in time” (2P). As the representative from the Vanuatu Department of Labour put it, “Here people go around doing their own things, at their own time. It’s more like a subsistence community, so you work for yourself and any time that suits you” (1G).

The majority of ni-Vanuatu men were unemployed before joining the RSE scheme, and had a lot of free time. Men indicated they lived a “simple life” (1FGW). All men indicated they worked on family gardens during the day, which are an important part of life in Vanuatu. Other men also went hunting and fishing during the day, while others did community work, which included cleaning villages and repairing roads in winter. Meeting people and talking in general is a major component of life in Vanuatu, with a NGO worker stating during fieldwork “they are a nation of talkers” (Observation 9/7). This demonstrates the social and communal nature of Vanuatu society. For ni-Vanuatu men, meeting and drinking kava together was an important aspect of daily life, and many men drank kava every day (Observation 22/7). Generally time management on Tanna was not a priority, as unless a person had a job there was not a lot that urgently needed to be done (Observation 12/7). As one worker stated, “You know, here in Vanuatu we don’t see time as important to us” (1W). This meant that things such as starting work (for example on gardens) at a set time, or meeting a person at a particular time were not considered important (1FGW, Observation 21/6).

However, as a result of participating in the RSE scheme some of the ni-Vanuatu men have begun to manage their time differently on their return to Vanuatu. One group of men stated they tried to follow New Zealand time on their return, for example waking early,

working until lunchtime, taking a break, and then continuing to work in the afternoon (3FGW). Others said they thought about how they could use their time more effectively when they returned (1W, 3W, Observation 21/6), linking effective time management with increased productivity. There was also an indication that the men's increased value for time meant that they were more likely to keep appointments with people, rather than arrive late or not arrive at all. As one migrant worker stated "if someone says I have to go at this time to see him, I must go at that time. But [before going to New Zealand] when they say you have to come 8 o'clock sometimes I come around 9,10 o'clock! Now I'm keeping my time, eh. If you say you want to see me this time, I'll see you that time" (2W). The increased reliability - in terms of punctuality - of workers was also highlighted by the representative from the Vanuatu Department of Labour, who said that before the men leave Vanuatu "there has to be a pre-departure briefing, and sometimes they'll come in late, or we have to wait, but when they come back (from New Zealand) you know, it's like when we say we'll debrief at 2pm they'll be here at 1.30pm" (1G).

Overall the results suggest that migrants' perceptions of time, and value for time, are changing as a result of participating in the RSE scheme. This changing perception of time has had an impact in New Zealand, with workers more aware of how they can manage their time effectively on the vineyard to increase their earnings. In Vanuatu it has been shown that migrants are returning with a different understanding of the value of time. Workers are beginning to look for ways to use time to their advantage. This attitude may have positive impacts on the reliability and productivity of returned workers as well as spin-off benefits for families and communities within Vanuatu. With the ni-Vanuatu workers looking to use time productively to increase their earning potential, migrants are demonstrating that they are responsible members of their home communities, and are seeking to meet economic and social obligations.

As examined above, migrants have indicated an increased understanding of the importance of time, as well as the links between time and money. These make up part of the overall experience of ni-Vanuatu workers with money management, which will be discussed next.

### **Money management and changing concepts of money**

Further to their management of time, migrants have also learned how to manage their money, both in New Zealand, and on return to Vanuatu. This section will examine the workers' experiences regarding money in New Zealand, including its management, and pressures associated with managing money. A description of how money earned during workers' time in New Zealand is used in Vanuatu, examining how workers' management of money has changed will then follow.

The workers highlighted money management as being one of the main skills they gained in New Zealand. Men reported that they learned how to budget their money, as they had to decide how to manage the \$80 per week provided for food and other expenses (1FGP, 1W). As one worker stated "You've got one week – if you mismanage your finances you're in trouble!" (4FGW). In order to keep costs down some men decided to shop and cook together (1FGW, 2W), although others felt more comfortable shopping and cooking for themselves (3FGW). All of the men tried to save some money from their weekly allowance, with some spending as little as \$20-\$40 per week in order to send money home to Vanuatu (4FGW, 2W, Participant observation 21/6).

As suggested above, the \$80 per week provided for food and other expenses was carefully managed by workers. For some, the careful management of their money actually led to negative outcomes. To illustrate an example, employers and pastoral carers noted that when the ni-Vanuatu workers first arrived in New Zealand they often ate poorly, which affected their work productivity and health in general (2E, 3E, 2FGP, 3P). According to pastoral carers, the reason the men did not eat well at the beginning of their time in New Zealand was that they wanted to save money, and did not want to spend more money than necessary on food (2FGP). While employers and pastoral care workers have addressed this issue, this demonstrates how important saving money is to the ni-Vanuatu migrants.

Migrants all aimed to take home a lump sum at the end of their time in New Zealand, and remitted money home when able to or when required. As one worker put it, "we save up a lump sum, that's for the end of our stay here, but all other allowances we have every week, we use a little bit on food, and then save a little bit, and that's it, we send a little bit of that home" (1W).

Pastoral care workers indicated that the ni-Vanuatu were good at saving money, and they had empathy for the men in terms of their financial situation, with one pastoral care worker saying “we underestimate the pressures that are put on the men to send money home” (2FGP). The pastoral carer went on to say that some workers’ families “just have dollar signs in front of their eyes” (2FGP). Employers and pastoral care workers have pushed home the message that spending money on expensive cell phones, clothes, or computers is not a good idea for the workers, and that they should take their money home with them. As one pastoral care worker stated, “the guys come out here and earn their money, go home with a pocketful of money, and the RSE contractors are saying ‘take your money *home*, don’t spend it here’...it’s just an education thing, you know, your money’s a lot better off at home” (2P).

As discussed previously, one of the main aims of the RSE scheme is for participating migrant workers to earn money to send or take home. Workers have learned how to manage their finances and how to live on a budget. Although some workers spent their money on expensive electronic equipment and clothing in New Zealand, for most men pressures from home meant they were restricted in many ways financially as well as socially. Even though it was difficult for the men to live within such a restricted budget, for most it was worth it for the benefits seen on their return to Vanuatu.

For many migrants, the money management skills they learned in New Zealand were transferred back to Vanuatu. One worker said he was more careful with his money in Vanuatu, saying:

I try to save up – if I have 10 dollars in my pocket I try to keep it instead of spending it for things like...no need. Yes, like I just *like* it, I want to spend it but I think ‘no’, I don’t need. It’s one of the things I learned in New Zealand about myself” (3FGW).

Families also noticed a difference in the spending behaviours of returned RSE workers, with one family saying that “he (the worker) used to be someone that wasted money, now he’s changed and he’s better with his money” (1F). Another returned migrant worker, speaking about his friend, said “(He) was drinking kava like me, and other boys, having

alcohol, but when he went over to New Zealand and came back he changed, like he don't have any more alcohol and he started to save up money, and he start to plan his money to do a good business" (2W).

All workers interviewed felt that their participation in the RSE scheme had brought real benefits to their families. This quote from a worker in Blenheim illustrates the general feelings of the men: "personally, for myself, back in my household I could see that our lifestyle, and our standard of living – it's not the same. It's changing, I mean it's developed - it's getting better" (1FGW).

Families themselves reported that their lives were getting "easier" and "better" (2F, 3F), mainly because of the financial support the remitted money and lump sum savings provided. Families found it tough having the men away, especially in terms of missing the person, and the extra work that had to be done in the gardens, although most had the support of their extended family (3FGW, 4FGW, 1W, 2W, 6W).

Money taken home by migrants was used for many different purposes, although savings were mainly spent on building and renovating houses, paying school fees, and starting small businesses. Some workers have also spent savings on water tanks, vehicles, boats and fishing equipment. Others have used their savings to pay bride prices.

Workers also took things back with them from New Zealand, or sent things back in containers. Among the items taken or sent back were solar panels, hand tools, power tools, sewing machines, a microwave, toasters, electric kettles, a freezer, second hand beds, duvets, sheets, mattresses, second hand furniture, and bicycles (2FGP, 4FGW, 2C).

Overall, solar panels were the most popular item men took back to Vanuatu, because they were able to fit inside workers' suitcases (2FGP). By using solar panels men stated they were able to save money on kerosene, which could then be spent elsewhere (4FGW). Taking and sending things such as solar panels back to Vanuatu could be seen as helping to improve the lives of families, and also offsetting the negative aspects of having a family member away for an extended period.

In terms of starting small businesses, some men had established small general stores within their villages, started driving taxis, established fuel stores, and planted cash crops. Other men stated they would like to build a guest house for tourists in the future. Often men who had not established small businesses indicated that it was one of their goals for the future. The men felt that having a small business would enable them to have a sustainable income coming in through the year.

One of the most obvious benefits for families has been the building of new houses. On Tanna five out of the six ni-Vanuatu workers interviewed during fieldwork were in the process of building new houses, with the remaining worker's house already completed. Families indicated they appreciated the new houses more than traditional houses because they were safer during the cyclone season and did not have to be replaced or repaired as often (1F, 4FGW, 1C). Not explicitly stated by the ni-Vanuatu interviewed during fieldwork was the fact that a permanent house in Vanuatu reflected well on the person who owned the house, with the feeling that the person was successful, so the indication was that a permanent house also represented a sign of status within the community (Observation 18/7).

Also impacting on the migrants' social status, some men used their money to help others, both within their family and community. Last year one worker donated \$600 to help rebuild his church, and this year he donated \$400 (6W). Another worker donated an undisclosed amount to his church, and gave some money to family members (3W). One man bought his father a boat (3FGW), while another built his father a bungalow (5W). An enterprising worker established a shop and bought his mother a sewing machine, which she used to make clothes to sell in the shop (Observation 13/7). Other workers aimed to benefit their community by providing an example to others, stating:

When we go back to Vanuatu we *show* them, we show them the fruit of our work in here, in New Zealand. We show them that if you happen to go to New Zealand this is what you can do – if I go to New Zealand and come back and buy a water tank then you can do the same (1FGW).

The returned migrants who had shared their money, particularly with their local churches, gained a great deal personally from these altruistic gestures. Labelling these as 'altruistic

gestures', however, may be missing the social significance of the donation of money to community groups. Within a Pacific context, where values such as reciprocity and cooperation are highly important, these donations may be seen more as a means of maintaining or enhancing a person or family's social status, or even as an obligation to the community. Positively, after giving money to his church, one worker felt that the feedback he received from the community was one of trust towards him, which for him translated into increased self confidence (3FGW). Another said he felt proud to be giving the church and his family money, and he felt that this had increased his respect within his community (3W).

Overall these results demonstrate that migrants have gained skills in managing money effectively. Successful money management in New Zealand enabled remittances to be sent home to Vanuatu, as well lump sum savings to be taken back on return. Remittances and savings were used for a variety of purposes in Vanuatu, which benefited workers, their families and their communities. This indicates that one of the main aims of the RSE scheme – to bring economic and social benefits to participating workers and their families – is being achieved.

Although these results reflect clear development outcomes for participating ni-Vanuatu RSE workers and their families, of some concern is the top-down and paternal nature of the relationship between the RSE team, including employers and pastoral care workers, and the ni-Vanuatu migrants. These issues will be further examined in the following section.

### **Power issues and ni-Vanuatu worker dependence on the RSE team**

In some ways the relationships between the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers and their New Zealand pastoral care workers can be seen as contributing to a situation of ni-Vanuatu dependency on pastoral care support. Furthermore, relationships between the workers and their RSE employers are characterised by a power imbalance, which allows the management style of employers to be top-down and coercive in nature. This section will examine these relationships in more detail, identifying aspects that may be holding the ni-Vanuatu migrants back in terms of developing further skills and knowledge through their work and non-work experiences in New Zealand.

### *Ni-Vanuatu dependence on pastoral care support*

The ni-Vanuatu men involved in the RSE scheme had significantly different life skills and knowledge compared to the skills and knowledge that were required to live and work in New Zealand. This meant the men naturally required some support and assistance in their work and non-work lives. This support mainly came from employers, supervisors, and pastoral carers. However, some migrants were beginning to question the amount of support received. As one worker put it: “the RSE team is always there for us, and it’s kind of...I think it’s blindfolding us, I mean, they should make us know how to solve our own problems, and they have to give us some distance” (5W). This worker sees the support of pastoral care workers and RSE employers as restricting opportunities for the men to learn and develop skills and knowledge independently. According to the worker, if pastoral care workers and employers are constantly solving problems for the men then opportunities for independent self-development are limited.

