



Until we are all equal

# Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate



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This project was a collaboration between Plan International Australia, Kiribati Climate Action Network, Edith Cowan University's Centre for People, Place and Planet, and the Australian National University.

**Plan International Australia** is a global independent development and humanitarian organisation. As one of the oldest, largest and most experienced organisations in its field, Plan works alongside children, young people, supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the injustices facing girls and the most marginalised children.

**Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN)** is a coalition dedicated to addressing the severe impacts of climate change on the islands of Kiribati. Founded in 2011 by Pelenise Alofa, KiriCAN brings together multiple organisations to advocate for climate resilience, support community adaptation projects, and raise international awareness of Kiribati's plight. KiriCAN works on several fronts to mitigate challenges. KiriCAN implements community training programmes to develop climate-resilience practices and collaborates with international partners to strengthen local capacity and influence climate policy both nationally and globally.

**The Centre for People, Place and Planet at Edith Cowan University** conducts transdisciplinary research using participatory methodologies in the context of global environmental change. The Centre aims to reconnect people, ecosystems, and place-based knowledges for universal well-being.

**The Australian National University** is a public research university located in Canberra, the capital of Australia. It comprises seven colleges, including the College of Health and Medicine which is home to the School of Medicine and Psychology.

## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the lands, seas and skies of the Pacific region, and the continuing custodianship of Pacific people. We acknowledge the girls of the Pacific who participated in this project, and their knowledges and commitment to climate justice. Climate justice is ensuring the human rights of all girls in all their lived experiences, and the rights of their families, communities, lands, seas, and skies.

The Australian authors of this report, acknowledge and pay our respects to First Nations Elders past and present. We recognise sovereignty was never ceded and that this land always was and always will be First Nations land. We recognise their ongoing connection to land, waters and community, and we commit to ongoing learning, deep and active listening, and taking action in solidarity.

We recognise that climate justice is dependent on First Nations justice. First Nations people in Australia are at the frontline of the climate crisis, and it is their knowledge of caring for Country for over 60,000 years that must be central to our climate responses.

We are committed to our allyship and solidarity in the ongoing fight for First Nations justice and the long and continuing history of discrimination and disenfranchisement of First Nations people in Australia, seen in the disappointing outcome of the Voice referendum.

As allies, we know that when it comes to First Nations justice and responding to the climate crisis, it is First Nations communities who have the solutions. It is critical that Australia listens and centres their knowledge in our climate response. Treaties are critical in this movement for change, recognising First Nations sovereignty, and custodianship of our land and waters.



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# Preface

Apolonia<sup>1</sup> is an 18-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji.  
This is her poem about climate change.

*Climate change is not funny  
All people care about is their money  
From digging up oil  
Cutting down trees  
We need more soil.  
Let's keep our world clean.  
Not an ozone layer to be seen.  
We need more by far.  
Let's work as youths,  
And easy it will seem,  
And tackle through  
"Climate change".*

*I need love  
I need care  
I am your home  
But you destroy  
My skin and bone  
But I forgive  
And I forget  
And let you live  
But I regret.*



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Village near Nadi, Fiji. Photo: Unsplash.





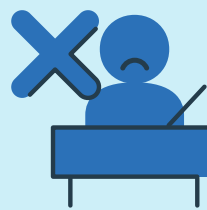
# Climate change is challenging Pacific girls' lives

We surveyed 319 girls across the Pacific region including from the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. This is what they told us.

**82%**

of surveyed girls say that climate change has affected their life at home, in school or in their community.

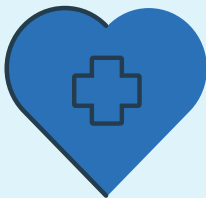
## Education disruptions



**50%**

of surveyed girls say that climate events have stopped them from going to school.

## Health and wellbeing



Only

**0.6%**

of surveyed girls say that climate change has not affected their health and wellbeing.

## Food shortages



**27%**

of surveyed girls say there is less food and 19% say they feel hungry due to climate change.

## Water scarcity



Close to

**50%**

of surveyed girls say the most common impact of climate change on their basic needs is lack of clean fresh water.

## Housing insecurity



Almost

**1/3**

of surveyed girls say that climate change has damaged or destroyed their homes.



# Girls are not passive actors, they are leaders and activists

**Pacific girls are climate justice activists**



**34%**

of surveyed girls participate in climate justice activism.

**Pacific girls want to build a stronger girl-led movement**



**72%**

of surveyed girls want to be connected to climate justice groups.

**Pacific girls want to shape a just future**



**57%**

of surveyed girls want their voices to shape climate policy and action.

**Pacific girls want tools to build a better future**



**66%**

of surveyed girls want education on how to adapt to climate change.



# Executive Summary

Climate change is a significant threat to island nation communities in the Pacific Ocean. Adolescent girls in the Pacific have unique experiences of climate change, which are different to those of women, men and other children in the region. This is due to their age, gender and status in their communities and families, underpinned by structures of oppression such as patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism.

This project, *Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate*, was conducted between 2021 and 2024. It was initiated by Plan International Australia in partnership with Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN), Edith Cowan University's Strategic Research Centre for People, Place and Planet, and the Australian National University. The project aims to increase community knowledge of the impacts of climate change on Pacific girls aged 10-18 in all their lived experiences, and strengthen girl-led activism for climate justice in the Pacific.

## Methodology

This project is informed by the principles and practices of feminist participatory action research (FPAR). FPAR combines research, gender justice and climate advocacy. It is a cyclical, iterative, co-designed process facilitated and co-led by communities. FPAR involves ongoing cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting as communities collaboratively undertake research and action to generate knowledge about their lives and address systemic injustices. *Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate* involves four cycles:

**Cycle One – Co-design:** Through workshops, 12 Pacific young women in Kiribati and Fiji participated in training on FPAR and climate justice, and co-designed data collection methods for the project.

**Cycle Two – Data collection:** Data was collected through two methods.





1) **A regional survey** was conducted with 319 girls aged 10-18 in six Pacific countries – Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. The survey asked girls questions about how climate change affects their lives; actions that can be taken by governments and international countries to address the impacts of climate change on girls in the Pacific; and how girls can be involved in climate justice activism.

2) **Arts-based storytelling** involved 34 girls aged 10-18 from Fiji and Kiribati. Girls created a drawing, video or presentation about the impacts of climate change in their lives, actions they would like governments to take, and girl-led activism for climate justice.

**Cycle Three – Participatory data analysis and writing:** 14 climate advocates from KiriCAN, including young women, attended a participatory workshop in Kiribati to collectively analyse the data, produce recommendations, and inform the research report writing.

**Cycle Four – Girl-led advocacy:** 14 climate advocates in KiriCAN participated in training on climate advocacy and campaign planning. After

this report is launched, young women in the Pacific will be supported by Plan International Australia and KiriCAN to participate in girl-led advocacy for climate justice.

The project involved ethics and child safeguarding strategies such as safeguarding assessments of partners and the research team, safeguarding training, development of safeguarding reporting and referral mapping and protocols, and informed consent procedures for girls and parents.

## **Findings: Impacts of climate change on girls in the Pacific**

The data shows that Pacific girls experience various climate change impacts. The most common impact is increased heat, as well as water scarcity, sea level rise, and extreme weather events. Girls in atoll nations like Tuvalu are most affected, facing issues like coastal erosion and floods. Sea level rises are more common for girls in Tuvalu, Kiribati and FSM. Rural areas and outer islands are more severely impacted. 82% of surveyed girls say that climate change has affected their life at home, in school or in their community.

Tokoriki Islands, Fiji. Photo: Unsplash.







Clean water containers for hand washing at a school in West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Photo: Plan International Australia.

**Impacts of climate change on girls' basic needs:** Surveyed girls say that access to clean water is their biggest climate challenge, especially in rural areas and outer islands. Climate change exacerbates water scarcity, affecting girls' ability to complete household chores and manage their hygiene. Climate change also reduces girls' access to quality food, with more difficulties growing crops and fishing. A quarter of girls say that climate impacts like floods and cyclones have damaged or destroyed their homes, displacing families. Climate events damage power lines and phone and internet access which disrupts girls' education. Girls' access and inclusion in disaster response is a significant issue, especially for girls with disabilities. This includes poor access to disaster information and lack of disability inclusive evacuation facilities.

**Impacts of climate change on girls' health and wellbeing:** Surveyed girls experience significant impacts of climate change on their physical and mental health. Climate-related challenges include feeling very hot, thirsty or tired, poor hygiene and sanitation, and skin and stomach problems due to a lack of access to clean water for cooking and bathing, poor sanitation, overcrowding, dietary deficiencies, dusty air, and pollution. Girls report mental health concerns such as climate-related worry, fear and stress. Climate change affects family wellbeing, and some girls have experienced family separation after losing homes or moving villages. A small cohort of girls report physical violence, early or forced marriage, and sexual and gender-

based violence during and after disasters, along with limited access to support services and safety issues in evacuation centres.

**Impacts of climate change on girls' education, play, and livelihoods:** 50% of Pacific girls in the survey say that climate events have stopped them from going to school, including missing classes and changes to school terms. This is higher in Tuvalu, Tonga and the Solomon Islands. Floods and storms damage schools, roads and internet connectivity, hindering girls' school attendance. Climate events exacerbate disparities in education infrastructure and access between girls in urban areas, rural areas and outer islands. Girls have fewer opportunities for sport, recreation and play due to destruction of sporting areas, heat distress, lack of access to fresh water, poor health, and more household chores. Climate-related disruptions to family livelihoods, particularly in agriculture and fishing, cause economic strain and increased household responsibilities for girls, and some families cannot afford to send girls to school.

**Impacts of climate change on community and culture:** Climate change causes damage to community infrastructure. These impacts are far worse in rural and remote areas that already lack health, educational and other public infrastructure. Surveyed girls say that climate events have damaged some religious and community buildings, affecting traditional meetings and community events. Climate change affects girls' cultural practices and way of life, damaging cemeteries, ceremony grounds and



ancestral sites, and disrupting opportunities for community and cultural activities like dancing, music and singing. Rising sea levels, flooding and landslides change the environmental landscape, with losses of Indigenous knowledges such as medicinal plants. Relocation of families and communities can disrupt cultural practices and intergenerational knowledge sharing.

## **Findings: Pacific girls' proposed actions for climate justice**

Surveyed girls identify how governments and international countries can take action for climate justice, including preventing climate change, supporting girls to cope with climate change, and disaster resilience. Their key message is that governments must centre girls and their diverse lived experiences in climate policies.

**Preventing climate change:** Surveyed girls want governments to protect the natural environment by enforcing strict rules to stop deforestation, planting more trees and mangroves, and reducing water use. They call for governments and industries in the Pacific and internationally to stop burning fossil fuels and reduce carbon pollution, with increased renewable energy and better waste management. They seek climate change education for girls, through strategies such as awareness groups and programs, stronger integration of climate change into school curriculum, and workshops.

**Supporting girls to cope with climate change and build resilience against climate change:** Surveyed girls want governments to teach girls adaptation skills such as gardening and swimming. They want governments to include girls' voices in climate policy. They want governments to provide girls with their basic needs, such as clean water, proper shelter, and improved waste management. They call for international countries to support sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific.

**Emergency response and disaster risk resilience:** Surveyed girls want governments to have a stronger focus on girls in disasters. Their priorities are teaching disaster preparedness, ensuring girls' safety during disasters, improving disaster information sharing, and providing care packs for girls. Girls say they need improved disaster education, early warning systems, and safe and accessible evacuation facilities. They call on international countries to provide aid to Pacific communities during disasters, including

food, water, medical support and sanitary aids such as menstruation packs.

## **Findings: Pacific girls' activism for climate justice**

**Pacific girls' participation in climate justice activism:** 34% of survey participants participate in climate justice activism, particularly in Tuvalu, Kiribati and in outer islands and rural areas. They engage mainly through school groups, community education, and environmental projects. Pacific girls have strong interest in participating in climate justice activism, with 72% of survey participants wanting to be connected to climate justice groups.

**Ideas for girls' activism to encourage governments to take climate action:** Surveyed girls want to act collectively to encourage governments to take meaningful action for climate justice. Proposed girl-led activism strategies include forming organizations, peaceful protests, lobbying decision-makers, and using media to raise awareness. They promote girls' education about climate change and girls' participation in environmental projects. Girls also want to be involved in community disaster preparation.

**Enablers for Pacific girls to engage in climate justice activism:** To engage in climate justice activism, Surveyed girls need education about climate change. They need opportunities for collective action such as girls' climate justice groups and school activities. They also need support from families, communities (including community leaders), and governments, and for international countries to listen to them. Personal motivation is also crucial.

**Barriers for Pacific girls to engage in climate justice activism:** Barriers to Pacific girls engaging in climate justice activism include lack of knowledge about climate change, and lack of activist opportunities, support, and resources. Cultural norms, gender and age limit girls' participation, as some girls face opposition from Elders and community. Some girls say they are afraid, scared and shy to be climate justice activists. Their participation is also limited by financial constraints, transport, and family responsibilities. Girls with disabilities face additional access and inclusion challenges.



# Recommendations from Pacific girls in a changing climate

Co-researchers promote ten strategies to uphold the human rights and active participation of Pacific girls in a changing climate. The strategies are aimed at governments and industries in the Pacific and internationally, as well as civil society organisations that engage in climate justice programming and advocacy in the region.

## Strategy 1:

That girls in the Pacific are supported and resourced to further build girl-led feminist movements for climate justice. This includes the adequate provision of training, mentoring and funding of girls in all their lived experiences, and supporting strong relationships between girl-led movements and broader feminist movements in the Pacific and internationally.

## Strategy 2:

That Pacific NGOs, governments, feminist and civil society organisations and advocacy groups provide inclusive spaces for girls to collectively engage in climate justice co-learning and advocacy and be a voice for their community.

## Strategy 3:

That Pacific girls are supported, mentored and resourced to document their lived experiences of climate change, promote effective disaster practices that uphold girls' rights, and share stories of girls' involvement in climate justice activism.

## Strategy 4:

That Pacific governments heed girls' call to review, strengthen and enforce laws to protect forests, oceans, rivers, fresh water sources, air, and land. This includes recognising and protecting marine life and biodiversity as primary sources of food and livelihoods, and that the right to a healthy environment depends on the sustainability of our natural habitat.

## Strategy 5:

That policymakers collaborate across departments to protect Pacific girls' rights in a changing climate.

## Strategy 6:

That policymakers actively engage with girls to inform decision-making related to climate change.

## Strategy 7:

That all Pacific girls have access to well-managed, safe and climate resilient essential infrastructure to access their human rights to quality water, food, housing, energy, internet, and community buildings.

## Strategy 8:

That all Pacific girls have access to quality education, including during and after climate events, and can pursue climate resilient livelihoods and engage in climate justice activism. This includes ensuring that feminist climate justice is included in education curricula at primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

## Strategy 9:

That Pacific girls' rights to health and safety are protected during and after disasters.

## Strategy 10:

That Pacific girls are supported, mentored and resourced as agents of change and first responders in climate change adaptation and disaster resilience.



# 1. Introduction

Climate change is a significant threat to island nation communities in the Pacific Ocean. The latest Synthesis Report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that the Pacific region is exposed to some of the highest risks of climate impacts, which will make some small islands uninhabitable over this century.<sup>2</sup> The risk of loss and damage is highest for atoll nations. The IPCC found that Pacific islands are disproportionately affected by displacement due to climate change and extreme weather events. Other significant risks identified include coral reef and wetlands decline, sea level rise resulting in loss of coastal land and increasing poverty.

Adolescent girls in the Pacific have unique experiences of climate change, which are different to those of women, men and other children in the region. This is due to their age, gender and status in their communities and families, underpinned by structures of oppression such as patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism.

This project was conducted between 2021 and 2024. It was initiated by Plan International Australia in partnership with Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN), Edith Cowan University's Strategic Research Centre for People, Place and Planet, and the Australian National University. The project was informed by the principles and practices of feminist participatory action research.

The project has the following aims:

- To increase the knowledge of adolescent girls and young women about climate change and climate justice.
- To increase community knowledge of the impacts of climate change on adolescent girls in all their lived experiences.
- To increase the skills and confidence of adolescent girls and young women as advocates for climate justice.
- To build and strengthen inclusive climate justice movements in the Pacific led by adolescent girls and young women, and connect them to existing organisations and movements in the region.

The research methodology was co-designed with Pacific young women from Kiribati and Fiji. Data was collected across the Pacific region by Tebbutt Research and femLINK Pacific. Data analysis and report writing occurred through a participatory workshop with climate advocates, including young women, from KiriCAN. The findings were generated through participatory data analysis and interpretation with climate advocates in Kiribati.

The project documents the lived experiences of climate change for girls and young women aged 10-18 in the Pacific. For the sake of brevity, for the remainder of the report we will refer to this cohort as 'girls', but we acknowledge it encompasses age groups that span adolescence and young adulthood. The project enables girls to communicate their needs and identify policy responses that could be taken to uphold girls' human rights in a changing climate. It also shares girls' perspectives on their involvement in climate justice activism. This report can be used to inform girl-led action for climate justice in the region.

This report is structured as follows:

- Background and context
- Methodology
- Findings: Impacts of climate change on girls in the Pacific
- Findings: Pacific girls' proposed actions for climate justice
- Findings: Pacific girls' activism for climate justice
- Recommendations from Pacific girls in a changing climate
- Conclusion





## 2. Background and Context

Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Islands.  
Photo: Unsplash.

This section shares the background and context to the project, including the research framework.

### 2.1 Background

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights argues that girls and their rights must be authentically included in climate decision-making:

*Intersectional forms of discrimination can further increase the vulnerability of some women and girls to climate change, while the exclusion of women from climate action inhibits its effectiveness and further exacerbates climate harms. The meaningful, informed and effective participation of women with diverse backgrounds in relevant decision-making processes lies at the heart of a rights-based, gender-responsive approach to climate action. This inclusive approach is not only a legal, ethical and moral obligation; it will also make climate action more effective.<sup>3</sup>*

In 2023, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child issued General Comment 26 on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change.<sup>4</sup> The Committee states that children are a powerful force for environmental protection, and their views must be included in the design and implementation of strategies to address climate change. This includes,

*States must ensure that age-appropriate, safe and accessible mechanisms are in place for children's views to be heard regularly and at all stages of environmental decision-making processes for legislation, policies, regulations, projects and activities that may affect them, at the local, national and international levels.*

Pacific girls are marginalised from participating in climate decision-making and advocacy spaces due to structural oppression such as patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism and ageism. Climate change events exacerbate existing inequalities, with worsened insecurity and



uncertainty for Pacific girls. Stronger recognition and development of the rights, inclusion and participation of girls is critical to climate change responses regarding mitigation, adaptation, disaster resilience and loss and damage in the Pacific. In this report, Pacific girls argue that their rights, their agency, power and determination for climate justice must be supported.

### **Climate change and the rights of Pacific girls**

Climate change is an evolving and protracted rights crisis for girls in the Pacific region. Pacific nations experience some of the most extreme impacts of climate change, including slow onset events such as rising sea levels and droughts, combined with intensifying weather events such as cyclones and typhoons.

In the Pacific, climate change occurs in a colonial, patriarchal and capitalist context of deep and intersecting injustices. Some of these structural injustices include economic exploitation and extractivism from colonial powers, the nuclear legacy and increasing militarisation in the region, and environmental destruction. These structures of oppression cause injustices such as food and water insecurity (particularly declining fisheries), insecure governance, widespread social and gendered inequalities, displacement, and loss of land and cultural heritage. Girls are at the forefront of structural injustices in the Pacific. Climate change threatens a range of human rights for Pacific girls, such as safety from violence, access to adequate health, education, and opportunities for economic development and political participation.

