

Teamwork in my community



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PACIFIC CLIMATE READERS

Teamworkⁱⁿ my community

Level
2



Teamwork in my community

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Introduction

Climate change is a global threat and the greatest challenge to human wellbeing and survival. The Pacific Islands are especially vulnerable to its impacts, which have become visible in people's daily lives. Climate change education and adaptation are essential to Pacific Islanders and should become a topic of discussion in every classroom and every home. Helping people of all ages to understand climate change is important, because without the right knowledge, we cannot imagine the best solutions.

Along with other books in the **Pacific Climate Readers** series, this book aims to build the foundational knowledge required for understanding climate change impacts and adaptation options in different Pacific Island settings. By exploring island ecology, health, hygiene, and traditional knowledge within the diverse and dynamic contexts of Pacific communities, this series of readers helps children interpret and navigate the complexities of a changing world.

This series was made possible by the Australian Government's **Australia Pacific Climate Partnership (APCP)** working with **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)** on a programme called **Accelerating Climate Education (ACE)** for the Pacific. The goal of this initiative is to empower through knowledge and to inspire educators and students throughout the Pacific to lead meaningful climate action within their own schools, homes, and communities. Working together is the best way to move forward with hope for a safe, healthy, and sustainable future.



How to use this book

Like other books in this series, this climate reader has several parts to support the learning of the reader.

- a) The informational narrative (story): Children can read the story by themselves, take turns to read as a small group, and/or listen to it being read by an older child, parent, educator, or another adult.
- b) **Learning outcomes**: This is what the reader should be able to know and do after reading the book.
- c) **Interactive prompts** for deeper discussions on topics raised in the narrative: These help parents and educators encourage children to think more about the story and research more about it, especially by talking to elders and local experts in the community.
- d) **Facts and tips** related to the topic: These help parents and educators create projects, assignments, outdoor activities, and other educational opportunities in which children will take on roles similar to the story characters and follow practical advice to engage in learning through play.

My name is Manu.

These are my sister, Mere, and
our cousin, Lagi.





We love working in our garden. I enjoy growing fruits and vegetables.





Mere grows many beautiful flowers.
Lagi likes to grow herbs.

We eat healthy fresh fruits and vegetables from our garden. Mere makes beautiful garlands and decorations with the flowers she grows. Lagi plants strong-scented herbs in between the vegetables to keep away pests.





A scientist visited our school today and told us about climate change. She said that weather patterns are changing.

Some places may experience droughts – long periods without enough rain. Places may also experience floods – when too much rain falls in a short time.

Some places may get hotter and there could be more storms.

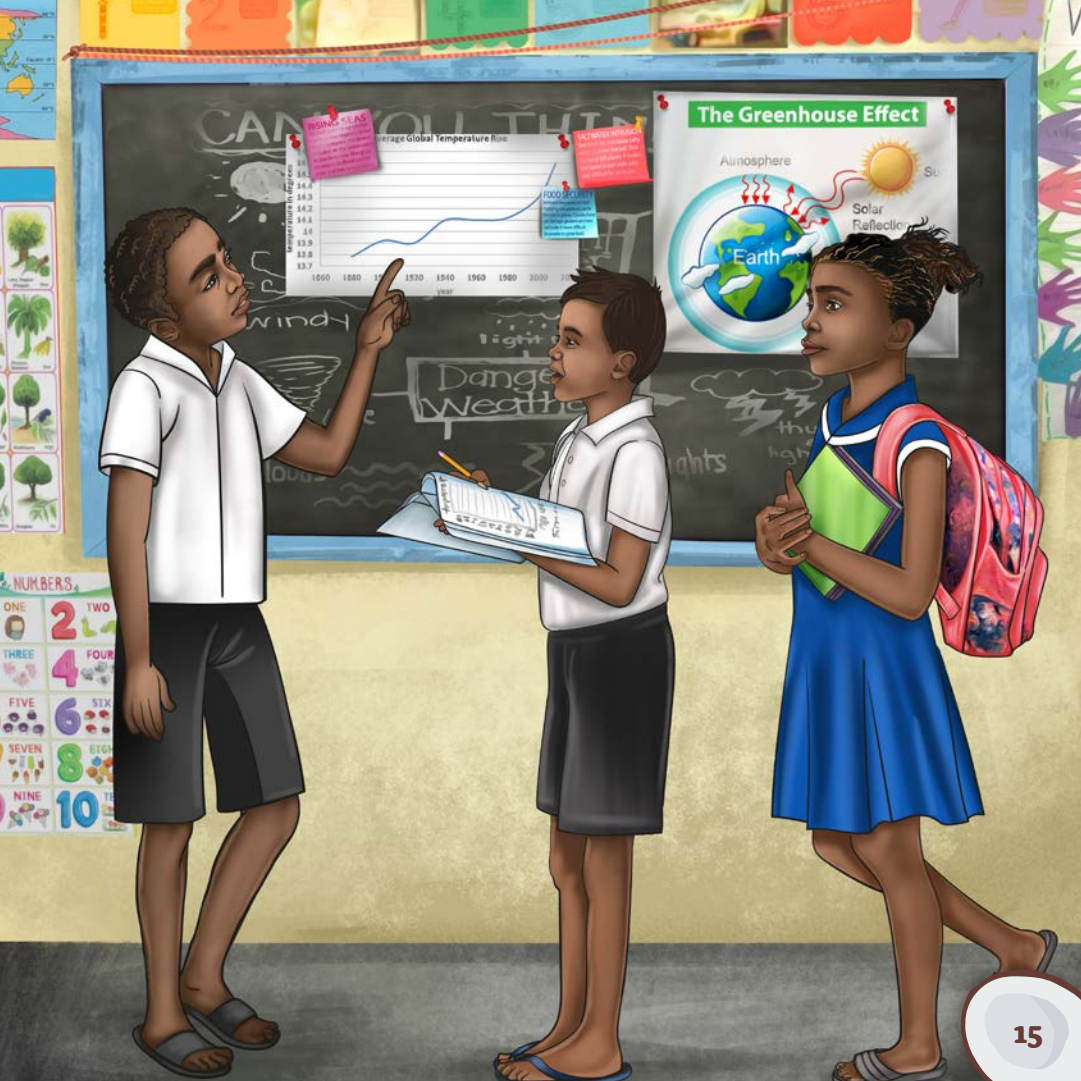
The sea level is rising, eroding coasts, and causing some of the soil to become salty.