One factor that may have influenced the migrants’ dependence on pastoral care and community support was the belief of the workers themselves regarding their capacity to successfully live and work in New Zealand. During fieldwork the ni-Vanuatu men made constant reference to the ‘white man’s world’ and the ‘black man’s world’. The division between the ‘white man’s world’ and the ‘black man’s world’ came up in a number of different contexts, but almost always comparing one location to the other, or one people to the other. Almost always the reference to the ‘white man’s world’ was positive, while the reference to the ‘black man’s world’ was negative. To illustrate some examples, migrants spoke about wanting to learn how to “live like the white man” (4W), and gaining confidence – “confidence to talk to the white man” (2FGW). In contrast, other workers talked about “black man walking” in reference to the ni-Vanuatu having to walk everywhere (Observation 14/7), and a pastoral care worker summarised the attitude of the ni-Vanuatu men (half jokingly) as “black man put hand out, white man put something in it” (Observation 15/6).

These attitudes could be seen as justifying the migrants’ dependence on pastoral care workers and members of the local New Zealand community; if the workers believed themselves to be inferior in some way it legitimised their ongoing dependence on this support. New Zealand employers, supervisors, pastoral care workers and members of the

local community also reinforced this situation of dependence, in the manner of their relationships with the ni-Vanuatu migrants which, although positive, were in some ways like that of a parent-child relationship.

Pastoral care workers had perhaps the most direct influence on migrants' lives while in New Zealand. Although the relationship between pastoral care workers and the ni-Vanuatu workers was largely positive, it was still something of a 'parent-child' relationship, perhaps reflecting a subconscious colonial mindset in pastoral care workers. This meant that from the pastoral care workers' perspective the ni-Vanuatu men could be "very demanding" and "high maintenance" (1FGP). The relationship was beginning to change, however, as pastoral carers, as well as employers, were looking to 'step back' from the ni-Vanuatu to enable them to help themselves. To give an example, during fieldwork a worker called a pastoral care worker because the light bulb in his room had blown. In the first season the pastoral care worker would have driven to the supermarket, bought a new bulb, and replaced it herself. This season, however, the pastoral care worker told the ni-Vanuatu worker to go to the supermarket and buy a new bulb, and replace it himself. This change in attitude and approach to dealing with workers' requests can obviously be seen to have the potential to lead to positive learning experiences. As a result of these changes the ni-Vanuatu were becoming less dependent on pastoral care workers and employers for daily assistance. As one pastoral carer put it, "it can be a bit like bringing up children – if you do everything for them then human nature being what it is they'll just take advantage of it, so you have to find that balance between saying 'well you can do that, you're quite capable of doing that, but I'll do this'" (1P). Other pastoral carers held similar views, saying things such as "they're fully capable people, they can do everything they want to do" (2P), and "I don't want to baby sit them – I want to support them" (3P).

During interviews some men raised the possibility of having ni-Vanuatu pastoral carers in the future. The workers felt that they knew how to talk to their people, they knew what they needed, and they would like to do things their own way (1W, 2W, 5W). All workers stated they were happy with their pastoral care, but experienced workers indicated that while pastoral care was important for first year workers, it was less important for experienced workers, who could look after themselves to an extent (3FGW, 1W, 2W, 5W). Instead of relying on their pastoral care workers, it seemed that men were beginning

to seek advice and assistance from the more experienced workers. This shift indicated a decreasing dependence on pastoral carers.

The relationship between members of the local community in Blenheim and the ni-Vanuatu workers was also good. However, one observation made during fieldwork was that in some ways the support of local community groups could lead to a 'competition of care' between the community and pastoral care workers. For example, local Blenheim churches were quick to support the ni-Vanuatu with clothes and food, and they should be commended for this. However, one pastoral care worker noted that this assistance was sometimes parallel to assistance from pastoral carers, and that it had resulted in more work for the pastoral carers. An example of this was when a local church worker called a pastoral carer asking why the workers did not have heaters in their rooms. The workers did have heaters, but they were still in their boxes, in their rooms, unopened (1FGP). The pastoral carer labelled these people in the community as "well intentioned but ill informed do gooders" (1FGP).

From the perspective of pastoral care workers, this parallel assistance may also have served to undermine their authority. The support churches offered was in some cases needed, for example the donation of warm clothing, although in other cases it seemed as though some members of the church community mistrusted the pastoral carers, or thought that the ni-Vanuatu were not being provided with sufficient support. As noted in fieldwork observations, "if the ni-Vanuatu are continually offered assistance by churches and other community groups it takes away the incentive to go out and help themselves", and "this seems to be reinforcing the view that New Zealanders have the answers to the ni-Vanuatu problems, and that the ni-Vanuatu are incapable of looking after themselves" (Fieldwork Journal 11/6). In other words, if the ni-Vanuatu become too dependent on the local church community to act as their advocates and provide clothing and food, then it places the workers in a role of dependency on these organisations. In contrast to the local community, however, the pastoral care workers were beginning to encourage the ni-Vanuatu migrants to take more responsibility in looking after themselves.

*The relationship between RSE employers and the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers*

As discussed in the opening section of this chapter, relationships between the ni-Vanuatu workers and their employers were top-down in nature, but mainly positive. Workers made statements such as “even though the boss is very strict, he wants us to progress and be successful” (1FGW). Like pastoral carers, employers were beginning to give the ni-Vanuatu workers more freedom: as one employer stated; “They’re their own individuals and we feel you’ve got to give people their own space, so we’re not there all the time, you know, checking on them. They’re grown adults and they have to have some responsibility for themselves” (1E). However, there was a feeling that the ni-Vanuatu men, from the perspective of employers, felt they were ‘owed’ a certain level of support. One employer went on to state that “sometimes it feels like we’re here to service them” (3E). In contrast some workers said that they felt “used” by the company (Participant Observation 22/6), with one worker stating that “our thoughts are that they’re getting more money out of us rather than we’re here to make money” (4FGW).

The relationship between an RSE employer and his ni-Vanuatu workers was illustrated during an initial induction meeting for new and experienced workers. The meeting in general was ‘top down’ with the boss obviously in charge and asserting his authority, although there seemed to be a friendly rapport between the boss and the workers (Observation 14/6). The overall impression was one of a headmaster addressing his pupils at the beginning of the school year (Observation 14/6). During the meeting the employer singled out one worker who had complained (wrongly) about his pay from the previous season, saying “one man – you – (pointing at him) complained about your pay. You wasted two hours of *my* time, with your stupid complaint” (Observation 14/6). Speaking to a pastoral care worker a few days after the meeting, the man singled out had not only made an incorrect complaint, but had actually gone behind the backs of the pastoral care workers and complained directly to the employer, which was not correct procedure. As far as the pastoral care worker was concerned the man was a “trouble maker”, and “got what he deserved”; being singled out in front of his friends and co-workers was an attempt to teach him more appropriate behaviour, albeit in a drastic manner (Observation 18/6).

Throughout the meeting this employer encouraged the men to think about their wives and children, and how their lives would be affected if they were not able to come back to New

Zealand. By encouraging the workers to imagine how guilty they would feel if they could no longer participate in the RSE scheme the employer coerced the men into working hard and behaving well. He reiterated the need for the men to refrain from complaining about things, and in an induction handout sheet for the workers wrote:

My team have better things to do than listen to a bunch of men complain about things they simply don't seem to be able to understand – no matter how many times we explain it. From now on stupid complaints will mean you have no future with my company – you have been warned (Observation 14/6).

Generally this style of worker management appeared fairly coercive, although in defence of the employer he provided a high standard of pastoral care and accommodation for the ni-Vanuatu migrants. The fact that he employed ni-Vanuatu rather than workers from other RSE participating countries may have indicated a level of respect for the ni-Vanuatu workers, or, from a more cynical viewpoint, that the ni-Vanuatu migrants were easier to control than workers from other countries. The relationship between the employer and the men demonstrated that the ni-Vanuatu workers were largely dependent on their employer's favour, and if they stepped out of line they ran the risk of either being sent home or refused the possibility of returning in subsequent seasons. In other words the migrants carried the pressure of keeping their place within the RSE scheme during their time in New Zealand, and they relied on their employer to grant them that place. It seems that the dependent relationship between some RSE employers and ni-Vanuatu workers has been nurtured and perpetuated by these top-down, coercive, and intimidatory methods of worker management that in some ways reiterate colonial attitudes and practices. This style of worker management is clearly quite negative, and can be seen as contributing to the ni-Vanuatu workers' feelings of inferiority.

Overall these results suggest that while the ni-Vanuatu were dependent on the support of pastoral care workers and members of the local community during the initial stages of the RSE scheme, the situation had begun to change. Experienced workers were starting to seek more independence, and pastoral care workers and employers were beginning to give them this freedom. Although the situation is developing, there is still a strong element of ni-Vanuatu dependence on outside support, and unequal power relations between RSE

employers and workers. Some of the inferior mindsets of the ni-Vanuatu men themselves have had a role in maintaining this power imbalance and dependence on outside support, in that the men may have felt they lacked the capacity to live and work in New Zealand without this framework of support. Likewise the mindsets of the employers, supervisors, pastoral care workers and local community may have also had a role, in casting the ni-Vanuatu as the ‘helpless ni-Vans’. It seems apparent that a ni-Vanuatu dependence on pastoral care support benefits neither the workers nor the pastoral care workers. The unequal power relations on the other hand may actually be beneficial to RSE employers, in that they are able to maintain control of the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers.

Positively, experienced migrant workers, as mentioned above, are beginning to seek a greater degree of independence and freedom from their RSE employers and pastoral care workers. This outcome reflects one of the range of contributions experienced ni-Vanuatu RSE workers have brought to the RSE scheme, which will be further examined in the following section.

### **Experienced workers’ contribution to the success of the RSE scheme**

One of the aims of the RSE scheme is to encourage migrant workers to return in subsequent seasons, allowing for benefits for RSE employers and for the workers themselves. Migrants indicated they wanted to return to New Zealand to continue earning money, and to achieve their goals, which included building houses and establishing small businesses. A further point men noted was that the money they made over six or seven months in New Zealand was not enough to “meet our dreams” (4FGW), and so they returned. As one worker put it “as soon as you get a little money you have to go one step forward and then stop, and then another season, that’s another step” (5W).

Experienced workers brought skills and knowledge, which enabled them to contribute to life both on the vineyard as well as outside the vineyard in workers’ down time. As discussed above, one positive aspect that characterised experienced workers was their growing independence. This section will examine the role of experienced workers in New Zealand, focusing on their contribution to work-life on the vineyard, as well as their social contributions outside work hours.

### *Experienced workers on the vineyard*

Experienced workers returning on repeat contracts made up the majority of employees for all companies interviewed during fieldwork, with one company reporting that between 80% and 90% of its ni-Vanuatu work force was made up of returnees (1E). On the vineyard, experienced workers were valued by employers and supervisors, primarily because they knew the basics of vineyard work, they had done the job before, and they understood what it entailed (1S). Experienced workers were able to pick up new jobs a lot more easily after coming back to New Zealand, because they understood the basic concepts involved in the work, and could transfer skills and knowledge gained in previous seasons (3E).

Experienced workers were given some extra responsibilities on the vineyard, for example as supervisors, as second-in-charge to supervisors, and as drivers. One of the main benefits for employers was that experienced workers actively supported new workers on the vineyard. This support was not a requirement of the men, but occurred naturally without direction from employers. However, there was an “expectation” from employers and supervisors that experienced workers would support new workers on the vineyard (1E, 3E).

Experienced workers supported new workers in a number of different ways, for example, explaining the specifics of a vineyard task in Bislama, giving advice on technique, translating what the supervisor was saying, and explaining why the supervisor was telling the men to do something (Participant observation 21-23/6). This support obviously benefited the supervisors too - an example of which can be illustrated by the procedure for dealing with rain on the vineyard. Work on a vineyard would continue in steady light rain, but when the rain got heavier the supervisor would make the decision to pull the workers off the vineyard, and to go home for the day. New workers complained that they were missing out on work, but experienced workers were able to explain that working in the rain could lead to people becoming sick, which could result in losing two or three days work later on (1S).