Girls in the Pacific experience some of the highest rates of family and sexual violence in the world: one in four adolescent girls in the Pacific experience physical violence and one in 10 adolescent girls experience sexual violence.<sup>5</sup> Research shows that girls are at an increased risk of violence during and after climate events in the Pacific.<sup>6</sup> Further to this, entrenched patriarchy and conservative Christian practices severely limit girls' self-determination, such as excluding girls from public spaces, taboos regarding sexual reproductive rights and health, and the normalisation and silencing of sexual violence.<sup>7</sup> As climate events increase in frequency and intensity in the region, girls' right to safety is severely worsened. Evacuation centres can be unsafe for girls, especially girls with a disability due to lack of accessible evacuation facilities or carers.<sup>8</sup>

Pacific girls face multiple barriers to accessing secondary education, leading to low enrolment and completion rates in secondary education. For example, only 27% of girls in the Solomon Islands are enrolled in upper secondary education and one in two girls drop out of secondary school.<sup>9</sup> Recent research by Plan International Australia found that climate disasters threaten access to education and learning for 1.85 million Pacific girls aged 5-19.<sup>10</sup> Some climate-induced barriers to education for Pacific girls include disrupted access to school due to disasters; damage and destruction of school buildings, and teacher resources and learning materials; climate change-related migration to find secure housing; and increased domestic chores.<sup>11</sup> When disasters prevent girls from resuming their education and families experience economic hardship, girls face greater risks of unintended pregnancy and early marriage.

Pacific girls experience climate health risks such as malnutrition, skin diseases and heat-related illnesses.<sup>12</sup> This is exacerbated by wide ranging barriers to equitable, rights-based and gender-responsive healthcare.<sup>13</sup> Water justice is a key issue for Pacific girls. Climate change significantly worsens girls' equitable access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, particularly while menstruating.<sup>14</sup> Girls are increasingly responsible for collecting fresh water and food for their household as scarcity is becoming common and adults have to do other work. Climate impacts such as saltwater intrusion and drought mean that girls may need to walk longer to

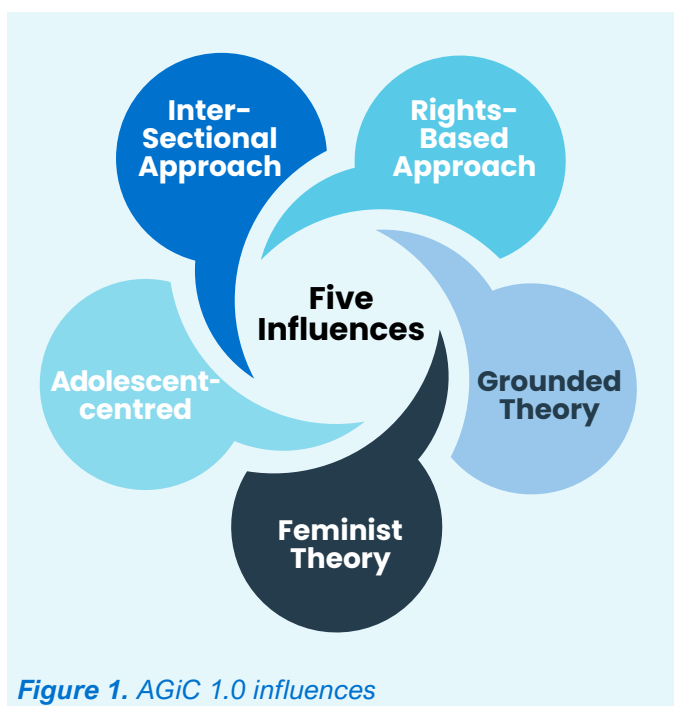


Figure 1. AGiC 1.0 influences



collect water, with increased risk of violence and reduced time for school and play.<sup>15</sup> Exposure to extractive industries such as mining also restricts equitable access to fresh water and food, due to contamination and damage to water sources, coral reef systems and agricultural livelihoods.<sup>16</sup> These issues are worsened during disasters. In many Pacific communities, women and girls are first responders and are tasked with cooking and caring for families in evacuation centres. This has enormous impacts on girls' bodies, wellbeing and mental health. With increased domestic labour and care work in a changing climate, girls must find their own ways of coping with exhaustion, fear and trauma without access to professional counselling services and support.

### ***Pacific girls' participation and leadership for climate justice***

Girls' participation is key to peace and security in the Pacific region. However, the Pacific region has the world's lowest rate of women's political participation.<sup>17</sup> While girls are actively engaged in community, church, school, youth and sports activities, patriarchal attitudes and practices prevent women's and youth groups from participating in village meetings and policy decision-making spaces. As such, the voices and perspectives of girls are excluded from male-dominated decision-making. Despite these structural barriers, girls and young women are leading action for climate justice in the Pacific region. Young female Pacific climate activists such as Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner (Marshall Islands) and Brianna Fruean (Samoa) have been impactful

at local, regional and international levels in their advocacy for climate justice. So have a range of youth climate justice groups such as Pacific Island Students Fighting for Climate Change, Fridays for Future and Pacific Climate Warriors. It is critical that LGBTQIA+ girls, girls with a disability and girls from rural and remote areas across the Pacific are supported as agents of change for climate justice in local, national, regional and international arenas, particularly as more girls experience climate-induced displacement and are relocated from their communities.<sup>18</sup>

Pacific girls have the capacity to understand their context and experiences, and to identify their rights and prioritise their needs. They have developed personal disaster resilience and can adapt to the impacts of climate change through their lived experiences and learning through oral stories from their Elders. Girls can mobilise to collectively use their agency and power to shape their lives and communities.

This research examines how climate change in the Pacific exacerbates existing inequalities and creates barriers for girls, and how climate change reshapes girls' lives as they enter adulthood. It highlights how Pacific girls show their leadership and amplify their voices for climate justice. The research identifies actions that girls across the region can take to elevate climate justice advocacy, and shares strategies for ensuring the human rights of all Pacific girls in a changing climate.



## 2.1 Research framework

The research is informed by Plan’s Adolescent Girls in Crisis (AGiC) Research Framework. The AGiC 1.0 framework has five key methodological influences, as articulated in Figure 1. These are an intersectional approach, rights-based approach, grounded theory, feminist theory, and being adolescent-centred. AGiC 1.0 examines the unique impact crisis has on adolescent girls, how they experience and navigate insecurity and what needs and opportunities exist to support girls in crisis situations.

The AGiC Framework 2.0<sup>19</sup> that was adapted for two other reports in the series (Sahel and Venezuela/Colombia border) dug deeper into the possibilities for change in the enabling environment. This updated framework analyses the interrelated legal, political, social and cultural factors in the enabling environment,

and the importance of wider institutional, policy and socio-economic factors in supporting community-level resilience.

Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate adapts the AGiC Socio-Ecological Framework to be not just girl-centred but girl-led — developed and driven by girls themselves — and relevant to the Pacific context. The methodology was co-designed with young women, who developed research questions, methods, and approaches that they consider to be culturally responsive and that promote cultural safety. This updated approach to AGiC research incorporates a stronger focus on girls engaging in action planning and activism as part of the research process.

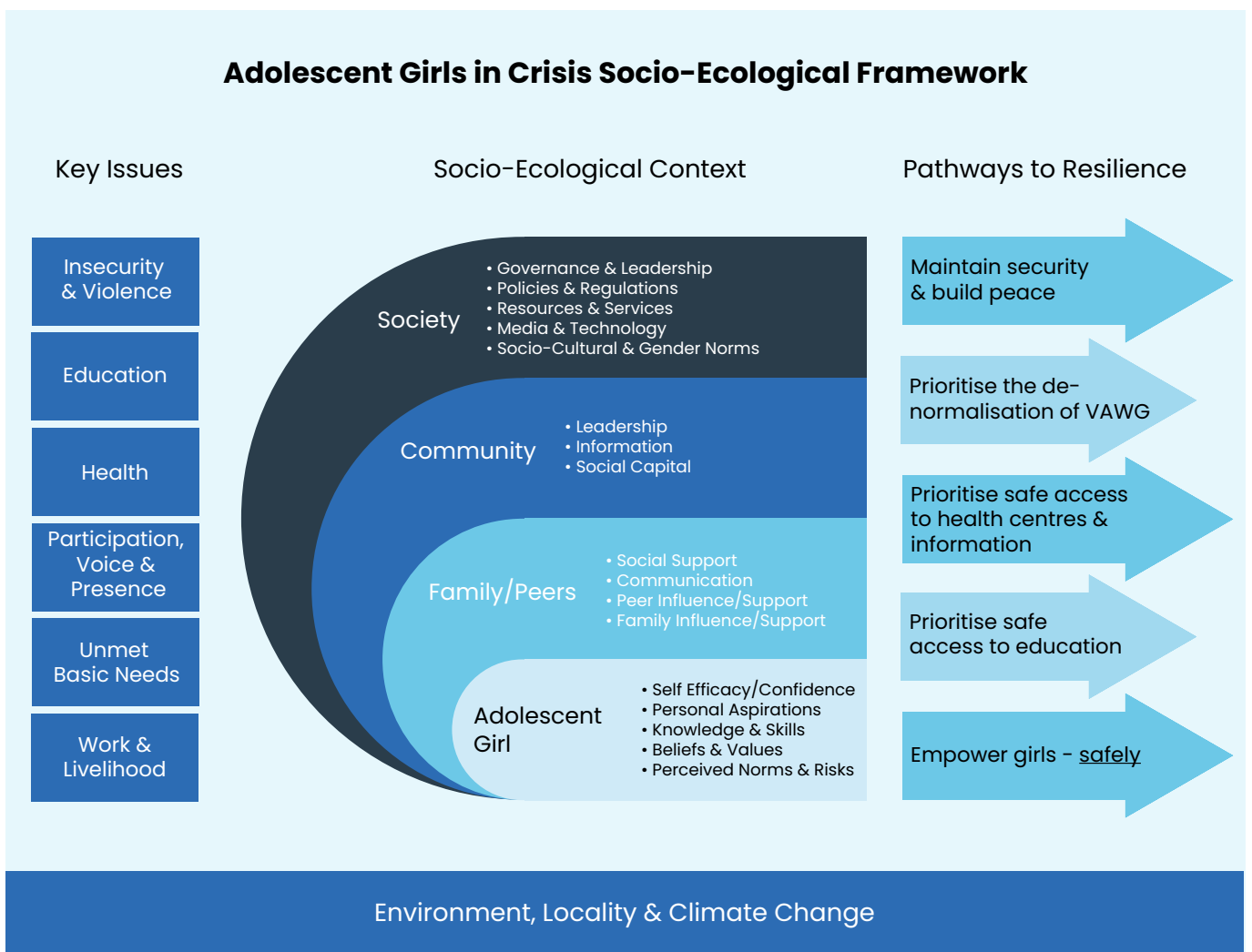


Figure 2. AGiC Socio-Ecological Framework



Girl returns home from school in West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Photo: Plan International Australia.





# 3. Methodology

This section shares the project methodology, including the approach of feminist participatory action research, the project cycles, project participants, and ethics and safeguarding.

## 3.1 Feminist Participatory Action Research

This project is informed by the principles and practices of feminist participatory action research (FPAR). FPAR combines research, gender justice and climate advocacy. It is a cyclical, iterative, co-designed process facilitated and co-led by communities. FPAR involves ongoing cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting as communities undertake research and action to address systemic injustices.

In FPAR, decision-making is collective and decentralised, whereby participants are 'co-

researchers' who collectively generate knowledge as experts in their own lives. This process supports young women to understand systemic injustices and actively work to transform patriarchal power. The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) has strongly influenced the development of FPAR as a methodology for research and activism. Box 1 shares APWLD's nine principles of FPAR. These principles informed the process of this project.

## 3.2 Project cycles

Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate involves four cycles:

### Cycle 1 – Co-design

Through workshops, Pacific young women in Kiribati and Fiji participated in training on FPAR and climate justice, and co-designed data

### APWLD's nine principles of Feminist Participatory Action Research:<sup>21</sup>



Figure 3. APWLD's nine principles of Feminist Participatory Action Research

## APWLD's nine principles of FPAR<sup>21</sup>

- 1. Purpose is structural change:** the purpose of our research is to bring about structural changes that women identify as critical to their enjoyment of human rights.
- 2. Amplifies women's voice:** the research gives voice to women as the experts and authors of their own lives and policy decisions. It strategically places them as researchers and experts and promotes them into policy dialogue.
- 3. Owned by community:** research decisions are made by the community of women who are the stakeholders of the research project.
- 4. Takes an intersectional approach** to identity and experiences of discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation: recognising the diversity of women's experiences, identities and power.
- 5. Aims to shift power:** the research seeks to reconstruct traditional power imbalances such as researcher/subject, and also aims to challenge and shift gendered sources of personal, political and structural power.
- 6. Fosters movement building/collective action:** the research process itself should be seen as a collective process that strengthens solidarity, but in addition, the research aims to empower women to work collectively for long-term structural change.
- 7. Builds capacity of all:** FPAR always involves capacity building but also recognises that capacity building and learning is a collective, political action of all the players involved.
- 8. Free, prior and informed consent** of all participants is prioritised in FPAR.
- 9. Safety, care and solidarity** with participants is essential.

collection methods for the project. Preliminary data was also collected through interviews and focus group discussions with these young women. Due to unforeseen circumstances, young

women in Fiji were not able to continue through to the project implementation.

### **Cycle 2 – Data collection**

Data collection was supported by Tebbutt Research and femLINKPacific. Tebbutt Research is a market research and social research agency with expertise in Pacific Islands research. femLINKPacific is a local, national, and regional catalyst for change through the use of accessible media and information. Their mission is to be a strong and effective feminist media platform for the community, recognising and affirming their multi-ethnic and multi-faith founding principles in order to create visibility on the issues faced within society.

Data was collected via two methods:

- **A regional survey** was conducted with 319 girls aged 10-18 in six Pacific countries – Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. The survey asked girls questions about the impacts of climate change they have observed, and how climate change affects their lives in areas such as basic needs, health and wellbeing, education and livelihoods, community and culture. Girls were then asked questions about actions that can be taken by governments and international countries to address the impacts of climate change on girls in the Pacific. Finally, girls were asked questions about how girls can be involved in climate justice activism, and the enablers and barriers for their participation. Tebbutt Research engaged local young people to undertake face-to-face surveys with girls in urban, rural and outer island contexts. For survey questions where the girls were asked to select from a list of possible responses, showcards to display these response lists were used. These showcards increased interaction, made the girls feel involved, provoked thinking, and helped the girls more easily answer the questions as they could see the response lists in front of them. Tebbutt Research uploaded girls' responses into their online database, and shared an anonymised spreadsheet with the research team.
- **Arts-based storytelling** involved 34 girls aged 10-18 from Fiji and Kiribati. Girls created a drawing, video or presentation about the impacts of climate change in their lives, actions they would like governments to take, and girl-led activism for climate justice. femLINKPacific



engaged Youth Community Focal Points from its diverse network to assist girls from rural and remote locations to document their stories of lived experiences of climate change. Girls were supported to upload their photographs, videos and a written explanation to an online survey platform (Qualtrics).

### **Cycle 3 – Participatory data analysis and writing**

Climate advocates from KiriCAN, including young women, attended a participatory workshop in Kiribati to collectively analyse the data, produce recommendations, and inform the report writing. This report was then drafted, reviewed and finalised with all partners.

### **Cycle 4 – Girl-led advocacy**

Climate advocates in KiriCAN participated in training on climate advocacy and campaign planning. After this report is launched, young women in the Pacific will be supported by Plan International Australia (PIA) and KiriCAN to participate in girl-led advocacy for climate justice.

Throughout the project cycles, co-researchers participated in ongoing reflections about the process and their learnings. For example, during the data analysis and advocacy workshop, co-researchers explained that they gained new learnings about gender, girls and climate change, about research and advocacy, and how they can

integrate data into their advocacy. As one person explains, “the data is putting the dots together”.

## **3.3 Project participants**

The project involved more than 350 girls who live in the Pacific, in six countries: Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

**Methodology co-design:** 12 young women aged 18-24 from Kiribati and Fiji co-designed the research.

**Survey:** 319 people participated in the survey, including 318 girls and one person who identified as third gender. The survey participants are aged between 10 and 18 (with an average age of 14.6). Only 7% of participants are aged 10 while almost 20% are aged 18. Survey participants are from the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. Girls mainly live in a rural area or village (52%) and urban areas or town (46%), with a small number who live in outer islands (3%). Many girls identify as Indigenous (38%), while 21% identify as a religious minority and 13% identify as an ethnic minority. 19 participants (6%) indicated that they have a disability. We note that there is generally no significant differences in the survey findings between girls with and without disability.

Children in canoes play near the shore in West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Photo: Plan International Australia.



## Map of the Pacific countries that took part in this research

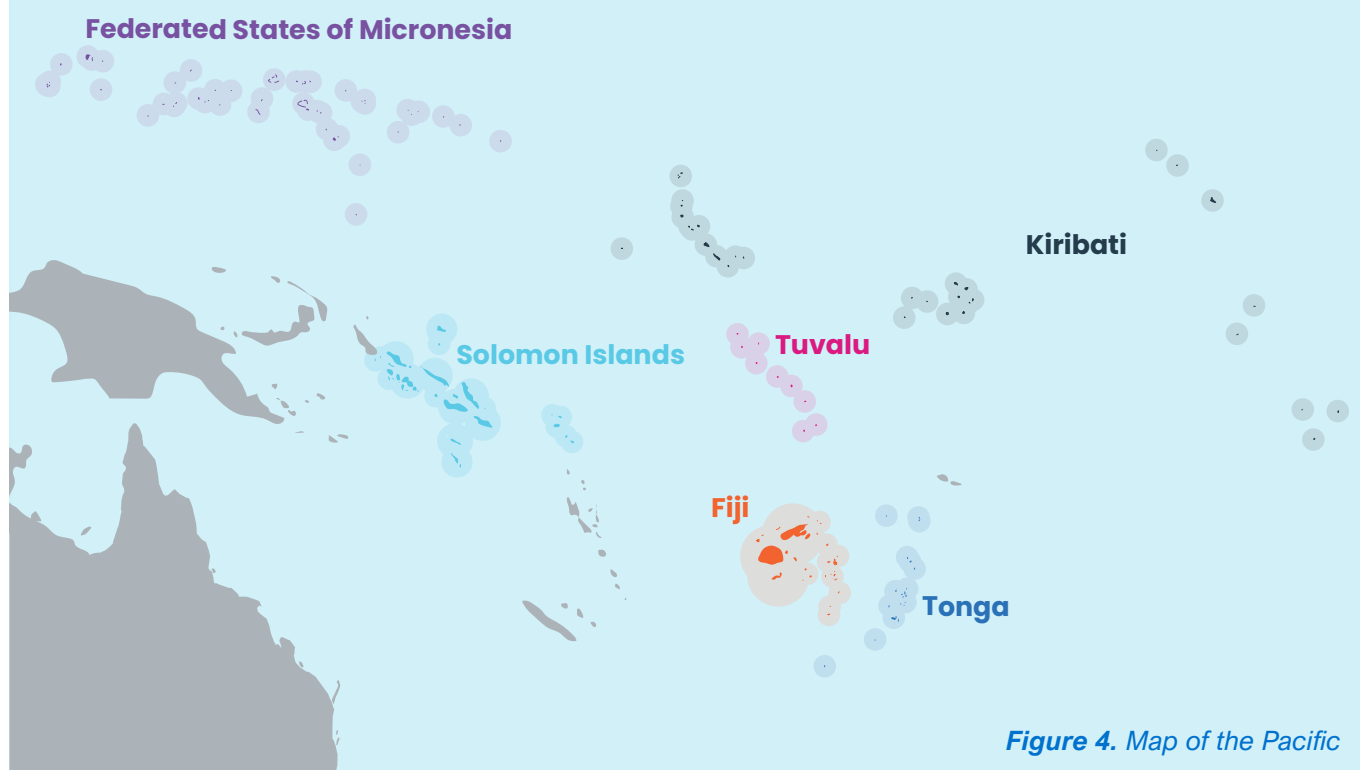


Figure 4. Map of the Pacific

Table 1: Lived experiences of survey participants

Category	Frequency	Percentage
LGBTQIA+	1	0.3%
A person with a disability	19	6.0 %
Indigenous person	122	38.2%
An ethnic minority	41	12.9%
A racial minority	30	9.4 %
A religious minority	68	21.3%
None of the above	63	19.7%
Prefer not to say	24	7.5%

**Arts-based storytelling:** 34 girls produced artworks and stories about their lived experiences of climate change. The girls are from Fiji (n=33) and Kiribati (n=1). The girls are aged between 10 and 18. Most girls live in rural areas and villages (n=29). Many girls identify as Indigenous (n=20) and two girls say they have a disability.

