

*ABSTRACT*

## **Exploring the effectiveness and resilience of integrated conservation and development projects to global disruptions: a comparative case study in the Cook Islands and Tonga**

Roxane de Waegh

**Keywords:** Conservation; development; resilience; remote coastal community; social-ecological wellbeing; disruption

Remote Coastal Communities (RCC) are at the forefront of humanitarian and climatic change. Faced with the stressors of sustaining growing populations in the context of natural resource degradation, RCC must also adapt to globalisation and the subsequent economic linkage and flows of resources and people. In an attempt to support the social-ecological wellbeing of marginalised communities, Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) were introduced in the late 1980s. Today, ICDPs, such as eco-tourism projects, are used to reduce reliance on natural resources, generate economic benefits, and increase local support for conservation. However, the effectiveness of ICDPs in meeting either conservation or development goals has long been debated. Furthermore, limited studies have explored the effectiveness and resilience of ICDPs to global disruptions. Based on the existing literature, it is unclear how major disruptions will impact RCCs in a globalised world and if ICDPs can effectively support the social-ecological wellbeing of host communities during and after global disruptions. This presentation will reveal preliminary findings from research in the Cook Islands and Tonga on the resilience and effectiveness of ICDPs in supporting the social-ecological wellbeing of two coastal communities in the wake of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.