Experienced workers were seen by employers as being more reliable and productive, and were making more money as a result (3E). One supervisor stated that two men who were two of the slowest workers in the previous season had returned, and were now two of the fastest workers (1S). Contract rates (where workers were paid per vine, instead of being on an hourly rate) for vineyard work had dropped from previous seasons, with one employer stating that there were some “ridiculous” (very low) rates around (2E). However, one of the positive characteristics of experienced workers was that they knew the job well, so they were able to make money even though contract rates had decreased (3FGW). Experienced workers took very little time to get back into vineyard work, with reports of workers “flying” out of work vans (1FGP) and “hitting the ground running” (2E).

Experienced workers not only supported new workers on the vineyard, but also outside the working environment, assisting new men in a number of different ways. This support proved beneficial to the new workers, as well as to employers and pastoral care workers, as will be discussed in the following section.

### *Experienced workers outside the work environment*

Experienced workers outside the work environment were an integral part of the social support system for new workers. Even though a high percentage of the ni-Vanuatu were migrant workers returning on repeat contracts, there was still a role to play in supporting new men socially in their daily lives. Additionally, having a high percentage of men who had been to New Zealand before, and understood what life in New Zealand entailed, reduced the workload of pastoral carers (2P). Experienced migrants supported new men in a number of ways: showing colleagues how to use ATMs to withdraw money; pointing out where places around town were, such as supermarkets, churches, and second hand shops; showing what kind of food to buy; demonstrating how to live on a budget, for example by teaching new men not to buy milk or bread from a dairy or service station; explaining how to fill in forms and what forms were for; helping men integrate into a new, unfamiliar culture; and liaising between house members and pastoral carers (1P, 2P, 3P, 2FGP, 3E). The experienced ni-Vanuatu workers compared to first season workers were, according to pastoral carers, much more outgoing, keener to meet people, and a lot more confident (2P, 2FGP). Experienced migrant workers were able to blend into New Zealand

life a lot better, and they were able to reunite with friends in New Zealand, and maintain those friendships (2P). The experienced migrant workers not only maintained friendships with friends in New Zealand; as a result of the RSE scheme the workers developed close relationships with ni-Vanuatu from different communities and islands in Vanuatu. These relationships may have the potential to increase the social connectedness of workers when they return to Vanuatu.

A negative issue that has affected the ni-Vanuatu migrants in the past has been in regards to their health. Some men during the first season would carry an injury, or would be sick and not tell anyone, because they did not know what to do. This situation has changed, however, and experienced workers were confident enough to let employers or pastoral care workers know when they were unwell, and were passing on this advice to new workers (2P). Other workers lost a lot of weight during their time in New Zealand because they were not eating healthily. Furthermore, in the first season many workers came out in boils because of the change in food and diet. They had to be told about the importance of a healthy diet and the importance of taking a good lunch to work with them, to enable them to work productively through the day (1P). Experienced workers understood these issues and were taking steps to improve their diets, as well as imparting this knowledge on to new workers.

Overall these results demonstrate the benefits that experienced migrant workers have brought to the RSE scheme. Experienced workers have contributed in a number of different ways to the success of the RSE scheme: in their support of new workers and supervisors in the workplace; in their support of new workers and pastoral carers outside working hours; in the practical vineyard skills and knowledge possessed which bring personal benefits on the vineyard; and in the practical New Zealand life skills and knowledge possessed which can enable return workers to adapt to New Zealand life more successfully. It would seem that experienced workers were more successful in their work lives as well as non-work lives as a result of their previous experience, and may also have gained skills and experience in their informal leadership roles while living and working in New Zealand.

## Chapter Summary

The findings of this study have shown that the RSE scheme is bringing benefits to participating ni-Vanuatu workers and their families. Migrants have gained skills in time management and money management, and have begun to utilise these skills on their return to Vanuatu. The workers' conception of 'time' and 'money' has shifted as a result of their experiences in New Zealand. At a broader scale the remittances transferred back to Vanuatu by workers have brought tangible benefits to workers and their families, in the form of new houses being built, school fees being paid, and small businesses established. Less tangible benefits, including increased confidence, have also been gained by the ni-Vanuatu migrants.

The increased confidence among many of the ni-Vanuatu RSE workers can be partly explained by the enhanced social status of the men who have supported their families and communities on their return to Vanuatu. Additionally, now that many ni-Vanuatu workers are into their third and fourth season of participation in the RSE scheme, their confidence in managing their work and non-work lives in New Zealand has increased, in conjunction with their increasing skills, knowledge and experience.

However, in order for the ni-Vanuatu to live, work and survive in New Zealand, it is necessary to ensure that the workers are adequately supported. This support primarily comes from their RSE employer and pastoral care workers, and in many ways is essential, contributing to the success of the RSE scheme. However, the relationship between the New Zealand RSE team (including RSE employers, supervisors and pastoral care workers) and the ni-Vanuatu workers is somewhat top-down and paternal in many ways, and this can be seen as contributing to a situation of dependency on the RSE team on the part of the ni-Vanuatu workers. The dependent relationship between the RSE team and the ni-Vanuatu migrants is beginning to change, however, with employers and pastoral care workers on one hand saying they need to give the workers more space and freedom to make their own decisions, and the ni-Vanuatu workers on the other hand - particularly experienced workers - stating that they need more independence from their employers and pastoral care workers.

As discussed, the experienced migrant workers returning on repeat contracts have brought a number of benefits across the RSE scheme, including supporting new workers on and off the vineyard, which also benefits both employers and pastoral care workers. Furthermore, employers also welcome the return of productive and reliable workers, which brings obvious benefits to their companies, and at a broader scale, to the Marlborough wine industry. Perhaps most importantly, experienced workers themselves have gained individually, particularly in the form of their increased productivity on the vineyard, which has largely come from industry-specific skills and knowledge gained from previous seasons. This increased productivity has, for some, translated into increased earnings.

Although these findings show that there are clear benefits for ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families, there are also some aspects of the RSE scheme that are not as positive, particularly the top-down, coercive, and paternal nature of the relationship between the ni-Vanuatu workers, and their RSE support team. The next chapter will move on to discuss the findings discussed above in relation to the conceptual framework of the thesis, as outlined in Chapters Two and Three.

## **Chapter Six - Examining the Social Development Outcomes of Participation in the New Zealand RSE scheme for Ni-Vanuatu Migrants**

### **Introduction**

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, this current age of migration is characterised by migrants' mobility (United Nations, 2006). The multi-dimensional nature of contemporary migratory flows is much influenced by circular migration. Programmes enabling migrant circularity have been advocated by development organisations such as the World Bank, as well as government policy makers and academics, who contest that the nature of circular migration enables benefits for all involved: participating circular migrants, their countries of origin, and their countries of destination (OECD, 2008; Vertovec, 2007; World Bank, 2006). Inherent in the success of circular migration programmes, from a social and economic development perspective, is the fact that migrants are able to gain access to the labour markets of hosting countries, and in doing so earn money, gain experience, skills and knowledge, and establish and strengthen social networks. As migrants circulate between their home and host country, these benefits may then be transferred to migrants' home communities, furthering the development aspirations of those at the grassroots.

Specifically focused on those at the grassroots level in the Pacific, the New Zealand RSE scheme is a temporary migration programme that facilitates migrant circularity, and seeks to enable social and economic development outcomes for participating migrants and their countries of origin. The results of this study, as presented in Chapter Five, suggest that ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families, who primarily come from poor and rural areas of Vanuatu (McKenzie et al., 2008), have gained a number of economic and social benefits from their participation in the RSE scheme. This chapter will discuss these findings in the context of the current literature, as presented in Chapters Two and Three. As outlined in Chapter One, this thesis focuses on the social and economic development outcomes of participation in the RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu migrant workers, and as such, this chapter will begin with a brief overview of the social and economic outcomes of participation in the RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families, before moving on to discuss the key research findings, and concluding with a brief summary.

## **Outcomes of Participation in the RSE scheme for Ni-Vanuatu Migrant Workers and their Families**

Reflecting on the outcomes for ni-Vanuatu migrants participating in the New Zealand RSE scheme, and as outlined in the previous chapter, it is apparent that for many, participation has brought tangible benefits. First and foremost, workers earn and save money which they transfer back to Vanuatu, either as remittances, or as lump sum savings. This money is then used for a variety of purposes, but is mainly spent on housing, education, and small business development, benefiting migrants and their families. As Ratha (2007) states, remittances can play an effective role in reducing poverty, and because remittances and savings go directly to the families of migrants, the families' specific needs and wants are realised, enabling those receiving remittances to meet their own development goals and aspirations. In this regard, remittances can enable bottom-up development initiatives, which as De Haas (2005) asserts, may prove to be more effective at facilitating economic and social development than traditional top-down approaches. These outcomes would seem to demonstrate that one of the primary aims of the RSE scheme is achieved; to reduce poverty at the grassroots level in the Pacific (Gibson et al., 2008).

In addition to the obvious economic outcomes for migrant-sending households, remittances also maintain and strengthen migrants' social connections with their families and communities (Chimhowu et al., 2005; Connell & Brown, 2005). In the context of this study, the investment of remittances and savings in children's education, as well as the construction of permanent houses, have resulted in observable social development outcomes for ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families, as will be discussed in further detail in this chapter. In addition, remittance spending may also result in high social returns, such as human capital gains (Chimhowu et al., 2005; Connell & Brown, 2005; Ratha, 2007).

As well as human capital gains from remittance spending, ni-Vanuatu migrants have made human capital gains through their participation in the RSE scheme. These gains include time and financial management skills. These skills, when added to the industry-specific skills and knowledge learned during their time on the vineyards of New Zealand, and the cultural skills, knowledge and values migrants inherently possess, enable workers to fulfil

economic and social obligations to their families and communities in Vanuatu. While there is debate on the value of the skills and knowledge transferred by low-skilled migrant workers to their home communities (Ammassari & Black, 2001), it would appear that the skills and knowledge ni-Vanuatu migrant workers gain are most useful in terms of their success in strengthening and maintaining their position as circular labour migrants, and in remitting money, gifts in kind and lump-sum savings back to their families and home communities. Furthermore, the skills and knowledge experienced ni-Vanuatu circular migrants possess enable them to adapt culturally to both life in New Zealand, and life in Vanuatu. In this sense, migrants have a degree of cultural adaptability, which allows them to successfully manage the very different cultural settings they confront in New Zealand, and in Vanuatu.

As the points discussed above demonstrate, ni-Vanuatu migrant workers and their families are making positive development gains from their participation in the RSE scheme, in the form of financial, human, and social benefits. The economic gains of migrant workers have social development spin-off effects for migrants and their families, and the human capital gains of ni-Vanuatu migrant workers may have positive implications for their future as circular migrants. Although these outcomes present obvious benefits for the ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families, there are concerns regarding the top-down and restrictive management style of New Zealand RSE employers. In this regard, there are observable power issues at play which serve to keep the ni-Vanuatu workers in a submissive relationship with their employers. Furthermore, the relationship between pastoral care workers and the ni-Vanuatu migrants is paternalistic in nature, which has meant that migrants are somewhat dependent on pastoral care support. As Ruhs (2005) states, however, low-skilled migrant workers will accept some degree of restriction on their rights in order to ensure access to a developed country's labour market, indicating that power and dependency imbalances are inherent in temporary migration programmes such as the RSE scheme. Nevertheless, the degree of dependence is beginning to shift, as experienced ni-Vanuatu workers in their second and third seasons have begun seeking more independence from their RSE team.

Experienced workers entering New Zealand on repeat RSE contracts have brought a number of benefits to the RSE scheme. The primary benefit experienced migrants bring is their support of first season workers, both at work, and during non-working hours. This

support has flow-on effects, easing the responsibilities of RSE employers and pastoral care workers (Department of Labour, 2010). Indeed, the success of the RSE scheme, from the employers' perspective, involves the repeated circulation of these experienced migrant workers between Vanuatu and New Zealand (Department of Labour, 2010; Roorda & Nunns, 2009). Having experienced workers reduces training costs and ensures productivity levels are maintained. In this sense it may be argued that the skills and knowledge experienced workers possess are essential to the continued success of the RSE scheme

Accordingly, this study has identified four key research findings, as described above, which will be examined and discussed in further detail during the next section. The key research findings are:

- 1.) Ni-Vanuatu migrant workers enable a number of social and economic development outcomes to be realised by families and communities at the grassroots level in Vanuatu, through remittances, gifts in kind and lump-sum savings transferred by migrants to their families and home communities;
- 2.) The skills and knowledge ni-Vanuatu migrant workers gain through their participation in the RSE scheme are most useful, from a development point of view, in maintaining their positions as RSE workers, enabling cultural adaptability between Vanuatu and New Zealand, and ensuring the successful transfer of remittances, gifts in kind, and lump-sum savings;
- 3.) There are power issues at play which result in the ni-Vanuatu migrants being involved in a submissive relationship with their RSE employers. Moreover, the relationship between New Zealand pastoral care workers and ni-Vanuatu migrants is paternalistic in nature which results in the ni-Vanuatu being dependent on the support of pastoral care workers. However, this situation is beginning to change with the increasing independence of experienced ni-Vanuatu migrant workers.
- 4.) Experienced migrant workers bring many benefits to the RSE scheme, and therefore contribute to the overall success of the scheme both in New Zealand, and in Vanuatu.