**Participatory data analysis, writing and advocacy workshop:** 14 people from Kiribati participated in this workshop, including nine women and five men. Four participants were young women.

### 3.4 Ethics and safeguarding

The safeguarding of girls, communities, mentors, researchers and partners was paramount in this project. The project was assessed and approved by Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee.<sup>20</sup> Safeguarding strategies were also reviewed by Plan staff. Safeguarding risk assessments were conducted by project partners during each cycle, and safeguarding strategies were co-designed, co-implemented and reviewed throughout the project:



- PIA assessed the safeguarding capacity of partner organisations, and co-designed plans to fill those gaps, with clear agreements on joint reporting protocols, roles and responsibilities. All project contracts included safeguarding and clauses for the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
- Project staff and local data collectors participated in online training on safeguarding and ethics, and they were all briefed on Plan International’s Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People, the Code of Conduct and the Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy. Project staff and local data collectors undertook police/background checks and signed Plan’s code of conduct.
- During Cycle 1 (co-design), young women engaged in a discussion on risks, research ethics, safeguarding considerations and cultural considerations, and appropriate safeguarding actions that can be undertaken.
- Safeguarding Reporting and Referral Mapping and Protocols were prepared to outline processes and agencies to report and refer disclosures or instances of abuse. During each activity, Safeguarding Focal Points were identified and trained to respond to concerns and support reporting and referral processes if needed.
- Girls and their parents received Project Information Sheets and Informed Consent Forms in plain English.
- All workshops included discussions about ethics and safeguarding, and co-establishing ground rules for safe and equitable participation. Partner staff had preparation and debriefing discussions with workshop attendees.
- Online workshops included cybersafety protocols such as using secure links and registration, digital security briefings and training for project staff, ensuring at least two adults are involved in online meetings.
- The project staff and local data collectors were trained to use protective interrupting when required.
- All data were de-identified and safely stored in ECU’s secure online data storage. The data will be destroyed in 2037 (after the youngest participant turns 25 years of age).

### 3.5 Limitations of the project

This project was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing impacts of climate change in the Pacific. During the period January 2020 to June 2024, the project partners in Kiribati, Fiji and Australia experienced a range of environmental challenges, including bushfires, COVID-19 pandemic, cyclones, severe flooding, and drought. This caused ongoing disruptions to the project. International travel between Australia and the Pacific was prohibited in 2020-2022, and due to these delays, project implementation did not take place in Fiji beyond the co-design phase. Cycle 1 was conducted through a series of online workshops.

These delays and other political complexities within the region meant it was extremely difficult for young women to collect data themselves. As such, Cycle 2 was conducted in partnership with Tebbutt Research and femLINKPacific, who engaged local young people to support data collection in urban, rural, and outer island communities.

Cycle 3 was conducted in person with climate advocates in Kiribati, but due to delays in the project and competing priorities, the young women originally involved in the project co-design were unable to participate. However, other young women did participate in that workshop. Due to resource constraints, Cycle 4 only involved climate advocates from Kiribati. KiriCAN will support girls in Kiribati to engage in planning and implementing climate justice activism after the report is launched.

These challenges limit the extent to which the project fully reflects the principles and practices of FPAR. Nevertheless, the rich data and civil society engagement in the project strengthen the scope and possibilities for girl-led climate justice activism in the Pacific.

*Names and identifying details have been changed for each of the stories shared in this report, to protect the privacy of the girls.*



Traditional dancers in Fiji.  
Photo: Johnny Silvercloud





# 4. Findings: Impacts of climate change on girls in the Pacific

This chapter shares the findings of the research related to the impacts of climate change on girls in Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Solomon Islands. It discusses climate change impacts, and then specifically the impacts of climate change on girls' basic needs, health and wellbeing, education, play and livelihoods, and community and culture.

## 4.1 Climate change impacts

The survey asked girls to identify the climate change impacts they have experienced. The most common response is "getting hotter" (see Figure 5). Other common impacts include lack of water, sea level rise, more or less rain, more mosquitoes, and storms and cyclones.

Girls' responses varied by place. In general, girls in the atoll nation of Tuvalu are most likely to

report climate impacts across the broad range of options. Sea level rises are more common for girls from Tuvalu (70%), Kiribati (57%) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) (42%). Coastal erosion is much more common for girls from the atoll nations of Tuvalu (58%) and Kiribati (51%), while floods are much more common for girls from Tonga (58%). Girls from Tonga (64%) and Tuvalu (44%) are more likely to experience storms and cyclones. Issues such as the natural environment breaking down (34%) and crop failure (20%) are more common in Tuvalu, while girls in Solomon Islands are more likely to experience more mosquitoes (50%). Co-researchers noted that malaria is a risk in Solomon Islands. Lack of water is experienced predominantly by girls in Tuvalu (72%), Kiribati (51%), FSM (39%) and Tonga (38%).

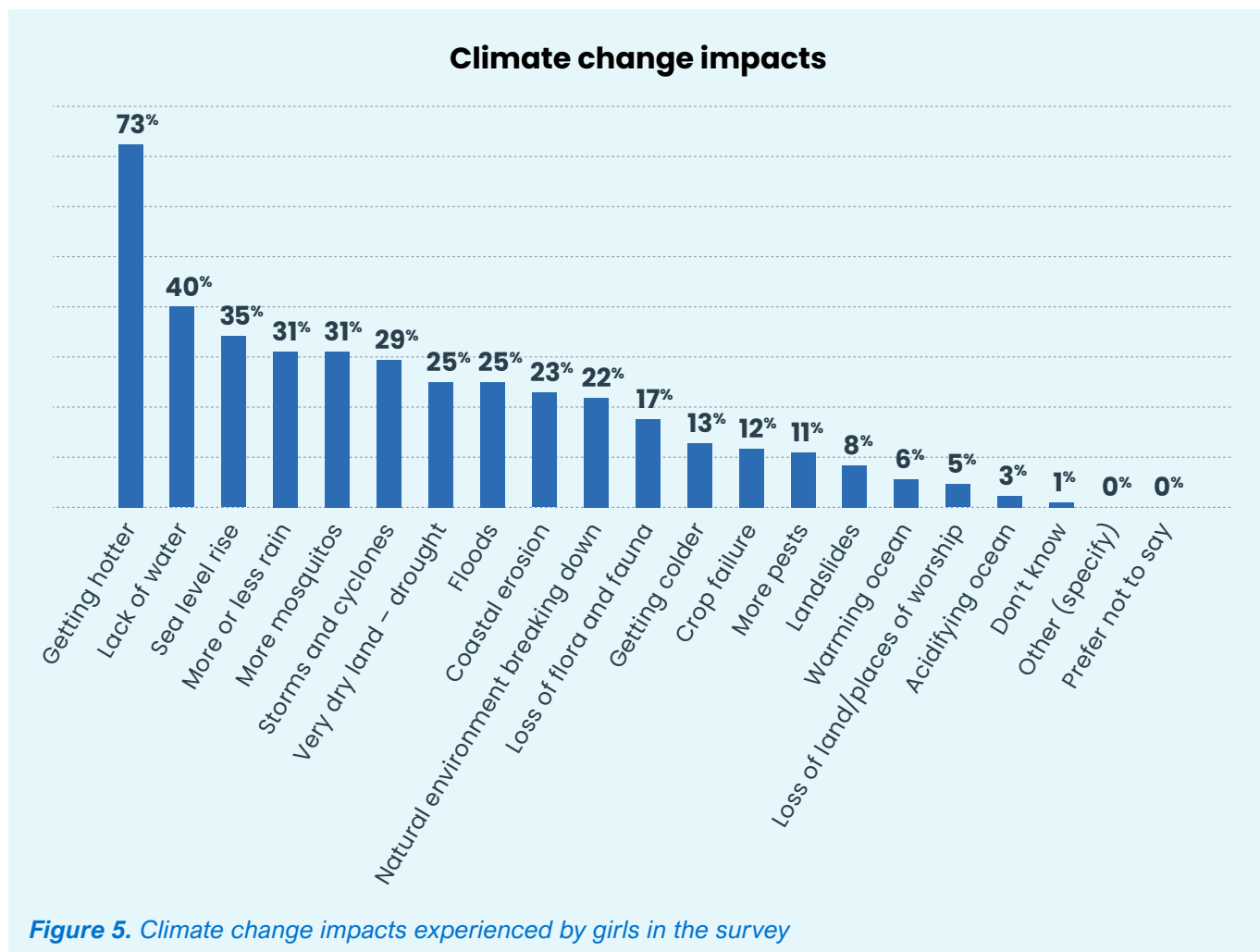


Figure 5. Climate change impacts experienced by girls in the survey

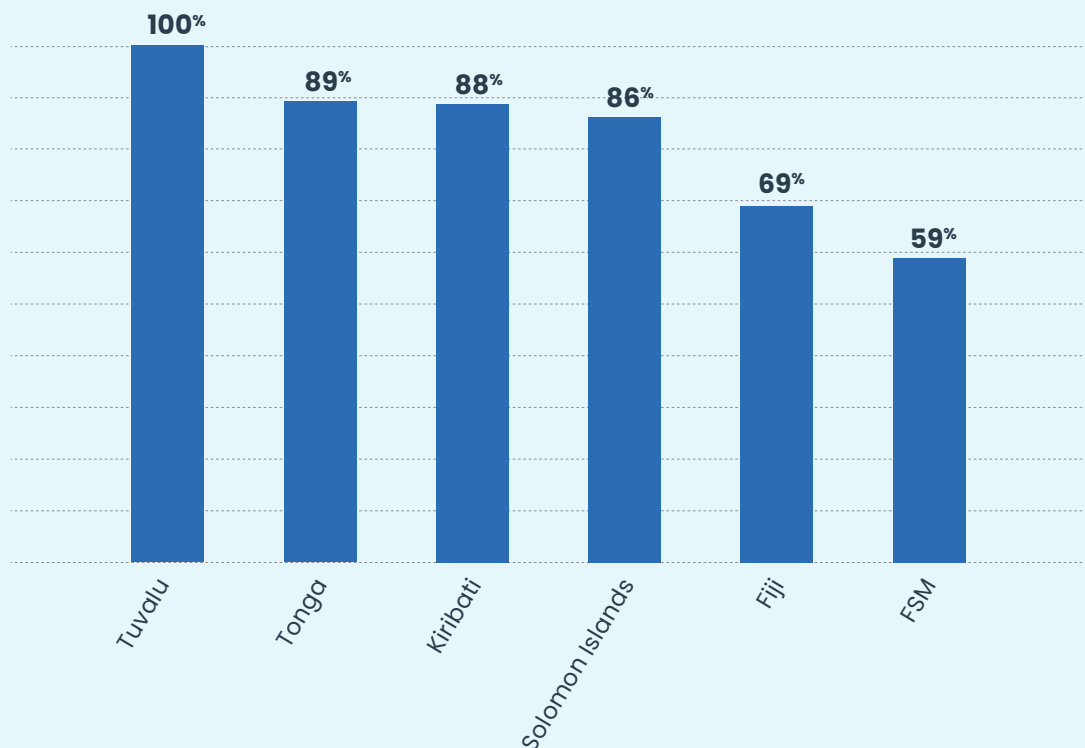
Girls in outer islands are much more likely to report most of these climate impacts, especially lack of water, natural environment breaking down, loss of flora and fauna, drought, coastal erosion, sea level rise, and more or less rain.<sup>22</sup> Girls in rural areas or villages are more likely to experience lack of water than girls in urban areas and towns, and girls in urban areas are more likely to experience increased heat. Girls in rural and urban areas have similar levels of experience of other impacts. Across the categories, there are no significant differences by age, although girls aged 16-18 are slightly more likely to experience each climate impact than girls aged 10-12. This is

likely explained by increased exposure to climate events due to older age.

The survey asked girls whether climate change has affected certain things in their life at home, in school or in their community (see Figure 6). A total of 82% of girls responded 'yes' to this question. Girls in FSM are the least likely to respond yes, while every girl in Tuvalu responded yes.

The data suggests that climate change affects girls' lives in the Pacific, and that girls living in low lying islands are most at risk, particularly due to sea level rise.

**Percentage of girls responding 'yes' when asked if climate change has affected them**



**Figure 6.** Survey responses to whether climate change has affected the participant's life, school or community, by country.

### Salote's story

Salote is a 16-year old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Climate change is a serious global challenge in our environment. It is a sudden change that affects the environment. It is a major issue in our everyday life that the world should worry about. Due to these changes we are facing serious problem. Some of these disasters*

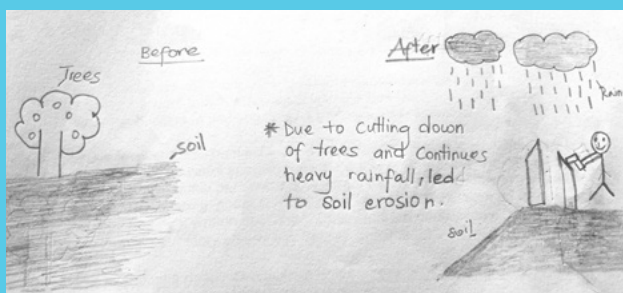
*are natural such as landslide that affects our community because we are located up the hill. Before we have never face heavy rains. But now we are experiencing these changes, heavy rain which is causing landslide. And we have no land to relocate to, as we are Solomon Descendants bought into Fiji as slaves in the olden days (black birding).*



## Mere's story

Mere is a 13-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Before there were plenty of trees and the soil was firm however due to cutting down of trees and heavy rainfall it led to soil erosion.*



## 4.2 Impacts of climate change on girls' basic needs

Girls who identified that climate change has affected their life were asked to identify impacts on their basic needs from a list of possible responses. The key issues are access to clean and safe water; access to sufficient quality food; and housing.

### Access to clean and safe water

Fresh water is a scarce resource in atoll nations, particularly for rural and remote areas that lack infrastructure such as desalination plants or water tanks to collect rainwater. Many communities in rural and remote areas must queue for hours to collect fresh water for their homes relying on a single tap. Further, these islands rely heavily on groundwater and for many Pacific communities, groundwater is the only reliable source of fresh water throughout the year. Sea-level rise and changes in rainfall patterns are putting water resources at further risk. This is also exacerbated by increasing populations and pollution particularly in urban towns.

“Drinking water is not clean during floods”.

Girl, aged 14, living an urban area in Solomon Islands

In the survey, girls identify that the most common impact of climate change on their basic needs is lack of clean fresh water, felt by 47% of girls. This was much higher for girls in

Tuvalu and Kiribati, and was a major problem for girls in outer islands. Some girls say they experience water shortages and brackish water due to floods, droughts, and sea level rise, particularly when wells and other water sources are contaminated by salty and unclean water.

Climate events can make it difficult for girls to collect fresh water, which is usually their responsibility in their households. Girls explain that lack of fresh water affects their hygiene, experiencing difficulties washing their bodies and managing menstruation. Many girls must boil water before drinking it.

### Access to sufficient quality food

In atoll nations without adequate soil and land mass, food insecurity has been a significant problem with heavy reliance on often expensive imported fresh foods or cheap canned food products. The workshops observed that rates of obesity, diabetes and non-communicable diseases amongst Pacific people are some of the highest in the world. Cyclones, storms, coastal erosion and flooding affect freshwater availability and contribute to salination of lands, reducing fertile land for farming and access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This causes further dependency on unhealthy canned food products.

In the survey, 32% of girls explain that the quality of food has reduced due to climate change. Furthermore, 27% of girls say that there is less food available. Both are more likely for girls in Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu, and for girls in outer islands and rural areas. 19% of girls say they feel hungry, and this is higher for girls in Tonga and Kiribati, and for girls in rural areas (24%). Some girls say they have difficulties growing food due to water shortages and difficulties importing food during cyclones, while heavy rains flood traditional lovo pits (Fijian underground oven).

“We can't grow food around the house due to poor water quality.”

Co-design workshop participants

Girls explain that Pacific communities are heavily dependent on oceans for food, income and cultural spiritual ties. The Pacific Ocean is experiencing acidification, warming and overfishing, and pollution is debilitating marine ecosystems including poisoning marine food sources such as fish.

## How climate change has affected basic needs across countries

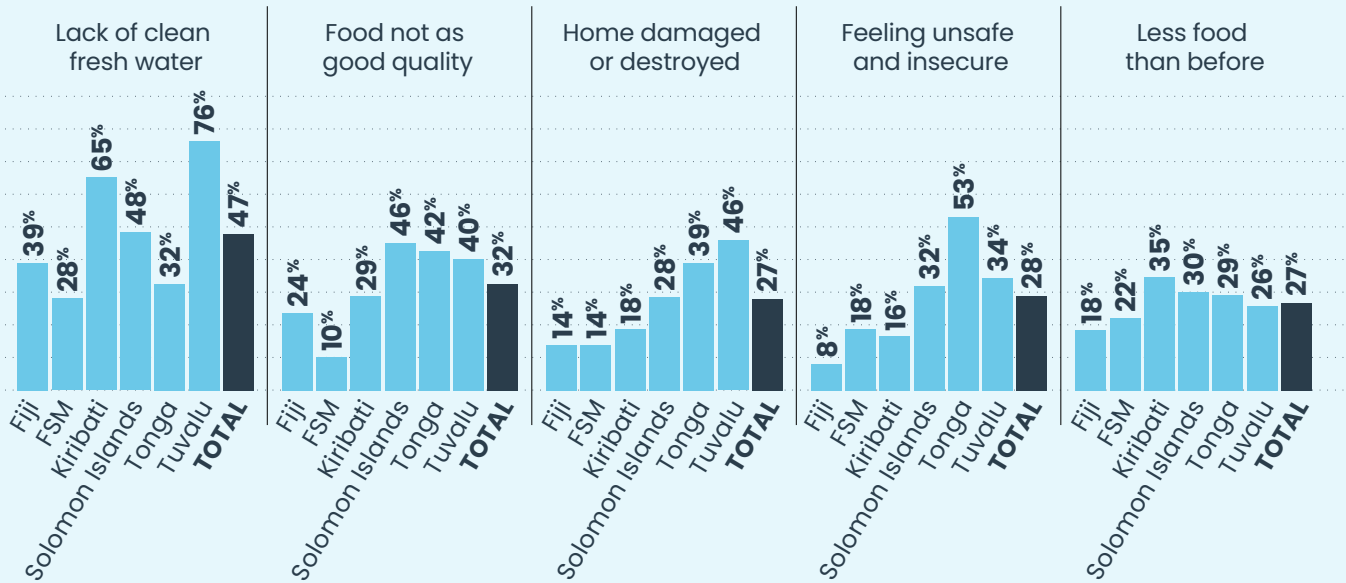


Figure 7. Survey responses to whether climate change has affected girls' basic needs, broken down by country (top five impacts).

