Climate Resilient Islands Programme

Contextualising the Indigenous Knowledge Leadership Programme (IKLP)

live & learn
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere

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1. Introduction

This report details how the Indigenous Knowledge Leadership Programme (IKLP) was designed and tailored to each participating Pacific Island country, serving as a key mechanism in Live & Learn's implementation of the Climate Resilient Islands programme (CRI).

The Indigenous Knowledge Leadership Programme aims to revive cultural practices that have historically been integral to community life. As articulated by a Fijian cultural expert, there is an imperative to invigorate this dormant cultural potential:

> *[T]here is a need to be strengthened to awaken the sleeping giant that is culture. The Indigenous Knowledge Leadership Programme (IKLP) presented an opportunity to revive, reawaken and collectively strengthen the traditional practices that have always been a part of the people's lives.*
> – Fijian cultural expert

Since its launch in 2021, the IKLP has become a central pillar of the Climate Resilience Islands programme, forged through close partnerships between Pacific Island community stakeholders and the Network Support Office in Melbourne. The programme follows a grassroots, community-driven model rooted in Pacific knowledge-sharing traditions, ensuring that every selected community member is actively involved in planning, design and implementation of climate adaptation strategies.

The programme seeks to strengthen Indigenous knowledge systems to inform climate change resilience. Its methodology focuses on empowering Indigenous knowledge (IK) frameworks to guide land and ecosystem management practices as well as culturally relevant strategies for climate adaptation that prioritize sustainability and resilience.

The key outputs of the IKLP include intergenerational transfer of knowledge with the aim of strengthening leadership of youth and young adults within the community with key thematic areas that CRI addresses: ecosystems restoration, food security and disaster risk management.

The IKLP provides a structured approach to climate-change adaptation across Pacific islands, where communities are confronting rapid disruptions and mounting threats to the lands, seas, skies and ecosystems that have sustained them for generations. By empowering local people as the leading agents of change, the programme uplifts and reinforces Indigenous knowledge, supplying communities with the skills and resources they need to safeguard their heritage and drive the transformative actions that will secure their legacy for future generations.

2. Profiling of communities and identified challenges on Indigenous knowledge

The CRI programme conducted participatory, bottom-up profiles of every participating island community. In doing so, community members in each country pinpointed the gaps and challenges in Indigenous knowledge. Below are summaries of main issues and challenges identified by communities for each of the island countries.

Fiji

There are key challenges and issues that Fijian communities are facing in terms of practices and maintenance of Indigenous knowledge. One of these is the practice of ***solesolevaki*** – a once-strong tradition fostering unity and mutual support – which despite its enduring importance has greatly diminished today.

In addition, lifestyles have become more economically driven, so longstanding practices of environmental stewardship – like sustainably harvesting from land and sea and preserving resources for future generations – are increasingly neglected. At the same time, destructive methods such as burning woodlands to clear fields or using chainsaws are on the rise, whereas tradition and ancestors relied on more selective, low-impact techniques.

Elders have raised concerns that recent farming initiatives are focusing on cash crops for financial gain rather than nutrient-rich foods essential to food security. By prioritizing profit over sustenance, these efforts risk creating disparities and inequalities in communities that once shared resources equitably and met everyone's needs.

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

There has been concern raised by the community over the decline in the traditional ***hausboi*** system. This system helped young men understand their roles and responsibilities in communities and to their environment. Today, however, the ***hausboi*** system is not used frequently even though it is protected especially in some provinces such as Himau, where customary beliefs remain strong,

In the past, the ***hausboi*** served as the forum where elders and the Masa (chief) guided young men in observing the rules governing management areas. Potential leaders were identified early on and, over the years, were mentored to develop strong leadership skills. During this period of guidance, these future leaders learned how to establish community rules, recognize collective benefits, uphold customary practices, make informed decisions, and distinguish appropriate from inappropriate actions for the community's welfare. This process ensured effective leadership and resource management, but since it has fallen out of use, the traditional principles of management have begun to deteriorate.

Other loss of traditional knowledge systems is related to methods of food storage and preparations as well as ***tabus (taboos)*** of resources to prevent overuse, so communities remain sustainable and resilient in times of hardship or disasters. A large portion of traditional healing methods and herbal knowledge is also being lost.

However, some Indigenous knowledge remains, and is still being practiced in some parts of New Ireland, where the CRI programme is operating. For instance, the traditional way of conservation, through restricting a certain part of the coast (***Gorgor/Tanget***) was used to revive the marine ecosystem. After a certain period, the reef was opened again to the community to harvest. This traditional management system is still being used today.

Tonga

The communities have underscored the importance of four foundational values – respect, humility, loyalty, and sharing – that define Tongan society and continue to shape communal life today.

Tongan villagers practice traditional shifting cultivation, growing indigenous root crops to enhance resilience against the impacts of climate change. However, a trend has emerged towards less sustainable agricultural practices, including the use of toxic chemical pesticides, which have replaced more ecologically sound methods such as planting Fijian kava as a natural pest deterrent.

In the face of natural disasters, cultural traditions play a crucial role in informing survival strategies, with the head of the extended family guiding efforts to strengthen family and community resilience.

While ancestral ways of life remain strong and intergenerational respect is deeply ingrained, there is growing concern among community members regarding the infrequent transmission of cultural traditions and Indigenous knowledge. This inconsistency may lead to younger generations missing out on essential practices that promote healthy lifestyles, further exacerbated by a notable migration of youth from their communities. Local leaders have identified gaps in educational resources and a lack of opportunities for youth engagement in community initiatives as key factors contributing to these trends.

Additionally, there are signs that Tonga's social structure is evolving, evidenced by a diminishing interest in traditional family structures such as ***Nofo 'a Kaiga***, which represents living together as a unified extended family.

Tuvalu

In Tuvalu, traditional fishing knowledge on the breeding cycles of fish, where they are in the lagoon and the right time to fish them is passed on from elders to children. This knowledge is valued and often kept secret within families.

Traditional farming methods tend to be more resilient to natural disasters. At the same time, younger people are increasingly immersed in modern technologies, benefit from improved education, and rely more heavily on imported foods. As a result, traditional food preparation skills have fallen out of favour, and playing the lottery has become a common leisure activity, taking time away from traditional cultural pursuits.

Solomon Islands

Solomons communities indicated that much of the traditional wisdom, tools and techniques previously passed down by elders have now disappeared. Formal education introduces new knowledge, shops stock modern supplements, and outside farming and fishing methods have been adopted. For example, the ancestors were expert navigators who crafted vessels capable of long sea voyages, but canoe-building expertise was lost when the master builder passed away. Ancestral seasonal calendars, once used to prepare for natural disasters, are now rarely consulted. Skills in load-carrying techniques and carving – such as choosing the right trees and creating traditional designs – have also faded. Western influences have eroded cultural norms, reducing attention to and respect for surrounding ecosystems. Although cultural protocols for sharing Indigenous knowledge remain important, few community members seem aware of them, as reflected in observations by CRI staff members:

> *I went to the communities right after the IKLP and what I heard back is that the team followed really well cultural protocols to the point that they didn't have to pay IK holders to share their knowledge (when you usually have to in Sols) and that the IK holders were talking about how because traditional 'chupu' was provided they had to share their knowledge with the youth for free.*
>
> – Chloe Malvasio, Live & Learn NSO

Vanuatu

There were strong reflections on how in the past, even without modern conveniences, people always had enough to eat and never experienced food shortages. A member of the community pointed out how cooking with pots made meal preparation easier but also brought some health issues. By relying solely on locally grown foods, the ancestors avoided scarcity, enjoyed healthier lives, and often lived longer.

In earlier times, older men would gather younger men for 'evening ***storian***' meetings at the community hall – a tradition that has largely disappeared today. When missionaries arrived, they did bring the community together, but they also interrupted many traditional customs around respect.

Now, community elders worry about the loss of their cultural knowledge. In the past, people did not have to ask for help because everyone naturally worked together; elders fear that cooperative spirit has diminished.

3. Indigenous knowledge and climate change

It was only recently that the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) acknowledged how vital Indigenous knowledge systems are for both interpreting the effects of climate change and designing appropriate responses (van Bavel, MacDonald, & Dorough, 2022). Yet its procedures still lean heavily on Western scientific frameworks, frequently treating Indigenous and local perspectives as supplementary rather than as core contributions (Germano, 2022). This orientation places Pacific Island countries at a disadvantage, since their climate adaptation work relies on donor funding anchored in IPCC scientific reports that are oriented to quantitative data and less on qualitative information which Indigenous knowledge research and information prioritises. Consequently, climate policies and projects across the Pacific tend to reflect Eurocentric assumptions, prioritizing Western science, technical fixes, and outside experts (Rarai, Parsons, Nursey-Bray, & Crease, 2022), thus resulting in externally imposed approaches that often lack sustainability and fail to build genuine resilience in these communities.