## **Discussion of Key Research Findings**

Building on from the previous section, which outlined the key outcomes of participation in the RSE scheme for ni-Vanuatu migrant workers and their families, this section will expand upon the points discussed above, further linking key findings to the literature, as outlined in Chapters Two and Three, and including examples from the results of this research, as described in Chapter Five.

### **Social gains of ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families: The impacts of remittances, gifts in kind, and lump-sum savings**

As outlined in Chapter Two, it is widely recognised that remittance and savings transfers can contribute to social and economic development in migrant sending countries (Bedford et al., 2009; Connell & Brown, 2005; De Haas, 2005; IOM, 2008b). In particular, remittance transfers are seen as having the potential to contribute to development at the grassroots level, and are thus an increasing focus of many development organisations (Faist, 2008; World Bank, 2006). The ni-Vanuatu migrants interviewed during this study transferred remittances back periodically to family in Vanuatu while in New Zealand, mainly in response to specific requests from family members, although the primary form of capital transfer came in the form of lump-sum savings transferred by returning migrants. As previous studies have shown, remittance and savings transfers such as these can also help to maintain and strengthen migrants' social ties to their family, home community, and home country, as well as maintain or enhance migrants' social status within their home community (Connell, 1981, cited from Bedford et al., 2009, p. 17).

As discussed in the previous chapter, almost all workers interviewed used savings earned in New Zealand to build or renovate houses and pay for school fees, and for some, start small businesses. The use of savings for these purposes reflect strongly the findings of a range of studies on the RSE scheme, including Connell and Hammond (2009), the Department of Labour (2009b, 2010) and McKenzie and Gibson (2010). These positive outcomes also reflect the findings of Basok (2003), who found that Mexican seasonal labour migrants employed in Canada's SAWP also invested in housing, children's education and small business development, providing positive development benefits.

These results also reflect the outcomes of remittance transfers and savings in the Pacific context, with Borovnik (2006, p. 158) finding that families of I-Kiribati seafarers used remittance money to pay for school fees, and after basic needs were met, invested in brick houses and small stores.

The results presented in Chapter Five demonstrate that alongside economic gains for participating ni-Vanuatu migrants, social gains have also been made. An example of this is the increased investment in children's education, which Yang (2009, p. 10) labels as "human capital investment". Borovnik (2006) also raises the point that in Kiribati an investment in children's education represents an investment in both the future of the child, and in the future of the parents. In this regard children are expected to care for their aging parents in the future, in return for the investment in their education. This example demonstrates that remittance spending can have significant social flow-on effects; in this case, migrants' future financial and social security may be ensured by an investment in their children's education. These increased investments in children's education may also be seen as reflecting the growing value for education in Vanuatu, as supported by the government's decision to fully subsidise primary schooling for all students, implemented in early 2010 (McKenzie & Gibson, 2010).

A further use of migrants' savings involved the construction of permanent houses. The building of permanent houses may also produce intangible social benefits; as Gegeo (1998, p. 291) points out, such houses "provide comfort, and a sense of confidence, dignity and rootedness". Similarly, Connell and Brown (2005, p. 32) see the construction of permanent housing as contributing to welfare, security and prestige. In this regard it would appear that the building of permanent houses by ni-Vanuatu migrants may have significant social implications. Although a permanent house is a tangible object, many positive intangible outcomes may arise from its construction, and as Connell and Brown (2005) point out, for migrants, a permanent house symbolises achievement.

In addition to permanent houses, many of the ni-Vanuatu migrants also invested in water tanks on their return to Vanuatu. The tin roofs of permanent houses enable rain water to be channelled directly into water tanks. In parts of Tanna vulnerable to water shortages, these water tanks provide water to families and communities during times of need. Water tanks may also be seen as providing social benefits, not only to families, but also to the wider

community. As discussed in Chapter Five, families and communities often share water from individually owned tanks during water shortages. Due to the cooperative and reciprocal values of Melanesian society (Narokobi, 1983), this interaction can be seen as strengthening social bonds between members of the community. As Yang (2009, p. 16) asserts, rural households at the grassroots level in developing countries are highly prone to weather-related risks, and thus benefit from access to formal and informal insurance that may alleviate those risks. In the Vanuatu context, water tanks perhaps represent a form of insurance against water shortages, which may be supplemented by remittance demands from families during times of shortage.

A further form of remittance transfer from New Zealand to Vanuatu includes material goods, or gifts in kind. These transfers may maintain and strengthen social connections between migrants and their families (Chimhowu et al., 2005), as well as enhance the prestige of migrants and their families (Reysoo, 2008), secure migrants' future in case of external shocks (Chimhowu et al., 2005; Cliggett, 2003), and fulfil obligations to family members (Chimhowu et al., 2005). In this sense, the transfer of material possessions may reflect the social outcomes for migrants and their families that arise from financial transfers.

In the context of this study, solar panels were the most popular item sent back by ni-Vanuatu migrants. With many areas of Tanna not connected to the electricity network, solar panels enabled migrants and their families to have some level of electricity to light their homes, and provided enough power to charge cell phones and MP3 players. Some flow-on effects of solar panels were observed, further demonstrating their value, including the reduction in kerosene use due to light being provided by electric lamps rather than kerosene lanterns. This may not only save families money in terms of not having to purchase kerosene, but may also be safer for families' health. Also, if a permanent house symbolises achievement, as Connell and Brown (2005) assert, then the acquisition of solar panels must surely enhance this achievement. Although this is just one example, material items transferred back to Vanuatu by RSE migrants are clearly having a positive impact, both socially and economically.

Although it is apparent that the direct benefits of migrants' participation in the RSE scheme have gone to their families, as outlined in the previous chapter, migrants have also

donated money to extended members of their family, to their children's school, and to their local church. From a Western view point these donations can be seen as altruistic gestures from benevolent returning migrants, however, in a Pacific Islands context these types of donations may in fact be more a form of reciprocation, as well as intended to enhance the social standing of the worker and in turn the worker's family within their community. As Hau'ofa (1993, p. 115) points out, these gestures of reciprocity have a social significance that many economics-focused observers miss.

In this regard, as observed during fieldwork, ni-Vanuatu migrants discussed feeling proud of their contributions, particularly to local churches and schools. One respondent stated that he felt he had gained his community's trust, and in doing so had gained confidence. These are powerful social outcomes for the ni-Vanuatu migrants, and demonstrate the status migrants' gain from their distribution of earnings among their local community. Given the family- and community-oriented nature of Vanuatu society, these social gains may be extended beyond individual migrants. As Borovnik (2003, p. 288) states, families of migrant seafarers in Kiribati have gained respect and status within their local communities due to their improved capacity to share wealth. A similar outcome may become apparent in Vanuatu, particularly once families have met initial goals such as building a permanent house and establishing a small business.

It can be concluded that in the Vanuatu context, the investments made by RSE migrant sending households, including the construction of permanent housing, the payment of school fees, the purchase of water tanks, and the transfer of gifts in kind, contribute positively to social development. While an economics-focused summary of the RSE scheme's contribution to development at the grassroots level in Vanuatu may point to these investments as tangible proof of migrants' success, many intangible social development outcomes may also arise from these investments. These include an increase in migrant households' social status, an increased level of social security for the household, the maintenance and strengthening of migrants' social networks through remittance transfers, the maintenance and strengthening of community relations through reciprocal gestures, and increased confidence and pride among migrants and their families. In this sense these investments have led to important social development gains for migrants, their families, and their communities.

### **Development impacts of ni-Vanuatu migrant workers' human capital gains**

In addition to social development benefits, it is widely claimed that migrant workers may gain valuable skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes during their time abroad which can be used to further economic and social development on their return to their countries of origin (Bedford et al., 2009; GCIM, 2005; United Nations, 2006). As discussed in Chapter Two, however, there is some debate on whether low-skilled migrants actually do gain any valuable skills or knowledge during their time abroad, as “they only [do] unskilled work” (Ammassari & Black, 2001, p. 27). Nevertheless, the results of this study, as presented in Chapter Five, demonstrate that workers do in fact gain valuable skills and knowledge, even though some may consider vineyard work as being ‘unskilled’. As discussed, one of the main findings of this study is that ni-Vanuatu migrants have a degree of cultural adaptability, which allows them to adjust culturally according to the country they are in at any given time, be it Vanuatu or New Zealand. In this sense the skills, knowledge and experience gained in New Zealand are most relevant for migrants during their time in New Zealand. Likewise, ni-Vanuatu migrants’ own cultural backgrounds naturally allow them to successfully adjust back to life in Vanuatu on their return. It would seem then that the labelling of any type of work as ‘unskilled’ is a misnomer, as all work involves learning, utilising, and maintaining contextually relevant skills and knowledge of some kind, as Williams and Balaz (2008) attest. Furthermore, this focus on industry-specific skills and knowledge ignores other contexts in which migrants may gain skills, knowledge and experience.

#### ***Skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu migrants in New Zealand***

The results of this study, as outlined in Chapter Five, appear to reinforce the assertion of Williams and Balaz. Ni-Vanuatu migrants primarily gained skills necessary to successfully live and work in a New Zealand setting, such as time management and money management skills, as well as vineyard-specific skills. These results support the findings of other studies on the RSE scheme, including the Department of Labour’s comprehensive evaluations of the scheme (Department of Labour, 2009b, 2010).

While the migrant workers acknowledged that the vineyard skills and knowledge gained were useful, particularly for experienced workers returning to New Zealand on repeat contracts, of greater significance were the skills of time management and money management. Supporting these skills was the knowledge acquired by workers relating to the importance and value of effectively managing time and budgeting money. It would appear, then, that a dismissal of the value of skills and knowledge gained by low-skilled migrant workers may be due to the fact that previous literature has concentrated on skills and knowledge directly relevant to the industry in which the migrant worker was employed in (Bedford et al., 2009), and ignored non-industry skills and knowledge that migrants gain, which may support migrants' development aspirations both in their country of origin, and perhaps more importantly for circulating migrant workers, in their host country.

On this note, while in New Zealand, the workers used their time management skills to work effectively and productively during their working hours. Successful time management translated into increased earnings. Evidently, ni-Vanuatu migrants have successfully adapted to New Zealand work practices. The astute management of those earnings allowed workers to send remittances back to Vanuatu, as well as save up lump sums which were transferred back directly by workers themselves on their return to Vanuatu. When it is considered that the transfer of remittances and savings to Vanuatu is the primary purpose of migrants' lives in New Zealand (Maclellan, 2008), the successful management of time and money by ni-Vanuatu migrants has undoubtedly played a role in the overall success of the RSE scheme for Vanuatu, as outlined in Chapter Three. This success has come not only from the financial transfers of remittances and savings, but may also have come from the non-financial transfers of knowledge, skills and work-experience gained in New Zealand.

### ***Migrants' transfer of skills and knowledge to Vanuatu***

As discussed in Chapter Five, skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu workers in New Zealand have been transferred back to Vanuatu. The main skills and knowledge discussed within this study have been in relation to time and money; as one worker stated, "I'm trying my best to take the time from New Zealand, to work on the island" (7W). The results showed that workers intended to use the newly acquired time management skills on

their return to Vanuatu to improve their productivity: in working on family gardens; in building new permanent houses; and in working on newly-established small business enterprises. The results also demonstrated that workers used money management skills to manage the savings earned during their time in the RSE scheme. As discussed, the results of this study showed that ni-Vanuatu migrants have invested in service-oriented enterprises such as general stores. Where workers were planning future business enterprises these were also focused on the service sector, and primarily included plans for guest house bungalows for tourists. These results also support the findings of Connell and Hammond (2009, p. 89), who found that none of the ni-Vanuatu RSE workers in their study expressed any interest in establishing agricultural enterprises, due to issues including land shortages, a limited focus on agricultural development, and a disdain for agriculture among local people.

