



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

Futures of our sea of islands

Voices across the Blue Pacific



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Noumea, New Caledonia, 2026

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Acknowledgements

The Pacific Community's (SPC) strategic futures journey has been carried over three generations of leadership. From the futures-oriented legacy review commissioned by Director-General Sir Collin Tukuitonga (2014–2020), to the foresight of our Members in applying futures thinking to the co-development of the SPC Strategic Plan 2022–2031, a long-term direction has been guided by Pacific values and adaptive, forward-looking ways of working in a rapidly changing region. Under the leadership of Director-General Dr Stuart Minchin (2020–2026), SPC invested in organisational futures literacy through the Metafuture School's Become a Futurist online training (2020–2023), which created an emerging Futures Community of Practice under the stewardship of SPC's Strategy, Performance and Learning (SPL) Unit, and ensured futures practice was integrated across SPC's scientific and technical sectors. In a gesture of reciprocity, in December 2023, SPC launched the *Pacific Pathfinder Toolkit* to make futures methods more accessible and Pacific-relevant, together with the *Compendium of Pacific Practice in Strategic Foresight*.

We also wish to acknowledge and express our deep appreciation for our long-standing engagement with the Asia Pacific Futures Network (APFN), an important regional partner since 2019. Through sustained effort and collective advocacy, SPC has contributed to strengthening Pacific visibility and leadership within this network, including serving in a co-Navigator role since 2022, and similarly with the Dubai Future Forum since 2023, and Aotearoa Futures Forum since 2025. This journey reflects a deliberate commitment to ensure that Pacific perspectives are not only included but help shape international futures discourse.

This grounding in strategy, skills and practical tools set the course for SPC and partners to come together for the Inaugural Pacific Futures Reflection.

Held in August 2025, the Inaugural Pacific Futures Reflection convened the emerging Pacific Futures Community of Practice to reflect collectively on futures thinking, grounded in Pacific values, knowledge systems and lived experience. The reflection created a shared space for dialogue, learning and imagination, confirmed a strong appetite for Pacific-led futures practice and explored the creative ways in which Pacific peoples are dreaming their futures into being.

Building on this momentum and supported by the *Pacific Pathfinder* as a key catalyst for strengthening futures skills across the region, SPC launched the Pacific Futurists Writing Competition. Between August and October 2025, storytellers, artists and futurists from across the Blue Pacific were invited to imagine thriving, resilient and interconnected futures. The competition sought to surface voices not always heard in formal policy spaces, while nurturing a living and inclusive community of Pacific futurists. We received 74 submissions of poetry, essays, visual narratives and short stories from 66 participants across 16 Pacific Island countries and territories. Entries were assessed on creativity, cultural resonance, foresight literacy, clarity and relevance to the theme ‘Futures of our sea of islands’.

To mark UNESCO World Futures Day 2025, SPC celebrated the competition’s winners and all contributors whose works demonstrate the power of Pacific storytelling as a form of collective future building. This *Pacific Futures Compendium*, published under the leadership of Director-General Dr Paula Vivili, brings together a selection of these works to imagine, through art and literature, the futures of our sea of islands.

We extend our sincere thanks to all the storytellers, thinkers, artists and futurists who responded to the call, and to the review panel, whose careful and thoughtful reading helped shape this collection.

Finally, we thank *you*, the readers, who carry these stories into libraries, homes, classrooms and conversations across our Blue Pacific Continent.

Foreword

To our children of today and tomorrow,

Our Blue Pacific Continent has always known how to imagine what comes next. It has long been a place – and a mindset – for futures thinking.

Across our Sea of Islands, futures have been carried in stories, songs, genealogies, and everyday acts of care for land, ocean, and all living entities. They are read in tides and stars, shaped through relationships, and held as responsibilities rather than distant possibilities.

In these pages, writers and artists from across the region offer visions of Pacific futures that are bold, grounded, and deeply relational. Some look far ahead, others stay close to the present. Together, they remind us that our futures are not imported or singular, but woven – from memory and innovation, culture and creativity, care and courage across time and space.

Across the collection, recurring themes surface: the ocean as a connector rather than a boundary; technology as a tool to be shaped by values rather than allowed to shape them; culture not as something to be preserved in the past, but lived, adapted, and carried forward. These reflections sit alongside honest reckonings with climate change, displacement, inequality, and historical injustice, as well as expressions of resilience, creativity, and care.

This collection also reflects the diversity of Pacific worldviews. Not all will share the same comfort levels with the ideas, tools, or futures imagined here – and this plurality is respectfully intentional. The strength of our region has always rested in our diversity, our dialogue, and our capacity to hold multiple ways of knowing, being, and becoming.

As you read, we ask you to not only observe these futures, but to consider your own role within them. What stories do we choose to carry forward? What knowledge do we protect, adapt, or share? And how might we act today, with intention and care, for generations to come?

This collection is an invitation to listen, to imagine, and to consider the futures we are already writing – for those who will one day call us ancestors.

Till we meet again as we walk back into the future.

Valery Wichman

Lead Strategy and Innovation,
Pacific Community and Pacific Futurist

Poems - Sensing futures

“

*“Keitou dua ga na
wasawasa dua ga na
waqa – We are one
ocean, one canoe”*

*– Morien Monika Prasad
Futures of our sea of islands*



We are the future the ocean dreamed

By Monique Liatana Pitasua

Overall winner and poetry category winner — *Solomon Islands*

Once, we stood on the shoreline,
watching tides carry away our crops,
our children's futures,
and the world's promises that came too late.

We shouted for climate justice
And this time, the world listened.

Now the ocean no longer threatens us, it empowers us.
Wave farms hum beside mangrove walls,
Solar mats shimmer on village roofs,
and wind towers rise like totems
carved in the spirit of balance.

We are no longer the forgotten blue.
We are the innovators of the new green.

The barter system has returned with brilliance reborn.
Blockchain tracks our exchanges,
satellite markets map every reef trade,
and local apps record who gives and who gains.

We trade in tuna, tech, and trust.
We measure profit not by dollars but by harmony.

Pacific poultry, beef and pork feed islands,
Solomon Islands' "taiyo" thrive with AI
nets that spare the young fish,
and Samoa's cocoa goes global
through digital co-ops owned by farmers.

Each island a hub,
each nation a node,
each trade a woven thread
in the Pacific Network of Plenty.

The global market looks our way now,
not with pity – but with envy.
We are the example of resilience,
the model of circular design.

We proved that sustainability
is our system.

Our universities teach the Pacific Way
as the future of economics.
Students study tides and algorithms side by side,
learning to balance coral ecosystems with data economies.

Our elders lecture through holograms,
retelling oral histories once lost,
now preserved in cloud memory,
spoken in every dialect of the ocean.

We are advanced but never alienated.
Technology does not erase our roots,
it deepens them.

Digital tattoos record genealogy,
Ancestral chants play on smart speakers as
reminders of where knowledge begins.

Our homes are smart,
but our wisdom is ancient.
Our cities are green, but our values are blue,
tied to the tides,
guided by communal care.

We have learned to live again without leaning.
We import less, create more,
and sustain everything.

We export not just goods but good sense,
the kind born of land, language, and love.

The Pacific has become the teacher,
The world our classroom.
Nations come to learn from us
how to heal reefs,
grow cities that breathe,
and build economies that sing.
Our ancestors smile in the current,
their stories now our strategy,
their chants our constitution.



A memorable *andi-andi*¹

By Monique Liatana Pitasua

Solomon Islands

Today, I met my fifteen-year-old self for an *andi-andi*. She came in her uniform skirt faded at the hem, a plain black T-shirt tucked loosely in. Her hair smelled of frangipani-infused coconut oil, that soft, familiar scent of home.

We sat cross-legged on a woven mat, on the walls, our island pride art surrounds us. She looked around, wide-eyed, still unsure of her place in the world. She didn't know yet what she wanted to be, but she cared deeply; it was plain to see.

She used to daydream about her future, about the world she saw through textbook pages. She carried questions like treasures in her *kuzza*².

I smiled, twenty-nine now,
living far from home but carrying my identity in my chest.
“I became a teacher,” I told her,
“not because I always knew I would, but because I found meaning in helping others find their path.”

I spoke of classrooms in 2025 – whiteboards instead of chalkboard,
PowerPoint slides and Zoom meeting rooms instead of desks.

I told her the internet had reached our shores. Starlink glinting like new constellations above the sea, undersea cables threading islands together. We must harness its power with intention, so that knowledge flows like tides, not tempests.

She listened quietly, dipping “navy” in her tea as rain tapped against the window. We spoke of home, of kitchens sharing sugar and salt.

Of how the Pacific still holds us, even when the tides pull us apart.
“What will education look like in 2056?” I wondered aloud.

1 *Andi-andi*: Having a relaxing get together. *Tok stori/talanoa*

2 *Kuzza*: Bag made from tree bark originating from Choiseul Province, Solomon Islands

Finally, sixty-year-old me arrived. Hair silver like reef foam,
smile, calm as Marovo lagoon, carrying wisdom like woven mats,
patterns of resilience gliding with grace. “You both ran so I could walk,”
she said. “And now, the Pacific smiles.”

We sat together, three tides of one ocean, past, present, future – braided
like the coconut broom top.
Each to their own, but with one purpose.

“Learning in 2056,” she began,
“goes beyond knowledge, graceful with respect and warm with
connection.

Children learn under the sky and in digital clouds. They study stars as
our ancestors did, and map coral reefs with drones and data. They know
their lineage, their languages, their land.

Technology became our tool, not our teacher, and wisdom still begins
with listening.”

The teenager was amazed. And the now a Zai³ smiled.

We found ourselves again
in every child who learns both science and story, in every woman
who leads with empathy, in every village that plants mangroves
before buildings.

In our andi* we laughed about how far we’d come
from notebooks to holograms, from borrowed systems to our own
contextual frameworks,
from being spoken for to speaking with.

We grieved too
For the parts of us that we lost.
Yet even in grief, we found strength because
every tide returns.

Before they left, the eldest placed her hand
on mine. “The future is not something that
happens to us,” she said, “It’s something we
remembered into being.”

*“The future is not
something that
happens to us,” she
said, “It’s something
we remembered
into being.”*

Tomorrow, in another andi-andi, we will meet again, not to wonder
who we’ll become, but to celebrate who we already are.

3 Zai: Grandma (Elderly woman)



Oceans future

By Monique Liatana Pitasua

Solomon Islands

Nets cast on deep seas
Islands live by ocean's gift,
Drones watch tides and schools.

The flight of three voices

By Chrislyn Julai, Kayel Oué, Vreny Song

New Caledonia / Papua New Guinea

Through this poem, we sought to give voice to our islands united by the same sea, this «Sea of Islands» that does not divide but connects us. Each word is a wave; each stanza, a shared breath between New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea carried by friendship, curiosity, and pride in belonging to the Pacific.

Under the moon of the great ocean, a flying fox awakens. Its wings spread out across the night like a living cloak, laden with the scents of trees, ripe fruit, and salty sea spray.

It leaves the treetops of the banyan trees, carrying with it the memories of the ancients.
She flies without borders, without a map or passport, guided only by the stars and the murmur of the waves.

First, she flies over Aotearoa,
where the Kiwi, guardian of the soil, watches over the silence of the roots. She hears the discreet beating of the earth,
the ancient breath of the mountains that still breathe Maori songs.

In the lands of Aotearoa, a welcome like no other,
The *waita*, sweet melodies that touch the hearts of each traveller,
A *haka* that vibrates, a dance filled with pride and might,
Dancers marked by their culture, tattoos rich in meaning and light.
Not just heritage, but a pride, a tale, a powerful force,
Sacred places, rhythms to cherish, rooted deep in our course.
Natural resources affected by a swift evolution,
Crafted skills passed down, yet climate brings destruction.

The youth today, sometimes distant from ancient ways,
Yet they wield new technologies, in countless modern displays.
Tech that eases exchanges, yet dims the treasured ties,
Rituals fading softly, as the economy steadily flies.

Opting for ease, returning to earth seems a daunting quest, the kai, our nourishment, bought instead of grown with zest.
Kaimoana, a rare bounty now, once abundant and free,
Matariki, a festive time, honoring our ancestors with glee.



A marae, a wharehenui, a sacred space for great events, A story, a culture,
legends carved in time's immense. A way of life, an identity, an anthem
to beauty we sing, hospitality, kindness, no matter what life may bring.

The world's evolution may pose a challenge to tradition,
Yet from this culture, we forgot a strength, a shared vision.
An unseen battle, yet one we can foresee,
A future to build, a legacy to decree.

The flying fox drifts through morning haze,
where the kagu rises, its clear cry echoing off the traditional stone.
Beneath its wings, the wind carries the memory of fire and salt,
and the promise of a people standing tall between the mountains and
the sea.

There, the kagu calls calm and clear,
Grey like mist, it walks, not flies,
its gaze reflects the changing skies.
"Tell me, Kagu,"
"How do You live in this new day?"

"I live through soil," the kagu replies,
"My heart beats with ancestral flame,
though time and weather shift the frame."

"Now screens glow bright where stories rang.
Youth scroll fast through shining streams, forgetting land that built
their dreams.
But still, our *coutume* lights the way, our voices rise though skies decay.
We blend the old with what is new,
our spirit strong, our hearts still true."

The kagu lifts its head with grace, hope reflected on its face.
"Guard the land, let wisdom stay
for earth and time must find their way."

The flying fox departs once more,
Finally, carried by the east wind,
it reaches the mountains of Nakanai,
where the Regina, the bird of paradise,
makes the morning light dance on its orange feathers.
Nakanai Mountains, East New Britain, Papua New Guinea
Coordinates: -5.18701 / 151.834408

The mist rises high above, in the golden halo of the rising sun,
thousands of wings fluttering, adorned with bright, shimmering colours.

The morning star caresses the awakening of Raggiana,
the bird of paradise, emblem of this country.
Singing for the first time,
facing the warm, unseasonal east wind.
Could it be the waters of the Bismarck Sea rising,
engulfing the shores of Madang,
and carrying salt to the heart of the great thousand-year-old trees?
Raggiana sings a second time,
at the call of the Wantok,
inhabitants of these lands, guardians of words and dreams.
They carry the memory of Pishmary,
the moon veiled by the pride and darkness of men.

In the forest, a silhouette stands tall,
the *tambuan*, a feathered and sacred mask,
dancing between the roots and the wind.

Then the flying fox, messenger of heaven and earth,
gathers the three voices:
that of the kiwi, that of the kagu, that of the Raggiana.
It keeps them in its warm belly,
like three seeds from the same fruit,
and flies off toward the horizon.
The night has calmed down.
The flying fox returns, its wings heavy with songs.
It lands on the branch of an old banyan tree,
at the edge of a beach that the waves brush like living skin.
The flying fox listens to the sea. She hears that it is not a barrier,
but a thread of water woven between peoples. Each wave bears a name,
each current a memory.

In the distance, the constellations are reflected on the dark surface,
like celestial canoes still searching for their way.
The flying fox closes its eyes:
it understands that our islands are not scattered – they breathe
together.