We talk about how these changes may affect our garden. “I planted the vegetables based on observations of weather and seasons, and now that’s changing,” I say.

“Grandmother told me the hibiscus flowers need a lot of water. If there’s less rain, how am I supposed to water them?” Mere chimes in.

“I am worried the herbs will not survive the hotter days,” Lagi sighs.



CAN YOU TURN

WINDY CLASS
The wind is blowing hard today. It's a good day to go outside and play.



THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT
The greenhouse effect is a process by which the Earth's atmosphere traps heat from the sun. This is why the Earth is warm enough to support life.

The Greenhouse Effect



DANGER WEATHER

NUMBERS

ONE	2	TWO
THREE	4	FOUR
FIVE	6	SIX
SEVEN	8	EIGHT
NINE	10	TEN

When we get home, we rush into our garden. We want to make sure it is alright.

We are so happy to see that the trees and vegetables are still there. Mere's flowers are still blooming and Lagi's herbs are still smelling great.

But we still feel worried. We know that the scientist had shared real observations and we have heard our elders talk about climate change.



That evening, we can hardly eat the delicious dinner before us.

So, we ask permission to go out and talk to the elders who had taught us how to garden.

We promise to be home in time to clean up and go to bed.



We get to Aunty Luisa's house as quickly as we can. When we get there, we are so nervous we can hardly speak.





Aunty Luisa calms us down.

She makes us hot tea using herbs from her garden. By the time the tea cools enough to drink, we have caught our breath and collected our thoughts.

We take turns sharing what we learned from the scientist and how we feel about our garden.



I wonder, “Do we have to change the way we plant the vegetables and fruit trees because the climate is changing? Will salt in the ground harm our root crops?”

“I am worried about my flowers not getting enough water,” Mere says.

“How are we going to make sure the herbs survive if there is no water and it gets hotter?” asks Lagi.





Aunty Luisa shares what she has observed and tells us her ideas.

“Yes, children. The scientist was correct. Our weather patterns are changing. Things are different now from when I was your age. We used to have very clear wet and dry seasons and would know what weather to expect. We followed the rhythm of the seasons when we worked in our gardens.”

“But now, we sometimes get too much rain when we don’t expect it, or go for months without a drop of rain when we need it.”

“What do you think we should do?” Lagi asks.



Aunty Luisa continues, “There are different things that people are trying to do. I think that one of the most important adaptations is to grow a diversity of plants. This means growing as many different varieties as possible.”

“A garden with just a few kinds of plants is vulnerable. A garden with different types of bananas and breadfruit, a variety of root crops, and many kinds of leafy green vegetables and herbs is resilient.”

“That way, if it gets too wet or too dry or too hot, some plants will always do better than others. With time, we can learn which varieties are the best suited to new conditions.”