This investment in service-oriented small business enterprises by ni-Vanuatu migrants is worthy of note, because as many seasonal labour migrants participating in TMPs are employed in the receiving country's horticultural industry it is thought that the horticultural skills and knowledge acquired on the job will be useful and relevant to horticultural enterprises back in their home countries. This assertion that the skills and knowledge gained from working overseas can assist migrant workers in related industries, including crop production, on their return home appears somewhat Western-centric, further perpetuating the belief that the skills and knowledge of those in the West are superior to the skills and knowledge of those in developing countries (Briggs & Sharp, 2004, p. 662; McEwan, 2009). According to this perspective the West is seen as advanced, and the developing world as backward and primitive (McEwan, 2001). This view ignores the fact that agricultural and horticultural skills and knowledge in developing countries have been developed over hundreds, if not thousands, of years. These skills and knowledge are directly relevant to the conditions in which the crops are grown. This focus on "advanced" Western horticulture-specific skills (Chand, 2004, p. 12) appears to represent a modernistic vision of development, where migrant workers are expected to copy the 'superior' Western skills and knowledge and transfer these back to their home countries, in this case from New Zealand to Vanuatu. The use of these Western skills and knowledge is then expected to lead to positive developmental outcomes. This uncritical transfer can be seen as perpetuating the domination of Western knowledge and skills over forms of indigenous knowledge (Briggs & Sharp, 2004, p. 662). Hughes and Sodhi (2006,

p. 11) reinforce this Western-centric view by stating that “most people in the Pacific crave” the achievement of Western living standards, which presumably includes the associated Western skills, knowledge and values.

A clear example of Western values being adopted by ni-Vanuatu migrants was observed during fieldwork, with many ni-Vanuatu workers beginning to link effective time management with making money. As one worker stated during a focus group discussion – “Every single time you waste, that’s where you lose a penny” (1FGW). This statement reflects a Western value for time and money, which does not necessarily reflect traditional Pacific values and principles. The fact that this view has been adopted by many workers who have participated in the RSE scheme could be seen as contributing to the Westernisation of Vanuatu, and although not directly intending to, can be seen as undermining Melanesian values such as community cooperation, self-sacrifice, reciprocity, common ownership of resources, and strong kinship networks (Gegeo, 1998; Hau'ofa, 1993; Narokobi, 1983). The notion that time can be utilised in order to gain money reflects a capitalistic attitude, where almost everything can be seen as having an economic value. This attitude would appear to be in conflict with traditional Melanesian values. McEwan (2001) and Gegeo (1998) support this assumption, questioning whether the pursuit of capitalism, with its associated push for individualisation is more beneficial than indigenous knowledge, systems and values, such as those mentioned above. As Narokobi (1983, p. 14) states, “to work for others is part of the Melanesian spirit of caring for others”. This caring spirit is demonstrated by migrants’ wide range of contributions to families and communities which have in turn led to positive social development gains, as discussed in the previous section.

However, while ni-Vanuatu RSE workers have gained skills, knowledge and financial capital, and invested in children’s education, built permanent houses and established small business enterprises, the reality of life in Vanuatu, including limited infrastructure and employment opportunities, mean that for many the prospects of productive investment are restricted. In this regard the experiences of the ni-Vanuatu return migrants in this study match those of other return migrants: as outlined in Chapter Two, the underdevelopment of home communities, and the associated limited opportunities to utilise skills, knowledge and savings can severely restrict migrants’ efforts in establishing small business enterprises (Bedford et al., 2009; De Haas, 2005; Millbank, 2006).

Nevertheless, where there is scope for improving the productive use of returning RSE workers' skills, knowledge and financial capital is in the implementation of training and support systems within Vanuatu to assist migrants in establishing small enterprises (Bedford et al., 2009, p. 25; De Haas, 2005; Newland et al., 2008; Ruhs, 2005). Recognising this need, the Vanuatu Department of Labour has initiated steps to integrate, train, and support returning workers (Department of Labour, 2010). The Vanuatu Department of Labour's Employment Service Unit has requested funding from NZAID, the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation to support these initiatives (Department of Labour, 2010). This seems to be a step in a positive direction, particularly given that many ni-Vanuatu RSE participants are now into their third and fourth seasons, and have met initial goals such as building permanent houses. A further possibility, which has already been employed by some ni-Vanuatu migrants (Department of Labour, 2010), could be in the promotion of migrant community associations. This involves a group of workers forming an association based around their local community and contributing funds towards development projects, such as new school buildings or community water pumps (Faist, 2008; GCIM, 2005). As discussed in Chapter Three, Maclellan (2008) provides a case study of one such initiative in Vanuatu, the Lolihor Development Council, and preliminary results suggest positive outcomes.

Without doubt, the skills, knowledge and financial capital gained by ni-Vanuatu migrant workers have had a positive impact on development at the grassroots level in Vanuatu. It would appear though that many of the skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu migrants in New Zealand contrast with Vanuatu cultural values, practices and understandings. The most obvious example in the context of this study is in the difference between the conception of and value for time between New Zealand and Vanuatu. This difference may be best illustrated by one ni-Vanuatu migrant's observation that in New Zealand, "time is money" (7W), which represents an obvious difference to ni-Vanuatu conceptions of time, illustrated by another ni-Vanuatu migrant who said that "here in Vanuatu we don't see time as important to us". A New Zealand value for time may therefore be difficult to transfer to Vanuatu due to cultural differences regarding time between the two countries. Thus, while the skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu migrants may not be readily transferable to Vanuatu, they are most useful, from the ni-Vanuatu migrants' perspective, during their time in New Zealand.

### *Ni-Vanuatu migrants' skills and knowledge: Enabling success in New Zealand*

The skills and knowledge the ni-Vanuatu migrants gain during their time in New Zealand, including industry-specific skills, money management skills, knowledge and understanding of New Zealand cultural norms and work practices, English communication skills, and a host of other intangible skills such as problem-solving and time management skills, may contribute to migrants' overall success during their time in New Zealand. As such, it would appear that the skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu migrants in New Zealand under the RSE scheme are most relevant for the migrants in terms of supporting their earning capacity in New Zealand, and in turn managing those earnings to enable remittance transfers, and in easing their integration into New Zealand culture. As Williams and Balaz (2008) assert, skills and knowledge migrant workers gain that are specific to the host country, such as language skills and knowledge of local work practices, can lead to an increase in earning potential over time.

It would seem, then, that as the cultural differences between New Zealand and Vanuatu are vast, one of the primary skills ni-Vanuatu migrants possess is cultural adaptability: their ability to move successfully between these cultural spaces, and to maintain cultural practices appropriate to both New Zealand and Vanuatu. Borovnik (2003, p. 292) refers to I-Kiribati seafarers as migrants that have established "cultural flexibility" in order to manage their changing cultural settings. Similarly, Ossman (2004, p. 112) labels serial migrants – migrants who have moved multiple times between countries – as "cultural chameleons". In this regard, migrants are seen to possess skills and knowledge from their own cultural backgrounds, which they may share, and which may be used to ease the transition from home to host country (Levitt, 1998). This cultural adaptability allows migrants to establish themselves successfully in new settings, and may be relevant to the experiences of circulating ni-Vanuatu migrants engaged in the New Zealand RSE scheme. Accordingly, the results of this study suggest that the industry-specific skills and knowledge, as well as non-industry skills and knowledge bring tangible benefits to migrant workers returning to New Zealand on repeat RSE contracts.

Although industry-specific skills and knowledge may not be transferable to Vanuatu due to differences in crop types, soil types, availability of resources, and growing conditions,

not to mention the lack of an apple, kiwifruit or wine industry in Vanuatu, the skills and knowledge gained by RSE migrants may in fact be transferable if workers were able to migrate to other countries that have the same industries they have experience in. In the case of the RSE scheme, workers with skills and knowledge in the viticulture industry may be able to use the skills and knowledge gained from working in the wine industry to find work in other wine producing countries; in the Pacific context the most obvious example being Australia. Given the fact that Australia has recently introduced its own seasonal work programme, the 'Seasonal Workers Pilot Scheme' (Martin, 2009), the skills and knowledge gained through participation in the RSE scheme may increase a person's chances of being selected for that particular programme. In addition, the experience of having participated in the RSE scheme means that the ni-Vanuatu workers have a degree of "migration-specific capital", which include an understanding of the risks, costs and benefits associated with migration, further increasing the migrants' chances of success (Vertovec, 2007).

In summary, this study found that the skills of time management and money management were gained by the ni-Vanuatu workers, and were considered most important by the workers. Industry-specific vineyard skills and knowledge were also considered important, although were not considered directly transferable to workers' communities in Vanuatu. Therefore one of the findings of this study is that non-industry-specific skills such as time management and money management have been largely ignored in the literature to date, which has instead tended to focus on industry-specific skills and knowledge as being valuable for returning migrants. It is for this reason that a more holistic understanding of the skills and knowledge temporary migrant workers gain while overseas is needed, which includes an acknowledgment of migrants' cultural adaptability.

Furthermore, it is apparent that migrants are intent on utilising the skills and knowledge gained in New Zealand on their return to Vanuatu. Workers were determined to use their time management skills and money management skills to enhance their productivity and earning potential. Due to the limited infrastructure and employment opportunities in Vanuatu, a more supportive environment for returning workers is needed, offering returning workers the opportunity to access assistance. If workers receive this support then the skills, knowledge and experience transferred home by returning migrants, particularly those who are in their third and fourth seasons, may be increasingly utilised.

Finally, the skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu migrants during their time in New Zealand are arguably most useful, from a development perspective, in enhancing migrants' earning capabilities and easing their transition from life in Vanuatu to life in New Zealand. It is with these factors in mind that a more complex understanding of the value of skills and knowledge gained by migrant workers is required, which recognises the impacts skills and knowledge may have not only on migrants' home communities on their return, but also on the migrants themselves during their time in New Zealand. Therefore a greater recognition of the contribution of migrants' skills, knowledge and experience to the success of the RSE scheme is perhaps needed, which may go some way towards addressing the power imbalances that characterise the relationship between the New Zealand RSE support team, and the ni-Vanuatu migrants.

**Power issues: The dynamics of the relationship between ni-Vanuatu migrant workers and their New Zealand RSE employers and support team**

The World Bank has identified temporary migration programmes, such as the RSE scheme, as providing migration opportunities for those at the grassroots (World Bank, 2006). As such these programmes may be considered pro-poor development initiatives, in that the direct benefits of participation go to migrants, their families, and their communities. Indeed, the publicly-stated aim of the New Zealand RSE scheme is to provide employment opportunities for rural and outer island workers who may lack access to domestic employment options, with the earnings from participation in the RSE scheme going directly to migrants' families (Gibson et al., 2008).

At the same time, such programmes also aim to provide benefits to countries of origin, and countries of destination. TMPs, such as the RSE scheme, which facilitate circularity are moreover seen to enable a 'triple win', in that the benefits from the programme are seen to be distributed equally between participating migrants, their countries of origin, and their countries of destination (Vertovec, 2007). However, Vertovec (2007) states that although circular migration programmes may promise an equitable distribution of benefits between migrants, their countries of origin and their countries of destination, highly regulated

circular migration programmes for low-skilled migrant workers may not in fact be mutually beneficial to all parties.

From Vertovec's position, highly regulated circular migration programmes, aimed at low-skilled labour migrants, increase the risk of workers becoming 'locked-in' to dependent and exploitative relationships with employers, in that low-skilled migrant workers are restricted in their movement within the labour market of destination countries, and reliant on individual employers (Martin, 2009; Vertovec, 2007). In this regard, employers hold a great deal of power over the migrant workers, and the power imbalance may enable employers to use top-down, coercive management methods to ensure worker conformity.

These power imbalances suggest that there is a conflict between the pro-poor, grassroots-focused nature of the RSE scheme, and the modernistic, neo-liberal style of worker management. On one level the RSE scheme may be considered a pro-poor, alternative development approach, in that low-skilled migrants gain access to the New Zealand labour market and can transfer remittances and savings directly to their families and home communities. In this sense the RSE scheme may also contribute to empowerment at the grassroots level, in that migrants and their families retain control of the outcomes of migration, namely financial, human and social capital, and can use these gains to further their own specific development aspirations.

As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the primary aims of current approaches to development is the empowerment of those at the grassroots level (Parpart, 2008), and it would seem that in one sense the RSE scheme is facilitating empowerment, in that migrants maintain control over the gains from participation in the RSE scheme. At another level, however, ni-Vanuatu migrant workers participating in the RSE scheme may be disempowered, through the restrictive and top-down management methods used by their RSE employers.