In its belly, three voices continue to echo:
the buried breath of the kiwi,
the standing cry of the kagu,
the sacred hum of the Regina bird of paradise.



Breaking waves

By Louisah Enos

Papua New Guinea

We rise from ashes
We come from seashells
The islands and the sea is where I'd rather be
Instead of being stuck in the city
Always working with no rest is such a pity

Return to your homeland
Whispers the island
The sea ripples and you feel it in the wind
To the land and sea, always be kind
Protect our marine environment
And preserve the forest

Our sea is the source of protein
For families now and generations yet to be seen.
The trees for homes and gardens for food: resources too good to lose
Our beaches and terrain are lovely for tourism so please, stop pollution
For the ocean and forests everyday breathe life into the land.

A timeless leader

By Louisah Enos

Papua New Guinea

Across the ocean stood a woman
White hair, tattooed arms, wrinkled skin
Always smiling under her home with a roof made of tin
Whenever the sky darkened and the seas turned rough
Villagers ran to her because they knew that she was tough.

She spoke with authority and the men listened
Her words were not questioned
The women and children planted food following the seasons
Men went out fishing when it was plentiful

They thanked the lady when it was harvest time
And the men shared their fish with neighbouring tribes
Today, overfishing and dynamite fishing destroy our coral reefs
Home to the marine life is what we must protect to supply our needs
The trees are cleared for plantations to generate money
Our actions now and not looking to the future seem tiny
We must hold on to our traditional way of life
Otherwise, future generations will suffer the fall of islands like the pain
of a knife.

Sea of islands – past, present and future

By **Louisah Enos**

Papua New Guinea

A tendril of smoke exits the doorway of a small hut
Fire keeps the old man warm while he chews betel nut
The kettle boils for tea and all of a sudden starts to shake
Sweet potato, taro and Chinese taro are yet to bake
“Everyone, wake up! There’s an earthquake!”
The old man screams as though he’s seen a snake

Head to the highest point, he says
Only take what is needed up on the mountain and stay
Even the birds and animals fly and move far away from the sea
Nature’s communication is what we cannot see
Only their actions tell us that something is coming
A tsunami and cyclone hit the island without warning

Destruction of environmental habitats affects animals
Natural disasters come without warning and strike our islands
Today, we can use artificial intelligence to help predict the weather
patterns and be well prepared
Technology must be used to reflect our Melanesian, Polynesian and
Micronesian decisions
In this way, our cultural values are seen as an important foundation to
govern our lands
As people work towards better education, environment, health and
industries for the future of our sea of islands



Futures of our sea of islands

By Morien Monika Prasad

Fiji

Prologue: Calling the horizon

From the first canoe that split the waves
to the digital stars of tomorrow,
our sea of islands breathes futures –
woven from memory,
sustained by wisdom, and lifted by dreams.
This is not only where we come from,
but where we are going:
together,
as one ocean,
as one canoe.

1. Genealogies of the tide

The ocean carries names, etched in currents, whispered by reefs,
sung by voyagers
who followed the stars home.
We inherit this map – canoes woven from memory, paddles carved with
prayers, navigating tomorrow.

Our genealogies
are not chains that bind us, but roots that float, teaching us to bend,
to drift,
to rise again with every tide.
Na wasawasa e vosa
(The ocean speaks) –
its language is our inheritance.

2. Digital canoes

What if the *vaka* sails again – not only of wood,
but of fiber and code?

Satellites as stars, AI as wayfinder,
connecting island to island with unseen threads.

Yet the rhythm remains: knowledge passed in circles, elders teaching youth,
youth dreaming futures, the canoe still guided
by values older than time.

Na veitokani e sega ni yali (Friendship is never lost) – even across oceans
of glass and light.

Technology becomes a paddle – useful only
when held with wisdom.

3. *The sea we dream*

Tomorrow, the Pacific rises – not in fear,
but in song.
Coral gardens reborn, fisheries thriving,
languages blooming on digital winds.
Communities linked like woven mats,
each strand vital, each colour shining.
We are not small islands in a scattered sea.

Keitou dua ga na wasawasa

(We are one ocean),

dua ga na waqa

(one canoe),

sailing boldly

into the horizon of futures we create together.

Epilogue: One voice of the Pacific

The sea is our story, the canoe our future, the stars our guide.

From tide to tide, generation to generation, we carry not only survival, but
vision.

For we are more than islands apart –
we are a constellation, a rising horizon,
an ocean of hope.



The tides of tomorrow

By Belyndar Maonia Rikimani

Solomon Islands

In our sea of islands, futures bloom,
Not in distant stars, but in ocean's womb.
Waters cradle stories told by ancestors' hands,
Genealogies like coral, built on sacred strands.

We are leaders of vast ocean states,
Way-finders guided by ancient fates.
Navigators of sea and land combined,
Ancestral wisdom mapped in mind.

A thriving future hums with island song,
Where tongues and tales weave futures strong.
Roots deep in soil and spirit wide,
Paths of wisdom in ocean's tide.

But then AI whispers, tools in human grasp,
Not to replace but to nurture, clasp.
Technology as canoe, paddled wise,
Guided by stars, under ancestral skies.

Pacific values, our *falafala*
Centre our futures everywhere.
To guard the sea, the sky, the land,
And hold each other's hands.

From island councils, futures arise,
Lessons lived, and shared, wise.
Together sailing, futures clear,
The sea of islands holds us near.

Genealogy of waves

By Belyndar Maonia Rikimani

Solomon Islands

Our futures flow like lineage
A genealogy of waves, bound by heritage,
Each crest a memory, each trough a dream,
Our ancestors whisper in ocean's gleam.

As leaders of vast ocean lands,
We navigate with steady hands.
Way-finders reading stars and swell,
Time-tested wisdom guides us well.

Foresight sown in stories passed,
In song lines vast as Pacific vast.
Mapping horizons with wisdom old,
Navigating futures our elders told.

AI emerges – a double-edged reef,
Power to harm, or heal, or grief.
But when shaped by Pacific heart,
It becomes a compass, a future's art.

We hold values like fire's glow,
Respect, love, the spirit's flow.
In future-making, hands united,
By ancestral codes, futures ignited.

Regional paths teach us to blend,
Tradition and future, friend with friend.
Our sea of islands, future's embrace,
Thriving with courage, dignity, and grace.



The island light

By Belyndar Maonia Rikimani

Solomon Islands

What does future light, when islands rise?
Not steel alone, but starry skies,
A future bright in community's face,
Where knowledge and tech find their place.

We are the leaders of ocean's great spread,
Way-finders with ancestral threads.
Navigators tuned to wind and wave,
Charting paths our forebears gave.

Stars our compass, currents our guide,
In ocean's vastness, we confidently ride.
With hands that read the swell and keel,
Holding wisdom time cannot steal.

AI aids with heart and mind,
Tools reflecting what we find,
Deep roots of culture, ocean's lore,
Pacific wisdom at our core.

Our future held in sacred hands,
By ways of old, in new lands.
Values close – respect, family, sea
A thriving future's guarantee.

From carved canoes to digital streams,
We weave together age-old dreams.
Futures made when voices blend,
From lagoon to mountain's end.

Lessons learned, futures spun
Our sea of islands, shining sun.

A tri-poem futurist vision

By Richard Kurak Douglas

Papua New Guinea

1. The tide's new navigator

The sea is not a fence but a doorway, my kin,
Yet the salt-salt-thief comes to claim what is within.
From Sepik Delta's edge to Tuvalu's thin thread,
The rising water whispers, "Soon, you'll be unfed."
We saw the *laulau* tide – not moon's pull, but fire,
Melting mountains distant, fuelling its desire.
Our coconut-rafter homes, our sacred *haus tambaran* grounds,
Washed to a memory, a sorrowful sound.
How can a coral nation hold the global heat?
To make the wave retreat.
We turn to Blue Carbon, the mangrove's deep root,
A forest in the water bearing ocean-fruit.
The sea's deep currents, an engine we must tame,
To power all our islands with an ancestral flame.
No more the smoky chimney from a foreign shore,
But solar on the stilt-house, power for the poor.
The elders built canoes to ride the storm's crest,
Now our *bilum* of knowledge must put science to the test.
We are not drowning, we are fighting, the song must resound,
A Clean, Healthy, Productive, Predicted, Safe,
Accessible, and Inspiring ground.
From ancestral sea-walls, a blueprint we retrieve,
To build a future solid that the next kin will believe.



2. The reef's plea and promise

The *tabu* sign is fading, our reef's colour is grey,
Where the *masalai* lived, the ghost fish swim today.
Dynamite and nets dragged across the living floor,
Leaving barren sand where life had bloomed before.
In Manus, or Fiji's coast, the plastic tide ascends,
A foreign, hungry ghost that the current sends.
How to heal the ocean-mother, bruised and torn?
A healthy future, newly born.
We claim the *Ocean Parks*, a *Lakalai* sacred space,
Where fish can spawn again, restoring grace.
Our grandmothers' knowledge, of seasons and of moons,
Is richer than the data in a thousand bright balloons.
A *wan-solwara* fence, of science, myth, and law,
To draw the line against the poison that we saw.
From the *Mekeo* village, a pledge to the deep blue,
To monitor the seabirds and the turtle, strong and true.
A Clean, Healthy, Productive, Predicted,
Safe, Accessible, and Inspiring domain,
Where *tek*¹ meets *tumbuna*² to break the chain.
A census of the clam, a re-planting of the weed,
The living coral garden, fulfilling every need.

1 *Tek*: modern technology

2 *Tumbuna*: ancestral knowledge

3. The digital canoes

They call us small dots, on a map drawn in the west,
Forgetting we are navigators, put to the ultimate test.
The great *vaka* of ancestors, steered by the star's arc,
Now shadowed by an image, a future in the dark.
We trade the *taro* patch for screens of flashing light,
Losing the ocean-song in the electric night.
How to bridge the ancient heart and the AI's new brain?
To steer our digital canoe again.
Our children learn code now, but forget the tide's name,
We must weave our values in this high-tech game.
The Digital Twin of the reef, a classroom on the screen,
Showing all the world what a healthy world has been.
Our Pacific Values must centre the machine,
AI serving *Wantok* – not a powerful, cold queen.

To re-spark the reverence, the Inspiring Ocean's call,
That Ocean is not *resource*, but the *Source of All*.
A Clean, Healthy, Productive, Predicted, Safe,
Accessible, and Inspiring sense
Of who we are, a shield and a defense.
Let the world hear our story, our logic, and our worth,
The sea of islands dictates the future of the earth.



Glimpses of Pacifitopia

By Catherine Payne

Guam

From the cage of colonialism,
Pacific nations break free.
Phytoremediation cleanses land
saturated with poison and pessimism.

The chains of capitalism
are buried in forgotten corners.
Safety nets cradle islanders
from the first cry to the last breath.

Using power and control,
islanders wield technological tools
like ancient slingstones,
not sacrificial altars.

Guided by ancestral wisdom
of circular time, islanders see
the past, present, and future
interwoven in an invincible Pacifitopia.

Essays - Thinking futures

“

*It is both a record and
a vow, her tattoos declare
“I carry my people with me”*

– Natalie Mwayawa

*- My great-grandmother's tattooing
art: Genealogy and knowledge
shaping Pacific foresight*



Mei he Ngaahi Aká ki he Ngaahi Fetu'ú: Ko e Felupe Siomama'opoto ki ha Pasifiki Faaitaha mo ha Liliu'uhingamālie

Fa'u 'e Dr. Laiseni Fanon Charisma Liava'a

Essay category winner — *Tonga*

Na'e fanau'i au 'i he uhouhonga'i moana 'o Tonga, 'a ē 'oku fefanafanai ai 'a e ngaahi hu'a mo e mamaha 'o e tahi, 'o fekau'aki mo e ngaahi talanoa 'o e malufakaakekevavé, fefolau'aki, mo e 'ilololotofia 'a 'etau fanga kui mei ono'ahó. 'I he'eku kei talavousi'i, na'e kamata ai 'a 'eku fononga fakatamaio'eiki ma'a hoku fonuá, ko e 'ofisa kateti akoako 'i he Va'a Tautahi 'o e Taumalu'i Fonua 'a Tongá, pea na'e tókaki ai kiate au 'a e mo'uimapule'iá, faifatongia, mo e 'ulungaanga fakaetakí. Pea mei ai, ne u folaua leva ha ngaahi ngāue 'i he pule'angá mo e fakataautahá 'i Tonga, 'a ia ne u fuofua ako ai ki he ngaahi pole 'o e fa'unga'ulungaangapule, langafakalakalaka, mo e mo'ui faka'ekonómika 'o e ngaahi 'otumotu iiki. Hili ha ngaahi taimi mei ai, ne u hoko atu 'i hoku halafolaú ki he ngāue 'a e siasí, fekumi fakaakó, pea u a'u ai ki he angafakatupupa'angá. 'I he ngaahi ngāue ko 'ení, ne u 'ilo ai tā ko e taumu'a angamaheni ma'u ai pē 'eku mo'uí, ke u hanga 'o lalanga fakafā'utaha 'a e 'ilo'angá, lotú, 'ulungaanga fakafonuá, mo e fakatupume'afo'ou, ke fatu'aki ha fala 'o e liliu'uhingamālie.

