

# MOANA: THE RISING OF THE SEA

With leading Pacific artists from the University of the South Pacific, an EU-funded Europe-Pacific climate change project produced a world class drama performance. *Moana: The Rising of the Sea* toured Europe in 2015.

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## The Global Challenge: Climate Change and the Ocean

Scientific scenarios of global climate change and sea level rise tell us that although the islanders of the tropical Pacific contribute the least to global warming, they are set to suffer the most from its effects. For anyone who lives on an island, surrounded by the deep, beautiful yet dangerous sea, it is a cruel thought that one day the island will be swallowed by the ocean, that ancient nurturing realm called Moana Nui in Oceania. How does it feel when the ocean forces you to abandon all that you hold dear?

With *Moana: the Rising of the Sea*, islanders themselves set the scene for thought-provoking questions, answered in part by them through the accumulated wisdom of generations, while also calling on the world to act on climate change. A performance of beauty, fear, hope and challenge, *Moana: The Rising of the Sea* addresses these questions in ways not seen on stage before.

Invited to major international art festivals and to political fora such as the European Parliament and COP21, *Moana: the Rising of the Sea* has proved its potential for changing mind-sets concerning global climate change and its effects on the Pacific Ocean, its islands and islanders.

*Moana* is produced in Fiji and Norway by the European Consortium for Pacific Studies (ECOPAS), a project that was funded by the European Commission's 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for the period 2012-2016. Consisting of six research institutions in Europe and the Pacific, the ECOPAS project ([www.ecopas.info](http://www.ecopas.info)) was coordinated by the University of Bergen, with the University of the South Pacific as the main Pacific partner. Working under the banner of 'Restoring the Human to Climate Change in the Pacific', ECOPAS has an enduring agenda of bringing social scientists, climate scientists, and Pacific artists, intellectuals and activists together to bring high-impact messages to the world.



The waves of a rising ocean crash against a village shore in the atoll nation of Kiribati



## The Making of Moana

*Moana: The Rising of the Sea* is created by leading artistic directors from the Pacific, and performed by experienced resident artists at the University of the South Pacific's Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies in Suva, Fiji. Funding for the original performance came from the European Union. The expanded version for the 2015 European Tour, and the one-month tour itself, were funded mainly by the University of Bergen.

**Vilsoni Hereniko** – Producer, Story  
**Peter Espiritu** – Director, Choreographer  
**Igelese Ete** – Musical Director, Composer  
**Allan Alo** – Lead Actor, Cultural Protocol  
**Edvard Hviding** – Executive Producer

Performed by 28 artists of:  
**Oceania Dance Theatre**  
**Pasifika Voices**

*Moana* is on the standing repertoire of its artistic company and can be contracted for re-staging.

## A Film for Global Distribution

The film *Moana Rua: The Rising of the Sea* is in sparkling high-definition video with the entire live soundtrack. The film is available free of charge in DVD format to those interested, and for cinema screenings special HD versions can be supplied via download.

## Ocean and Climate: Research Collaboration and Dissemination

Under a Memorandum of Understanding, the University of Bergen (UiB) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) continue to develop long-term Norway-Pacific cooperation in research on ocean, climate and Pacific Studies, as well as in high-profile dissemination through the performing arts. A new performance on the fate of the ocean in a time also of marine pollution and overfishing is in the making, and a range of collaborative projects in research and training are established on the Bergen-Suva axis.

**MOANA RUA**  
THE RISING OF THE SEA

THE OCEANS DAY AT COP21  
4 December 2015  
Climate Generations Area

Rio Conventions PAVILION

#RioPavilion  
RioPavilion.org

"For most of us who live in the Pacific, our views of climate change are influenced by what we see happening in our own backyard: waves crashing against our homes, making obvious that we face a bleak and uncertain future."  
Professor Vilsoni Hereniko,  
Director and Producer  
of *Moana Rua*



The *Moana* performance-and-film project received the label of COP21. *Moana Rua* was screened on the COP21 Oceans Day and later in the conference.

' - tell them what it's like to see the entire  
ocean\_level\_with the land'

From the poem 'Tell Them'  
by Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, Marshall Islands

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