Research across the Pacific on climate change impacts – in areas such as health, ecosystems, biodiversity, social sciences and development – further underscores the need to integrate Indigenous knowledge into climate adaptation initiatives and nature-based solutions.

> *The clues for combating climate change lie in our past ancestral wisdom ... If we honour our Pacific traditions and carry our ancestors forward with us, then we will honour their systems of sustainability in order to provide an abundant future for our young.*
>
> (Dunsford 2010:4-5)

Dunsford's views reflect the work of many Pacific Island scholars, writers and researchers in the field of Indigenous studies worldwide. Studies in the fields of climate change, environment, social sciences and others indicate that cultural knowledge remains vital for shaping future adaptation efforts. Nunn, Janif and colleagues (2016) examined traditional oral narratives in rural Fijian communities to develop effective, sustainable climate-change adaptation strategies. This work continues to be significant today as climate change impacts exacerbate people's ability to adapt and yet they lack the financial capacity to mitigate and ensure continued resilience and protection for the future generations.

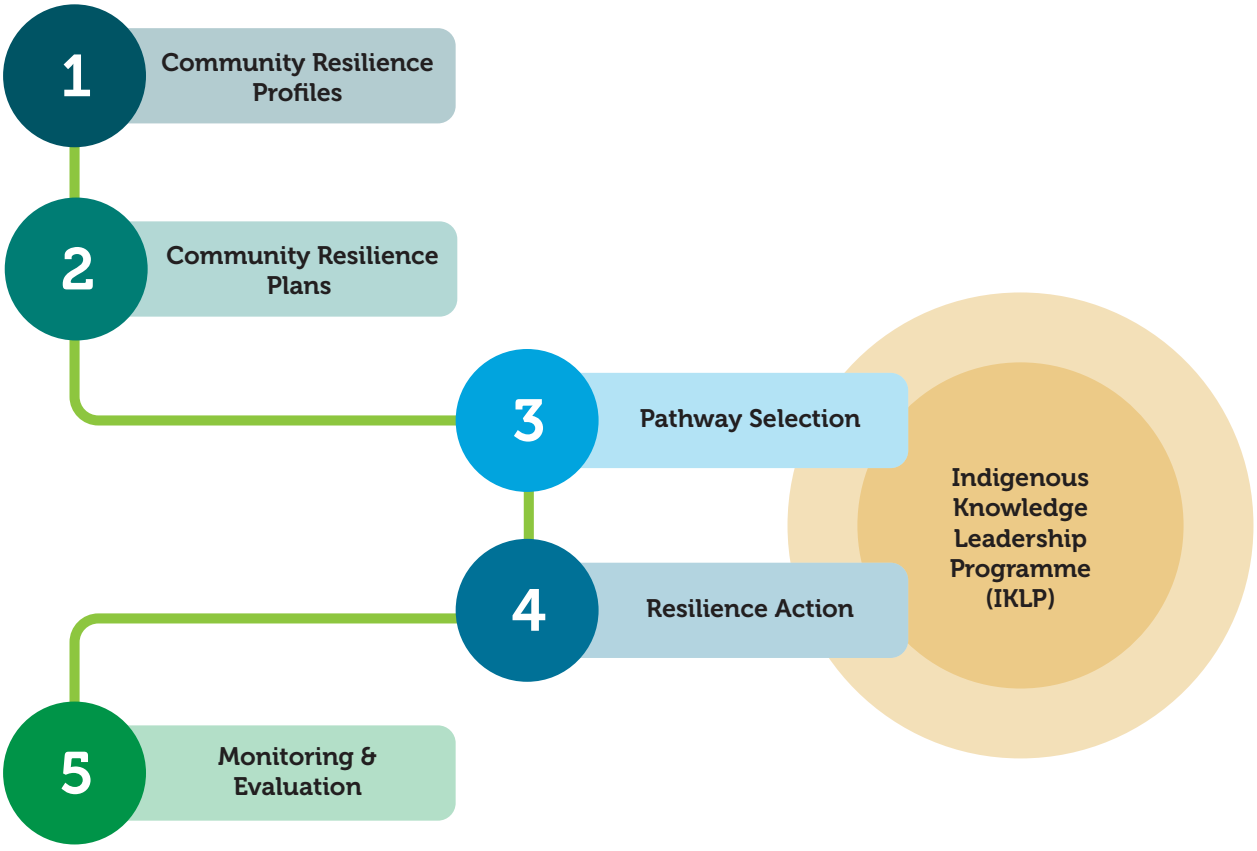
3.1. Integrating the IKLP into CRI

The IKLP serves as a key part of CRI, linking detailed Community Resilience Plans to broader Resilience Actions by placing community-driven leadership and hands-on adaptation at its heart.

It unfolds in six phases in which the IKLP sits in the third phase of the CRI process: Pathway Selection.

- **Phase 1: Community Profiling** – Communities undertake a detailed mapping of their local environment, social structures, and cultural traditions. They identify their most pressing challenges and gather critical insights into what drives sustainability and resilience in their context.
- **Phase 2: Plans for Community Resilience** – Using the profiles developed in Phase 1, communities design targeted climate-resilience strategies that align with CRI priorities such as ecosystem restoration and food security. This phase includes a clear evaluation of proposed action pathways, the knowledge-brokering support required for their implementation, and the human-resource capacities the community will need.