### Maria's story

Maria is a 17-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. Her village sources drinking water from a borehole. In a video story, Maria explains the effects of drought on the river which they mostly use on their livestock, vegetable garden and daily livelihoods. She says:

*I live in a rural community in Fiji. Reduced stream and river flow can increase the concentration of pollutants in water and cause contamination. Livestock can become hungry, diseases are*

*even dire. We drink from borehole as a source of drinking water and during these drought conditions we need to save water, but the conservation efforts should not get in the way of proper hygiene. I want to drink clean and quality drinking water.*

*I want the government of the day to invest more on new conservation technologies, community governance and partnership, more education and awareness in my community.*

**“Fish in the sea are poisonous, not good for eating.”**

Girl, aged 17, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

**“It affects our daily routine that we usually do. Early in the morning we go out to collect firewood for our cooking but if there is a cyclone we cannot go out, all we have to do is to stay indoors to protect ourselves.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 13, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

A young woman in the co-design workshop also explained that climate change affects fishing grounds, saying “Women and girls have to either go to other locations or go deeper to fish. [This is a]challenge as we have to travel by boat to fish.” (Co-design workshop participants)

#### Housing

In the survey, 27% of girls say that climate change has damaged or destroyed their homes. This is due to events such as floods and landslides, cyclones and sea level rise. Some girls explain their homes have been rebuilt in new locations and others displaced. Workshop participants observe an increase in urban slums across the Pacific region as more



## Filo's story

Filo is a 14-year-old girl with a disability living in a rural village in Fiji. She says:

*As you see in the picture, I'm near the river. A river full of dirty water when it's bad weather condition. I use the river for bathing, washing clothes and even for drinking when the main source is closed. We had to walk a few miles to fetch water from the river. This poses a huge negative impact on my health and personal security as a person living with disability.*

*I would like to have water tanks to reduce work for our mothers in fetching clean water and our community water source to be treated to reduce skin diseases and sickness. Request if the Ministry of Health and Infrastructure could pay a visit to my community to see the issues faced and provide awareness. If my community are supplied with good water tanks and water sources are treated, we will have clean and safe water to use and good health.*



and more people are unable to rebuild from disasters and are moving to cities and towns to secure employment, access better public services and be safe. In the survey, 9% of girls have experienced living in a temporary shelter or moving to a new place, with higher incidence in Tuvalu and Solomon Islands, and much higher likelihood for girls in outer islands. 8% of girls say they feel unsafe in evacuation centres.

Co-researchers explain that disaster assistance to rebuild homes often only targets traditional families. Many families that are headed by women, LGBTQIA+ people, single mothers, and older people are not prioritised for disaster assistance, and they have to find creative ways to rebuild their homes. These families are more likely to be living at or below the poverty line.

In the survey, 22% of girls explain that climate events have caused power lines to go down, and without electricity they cannot use television, phones or internet. This is higher in Tuvalu, FSM and Kiribati, and for girls in outer islands and rural areas. It can often take years to repair bridges, power lines and wharves, and some are never repaired. This limits community access to infrastructure, that ensures equal opportunities for all.

### **Accessibility and inclusion in disasters**

Some girls experience difficulties of accessibility and inclusion in disasters. 14% of girls say they have difficulties getting information about climate change and disasters. This was much higher in Solomon Islands (34%) and for girls living in urban areas (20%). During the co-design workshops, young women explained that some girls experience difficulties accessing information during disasters. Project partners explain that many communities in the Pacific have limited access to connectivity through mobile phones and radio; and that disaster information is not consistently and equitably coordinated, with lack of translated and plain language information. Access to disaster information is particularly an issue for girls with a disability:

**“Some of my friends are visually impaired and have hearing impairments and miss out accessing information about cyclone. When we have television news, there are no interpreters so it's hard to know what's going on... There is still not enough support from government for our group especially for my other friends and colleagues who have visual and hearing impairment. Lack of disability friendly facilities at evacuation centres and even in our everyday life.”**

Co-design workshop participants

Young women in the co-design workshops highlight other issues of accessibility and inclusion for girls in disasters. They identify a lack of disability-friendly facilities at evacuation centres, along with issues of privacy, and poor communication with girls with disabilities.

“At the moment there is no consideration around safe spaces or specific allocated spaces for people with disability as we have different needs. For visually impaired, we need a carer and for hearing impaired, we need advanced sign language interpreters because in rural areas, we mostly use basic sign language however we need to be also made aware of the advanced sign language that aligns to the universal standard and that is a another set of work that needs to be prioritized so we are not lost when we visit urban areas or when we are in another setting. This becomes a bigger challenge when you are disabled and a female.

In villages, disability people and needs are often and mostly forgotten during times of disasters and within community recovery phases. For disabled people in rural areas, they are often excluded within disaster responses. At the moment only [a] few communities have Village Headmen giving physical signals so they are aware when a disaster is in place or about to take place. For [the] visually impaired, whistle is blown and for hearing impaired, there are different flags/signages to reflect the level of warning or emergency.”

Co-design workshops

Children at school in West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Photo: Plan International Australia.





### 4.3 Impacts of climate change on girls' health and wellbeing

In the survey, girls identify many impacts that climate change is having on their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Only 0.6% of girls say that climate change has not affected their health or wellbeing.

#### Physical health

The most common impact of climate change on Pacific girls' physical health is feeling very hot, thirsty, or tired (48%). This is more common for girls in Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and FSM. Access to medical clinics and hospitals is also difficult for many girls living in rural and remote areas. Overall, 7% of girls say they cannot get to a medical centre or hospital for medical help due to climate events, and this is higher in Solomon Islands (16%) and Tuvalu (14%), and for girls in outer islands (38%).

Girls share that some health impacts of heat include feeling hot and itchy during hot and dry days, headaches, stomach aches, feeling tired, hot, sweaty, sunburn, skin rash, fever, difficulty breathing due to polluted and dusty air, and mosquito bites.

**“ Hot temperatures in weather causes raises and boils on the head. Frequent changes in weather patterns causes sicknesses like short of breath, headaches. During hot sunny days it causes headaches.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 10, living in an urban area in Fiji

**“ Mosquito bites based on weather.”**

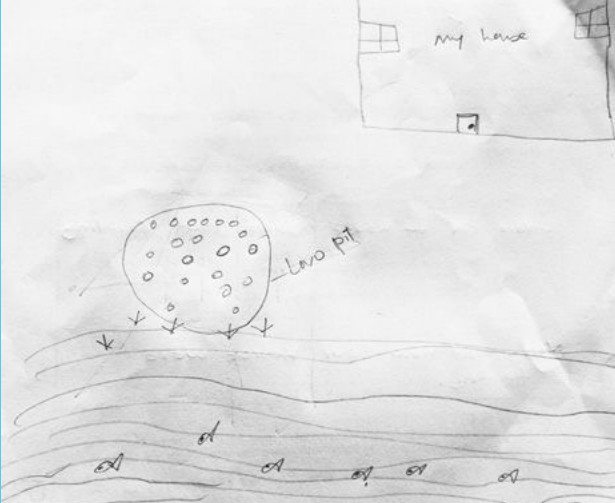
Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in the Federated States of Micronesia



## Susana's story

Susana is a 13-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Our lovo pit does not get flooded as we live beside the river however recently due to heavy rainfall there is flash flooding and the water level rise and bust the riverbeds and our lovo pit has been under water.*



## Ruci's story

Ruci is a 15-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*My drawing describes how poor fishing is happening in my villages which affects my livelihood. Before when I go out fishing, I usually collect a lot of seaweeds, sea grapes, fish etc. but now it has [become] extinct due to land reclamation and dumping of rubbish in the sea. We can reduce by placing taboos [restrictions on fishing] in reserved areas for a period of time to let the marine resources grow again.*



32% of girls report health problems with their skin and stomach, particularly in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands. Girls explain that this is caused by lack of access to clean water for cooking and bathing, along with poor sanitation, overcrowding, dietary deficiencies, and breathing dusty air. Pollution from poor waste disposal on land and in the ocean also causes contamination, which directly affects girls' health. This affects their skin, spreads disease, and diarrhoea. Girls say that floods and droughts cause disease.

**“ I was suffer everyday from diarrhoea because we usually used to drink dirty water.”**

Girl, aged 15, from an ethnic minority, living in a rural area in Kiribati

In regards to hygiene and sanitation, 17% of girls say they have experienced challenges when it comes to bathing, washing and managing menstruation, due to the impacts of climate change on freshwater supply. This can be difficult for some girls to address due to fear, shyness or disability.

**“ It is not safe to bathe in poor quality water, salty and brackish, especially when menstruating.”**

Co-design workshop participants

12% of girls have experienced people dying from disasters like cyclones or flooding, with higher rates in Solomon Islands and Tonga. '

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

The survey data shows that climate change affects many aspects of Pacific girls' mental health and wellbeing. Girls share many feelings they have about climate change.

**Worry:** 42% of girls worry about the future. This is much higher in Tuvalu (60%), Kiribati (49%) and Tonga (49%), for girls aged 16-18 (48%) and for girls living in outer islands (88%). This may be due to greater risk of rising sea levels and less access to higher education and employment opportunities in these locations.



## How climate change has affected health and wellbeing across countries

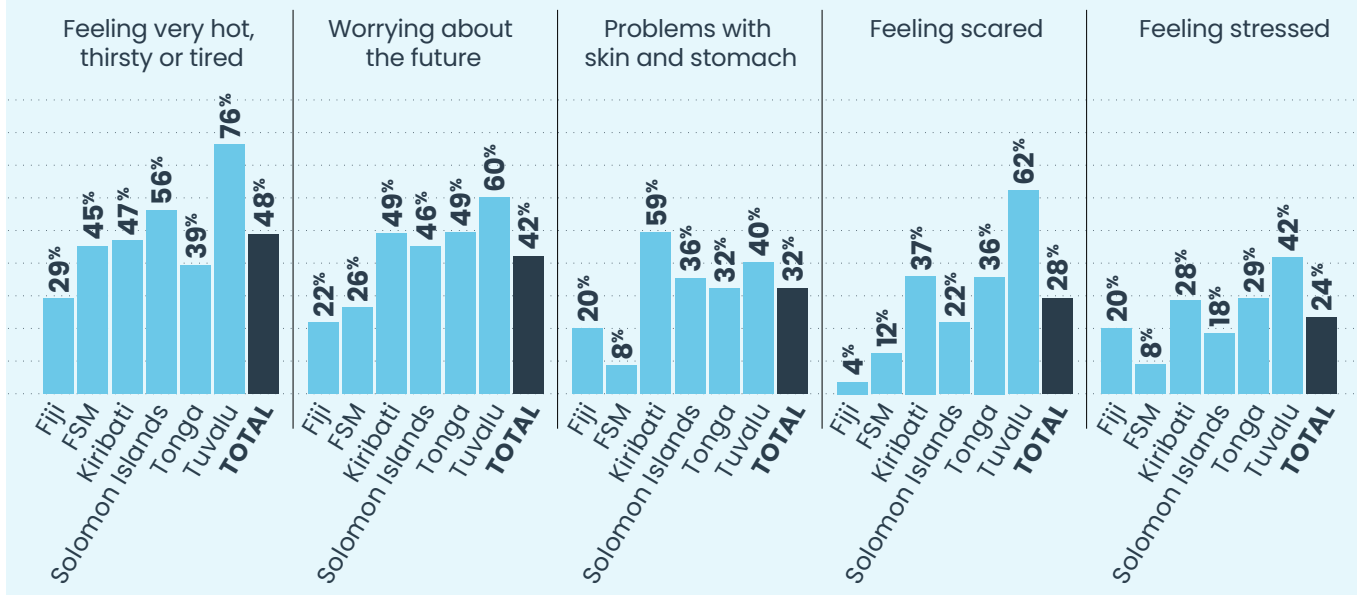
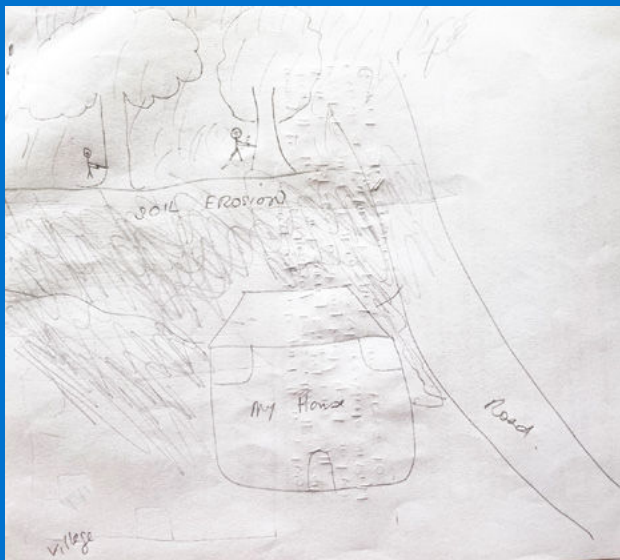


Figure 8. How has climate change affected girls' health and wellbeing across countries (top five impacts)

### Talei's story

Talei is a 15-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

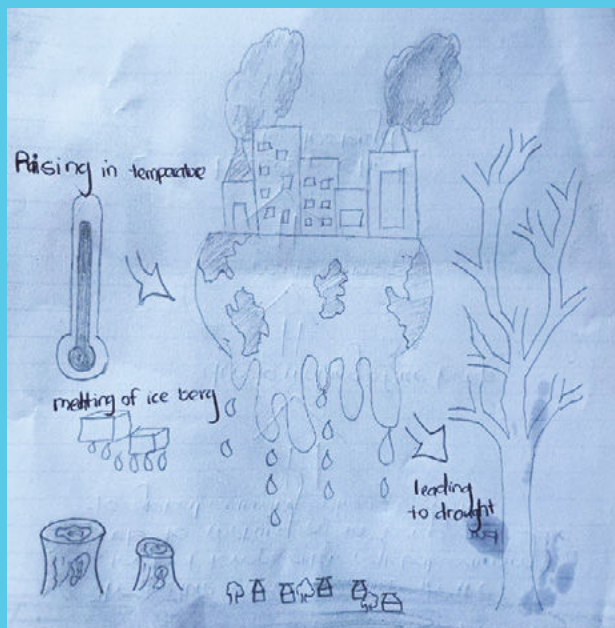
*At the backyard of my house there are two mango trees providing shade to my house. They decided to cut down these trees and during heavy rainfall we need to find shelter elsewhere because of soil erosion which filled the back of our house. Now we are starting to plant some trees to try and prevent soil erosion from happening.*



### Wati's story

Wati is an 18-year-old girl living in an urban area in Fiji. She says:

*My picture shows increase in the level of temperature or global warming which lead to melting of icebergs and due to global warming drought occurs, sea level rises and therefore house in islands gets destroyed.*



**Fear:** 29% of girls feel scared about climate change. This is much higher in Tuvalu (62%), in Kiribati (37%) and Tonga (36%), and for girls in outer islands (88%). It is slightly higher for girls aged 10-12 (33%). Some girls are scared of “thunder” and “big waves”.

**“ Hot temperatures in weather causes raises and boils on the head. Frequent changes in weather patterns causes sicknesses like short of breath, headaches. During hot sunny days it causes headaches.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 10, living in an urban area in Fiji

**“ I am worried about the future. I am worried about losing my family in the future.”**

Girl, aged 11, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“ As a student, now disasters are frequent and we are worried about the future especially when we are not doing anything now, it will get worse later.”**

Co-design workshop participants

**“ There's a lot of information about the effect of climate change but the most worrying of this is about the future. We (next generation) don't know what's going to happen to our home island.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**“ Climate change makes me feel scared. Staying home thinking about the future.”**

Girl, aged 16, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“ Live in fear when there was a big flood.”**

Girl, aged 15, living in a rural area in Solomon Islands

### Bulou's story

Bulou is a 10-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural village in Fiji. She says:

*My village is situated along the coast, whenever there's high tide, water comes inland and most times it covers half the village. The high tide also brings in more rubbish that dumps it right to my doorstep which affects my health. Also the road condition is very poor going to my school and going to town. Most times I can't access services in town in regards to my school work because of the road condition and the bus doesn't reach my village. This affects my health and personal security. Poor network is problem as well. Most of my school work nowadays needs research. I couldn't do my research mainly because of poor network coverage.*

*Recommendations to my issues, I and my community need [a] sea wall. This could solve the issues of sea water coming in land with rubbish. If sea walls are built then we can do some backyard farming in our homes. Road condition could be widened and upgraded and walkways to my school.*

*Network towers to be situated in a place where network is accessible during good and bad weather as well. If all these recommendation is accomplished, my health, personal, food, environment, community and education will not be affected.*





**Unsafe and insecure:** 28% of girls say they feel unsafe and insecure about what climate change is doing to them. This is much higher in Tonga (53%) and for girls aged 16-18 (37%).

**Stress:** 24% of girls feel stress due to climate change. This is higher in Tuvalu (42%), Tonga (29%) and Kiribati (28%), for girls aged 16-18 (30%) and girls in outer islands (75%).

**Sadness:** 22% of girls feel sad about climate change, especially in Tonga (47%), for girls aged 10-12 (33%) and in outer islands (38%).

**“ I am feeling sad about what climate change will bring for the next years.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 17, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**Confused:** 16% of girls feel confused about climate change. This is much higher in Tonga (36%) and Solomon Islands (20%), and slightly higher for girls aged 10-12 (20%).

Some girls also share other feelings related to climate change, such as frustration (7% overall, 18% in Solomon Islands), depression, grief, exhaustion, and tiredness.

**“ Sleepless within more than one month due to flooding as I have no place to sleep.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 17, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**“ Sometimes I do feel depressed and exhausted during the night.”**

Indigenous girl from a religious minority, aged 14, living in an urban area in Fiji

**“ Drought makes me very tired of going around with my bucket.”**

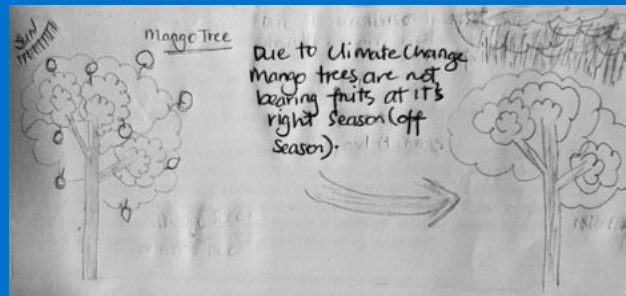
Girl, aged 17, living in an outer island in Tuvalu

Climate change also affects family wellbeing. 5% of girls have experienced family breakup and separation after losing homes or moving villages. This is higher in Tuvalu (12%) and Solomon

### Sera's story

Sera is a 17-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Due to climate change mango trees are not bearing fruits at its right season.*



### Alanieta's story

Alanieta is a 14-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*My artwork is about the rise in sea level and soil erosion, those are the changes that I have experienced due to climate change. There use to be lots of fish in our sea back in my younger days. I'm part of [a] kids club, what I need to be done to my community is to stop polluting rubbish to our sea and oceans.*

*Climate change affects my life in so many ways. When I was a child I used to swim in a nice and beautiful, clean still water. But now due to climate change and rising sea level, I am facing difficulty in swimming and fishing, as there is not as much fish as in my younger days. I am also worried that sea level rise can wash and make landslide beside our road.*

*What I want to pick up is awareness in community and if the government can take environment law enforcement.*

Islands (8%), and for girls in outer islands (25%). Some families are migrating due to climate change, and some girls cannot visit their families in other places due to extreme weather.