We talk for a long time until suddenly Lagi has an idea. “We don’t have so many kinds of plants in our garden, but we could start a new garden with the whole community! The community can plant all the different varieties to see which ones do well. We can all share flowers and herbs and vegetables!”

The next day we share Lagi’s idea for a community garden with our teacher and friends at school. We explain that a community garden may be a way to have a huge variety of plants growing and make sure that we have healthy local food even when the climate is changing.



Our teacher takes our class on a walk around the school neighbourhood. We notice a nice open area behind the community centre. “Oh!” exclaims Mere. “This may be a perfect place for a community garden.”





“Yes,” agrees Lagi. “There is enough space and the building will provide wind protection.”

When we get to the community centre, we explain to the director the idea for a community garden.

She listens very carefully and then asks, “You are just children. How are you all going to create this garden by yourselves?”



I take a deep breath. “Director, this is a community garden. We will ask the community for help and do this as a team. Different members of our community grow different types of vegetables and fruits and flowers and herbs. If we can all come together and plant many things all in one place, then we can see which ones do best as the climate changes. Then we can save the seeds or make cuttings from those plants and share them back out to everyone.”



“I understand about the different plants,” says the director. “I am concerned about animals coming in and destroying the garden.”

Mere raises her hand. “Director, we will ask the community to help with fencing to keep out animals.”

“What about the watering? Who will make sure the plants have what they need to grow well?” replies the director.



Our teacher steps in. “Director, I will allow my students to take turns to care for the garden. I will also guide them to make a garden maintenance schedule. This way the students can ask community members to sign up and help care for the garden.”

“Alright then, this is a good idea. Please show me the schedule when it is ready.”

We are so happy we all “high-five” and cheer.



When we get back to school, our teacher asks us to use our time wisely to create this garden.

First, we set a date to start the garden.

Next, we create work teams. A team works on a flyer about the garden to share with the community. A team works on a maintenance schedule. Another team starts listing the materials and tools needed.

For the next few weeks, we are so busy! We learn from elders and farmers about the varieties of plants they grow and ask them to share seeds or cuttings. We mark out where the fence should go and decide on some places to plant trees. Auntie Luisa helps us a lot by telling all her friends.

A TEAM WORKS ON A
MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE.



Kinky is Lisa



MATERIALS AND TOOLS
GLOVES, TROWEL, PRUNERS,
WATERING CAN
SHOVEL,
RAKE,
WHEELBARROW

A TEAM WORKS ON A FLYER
ABOUT THE GARDEN TO SHARE WITH
THE COMMUNITY



The big day arrives and everyone shows up to help.

The local farm supply store has generously donated the materials for fencing, which some community members put up to protect the garden from animals.

Others build a tool shed where we can safely store the tools.

A team installs a water tank next to the shed to collect rain off the roof for watering.

We start a composting area.

And a group begins planting trees as a windbreak.

WE INSTALL A WATER TANK
NEXT TO THE SHED
TO COLLECT RAIN OFF
THE ROOF FOR WATERING.

WE BUILD A
TOOL SHED WHERE
WE CAN SAFELY
STORE THE TOOLS.



WE START
A COMPOSTING AREA



WE BEGIN
PLANTING





This is teamwork in our community.
When we face challenges, we come
together to make sense of the issue.



We then come up with a solution and work on it together. This is one way we can adapt as a community to the changing climate.

Learning outcomes

This is a story about working as a team to solve problems. Manu, Mere, and Lagi invite friends and community members to help create a garden for everyone. Their idea brings the community to work together toward the common goal of improving food security. Changing their idea into reality is not easy. Though Manu, Mere, and Lagi face challenges, they reach their goal thanks to being able to inspire many people to work together.

Community teamwork is an integral part of the Pacific Island way of life and culture. For generations, Pacific Islanders have relied on this ancient solution and tackled challenges together. Today, the Pacific Islands are among the places most threatened by climate change. Being able to act together as teams and as communities, whether thanks to age-old traditions or new ideas, makes us more resilient to climate change.

After reading this book, children will be able to:

- 1.** Realise that solving problems as a team is a better approach than acting just as individuals,
- 2.** Recognise that teamwork is a strategy for climate change mitigation/adaptation, and
- 3.** Develop positive feelings towards science-based climate change research.

Interactive prompts

Educators, caregivers, and parents can use these guiding questions to kick off discussions with students. The discussions are intended to support the students' deeper understanding of the story by helping them reflect on what they read, and by encouraging them to find out more.