Figure 1: CRI Programme Phase

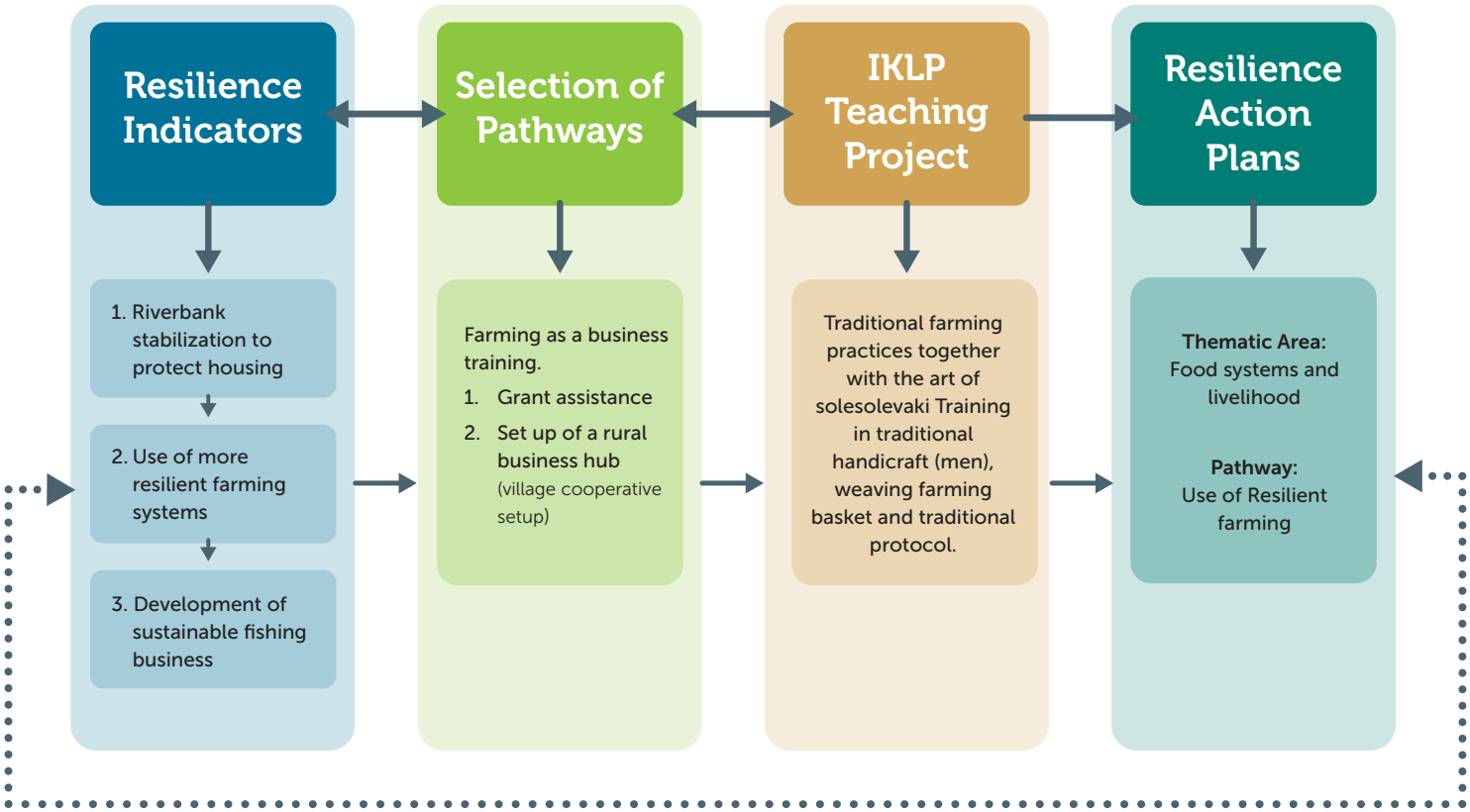


- **Phase 3: Pathway Selection** – This is part of the planning process and is related to feasibility, funding, time etc. It also is the selection of IKLP projects that can be carried out to help communities become resilient.
- **IKLP Programme** – The IKLP not only guides the selection of resilience pathways but also enriches the entire process through an immersive, community-led workshop. There, elders and youth collaborate to design a teaching project firmly anchored in Indigenous knowledge. By facilitating direct knowledge and skill transfer between generations, the workshop both strengthens community resilience and revives Indigenous learning practices. This co-created project serves as a key deliverable that informs the shift from Phase 3 into Phase 4 of the CRI Pathways. At the same time, the process builds the leadership skills of emerging young people, equipping them to lead and implement future initiatives.
- **Phase 4: Resilience Actions** – Resilience actions are the concrete results of the planning process and IKLP, with funding channelled into projects that communities themselves design and implement. In Phase 4, these grassroots initiatives apply locally shared expertise and training to develop and execute adaptation solutions for their most urgent climate-change challenges.
- **Phase 5: Monitoring and Evaluation** – This phase includes a focus on the outputs of the IKLP Teaching projects that have been implemented.

How the process works

Figure 2 below illustrates how the IKLP is embedded within the wider CRI framework. In Naiqaqi village, Fiji, every IKLP activity is directly mapped to the community's own resilience plan and its three identified indicators. The village selected the second indicator – shifting to more resilient farming systems – as the foundation for their IKLP pathways, ensuring the solutions they design are both nature-based and climate-smart. Through the IKLP workshop series, Naiqaqi residents then launched a suite of food-system and livelihood projects: training young people in the traditional solesolevaki cooperative farming method and reviving basket-weaving skills to support food handling and storage.

Figure 2 : Integrating IKLP into the CRI Pathways



4. How the IKLP was carried out

During its initial setup the IKLP operated in a hybrid role, neither fully integrated into the CRI process nor entirely independent.

The IKLP was implemented using the IKLP Facilitation Guide, a bespoke toolkit crafted to support culturally sensitive, intergenerational approaches to teaching and learning Indigenous knowledge.

4.1. IKLP Facilitation Guide implementation process

The IKLP Facilitation Guide is a Pacific knowledge–driven toolkit that assisted communities in carrying out the IKLP work with the communities. It was tailored for the flexibility of Pacific islands contexts, so communities could adapt and tailor to suit their context. Thus, it weaves in culturally appropriate knowledge-sharing methods – such as the Tuakana/Teine approach – and is laid out in three core sections under which every activity falls:

1. **Methodology and cultural concepts**
2. **Preparation and planning: activities devoted to logistical planning, stakeholder briefings and preparing for fieldwork**
3. **Implementation of Community Workshop –delivery of the program's central activities in which indigenous knowledge learning and teaching projects is carried out in alignment with the prioritised resilience pathways selected and approved by the community.**

Currently gaps in reporting for the facilitation guide are being reviewd, with the understanding that reporting needs to provide more qualitative material. This will improve the programme process and any redesign.

Detailed below is how the IKLP was rolled out in each community, highlighting the ways in which communities have adapted the toolkit so that the processes are culturally contextualised.

4.1.1. Methodology and cultural concepts

Countries tailored the IKLP workshops to their own cultural contexts. In nearly all Melanesian settings (with Vanuatu the sole exception), a local cultural specialist was essential, whereas in Polynesia the CRI team led workshops independently. Almost every implementing country adapted the facilitation guidelines to weave in its own cultural concepts and values – anchoring the process in Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, being and doing.

Engaging cultural specialists in certain countries was important because communities are highly diverse in terms of language and traditional protocols. Respectfully following these protocols is essential for enabling people to carry out work on the islands.

Fiji

The CRI team collaborated with Cultural Specialist Mr. Simione Sevudredre (Master Simi) to adapt the IKLP for the local context and oversee its rollout. Throughout the IKLP process, culturally appropriate values, etiquettes, and principles were incorporated, ensuring effective intergenerational transfer of knowledge between traditional knowledge holders and younger or adult participants.

- *Vanua* represents the interconnectedness of land, environment, people and spiritual life. In the IKLP, this holistic idea is activated through a formal partnership among local communities, the church and government. By engaging all three sectors, the programme creates a multi-stakeholder forum where participants pool cultural and traditional knowledge to build climate-resilient practices. Involving community members, faith bodies and state institutions ensures a truly integrated approach that honours Indigenous wisdom alongside Western science.
- *Sevu,* also called ***sevusevu***, literally means 'offering' and refers to the traditional ritual of presenting kava to a chief when entering a Fijian village. This ceremony functions as a formal introduction and grants the visitor acceptance into the community.
- *Solesolevaki* (unity or reciprocity) is at the heart of Fijian life, embodying the communal spirit that treats everyone as part of an extended family (Movono & Becken, 2017). Whether it's planting crops for a wedding, building a new house, or carrying out a community project, people come together to share labour and resources in mutual support. Closely linked to social capital, solesolevaki underpins highly reciprocal and collaborative community efforts. For this reason, it is core to carrying out the IKLP.
- *Sau* refers to prosperity (usually referred to as sustainability). The IKLP aims to enhance self-reliance and sustainability, especially when under pressure from climate change.
- *Mana* refers to blessings, and when engaging with a community it is essential to observe traditional protocols by first seeking the approval and blessings of the ***vanua*** (land), chief or tribal leader before holding any workshop, consultation, or sharing of Indigenous knowledge.

One clear illustration of the integration of these cultural concepts and its values in the IKLP is the example presented by Kavula community, where there was need to support and strengthen the planting of yams and the i-***sevu***. Younger generations were taught the sacred values of the ***vanua*** and key cultural practices – such as the revival of ***sevu*** – to restore ***sau*** (prosperity) and ***mana*** (blessings) to their land. To make this revival possible, every household should receive planting materials for climate-resistant crops and, critically, yam slips to establish a ***were*** (yam plantation). Because yams are central to the ***sevu*** ceremony, providing yam planting materials for the next season will ensure broad participation. Guided by the principle of ***solesolevaki***, communities work together to prepare and tend their ***were*** until the harvest. When the ***i-sevu*** offering is presented to the ***vanua*** and the church, it reinvigorates tradition – bringing renewed ***sau*** and ***mana*** to Kavula and strengthening its resilience.

Papua New Guinea

The IKLP incorporated PNG's traditional ***hausboi*** and ***haus-meri*** practices – key cultural systems for transferring and sharing Indigenous knowledge. The term ***hausboi*** literally means 'boys' or men's house', and it served as the environment where young boys were taught the rites of passage into manhood. Within this sacred space, male adolescents underwent a transformation designed to prepare them to protect and defend their clan, while elders passed down essential skills and community knowledge (Aime, 2017). The ***haus-meri***, or 'women's house', initially functioned as a secluded space for women during menstruation and childbirth (Maulingin-Gumbaketi et al., 2021). Over time, its role expanded into a forum for women to gather, articulate their concerns, and educate one another on pertinent local issues, ranging from domestic violence prevention to economic empowerment and political engagement (Meten, 2024).

Tonga

Culturally relevant values for Tongan communities are known as the four golden pillars. These core pillars are:

- *faka'apa'apa* – mutual respect is a foundational value shaping interactions and relationships in Tongan communities
- *tauhi vā* – maintaining relationships by nurturing connections and ensuring they are strong and continuous.
- *fakatokilalo/loto tō* – humility and openness to learning and being generous. It is knowing one's place within the community.
- *mamahi'i me'a* – loyalty/passion in all endeavours.