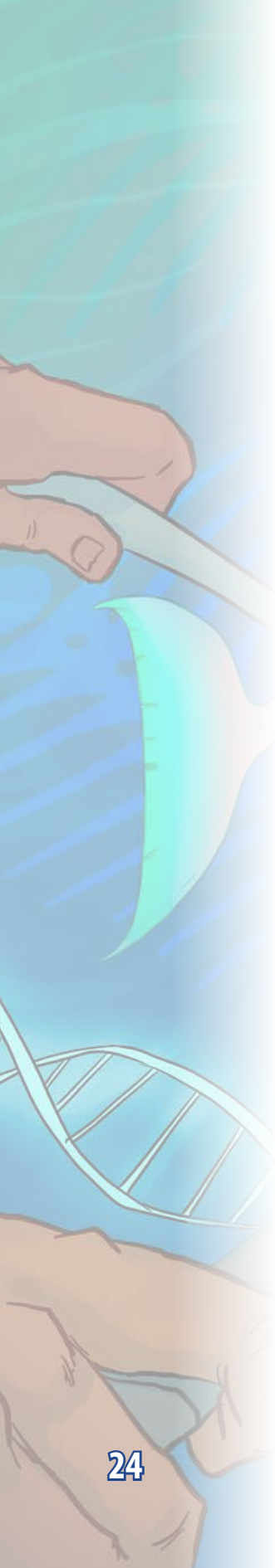
Ko e 'esei ni 'oku 'ikai ngata pē ko ha fatua'usia fakaeko, ka ko e talataumu'a foki ki he kaha'ú, 'a ia na'e fakaivia 'e he fakakaukau faka-Tonga ko e felupe, pea ko hono 'uhinga tefitó, ki hano taki pe puke fakataha ha ngaahi me'a kehekehe. Ko e me'angāue tu'ufonua 'eni ne u fakalakalaka'i lolotonga 'eku fekumi fakaako ki hoku mata'itohi Toketaá. 'Oku fakamamafa'i 'e he felupé 'a e mahu'inga 'o e aká, vā, mo e ngaahi felālāve'i 'o e mo'uí. Ko e filōsofia mo e founga 'eni, 'oku 'uhinga, ko e taimi 'oku fefeka ai 'a e ngaahi aká, 'oku tupu'afa'afa leva 'a e fu'u 'akaú. Ko e taimi 'oku faka'apa'apa'i ai 'a e vā pea 'oku mo'uilelei 'a e ngaahi fehokotakí. Lolotonga 'a 'etau 'i ha taimi 'oku hanga ai 'e he fakamāmanilahi mo e feliuliaki 'o e 'eá 'o uesia hotau ngaahi 'otumotú, 'oku fokotu'u mai 'e he felupé 'a e founga ke tau mo'uitolonga ai, pea 'oku ne toe 'omai foki mo ha liliu'uhingamālie ma'a kitautolu. Ko e makatu'unga 'eni 'oku ne fakalotolahi'i au ke u fakamisia ha Kautaha Pasifiki Fakatahataha, te tau le'o taha ai, ha pa'anga te tau taha ki ai, pea mo ha feitu'u te tau hu'ufataha ki ai. Ko 'eku misi ko 'ení 'oku vevela, fakataha mo ha feinua ta'emanonga ki ha Pasifiki 'oku tupulekina pea ne fakalahi atu kitautolu 'i he moaná, pea mo taukave'i hotau nofo'anga

‘i he vavaá. ‘Oku fai fūfūnaki ta‘emamotu pē ‘eku ngāue ‘i he liló, ‘ou fakamisia ha Pasifiki kuo fakangata ai ‘a ‘etau kei alea mei he ngaahi tafatafafonua, ka tau tu‘utu‘unia hotau nofo‘anga ‘i he lolototonga ‘o e ngaahi alea fakamāmanilahí. Mei he ngaahi aká ki he ngaahi fetu‘ú, ‘e tofa ai ‘e he Pasifiki ha halafononga mei he tapa‘ilangi ‘oku tau lolotonga ‘i aí, ki ha tapa‘ilangi fo‘ou.

Ko e taimi lahi, ‘oku fa‘a faka‘ilonga‘i ‘aki e Pasifiki ‘a e ngaahi talanoa si‘imovaivai. ‘Oku ui kitautolu ‘e he ngaahi ‘ulu‘italanoa fakavaha‘apule‘angá ko e ‘ngaahi pule‘anga fakamotusi‘i, pea nau fuatautau ‘aki kitautolu ‘a e tu‘ulaveangofua ki he tutupu ‘a e tahí, fusimo‘omo faka‘ekonómiká, pe fakafalala ‘i he pa‘angatokoni. Ko e fa‘ahinga faka‘uhinga ko ‘ení ‘oku fakapokopokosi‘i fau, pea koviangé, ‘oku ne fakatārāpuni‘i hotau fakamatara mo‘oní. Ko kitautolu ko e kau faifolau lahitaha ia ‘o māmaní, ne tau folaua e ngaahi tapa ‘o e Pasifiki kimu‘a ānoa ‘oku te‘eki ke ‘asi ‘a e ngaahi naunau fakaeonopooní. Ko kitautolu ‘a e kau tauhimalu‘i ‘o e ngaahi ‘ulungaanga fakafonua mahutafea, ngaahi me‘afakalaumālie loloto, mo e ngaahi kāinga malufakaakeakevave. ‘Oku ‘ikai ke tau ‘si‘i. Kā, ‘oku tau lahifaufaua, pea mafao atu ‘o tau kapu ‘a e vahetolu-‘e-taha ‘o e palanité. Ko kitautolu ‘a e kau tauhimalu‘i ‘o e fu‘u moana lahitaha ‘o e māmaní. Ko hotau kaha‘ú ‘e ‘ikai lava ke faka‘uhinga‘aki ‘a e si‘imovaivai, kā ke ‘ilo‘aki ‘etau fakatupume‘afo‘ou mo e faaitahá.

‘Oku hanga ‘e he ākenga ‘o e felupé ‘o ne akonekina kitautolu, ko hono malu‘i ko ia hotau kaha‘ú, kuopau ke tau tokanga‘i ‘a e ngaahi aká. Ko e ngaahi aka ko ‘ení, ko ‘etau ngaahi lea tu‘ufonuá, ko ‘etau ‘ilo mei ono‘ahó, ko ‘etau ngaahi me‘afakamea‘á, mo ‘etau ngaahi mahu‘inga‘ime‘a fakakāinga. Ko e taimi ko ia ‘oku ‘ikai tokanga‘i lelei ai ‘a e ngaahi aká, ‘oku hōloa ‘a e mo‘uilelei, movetevete ‘a e sosaieti, pea mōlia e ‘ilo‘angá. Ka ko e taimi ‘oku faka‘apa‘apa‘i mo fakafefeka‘i ai ‘a kinautolú, pea ‘oku mo‘ui‘afa‘afa ‘a e fu‘u ‘akau ko Pasifiki. Ko ia ai, kuopau ke kamata ‘a e kaha‘ú ‘aki ha ngaahi sisitemi fakaako ‘oku mahulu atu mei hono kei fa‘ifa‘itaki ‘a e ngaahi ākenga faka-Uesité. Kuopau ke tau fakatoka ‘a e ngaahi ‘ilomoeākenga tu‘ufonuá, fakakaukau filōsofia Pasifiki, mo e founga fakamoaná, ke ‘i he mafu ‘o ‘etau polokalama fakaakó. Kuopau ke tau fakaivia ‘a e to‘utupú ‘o ‘ikai ngata pē ‘i he‘enau ‘ilo ki he STEM¹, kae kau ai mo e ‘ulungaanga

1 Ko e STEM ko e fakanounou ia ki he Saienisi (Science), Tekinolosia (Technology), ‘Enisinia (Engineering), mo e Fika (Mathematics). Ko e kupu‘ilea STEM ‘oku ngāue‘aki ki hono fakatahataha‘i ‘o e ngaahi mala‘e fakaako ko ‘ení ‘e 4, mo hono mahu‘inga ki he akó mo hono fakalakalaka‘i ‘o e tekinolosiá mo e fakatupume‘afo‘ou. Ko e STEM na‘e kamata mai ia ‘e ha kau mataotao he mala‘e ‘o e akó ‘i he ta‘u tahahiva hivangofulu tupu ‘i ‘Amelika, pea kuo fakalakalaka‘i mai ‘o toe fakava‘ava‘a ki he ngaahi fakakaukau kehekehe, pea kuo ngāue‘aki ‘e he ngaahi fonua lahi ‘i māmani he ‘ahó ni.



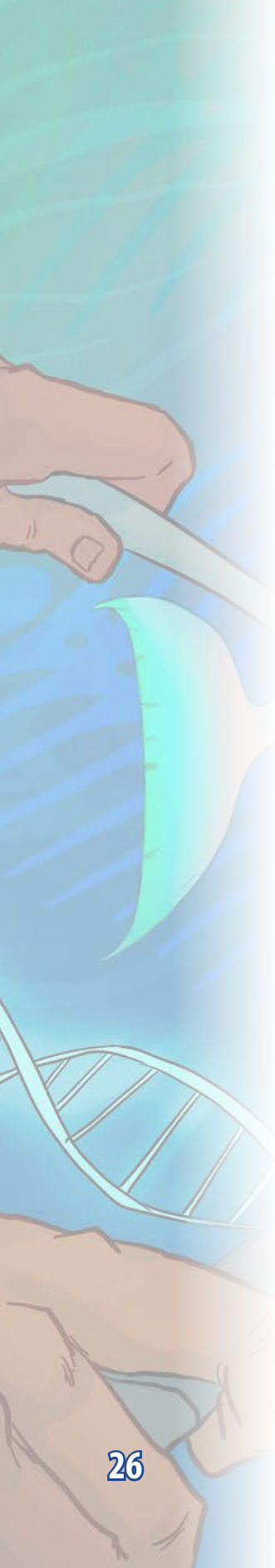
poto fakafonua foki, ke ngāue'aki 'i he ngaahi founa ke tokoni ki he kāinga mo e ātakāi. 'Oku mahu'inga tefito 'i heni 'a e founa taki fakavaha'ato'utangata, 'a ia kuopau ke paasi 'e he mātu'ā 'a e potó ki he to'utangata, kae pau ke toe to'omai 'e he to'utupú 'a honau lototo'a fakafa'ume'á.

'I he'etau fakafefeka'i 'a e ngaahi aká, kuopau ke tangakihake hotau fofongá ki he tapa'ilangi. Ko e tapa'ilangi hokó leva, ko e fakatahataha 'a e Pasifiki. Hangē ko e Kautaha 'Iulopé pe ko e Kautaha 'Alepea 'Emilatesi, te tau lava 'o mavahehake mei he ngaahi kau'āfonua fakakoloniá, ka tau fa'u 'a e Kautaha Pasifiki, 'a ia 'oku fo'u'aki 'a e ngaahi 'otumotu' pea fakama'u'aki ha feitu'u 'oku tau hu'ufataha ki ai. Ko e kautaha ko 'ení te ne fokotu'u ha pa'anga te tau taha ki ai, 'e ui ko e Pasi, ke fakapapau'i 'oku alea 'a e ngaahi pule'anga 'o e Pasifiki mei ha tu'u'anga mālohi 'i he māketi fakamāmanilahi. 'I he 'aho ní, ko 'etau ngaahi 'ekonōmika'oku movetevete, pea 'oku ne fakatekeutua atu leva kitautolu ke tau tu'ulaveangofua ki hono me'angāuekovi'aki. Ka 'i he'etau faaitahá, te tau lava ai 'o fakapatonu kitautolu ki he fiema'u 'o e fefakatau'aki, 'uuni fakataha hono tokangaekinamoleva'i e ngaahi mā'u'angaivi, pea mo fa'u ha ngaahi tu'utu'uningāue 'oku tu'ulotolotoa ai 'a e vahevahetaaú mo e matauhime'á. Fakatokanga'i ange, 'e 'ikai ke hanga 'e he Kautaha Pasifiki 'o to'o 'a 'etau faikehekehé, ka te ne katoanga'i, mo 'omai hotau ngaahi le'o kehekehé 'o fa'u'aki ha fo'i ongotahamālie mālohifau. Hange pē ko hono fiema'u 'e he tauhivā ke tau pukefakataha 'a e ngaahi faikehekehe toputapú, 'e pehē pē foki pea mo hono faka'apa'apa'i 'e he Kautaha Pasifiki 'a e 'ilo'anga 'o e 'otumotu kotoa pē, pea 'i he taimi tatau, 'oku ne fakataula kitautolu ki ha faaitaha 'oku tau fevahevahe'aki ai.

Ko e laumālie 'o e Pasifiki kuo angamaheni mai 'aki pē 'ene iviivi'ia mo tupuloá, mo hono pukepuke mai 'a e tukufakaholo 'o e ngaahi fefolau'aki 'etau fangakui mei ono'ahó ki he kaha'u 'o hotau ngaahi potutahi mo e langi. Na'e fefolau'aki 'etau fangakui 'i he ngaahi kilomita 'e lauiafe, pea na'e tatakinautolu 'e he ngaahi fetu'u, peaú, mo e havili, 'o fakasinomai ai 'enau lototo'á mo e fakatupume'áfo'ou. 'I he 'ahó ní, ko e laumālie tatau kuopau ke ne 'ave kitautolu kimu'á. 'Oku ou siomama'opoto ki ha kaha'u 'oku langa ai 'e he ngaahi fonua 'o e Pasifiki ha ngaahi kolo ma'anu he 'oseni. Ko e ngaahi kolo fakatonuki-he-'ea ko 'ení, 'oku nau fakafoki mai 'a e 'ilome'a ko e tahi ko me'amo'ui, pea 'e fakalahi ki ai 'a e langafonua, 'a ia te nau ngāue'aki ha ngaahi me'angāue ke liliu 'a e ngaahi mā'u'angaivi 'o tahi ki he ivi'uhilá, fakafa'utaha e ngaahi fa'unga matauhime'á, pea nau hoko ko e ngaahi sinongāue 'oku nau tauhifakatamaio'eiki 'a e 'ulungaanga fakafonua malufakaakeakevavé. 'E 'ikai melemo 'a e Pasifiki ia, kā 'e tu'uhake mo ngingila, 'i hono liliu'uhingamālie 'a e ngaahi faingatamaki ke

nau hoko ko ha ngaahi faingamālie. 'I he kaha'ū ko 'enī, 'e fulihi ai 'a e ta'etotonumovahetaau 'a e ngaahi visa-hu'utaha ta'etotongi ko 'enī 'oku 'oange ma'ae ngaahi fonua fakalakalakaange. Ko e ngaahi fonua hangē ko 'Amelika, Nu'usila, mo 'Aositelēlia, 'oku nau fu'u ma'upa'anga faufaua mei he 'enau ngaahi 'ekonōmika faka'imikuleisinī. 'I ha kaha'ū 'oku fakapalanisiange, te nau kole visa (mo totongi pa'anga) ka nau toki lava 'o hū ki he ngaahi fonua 'o e Pasifikī. Ko 'enau tokoni ia ki he 'etau pa'anga hūmai ki he Pasifikī, pea ke fakatonutonu 'a e ta'evahevahetaau 'i he visá, he kuo fu'u fuoloa hono fakangofua kinautolu ke nau hū visa ta'ekole-mo-ta'etotongi mai ki hotau ngaahi fonuá. Kae hili ko iá, 'oku nau fakamano'osia e Pasifikī 'i he 'etau hū ki honau ngaahi fonuá. Ko hotau 'ōsení 'a hotau 'ilo'angá, pea 'i he kaha'ū, 'e toe hoko pē ia ko e fakalahi hotau ngaahi fonuá. Ko e Pasifikī 'oku 'ikai ko ha fanga ki'i kongafonua tu'umavahevahe, kā ko e fu'u fonutahi fālahifau, he 'oku mafao atu 'o ne kapu 'a e vahetolu-'e-taha 'o e funga māmaní, pea 'oku 'i ai mo e ivifaingamālie ke tau kautaha mālohi 'o hangē ko 'Iulope mo 'Emilatesí.