### Safety and security

Safety and security are climate issues for girls. Although rates of violence are high in the Pacific, only a small proportion of girls who participated in the survey say they have experienced violence in the context of climate change. This

includes physical violence (6%), early or forced marriage (3%) and sexual and gender-based violence (2%). Rates of physical violence are much higher in Tonga (17%). Early or forced marriage are more common in Tonga (9%) and for girls aged 16-18 (6%). Sexual and gender-based violence are more common in Solomon Islands (8%), in outer islands (13%) and for girls aged 10-12 (4%). A very small proportion of girls say they can't access counselling services such as women's help centres (1.2%).

In the co-design workshops, young women highlighted issues of safety for women and girls in evacuation centres. They said,

**“ [In the evacuation centres] there is more focus on everyone’s safety and not much on women and girls’ safety. Women and girls are bearing the burden of looking after families and community in the evacuation centre. We are having to stay in an evacuation centre for almost a week and having to rebuild our life. At times other organisations like the church steps in to help faster than the government, otherwise we have to rebuild at our own cost. We have to deal with our own traumas and especially violations like rape, abuse etc because in our culture, it can bring embarrassment, so we try to solve it within our own household.”**

Co-design workshop participants

In the analysis workshop, co-researchers explained that girls and young women in the Pacific often deal with trauma and violations such as rape and abuse within their households to avoid embarrassment and shame due to cultural norms. It is possible that some girls who completed the survey did not report their experiences of violence due to cultural shame and stigma. As such, the data may not fully capture the extent of violence experienced by girls and young women in the Pacific. Rather, the data reflects the complex interplay between

cultural norms and the under reporting of violence among girls and young women in the Pacific.

## 4.4 Impacts of climate change on girls’ education, play, and livelihoods

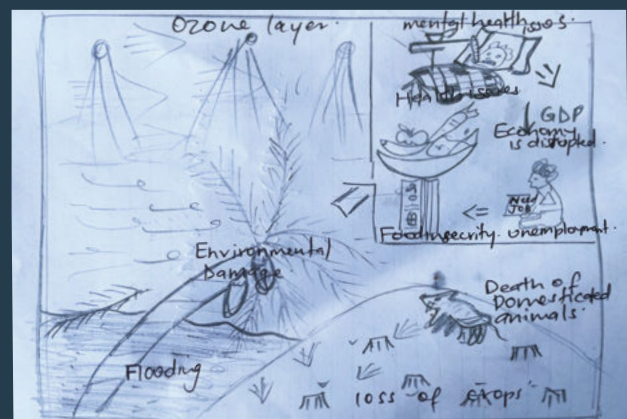
### Attending school

In the Pacific region, there are significant disparities between education infrastructure and access for urban areas compared with rural and remote areas. Families on a low income often cannot afford a mobile phone, tablet or internet data access. Climate change further affects Pacific girls’ ability to go to school. Girls from rural and remote areas face disproportionate impacts of climate change on education access due to lack of roads, bridges, transport, streetlights, footpaths and other services such as internet and phone connectivity, along with reduced ability to travel to towns to buy books and educational supplies.

### Tima’s story

Tima is an 18-year-old girl of Indo-Fijian descent living in an urban area in Fiji. She says:

*Climate change are natural disasters e.g. hurricanes, cyclones and flooding. Thus for hurricanes it had destroyed agriculture produce, livestock are being killed and livelihood are being affected. Not enough climate resilience resulted in food insecurity, poverty and unemployment, increase in crime and violence against women, rage, frustration and mental health issues. Not only climate change impacts the environment, but also social and economic aspect of an individual in the community.*







Children on their way to school in West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Photo: Plan International Australia.

50% of girls in the survey say they have experienced times when they cannot get to school, including missing classes and changes to school terms, due to disasters. This is much higher in Tuvalu (74%), Tonga (64%) and Solomon Islands (62%), and for girls in outer islands (63%). 33% of girls say their school has been damaged or destroyed, higher in Tuvalu, Tonga and the outer islands. Further to this, 13% of girls say they have attended school in different places, such as churches, village halls, temples, mosques and tents, and this is higher in Solomon Islands.

Some girls explain that they miss school due to rain, floods, heat and droughts. Bad weather conditions such as flooding can

**“Missing classes when there is a rainy season or even hot/drought season due to lack of water.”**

Girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 16, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“There was one time that I was not able to go to school because the classrooms were flooded due to heavy rain, all desks and other school materials were damp.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 12, living in a rural area in Kiribati

affect girls’ ability to travel to school, and they may miss school due to poor health.

Online classes are not sufficient:

**“Climate can disturb school and when kids stay home and do online studies it’s just not like being in classes.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in an urban area in Fiji

Furthermore, due to the impacts of climate change, some families do not have enough money to send girls to school.

**“Climate change affects my education. I hardly go to school. Shorten money for bus fare.”**

Girl, aged 10, living in a rural area in Tonga

Young women in the co-design workshops also explained that some Pacific girls don’t see the purpose of education due to climate threats:

**“We are scared because at school, there is a joke that there is no point of schooling because climate change is real, and that is a worry for us as student, what will be there for us in future?”**

Co-design workshop participants

Girls suggest that they lack strategies to cope with these issues, including lack of support and funding. Only 6% of girls say climate change has not affected their education or livelihoods.

**Play and recreation**

Climate change affects Pacific girls’ ability to engage in play, sport, and other recreation activities. Across the survey, 26% of girls say they cannot do sport due to climate change. This is higher for girls in Kiribati (41%) and for girls aged 13-15 years (33%). Further to this, 23% of girls say they cannot play due to the impacts of climate change. Again, this is higher in Kiribati (39%) and for girls aged 10-15. There are several reasons for this. Girls explain that disasters destroy or flood sporting areas and schools, while heat distress, lack of access to fresh water and poor health affects girls’ ability to participate in recreation activities:

**“Climate change has made me to stay indoors all day because it’s too hot to go outside to do physical activities that kids normally do.”**

Girl with a disability, aged 14, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“I don’t have the freedom to do daily activities which makes life boring.”**

18-year-old girl, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

In some coastal contexts, some girls can swim as part of their recreation, but climate change has reduced this opportunity.

Girls also explain that they are undertaking more household labour. 19% of girls say they are working longer to help with tasks at home, and this is much higher for girls in Tonga (32%). 11% of girls say they are walking longer to collect food, firewood and water, or to go to school; higher in Solomon Islands (20%). These household tasks are gendered – that is, they are often allocated to girls rather than boys. It is likely that increased time to undertake domestic labour affects girls’ ability to access education; thereby increasing inequality in education and employment for girls and women.

**“Climate change makes it difficult for girls to do their jobs around the house, like washing. Some jobs need to be relocated away from the housing, like longer walks to get water.”**

Co-design workshop participants

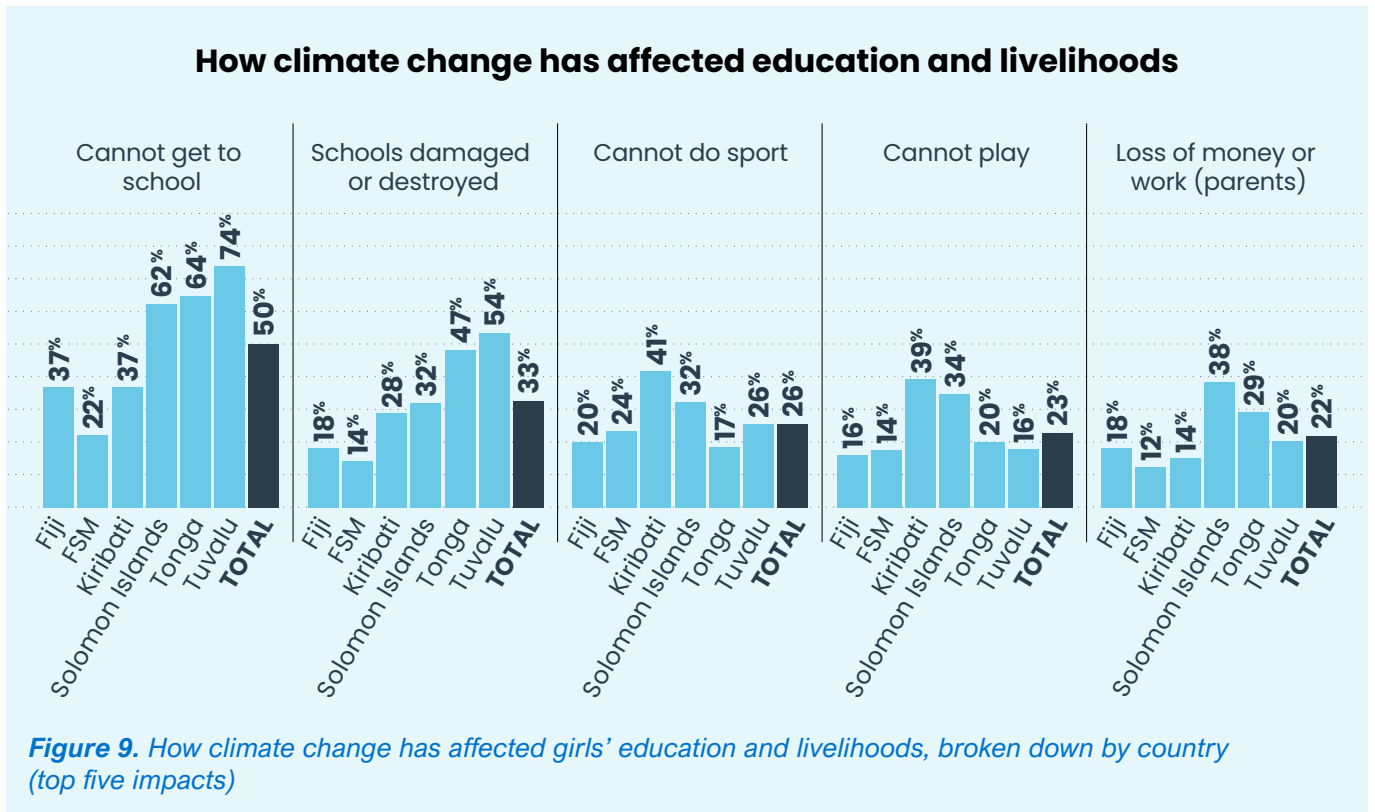


Figure 9. How climate change has affected girls’ education and livelihoods, broken down by country (top five impacts)

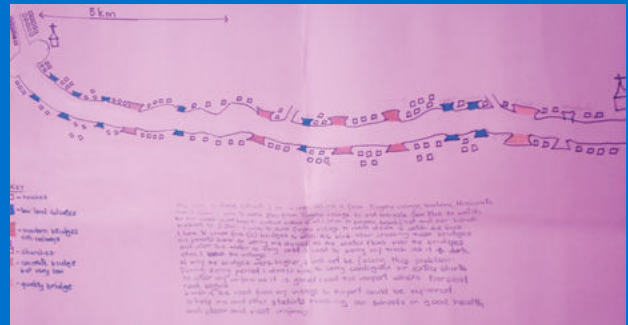


## Elenoa's story

Elenoa is a 12-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*I walk 5km every morning during bad weather conditions. Road from my home to school is very poor. I had to walk 5km to catch my school bus. This also happens when returning home after school. The culvert and bridges are very low and not in a good condition putting us into risk when traveling. I leave home at 3am in the morning to go to school and to catch the bus at 6am, reaching school at 7am.*

*Recommendation: I, as a young girl at the age of 12, my personal and health security is very important in order to access learnings and services provided. I need solar streetlights along the roads, bridges to be raised higher and build on a solid foundation. If these recommendations are being implemented, my life as a young girl will be safe and secured. Reduced in violence if there's solar streetlights and the bus will come right to the village instead of walking 5km every day. Our clothes won't get wet when we go to school. With this being implemented, there will be less crime in my community and my health issues will be reduced as well. Because of where my village is situated, communication is my biggest barrier and also community leaders are not active enough to try and work on these issues.*



### Text from image:

When it rains, I had to walk 5km from my village to catch the six o'clock school bus. My mother wakes up at 1.30am to prepare breakfast and our lunch. I have to cross five bridges to catch the bus. When crossing these bridges my parents have to carry me across as the water flows over the bridge and also the water is very cold. I need to carry a torch as it is dark when I leave the village. If only the bridges were higher, I will not be facing this problem. During sunny periods always have to carry cardigans or extra shirts to cover my uniform as it is gravel road, tarseal where road begins. I wish if the road from my village to airport could be repaired to help me and other students reaching our schools in good health and clean and neat uniforms.

**“ Young women are usually cooking, fishing, washing, helping [the] family... Girls work harder than boys. Some girls experience hard times, such as carrying water. Men's job is to build sea wall, and women get more tasks.”**

Co-design workshop participants

### Family livelihoods

Climate change affects family livelihoods in the Pacific particularly for those whose livelihoods depend on informal sectors such as agriculture, farming and fishing. This has multiple impacts on girls. In the survey, 22% of girls say that climate change has caused loss of money or work for their parents, and this is higher in Solomon Islands (38%) and Tonga (29%). An example is destruction of crops due to extreme weather:

**“ Our community is experiencing scarcity in crops plantation due to brackish water, no fresh water and no healthy soil.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 16, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**“ Whenever there is a cyclone, our plantation is destroyed and we have to re-plant and this is the usual hard work communities, especially women and girls, have to endure.”**

Co-design workshop participants

**“As my life focuses on the plantation and all my plants will be destroyed when the weather becomes hotter.”**

Girl with a disability, aged 16, living in an urban area in Kiribati

Loss of resources also affects livelihoods. 11% of girls have experienced loss of animals like cows, pigs, chickens, ducks, goats and horses, and this figure is higher in Tonga (23%) and for girls living in the outer islands (25%). 9% experienced loss of farmland and fishing grounds, particularly in Tuvalu (20%) and the outer islands (38%).

**“Livestock gets impacted and it’s a big loss when they die within [a] disaster.”**

Co-design workshop participants

As a result of these livelihood impacts, girls explain that their families have less money as costs increase or they are not able to work:

### Agela’s story

Agela is a 13-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She is involved in a local environment-based kids club. She says:

*My artwork is about climate change that affects my daily life. What I wanted to be done, let's hold hands together and fight climate change. I did not feel the effect of climate change until this year. This year the weather was different in so many ways to me. I have seen that there was so many rain and no school for us which I found unusual. Every morning I get up so early to prepare for school but this year it was hard getting up in the cold... and it's affected my eardrums and I started experiencing ear pain and coughing frequently. As you can see I am 13, I am a young girl, I started missing out on class a lot because of the weather. When I go to school sometimes I noticed that I wasn't the only one affected by the weather, my classmates too.*

*My message is that climate change is also affecting our education so please to all the leaders in all countries, I beg you we are the future, so please let us all work together to strengthen climate justice for our future.*

**“Sometimes the amount of money, buying needs and wants are going to [have a] higher price which some people can afford and some can't afford.”**

Girl from a religious minority, aged 18 living in a rural area in Tonga

**“Sometimes we can't earn anything we want because of climate change.”**

Girl from a racial minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

Reduced family income can affect girls' access to and participation in education.

## 4.5 Impacts of climate change on community and culture

Girls in the Pacific identify a range of community and cultural impacts of climate change, with only 6% saying that climate change has not affected their community or culture. Co-researchers provide examples of the cultural impacts of climate change for Pacific communities who have been relocated from coastal to non-coastal locations. They explain that some women and girls must walk longer distances to fish and collect seafood. Some communities have to give up going to the sea and must find ways to adapt to their new environment, including changing their meals. As many reallocations are funded by donors, families often transition to a developed community with new houses, access to electricity and television and mobile phones. This has impacts on family and cultural activities, with less time together for families and for social and cultural gatherings.

### Community infrastructure

Climate change affects community infrastructure and these impacts are far worse in rural and remote areas that already lack basic health, educational and other public infrastructure such as power lines, and community buildings.



**“Climate change affects the electricity supply and it affects communication, and this become a problem for sick and pregnant women in terms of hospitalisation and medical needs.”**

Co-design workshop participants

31% of girls observe climate-induced damage to religious buildings, and this is higher in Tonga and Tuvalu, and in the outer islands (75%). 25% of girls also observe damage to community buildings like libraries, community halls and evacuation centres, which is higher in Tuvalu and Tonga, and in the outer islands (63%). Community buildings are used for activities such as traditional meetings and community education activities, and these activities cannot happen when the buildings are destroyed. 26% of girls say they cannot go to events like weddings and funerals, and this is higher in Solomon Islands and Tonga. One girl says she misses religious activities due to the impacts of climate change (Girl aged 17 living in an urban area in Solomon Islands).

### **Cultural impacts**

Girls in the Pacific identify that climate change affects their cultural practices and way of life. 24% of girls observe damage to cultural places like cemeteries and ceremony grounds, and this is higher in Tuvalu, Tonga and Solomon Islands, and in the outer islands (63%). Similarly, 30% of girls identify that, due to climate impacts, they cannot do community and cultural activities like dancing, music and singing. This is higher in Solomon Islands and Tonga, and for girls aged 16-18.

Girls explain that climate change affects their way of life in the Pacific. A girl explains that sea level rise affects the coastline and causes erosion, and she “cannot access beautiful seashores like before” (Indigenous girl from an ethnic minority aged 13 living in an urban area in Solomon Islands). Others explain,

**“Climate change really affects my future as a young girl like my education and the loss of my island home.”**

Indigenous girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 13, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

### **Lusiana’s story**

Lusiana is a 10-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*My issue is, we don't have any bridge to go to school, town, etc. I had to cross the river everyday of my life to reach school or access services. When water level rises my mom had to carry me across to go to school. As you can see in the picture drawn, the difference between myself from the rural area and a student in urban areas. The difference in accessing services and how safe and secured the environment of learning is.*

1. School in urban area have street lights
2. Walkway
3. Flush toilets attached to the school
4. Good standards of learning environment
5. Bridges to cross to access services

*In my school, in rural areas whatever a student has in urban, I don't have it in my school. My personal, health and education is affected. Not only myself but my families and my community as a whole is affected.*

*Recommendations: We at my village need a bridge, streetlights, walkways in school, a library, networks for research and information, our school toilets to be attached to school, treated, safe and clean drinking water and many more. Urging the government of the day, NGO, CSO and other stakeholder to help us. My environment of living and studying will be safe and secured if only changes are made. Biggest barriers is, we don't know [which] door to knock to seek help and access information.*



**“Climate change has affected our lives and has changed the way we live.”**

Indigenous girl from a racial and ethnic minority group, aged 16, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

Co-researchers explain that the cultural impacts of climate change are particularly difficult for Pacific girls because with increasing climate-related disasters, communities must find new ways and means to adapt and survive. Rising sea levels, flooding and landslides, change the environmental landscape. There are significant losses of plants with traditional medicinal value and coconut trees, which are an important economic and subsistence crop and a major source of food, oil, fibre, and wood for Pacific peoples. Some girls belong to communities experiencing climate-related threats to gravesites of their ancestors and loved ones, such as waves crashing on sacred burial grounds. Communities experience uncertainty and fear about leaving their homes due to their traditional ties and sense of identity connected to their land.

