



# Perceptions of how social protection is spent in the Pacific and Timor-Leste

Easy read version

**P4SP**  
Partnerships for  
Social Protection

**Australian  
Aid** 

## Partnerships for Social Protection

Perceptions of how social protection is spent in the Pacific and Timor-Leste



We will provide instructions on how to read this document. [To skip ahead, go to page 5.](#)



The information on this page is called a **blog**.



A **blog** is information that is on the internet.



It includes the ideas and thoughts of the person who wrote the information.



This blog is called **Perceptions of how social protection is spent in the Pacific and Timor-Leste**



You can also read this blog at this website <https://p4sp.org/resources/perceptions-of-social-protection/>



P4SP wrote this blog.

## How to read this blog



This blog is written in an easy to read way.



There will be some hard words.

We will write the hard words in **bold**.



We will explain what they mean.



You can ask someone to help you to read this blog.



When you see the words ‘we’, ‘our’, or ‘us’ it means **Partnerships for Social Protection**.

We also use the short name **P4SP**.



**P4SP** is a project by the Australian **government**.



**Government** means a group of people who make up the rules that everyone must follow.



P4SP makes **social protection** systems stronger in the **Pacific**.



**Pacific** means people who live on an **island** in the Pacific Ocean.

An **island** is when there is water all the way around the land.

## Views on how social protection is spent in the Pacific and Timor-Leste



We did research with a business called Sustineo.



We looked at 242 documents from around the world to learn about **social protection** in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.



**Social protection** means things that the government gives a person to



- recover when something that is not planned happens, like losing your job or being in a flood.



- have money to buy things like food



- do things like see a doctor.



The research found that there are several views about social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.



Views about social protection can affect policy.

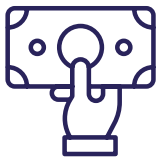
But some views about social protection are not always true.

For this blog, we asked three Pacific **experts** to share their thoughts on these views.



An **expert** is someone who knows a lot about something.

## Cash transfers are spent on daily needs



There are several views on how **cash transfers** are spent.

**Cash transfers** are money given to people to assist with living costs.



There is a view that cash transfers may be used for alcohol and cigarettes.

We learned that cash transfers are used to help with everyday household costs such as buying food.



We learned that there is not enough evidence to prove that cash transfers are used for alcohol and cigarettes.

We learned that after cyclones and the COVID-19 pandemic, cash transfers were used to buy:



- food



- materials to repair homes



- clothing



- medicine



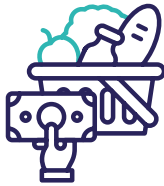
- school supplies.

**Professor Steven Ratuva** studies Pacific issues at the University of Canterbury.



Professor Ratuva said “When people are desperate, they don’t use the money to buy cars. They use it to feed themselves.”





Another view is that all the money from a cash transfer is spent rather than saved.

This makes sense because the money is only meant to cover daily living costs.



It is not meant to help people save money for future needs.



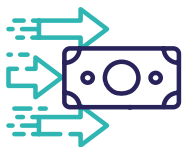
Professor Ratuva said “Communities know cash transfers won’t happen every day. Every month, it comes and goes.”

We learned there is not enough evidence to prove that people rely only on social protection money in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

## Learning from research



Research on how people spend their **remittance** is helpful.



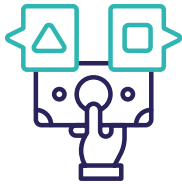
A **remittance** is money that someone sends to their family or friends in another place, usually another country.

For example, people working overseas send money to relatives back home.

This can be seen as a type of community social protection.



This is different from state-based social protection which is small cash transfers from the government.



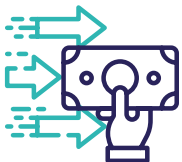
Research shows that community views can change how people spend their money sent from overseas.

**Litea Meo-Sewabu** is an **associate professor** at Western Sydney University.

An **associate professor** is a type of teacher at a university.



Dr Litea Meo-Sewabu said “They [people who get money] are more worried about how the community views them.”



“The community knows that a person is away [working overseas] and how relatives use the money that’s being sent.”

## How do views in the community affect policy and research?



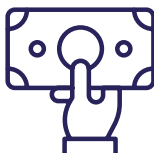
False views about social protection can be harmful when writing policies.



**Ms Kalsuak** is a team leader at the Pacific Community organisation.

Ms Kalsuak said “The myths can create a negative impact where the government questions why they should commit to social protection if citizens are not utilising it as intended.”

More research is needed to learn how people spend social protection payments.



It is important to understand how the payments are used in situations that are not emergencies.



Ms Kalsuak says that community networks of support have been around for a long time.

But cash is used a lot more now.



This makes payments from the governments important for helping people.

Ms Kalsuak says there needs to be more information from communities in studies about social protection.



Ms Kalsuak said “In the Pacific, we have traditional law, our families, and informal law. If a family member is sick, we take care of the family member, whether they’re working or not – it’s our responsibility.”

Ms Kalsuak said “Understanding what social protection means for people in the Pacific can help clarify those perceptions around social protection.”



## How to talk to us

Would you like to learn more?

Do you have any questions?

You can contact us at:



Email: [info@p4sp.org](mailto:info@p4sp.org)