These four golden pillars encourage people to share, be generous and be selfless (Houkamau & Ongolea, 2024). For the IKLP, these values are crucial to the sharing of Indigenous knowledge between knowledge holders and younger people.

Solomon Islands

The ***Chupu*** ceremony is an important traditional practice for Solomon Islands, especially in Guadalcanal Province. It serves as a formal rite that signifies the endorsement of IKLP by community leaders and traditional knowledge custodians. This event facilitates the transmission of Indigenous skills from knowledge holders to the younger generation and members of the community.

Tuvalu

Tuvalu adopted the Maori ***tuakana*** (older) – ***teine*** (younger) concept, thereby framing the interaction between elders and youth in much the same way as the oral intergenerational transmission that occurs within families. Interactions with people and discussions with sharing of knowledge are carried out in Tuvaluan language.

Vanuatu

Engagement with communities and the use of Indigenous knowledge complied with the Republic of Vanuatu's Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Act No. (2019). Traditional customs and protocols – known as 'kastom' – then served as the guiding framework for social interactions during the IKLP activities.

Table 1: Conceptual frameworks for each country

Country	Cultural conceptual framework
Fiji	The engagement of culturally appropriate themes was applied across all the island communities where the IKLP was implemented • *Vanua* – land, environment, people, and spiritual elements • *Sevu* – Offering • *Solesolevaki* – Unity or reciprocity • *Sau* – Prosperity • *Mana* – Blessings
PNG	PNG used the cultural concept of Indigenous learning and teaching of the *hausboi*/*hausmeri*
Tonga	The four pillars or 'four golden values' of communities have been used to guide the facilitation of the IKLP work: • *faka'apa'apa* - respect • *anga fakatokilalo/loto to* - humility • *tauhi vaha'a/ va* -cultivating healthy relationships • *mamahi'i me'a* - loyalty/passion
Solo-mons	The *Chupu* ceremony serves as a formal rite that signifies the endorsement of a particular program by community leaders and traditional knowledge custodians. This event facilitates the transmission of indigenous skills and knowledge to individuals lacking traditional backgrounds, thereby promot-ing cross-cultural understanding and the integration of local wisdom with non-indigenous perspectives.
Tuvalu	Tuvalu used the Maori *Teine*, *Tuakana* concept. This is very similar to oral transitions of knowledge in Tuvalu.
Vanuatu	Similar to Tuvalu, Vanuatu utilised the *Teine, Tuakana* concept.

4.2 Implementing the IKLP Workshop

The IKLP Facilitation Guide served as a vital, adaptable resource for CRI country teams working with their communities. Its flexible design helped teams across the Pacific Islands lead intergenerational knowledge exchanges, and, as mentioned earlier, recognizing the cultural diversity between Melanesian and Polynesian contexts, each team customized the guide to fit local traditions. Workshop delivery varies – and also overlaps – depending on who leads the session. When the CRI team partners with local cultural specialists, they follow one set of practices, and there is practical application of knowledge; when the LLEE team runs the workshop on its own, a noticeably different approach emerges.

4.2.1. Preparation and planning

All CRI country teams were first trained on the IKLP facilitation guide by the Network Support Office, which oversees the programme. Before any fieldwork, each team conducted thorough advance planning – mapping out local cultural protocols, consulting relevant authorities, and completing all required government clearances. In Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, teams had to observe extensive customary rituals and approvals; in Tuvalu and Tonga, formal cultural requirements were lighter, though official government processes remained essential. Understanding the role of provincial councils and the broader national or regional context is therefore critical. Tuvalu and Tonga consist of small, tightly knit, single-language communities, whereas Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu cover much larger territories with multiple languages and highly varied cultural traditions.

Fiji

The team engaged a cultural specialist to design, plan and facilitate the IKLP. Before any activities begin, it's vital to develop a deep understanding of each community's cultural context – their values, guiding principles and history. This specialist brought key insights into local customs and protocols.

The Cultural Policy was essential for ensuring that traditional protocols and etiquette were upheld and that engagement with each island community followed the proper provincial-level procedures. In practice, this meant sourcing workshop materials, arranging travel, and working closely with the cultural specialist to secure approval from the relevant community gatekeepers and chiefs before departure.

PNG

The CRI team brought on a cultural specialist with deep knowledge of New Ireland's customs and traditional protocols. Community-led governance systems like the ***hausboi*** (for men) and ***hauskuk*** (for women) systems are active in New Ireland. Local chiefs (***maimais***) govern each community, and all activities must follow their established procedures.

Tonga

Unlike the other Melanesian countries, the IKLP in Tonga was carried out directly by CRI office staff in partnership with local communities. This reflects Tonga's relatively uniform cultural traditions, minimal language diversity and compact geography, which keeps provincial councils easily accessible.

Tuvalu

The Tuvalu team, like the Tongan CRI team, did not engage an external specialist, so preparation and facilitating the workshop were carried out by the team members themselves. Preparations entailed ensuring that all relevant materials needed for the workshop were obtained and contacting the local government focal point to ensure protocols and permissions were followed.

Vanuatu

The CRI team did not engage the use of a cultural specialist as they are all well-versed with the communities that they are carrying out work on IKLP. The CRI team facilitated the workshop based on the participants that were selected by the District Council on the island.

4.2.2. Cultural Protocols

Cultural protocols are the traditional and respectful practices required when engaging with island communities. These protocols encompass reciprocal behaviours and attitudes that honour and acknowledge traditional leaders, community members, and their ways of life. Consequently, cultural protocols are designated as a priority activity in the IKLP Facilitation Guide. This section outlines the community-specific cultural protocols implemented throughout the IKLP.

Pacific Island cultures display remarkable diversity and depth, evident in both daily practices and broader ways of life. Cultural protocols – comprising each community's traditions, customs, values and guiding principles – shape behaviour across the islands. Because these protocols differ from one community to another, they are described separately for each country where the IKLP was carried out.

Fiji

Before beginning IKLP activities in the selected Fijian villages, the team observed the sevusevu ceremony. This ritual – offering a bundle of kava to the chief (see photos 1 and 2) – serves as a formal request for permission and signals the community's welcome. Beyond its symbolic role, the sevusevu secures the endorsement of local knowledge holders to pass on their skills and experiences to younger generations.

Photo 1: Sevusevu, a traditional protocol that seeks approval from the community and knowledge holders to share their knowledge with the younger generation of Kavula

Photo 2: Performing the sevusevu a traditional protocol to seek approval from the community and knowledge holders to share their traditional knowledge and skills with the that of the younger generation of vanua Turewa.

Respecting core cultural values is essential in every interaction. In Fijian villages, protocol governs speech and seating. Anyone wishing to address the chief must demonstrate deep respect and wait until the chief personally invites them to speak. Seating reflects the social hierarchy: the chief occupies the place of greatest honour, followed by elders, then younger men, with women seated toward the back.

Papua New Guinea

The Papua New Guinea team called on Chief Jon Aini of Ailan Awareness – a recognized authority on New Ireland's Indigenous traditions – to inaugurate the IKLP. Chief Aini hosted all eight provincial chiefs and their village planner committees at Ailan Awareness, strictly observing customary acceptance and welcome protocols. When the delegation arrived, the Chief of Himau delivered the formal welcome address, and a visiting chief then performed the traditional permission-to-enter ritual. Alfred Luang followed with brief opening remarks, co-leading the welcome ceremony alongside the CRI team, which had provided all required materials and provisions. The visiting chiefs were honoured with customary offerings – a ceremonial pig, root crops and fresh coconuts – and the proceedings concluded that evening with a shared communal feast.

Photo 3: Maimai Chief from the provinces performing a cultural ritual seeking permission to enter the premises.

Photo 4: Traditional acceptance of the arriving party and formally inviting the delegation.

Photo 5: Chief Jon Aini traditionally welcoming the guests into the premises.

Tuvalu

The CRI team and IKLP facilitators follow the government's official engagement procedures for island communities. All requests for permission and coordination are submitted through the Department of Rural Development (Ministry of Home Affairs, Climate Change and Environment), which acts as the primary link to the Island Kaupule/ Council Secretary. Once permission is granted, the team always pays a courtesy visit to the Kaupule Secretary both before and after community activities to acknowledge and thank them for their support. The CRI team also observes local spiritual blessings and thanksgiving ceremonies as an integral part of any workshop held in the community.