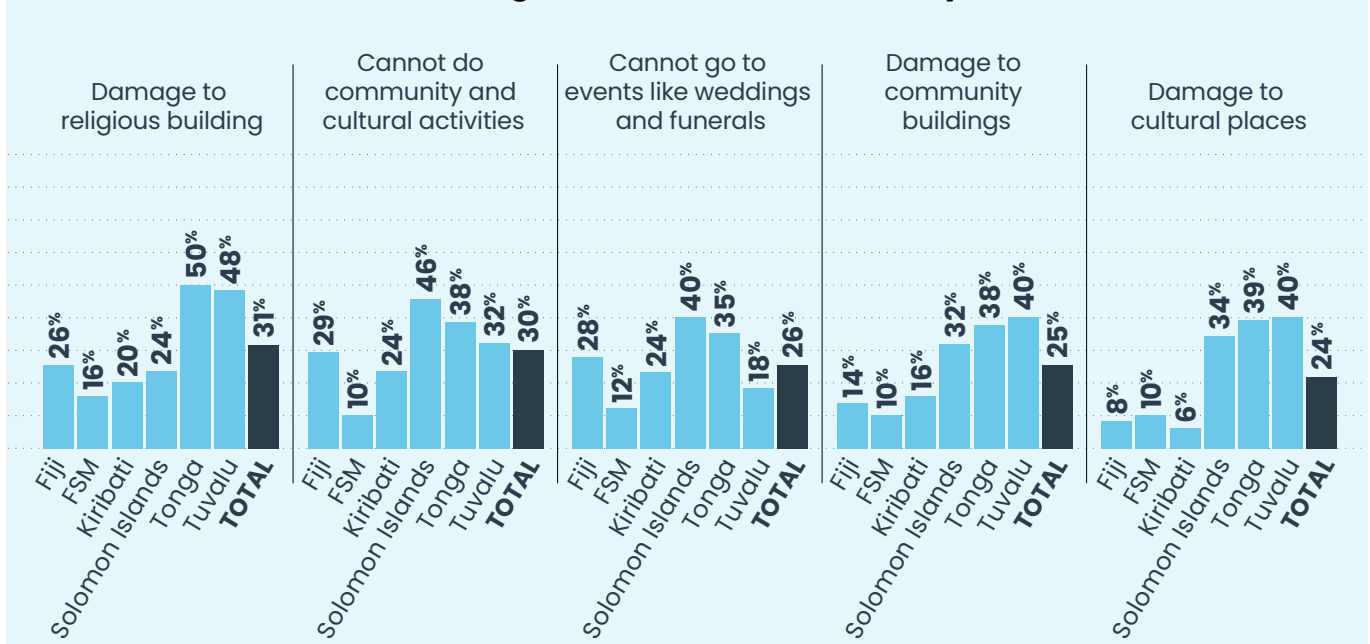
**Jasmin’s story**

Jasmin is a 17-year-old girl of Indian descent living in a rural area in Fiji. In her video story showing the degraded land from her family’s okra farm, she says:

*Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme heats events. I live in a rural village in the beautiful island of Fiji. Children are less able than adults to regulate our body temperature. Thus, we are more vulnerable to the changes in the temperature. This was our okra farm but because of longer periods of drought and dry spell affecting our food source.*

*I call on the government of the day to invest more funds to implement mitigate response strategies to address climate change related issues in rural communities.*

**How climate change has affected community and culture**



**Figure 10.** How climate change has affected girls’ community and culture, broken down by country (top five impacts).



Russell Islands in the Solomon Islands lie only two metres above sea level. Photo: Plan International Australia.





Cyclone damage in Fiji.  
Photo: Robert McKechnie.





# 5. Findings: Pacific girls' proposed actions for climate justice

This section shares girls' perspectives about how governments and international countries can take action for climate justice, including preventing climate change, supporting girls to cope with climate change, and disaster resilience.

Girls' key message is that governments must centre girls and their lived experiences in climate policies:

**“For the government to look at the difference between girls and boys.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 13, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

76 girls call for international countries to provide funding to the Pacific to support climate action. This includes funding to overcome climate change:

**“They can fund Pacific nations to fight climate change.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in an urban area in Fiji

## 5.1 Preventing climate change

The survey asked girls to select their top three actions that governments could take to prevent climate change. Table 2 shows the most commonly selected actions are to protect forests, oceans, rivers, land and animals; make tougher rules to control industries that make pollution; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### Miriama's story

Miriama is a 14-year-old girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*The cutting down of trees and burning of forest can cause a landslide. My solution is that we should stop cutting down of trees and burning the forest. My message is once you cut you can't replace it.*

**Table 2: Girls' preferred actions to prevent climate change**

Category	Percentage of participants selecting as a top three action
Protect forests, oceans, rivers, land and animals	63.0
Make tougher rules to control industries that make pollution	59.6
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	44.2
Use solar power and wind power	43.3
Stop overseas companies from ruining forests and mangroves	41.7
Stop licenses for mining, fishing and logging by outsiders	30.4
Don't know	1.9

### Environmental protection

Girls share many ideas for governments to protect the environment in the Pacific. They want strict rules to stop deforestation, planting of more trees and mangroves to prevent erosion, and reducing water usage. They call for Pacific governments to stop sedimentation in the ocean, stop removing sand from the beach and build seawalls to “prevent sea water from entering inland and causing floods at home” (Indigenous girl aged 15 living in a rural area in Kiribati).

Some girls suggest governments should change or enforce policy to protect the environment.

**“The government should emphasise the law and fine for those who have neglect what should be done for the environment that could be helpful to protest the effect of climate change.”**

Girl from a religious minority, aged 13, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Girls want countries around the world to consider the environment by keeping it clean and protecting nature:

**“Help in protecting our ocean from pollution.”**

Indigenous girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 18, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

### Loata's story

Loata is a 15-year-old girl living in an urban area in Fiji. She says:

*Deforestation and smoke from the factory that cause the mother earth suffer. This drawing shows air pollution and deforestation. Industries are causing a lot of smoke which causes air pollution and us humans are cutting down a lot of trees. Our mother earth is suffering from air pollution and deforestation. The solution to this is stop the cutting down of trees and reduce the smoke that is coming from industries.*



### Energy and pollution

Girls call for government actions regarding energy and pollution. A key action is to stop burning fossil fuels:

**“Minimise industrial pollution.”**

Girl from a racial minority group, aged 16, living in an urban area in Fiji

**“Stop relying on fossil fuels.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

**“We need to stop something that pollutes our atmosphere.”**

Girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

Girls call on international countries to reduce pollution from industrialisation and the use of fossil fuels and gas.

**“Help Pacific girls by agreeing to decrease pollution from their factories.”**

Girl, aged 17, living in an urban area of Tuvalu

**“Create a law and regulations throughout all the Pacific areas about environment pollution that will cause Pacific girls affected by different diseases.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

Girls want international countries to stop activities that cause climate change.

**“Stop doing the things that can destroy the ozone layer and cause climate change.”**

Girl, aged 16, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

Girls also want governments to encourage Pacific people to reduce carbon pollution. They say this can be done by using cars, motorbikes and boats less (walking instead of driving, or using a canoe), using renewable energy sources such as



solar power, reducing the importation of trucks, cars and motorbikes, and not burning rubbish. They want governments to help communities reduce emissions, by reducing energy use at home, and using energy more efficiently. They say that houses need to be better designed:

**“ Since it's usually hot during the day, I think it's best that we change our house materials to prevent hot temperature from entering our house.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 14, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Some girls want international countries to provide renewable technologies to the Pacific to reduce emissions:

**“ One way I think the international countries can take to support us is to provide solar panel so that it can stop the burning of fossil fuel for electricity, also to provide us with more water tank.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 14, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

Many girls call for improved waste management. Some proposed waste actions are to reduce consumption (buy fewer things and don't use plastic bags), recycle and repair, and throw away less goods. They want an end to littering in town, in the ocean, in the river, and everywhere:

**“ Don't throw rubbish especially plastics in the ocean, sea creatures might choke on them.”**

Girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Solomon Islands

Girls want more rubbish bins in public places, and more community clean-up activities. Some girls also want other countries to stop exploiting the Pacific:

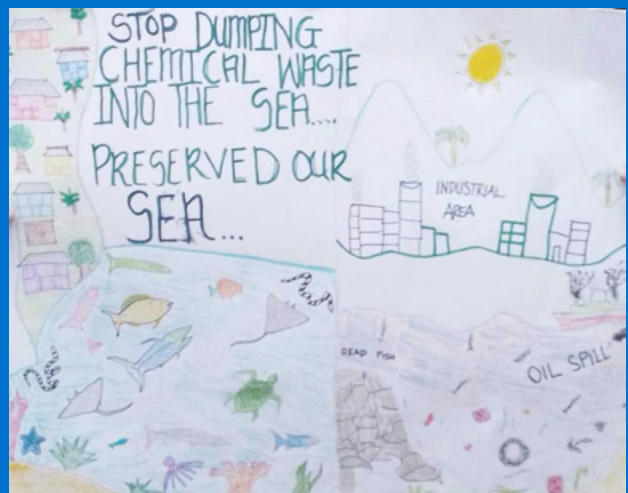
**“ Stop sending plastic to Kiribati. Reduce gas emissions. Stop fishing in our ocean. Stop oil spillage both on land and sea. Stop mining phosphate.”**

Girl, aged 13, living in a rural area in Kiribati

## Katarina's story

Katarina is a 13 year old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

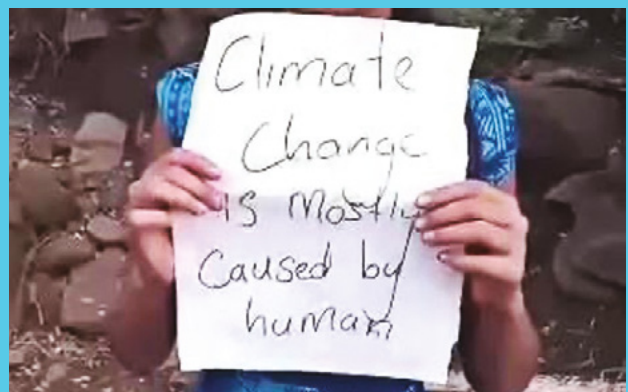
*My drawing is about the changes that happen to our ocean due to climate change and water pollution compare during my younger days there used to be so many fish in the ocean, less rubbish and swim in a nice and clear sea water. I'm part of [a] kids club taking action for our voice to be heard about climate change.*



## Premila's story

Premila is a 10 year old girl of Indian descent living in Fiji. She says:

*Climate change is mostly caused by humans. Effect of climate change is cutting down the trees. The more we cut the tree the more we get the soil erosion. Solution of climate change is planting down the trees. So stop cutting down tree.*



### Education about climate change

Girls are calling for more education about climate change for girls. Girls want to understand climate change and how it affects the planet:

“**Educate children in early years about climate change and its effects on our planet.**”

Girl, aged 16, living in a rural area in Solomon Islands

They also want education about individual behaviour change:

“**Reduce the activity that might lead to the development of climate change.**”

Girl from a religious minority group, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Girls identify effective strategies to educate girls, including awareness groups and programs, stronger integration of climate change into school curriculums, and workshops:

“**Awareness groups in communities about the effects of climate change.**”

Girl, aged 17, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

“**More awareness programs to high school girls.**”

Indigenous girl, aged 15 living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

“**Provide more information about climate change to all schools.**”

Girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 15, living in an urban area of Solomon Islands

“**Talk about climate impacts on us in schools.**”

Indigenous girl, aged 15, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

“**All people should be encouraged to enter the workshops about climate change.**”

Girl with a disability, aged 16, living in an urban area in Kiribati

“**Do some workshops for more information about climate actions.**”

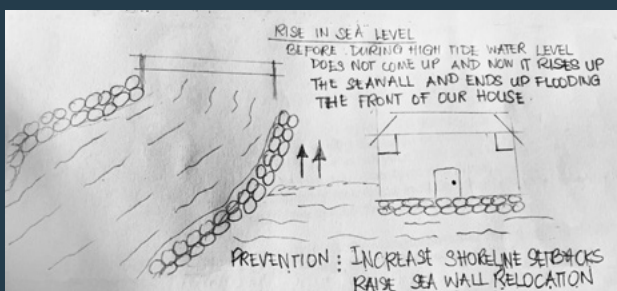
Girl from a religious minority group, aged 15, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

### Emele's story

Emele is a 12-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Rise in sea level: Before during high tide, water level does not come up, and now it rises up the sea wall and ends up flooding the front of our house.*

*Prevention: Increase shoreline setbacks, raise sea wall and relocation.*



Girls maintain that countries around the world can also assist with providing education and workshop opportunities for girls. Girls also want other countries to raise awareness about climate change in the Pacific and abroad:

“**International countries can raise awareness on how climate change can affect people in the Pacific such as Tuvalu and discuss ways on how they can better the Pacific Island.**”

Indigenous girl, aged 16, living in an urban area in Fiji



## Marica's story

Marica is an 18-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Climate change is a natural phenomenon faced globally. My drawing simply describes of how rise in sea level has mostly affected my village especially my livelihood. We have experienced poor road conditions that has been contributed by rise in sea level. The intrusion of salt water into the soil has affected my mother's flower plantation (salinity) and my mother has experienced poor flower growth.*

*Therefore, one major way in which we can fight against this issue is to minimize human activities such as deforestation, littering and burning and most of all practice the use of renewable energy.*



Some girls ask for overseas educational and work opportunities to further their knowledge:

**“ Send girls to international universities that provide quality education with regards to climate change.”**

Girl, aged 18, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

Many girls want international countries to provide funding for education workshops to increase climate change awareness and girl-led action for climate justice:

**“ Provide funding for Pacific girls to know more about climate change and build their islands.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 15, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

## 5.2 Supporting girls to cope with climate change and build resilience against climate change

The survey asked girls to select their top three actions that governments could take to support girls to cope with climate change and build their strength against climate change. Table 3 shows the most commonly selected actions are to teach girls how to adapt to climate change, include girls' voices in shaping climate policy and action, teach girls about climate change, and improve education and job opportunities for girls.

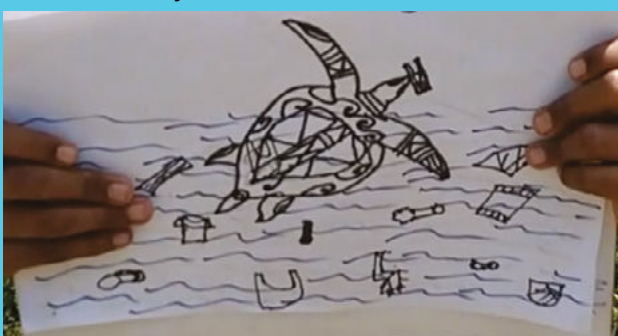
**Table 3. Girls' preferred actions to support climate change adaptation**

Category	Percentage of participants selecting as a top three action
Teach girls how to adapt to climate change	66.1
Include girls' voices in shaping climate policy and action	57.4
Teach girls about climate change	51.4
Improve education and job opportunities for girls	46.7
Improve recycling and waste management and manage plastic pollution	41.7
Companies and governments need to obtain proper consent from traditional landholders and Indigenous communities before building or developing the village	24.1
Don't know	1.3

## Unaisi's story

Unaisi is a 10-year-old girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*My drawing is about climate change that we facing today, you can see that the sea is been polluted and the turtle is finding its way out to breath and look for shelter in mainland, and they been eating rubbish that been thrown to the sea. It's really affecting me and my family because this where we always get our food from, from dumping of rubbish it's so risky for me and family to fish.*



### Education about climate change adaptation

Girls want governments to provide more education to them about climate change in the Pacific and how it affects girls.

**“Government should teach girls how to be prepared when climate change starts to affect the community.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Federated States of Micronesia

Girls want to learn climate change adaptation skills, such as gardening and swimming. They want governments to “involve girls in climate change activities” (Co-design workshop) and

## Vitila's story

Vitila is a 16-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural community in Fiji. In her video, she expresses the vital role of river water in their daily livelihoods, which is drying up due to a dry spell:

*I remember during school holidays this [dry riverbed] is where we would spend the day fishing, doing our laundry but the best part*

*is swimming. Now it is drying up. Now we have resorted to borehole as our source of drinking water. But we mostly use it for cooking purposes only. About 200 meters away from my house is where we have a community shopping centre. We would use the tap water to fill our drinking water.*

**“To fill out [a] pack form to go overseas to live there.”**

Girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Girls call on international countries to provide funding to run “awareness workshops to communities [on] how they can face climate change” (Girl from a religious minority group, aged 13, living in an outer island in Tuvalu). Similarly, a girl says:

**“Some of us don't really know what climate change is. So I think it's better for international countries to support our island and provide more projects or workshops for young girls to participate in, to take charge and be familiar with what is helpful.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 13, living in an urban area in the Federated States of Micronesia

### Basic needs

Girls want governments to improve their standard of living through providing basic needs. This includes providing and maintaining clean water sources:

**“Have a share of water tanks for saving drinking water in my community.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 13, living in a rural area in Kiribati



**“The government to provide water tank to each household.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 13, from an urban area in Tuvalu

Girls call on governments to ensure families have proper shelter:

**“Stop building houses next to the sea.”**

Indigenous girl from a racial minority, aged 11, living in an urban area of Fiji

They want governments to assist families to plant vegetables and promote local vegetables for eating.

Some girls call for international countries to provide protection and a safe environment for Pacific girls:

**“To protects the safety of girls during climate change.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 17, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**“To promote equity, assure access to basic resources, and ensure that young girls can live and work in a healthy and clean environment.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 14, living in a rural area in Kiribati

### **Livelihoods**

Girls call on international countries to support sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific, for example through providing equipment:

**“To donate funds for farmers to buy their equipment to help them planting crops and for the livestock. Buy food for the families.”**

Indigenous girl from a religious minority, living in an urban area in Fiji

They want international countries to provide support to improve farming in the Pacific, as well as jobs and opportunities to study and work overseas.

### **Salome’s story**

Salome is a 12-year-old girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*My story is about polluting the river. The more we dump the rubbish the more the flood. It’s a breeding place for mosquitoes. My message is ‘do not dump rubbish in the river’.*



## **5.3 Emergency response and disaster risk resilience**

The survey asked girls to select the top three actions they believe governments should take for emergency response and disaster risk reduction. Table 4 shows that the most commonly selected actions are: teach children about how to prepare for disasters, protect the safety of girls during disasters, improve sharing of information about disasters (e.g. using text messages, translation, radio), and provide care packs for girls during and after disasters.

**Table 4. Girls' preferred actions for disaster risk resilience**

Category	Percentage of participants selecting as a top three action
Teach children about how to prepare for disasters	71.5
Protect the safety of girls during disasters	47.6
Improve sharing of information about disasters (e.g. using text messages, translation, radio)	46.4
Provide care packs for girls during and after disasters	42.0
Provide humanitarian relief/aid	41.4
Build systems to warn communities about disasters	41.4
Don't know	0.9

**Girl-responsive disaster resilience**

Girls say that governments must have a stronger focus on girls in disasters:

**“Taking care of girls during disaster.”**

Girl, aged 13, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“In our community during times of drought, us girls cannot carry heavy buckets of water because we usually go and collect waters from our community water tank.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 13, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

This includes providing transportation for girls during disasters.