'E 'ikai ke ta'ofi pē 'a e Pasifikī 'i he fakangatangata 'o e 'ōsení. Ko e kau'āfonua hokó ko e 'univeesi. Na'e faifolau 'etau fangakuí 'aki e ngaahi fetu'ú, pea ko e 'aho ní, kuopau ke tau nōfo'i mo e ngaahi fetu'ú. 'Oku ou siomama'opoto ki ha Kautaha Fakatahataha Vavā Pasifikī, 'oku ne fokotu'u ha ngaahi satelaite, langa ha ngaahi fekautaha'aki fekumi, pea mo fakafolau 'etau to'utupu ki he vavaá. Lolotonga 'a e fakaaaoa 'a e ngaahi fonua hau fakamāmanilahí 'i he vavā ki he 'enau lelei fakakautau mo faka'ekonōmiká, kuopau ke 'ekea 'e he Pasifikī 'a hono nofo'anga ko e kupufekau'aki tatau mo e ngaahi fonua hau 'i hono fakafuo 'o e kaha'ū faka'univeesi 'o e fa'ahinga 'a e tangatá. 'E fiema'u ke tau lotolahi ke 'invesi 'i he saienisí, tekinolosíá, mo e fakatupume'afó'ou, kā ke fakatefito ma'u pē 'i he 'etau ngaahi mahu'inga'ime'a faka-Pasifikī ki hotau 'ulungaanga fakafonuá, matauhime'á, mo e me'afakalaumālié. 'I hono teuteu'i ha kau saienisi Pasifikī, kau folauvavā, mo ha kau 'enisia, te tau fakalahi ai 'a e laumālie fefolau'aki, ke mahulu atu mei he 'ōsení ki he vavaá. Mei he vaká ki he lōketí, mei he fakakulupu 'o e satelaité ki he ngaahi satelaite fakatautahá, ko e talanoa 'o e Pasifikī 'oku hokohoko atu. Kuopau leva ke fao'i atu 'etau vavaló ke 'oua 'e ngata pē 'i he 'etau ngaahi fonua ma'anu he 'Ōseni Pasifikī, kae ope atu ki he vavā mo e ngaahi fetu'ú. 'A ia, kuo 'ikai ke tau kei hoko pē ko e kau folautahi, ka ko e kau kaungāfa'u 'o e konga hoko ki he mo'ui 'o e fa'ahinga 'a e tangatá. 'E 'ikai ngata pē 'a e Pasifikī 'i he 'ene fakatonu ki he faingata'a faka'atakai 'o e māmaní, ka te tau fakalahi 'etau 'así 'o mahulu atu ia 'i he fo'i māmaní, pea ke fakahā atu ki māmaní 'oku lava pē ha vahefonua si'isi'i 'o 'i ai ha'ane taumu'a fakaevavā.



‘Oku kau ‘a e vahevahetaau faka’ekonōmika ‘i ha tapa’ilangi mātu’aki mahu’inga. ‘I he ‘aho ní, ‘oku ‘ikai palanisi ‘a e fefakatau’aki. ‘Oku tau hūkoloa lahi mei he ngaahi fonua fakalalakalakaangé, ka ‘oku tau fehanga hangai mo e ngaahi fakafe’ātungia ‘i he taimi ‘oku huatu ai ‘etau ngaahi koloá. Ko e ngaahi fakamano’osia ‘eni mei he ngaahi fonua hangé ko Nu’usila mo ‘Aositelēlia, ‘oku nau fakahoko ki he ‘etau ngaahi koloa ‘o hangē ko e kavá, pe ngaahi me’afakamea’a tu’ufonuá, ‘a ia ‘oku ‘ikai ke ngata pē ‘i he’ene ta’etotonumovahetaaú, ka ‘oku ne fakaivia ‘a e kei hokohoko atu ‘a ‘etau mo’uifakafalala ‘iate kinautolú. ‘A ia, kuopau leva ki ha Kautaha Fakatahataha Pasifiki ke ne tekemālohi ha ngaahi aleapau ‘oku totonumovahetaau ki he fefakatau’aki, fakamu’omu’a ‘a hono hūtau ‘etau ngaahi koloa fakae’ilo tukufakaholó, me’afakamea’a, fakafaito’ó, mo e fakaengoué. ‘I he ‘etau alea fakakautaha fakatahatahá, ‘oku lava leva ‘a e Pasifiki ‘o matangaatu mei hono siofi mai kitautolu ko e kau tali pa’angatokoni mo e ngaahi ngāue leipa ki muli, ke tau hoko ko e ngaahi kupufekau’aki longomo’ui ‘i hono fakafuo ‘o e ngaahi fokotu’utu’ualea fakamāmanilahí. ‘E hanga leva ‘e he vahevahetaau ‘o e fefakatau’aki ‘o ne matauhi ‘a e ‘etau ngaahi mā’u’angamo’ui, mo ne malu’i ‘etau ngaahi ngāue’anga fakae’ulungaanga fakafonuá, pea toe fakatafe atu foki ‘etau ngaahi mā’u’angaivi ki he akó mo e fakatupume’afo’ou.

‘Oku toe fiema’upau foki ‘e he kaha’u ko ‘ení, ‘a e mahu’inga ‘o e loloto fakalaumālié. Ki he Pasifiki, ‘oku ‘ikai fakamāvae ‘a e me’afakalaumālie mei he ngaahi me’a fakapolitikalé mo faka’ekonōmika, ka ‘oku lalanga ‘a e me’afakalaumālié ki he ngaahi tapa kotoa pē ‘o e mo’ui. Ko hono ‘uhinga ia ‘oku taukave’i ai ‘e he ākenga ‘o e felupé, kuopau ke siofi fakataha ‘a e me’a fakaemo’uilelé, fakamaautotonú, mo e langafakalakalaká. ‘E ‘ikai lava ke mā’uolalelei ‘a e Pasifiki Fakatahatahá pe Kautaha Vavá, ‘o kapau ‘e fakangalo’i ‘a e laumālie ‘oku ne pukepuke ‘a e fonuá, ‘ōsení, mo e kakaí. Ko ‘etau siomama’opoto, kuopau ke fekaukau’aki, faka’ēfika, pea fakatoka fonua ‘i he ‘ofa ki he me’afakatupú. Ko e fa’ahinga me’afakalaumālie ‘eni te ne fakafaikehekehe’i ai ‘a e kaha’u ‘o e Pasifiki mei ha toe fa’ahinga kehe. ‘Oku ‘ikai ke tekefia kitautolu ‘e he manumanú, kā ‘e hotau tu’unga fakaetauhí, ‘o ‘ikai makatu’unga he fakaaaoá, ka ko e fakapalanisi, pea ‘ikai ko e ilifía, ka ko e ‘ofá.

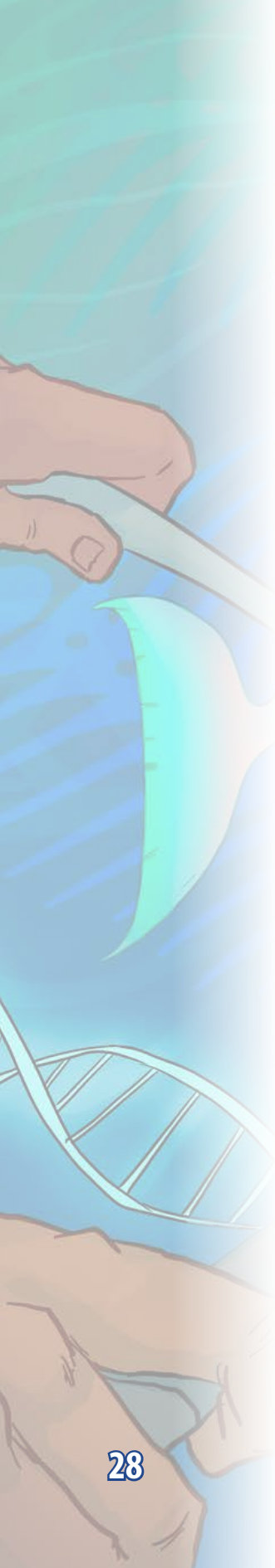
‘Oku ou tui kuo hokosia e taimi ke tau fakamisia ‘i he lototo’a. ‘Oku ou siofia ha kaha’u ‘o e Pasifiki ‘oku ‘ikai ke tali ‘e hotau to’utupú ‘a e taumu’avalea, ka ke nau siomama’opoto. Ke kei fakafehokotaki hotau kainganofomulí ki hotau ngaahi fonuatupu’angá ‘o fakafou ‘i he ngaahi fetu’utaki fakatekinolosia mo e fefakafetongi’aki ‘ulungaanga fakafonuá. Pea hoko ai ‘a e ngaahi kolo mā’anú ko ha ngaahi falefakasaienisi ‘i hono matu’uekina e ‘eá, ke polepole ai ‘a māmani. Pea ke ‘omeia ai ‘e he pa’anga Pasi ‘a e ngeia kiate kitautolu ‘i he fefakatau’aki fakamāmanilahí. Ke hoko ai foki mo e hūtau ‘a ‘etau kavá, me’afakafaito’o tukufakaholó,

mo e me'afakamea'á ke kátoanga'i, kae 'oua 'e kei fakamano'osia. Ke hoko hotau nofo'anga 'i he vavā, ke fakapapau'i ai, pea ko e Pasifikí 'oku 'ikai ko ha tafatafafonua, ka 'oku tu'u 'i he uhohonga 'o e kaha'u 'a e fa'ahinga 'o e tangatá.

Ko e talataumu'á ni 'oku 'ikai ko ha angalau pē. Molekemama'o, ko e ui 'eni ia ke tau ngaue. Pea 'oku ou 'omai pē 'a e ngaahi sippinga kuó u a'usia mo mo'ui'aki: mei he'eku tupu hake kei si'i 'i he ngaahi ngāue fakatupupa'angá mo tokoni ki he falekoloa fakamovetevete 'a hoku fāmílí, ki he toungeāue leipa totongi 'i he potungāue 'a e siasí, ki hono tokanga'imoleva'i 'a e senitā visa ma'upalemoikuna 'i Tonga, ki he'eku fekumi fakaako mo e faiako 'i 'Aotealoa Nu'usila. 'Oku ou 'omai pē 'a e mo'oni'ime'a 'oku ou tui ki ai, ko e fakafalala 'i he kei taha pē 'a e ma'u'anga pa'angá 'oku 'ikai ke toe fe'unga ia, pea kuopau leva ke hoko 'a e angafakatupupa'angá 'o fakatokafonua 'i he 'ulungaanga fakafonuá, ke tu'ulotoloto 'i he'etau malufakaakekevavé. 'Oku makatu'unga foki 'a 'eku fai 'a e ui ko 'ení, pea mei he'eku mateaki fuoloa ke u fakatupu 'ofa mo hoko ko 'ofa 'i he feitu'u kotoa pē.

'Oku mateuteu 'a e Pasifikí ia. Mei he ngaahi aká ki he ngaahi fetu'ú, kuopau ke tau tu'uhake. Ke tataki kitautolu 'e he felupé, fakaivia 'aki e faaitahá, pea fakamānava'i 'aki e fefolau'aki 'etau fangakuí, pea 'e lava ke tau liliu'uhingamālie pea mei he tu'ulaveangofuá ki he ikuná. Te tau lava 'o fakahā atu ki māmani, ko e Pasifikí 'oku 'ikai ko e kau'āfonua fakamuimuitahá ia, ka ko e fuofua tapa'ilangi ia 'o e kaha'u fakamāmanilahi fo'ou.





From roots to stars: A felupe vision for Pacific unity and transformation

By Laiseni Fanon Charisma Liava'a

Essay category winner – *Tonga*

I was born into the oceanic heartbeat of Tonga, where the tides themselves whisper stories of resilience, voyaging, and deep ancestral knowing. My journey began in service to my country as a midshipman in the Tongan Navy, where discipline, duty, and leadership were instilled in me at a young age. From there, I navigated careers in the public and private sectors in Tonga, where I learned first hand the challenges of governance, development, and survival in small island economies. Later, my path carried me into church ministry, academic research, and eventually entrepreneurship. Across these roles, I discovered that my life's purpose has always been to *lālanga* (weave) together *ilo'anga* (identity), *lotu* (spirituality), *'ulungaanga fakafonua* (culture), and innovation into a *fala* (mat) of transformation.

This essay is not simply an academic reflection but a futurist manifesto inspired by a Tongan concept *felupe*, which basically means carry or hold things together. The indigenous framework I developed during my doctoral research, *felupe* emphasises the roots, the *vā* (relational space), and the *fekaukau'aki* (interconnections) of life. It is both a philosophy and a methodology, which mean when the roots are strong, the tree thrives. When the *vā* is respected, relationships flourish. In a time when globalisation and the climate crisis threaten our islands, *felupe* offers us not only survival but transformation. It is from this foundation that I dare to imagine a Pacific Union with one voice, one currency, and one shared destiny. My dream burns with an unquenchable thirst for a Pacific that rises, expanding across the *moana* and claiming its place in the *vavā* (outer space). I shape my craft in quiet persistence, dreaming of a Pacific that no longer negotiates from the margins, but commands its place at the centre of global dialogue. From our roots to the stars, Pasifika will chart a new horizon.

"When the roots are strong, the tree thrives."

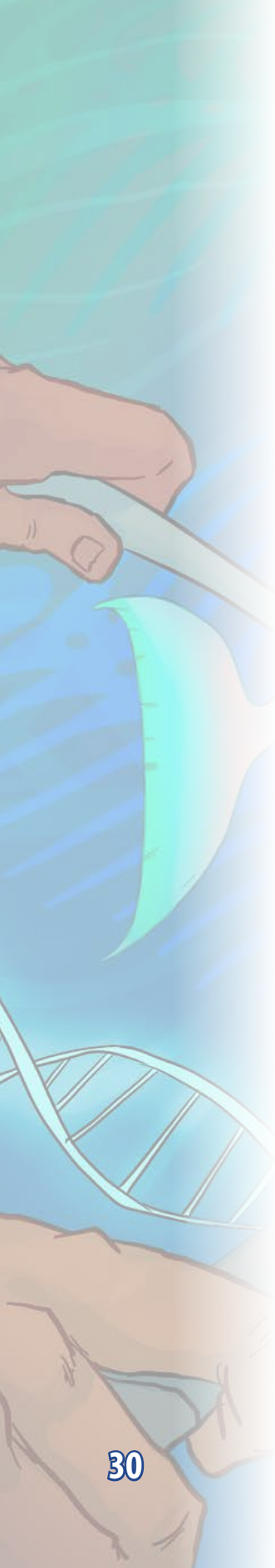
Too often, the Pacific is cast in narratives of fragility. International headlines call us 'small island states' and measure us only by vulnerability to rising seas, limited economies, or dependence on aid. This framing is limited, and worse, it silences our true story. We are the world's greatest navigators, voyagers who traversed the Pacific long

before modern instruments existed. We are custodians of rich cultures, profound spiritualities, and resilient communities. We are not ‘small.’ We are immense, stretching across one-third of the planet. We are guardians of the largest ocean on Earth. Our future cannot be defined by fragility, but by innovation and unity.

The *felupe* model teaches us that to secure the future, we must nurture the roots. These roots are our indigenous languages, our ancestral knowledge, our arts, and our communal values. When the roots are neglected, health withers, society fragments, and identity fades. But when they are honoured and strengthened, the tree of Pasifika flourishes. The future must therefore begin with education systems that go beyond replicating Western frameworks. We must embed indigenous epistemologies, Pacific philosophies, and oceanic methodologies at the heart of curricula. We must empower youth not only with STEM knowledge but with the cultural wisdom to apply it in ways that serve community and environment. Intergenerational leadership will be key, where *mātu‘a* (elders) must pass on *poto* (wisdom), and youth must bring creative courage.