Tonga

In Tonga, the team followed a straightforward process rather than elaborate cultural protocols. They submitted formal requests through the appropriate ministerial focal points to the town council for each island. On arrival, they paid a courtesy call to the town council, who then introduced them to a dedicated liaison officer to coordinate and prepare the workshop. Like other Pacific Islands, spiritual blessings and thanksgiving is integral to any activities carried out in the community.

Photo 6: Opening of the workshop on Vava'u Island, Tu'anekivale community

Solomon Islands

To respect cultural protocols, the traditional ***chupu*** ceremony is conducted first, before making any request of significance. This ritual not only shows reverence but also draws in both knowledge holders and youth, inspiring their active participation in the workshop.

Photo 7: Performing the Chupu ceremony, Poposa Community

Photo 8: Sharing the Chupu with the people in the communtiy

Photo 9: Chupu presentation, Nui/Marapa

Photo 10: Preparing the Chupu, Hautahe

Vanuatu

In Vanuatu's Bislama, 'doing kastom' means observing the traditional protocols of Indigenous communities. To begin, the CRI team offers mats and kava to the chiefs and knowledge holders, who then pass on their wisdom to youth groups ahead of the workshop. In some villages, these offerings are handed directly to the chief and elders by CRI staff. Where local customs forbid women from approaching or addressing the chief, the team works with male community members to present the gifts in the correct way. The ceremony itself includes formal welcomes, solemn recognition of the chiefs' and knowledge holders' rank and expertise, and a respectful request for permission to share their knowledge with younger generations through the proposed pathways.

Pangpang - CRI Team doing kastom

Ahkamb – Youths doing kastom to knowledge holders and chief

Sunae – Men doing kastom on behalf of CRI

In summary, each participating country tailored the IKLP to the context of their communities and cultural practices, values and behaviours, by leveraging traditional local frameworks. This approach fosters a respectful and secure environment conducive to sharing traditional knowledge, historically transmitted orally among targeted audiences in the community context. There were some countries where practitioners used the Māori framework of the Teine Tuakana approach to guide knowledge sharing and engagement. Below is a summary of the cultural protocols that were described above for each of the countries.

Table 2: Summary of cultural protocols for each country

Country	Cultural protocols	Materials needed	Cultural specialist engagement?
Fiji	In Fiji, traditional cultural protocols, such as the *sevusevu* ceremony, play a significant role in social interactions. During this ritual, the presentation of kava is made to the village chief as a means of seeking permission and establishing a respectful relationship with the community. This practice not only underscores the importance of kava in Fijian culture but also reinforces social hierarchies and community ties.	Yaqona shoot or roots.	Cultural Specialist, Mr. Simione Sevudredre or Master Simi
PNG	A traditional ceremony was held for all six communities together where they were all invited to attend at the province of New Ireland.	Pigs, coconuts, crops	Mr Jon Aini
Tonga	Courtesy visit to the Governor General on the island before any work in the community can be carried out. District officers provide assistance and support for the CRI Team. There are no significant cultural protocols that are needed for blessings that are made in the beginning and end of the workshop.	Not Applicable	CRI team were the facilitators
Tuvalu	Protocol includes making contact through the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development Council who liaise on behalf of the team and seek permission from the kaupule. Upon arrival on the island a courtesy call is paid to each island council/kaupule.	Not Applicable	CRI team

Solomons	The traditional *chupu* ceremony in the Solomon Islands is conducted within each community as a critical cultural protocol, involving seeking permission and formal approval from the Chief before undertaking any activities or projects that require community involvement. Such ceremonies are integral to maintaining social order and respect for customary authority within the community, ensuring that all stakeholders are acknowledged and engaged in the decision-making process.	Traditional *chupu* offering: red shell money, potato, betel nut, pigs, bananas, sugarcane	CRI team
Vanuatu	Doing kastom is a cultural protocol that is carried out during the IKLP – it is carried out by the CRI team, youths and by the community (on behalf of the CRI team of women)	Kava and traditional mat	CRI team

4.2.3. Participant selection

Participant selection includes engaging Indigenous knowledge holders and demands careful attention to local customs and protocols, which vary notably between Melanesian and Polynesian settings. In Melanesian countries, participant selection is a joint effort by the community and the CRI team, carried out only after all requisite permissions are secured and cultural protocols are fully respected. Elders and youth are formally nominated in the presence of the chief – an approach that both honours tradition and encourages broad community participation. Although island councils often operate from off-island locations, they are always kept informed of any activities on the ground.

By contrast, in the Polynesian nations of Tonga and Tuvalu, the process is more streamlined: the CRI team defines the profiles of desired participants and submits that list to the island or district council, which then handles the official selection and issues invitations – complete with dates, times and other logistical details.

It is also important to note that some countries engaged the presence of government agencies in fisheries and agricultural sectors in the IKLP workshop.

The selection of youth participants does not always follow national policy; however, there are key factors that can affect youth representation.

Fiji

Participant selections were carried out in the community, on the first day after cultural approvals were in place. The CRI team partnered with each community chief – and cultural specialist – to map out participants. Together they ensured that all key stakeholders took part, including government technical officers responsible for agricultural, fisheries and other community development initiatives with youth, knowledge holders and other community members.

Papua New Guinea

IKLP participant choice was a joint effort by the CRI team, the chief, and community members. Drawing on his deep understanding of local strengths and needs, the chief identified which knowledge holders should lead the workshop and nominated the youths and other residents most likely to gain from – and carry forward – their expertise. The team then worked alongside the cultural specialist, the Maimais (chiefs), and village planners to confirm the list of participants. In the end, elders, knowledge holders and young people were selected in line with the criteria and conditions set out in the facilitation guide.

Solomon Islands

Participant selection was a collaborative process involving the CRI team, the chief, and community members. Because the chief knows the community intimately, he could identify those who would contribute their expertise at the workshop and nominated the youths and other members who will benefit from that knowledge but also be able to lead the development initiatives under CRI.

Tonga

The selection of participants was done by the district council committees for each of the islands. However, due processes needed to be carried out, which included the team informing the local Ministry of Home Affairs who liaised on behalf of the CRI team with each of the district councils.

Tuvalu

Participants were selected by the Island Councils on each island community based on criteria provided by the Live & Learn in-country team. Knowledge holders and youths were recruited by the kaupule to attend the workshop.

Vanuatu

The selection of participants was a collaborative effort between the CRI team, the chief and the community. After cultural protocols and ceremonies were completed, the mapping of participants was carried out. Knowledge holders were selected for their different expertise in each community, and members of the community were selected to take part. There were also key stakeholders from government who work in agriculture, fisheries and other sectors who were invited to attend the workshop and share their expertise.

Table 3: Summary of selection process for each country

Country	Who are the knowledge holders?	Who are the youth?
Fiji	• **elders** who possess an **extensive understanding** of their ***vanua and culture*** • **actively practice this Indigenous knowledge** in daily life • **traditional leaders,** these individuals hold **detailed insights** into the ***vanua*** and command widespread respect • **specialized as custodians** of practices • not limited to local culture but also government officials who provide technical knowledge and understanding of modern development	Uses the Fiji National Youth Policy of people aged 15-35 yrs.
PNG	• traditional leaders or ***maimais***, • elders: both men and women entrusted with the specific knowledge, wisdom and skills that have been passed through their ancestors or through experience (including weavers, fishermen, weathermen, farmers and others)	• anyone who is not an elder – ***maimais*** or chiefs. • Youth participation is dependent on the availability of young people in the community at the time of the IKLP
Tonga	• Identified by the district officers on the island • Elders, leaders of the community, practitioners of Tongan cultural way of life	15-34 yrs according to the Tongan National Youth Policy 2021 -2025.
Tuvalu	• The Island kaupule/council selects the knowledge holders for the IKLP workshop as they are familiar with the knowledge holders • Elders and traditional leaders as well as practitioners of cultural way of life	• National Youth Policy defined as persons 15-34 yrs. • ***Lima malosi,*** which is anyone below 50 yrs and out of school and contributes to the community.
Solomons	Elders who are permanently residing in the community.	• Youths who stay in the community with limited urban mobility
Vanuatu	Elders and families who have special knowledge and skills.	• Aged 12-30 yrs according to the Vanuatu Youth Policy

Participation in the IKLP workshops across six countries totalled 3,092 individuals (see Table 4). These figures rely on accurate data entry into the mWater monitoring system; however, missing data from four communities suggests actual numbers may be up to 10% higher. Gender representation was generally balanced, except in Tonga, where women accounted for 72% of participants. Youth comprised approximately 22% (see Table 5) of attendees, with equitable representation of males and females. By country, the Solomon Islands recorded the highest participation (33%), followed by Fiji (28%), Vanuatu (14%), Tonga (13%), and both Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu at under 10%.