In the context of this study, the relationship between RSE employers, supervisors and pastoral care workers, and ni-Vanuatu migrants, as outlined in Chapter Five, is somewhat top-down and paternal in nature. As one employer stated to the ni-Vanuatu workers during an induction meeting at the beginning of the season, "My team have better things to do than listen to a bunch of men complain about things they simply don't seem to be able to

understand” (Observation 14/6). This statement illustrates the power employers have over workers, which has contributed to a situation of ni-Vanuatu dependency on their employers and pastoral care workers. Perhaps seeking to redress this power imbalance, experienced workers are seeking a greater degree of independence from the RSE team. Concurrently, their RSE employers and pastoral care workers have begun to give the ni-Vanuatu workers more independence.

However, while the balance of power is shifting, the ni-Vanuatu workers’ present relationship with their RSE employers is one of dependency. Although the RSE scheme has been modified to allow workers the opportunity to move between employers within the horticulture and viticulture industry (Department of Labour, 2010), the choice to move is dependent on the employer, not the migrant workers. In this sense the workers are still ‘tied’ to the RSE employer that selected them for the RSE scheme, and as a consequence still at risk of becoming trapped in an exploitative and restrictive relationship with that employer. Not all relationships between RSE employers and migrant workers may be exploitative, however the fact that migrants participating in the majority of TMPs are restricted in their movement within the labour market (Martin, 2009) means that the earning potential of ni-Vanuatu workers is still largely dependent on their employer.

Consequently the ni-Vanuatu migrants have a strong incentive to work well, and behave well while in New Zealand. However, as indicated by the ni-Vanuatu participants of this study, this situation is not necessarily negative. On the contrary, being ‘tied’ to an employer can be seen as acceptable for the workers, in that they are guaranteed employment while in New Zealand, they are provided accommodation and pastoral care support, and if they work productively during their time in New Zealand they have the chance to be reselected. This ni-Vanuatu acceptance of the top-down management controls that characterise their RSE employment contracts correspond with the views of Ruhs (2005), who, as discussed in Chapter Two, states that migrant workers will accept some form of restriction on their rights in order to gain access to a country’s labour market, and the associated economic and social gains that may arise.

The RSE employers’ top-down, coercive style of worker management, as described in Chapter Five, is not desirable in managing the ni-Vanuatu workers. In fact this management style contrasts quite sharply with ni-Vanuatu cultural values such as fairness

and social equity, as observed during fieldwork. By alternatively offering the prospect of future employment opportunities with the company, and the threat of being sent home for disruptive behaviour, employers can create a negative environment for workers. During fieldwork, employers were seen using negative reinforcement to control workers. Negative reinforcement is the strengthening of a particular behaviour by the stopping or avoiding of a negative consequence. In the case of the ni-Vanuatu workers, the desired behaviour (from the employer's perspective) is that the workers will behave appropriately while in New Zealand. An example of this style of management, as mentioned in Chapter Five, involved an RSE employer who stated that he would be angry with men who made "stupid complaints" (Observation 14/6). As a result, to avoid or stop the negative consequence - an angry employer - the ni-Vanuatu men may be less likely to complain. The ni-Vanuatu workers' compliant behaviour is clearly reinforced by the negative language the employer uses.

Another aspect of worker management that appeared highly coercive was one RSE employer's use of workers' families as an emotional bargaining tool to control the ni-Vanuatu workers. By constantly reminding the workers to think about the future of their wives and children back home if the workers were no longer able to participate in the RSE scheme, the RSE employer is in essence coercing workers, by use of this pressure, into behaving well. As already mentioned in Chapter Three, the sacrifices migrant workers make in order to provide social and economic benefits for families and communities is characteristic of the Melanesian value of caring for others (Narokobi, 1983). Respecting these values, the ni-Vanuatu migrants have an obligation to provide for their families and communities in Vanuatu, making RSE employers' use of workers' families as an emotional bargaining tool highly effective.

Although negative reinforcement methods were sometimes used to control workers' behaviour in New Zealand, RSE employers, including the employer mentioned above, were also observed during fieldwork using positive reinforcement to encourage the ni-Vanuatu men to behave appropriately. Positive reinforcement involves the strengthening of a behaviour as a result of (or possibility of) experiencing a positive outcome. To provide a contextual example, an RSE employer organised a barbeque mid-way through the season to thank all the ni-Vanuatu workers for working well. All the workers were

therefore encouraged to keep on working well, due to this positive interaction with their RSE employers.

A positive reinforcement approach is obviously a more constructive style of management, however one could also argue that the positive reinforcement method of worker management involves a similar degree of power imbalance to the negative reinforcement method. The difference, however, is that one takes a negative approach, where the workers are seeking to avoid negative outcomes, and the other takes an encouraging approach, where the workers are seeking to gain positive outcomes.

As discussed, the relationships between RSE employers and ni-Vanuatu workers appear to be top-down and coercive. Relationships between pastoral care workers and ni-Vanuatu workers, on the other hand, appear paternal in nature. This paternal attitude towards the workers has contributed to a situation of worker dependency on the support of pastoral care workers. The pastoral care workers describing their role in supporting the ni-Vanuatu workers as “a bit like bringing up children” (1P) seems to reflect a paternal, almost colonial, mindset that places the pastoral care workers in the metaphorical role of ‘parents’, and the ni-Vanuatu workers in the metaphorical role as ‘children’. The remarks made to workers by pastoral care workers reinforce this position – for example, as one pastoral care worker said to a ni-Vanuatu worker, “take a shower, you stink!” (1FGP). This statement, while not said in a malicious manner, demonstrates the relationship is more like that between a parent and child, than that between two grown adults. It is highly unlikely that the same pastoral care worker would say such a thing to a New Zealand worker, or a backpacker worker from another country, unless they had a very close personal relationship. Although pastoral care workers’ intentions are undoubtedly good, Narokobi, (1983, p. 10) states that “it is pure paternalism to believe one is here to teach and educate poor and ignorant Melanesians”.

The pastoral care workers’ view of the ni-Vanuatu as somewhat naïve is to an extent encouraged by the ni-Vanuatu workers themselves. As discussed in Chapter Five, some of the ni-Vanuatu men made reference to the ‘white man’s world’ and compared it to the ‘black man’s world’ (4W; 2FGW). As one worker stated, “I want to learn to live like the white man” (4W). This seems to indicate a degree of inferiority on the part of the ni-Vanuatu men in New Zealand, and so the parent-child relationship between pastoral care

workers and the ni-Vanuatu men, as well as the top-down, coercive nature of the relationship between RSE employers and ni-Vanuatu workers may be somewhat perpetuated by the internal beliefs of the ni-Vanuatu men. As discussed in Chapter Two, the developing world is often seen as a world of poverty, in need of assistance from the benevolent West, and as McEwan (2009, p. 162) states, “the power of these discourses is that they are often internalised and people in the South come to see themselves in these terms”.

Similarly, the views of some RSE employers, in dominant positions of power over workers, would appear to maintain this situation, and as Hau’ofa (1993, p. 3) argues, in a general context, this allows employers to behave in ways that are accepted by their workers, who in turn, behave in ways that perpetuate the overall relationship of employer dominance over workers. As such, the relationship between the RSE employers and the ni-Vanuatu workers is one of dominance; as the workers are seen by their employers as accepting the top-down, restrictive, coercive nature of the relationship, the employers are encouraged to continue the relationship as it stands, which is a self-perpetuating relationship of domination. The same could be said for the paternal nature of the relationship between pastoral care workers and the ni-Vanuatu workers, in that both the pastoral care workers and ni-Vanuatu workers behave in ways that perpetuate the relationship.

Therefore, in order for the top-down, coercive, and paternal nature of the relationship between the RSE team and the ni-Vanuatu workers to change, it is necessary for the perception of the *active* RSE employer and pastoral care worker as agent and the *passive* ni-Vanuatu RSE worker as recipient, to change (McEwan, 2009, p. 213). Challenging the perception of RSE workers as passive dependents on the support of the RSE team, this relationship could alternatively be seen as one of interdependence, as the RSE workers certainly bring many benefits to their employers, and in turn the Marlborough wine industry, as well as to the wider New Zealand economy. Additionally, with the growing assistance of experienced return workers, pastoral care workers and employers alike are experiencing a reduction in their responsibilities.

Furthermore, migrants can be seen as being in a mutually beneficial relationship with their families and home communities in Vanuatu. As discussed in Chapter Two, Hau’ofa

asserts, in reference to the perception that remittance receivers are passive dependents on the support migrant family members (De Haas, 2005), that the relationship between remittance sender and receiver is actually one of interdependence (Hau'ofa, 1993). From this point of view, families and communities in Vanuatu reciprocate with local goods and services, as well as with the maintenance of land and property in Vanuatu for the RSE worker, and provide a welcoming environment for the worker to return to at the end of the time abroad in New Zealand (Hau'ofa, 1993).

To conclude, the results of this study suggest that what may be viewed as a submissive relationship of dependence should instead be considered a relationship of interdependence. As Wickramasekara (2007, p. 14) states, “all migrant workers (irrespective of their status) contribute to growth and prosperity in both countries of destination and countries of origin”. A more holistic understanding of the benefits RSE workers bring, not only to the New Zealand economy, but also to their families and communities at home, must therefore be considered by all, especially the workers themselves, pastoral care workers, and RSE employers. In this manner the power and dependency imbalances that currently characterise the relationship between RSE employers and pastoral care workers, and the ni-Vanuatu migrants, may begin to be addressed.

The next section will conclude the chapter, drawing upon many of the issues discussed in the key research findings. As outlined, a key finding of this thesis is that circulating ni-Vanuatu migrants contribute positively to the success of the RSE scheme, and to social and economic development at the grassroots level in Vanuatu. However, this success may entrench migrants in their positions as RSE workers, limiting the potential for new migrant workers to enter the scheme, which may limit future distribution of associated economic and social benefits.

### **Positive contributions of circulating ni-Vanuatu RSE migrants**

As discussed, this study found that experienced migrants in particular possess industry-specific skills, knowledge and experience which can increase workers' productivity and consequently enhance the workers' earnings. Experienced migrants are also more confident in coping with the day-to-day demands of living in New Zealand. These results

support the findings of the New Zealand Department of Labour's evaluation of the RSE scheme (2010). Experienced RSE migrants also discussed the value of their relationships with ni-Vanuatu from different islands and communities within Vanuatu. These relationships have come about directly through participation in the RSE scheme, where workers are employed alongside men and women from different regions of Vanuatu. These enhanced social connections represent an increase in workers' social capital, although it is unclear whether these networks have had a developmental impact so far.

The knowledge, skills and experience of experienced migrants has contributed to one of the primary benefits migrants have brought to the RSE scheme; their support of first year migrant workers, both on and off the vineyard. This support, which is not a requirement of the experienced migrants, occurs naturally and without direction from either pastoral care workers or RSE employers. However, there is an expectation from RSE employers and pastoral care workers that this peer support will be offered. This support for first year migrant workers from their fellow countrymen has meant that the workload and responsibilities of pastoral care workers has diminished, as inexperienced migrants are increasingly turning to their experienced colleagues for advice and guidance. This can be seen as a positive outcome, and also reflects the findings of the Department of Labour (2010).

As well as bringing benefits to pastoral care workers, the industry-specific skills, knowledge and experience of experienced workers also bring benefits to RSE employers. Having an experienced and productive labour force can have spin-off benefits for RSE employers, including: an increased quality of work, which can result in more work being offered to contractors; a reduction in the amount of time needed to train workers for new or unfamiliar jobs, saving employers time and money; and increased productivity, resulting in the potential for a greater amount of work to be completed during a season (Newland et al., 2008; World Bank, 2006).

This increase in productivity can also be seen as bringing tangible benefits to the New Zealand wine industry. As discussed in Chapter Three, the industry faced labour shortages before the introduction of the RSE scheme, which meant that vines were in danger of not being pruned before bud burst in spring (Beer & Lewis, 2006). With a more productive group of experienced workers, the issue of labour shortages is beginning to be addressed.

Although not a complete answer to the labour shortages faced by the New Zealand wine industry, the RSE scheme, and in particular the experienced workers returning to New Zealand on repeat contracts, bring a much needed injection of experienced workers into the local labour pool.