As we strengthen the roots, we must also lift our eyes to the horizon. The next horizon is Pacific unity. Much like the European Union or the United Arab Emirates, we can transcend colonial borders and create a Pacific Union, which is a collective of islands bound by shared destiny. This union would establish a common currency, Pasi, ensuring Pacific nations negotiate from a position of strength in global markets. Today, our economies are fragmented, leaving us vulnerable to exploitation. With unity, we can harmonise trade, coordinate resource management, and create policies that centre equity and sustainability. The Pacific Union will not erase our diversity but celebrate it, binding our different voices into one powerful chorus. Just as the *vā* requires us to hold sacred differences together, so too will the Pacific Union respect every island’s identity while anchoring us in shared solidarity.

The spirit of Pasifika has always been dynamic and expansive, carrying the legacy of our ancestors’ voyages into the future of our seas and skies. Our ancestors voyaged thousands of kilometres guided by stars, waves, and winds, embodying courage and innovation. Today, that same spirit must carry us forward. I envision a future where Pacific nations construct floating ocean villages. These climate-adaptive communities reclaim the sea as living space, where they will harness renewable marine energy, integrate sustainable architecture, and serve as hubs of cultural resilience. Far from drowning, the Pacific will rise and shine, transforming ocean threats into opportunities. In this future, the injustice of one-way visa regimes will be reversed. Developed nations



like the United States, New Zealand, and Australia profit greatly from their immigration economies. In a rebalanced future, they will apply for visas to enter Pacific territories, contributing to our Pacific income and correcting the inequity that has long allowed them free access while Pacific peoples are restricted. Our ocean is our identity, and in the future, it will also be our expanded continent. The Pacific is not a scattered territory, but rather a vast oceanic continent, stretching across one-third of the Earth's surface, with the potential to unite as powerfully as Europe or the Emirates.

Pasifika cannot stop at the ocean's edge. The next frontier is the cosmos. Our ancestors navigated by the stars, and today, we must inhabit them. I envision a united Pacific Space Agency that launches satellites, builds research collaborations, and sends our youth into space. While global powers dominate outer space for military and economic advantage, the Pacific must claim its place as an equal partner in shaping humanity's cosmic future. This requires bold investment in science, technology, and innovation but always grounded in Pasifika values of community, sustainability, and spirituality. By preparing Pacific scientists, astronauts, and engineers, we extend the voyaging spirit beyond the ocean into the galaxy. From *vaka* to rocket, from constellations to satellites, the Pacific story continues. We must now imagine floating lands, not only in the vast Pacific Ocean but also in outer space and across the galaxy. These cosmic Pasifika settlements would symbolise our return to the stars, and this time not only as voyagers but as co-creators of humanity's next chapter. The Pacific will not merely adapt to the earth's climate crisis, but will expand our presence beyond the earth itself, showing the world that a small region can have galactic ambition.

"As we strengthen the roots, we must also lift our eyes to the horizon"

Economic equity is another critical horizon. Today, trade is unbalanced. We import heavily from developed nations but face barriers when exporting our goods. Restrictions from countries like New Zealand and Australia on products such as kava or indigenous crafts are not only unfair but perpetuate dependency. A united Pacific bloc must demand fairer terms of trade, prioritising exports of our traditional knowledge, arts, medicines, and agricultural products. Through collective negotiation, the Pacific can move beyond being seen as recipients of aid and labour schemes to become active partners shaping the global agenda. Equity in trade will not only sustain livelihoods but also safeguard cultural industries and channel resources into education and innovation.

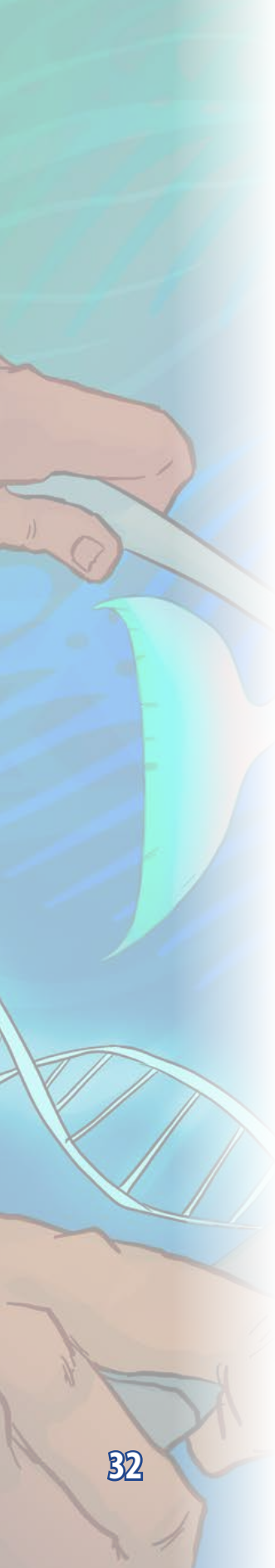
This future also requires spiritual depth. For Pasifika, spirituality is not separate from politics or economics; it is woven into all aspects of life. The *felupe* framework insists that health, justice, and development must be holistic. A Pacific Union or Space Agency cannot succeed if it forgets the spirit that binds land, ocean, and people. Our vision must always be relational, ethical, and grounded in love for creation. It is this spirituality that will distinguish Pasifika futures from others. We are not driven by greed but by guardianship, not by domination but by balance, and not by fear but by love.

I believe the time has come for bold imagination. I see a Pacific future where our youth do not inherit despair but vision. Where our diaspora remain connected to homelands through digital networks and cultural exchange. Where floating villages become laboratories of climate adaptation admired worldwide. Where the Pasi currency gives us dignity in global trade. Where our exports of kava, traditional medicine, and arts are celebrated, not restricted. Where our place in space affirms that the Pacific is not marginal but central to humanity's future.

This manifesto is not fantasy. Rather, it is a call to action. It draws from my lived experience: from childhood entrepreneurial ventures helping in my family's retail shop, to fundraising through food sales and labour hire in church ministry, to managing an award-winning visa centre in Tonga, to my academic research and teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand. It draws from my conviction that one income stream is no longer enough, and that entrepreneurship grounded in culture must be central to our resilience. It draws from my lifelong commitment to creating love and being love everywhere.

The Pacific is ready. From roots to stars, we must rise. Guided by *felupe*, fuelled by unity, and inspired by ancestral voyaging, we can transform vulnerability into victory. We can show the world that Pasifika is not the last frontier but the first horizon of a new global future.



An illustration on the left side of the page shows a hand holding a knife, with a DNA double helix structure visible below it. The background is a soft, abstract blend of blue and green colors.

Reweaving the mat: Integrating ancestral wisdom and modern science in Pacific futures

By Kerinina Leaupepetele

Samoa

“Smallness is a state of mind,” wrote the late Epeli Hau‘ofa in *Our sea of islands*. For generations, Pacific peoples have navigated vast oceans, cultivated land in harmony with nature, and preserved knowledge through stories, observation, and practice. Today, as we face challenges like climate change, food security, and technological transformation, these ancestral algorithms – the encoded wisdom of our ancestors – remain more relevant than ever. I am reminded of this each morning at dawn, walking through my experimental taro plot at the university farm in USP Samoa. The soil is damp, the leaves glisten with dew, and the quiet rhythm of the land feels like a conversation with my forefathers. Each plant is both experiment and a teacher, showing me that knowledge is not only written in books but carried in practice, observation, and relationship. Here, among rows of taro, I see the living truth of Hau‘ofa’s words: «Our islands are not small; they are vast with knowledge, expansive with wisdom and unbound with possibility.»

To thrive is not merely to survive, but to flourish in ways that honour our lands (*fanua*), waters (*vasa*), and communities (*aiga*). In a Pacific future, technology and innovation do not replace culture; they amplify it. Imagine a Samoa in 2050 where farmers use AI-driven tools to predict planting cycles while also observing the rhythms of the moon, soil, and seasonal winds – listening to the lessons of their ancestors. Taro fields become living classrooms where ecological knowledge converges with data science. Sensors, predictive modeling, and digital platforms are guided by Pacific values – respect for the land (*fā’aaloalo*), relational harmony (*va fealoa’i*), and community service (*tautua*). Across Oceania, islands are not isolated; they are nodes in a vast network of knowledge, culture, and sustainable innovation.

Our forefathers were, in many ways, the Pacific’s first data scientists. Their “algorithms” were not written in code but encoded in chants, genealogies, and careful observation of stars, tides, and soils. Navigators crossing thousands of kilometers relied on pattern recognition as precise as any modern model. Farmers tending taro understood weed cycles, soil rhythms, and seasonal patterns with the predictive logic that today’s agronomists call science. In my research, mapping weed life cycles, identifying critical periods for control, and optimizing plant spacing

are not just modern methods – they are a re-articulation of ancestral foresight. The challenge before us is not to replace one system with another, but to weave them together; to let Pacific genealogies guide the algorithms of tomorrow, ensuring that that technology grows from our values rather than erasing them.

Reweaving the mat is both metaphor and method. Just as an *'ie toga* (fine mat) is built one strand at a time, a thriving Pacific future is woven from layers of knowledge, practice, and vision. Traditional methods such as intercropping, crop rotation, and seasonal observation are threads; scientific experimentation and digital tools provide complementary strands.

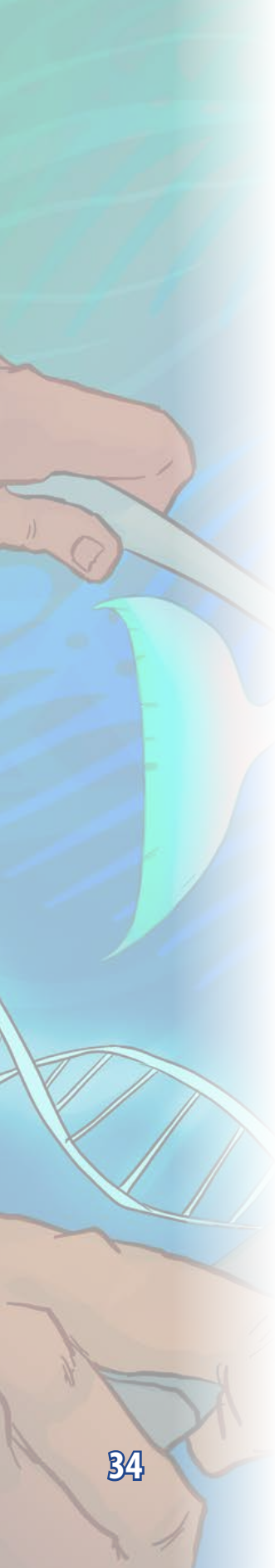
Together, they form a resilient, culturally grounded system. By centering Pacific values in these processes, innovation becomes relational, not extractive – honoring the environment and the communities that depend on it. This approach ensures that food security, climate resilience, and cultural continuity are mutually reinforcing outcomes.

"A thriving Pacific future is woven from layers of knowledge, practice, and vision."

Across the Pacific, communities are already experimenting with this blend of knowledge systems. Projects integrating climate-smart agriculture, community-led ecological monitoring, and participatory research demonstrate that the future is not imposed from outside but cultivated from within. My research contributes to this vision by providing evidence for effective weed management strategies that draw from both ancestral insight and modern science. In these practices, foresight is not theoretical; it is lived, tangible, and generational. By learning from regional examples, we can scale these approaches while retaining local specificity, ensuring that Pacific people remain the custodians of their own oceans, lands, and futures.

Conclusion: A mat for tomorrow

As the sun sets over my taro plot at the university farm, I see more than rows of plants. I see strands of a mat being rewoven – each leaf a reminder of ancestral wisdom, each data point a thread of modern science. The soil beneath my hands connects me to generations before me, while the tools I use connect me to futures yet to come. This is what it means to reweave the mat: to stand in the present, rooted in culture, reaching toward possibility. Our ancestors gave us stars to navigate the ocean; today, we inherit the responsibility to weave futures that honor their wisdom and extend their vision. The mat is not finished – it is ours to continue weaving, one strand at a time. The ocean remains, as Hau'ofa reminds us, vast, generous, and unbound. So, too, is the Pacific future we are called to weave: we are the Pacific; we are the ocean; and together, we continue the work of thriving in a world that sees us not as small, but as expansive, interconnected, and endlessly resilient.



My great-grandmother's tattooing art: Genealogy and knowledge shaping Pacific foresight in diplomacy and sustainability

By Natalie Mwayawa

Papua New Guinea

To others genealogy is a record of a person's ancestry and lineage, who you come from and who you are related to. To us, genealogy is a story of connection between people, time and place. It connects people to land, ocean, ancestors, spirit and the environment. My people were tracing their bloodline and their stories on their skin to be preserved, remembered and followed. The art of tattooing shows the permanence of relationships and belonging, an oath to the tribe to carry genealogy as a living and breathing storyboard. It carries cultural identity, history and responsibility. So how can Pacific genealogy and knowledge systems shape our foresight? This essay will explore and analyse how Pacific genealogy encompasses living, embodied knowledge, not just written or spoken records, that can shape foresight in diplomacy and sustainability.

Western genealogy focuses on lineage as data, written family trees, birth and death certificates, archives and DNA data bases. This approach tends to separate knowledge from the body and the environment, it treats genealogy as something to study or own. In the Pacific we have living archives rather than written records. In my small coastal village on the southern coast of Papua New Guinea called Mailu, the tattooing of genealogical symbols on women's skin transforms genealogy into a sacred text written in to the flesh. Each pattern is a storyboard, marking lineage, status, duty and faithfulness to the clan's values. The woman's body becomes a repository of culture, a living manuscript, ensuring that the tribe's story continues. It is both a record and a vow, her tattoos declare: "I carry my people with me".

My great-grandmother, for instance, had a fishbone of a unicorn fish tattooed on her spine. Her tattoo symbolized the "*orebe u'ura*" or "prayer for abundance" and an oath to carry her family and tribe on her backbone as a duty of care. The fish is a source of sustenance and life in many Pacific cultures. Etched into her spine, it deeply symbolizes the flow of nourishment, from sea to people and from ancestors to descendants. Her body became a reminder that abundance comes from reciprocity and care. The spine is the body's backbone, the axis that holds everything upright. By placing the fishbone there, she took an

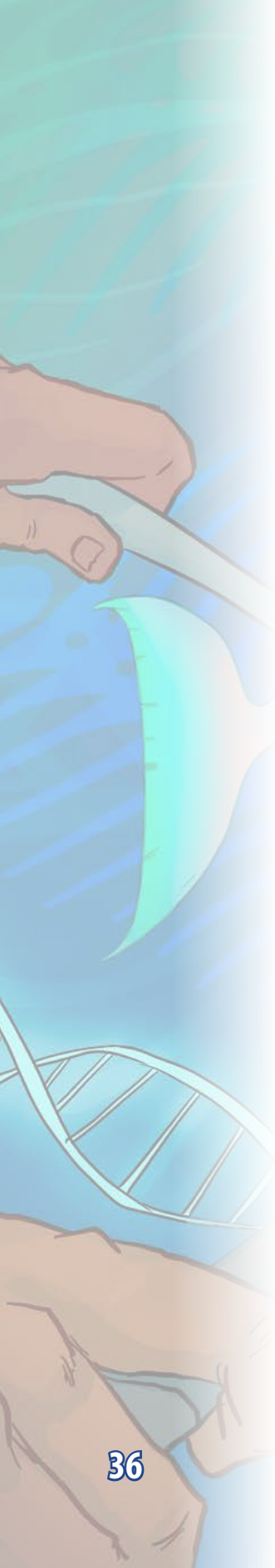
oath to carry the family and tribe; to uphold their values, bear their burdens and ensure their survival. The tattoo is a genealogical map connecting her to her lineage and the land and sea. This practice also shows the genealogy in the Pacific is relational, not possessive. It's not "my family tree" but "our line, our story, our shared breath". The tattoos don't just represent the past, they are foresight in action, ensuring that the values of the clan endure into the future.