Table 4: Total number of participants in the IKLP workshops by age, gender and country

Island	Gender	Under 18	Between 18 - 25	Between 25 - 50	Between 50 - 75	Over 75	Not answered	Total
Fiji	Female	6	82	179	111	6	20	**404**
	Male	17	94	224	170	19	36	**560**
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
	Total	23	176	403	281	25	57	**965**
Tonga	Female	7	61	241	158	1	7	**475**
	Male	4	24	72	73	7	1	**181**
	Total	11	85	313	231	8	8	**656**
Vanuatu	Female	25	28	108	47	1	20	**229**
	Male	18	26	104	76	9	6	**239**
	Total	43	54	212	123	10	26	**468**
PNG	Female	13	15	84	32	2	27	**173**
	Male	14	20	100	57	5	17	**213**
	Total	27	35	184	89	7	44	**386**
Solomon	Female	81	43	113	49	7	22	**315**
	Male	77	36	131	50	4	22	**320**
	Total	158	79	244	99	11	44	**635**
Tuvalu	Female	2	9	9	12	1	0	**33**
	Male	0	13	23	23	0	0	**59**
	Total	2	22	32	35	1	0	**92**
OVERALL	TOTAL	**264**	**451**	**1388**	**858**	**62**	**179**	**3202**

4.2.4. Workshop: Intergenerational transfer of knowledge

Intergenerational knowledge transfer plays a critical role in reinforcing the community-defined pathways that weave Indigenous wisdom into nature-based solutions for resilience and sustainability. This component focused on two core activities identified as essential by each community, and those practices have now been implemented at every participating site.

It entails two key activities, which are described in sections below:

i. Identification of types of knowledge to be learnt and shared between elders and youths, which involved a whole day of brainstorming

The IKLP is delivered through community workshops where participants co-design and share traditional knowledge aligned with the CRI Resilience Plans and selected climate adaptation pathways. This Indigenous wisdom provides nature-based approaches rooted in daily life and cultural traditions, forming the basis for effective climate adaptation and sustained community resilience. Knowledge varies by gender, reflecting distinct roles, responsibilities and contributions within the immediate family, clans or kins and the community as a whole. Participants are categorized as Teachers – the Indigenous knowledge holders – typically divided into men's and women's groups; and Learners – youths of both genders, typically divided into groups of young men and young women. This structure respects local tradition and ensures that gender-specific perspectives inform the sharing and preservation of traditional practices essential to long-term resilience.

Photo 11: Discussions between knowledge holders and youths during IKLP. Kavula & Banikea community, Fiji.

Photo 12: Introduction to the IKLP by CRI team and Cultural Specialist to the Maimais from the 8 provinces and the planners, New Ireland, PNG.

Photo 13: Presenting the IKLP work in the Solomon Islands

Photo 14: Brainstorming activity of workshop, Pangai, Tonga

Photo 15: Youths presenting during brainstorming session – Papaelise community, Tuvalu

Photo 16: Brainstorming IKLP projects youths and knowledge holders. Maliliu Community, Vanuatu

ii. Practical learning and imparting of traditional knowledge and skills to young people

The workshop unfolds in a practical, hands-on format where participants apply Indigenous knowledge identified in the first part of the workshop. Knowledge holders employ traditional materials and teaching methods to guide young people through skill-building exercises, ensuring lessons are absorbed through direct experience.

During the practical phase, young men and women are organized into gender-specific groups, each led by an experienced knowledge holder. These mentors teach the traditional skills that resulted from the brainstorming sessions which the youths specified they wanted to learn, supplying all necessary materials to facilitate immersive learning. This structure fosters a collaborative, mentor-driven environment that reinforces the transmission of heritage techniques through guided practice and shared cultural wisdom. The diverse knowledge transmissions for each country are detailed below.

Fiji

In Fiji, IKLP's intergenerational knowledge-sharing activities emphasize distinct skill sets by gender. Women concentrate on weaving mats, baskets and other handicrafts, while men focus on basket weaving, traditional farming techniques and the presentation of customary protocols.

- **Mat weaving (women only)** - Mat weaving is a vital skill for women in these communities. Each community has its own distinctive techniques. Generally, the tradition is gradually being lost as more young women focus on modern lifestyle skills and knowledge.

- **Handicraft weaving (both men and women)** - Handicrafts woven from coconut fronds and pandanus leaves feature prominently in various ceremonies and traditional gatherings. They express a deep bond between people and their environment and demonstrate the sustainable use of local resources. Learning to weave, they noted, goes beyond acquiring a practical skill – it carries forward living cultural traditions. All the communities where the IKLP is carried out presented baskets.

- **Traditional protocols** - In some villages, traditional protocols are treated as community-specific skills – only members of that village may perform the ceremony before their chief. For example, Dreketi is especially renowned for its kava ritual, a custom carried out solely by the young men of that village whenever they pay respects to the Tui Wailevu (paramount chief) in any formal setting or occasion. Sadly, these practices are now in decline as fewer young people take part or show interest.

- **Farming** – Farming lies at the heart of these communities' survival and way of life, since they depend on the land and its resources. Over generations, traditional agricultural techniques have been carefully passed down, but today's modern lifestyles and consumer-driven economies offer younger people alternative paths. As more youth turn away from farming, there is a real danger that this hard-won wisdom will disappear with its elder custodians. Thus, the IKLP provides crucial intergenerational learning, ensuring youth engage directly with elders. The planting of yam is the highlight in most villages. Yam is a sacred food that is used for ***sevu*** (traditional offering in Fijian culture) and all households need to participate, as it ensures the revival of the ***i-sevu*** where food is presented (first harvest) to the vanua and church. These rituals are reciprocal in that they bring with them blessings and prosperity.

Photo 17: Youth learning to weave baskets from coconut fronds, Nawailevu village

Photo 18: Young woman being shown how to weave a mat by a master weaver

Photo 19: Weaver teaching other women in Kavula the art of weaving a specific type of mat

Photo 20: Youths learning how to plant yams under the direction of a traditional farmer, Dreketi village

Photo 21: Indigenous knowledge holder teaching the young men how to present a traditional protocol, Laucala

Photo 22: Vitina villagers in the province of Macuata are renowned for their gift in kava ceremony presentation and under the IKLP village elders teach the young men this gift after more than 10 years

Papua New Guinea

Through the IKLP workshops, provincial elders and knowledge holders, both men and women, handed down traditional skills and wisdom to young men and women. Many of these practices recur across the islands, and they include:

- **Basket and fan weaving** – Master weavers taught young men and women to fashion baskets and trays for storing harvested food or even for fishing, using coconut fronds or the bark of specific trees. They also demonstrated how to make fans from coconut fronds, as observed in Damon Pam, Marai and Nokon in Katangan.

- **Mat weaving** – Elder weavers teach young women how to craft the traditional mat called *Loalo* from processed pandanus leaves. These mats are used in gardens, homes or when travelling (observed in Katangan).

- **Garden fencing** – Farmers and elders demonstrated how to build protective fences from bamboo and wooden stakes, safeguarding gardens from wild boars and other animals (carried out in Damon Pam and Himaul).

- **Stone reef fences** – In Nokon, elders guided young men in constructing stone walls on the reef, an age-old fishing technique that enables sustainable, selective harvesting and preserves marine resources.

- **Home gardening** – Women, who traditionally tend household gardens, taught young women time-tested cultivation methods that bolster food security and community resilience (observed in Limbin and Himaul).

- **Canoe building** – Skilled craftsmen instructed youth in the art of constructing traditional canoes from local timbers.

- **Farming of yam** – Yam planting protocols were taught to the young people by the farmers in the community (Himaul).

- **Weather-control rituals** – Certain families with hereditary meteorological knowledge passed on ceremonies and practices believed to influence local weather for the benefit of the community, especially for fishing, hunting and gathering.

Photo 23: Nokon men weavers teaching young men to weave baskets to store food using the bark of a tree.

Photo 24: Making a garden fence, knowledge holder teaching young men of the community, Damon Pam

Photo 25: Teaching young men how to build stone fences on the reef, Nokon

Photo 26: Traditional way of planting taro for home gardens, Limbin

Photo 27: Teaching young women the art of weaving mats, Kantangan

Photo 28: Teaching young women how to weave baskets and fans using coconut fronds, Himau

Tonga

Tonga hosted more IKLP workshops across its communities than any other country. The ways elders share their knowledge with young men and women vary widely: some communities focus on hands-on practice, others stage skits and demonstrations, and still others rely on storytelling and dance. There are, however, some common traditional practices across communities. They are summarised below.