Girls want governments to improve disaster readiness and early warning systems:

**“Prepare ourselves in advance before a disaster strikes. Having to run up the hill before a tsunami when we are alerted before it strikes.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 10, living in an urban area in Fiji

**“Provide community signals to let the people know that there will be something is going to happen.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 13, living in an outer island in Tuvalu

**“To help the community to prepare themselves when the disaster comes through.”**

Girl with a disability, aged 16, living in a rural area in Tonga

Girls also say that international countries can help Pacific countries prepare for disasters and protect themselves. Some ask for safe and accessible evacuation facilities to be built:

**“They should provide good facilities during [a] disaster.”**

Girl, aged 16, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“Bring some first aid, these things will help the girls in the Pacific prepare themselves when the climate change.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 15, living in a rural area in Tonga

**“To bring an opportunity to us being a young girl to protect our self.”**

Girl with a disability, aged 12, living in a rural area in Tonga



Cyclone damage in Fiji.  
Photo: Robert McKechnie



Girls also call on international countries to provide aid during disasters:

**“ Assist us in case of cyclone, because we Tuvaluan commonly affected by cyclone and drought.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 16, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

Aid includes providing support in accessing food, clean water and clothes during and after disasters. Girls ask for sanitary aids such as menstruation packs:

**“ Contributing sanitary pads before and after disasters.”**

Girl, aged 18, living in an urban area in Fiji

They also call for international countries to provide medical support such as medicine, first aid and medical information:

**“ Provide medical support when we are affected by climate change.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 10, living in an urban area in Fiji

### **Disaster education**

Girls call on governments to provide better education to girls, children, young people and families about disaster preparation, risk reduction and disaster action. This includes drills for natural disasters in schools. Some other proposed disaster education methods include teaching families how to prepare for disasters and using social media such as Facebook.

Girls identify that international countries can also support with disaster education:

**“ They should provide activities for girls about climate change and prepare us for anything that is going to happen especially flooding.”**

Girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Solomon Islands



Young girl in Fiji. Photo: Sandra Stephens.





# 6. Findings: Pacific girls' activism for climate justice

This section shares Pacific girls' experiences and ideas for participating in climate justice activism and advocacy, and influencing governments to take climate action.

## 6.1 Pacific girls' participation in climate justice activism

In the survey, 34% of girls say they participate in climate justice activism. This was higher in the atoll nations of Tuvalu (74%), Kiribati (51%) and FSM (29%), and higher for girls in the outer islands (75%) and rural areas (39%), compared with urban areas. It is possible that girls in small countries have greater access to activism opportunities because of their firsthand experiences of climate impacts on their communities.

Girls who engage in climate justice activism are mainly involved in school groups and school activities, community education, environmental projects, and campaigning. This demonstrates the important role of schools in engaging girls in climate justice. Older girls aged 16-18 are more likely to be involved in climate justice activism. Girls are involved in many different groups, such as Pacific Climate Warriors, Pacific Islands Climate Action Network, Fridays for Future (Tuvalu), and country-specific groups such as kids' clubs and government environmental departments.

### Melania's story

Melania is a 15-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. Her drawing shares how climate change has affected her home and surrounding areas. Melania is involved in a youth club taking action for their voices to be heard on climate change.



Pacific girls in the survey are overwhelmingly interested in being involved in climate justice activism. 30% of girls are extremely interested in doing climate justice activism, and another 28% are very interested and 20% are moderately interested. Only 7% are not at all interested. Interest in climate justice activism was higher in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Fiji. 72% of girls say they would like to be connected to climate justice groups in their region.

## 6.2 Ideas for girls' activism to encourage governments to take climate action

The survey asked girls an open-ended question about what Pacific girls can do to encourage governments to take climate action. The key themes were collective action, learning about climate change, and individual behaviour change.

### Collective action

Girls want to take collective action for climate justice. A total of 253 girls explain that working together could make governments take action on the climate crisis:

“They [girls] can work together to form an organisation that involves only girls and fight for climate change justice, so the government can see that they are suffering and will take action.”

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 18, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

A key idea from 103 girls involves having a united voice and advocating for climate justice. This includes seeking policy changes to encourage governments to take climate action. One girl acknowledged the utility of being “part of [the] government in order to access the government easily” (Girl aged 18 living in an urban area in Fiji). A key message for girl-led collective action is focusing on environmental issues to make governments act on climate change:

**“ Stop burning fossil fuels, stop deforestation and cutting down trees.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Federated States of Micronesia

For some girls, collective action involves peaceful protest, for others it is working together to explain their situations to governments or using the media:

**“ We as Pacific girls, we can get into groups and make a petition on papers, signboards and together we march into public areas.”**

Indigenous girl from a religious minority group, aged 14, living in an urban area in Fiji

**“ We have to go on strike to show to our Kiribati government that we (young girls) are really worried about our future so that the government should do their best for climate change.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 15, living in a rural area of Kiribati

**“ I would be on the road holding up signs considering climate change to show government that they need to take action.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 13, living in a rural area in Federated States of Micronesia

Many girls suggest that their voices should be heard and listened to, by being more vocal, giving feedback, writing letters, participating in youth parliament, or talking to community leaders.

**“ Tell the community leaders about what's happening so they can tell the government.”**

Girl, aged 16, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“ By writing a letter to the government to give them what we think about the climate change.”**

Girl with a disability, from an ethnic minority group, aged 10, living in a rural area in Tonga

Some girls suggest that social media is an effective platform for Pacific girls to encourage governments take action on climate change:

**“ We can do many great things. Know what we are doing and set our goal. Help broadcast or post on social media where we are failing from the effects of climate change and seek help from government leaders.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 13, living in an urban area in the Federated States of Micronesia

Some girls say it is important to show the world how climate change is affecting the Pacific through the media.

**“ We (young girls) have to do our video clip that we demonstrate our traditional dance and our background in areas that are affected by climate change, like coastal erosion, and upload it on social media by mentioning international countries to see the effect.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 11, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Another area of collective action is girls being involved in environmental projects. Common suggestions are girls planting trees and mangroves and participating in community clean ups to manage waste.

**“ Planting of mangroves to prevent coastal erosion.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 16, living in a rural area in Kiribati



## Talica's story

Talica is a 16-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*The effect [of] climate change in the place I am living is sea level rise. I would like to ask the government if they could advocate more on the place I am living.*

Many girls in the survey want to volunteer in these activities. Some girls also suggest that they can be involved in disaster preparation in their communities.

A handful of girls suggest that seeking financial aid may encourage governments to take climate action:

**“To unfold our problems experienced in our community due to climate change impacts to our government so that we receive support and grant.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 14, living in a rural area in Kiribati

### Learning about climate change

Girls suggest that Pacific girls could learn more about climate change and disaster preparation, which could further influence governments to take climate action. In particular, they suggest that girls' education will help governments take climate action, particularly through increased awareness:

**“More awareness programs about climate change in schools and our communities.”**

Girl, aged 15, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

### Individual behaviour change

Some girls suggest that Pacific girls change their environmental behaviours.

**“To maintain the use of sorting out waste into inorganic, organic and recycle without burning them.”**

Girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 15, living in a rural area in Kiribati

This may require girls to work harder or longer in order to influence decision-makers and bring about change for their communities:

**“Do professional work. Take [a] stand and lead. Raise our voice.”**

Girl with a disability from a religious minority group, aged 17, living in the Federated States of Micronesia

**“Be involved in higher offices.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 16, living in a rural area in Federated States of Micronesia

## 6.3 Enablers for Pacific girls to engage in climate justice activism

The survey asked girls an open-ended question about what could help them to take part in climate justice activism. The key responses consider education and awareness, opportunities to engage in collective action, support, and personal motivation.

### Education and awareness

144 girls say that education and awareness about climate change and activism could help them take part in climate justice activism:

**“In my own opinion, I need more clarification and awareness on climate justice activism to expand my understanding on this.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 16, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**“More awareness for girls.”**

Girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Solomon Islands

Many girls feel that schools need to provide education on climate change:

**“ If our schools do more activities about climate change then that would help me to take part more willingly.”**

Girl with a disability, aged 13, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“ Invite whoever wants to join, but first train us so we'd know how to take part.”**

Indigenous girl from ethnic and religious minority groups, aged 17, living in an urban area in Tonga

Some girls explain that workshops, resources and media in the community can help educate and increase awareness:

**“ Use social media wisely by updating necessary information about climate change activism.”**

Girl, aged 17, from a rural area in Tonga

**“ Young ladies should have an app to learn about climate change in their different communities.”**

Girl with a disability, aged 16, living in an urban area in Kiribati

### ***Opportunities to engage in collective action***

103 girls say they need opportunities to engage in collective action. Most girls explain that being involved in activism groups or communities would help them to engage in climate justice activism:

**“ When the climate change impacts experienced in my community get worse, I would encourage myself to join climate justice groups in my country to seek help and support for my community. That would also make me a climate justice activist at this age.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, from a rural area in Kiribati

Some feel that forming a group for girls within the community will help them take action:

**“ Form a girls' group and seek help from the government to help us be involved in other activities.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 14, living in a rural area in Federated States of Micronesia

**“ Separate girls from boys. For boys and girls they have both different points of view.”**

Girl from an ethnic and racial minority group, aged 15, living in a rural area in the Federated States of Micronesia

**“ Produce a group/committee of girls in our own village and keep fighting for our rights.”**

Girl from a racial minority group, aged 17, living in a rural area in Tonga

Some girls say that schools should run activities for girls to join.

**“ Maybe to have more activities like this in school and funding so we can be a part of activities like this.”**

Indigenous girl from ethnic and religious minority groups, aged 16, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

Some girls feel that joining climate justice activism organisations would help them to take part in climate justice activism:

**“ I will encourage my Kiribati young girls to be aware about climate change, so we can establish [a] body that only consists of Kiribati young girls, and then we can volunteer ourselves to do anything that deals with climate action or take on climate justice.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 17, living in a rural area in Kiribati



**“ To connect with people or groups who do climate justice activism. To have someone speak and make awareness about climate justice activism in our community so that our generation, especially girls, understand more about climate change adaptation and climate.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 15, living in a rural area in Kiribati

### **Support**

Girls identify the need for support from families, communities and governments to take part in climate activism.

**“ If my family and friends were more supportive and would let me go out on my own.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Federated States of Micronesia

Girls explain that community support would help them take part in climate justice activism. Some girls say that if their families and friends

were involved, they would join in climate justice activism. Some girls also say that approval from Elders and community leaders are important for them to take part in climate justice activism.

**“ I will take part in anything that Elders might decide I should do in climate justice activism.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 16, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**“ Let girls voices be heard to get to people who have power of the village.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

Furthermore, they feel that community leaders and Elders should include girls in climate justice activism:

**“ Community leaders must continue to engage us young girls in climate justice activism programs.”**

Girl from an ethnic minority, aged 16, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

Young girls in Fiji. Photo: Nem Malosi.



Others say that the involvement of the community would help them to be part of climate justice activism.

**“Community involvement would help make me know better and take part.”**

Girl, aged 18, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

Girls say that support from authorities is important for taking part in climate justice activism.

**“Support girls' voices.”**

Girl from religious and racial minority groups, aged 17, living in a rural area in Tonga

**“Need to respect girl's voice when they need help from the Government.”**

Girl from a racial minority group, aged 17, living in a rural area in Tonga

Girls identify a range of actions for governments and international countries to support girls to take action for climate justice. Some girls feel that governments can strengthen girl-led collective action by supporting awareness groups, organising collective activities such as community clean ups, and supporting girls' clubs and girls' organisations to do voluntary activities such as clean ups and mangrove planting. Girls also note that governments can support girls to teach each other about climate change.

Some girls want international countries to support girls to engage in collective action such as supporting climate change projects and activities:

**“We (young girls) seek help from them so they will keep donation to us by supporting our idea to fight for climate change.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 14, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Girls also call on international countries to listen to Pacific girls. Some girls ask international countries to provide opportunities in the Pacific and overseas:

**“Provide more projects that deals with climate change that Pacific girls can take part in.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 14, living in a rural area in Federated States of Micronesia

Funding and material support are also necessary to support girls to organise activities for climate justice activism:

**“Fund to run these kinds of activities and also to keep these kinds of activities going.”**

Indigenous girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 18, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

Some girls highlight the important of being paid to do activism:

**“If people who join or take part in climate change activism sometimes get paid.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

### **Personal motivation**

Some girls say that personal motivation could help them take part in climate justice activism.

**“Make friends with everyone. Do some climate justice activism for us, and not include Elders. Feel love for my country.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 15, living in an outer island of Tuvalu

**“Help people that are really affected by the climate.”**

Girl, aged 17, living in an urban area in Tuvalu



Others feel that making themselves available and ready for climate justice activism motivates them to be part of it. Some have a desire to learn, be ready and help:

**“ My desire of wanting others to know and understand their activism towards climate change.”**

Girl, aged 14, living in a rural area in Kiribati

## 6.4 Barriers for Pacific girls to engage in climate justice activism

The survey asked girls an open-ended question to identify what makes it hard for them to take part in climate justice activism. The responses consider lack of knowledge and opportunities, being a girl in the Pacific, and lack of support and resources.

### **Lack of knowledge and opportunities**

14% of girls say they don't understand or get information about climate change, while 10% of girls say they are not participating in decisions made for girls during disasters. Co-researchers in the analysis workshop explained that girls are not allowed to be involved in climate decision-making. 71 girls said they lack knowledge about climate justice activism. Most of them say they do not know about climate justice, and are not aware of climate change:

**“ It is hard for me to take part in climate justice activism because I lack knowledge on climate justice activism.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 12, living in a rural area in Kiribati

**“ Don't know who to follow to join such activism groups.”**

Girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 15, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

Some Pacific girls say there is a lack of opportunities for them to do climate justice activism as young women:

**“ No available activities for us young girls. Only when there is an environment week are there activities we can be invited to.”**

Indigenous girl from ethnic and religious minority groups, aged 16, living in an urban area in Tuvalu

Girls call for more opportunities, education, training and resources to build capacity, knowledge and skills in climate justice activism.

Project partners explain that the dissemination of climate change information and education is a big challenge in the Pacific. Climate information is mainly held by leaders and government agencies, while grassroots communities have limited access to simple and factual climate information. They explain that government agencies in rural and remote areas do not share enough information. Further to this, most information focuses on changing weather patterns and therefore does not address structural issues such as the role of fossil fuel industries, capitalism, and climate inequalities.

### **Being a girl in the Pacific**

Many girls share that their age, gender and culture – that is, being a girl in the Pacific - is a key barrier to participating in climate justice activism. Many girls say they are too young to participate in climate justice activism. They explain that cultural norms limit girls' participation. Some girls say that as a young person, they are not allowed to speak among Elders:

**“ As I'm too young I was too ashamed to open my mouth to Elders during the meeting of organisation that deals with climate change.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 16, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Some girls explain that their gender limits opportunities to do any activism, and they are afraid to raise their voice about climate justice activism.

**“ I may say that we are girls, we can not do such things that girls are forbidden to do, and any materials only boys can lift or pick up its weight.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 13, living in an urban area in Fiji

Some girls say they are afraid, scared and shy to take part in climate justice activism. They feel scared to join and be involved in activist activities, and they also feel shy to talk in front of people and Elders. Some girls say there might be a lack of support and trust from the community for girls' climate change activism because of their age and gender, and there are cultural constraints to girls' voicing their issues. Project partners explain that patriarchy restricts the ability for girls and women to have a voice, and this is also replicated with women and girls being silenced on violence and human rights violations.

In the survey, some girls say they are too busy with education to participate in climate change activism. Support from the community and family is important for girls to actively participate in climate justice activism.

#### **Lack of support and resources**

Some girls explain that a lack of support and resources makes it hard to do climate justice activism. They say there is limited support, cooperation and access to climate action groups for young girls. Some girls also say that some Elders, parents and community members do not support action on climate change:

**“ When the people of local areas don't really care that their life is important. They mostly cut the tree, burn the rubbish, it doesn't help the people stay healthy.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

Some girls identify a lack of financial support, transportation and resources for individuals and families as key barriers to participating in climate justice activism:

#### **Bulou's story**

Bulou is a 10-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Biggest barrier for myself to access climate justice activism is the lack of awareness in the rural communities and poor network for communication in accessing the learnings.*

**“ No money. No one to help support me.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in the Federated States of Micronesia

**“ I have no transportation.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 18, living in a rural area in the Federated States of Micronesia

Family responsibilities, particularly domestic chores, makes it hard for some girls to participate in climate justice activism.

**“ Busy with household chores.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 12, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“ I stay home and help my mom.”**

Girl from a religious minority group, aged 14, living in a rural area in the Federated States of Micronesia

Some girls say their parents are strict and will not allow them to be involved in climate justice activism.

**“ Parents don't allow me to go anywhere after school.”**

Girl, aged 12, living in a rural area in Solomon Islands

Girls with a physical disability explain that they are excluded from being involved in climate justice activism:



## Filo's story

Filo is a 14-year-old girl with a disability living in a rural area in Fiji. She says:

*Some of the barriers in engaging in climate justice activism is geographical location, since I live in a rural area, which is more than 150km away from town. Network is an issue and I live in a very conservative community, my voice as a young person living with disability is not heard and valued.*

*The picture shown talks about my school and my community. It express how people treat me as not being a normal person with a good visual impairment. Most children in school tease me as I am Disabled and my community labelled me as a trouble-maker. I am fully support from home for who I am but the community and children from school is my biggest barrier.*

*Request if government, NGO, CSO, other stakeholder to do awareness on gender, gender roles, diversity inclusion, human rights etc and this needs to do taken down to my community. If these learnings could also be part of the curriculum in schools to be implemented by Ministry of Education.*

*If these actions are implemented, my personal, health, environment will not be affected. A community free from unequal treatment [Discriminations, Stigma].*

*Barrier in engaging in climate justice activism is no awareness, maybe because we are in rural areas most times we are left behind. And the main thing is the network coverage where we need to access everything.*



**“People will not listen to me and I'm also deaf.”**

Girl with a disability from a religious minority group, aged 14, living in a rural area in the Federated States of Micronesia

Similarly, some girls said that health issues such as physical illness and extreme weather make it hard to participate in climate justice activism:

**“Because I'm a female and I have problems when I menstruate that deal with back and stomach pain.”**

Girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Kiribati

Nevertheless, the data shows that many Pacific girls participate in climate justice activism, even if there is limited support.

# 7. Recommendations from Pacific girls in a changing climate

This section draws from the findings to propose strategies to uphold the human rights and active participation of Pacific girls in a changing climate. The strategies are aimed at governments and industries in the Pacific and internationally, and civil society organisations that engage in climate justice programming and advocacy in the region.

A key focus of these strategies is including girls in climate justice decision-making and supporting their agency and power as climate justice advocates. However, we maintain that girls have the right to play, to learn, and to rest. States, civil society organisations and communities must not shift the responsibility of achieving girls' human rights in a changing climate to girls themselves.