My village was also part of a large trading system between the Massim Region, now known as Milne Bay and Oro Province, and Aroma Coast of Papua New Guinea. Our tattoos and body art are not just symbolic, they record economic cycles, social obligation and ceremonial life.

My great-grandmother's ceremonial thigh tattoos were a symbolism of trade and feast, representing annual cycles of exchange and ritual in the Mailu trading culture. The tattoos turn her body into a map of activity, encoding practical knowledge of sailing routes, trading partners and seasonal rhythms. They create an inter-generational memory that decades later her descendants would decipher. Tattoos ensure that this knowledge is anchored in the body, so the practice is less likely to be forgotten. The culmination of trade cycles in the *govi maduna* ceremony or "big feast" ties the tattoos to social obligations, marriage alliances and communal identity. It is living proof of cultural continuity, showing that the bearer honours the ancestors' practices and obligations to the next generation. In this example, genealogy, tattooing and trade are inseparable; the body carries economic, social and ceremonial memory, making it a living archive. They encode foresight into seasonal, social and ecological rhythms, ensuring continuity of community life.

"The tattoos don't just represent the past, they are foresight in action, ensuring that the values of the clan endure into the future."

On my great-grandmother's face was a living encyclopedia of culture, spirituality and survival. Her forehead marks connection to cosmic forces, the sun as essential life-giving energy, fertility, guidance and abundance. Her tattoos reflect the connection to cosmic order and respect for natural cycles. Her cheeks show patterns of the frigate bird, symbolizing navigation, trade winds and seasonal change critical for seafaring and trading voyages. Near her eyes are witchcraft motifs to mark ancestral protection, power and mastery of spiritual knowledge. Near her lips are fishing and gardening symbols, encoding practical ecological knowledge and connection to the land and sea. Below the chin, marking feasting and social rituals, are marks showing participation in ceremonial life and act as a social ledger, showing obligations fulfilled and community ties maintained.



My great-grandmother was tattooed from head to toe. I was privileged to see her before she passed away and learn about her markings that I may one day inherit. The integrated meanings of the tattoos on her spine, thighs, and face with those on her hands, legs, chest and stomach together create a total map of the Mailu culture. The patterns on her spine carry her responsibility for her family and tribe (backbone of the people), those on her thighs carry economic cycles and ceremonial trade, and those on her face embody spiritual, ecological and ritual knowledge. Each tattoo is a story, a vow, and a tool of foresight. It ensures that the knowledge of the tribe is embodied, remembered, and transmitted, not left to chance or written records. Essentially, her body becomes a living archive, blending genealogy, spirituality, ecology, and traditional economy into a single, holistic knowledge system, which is exactly how Pacific foresight operates: through the body, the land, and the rhythms of life.

This example perfectly illustrates how ancestral knowledge can shape a bold, vibrant future for the Sea of Islands. Genealogy can be used as a compass for decision-making. My great-grandmother's tattoos show that genealogy is not just history, it is guidance for action. By remembering our ancestors' oaths, values, and ecological knowledge, Pacific communities can make decisions rooted in responsibility, ensuring that growth, development, diplomacy and innovation honour both people and the environment. Her spine, thigh and face tattoos encoded practical knowledge of trade, farming, fishing and ceremonial life. This illustrates sustainable futures are built from deep observation, adaptive practices and relational thinking: understanding the environment, rhythms of the ocean, and inter-dependence with other communities.

Tattoos in a cultural context were not just decorative; they mapped networks of trade, ceremony and cosmology. When Pacific Islanders carry forward this approach, we can innovate without losing our identity, and create solutions in climate adaptation, marine stewardship and economic development that reflect our culture and values. Just as my great-grandmother's tattoos ensured that knowledge would not be forgotten, modern Pacific societies can embed foresight into education, governance and community planning. By linking ancestral wisdom with contemporary tools, we cultivate futures that are resilient, relational and abundant. The Sea of Islands was historically navigated, traded and cultivated with vision and bravery. Drawing inspiration from the ancestors' embodied knowledge allows communities to reimagine what is possible, how

"By linking ancestral wisdom with contemporary tools, we cultivate futures that are resilient, relational and abundant."

ocean conservation means cultural preservation, while stepping boldly into global engagement.

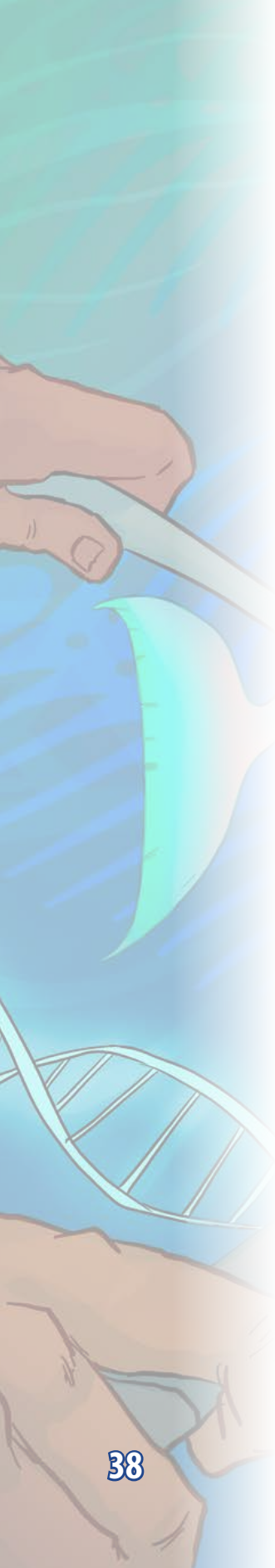
In essence, my great-grandmother's tattoos are a metaphor and blueprint of the past carried on the body, informing present action and guiding future possibility. By valuing genealogy and knowledge systems, the Sea of Islands can craft futures that are vibrant, sustainable and deeply connected to the wisdom of ancestors, yet daring enough to embrace tomorrow. The rich symbolic storytelling of tattooed knowledge or genealogical records can be shared in regional and global spaces to articulate Pacific perspectives on interconnectedness, sustainability and resilience. This narrative power can inspire innovative partnerships, cross-cultural understanding and moral authority in global forums. It also influences diplomacy through ancestral wisdom. Pacific genealogies teach that relationships are long-term, reciprocal and inter-generational. In global diplomacy, this encourages partnerships rooted in trust, mutual respect and shared responsibilities, not just long-term gain. For example, trade agreements, climate partnerships or regional security collaborations can mirror the careful, cyclical trade systems historically practiced in communities like the Mailu.

To others, genealogy may be a record of the past, a written account of who came before. To us, genealogy is a story of connection. This story was seen in my great-grandmother's tattoos, a storyboard etched on the skin, connecting us to the land, ocean, spirit, environment, trade and community. Through the wisdom of our ancestors, we learn to see the world not as separate pieces but as a living breathing system. Knowledge rooted in culture and customs teach us to act with care and to make decisions that honour the past and safeguard the future. In all complex and diverse cultures across the Sea of Islands, Pacific genealogy such as my great-grandmother's tattooing, conveys knowledge systems, not just records of what was but a map of what can be. It can guide us, inspire us and remind us that our futures are built on the cultural connections we maintain, the responsibilities we uphold and the stories we choose to carry forward.

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Imagining the future of the sea of islands

“Graun na solwara em i mama na papa bilong yumi.”
[*The land and sea are our mother and father.*]

By Lccroy James Kchono

Papua New Guinea

Ancestral memory and shifting shores

When I think about the future of the Pacific, my thoughts return to my grandmother’s village of Karkum, along the north coast of Madang Province. My grandmother often told me stories of how, fifty years ago, the shoreline was much further out to sea. She described how children would run and play on wide sandy beaches, how gardens grew close to the water’s edge, and how the sea seemed endless yet respectful of the land.

Today, when I stand where she once stood, I can see with my own eyes how the ocean has crept inland. The coastline has changed, swallowing the land little by little. Along the North Coast highway near Matugar village, the evidence is clear; the road is slowly deteriorating under the force of erosion. Each high tide bites away at the land, leaving less for future generations.

In Madang, the story of Yomba Island is a warning to us all. Once a living island, Yomba has now disappeared beneath the rising sea. Fishermen still know the spot, but they call it “Planet Rock” – a fishing hotspot where once there was an island. What was once a homeland is now only a memory beneath the waves.

These stories remind me that the Pacific is not just a sea of islands – it is a sea of connections, of ancestors, of living heritage. But if the sea continues to rise as it does now, our future will be a sea of loss. Villages, gardens, and even cultures risk being washed away.

Facing the rising tide

The scientific language of climate change speaks of “sea-level rise,” “erosion,” and “coastal flooding.” But for us, these are not distant theories – they are lived realities. Gardens are lost to saltwater intrusion, freshwater wells are contaminated, and homes are relocated inland.

Some communities in Papua New Guinea and across the region have already become climate migrants, forced to leave their ancestral lands.

Yet Pacific values of resilience and community show us a way forward. In many villages, people are planting mangroves to protect shorelines, reviving traditional fishing practices to sustain marine life, and using ancestral knowledge of weather to predict and prepare for storms. These are not just survival strategies; they are acts of cultural continuity. We must also create conservation strategies that blend traditional wisdom with new knowledge. One example is the nursing of mangroves – growing seedlings in nurseries before planting them along eroded shorelines. Mangroves are more than trees; they are guardians of the coast, slowing waves, preventing erosion, and providing shelter for fish and crabs. Communities can work together to replant mangroves, turning this act into both environmental restoration and cultural renewal.

At present, I live at Pari village, near Port Moresby, where I have witnessed with my own eyes the remarkable work at Mangroves Relax Farm. The farm is carefully laid out within the mangroves, where young trees are nursed and replanted along the shoreline. Each seedling becomes a shield, minimizing the risk of erosion and protecting the coast.

What I see at Pari is more than farming – it is resilience in action. It shows how mangroves can be both livelihood and lifeline. This model is one that can be shared across the Pacific: community-led conservation that is rooted in culture, while also building protection for the future.

As my elders remind me: *“Wanpela diwai i no inap wokim bus, tasol planti diwai i save mekim ples i strong.”*

[One tree cannot make a forest, but many together can make the land strong.]

Alongside this, we need workshops and training programmes for young people and local leaders on restoration methods – how to care for coastal vegetation, manage waste, and build with sustainable materials. Such workshops not only pass on skills but also create a sense of ownership and pride in protecting the land and sea. As my elders say, *“Yumi mas lukautim graun na solwara olsem yumi lukautim skin bilong yumi.”*

[We must care for the land and sea as if we are caring for our own skin.]

A stylized illustration on the left side of the page. It features a hand in a reddish-brown tone holding a vibrant green leaf. Below the hand, a blue DNA double helix is visible, suggesting a connection between nature and science. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

Navigating with creativity

Our future will depend on combining this wisdom with modern innovation. Solar energy, sustainable building materials, and climate-resilient agriculture can all support Pacific communities in living with dignity, even as the environment changes. But we must shape these solutions in ways that respect our cultures, rather than replacing them.

In this, we can learn from our voyaging ancestors. They set sail across unknown oceans, guided not by maps but by the stars, the waves, and the flight of birds. They imagined the unseen, trusted in their skills, and created a future on distant shores. Their courage is our inheritance.

"Today, we too must be navigators of change. The rising seas are our horizon, but imagination is our canoe."

Today, we too must be navigators of change. The rising seas are our horizon, but imagination is our canoe. We must build vessels of resilience, woven with the values of community, respect for nature, and creativity.

Art, storytelling, and cultural practices can also help us envision a future that is not defined by loss, but by adaptation and renewal. Our stories are more than entertainment – they are blueprints for survival. When we sing of the sea, dance the stories of the waves, or carve the patterns of the ocean into canoes, we remind ourselves of who we are: a people of the sea.

A future worth imagining

The Pacific is not small – it is vast, alive, and connected. To outsiders, our islands may look like specks on a map – but we know better. As Epeli Hau'ofa once said, 'We are not small islands in a faraway sea – we are a sea of islands.' Our strength lies in our relationships with one another, with the land, and with the ocean.

If we hold firmly to the wisdom of our elders, protect our mangroves and reefs, and embrace innovation that serves our values, then our future will not sink – it will sail.

"Sapos yumi holim strong long pasin bilong tumbuna, solwara bai i no bagarapim yumi."

[If we hold firmly to the ways of our ancestors, the sea will not destroy us.]

Reweaving the mat: Pacific futures of care, connection and climate wisdom

By Salsabeel Shah

Fiji

In the heart of the Pacific, where the ocean binds islands like threads in a woven mat, our futures are not drifting – they are steering. The mat, or *fala*, is more than a symbol. It is a living metaphor for our interconnectedness, our resilience, and our responsibility to repair what has frayed. As we face rising seas, shifting economies, and accelerating technologies, the question is not whether the Pacific will survive but how we will lead. This essay envisions a future where Pacific communities reweave the mat of tomorrow with ancestral wisdom, youth innovation, and a radical ethic of care.

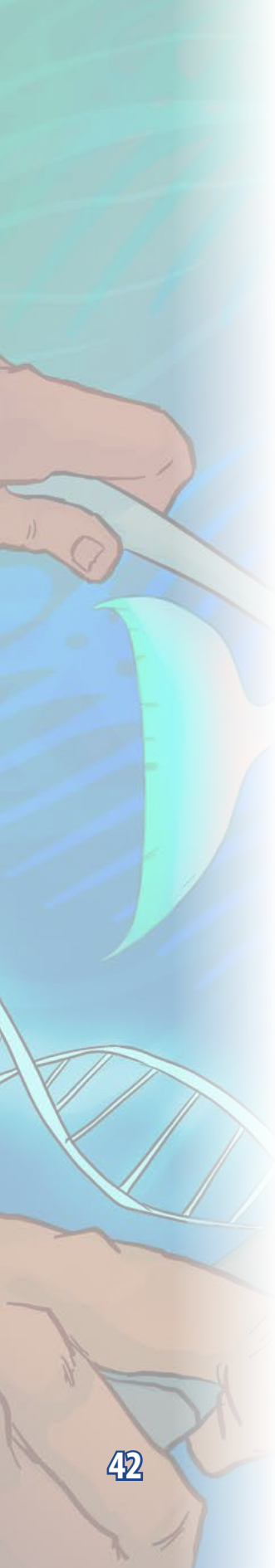
Vanua as compass: Land, ocean and identity

In many Pacific cultures, *vanua* is not just land – it is life. It encompasses people, place and spirit. This worldview offers a powerful alternative to Western models of development that often separate nature from humanity. In a future shaped by *vanua*, climate adaptation is not a technical fix – it is a relational practice. Communities restore mangroves not just for protection, but also to honour ancestors. Water is not a resource – it is kin. This relational ethic positions the Pacific as a global leader in regenerative futures, where healing the planet begins with healing our relationships.