- **Weaving and handicrafts** - Communities employ both hands-on workshops and dramatized skits to illustrate the techniques of sourcing materials and crafting traditional items. Throughout the IKLP region, **mat weaving, fan making, handcrafted ornaments, woven baskets, and food trays** are among the most prevalent forms of artisanal production. Each demonstration highlights not only the crafting process but also the geographical locations and natural sources of the raw materials used.
- **Farming** - Subsistence agriculture is a cornerstone of daily life and resilience. Local farmers instruct younger generations – particularly young men – in the cultivation of **yam – an important staple –** as well as other traditional foods. Instruction also covers the preparation of organic fertilizers, including compost made from fish bones.
- **Traditional dances and songs** - Esteemed composers and choreographers preserve and transmit Tonga's rich performative heritage by teaching the **traditional Tongan dance and songs**. These cultural practitioners ensure that each performance maintains its historical significance and artistic integrity.
- **Tradition fishing methods** – Uloa is a traditional fishing method that uses coconut leaves and relies on community-wide participation in its preparation. When the fish is collected, the catch is distributed to all members, with chief and pastor also receiving the first share of the catch, following a hierarchical pattern of distribution.

Photo 29: Young woman learning to make traditional handicraft using coconut sticks and pandanus dried leaves from a knowledge holder, Talihau

Photo 30: Elder teaching about traditional fishing technique using coconut fronds called Uloa

Photo 31: Skit involving elders and youths demonstrating farming techniques, Talihoau, Vava'u

Photo 32: Handicraft makers demonstrating how traditional handicrafts are made and the types of materials, 'Utulei

Photo 33: Tree planting with native plants

Photo 34: Demonstrating traditional Tongan mats at the IKLP workshop

Tuvalu

In Tuvalu, the IKLP workshop adopted a distinctly different approach, emphasizing the identification and design of teaching projects rather than practical implementation. Youth participation was limited, as many were based in Funafuti, engaged in migrant work schemes or attending school. Consequently, the workshops across all four communities largely focussed on theory.

Photo 35: Funafala community IKLP workshop

Solomon Islands

In Solomon Islands, the IKLP workshops were divided into two, with the first half of the workshop spent designing and identifying teaching projects aligned with the CRI Resilience plans and the second half spent on hands-on exercises where youths and other members of the community were taught traditional knowledge skills and displayed these skills at the end of the workshop.

- **Weaving of baskets and handicrafts** – Across the four provinces, weaving of baskets, fans, floor mats, and fencing are key activities that were carried out by women.
- **Traditional cooking** – women learnt traditional food preparation from knowledge holders.
- **Making of roofing**s – Men learnt how to sew sago palm leaves for local houses, making paddles and also creating fire – Niu/Marapa and Waimea.
- **Canoe making** – Male canoe makers in Hautahe (only) shared with their young men and others the types of trees that are important to make canoes. Time did not allow for making for canoes.
- **Traditional fishing tools** – Men were involved in making fishing gear such as fishing nets, spears, and traditional techniques.

Photo 36: Demonstrating the results from the basket weaving in Hautahe

Photo 37: Young men learning traditional fishing knowledge

Photo 38: Youth learning to weave baskets, Waimea

Photo 39: Youth trained to sew sago palm leaves for traditional roofing of houses, Poposa

Photo 40: Children being taught fire lighting skills

Photo 41: Making of fishing net

Vanuatu

The Vanuatu IKLP workshop took the form of a talanoa-style dialogue, with elders and knowledge holders passing on their insights to young people through storytelling. This was similar to Tuvalu; for example, agricultural knowledge holders explained the various crops that are important in the community and traditional methods of planting.

Photo 42: Vanuatu presentation of IKLP themes during workshop, Maliliu

Photo 43: Discussions regarding integration of knowledge in Sunae

Photo 44: Group discussion between an elder and young women, Pangpang

Photo 45: Group of young men working with knowledge holders, Ahkamb

4.2.5. Communities participating in IKLP

Between 2021 and 2025, the IKLP programme was carried out in six countries across 44 communities. As a result, the intergenerational transfer, revitalization and empowerment of cultural knowledge and skills reached a total of 3,202 participants across all communities. The CRI projects identified are led and executed by the local communities themselves.

Table 5: IKLP countries and communities

Country	No. of Communities	Names of communities
Fiji	8	Banikea, Dreketi, Kavula, Laucala, Naiqaqi, Valeni, Vitina, Nawailevu
PNG	8	Damon/Pam, Himau, Himaul, Marai, Limbin, Nokon, Nailut and Katangan
Tonga	15	**Vava'u Island (8 communities):** Tu'anekivale, Talihau, Pangaimotu, Koloa, Holeva, Ha'alaufuli & Ta'anea, 'Utungake, Utulei **Ha'apai Island (4 communities)**: Pangai, Fotua, Lolofa, Ha'ano/Muitoa **Eua Island (3 communities)**: 'Ohonua, Houma, Mata'aho
Vanuatu	5	Pangpang, Malaliu, Sunae, Ahkamb, Vunausi
Tuvalu	4	Papaelise, Funafuti, Nukufetau and Vaitupu
Solomons	4	Hautahe, Niu/Marapa, Poposa, Waimea
TOTAL	**44 communities across 6 countries**	

5 Community feedback

The IKLP received overwhelmingly positive feedback from communities engaged in the programme. Through a community-led approach, the programme enabled the design of projects focused on priority areas, creating space for communities to lead while reinforcing elders' culturally embedded wisdom and life skills. These time-honoured practices – essential for living in harmony with the environment and each other – had been at risk of disappearing due to modern lifestyles and technological conveniences. The IKLP has helped revive these traditions and pass them on to youth, empowering a new generation to carry forward this heritage and strengthen resilience.

Reflections on IKLP outcomes from various communities are summarized below. It is important to note that there were some limitations in the reporting from some countries. However, key perspectives from all countries are included below.

Fiji

- The number of people safeguarding traditional knowledge is steadily declining. In some villages, specific customs rest with a single elder, who may take them to the grave if these are not shared with young people to carry on the legacy.
- A youth participant expressed deep gratitude for the chance to attend the three-day workshop, where he learned to weave several different types of baskets for the first time. He added that he looks forward to practicing his new skills and sharing that knowledge with his peers.
- Youths in Laucala village highlighted how they learnt how to carry out traditional protocol ceremonies from the IKLP training workshop, especially the importance of the ***sevu /na i-sevu*** ceremony, which is the first fruit offerings to the chief and pastor.
- Youths expressed that the IKLP is crucial for them because most have little or no knowledge of traditional practices. They have always depended on the elders to conduct ceremonies and uphold protocols. In Naiqaqi, the next generation of leaders spoke of the importance of learning customs from ageing elders.
- The Vitina community, during its **IKLP workshop,** identified that discouragement by some religious organizations had eroded **traditional yaqona ceremonies, protocols and *meke* dances,** weakening communal cohesion. This loss made it difficult to coordinate village work, intensified interpersonal conflicts and prompted youth to challenge elder authority. Community leaders asserted that resilience hinges on reconnecting with the ***vanua***, and over the course of the **three-day workshop,** villagers came together in unprecedented unity. Elders generously transmitted their cultural knowledge while younger participants listened attentively, symbolizing a collective recommitment to **cultural revival** and **community resilience.**
- The communities recommended that the IKLP be implemented across all communities in Fiji, acknowledging its importance not only for climate resilience, but also for strengthening the ***vanua*** and community cohesion.

PNG

The small number of youths present for the programme was a significant challenge. However, in some villages some of the school students doing their traditional craft activities from school became participants in the IKLP, whereby knowledge holders helped them with their traditional crafts.