1. Climate change is very real and can be scary. In this story, Manu, Mere, and Lagi were frightened by what they heard about climate change. They went to talk to Aunty Luisa about their feelings and thoughts. Whom do you talk to about your feelings? What are some of the things you can do to act positively on these feelings?
2. In this story, the community comes together to create a garden. There are many other ways in which communities can work together. What are some of the ways in which your community works together? Are there community-based projects that support farmers in adapting to climate change?

3. There is a saying that “many hands makes light work”. How do you understand this? Can you use examples from the book to explain this better? Have you encountered a situation in your life when something was very difficult for you working alone, but easier when you tackled it together with family members or friends?
4. Manu, Mere, and Lagi are avid gardeners. That is one reason why they decided to get help in creating a community garden as a way to adapt to changing climate. What are you excited or passionate about? How can you use your interests to help your community and address climate change?
5. Talk to an elder in your community about their observations of weather and climate. Have they noticed any changes in rainfall? What about fruiting seasons, have they observed any changes? What about fishing, have they noticed any changes in the number or species of fish found on the reefs and in the open ocean? How do you think climate change is impacting the marine resources?

Tips

Ideas for community projects to mitigate and adapt to climate change:

Tree planting. *Planting trees is a great climate change mitigation activity.*

- Trees, especially hardwood trees, help to draw down carbon from the atmosphere.
- Trees help to keep the ground cooler and provide habitats for other living organisms.
- Trees help the rain to enter soil and move deeper underground. That helps recharge the groundwater supply and reduces the risk of floods and landslides.
- Trees help control erosion and keep the soil from getting washed away into rivers and onto coral reefs.
- Planting native trees can help perpetuate cultural practices in the community.

- Endemic trees are trees that are only found on certain islands and nowhere else in the world. Learn about the endemic trees present on your island and plant more.

Energy conservation. *Conserving energy contributes to decreasing dependence on fossil fuel.*

- Communities can work together to create a plan to save energy.
- Invest in renewable and sustainable energy resources such as hydro, wind, solar, coconut oil, and ocean waves.
- Commit to turning off lights and fans or air-conditioners when not in use.
- Walk, or bike, or sail, instead of driving or using a motor on a boat.
- Practise carpooling and use public transportation where available.

***Eat locally grown and harvested foods.** This decreases dependency on imported food which relies on fossil fuels to be shipped or flown into the island.*

- Purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from a local market.
- Grow your own fruits and vegetables.
- Barter your extra fruits and vegetables with friends and neighbours.
- Preserve fruits and vegetables to ensure there is enough food throughout the year and during emergencies.

About this book

This book is a part of the **Pacific Climate Readers**, a series of early readers created specifically for children in the Pacific Islands. The place-based focus on Pacific Island landscapes, local flora and fauna, and the island way of life helps students to explore new concepts within familiar contexts. While providing engaging and relatable literacy materials that children and educators can use to promote reading and comprehension skills, these books' Pacific Island focus on themes such as ecology, communities, health, and hygiene also allows students to develop fundamentals of climate literacy and refine their critical thinking, problem solving, and understanding of adaptive solutions.

The individual titles in the series are interrelated and grouped in three levels, with higher level books building on the lower level ones. To date, the Pacific Climate Readers include:

- ***How I take care of myself and others*** looks at ways to take care of oneself and others including steps and resources used while promoting drinking clean water and eating healthy local food.
- ***Welcome to our garden*** cultivates understanding of the need to maintain local agriculture and food security even during changing climate.
- ***Teamwork in my community*** highlights the importance of working together as a community to build climate resilience.

- ***Our high island adventure*** explores high islands in the Pacific, their key habitats, how they are interconnected, and what challenges they face.
- ***Our atoll adventure*** explores atolls and other low-lying islands, reiterating the interconnection of different habitats and promoting the need to protect and conserve island resources.

This series was made possible by the Australian Government's **Accelerating Climate Education (ACE)** for the Pacific programme, an initiative of the **Australia Pacific Climate Partnership (APCP)** implemented in partnership with **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**.

About the publisher

Island Research & Education Initiative (iREi) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to upholding the unique environmental and cultural legacies of islands and island peoples. We are based in Micronesia, but our work spans the entire Pacific. Our core activity is to assist educational authorities in creating locally relevant school resources, particularly in indigenous languages. That grants the children of Pacific Islands place-based tools they can relate to and positively reinforces their adventures in the world of learning. iREi can be contacted at irei@islandresearch.org



Disclaimer

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Although the authors have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability from its use.

The production of these climate readers is supported by the **Australian Government**. The perspectives and recommendations expressed in this book are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the **Australian Government** nor **GIZ International Service** as implementing partner.

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