In Fiji, the practice of *veiwekani* – relational respect – guides how we interact with land and each other. It teaches us that every action has consequence, not just for the environment but also for the spirit of the community. In a future where *veiwekani* shapes policy, development projects would begin with *talanoa*, not blueprints. Decision-making would centre on elders, youth, and custodians of land – not just engineers and economists. This is not romanticism – it is realism rooted in resilience.

Youth as navigators: Innovation rooted in identity

Across the region, Pacific youth are rising – not just as activists, but also as architects of change. From digital storytelling in Fiji to climate protests in Tuvalu, young people are reclaiming narratives and reshaping futures.

An illustration on the left side of the page shows a hand holding a green leaf over a DNA double helix. The background is a light blue gradient.

As a foundation medical student, I see this first hand. Our generation is not waiting for permission – we are designing apps that track wellness, creating flashcards that teach Pacific history, and dreaming of hospitals that blend biomedical care with traditional healing.

“Youth are not passengers – we are navigators, steering with courage and cultural pride.”

In my own journey, I have seen how technology can amplify Pacific values. When I create digital posters for health assignments, I do not just present data – I tell stories. I include Pacific symbols, local solutions, and voices that are often left out. This is the kind of innovation our region needs: not just technical skills, but cultural fluency. In the future, I imagine, youth are not passengers – we are navigators, steering with courage and cultural pride.

We are also redefining leadership. Pacific youth are forming collectives, hosting online *talanoa*, and building networks across islands. These are not just social movements – they are governance models. They show that leadership can be horizontal, inclusive, and rooted in care. In a world fractured by competition, Pacific youth offer a blueprint for collaboration.

Technologies of care: Reframing tradition as Innovation

Too often, technology is imagined as something foreign – metallic, mechanical, disconnected from culture. However, in the Pacific, our technologies are woven, sung, and shared. Herbal medicine, communal fishing, and *talanoa* are systems of knowledge that have sustained us for generations. What if AI could learn from these systems? Imagine a chatbot that speaks in *Bauan*, offering mental health support grounded in *lotu* and *vanua*. Imagine drones that deliver medicine to remote islands, guided by ancestral navigation routes.

In this future, Pacific technologies are not obsolete – they are revolutionary. They challenge the idea that innovation must erase tradition. Instead, they show that tradition can be the foundation of innovation. A canoe is not just a vessel – it is a data system, a navigation tool, a cultural archive. A mat is not just a seat – it is a governance model, where every strand matters and every voice is woven in.

We must also rethink education. Pacific futures require curricula that teach coding alongside canoe-building, climate science alongside *vakaviti* philosophy. Students should learn to write algorithms and chants, to analyze data and dreams. This is not contradiction – it is

coherence. It is the kind of education that prepares us, not just for jobs, but also for justice.

Already, we see glimpses of this future in grassroots innovation. In Vanuatu, solar-powered radios broadcast cyclone warnings in local languages. In Fiji, youth-led tech hubs are teaching digital literacy through storytelling and art. These are not just tools – they are lifelines, shaped by Pacific realities. They prove that when technology is rooted in culture, it becomes more than functional – it becomes transformational.

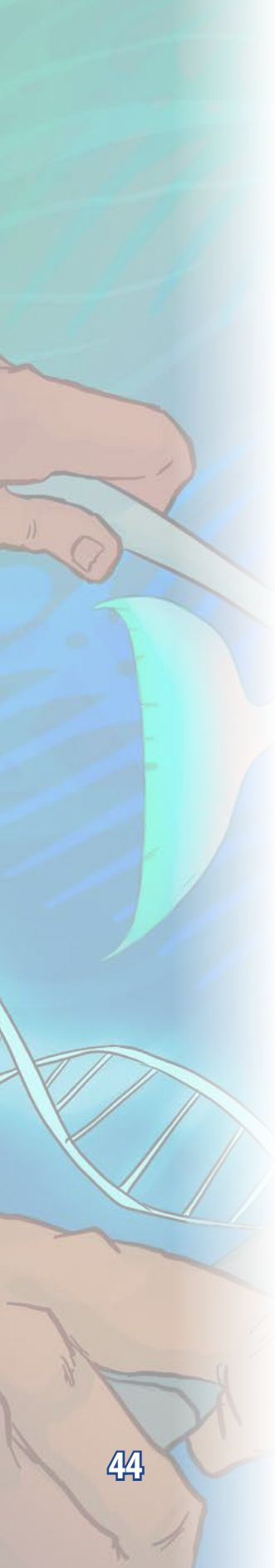
We must also consider how Pacific values can shape the ethics of emerging technologies. In global debates about AI, questions of bias, privacy, and control dominate. In the Pacific, we ask different questions: Does this tool honour our elders? Does it strengthen community? Does it respect the land? These questions reflect a deeper ethic – one that centres care, not profit. In the future, I imagine, Pacific-designed technologies will prioritize relational accountability, multilingual access, and environmental stewardship.

Imagine a regional innovation lab where elders, youth, and technologists co-design solutions; a place where digital tools are tested, not just for efficiency, but also for cultural fit; a place where the wisdom of *talanoa* guides user experience, and where *vanua* shapes data governance. This is not a fantasy – it is a blueprint for futures that are both high-tech and high-touch.

Finally, we must invest in platforms that elevate Pacific languages, stories, and symbols. Too many digital spaces erase our identity. But what if our apps, websites, and learning tools reflected our motifs, our chants, our metaphors? What if the interface of a health app included *masi* patterns or the rhythm of a navigation game followed the beat of a *meke*? These design choices are not decorative – they are declarations. They say: We belong in the future. We are not just users – we are creators.

Reclaiming the narrative: From margins to centre

For too long, the Pacific has been framed as vulnerable – small islands at the mercy of global forces. However, this narrative misses the truth; we are not marginal, we are central. Our histories of navigation, resistance, and adaptation make us experts in uncertainty. Our values – community, reciprocity, and respect – are precisely what the world needs in an age of fragmentation.



In climate discourse, Pacific voices are often tokenized – invited to speak but not to lead. This must change. Pacific people, not just studied by outsiders, must shape Pacific futures. Our stories are not just data points – they are directions. They show how to live with less, share more, and honour the land. They offer lessons in humility, hospitality, and hope.

We must also reclaim language. Pacific languages carry concepts that English cannot translate. Words like *solesolevaki* (working together) and *yalo vinaka* (kindness of spirit) are not just expressions – they are philosophies. In the future, I imagine, these words will guide policy, shape AI ethics, and inspire global movements.

Reclaiming the narrative also means challenging the way Pacific futures are portrayed in the media and research. Too often, our islands are depicted as disappearing, drowning, or dependent. This erases our agency. We are not passive – we are proactive. Communities in Tokelau are leading solar energy transitions. Villages in Fiji are relocating with dignity and planning, not panic. These stories must be amplified – not as exceptions, but as examples of Pacific leadership.

Cultural storytelling will play a vital role in this shift. Through poetry, film, and digital art, Pacific creators are reshaping how the world sees us. A single *meke* can carry centuries of wisdom. A spoken word piece can challenge colonial legacies. A digital comic can teach climate science through ancestral metaphors. These creative forms are not just entertainment – they are education, activism, and foresight.

We must also build platforms that centre Pacific voices in decision-making. Regional institutions like SPC and USP must invest in youth-led think tanks, community foresight labs, and multilingual publishing. Our future depends on our ability to speak for ourselves – in our own languages, through our own frameworks, and with our own authority. Finally, reclaiming the narrative means embracing our complexity. The Pacific is not one story – it is thousands. Urban and rural, diasporic and rooted, traditional and tech-savvy. Our diversity is our strength. In the future, I imagine, Pacific identity will not be simplified – it will be celebrated in all its layers. We will be seen not just as survivors, but also as strategists, scientists, and storytellers.

Conclusion: The mat rewoven (expanded)

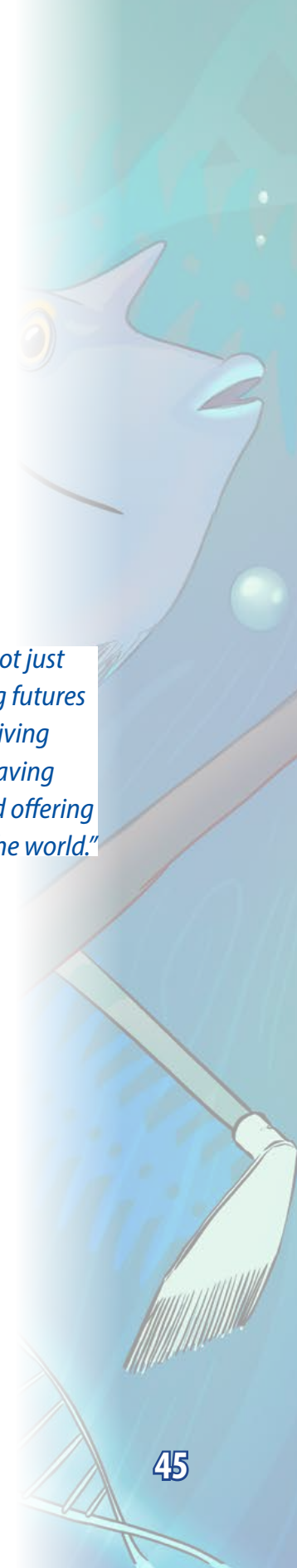
As we look ahead, the mat is being rewoven – not by one hand, but by many. Elders pass down threads of wisdom. Youth braid in strands of innovation. Artists stitch in stories. Scientists knot in data. Farmers, healers, and navigators each contribute their own fibre. Together, we create a future that is strong, flexible, and beautiful. This is not a utopia – it is a commitment. A commitment to care, to connect, and to climate wisdom.

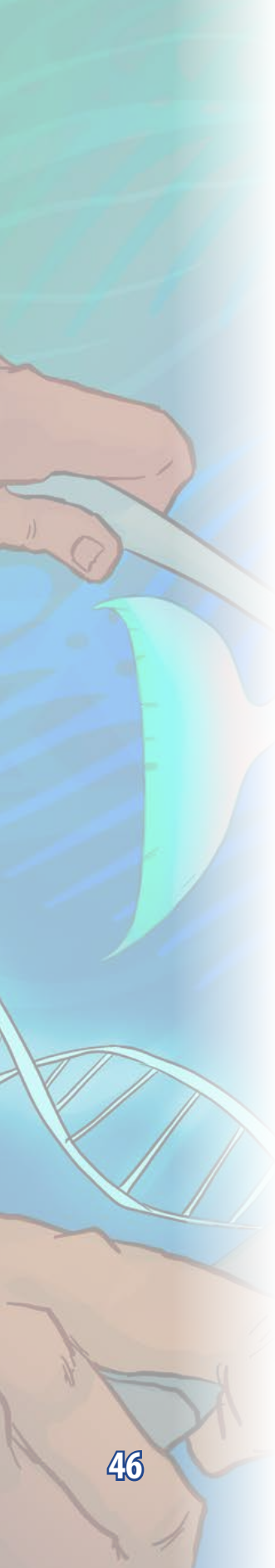
Reweaving the mat means restoring what colonialism tried to unravel. It means centering Pacific values in systems that once ignored them. It means designing futures where *vanua* is not just protected – it is respected, lived, and loved. It means building health systems that treat not just illness, but isolation. It means creating technologies that do not extract, but uplift.

The Pacific is not drifting – it is steering. In addition, I, like many others, am ready to take the helm. We are not just imagining futures – we are living them, weaving them, and offering them to the world. Our Sea of Islands is not a scattered geography – it is a united philosophy. It teaches us that distance is not division, and that smallness is not weakness. It teaches us that futures are not built alone – they are braided together.

*“We are not just
imagining futures
– we are living
them, weaving
them, and offering
them to the world.”*

Let the world look to the Pacific – not as a warning, but as a guide. Let our chants echo in climate summits. Let our languages shape digital platforms. Let our youth lead with both courage and compassion. The mat is ready. The journey begins. Moreover, with every strand, we weave, we declare: the future is Pacific.





The tides remember our names

By Mijica Rose Lus

Papua New Guinea

The first sound I remember was the sea.

I was born in Canberra, landlocked, quiet, still, yet before I could walk, my mother carried me home across the Coral Sea. The air in Port Moresby was different. Heavy, warm, alive. I would fall asleep to the rustle of palms, the rhythm of waves against the rocks, and the echo of my mother's voice telling stories from Alishu in West Yangoru. "The ocean is our first ancestor," she would say. "Every wave carries a name."

For seventeen years, I grew between palms and power cuts, between the laughter of aunties and the sudden hush that came when rain began. Port Moresby was my first school of resilience. My father, from Kumun village, taught me that strength was not noise but a rhythm like the *garamut* drum that calls people together, its deep sound a heartbeat of community. My mother, who had studied in the misty mountains of Mt Hagen, told me that knowledge was not something we owned but something we listened for in wind, in rivers, in stories passed around the fire.

They met again years later in Rabaul, that restless land where the mountains smoke and the sea gleams like glass before breaking. My father used to say the volcano reminded him that even stillness burns underneath. He taught me to watch the ocean closely, to notice when it changed colour, when it whispered warnings through tides. "The sea remembers everything," he said. "It keeps the stories we forget."

When I turned seventeen, my parents sent me back to the city of my birth, Canberra, with a suitcase full of *meri blouses*, coconut oil, and the quiet fear of forgetting where I came from. Ten years have passed since then. I've learned the sound of kookaburras, the dryness of southern summers, the polite hum of suburban silence. But no matter how far inland I go, I still feel the tide pulling somewhere inside me.

Sometimes, late at night, I dream of Mushu Island, the small stretch of coast near Wewak where my father grew up. In those dreams, I am walking the shore barefoot, and the sea is not just water but memory. I see faces in the foam, my grandparents, my uncles, the girls I played with as a child, all carried by waves that never stop returning. *Olgeta taim, solwara i no save lusim yumi*. The sea never leaves us.

Volunteering in Fiji years later was where that truth deepened. On a small island near Nadi, I joined a team of health workers, dental and nursing assistants like me visiting remote communities. But before we began, the elders led us through the *sevusevu* ceremony. We knelt before them with kava, offering respect to the land and its people. It reminded me of home, of how every community has its own rhythm of welcome,

“Each tide carries whispers from the past and possibilities for the future.”

its own way of saying, *we see you, we trust you, we work together*. In that circle, I realised that cultural protocol is not just tradition, it’s protection. It ensures that what we give is rooted in humility, not assumption.

I’ve carried that lesson into every project since, from health missions to youth initiatives through the Aurosokwo Project. We run programmes that merge storytelling with leadership, art with advocacy. When we hosted the Melanesian Film Fest for college students, I told them: “Your story is a canoe. Paddle it with truth.” Some laughed, but others understood.

Because for us, stories are how we travel across oceans, generations, and the silence of displacement.