Tonga

- The IKLP workshop has enabled young participants to recognize the value of **traditional knowledge.** One attendee described her experience with a vivid **'basket' metaphor,** underscoring the workshop's success in reviving **community-held practices**:

> *When I came for the workshop on the first day, my basket of indigenous knowledge was empty... now when the workshop is over, I am very grateful that my basket is being filled with some of the indigenous knowledges that exist in the village which I didn't know.*

- Participants' accounts highlight the deep relationship between Indigenous peoples and their environment. A 68-year-old woman emphasized how local flora guides both daily life and autonomous living by providing essential resources. In Houma, the plentiful ***tutu* (mulberry) trees** enable women to harvest bark and produce **tapa cloth (*ngatu*),** a vital form of **cultural expression** and a **reliable source of income.** Testimony from Kula participants demonstrates how **environmental stewardship** and **traditional knowledge** intersect to build community **resilience, economic independence** and preservation of culture.
- Other reflections highlight several key outcomes from the IKLP workshop. First, Indigenous Knowledge was genuinely revitalized: the women's committee expressed deep gratitude for a program that not only reintroduced but also reaffirmed the importance of local, traditional wisdom in addressing today's environmental challenges. Elders likewise welcomed the opportunity to share and preserve generations-old strategies for coping with climate variability, ensuring that ancestral practices remain both accessible and actionable. Crucially, the workshop fostered community empowerment and leadership: by recognizing their own Indigenous expertise, participants committed to guiding the design and implementation of climate-resilient initiatives, reinforcing collective ownership and sustainable development. Together, these outcomes demonstrate how the workshop not only preserved cultural heritage but also fostered autonomous, locally led responses to climate change.
- Youth in Ha'ano/Muitoa are increasingly seeing the importance of Indigenous knowledge for climate resilience. One young participant described how the holder of traditional farming knowledge taught him traditional cultivation methods – showing him, for example, how to create organic compost from fish bones and other natural materials.

- The workshops underscored the value of **ancestral wisdom** in contemporary environmental stewardship. An elder pointed out that, 'During extreme weather events, we rely on our traditional knowledge to protect our crops and homes,' noting that these practices draw their strength from a **deep understanding of nature's rhythms.** A youth leader added that learning from elders enables young people to recognize the **interconnection of all living beings.** This **holistic insight** fosters **sustainable behaviours** that not only address human needs but also preserve and support the **broader ecosystem.**
- At the close of the IKLP programme, **town officer Samiu Seau** praised the strong turnout of young participants and urged them to look beyond modern distractions. He warned that excessive focus on **technology** can cause youth to lose touch with their Tongan identity. Seau stressed the **importance of Indigenous knowledge** – especially as **climate change** disrupts traditional lifestyles and may limit future access to natural resources. He encouraged participants to learn and practice ancestral methods of **farming, fishing and food preservation,** and to seek guidance from grandparents and parents:

> *"During extreme weather events, we rely on our traditional knowledge to protect our crops and homes. Our methods may appear basic, yet they are powerful because they are grounded in a thorough grasp of nature's rhythms.*

- The community of Mararapa indicated that Indigenous knowledge is important to people's way of life and their survival. The IKLP programme provides a space in which Indigenous knowledge can be passed on to future generations before these knowledge holders pass on, enabling them to be resilient in times when faced with disaster.

Vanuatu

- Participants in Kerepua all agreed that traditional knowledge is essential for preserving their culture and strengthening community resilience. One attendee recounted how past generations weathered cyclones and earthquakes without any outside help, depending solely on ancestral wisdom to rebuild. Mrs. Lei, a young participant, said she had gained profound insights and argued that safeguarding and passing on traditional knowledge is crucial for future generations and remains the best strategy for disaster preparedness. The chief also urged young people to honour and learn from their elders, cautioning that modern technology has curtailed opportunities for the conversations that uphold traditional values.
- In the Maliliu community, the workshop uncovered long-neglected traditional practices and showed how Western influence had left many young people – particularly those in urban areas – estranged from their heritage.
- One chief, who has attended many leadership workshops, had never encountered one focused on the importance of Indigenous knowledge or on how to revive it in the modern world. He was grateful that this workshop was held in his own community, enabling local people to take part. He noted that the event underscored his responsibility as chief to recover and safeguard ancestral wisdom. The workshop also revealed just how much knowledge has been lost and inspired him to learn from others – and then share and teach those lessons to the younger generation.
- Rita, one of the participants, highlighted that the workshop transformed her appreciation of Indigenous knowledge as both a heritage asset and a practical strategy for environmental stewardship. Approaching her 40s, but previously unfamiliar with most of her community's traditional wisdom and its significance for **climate resilience,** she emerged with several key insights. The traditional **seasonal calendar** deepened her understanding of local agricultural cycles. She learned sustainable marine harvesting techniques and discovered previously unknown sacred and historical locations in her community, highlighting opportunities for culturally based tourism.

6 Challenges

- Although the importance of Indigenous knowledge was incorporated into the CRI framework, the IKLP operated relatively independently. It was introduced later as a pilot once the CRI process was already in motion.
- The absence of a dedicated CRI-IKLP role from the programme's inception meant missed opportunities to add value and avoid many of the implementation challenges and ad hoc country-specific adjustments..
- Across the communities, a widespread challenge was the low number of youth participants. Some of the key reasons included:
    - Migration of young people to urban areas in search of economic opportunities, employment, higher education, healthcare or Western lifestyles.
    - Rural-focused migrant worker schemes that draw away many able-bodied men and women who would otherwise lead and support local development, leaving villages dominated by elders and children.
    - The allure of modern lifestyles – with easy access to rapid advancements in information, communication and entertainment technology – has diminished young people's interest in traditional knowledge and cultural practices. These shifts threaten the oral, hands-on teaching methods that underpin cultural transmission.
- Because young people's existing commitments often prevent them from attending, organizers must carefully schedule events to avoid clashing with their obligations.
- Many young people today feel disconnected from the natural world, due to ecological losses, more urban lifestyles, the imposition of Western agricultural techniques, a focus on income generation and other factors. Elders and knowledge holders explain that the IKLP does more than convey Indigenous wisdom – it emphasizes caring for and respecting the environment, guiding participants toward a deeper, more meaningful bond with nature.
- Clear and consistent **communication of dates and objectives** – especially to community leaders – is vital. A previous IKLP attempt failed to complete its agenda because it was inadvertently planned for a period of high community obligations.
- Additionally, presentations should respect the **traditional language** of knowledge holders. Converting oral traditions into Bislama has led to misunderstandings, as knowledge holders cannot always provide feedback once their material is translated.
- Overall, ensuring timely, well-communicated events and honouring linguistic preferences fosters broader participation, diverse perspectives, and more effective knowledge exchange.

7 Recommendations and conclusion

7.1 Recommendations

- A dedicated IKLP coordinator to manage and oversee the entire programme is essential for harmonizing requirements across all country teams, addressing challenges as they emerge, and ensuring that any adjustments continue to deliver the programme's key outputs.
- Definitions of youth must be clearly articulated, considering both the community's cultural interpretations and the criteria set out in the national youth policies. While national policies provide a guiding framework, it is vital to recognize that cultural norms – especially the duties and obligations expected of young men and women in Pacific Island societies – can lead to significantly different understandings of what it means to be a young man or woman.
- The programme underscores the value of collaborating with local community partners, especially the use of cultural specialists who possess deep knowledge of cultural protocols, lifestyles and practices. These partners offer unique insights and methods for knowledge transfer in communities. Additionally, their established relationships within the community enhance collaboration and facilitate more effective engagement.
- Reporting systems need to be strengthened so teams can accurately capture the core processes and learning outcomes of IKLP delivery. At the outset, IKLP was not formally woven into the CRI workflow, and its purpose remained ambiguous. To address this, the programme was reorganized to better connect with CRI – an adjustment that has markedly changed how the program was subsequently integrated.
- Relationship building and understanding the community and historical context, language and cultural protocols and nuances are crucial to implementing IKLP work. Thus, the importance of time management, cultural commitment and obligations of communities are crucial to ensuring better participation.

7.2 Conclusion

The purpose of the IKLP is to support CRI resilience planning and the Pacific's rich tapestry of cultural practices and worldviews. Using a toolkit (IKLP Facilitation Guide) that draws on the example of Māori-inspired teaching and learning approach, it offered a flexible methodology that each country could adapt to its own context. The facilitation guide acted as an open framework rather than a set of rigid steps, empowering communities to tailor each step – selecting from a range of information-gathering techniques and structuring intergenerational knowledge exchanges in ways that honoured their unique cultural nuances.

The implementation of the IKLP has enabled communities to revive certain traditional knowledge and practices and ensure that these are passed on to younger people. Many young people who participated indicated how they have found that traditional ways of life continue to be relevant solutions to the current problems they face today.

The programme offers communities a vital way to strengthen their own knowledge and resilience, especially at a time when climate change responses too often prioritize costly, large-scale infrastructure projects that many communities cannot fund and that depend on slow government development processes. Rather than waiting on external partners and government, local communities take the initiative to adapt to climate impacts and determine how best to utilise local resources and capacities to ensure they continue to thrive and live sustainably.

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