In addition, the New Zealand wine industry prides itself on its quality, and as such, the completion of each task on a vineyard to a high standard is important, and a low standard job on one particular task will have negative flow on effects for the remainder of the season (Beer & Lewis, 2006). Experienced workers are more likely to have the knowledge, skills and experience to complete vineyard tasks to a high standard, enhancing the quality of completed work, and it is for these reasons RSE employers and the industry welcome the return of experienced workers (Department of Labour, 2010).

Experienced migrant workers facilitate the success of the RSE scheme, in that they circulate between Vanuatu and New Zealand with skills, knowledge and experience that enable benefits for the migrants themselves, for their families and communities in Vanuatu, for their pastoral care workers in New Zealand, for their RSE employers, for the Marlborough wine industry, and ultimately for New Zealand and Vanuatu. However, there is the potential for a conflict of interest. It may be argued that experienced circular migrants' continued success could lead to fewer opportunities for new migrants to participate in the RSE scheme, the ramifications of which will be further explored in the concluding chapter.

## **Chapter Summary**

A broad range of economic and social development benefits have been gained through migrants' participation in the New Zealand RSE scheme. Specifically, ni-Vanuatu workers have transferred remittances, savings, and gifts in kind back to their families and home communities in Vanuatu. The investment of these remittances and savings by migrants in permanent houses, children's education and small business enterprises have led to a number of social development outcomes, including increasing the social status and security of RSE migrant households, as well as strengthening and enhancing family and community social connections.

Further supporting the transfer of remittances, savings and material goods, ni-Vanuatu migrants have gained skills, knowledge, and experience through their participation in the RSE scheme. Primarily, migrants identified the acquired skills of time management and money management as being most useful, and were intent on transferring those skills home to Vanuatu. Although industry-specific skills and knowledge were identified as being gained by migrants, these skills were not transferred back to Vanuatu by returning migrants, but were instead valued in New Zealand, as they enabled workers to improve their productivity on the vineyard. Similarly, time management and money management skills acquired by migrants were also useful in New Zealand in terms of successfully adapting to New Zealand cultural conditions and enabling migrants to save and remit money while in New Zealand. In this respect the skills, knowledge and experience gained in New Zealand enables migrants to enhance their cultural adaptability, and strengthen their position as circulating RSE migrant workers.

A further aspect of migrants' life in New Zealand was the dependent nature of their relationship with New Zealand pastoral care workers, and the unequal power relations that existed between RSE employers and the ni-Vanuatu workers. Although the relationship is top-down and paternal in nature, experienced migrants in their third and fourth seasons of participation in the RSE scheme are calling for a greater degree of independence from the New Zealand RSE team. When recognising the skills, knowledge and experience ni-Vanuatu migrants have gained in New Zealand, as well as the skills, knowledge and experience migrants bring from their own cultural backgrounds, it is clear that a greater understanding is required of the contributions experienced circulating ni-Vanuatu migrants bring not only to their families and communities in Vanuatu, but also to the RSE scheme as a whole. The contributions of these experienced circulating ni-Vanuatu migrants may indeed enable the success of the RSE scheme. However, from a development perspective, the success of experienced circulating migrants may not necessarily result in long-term equitable social and economic outcomes for grassroots communities in Vanuatu. This issue represents one of the key conclusions of this thesis, which will be discussed in the final chapter, Chapter Seven.

## Chapter Seven – Conclusions

### Introduction

In January, 2011, during the concluding stages of this study, Tropical Cyclone Vania struck the island of Tanna, in Vanuatu. This cyclone was not widely covered by news media organisations in New Zealand, although for a group of ni-Vanuatu seasonal migrant workers from Tanna, living and working in New Zealand at the time, the cyclone represented a threat to their families and home communities and was thus much more meaningful. Initially worried for the safety of their families and communities, the men were relieved to hear that Tanna had escaped with only superficial damage, including food gardens uprooted, and traditional houses blown down (Personal Correspondence 16/1/11). Thankfully, nobody was killed. For the families of some RSE migrant workers, the effects of the cyclone were mitigated to an extent, due to the fact that savings gained from their participation in the RSE scheme had been invested in permanent houses. While traditional houses were damaged and even destroyed during the cyclone, the new permanent houses withstood its effects, and provided a safe haven for those families (Personal Correspondence 16/1/11). This example has demonstrated that the New Zealand RSE scheme is making a difference to the lives of people at the grassroots level, providing economic benefits, which have translated into real social gains for migrants and their families, a key finding of this study.

On that note, this concluding chapter will begin by summarising the key findings of this study within the context of the current literature, as described in Chapters Two and Three. The study's qualitative research approach will also be briefly discussed with regard to its success in enabling a depth of understanding of the research findings. In summarising these findings, the study's overall research aim and questions, which guided the research, will also be addressed. Following that, conclusions will be drawn in regards to the RSE scheme's stated aim of contributing to development at the grassroots level in the Pacific. The chapter will then close by offering some final thoughts.

## **Examining the Social Development ‘Win’ for Ni-Vanuatu Migrants: Key Findings of this Study**

Contemporary international labour migration is distinguished by migrants’ increased mobility (United Nations, 2006). The circular nature of migrants’ movements between their home and host country has been said to provide the potential for a ‘triple win’ to occur, with social and economic benefits for migrant sending countries, for migrant receiving countries, and for the migrants themselves (Vertovec, 2007). Facilitating circular migration, many countries have introduced temporary migration programmes (TMPs), which allow the temporary entry of low-skilled migrant workers into the labour markets of more developed nations. TMPs are seen to enable this ‘triple win’, with migrant sending countries addressing excess labour concerns, migrant receiving countries meeting labour shortfalls, and participating migrants accessing the labour markets of wealthy countries (Martin, 2003).

In relation to this ‘triple win’, the primary aim of this thesis was to focus on the ‘win’ for ni-Vanuatu migrants participating in the New Zealand RSE scheme. As the majority of research on short-term international labour migration has focused on economic outcomes for migrants, their families and communities (Bedford et al., 2009; Piper, 2009), this study instead sought to explore in detail the social impacts of temporary labour migration. While a gendered perspective of the social development outcomes of the RSE scheme was not a focus of this study, it is acknowledged that this is an area which requires further research. As outlined in Chapter Four, social development outcomes may not be easily quantified, and it was for this reason that a qualitative methodological research approach was used. Fieldwork was conducted successfully in Blenheim, New Zealand and on Tanna Island, Vanuatu, with research techniques including the use of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation. These research methods were chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the thoughts, feelings, motives and experiences of the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers, and other primary participants, and to establish whether the RSE scheme really is delivering a ‘triple win’, focusing in particular on the outcomes for participating ni-Vanuatu migrants.

In the case of the New Zealand RSE scheme, a real triple win appears to have been achieved: New Zealand’s domestic labour shortages are being addressed, with a

corresponding increase in productivity in the horticulture and viticulture industries observed; participating countries are relieving, to an extent, the pressures associated with excess labour issues; and Pacific migrant workers have gained access to the New Zealand labour market, and the associated financial and social gains that accrue from that access (Connell & Hammond, 2009; Department of Labour, 2009b, 2010; Maclellan, 2008).

In gaining this market access, migrants have the opportunity to enhance their skills, knowledge and experience, as well as earn money and transfer remittances to their families at home (Vertovec, 2007). From an economic development point of view, the transfer of remittances presents perhaps the greatest tangible outcome of migration (Bedford et al., 2009; Connell & Brown, 2005; De Haas, 2005; IOM, 2008b). As outlined in Chapter Two, circular migrants tend to retain close social and economic ties to their home communities and families (Newland et al., 2008), and therefore have a strong incentive to transfer remittances, as well as return with savings and gifts in kind. Accordingly, the fact that migrant workers retain such close connections with their communities and families help to enable successful outcomes for migrants and their families, as research suggests that migrants are more likely to contribute positively to their home communities and families if they maintain these close ties (Agunias, 2006; Katseli et al., 2006; Skeldon, 2010).

Remittance and savings transfers are mainly used by migrants and their families to meet basic needs, and may provide capital for investments (Borovnik, 2006; De Haas, 2005; O'Neil, 2003). However, as Hau'ofa (1993) argues, in the Pacific context the transfer of remittances may have a social significance, beyond the obvious economic impacts, that many observers overlook. As outlined in Chapter One, the overall research aim of this study was: **To identify the social development outcomes for ni-Vanuatu workers involved in the New Zealand RSE scheme.** The previous two chapters have presented a wide range of social development outcomes from ni-Vanuatu migrants' participation in the New Zealand RSE scheme, which go some way towards meeting this aim. These social development outcomes are positive, presenting benefits, not only for the workers themselves, but also for their families and communities in Vanuatu. Illustrating this finding, ni-Vanuatu RSE workers have increased their confidence and pride through their participation in the scheme. Furthermore, the social standing of migrants and their families within their local community was enhanced as a result of migrant households' donations

to churches and schools. The investment in children's education represents an investment in human capital development, and may ensure the future social and economic security of the children and by extension, the family. Significantly, migrants' investment in permanent houses may lead to an increased level of comfort, security, prestige and dignity for the RSE worker and their family, and the investment in water tanks can secure water for the family, as well as the community, enhancing social ties and maintaining the reciprocal and cooperative nature of the community. The use of cell phones by workers and their families to sustain contact maintains social ties, and the development of social networks among experienced circulating workers provides scope for social capital gains. The increases in social capital include the enhanced and strengthened social relations between workers and their families, as well as between workers, their families, and other members of their communities. The maintenance and strengthening of relationships at the family and community level can potentially have wider social development benefits, particularly within the Vanuatu context, where reciprocity and cooperation are part of the Melanesian way of life (Gegeo, 1998; Hau'ofa, 1993; Lini, 1980; Narokobi, 1983). Finally the transfer of remittances and savings back to Vanuatu by RSE workers, which enable the above gains, help to maintain and enhance migrants' social ties with family and community in Vanuatu. As the above points demonstrate, a key outcome of this study is the fact that the remittances, gifts-in-kind and lump-sum savings transferred by returning ni-Vanuatu migrants enable a range of positive social development outcomes for migrants, their families, and their communities.

Also inherent in the nature of circular migration is the return of migrants to their countries of origin (Martin, 2003). Although the return of circular migrants interrupts the flow of remittances, the enhanced financial, human and social capital of returning migrants is said to enable further development outcomes in migrants' country of origin. Addressing research questions one and two, this study found that migrants gained skills and knowledge in relation to their management of time and money while in New Zealand, and transferred their newly acquired skills and knowledge to Vanuatu on their return. The men are using their time management skills to improve their productivity, both in working on family gardens, and in small business enterprises. Money management skills were used to successfully handle the savings brought back by migrants to New Zealand. However, vineyard-specific skills and knowledge gained in New Zealand were not easily transferable, due to differences in crop types in Vanuatu, and a tendency among ni-

Vanuatu to avoid agricultural enterprises beyond the scale of family gardens (Connell & Hammond, 2009). Therefore, this study found that the skills and knowledge gained by ni-Vanuatu migrant workers were instead most useful, from a development point of view, in enabling migrants' success while in New Zealand. In this sense the New Zealand-specific skills and knowledge gained by migrants, including time management and money management, allowed them to adapt culturally to their work and non-work lives in New Zealand. As discussed in the previous chapter, this cultural adaptability facilitated migrants' success in both New Zealand and in Vanuatu.

It is evident that ni-Vanuatu migrants have acquired valuable skills, knowledge and financial capital, which have translated into real economic and social gains at the grassroots level in Vanuatu. However some commentators feel that TMPs such as the RSE scheme may not in fact be as mutually beneficial as they first appear (Vertovec, 2007). Restrictions on migrants' rights while they are in New Zealand give cause for concern (Castles, 2006; Ruhs, 2009; Vertovec, 2007). One of the primary concerns is that migrants participating in TMPs are generally 'tied' to their employers, and as such have no real mobility within the labour market of the destination country. Hence, migrants' earning potential is largely dependent on their employer (Martin, 2003). Although the New Zealand government has eased restrictions on mobility within the New Zealand labour market for participating RSE migrants, the ultimate decision remains with RSE employers, and not migrant workers. Therefore, the potential exists for migrants participating in the RSE scheme to become trapped in dependent and exploitative relationships with their employers. Addressing the third research question, this study has identified obvious power imbalances which exist between RSE employers and the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers. The study found that the ni-Vanuatu are in a submissive relationship with their RSE employers, who use top-down management methods of control. Furthermore, power imbalances extend beyond employers to pastoral care workers, whose relationship with the ni-Vanuatu workers is characterised by its paternalistic nature. It would appear that pastoral care workers' relationship with the ni-Vanuatu reflects an almost colonial-era mindset, in which the migrants are seen as passive recipients, and dependent on outside support, rather than active agents in their own development. The relationship between the RSE team and the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers has meant that in general the ni-Vanuatu were dependent on the RSE team in order to work and live successfully in New Zealand. In this regard, with the ni-Vanuatu seen as accepting the top-down, coercive and

paternalistic nature of the relationship, the relationship is somewhat self-perpetuating. Positively however, this situation is beginning to change with the increasing independence of experienced ni-Vanuatu migrants in their third and fourth seasons of participation in the RSE scheme.