## Strategy 1:

**That girls in the Pacific are supported and resourced to further build girl-led feminist movements for climate justice. This includes the adequate provision of training, mentoring and funding of girls in all their lived experiences, and supporting strong relationships between girl-led movements and broader feminist movements in the Pacific and internationally.**

The Pacific region has proud, diverse and interconnected feminist climate justice movements. There are many young women across the region who are strong leaders and advocates for climate justice. This strategy calls for intergenerational equity by scaling up the leadership of Pacific girls and young women

Solomon Islands.  
Photo: Robert McKechnie.





as climate justice advocates, by supporting and resourcing girl-led feminist movements for climate justice in the present, and for the future. It involves training, mentoring and funding girls in all their lived experiences as climate justice advocates, particularly children who identify as gender diverse and girls who have fewer opportunities to access and participate due to structural barriers such as location, income, and education access.

This strategy also involves strengthening connections and solidarity between girl-led movements and broader feminist movements in the Pacific and internationally, particularly through mentoring. We advocate for sustainable feminist leadership, grounded in a community of care, to nurture feminist leadership in the region for generations to come. This may require mapping and resourcing leadership pathways that enable and connect girls to climate justice advocacy from the community level to key global platforms. We encourage convening feminist spaces co-designed and co-led by girls to shape their pathways to advocacy and solidarity. We promote resourcing towards grassroots and diverse organisations (such as LGBTQIA+, disability, and sex worker organisations) who already facilitate safe, inclusive and enabling spaces to progress peer-to-peer mentoring and leadership for girls.



## Strategy 2:

**That Pacific NGOs, state, feminist and civil society organisations, provide inclusive spaces for girls to collectively engage in climate justice co-learning and advocacy and be a voice for their community.**

The data shows that Pacific girls have direct experiences of climate injustices, but they need more detailed information, including about the systemic injustices of climate change, to inform their activism. Girls want more knowledge, training and capacity building about climate change and human rights, and to be confident in collectively campaigning and calling on governments and industries to take action for climate justice. This can be addressed at family, community, church, school and government levels, and requires activist education that understands and responds to girls' diverse needs and barriers to their participation. It involves teaching girls how to use their lived experiences of climate change and its impacts on their lives to lobby governments and organisations to take climate issues seriously. Girls



in all their diversities must be included, from girls with disabilities, to LGBTQIA+ girls and girls living in remote areas.

Girls suggest that community-based organisations, NGOs and governments collaborate to educate girls about climate change, and create safe spaces for girls to participate in collective community-led actions for climate justice. This includes supporting girls to be involved in community activities such as planting trees, mangroves and coral, clean up and supporting girls to lead campaigns and advocacy for climate justice. These activities do not always require funding; they can be enabled through existing local resources. As co-researchers say, “girls should not be silenced, but they are struggling to be heard”.

Girls recommend that Pacific NGOs, state, feminist and civil society organisations and advocacy groups integrate girls into all their climate and sustainable development programs. An important process of engagement is a paid volunteer and mentorship modality and framework. It is also suggested that existing groups and programs include special measures to ensure diverse girls’ participation in all climate programming.



### Strategy 3:

**That Pacific girls are supported, mentored and resourced to document their lived experiences of climate change, promote effective disaster risk reduction practices that uphold girls’ rights, and share stories of girls’ involvement in climate justice activism.**

Pacific girls are the experts on their lives. It is important that Pacific girls are supported to document and interpret their lived experiences of climate change, to highlight multiple and intersecting climate injustices and inequalities. Such documentation must examine the structural foundations of climate injustices, including patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, cultural and religious conservatism, racism, militarisation and fossil fuel extractivism. It is important that girls’ documentation of their experiences integrates creative arts, and Indigenous languages through

multiple forms of expression such as visual presentations, songs, dance, poem, oral stories, drawings and drama.

Further, Pacific girls must be supported to document and share best practices, solutions and success stories for climate change mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, in a genuine manner that involves girls and upholds their rights. This may include documenting rights-based processes such as decision-making spaces that include girls, innovative disaster risk reduction practices that centre girls’ needs, and climate communication approaches that are accessible for girls. It is also imperative that Pacific girls are supported to document their stories, strategies, learnings and impacts of climate justice activism.



### Strategy 4:

**That Pacific governments heed girls’ call to review, strengthen and enforce laws to protect forests, oceans, rivers, fresh water sources, air, and land. This includes recognising and protecting marine life and biodiversity as primary sources of food and livelihoods, and that the right to a healthy environment depends on the sustainability of our natural habitat.**

Throughout the research, girls continually highlight how the environment has cultural, economic, and social importance for Pacific people. The environment provides human needs such as food, water and traditional medicine and is the basis for livelihoods for many families. The Pacific Ocean is the source of spiritual and cultural identity across the region. Land has spiritual and cultural significance and is passed down by generations. As a young woman co-researcher says, “if we lose our land we need to migrate”.

Governments are responsible for protecting the environment including all living species of plants and animals. This includes protecting the environment from harmful actions such as deforestation, overfishing, burning and dumping of waste, extractive operations like mining, and air,



land and water pollution. Girls are concerned that fresh water sources such as rivers and wells are being polluted. This is compounded by bribery, corruption, lack of strong independent institutions, coupled with low community knowledge of the social impacts of development. As such, current environmental laws, weak safeguards and protections leave accountability inadequately enforced and monitored on the ground.

Pacific governments have a responsibility to regulate local and foreign polluting industries. Stronger laws and transparent enforcement are required for fishing, logging, mining (land and sea) and manufacturing industries that extract natural and mineral resources for profit. Marine authorities also require stronger policies covering environment and climate violations.

Independent institutions such as the judiciary, environment tribunals, human rights commissions, and ombudsman's office must use laws and policies to provide remedy and relief from climate and environment harm. Girls are calling for stronger environmental protections, including waste management, to safeguard their communities, livelihoods, the future for all species, and collective survival. They say that it must be done now – governments must “stop the violence against the environment”. Governments should also support sustainable development that is inclusive and ensures equitable economic security and wellbeing for all.



### Strategy 5:

**That policymakers collaborate across departments to protect Pacific girls' rights in a changing climate.**

Pacific girls understand and experience how climate change intersects with all aspects of their lives, including the environment, health and wellbeing, education, livelihoods, culture and community. As such, climate justice must be integrated into all areas of policy in the Pacific and internationally.

Government departments must collaborate to ensure the rights of girls, are aligned with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other international instruments relating to women's rights, human rights and international law. This includes (but is not limited to) the ministries of women, education, health, and climate change and environment. All policies must protect girls' rights in a changing climate, including girls' rights to development and the right to an adequate standard of living, including the rights to food, safe and adequate clean water, access to education, safety and security, healthy environments, family, leisure, health, culture and shelter. Policies must also facilitate gender equality in a changing climate, by implementing meaningful girls' inclusion, participation and leadership, with a commitment to just and democratic societies. The rights of all girls in a changing climate, including girls with a disability, gender diverse young people, girls living in rural, remote and urban poor areas, and other minority groups, must be resourced and embedded across all policies and programs in both public and private sectors.



### Strategy 6:

**That policymakers actively engage with girls to inform decision-making related to climate change.**

Gender-based violence and other human rights violations on women and girls in the Pacific are very common; which may explain the low levels of participation of women or young people in Parliament, and very few, if any, formal mechanisms for girls to provide advice and guidance to governments. Climate justice demands intergenerational equity. This begins by engaging with children and girls now, to inform policies that affect them and enabling them to shape policies as future leaders, thereby protecting the rights of generations to come.

Despite women being the first and most trusted community responders during disasters and humanitarian crises, co-researchers explain that, culturally, women and girls are not allowed to participate in leadership and decision-making. In many Pacific communities, only men are allowed to sit in village and community

meetings while women and girls are expected to cook, prepare tea and care for children and older people. Co-researchers suggest that governments invite NGOs to enable girls to share their voices in decision-making spaces, particularly through the ministries of women and youth. Feminist movements and their allies, particularly progressive churches that work in grassroots communities challenging patriarchy and conservatism, must be funded and scaled up for greater outreach to girls. This can enable safer communities to amplify girls' leadership and voices. Policymakers should champion the leadership of girls in action for climate justice to shift patriarchal attitudes of gendered roles.

Furthermore, communities can provide spaces and platforms for girls to be heard through local and district level decision-making, feeding up to national governments. Co-researchers maintain that governments and civil society must work together to overcome barriers that restrict girls' participation, inclusion and leadership. Pivotal to this is governments building strong relationships with influencing institutions like churches and traditional leaders to open up safe spaces to amplify girls' voices and respond to their needs in the face of climate change.



## Strategy 7:

**That all Pacific girls have access to well-managed, safe and climate resilient essential infrastructure to access their human rights to quality water, food, housing, energy, internet, and community buildings.**

Climate justice requires that all people, including girls in all their lived experiences, can safely access essential and climate resilient infrastructure for their human rights to quality water, food, housing, energy, internet and community buildings. This requires investment in localised construction projects to develop community-owned infrastructure that is safe, accessible, and sustainable. Meeting the infrastructure needs of girls with disabilities and girls living in rural and remote areas must be prioritised.

A key priority is year-round household access for all girls to access their human right to clean water, particularly when they are menstruating. This requires water justice solutions that are community-owned and managed, and are locally-responsive to place, environmental risks, and cultural considerations. Co-researchers identify a critical need to resource and support girl-led campaigns for water justice at local, national and regional levels.

Aligned with the global ambition of a just and equitable transition to low-carbon and environmentally sustainable economies and societies, the need to completely phase out fossil fuel use in the Pacific region, is increasingly urgent. Use of renewable, safe and affordable energy allows women and girls to shift away from open-fire cooking that is unsafe for their health. The shift towards sustainable energy will provide more Pacific girls with access to quality and consistent lighting, making it easier for them to complete their schoolwork and household chores. Improved street lighting will provide more security and safety for girls. This will also reduce the financial burden for families to purchase kerosene and benzene for lighting and cooking.

The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that digital and technological access is a human right. However, many girls in rural and remote communities lack internet and communication connectivity. The rapid pace of technological development and the influence of social media call for investment in girls' digital skills. Governments and development agencies should provide digital training for girls in the Pacific. This includes training girls to document changes to their environment and their lived experiences of climate change, collect data, market their produce, share weather alerts and information, access virtual platforms and report any forms of violence and human rights violations.

Furthermore, governments and development agencies need to bridge the digital divide by investing in communication infrastructure that increases internet connectivity, especially in rural and remote areas. This will enable more girls to access online educational materials and attend online classes, training and workshops from the safety of their homes and communities. Girls require equal access to mobile phones, laptops and tablets to access information, make informed decisions and improve their socio-economic positions.





## Strategy 8:

**That all Pacific girls have access to quality education, including during and after climate events, and can pursue climate resilient livelihoods and engage in climate justice activism. This includes ensuring that feminist climate justice is included in education curricula at primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.**

It is vital that Pacific girls have access to quality education. This includes formal education and access to information, life-skills training, digital/technology access, connectivity and livelihood opportunities. Girls' education access must be maintained during and after climate events. This requires that governments and development agencies address issues of access and transport due to road closures and destruction of schools, and develop and maintain public infrastructure such as accessible roads, bridges and wharves. Importantly, the construction of temporary schools such as tents must uphold the safety and wellbeing of girls. Pacific girls with disabilities and girls living in poor rural, remote and urban areas must not be left behind. Furthermore, the financial impacts of climate change must not be a barrier to girls participating in education.

Girls that experience early school drop-out must be supported and resourced to reengage in educational opportunities, such as re-enrolling into the formal education system or enrolling into vocational or life skills training schools. It is also vital that Pacific girls and young women are supported to gain and maintain secure livelihoods in their communities and countries, rather than feeling like their only opportunity is to seek employment overseas. This includes reviving and reclaiming cultural and Indigenous practices and communal livelihoods that celebrate Pacific identities.

Girls also call for schools and community groups to foster girls' knowledge, skills and participation in climate change, human rights, and climate justice advocacy. This includes embedding climate justice, climate adaptation, and disaster resilience throughout education curriculum at

primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Girls will further develop an understanding of climate change, including enhancing their understanding of the structural foundations of climate change, and build further knowledge about connections to nature, natural resources, communal livelihoods, gender equality and protection of the planet and all living beings we coexist with. This also includes ensuring that girls are supported to learn Indigenous and traditional skills and culture, and ensuring safe cultural spaces for girls' participation. Indigenous sciences, practices and knowledges are recognised by the IPCC as critical for climate adaptation and solutions. Girls must be taught sustainable practices such as water and food preservation, marine life conservation, saving seeds (not modified seeds), organic farming, and planting climate resilient crops.

Pacific schools must also be equipped to provide care and counselling for girls who have experienced trauma from disasters or are suffering from eco-anxiety about their futures and the livelihoods of their families and communities. Education curriculum must cover mental health and wellbeing in a changing climate, and provide tools and healthy coping skills to support girls' wellbeing.



## Strategy 9:

**That Pacific girls' rights to health and safety are protected during and after disasters.**

Climate change exacerbates the already weak health systems in the Pacific. Girls call for equitable access to healthcare for all girls. A key focus is ensuring girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This includes resourcing reproductive health, women's health, screening and services for sexually transmitted illnesses, and HIV prevention, testing, counselling, and treatment. In the Pacific, SRHR for girls is a taboo topic – communities customarily avoid talking about the subject because they find it embarrassing or offensive. Co-researchers urge relevant government stakeholders to work alongside faith-based organisations and engage with parents and

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guardians about girls' reproductive health. There is a significant need to debunk myths and misconceptions about reproductive health so that young people can understand their bodies, access available services, and safely navigate early and unwanted pregnancies. There is a need for maternal health agencies to provide expecting teen mothers with relevant, timely and rights-based information and pre- and post-natal care. Girls also call for quality, sustainable and accessible menstrual products to be freely provided for all girls and young women.

Pacific girls have a range of unique health needs during and after climate disasters, particularly access to safe and clean water for their hygiene, especially when menstruating. Girls call for governments to supply all girls with reserves of clean water, hygiene supplies and dignity care packs to manage menstruation during disasters. It is vital that disaster and humanitarian community outreach teams include women and girls, to encourage girls to safely share their urgent needs.

Furthermore, many girls say they do not know how to adequately swim, compared with boys. This puts them in danger, particularly during flood events. Girls call for governments to provide swimming lessons for girls, and facilities and safety equipment (such as child-sized life jackets) for girls during disasters.

It is likely that the data from this research project underreports the severity of violence against girls in the context of climate change in the Pacific. It is vital that governments and civil society organisations provide adequate support and protection for girls who experience gender-based violence, including (but not limited to) during and after disasters. Evacuation centres must be safe for all girls, including girls with a disability, LGBTQIA+ girls, and girls from other minority groups. This may include providing separate and protected spaces for girls, gender diverse young people, and people with a disability.

It is also imperative that community leaders such as village headmen and community nurses are trained in rights-based approaches to gender-based violence. This includes understanding the intersections of gender-based violence and diverse disabilities. Further, girls and young women must have accessible information and avenues to seek help and report when experiencing gender-based violence. Law enforcement agencies must have female

officers trained in providing support and access to justice. This also requires a broader safety and support system for girls who report gender-based violence to avoid being further targeted or experience more fear. This includes strengthening and enforcing criminal laws regarding gender-based violence, alongside awareness raising programs and campaigns to prevent male violence against girls.

It is also integral that Pacific girls have access to professional, rights-based and culturally-secure counselling services to process trauma, depression and anxiety and other mental health issues, including in the aftermath of disasters. The mental health sector is heavily under-resourced in the Pacific region. Pacific girls call for support and resourcing for peer programs whereby girls and women can support each other through community, solidarity and sisterhood.

Finally, given the prolonged socio-economic impacts of extractive operations and mining within disasters in the Pacific, it is vital to exercise caution when deciding on investments in economic development opportunities. Furthermore, girls call for promoting sustainable developments such as community-owned agriculture and crop diversification. These can help improve girls' socio-economic circumstances, while also addressing water and food insecurity issues, due to climate change.




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### Strategy 10:

**That Pacific girls are supported, mentored and resourced as agents of change and first responders in climate change adaptation and disaster resilience.**

The Pacific has wide and diverse networks of women who are actively engaged in disaster preparedness and responses and are well-versed with community dynamics. There are opportunities to strengthen these networks with increased mentoring and inclusion of girls in disaster planning. Girls must be supported, mentored and resourced in their existing roles as agents of change and first responders in climate change adaptation and disaster resilience.





This will also open livelihood and leadership opportunities for girls beyond traditional gendered roles, into STEMM, construction or other male-dominated fields.

Girls identify the importance of establishing and resourcing place-based community disaster groups. These groups must have gender balance and diversity, including girl representatives, and they can work closely with traditional and community leaders. Group members can receive training and support, to influence and progress gender responsiveness and the engagement of marginalised communities in all disaster coordination and actions. Vital to this is training for rural women leaders in counselling skills and reporting gender-based violence so they can work closely with community leaders during disaster coordination and can manage reporting and data collection. This can also feed into national gender, human rights and disaster risk management systems.



Zanima at her school in the Solomon Islands. Photo: Plan International Australia.





## 8. Conclusion

This report shares Pacific girls' voices and experiences of climate change in the region, actions to protect girls' rights, and girls' engagement in climate justice advocacy. Influenced by the principles and practices of Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR), the project is undertaken in partnership with Pacific girls. Through four iterative cycles of co-design, data collection, participatory analysis, and girl-led advocacy, the project provides a platform for girls to voice their concerns, propose solutions, and engage in meaningful climate justice activism.

The research findings demonstrate the multifaceted impacts of climate change on Pacific girls. These range from lack of access to basic needs and health challenges, to barriers to education, play, and livelihoods. The data shows the intersectional nature of these impacts, highlighting how factors such as gender, age, location, and socio-economic status intersect with oppressive structures of patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism and ageism to exacerbate vulnerabilities.

Pacific girls in the project propose actionable strategies for climate justice, demonstrating that they understand the interconnections between environmental sustainability, social justice, and human rights. Girls call for governments, international countries, and civil society organisations to ensure just, girl-centred approaches to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and inclusive disaster response. They demand that girls are at the centre of climate policies.

The data suggests that Pacific girls are enthusiastic about climate justice activism. They want to take collective action for climate justice in girl-led spaces, supported by the feminist movement, families, communities, schools and governments.

The 10 strategies outlined in this report offer a roadmap for stakeholders at various levels—from communities to civil society organisations and governments — to uphold the rights and agency of Pacific girls in the face of a changing climate. These strategies emphasise the importance of building girl-led feminist movements, creating

inclusive spaces for girls' engagement, and ensuring all girls in the Pacific have access to essential services and education; while also calling on governments and industries to uphold their responsibilities to reduce emissions and protect communities and the environment. These strategies promote a holistic approach to addressing the impacts of climate change on girls' human rights.

It is imperative that these strategies are translated into concrete actions. This entails not only political will and financial investment but also a fundamental shift in attitudes and systems to honour and centre the voices and experiences of Pacific girls in climate discourse and decision-making processes.

As Pacific girls say,

**“We should not be quiet, we should find ways to survive through this climate change.”**

Girl, aged 16, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands

**“Take stand and lead. Raise our voice.”**

Girl with a disability from a religious minority group, aged 17, living in a rural area in the Federated States of Micronesia

**“Talk to local and world leaders and act up, no one can do it alone. We work together.”**

Girl from a racial and religious minority group, aged 18, living in a rural area in Tonga

**“Hear our voice.”**

Indigenous girl, aged 13, living in a rural area in Tuvalu

# Endnotes

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# Appendix

The full survey is available to download at:  
<https://www.plan.org.au/publications>



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