Misiona Patane: Despite Solid Economy, Poverty Persists in Rural Communities in Samoa  
  
An experienced project manager and technology consultant, Misiona Patane, Jr. serves as the business development manager for agriculture exporter Pure Pasifika, which maintains operations in the United States, Samoa, and New Zealand. Mr. Patane holds a special concern for people living in poverty in Samoa.  
  
Although Samoa has one of the more stable economies in the Pacific region, about 20 percent of Samoan residents dwell below the poverty line. In [Samoa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samoa‎), rural communities typically experience less opportunity and less access to benefits as compared to their urban counterparts, thus leading to higher rates of poverty. In addition, remote parts of the country are vulnerable to natural disasters, including cyclones, which have damaged the country over the last decade.  
  
One contributing cause of poverty in Samoa is deforestation, with over 80 percent of the country’s lowland rainforests lost due to human habitation. Continued population growth puts strain on dwindling forestry resources, which in turn contributes to soil degradation and erosion. To combat poverty, the Samoan government is focusing on sustainable growth solutions and providing improved health and education to the nation’s over 180,000 residents.  
  
While poverty is a difficult issue among rural communities, Samoa has seen promising increases in agricultural production and tourism in recent years. These economic gains, coupled with the government’s attention to providing basic services, suggest a hopeful future for Samoa.