Essential to the success of the RSE scheme for the migrant workers, for participating countries, and for New Zealand, is the circular, repetitive movement of experienced migrants between their home communities and the orchards, pack houses and vineyards of New Zealand (Department of Labour, 2009b, 2010; Roorda & Nunns, 2009). The results of this study demonstrate that experienced migrants bring significant benefits to the RSE scheme, and contribute to the overall success of the scheme. Addressing the fourth and final research question of this thesis, results showed that experienced migrants supported first season migrants both at work, and during non-working hours, assisting inexperienced migrants in their adaptation to New Zealand work practices, and the New Zealand way of life. In this manner, the responsibilities of both RSE employers and pastoral care workers were reduced, as experienced migrants played an increasingly large role in supporting and assisting first season migrants. Inherent to the overall success of the RSE scheme, experienced migrants were productive and reliable on the vineyard, and enabled RSE employers to improve both the productivity and the quality of the industry. However, the next section will discuss one of the conclusions of this study: that the sustained long-term circulation of a core group of experienced RSE migrant workers may not actually translate into successful equitable long-term development outcomes for participating countries.

### **The RSE scheme: A Conflict of Interests?**

The concerns regarding the long-term equitable distribution of development outcomes arise from one key point: while RSE employers seek the return of their skilled, efficient and experienced workers, Pacific Island countries alternatively seek to provide new migration opportunities for marginalised grassroots people to participate in the RSE scheme (Bedford et al., 2009). There is undoubtedly a conflict between the goals of RSE employers and the goals of participating Pacific countries. The RSE employers seek an efficient and reliable pool of labour, primarily comprised of experienced workers, whereas Pacific Island countries would prefer to provide developmental opportunities for a wide range of their citizens to ensure equitable access to the RSE scheme. Although a

respondent in the Department of Labour's RSE scheme evaluation report (2010, p. 54) argued that equitable access to the RSE scheme in Vanuatu would be maintained because long-term planning for investment is uncharacteristic of ni-Vanuatu at the village level, the results of this study suggest otherwise. The fact that many of the ni-Vanuatu migrants discussed establishing small business enterprises implies obvious long-term planning. Furthermore, ni-Vanuatu migrants' investment in their children's education can also be seen as a long-term commitment. Therefore, if a core group of highly experienced workers were to begin circulating between Vanuatu and New Zealand, and in doing so, dominate a country's participation in the RSE scheme, the developmental benefits may be monopolised by the experienced migrant workers and their families, and not shared equitably among the community and country. Connell and Hammond (2009, p. 93), as discussed in Chapter Two, support this view, asserting that "equity might be less well served in future if the same workers return repeatedly in subsequent years", and as the Department of Labour (2010, p. 47) point out, opportunities for new workers to come to New Zealand are decreasing, with employers' first choice being experienced workers who possess relevant skills and knowledge and are familiar with New Zealand life.

A constant and high turnover of RSE workers would therefore seem to benefit the developmental aspirations of a wide range of people at the grassroots level, and meet the pro-poor aims of the RSE scheme, whereas a low turnover of RSE workers is arguably the desire of the majority of RSE employers, as it makes economic sense from the employer's perspective to have a core group of experienced, productive and reliable workers return year after year. As employers quoted in Martin (2009, p. 69) assert: because the majority of RSE migrants have no experience in the horticulture and viticulture industries employers must invest in training. Therefore in order to justify these expenses, eighty per cent of the workers must return each year. Perhaps it is in the increased utilisation of experienced workers in training new workers that a compromise can be reached between the goals of employers and the need, from a development point of view, to enable new migrants to participate in the RSE scheme.

Additionally, experienced migrant workers on repeat contracts can be seen as having the potential to shift the balance of beneficial outcomes from the RSE scheme towards the RSE employer. This is because it is arguably more cost-effective to employ experienced workers, as fewer RSE workers may be needed due to increases in worker productivity

(Department of Labour, 2010). This shift in balance can be seen as making the RSE scheme much more beneficial for employers, and less beneficial for participating countries such as Vanuatu. To illustrate, a task that may have taken forty inexperienced workers six days to complete may take a group of twenty-five experienced workers four days to complete, at a higher quality standard of work. With fewer workers, employers' labour costs are reduced. Furthermore, if the workers are on set (hourly) rates instead of contract rates there are potential savings to be made by RSE employers. Even if the workers were on contract rates, an employer could still set the rate at minimum wage, rather than market rates, and decrease labour costs (Maclellan, 2008). As some evaluations of the RSE scheme have found, there is a need to ensure RSE employers do not set contract rates so low that workers can only earn the minimum wage (Martin, 2009). This is due to the fact that if workers on contract rate are only making the equivalent of minimum wage it takes away the incentive to work faster, and so it is in the RSE employers' best interests to set rates high enough that experienced workers have an incentive to work productively.

The results of this study show that experienced circulating migrants bring a range of benefits to the RSE scheme, and undoubtedly contribute to the overall success of the scheme. What must be considered now is the conflict between the goals of RSE employers and the goals of participating RSE countries such as Vanuatu. If a core group of experienced migrants come to dominate the RSE scheme in Vanuatu, circulating frequently between Vanuatu and New Zealand, the equitable distribution of benefits from the RSE scheme may be concentrated in certain villages or communities. In order for the RSE scheme to be a successful and equitable development initiative, opportunities for participation in the scheme must continue to be extended to those at the grassroots who lack access to such opportunities, as has been the case in the past (McKenzie et al., 2008).

## **Final Thoughts**

Although still in its early years, the RSE scheme is achieving the proposed 'triple win', bringing benefits to New Zealand, to Vanuatu, and to participating workers and their families. The RSE scheme has improved migrants' capacity to earn money, resulting in increased social and economic benefits for not only the workers, but for their families and communities as well. However, there are a number of sacrifices that have to be made by

migrants in order to gain these benefits. These include: submitting to the restrictive conditions necessary for participation in the RSE scheme; leaving family and friends behind in Vanuatu; and, from a family's point of view, losing a productive family member. The workers are also constantly under pressure during their time in New Zealand: pressure from their families to send remittances back to Vanuatu; pressure (in some cases) to support their community financially when they return; pressure from their RSE employer to work productively and efficiently; pressure from their RSE employer, their pastoral care workers, their home community, and the government of Vanuatu to be 'good men' while in New Zealand; and finally, the pressure that comes from having to live, work and survive in a culture that is considerably different from their own. In this sense, the benefits migrants and their families gain from their participation in the New Zealand RSE scheme come at some cost, which is borne primarily by the ni-Vanuatu migrants and their families. Nonetheless, displaying the Melanesian values that characterise the people of Vanuatu, the ni-Vanuatu migrant workers in this study have demonstrated their willingness to work for others, so that their sacrifices may be for the ultimate benefit of their families and home communities in Vanuatu. This attitude is perhaps best illustrated by this quote from a ni-Vanuatu worker during a focus group discussion in Blenheim:

Leaving children back home, and wives, it's hard, but I mean we just sacrifice ourselves, because we want a better living, we want to raise our living standards. It's like one of our sayings: 'if you want something sweet, it's harder to get, you have to go hard first, and then you'll have something sweet'. So, it's hard for us, but in the end it's sweeter (1FGW)

In recognising the sacrifices ni-Vanuatu migrants make during their participation in the RSE scheme, a deeper understanding and appreciation may be gained of their true contribution to development at the grassroots level in Vanuatu. The RSE scheme is not a complete answer to the developmental challenges Vanuatu faces. Rather, it provides a means to support development. If equitable access to participation in the RSE scheme in Vanuatu is maintained, and state, private sector and civil society support provided for returning migrants, then the transfer of financial capital, skills and knowledge may be further utilised for the benefit of migrants, their families, their communities, and ultimately, for Vanuatu.

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## Appendix One – Semi-structured Interview Participants

<b>Semi-structured interview participant (Code)</b>	<b>Interview location</b>	<b>Age range (est.)</b>	<b>Single/Married</b>	<b>Return Worker to NZ</b>
	<b>Home Island in Vanuatu</b>	<b>Male/Female</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Number of seasons involved in scheme</b>
Ni-Vanuatu RSE worker (1W)	Blenheim	30-40	Married	Yes
	Epi	Male	1 child	3 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE worker (2W)	Tanna	30-40	Married	Yes
	As above	Male	4 children	3 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE worker (3W)	Tanna	30-40	Married	Yes
	As above	Male	5 children	3 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE worker (4W)	Tanna	20-30	Married	No
	As above	Male	1 child	1 season <i>(but intends to return)</i>
Ni-Vanuatu RSE worker (5W)	Tanna	30-40	Married	Yes
	As above	Male	1 child	3 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE worker (6W)	Tanna	30-40	Married	Yes
	As above	Male	3 children	2 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE worker (7W)	Tanna	40-50	Married	No
	As above	Male	3 children (grown)	1 season <i>(but intends to return)</i>

*Appendix One (cont.)*

<b>Semi-structured interview participant (Code)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Age range (est.) Male/Female</b>
Pastoral Care worker <b>(1P)</b>	Blenheim	60+ Male
Pastoral care worker <b>(2P)</b>	Blenheim	50-60 Male
Pastoral care worker <b>(3P)</b>	Blenheim	20-30 Male

<b>Semi-structured interview participant (Code)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Age range (est.) Male/Female</b>
RSE employer <b>(1E)</b>	Blenheim	50-60 Male
RSE employer <b>(2E)</b>	Blenheim	30-40 Male
RSE employer <b>(3E)</b>	Blenheim	30-40 Male

*Appendix One (cont.)*

<b>Semi-structured interview participant (Code)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Age range (est.) Male/Female</b>
RSE worker's wife <b>(1F)</b>	Tanna Island	25-35 Female
RSE worker's wife <b>(2F)</b>	Tanna Island	30-40 Female
RSE worker's wife <b>(3F)</b>	Tanna Island	50-60 Female

<b>Semi-structured interview participant (Code)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Age range (est.) Male/Female</b>
Vineyard supervisor <b>(1S)</b>	Blenheim	25-35 Male
Vanuatu Department of Labour rep. <b>(1G)</b>	Port Vila	30-40 Male
Community member <b>(1C)</b>	Tanna	60+ Male
Community member <b>(2C)</b>	Tanna	50-60 Female

## Appendix Two – Focus Group Discussion Participants

<b>Focus Group Participants (Code)</b>	<b>Interview location  Home Island(s) in Vanuatu</b>	<b>Age range (est.)  Male/Female</b>	<b>Single/Married  Children</b>	<b>Return Workers to NZ  Number of seasons involved in scheme</b>
Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers  <b>(1FGW)</b>	Blenheim  Efate	Early 20s – mid 30s  8 males	7/8 married  7/8 have children	5/8 returnees  -2 workers have returned for 3 seasons -3 workers have returned for 2 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers  <b>(2FGW)</b>	Blenheim  Tanna	Late 20s – mid 30s  8 males	6/8 married  7/8 have children	3/8 returnees  -3 workers have returned for 3 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers  <b>(3FGW)</b>	Blenheim  Ambae	Early – mid 30s  6 males	4/6 married  4/6 have children	6/6 returnees  -all 6 workers have returned for 3 seasons
Ni-Vanuatu RSE workers  <b>(4FGW)</b>	Blenheim  Epi	Early 40s – mid 50s  3 males	3/3 married  3/3 have children	3/3 returnees  -all 3 have returned for 2 seasons

*Appendix Two (cont.)*

<b>Focus Group Participants (Code)</b>	<b>Interview location</b>	<b>Age range (est.) Male/Female</b>
Pastoral Care workers <b>(1FGP)</b>	Blenheim	50-60 1 Male 1 Female
Pastoral care workers <b>(2FGP)</b>	Blenheim	50-60 1 Male 1 Female