When I speak to young people about climate and ocean action, I tell them that it must begin with relationships, with listening to elders, to the land, to the subtle shifts in weather that our grandparents could read like scripture. We cannot save the ocean if we do not remember that it saved us first. It has fed us, taught us, carried our ancestors and our dreams across centuries of current.

In recent years, I’ve begun to think of the ocean not just as water, but as an archive. It stores more than salt, it holds memory. Each tide carries whispers from the past and possibilities for the future. I often imagine the waves as messengers between worlds, between Canberra and Port Moresby, between my mother’s village of Alishu and my father’s island of Mushu, between the child I was and the woman I am still becoming.

Some days I write letters to the sea. Not with pen or paper, but through words whispered on the wind. I write to the currents that connect my homelands, to the reefs that glitter under the moon, to the young people who are rising like tides themselves, full of courage, rooted in culture. I write to the future:

Dear Ocean,

Thank you for remembering us even when we forget ourselves. Thank you for holding the stories of those who came before.

We promise to listen better.

I think of my mother's red Bougainville soil, my father's Rabaul fire, my own Canberra cold, how all these landscapes shape me. My identity, like the ocean, shifts but never disappears. I am both saltwater and inland breeze. Both Melanesian and migrant. Both rooted and restless.

When I visit the lake in Canberra, I sometimes stand at the water's edge and imagine it flowing outwards through rivers, through delta, through coral until it meets the sea near Wewak. The same sea my father fished in. The same sea that carried my ancestors. The same sea that now connects me to a thousand other islands.

One day, I want to return home and walk the beaches of Mushu again. To listen to the sea and tell it what became of me. To whisper that I've tried to honour its rhythm through work, through story, through care. Because the tides have always known who we are, even when we drift far from shore.

And maybe that's what our generation is here to do, to be translators between worlds. To braid tradition with technology, culture with climate action, memory with innovation. To ensure that the digital waves of tomorrow still echo with the drumbeats of our ancestors.

"And maybe that's what our generation is here to do, to be translators between worlds."

In the end, I believe the ocean is teaching us how to live, not just how to survive. It teaches us that everything is connected: the salt of tears, the sweat of labour, the flow of rivers, the pulse of coral reefs. It teaches us that the future will not arrive as something foreign, but as something remembered, rising, returning, reshaped.

So, I stand, once again, by the water. I close my eyes and hear the sound of the garamut carried on the wind, faint but steady.

I whisper to the waves:
Mi pikinini bilong solwara. Mi save long ples bilong mi. The tides remember our names.

And somewhere, far away, I imagine the sea whispering back,
Yes, child. We never forgot you.

Visual narratives – Seeing futures



“

*“It felt like I put my
whole mana into
one artwork”*

– (Community mural with
Gillian Dueñas)

*Student, Kamaile Academy Public
Charter School, Wai‘anae, Hawai‘i*





Community mural

By Gillian Dueñas

Visual narratives category winner – *United States of America (Hawai'i)*

This idea for this project came from a conversation with my dear friend Teatuahe, who at the time was teaching 7th and 8th grade social studies at Kamaile Academy Public Charter School in Wai'anae, Hawai'i. She initially had brought up the idea of having me be a guest speaker for her students, where I could talk about my art and possibly do some kind of art project with the students. Somewhere else in the conversation, we were talking about how some topics are difficult to teach to young people, including climate change. Teatuahe remarked how she had shown her students the documentary "The Forgotten Pacific," and how students expressed feelings of anxiety and hopelessness during conversations about climate change. This gave me the idea to work on



a climate resilience mural with the students, where we could work through these feelings more and amplify their stories and dreams for the future of climate justice in Hawai'i. I brought the idea to Teatua here and she was on board, so we embarked on our mural journey.

As a group, the students discussed what they wanted their mural design to be. They wanted one side of the canvas to show issues they want to address (trash, violence, overfishing, disrespect to *āina*) and the other side to show the future they want to see. The students also wanted the mural to go from daylight to night time, or *ao* to *pō*. They also wanted a boy blowing the *pū* as a call to action to address the issues they identified. The students talked about access to culture as a main priority for the future, so we included a hula dancer to reflect the importance of this ancestral practice. On the *ao*/day side of the mural, they asked for polluted water with bleached corals. On the *pō*/night side of the mural, they asked for a healthy ocean with vibrant corals, fishes, and turtles. They also asked for people navigating and paddling a *wā'a* since there



were a few paddlers in the class. A student suggested having budding flowers on the left side of the canvas that bloom as you move to the right side. Another student drew a really cool picture of a man spearfishing, so I made a note to include that in the design as well. The class was majority Native Hawaiian students but there were also Chuukese and Marshallese students so we included a Chuukese boy and Marshallese stickchart to reflect their communities and ancestral knowledge. I asked the students if they wanted the mural to have any words and they suggested “*imua*,” “*ho’oponopono*,” and the *’ōlelo no’eau* “*i ka wa ma mua, ka wa ma hope* (we look to the past as a guide to the future),” which ended up being what we decided on incorporating. The students shared that the project made them feel happy, hopeful, involved, and relieved. One student said that “it felt like I put my whole mana into one artwork,” and another reported, “to me it felt like a new beginning of life.”



A climate-just future

By Gillian Dueñas

United States of America (Hawai'i)

To inform this piece, I conducted interviews with Pacific Island residents of Hawai'i, who shared with me their stories of climate change impacts and their visions of a climate-just future for Hawai'i and the Pacific. These community members have ancestry to the islands of (American) Sāmoa, Aotearoa, Guåhan, Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Maui, Moloka'i, Ni'ihau, O'ahu, Ra'iātea, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Sa'ipan, (Western) Sāmoa, and Tahiti. All the community members reported that the most effective and necessary climate actions center and perpetuate Indigenous ways of knowing and being. *Aloha 'Āina* (love for the land); kinship with *kalo* (taro); the *ahupua'a* system; *wai* and *mo'o* (freshwater and female water guardians); *kupuna* and *mo'opuna* (elders/ancestors and descendants); Indigenous women and gender justice; thriving coral reefs; *pō* and *ao*; ancestral navigation; traditional fishing and farming practices; and genealogical connections between Hawai'i and islands across the Pacific were all elements that community members emphasized as vital to seeing a climate-just future into reality.



We rise with the seas

By Gillian Ducñas

United States of America (Hawa'i)

Like “a climate-just future,” this piece was informed by interviews with Pacific Island residents of Hawai’i, who shared with me their stories of climate change impacts and their visions of a climate-just future for Hawai’i and the Pacific. These community members reported that climate justice is inextricably linked to nuclear justice, demilitarization, youth justice, and gender justice. This piece asserts that, despite the trauma of colonization and nuclear testing in the Pacific, Indigenous lives persist and are interconnected.

Future ancestors

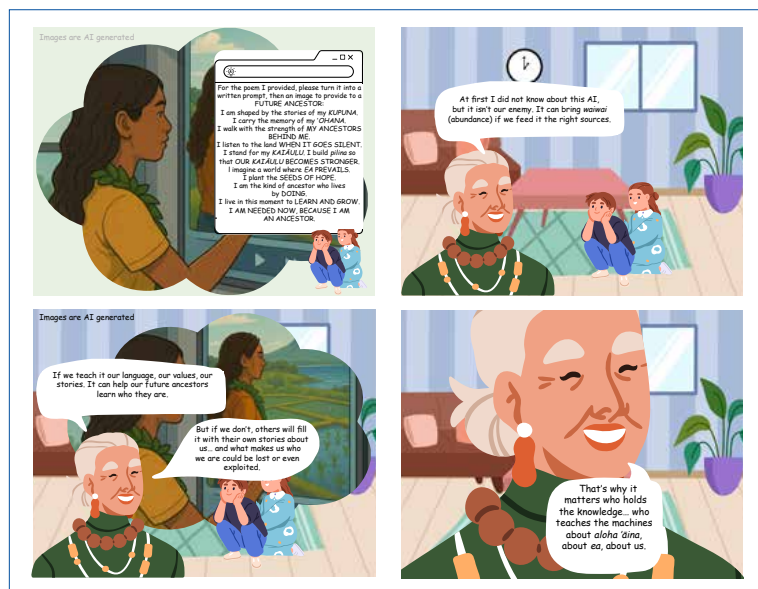
A story of connection, memory and future-making

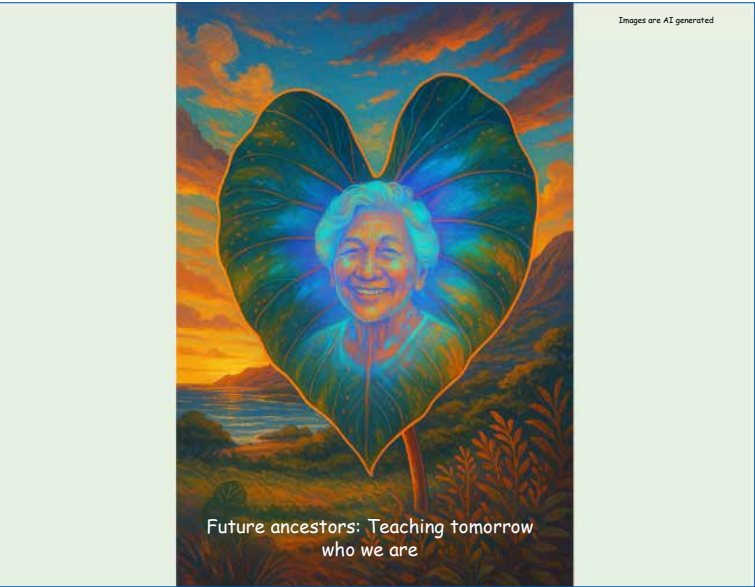
By Angelica Raza-Furtado

United States of America (Hawai'i)

This story is about a brother and sister named Leilani and Micah, who are visiting their grandparents in Hawai'i. The siblings live in Texas, but visit their grandparents on summer breaks. They feel a cultural disconnect because they live far away from most of their family, and there are not many Kanaka Maoli or Pacific Islanders around to relate to. This one particular summer, the siblings grew curious and decided to seek the *'ike* (knowledge) from their *kupuna* (grandparents) in order to reclaim their cultural identity and hopefully share the *mo'olelo* (stories) with other youth like them.







Disclaimer: Canva tools and images were provided by Canva Premium. I do not claim the artwork as my work, but only the *mo'olelo* and arrangements of the pieces. Other images are AI generated.



Suva 2150

By Sian Rolls, Antonia Bhagwan and Aaron Prasad

Fiji

“*Suva 2150*” is a visual series that blends digital photography and illustration into collective worldbuilding. Drawing on group visioning activities with youth in Fiji, each image proposes a future that breathes new life into tradition while embracing (and running with) contemporary cultural influences. The series seeks to demonstrate a reclaiming of ways of knowing and being. It posits that the future can look like us and embody our values.

“*Masi and tarmac*” and “*Thumbs up*” propose a reinvigoration of cultural dress – bringing outfits saved for weddings or dance performances to a casual outing. Both source photos were candid shots taken in central Suva city.

In addition to bringing local materials back into everyday wear, “*The ancestor in my shell-phone*” imagines a future where our past is a hologram call away, connecting new generations with knowledge before it is lost. The idea of channeling spirits of our ancestors as teachers and guides arose at one of the youth visioning sessions.

“*On the sea train*” extends beyond individual expression into a future where we may take a steady journey between islands, stretched out on a mat with our families. As we look through the windows out into the Suva harbour, our gaze could shift to the latest update from the algorithms that we create, using our knowledge systems appearing in the glass – perhaps bringing together Indigenous Knowledge about the environment and global weather data.



Masi and tarmac



Thumbs up



The ancestor in my shell phone



On the sea train

Short stories – Living futures

“

*“Without our spirit,
even the smartest
machine is blind.”*

– Alex Lew
Lanterns across the reef





The mo remembers

By Aisan U. Navales

Short story category winner — Republic of the Marshall Islands

The twin suns of the future sky cast long shadows over Majuro Port, their light reflecting off the water in streaks of amber and indigo. Isla stood at the edge of the dock, bare feet pressed against the smooth wood, feeling the pulse of the ocean beneath her – a rhythm older than time. The *va'a* before her, sleek and glowing with soft tech, seemed almost alive, as if it could hear the sea's whispers.

She gripped a small shell in her hand – a gift from Kōkā, her grandmother. *Ewor aelōñ in* – this island is part of us. The ocean called, and today, Isla would answer.

“This is it,” she whispered, stepping onto the canoe. The crowd behind her hushed, watching as she activated the Return Protocol. The AI interface hummed to life, displaying star maps and coral data – but Isla felt the pulse of the sea, stronger than the tech.

“Activate Protocol 7-2-1,” Isla ordered, her voice steady.

The screen flickered. Instead of a sterile AI voice, Kōkā's face appeared – calm, her eyes full of wisdom. “Remember, Isla. The sea is not a place, but a living relative. Trust it. Trust yourself.”

“The sea is not a place, but a living relative. Trust it. Trust yourself.”

A low hum vibrated through the hull as Isla spoke the chant passed down from her grandmother:

The sea remembers. Her breath is life.

The mo is our relative, her tides our guide.

Ewor an eo mour – The ocean carries life.

The *va'a* surged forward, its hull cutting through the water. Behind Isla, other canoes launched, but hers was the first. The first to restore what had been lost.

She remembered Camiguin – the island of her childhood. A place like Majuro, but smaller, nestled in the northern Philippine seas. The mangroves that once lined the shore had drowned beneath rising waves. The village was gone, but Kōkā's teachings lingered in her heart.

“Do you hear them, Isla?” Kōkā had asked once, her fingers brushing the surface of the water. “The *mo* speaks. It tells us when we’ve forgotten.”

Kōkā had taught her to fish with nets woven from niyog fiber, to listen to the wind, to navigate by the stars. But most of all, she had taught her reverence for the ocean.

“The *mo* is a relative, Isla,” she had said. “We must care for it as we care for ourselves.”

Now, sailing on a living ocean, Isla could feel that truth deep in her bones. The AI tracked coral health and current shifts, but it was only part of the story. She trusted the *mo* – the spirit of the ocean – more than any data.

“Invoke the memory of the *mo*,” Isla whispered, activating the link.

The world shimmered. In her mind, she was on the shore of Camiguin again. A storm was passing. The wind tugged at her hair, and beside her, Kōkā stood silently.

“Do you feel it?” Kōkā asked. “The *mo* remembers.”

The shimmer faded. Dark clouds gathered ahead. The storm came faster than the AI could predict. The ocean roared, rising in anger.

The *va’a* pitched sharply. Lights flickered. The reef regenerators spun into chaos. Isla gripped the rudder. The interface sputtered.

“Protocol 8-1-3. Stabilize!”

The AI struggled to recalibrate. The storm raged. The sea was a beast now.

Then, through the noise, Isla heard Kōkā’s voice – soft, but clear. “Sing, Isla. Sing the chant.”

Isla closed her eyes. Her breath steady, she began to sing, her voice trembling, but strong:

The sea remembers. Her breath is life.

We sail in her arms, we sail with her tides.

Guide us home. Let us return to the mo.

Jikin eo ej an karreo – The ocean is our pathway.





The storm slowed. The waves calmed. The AI's display brightened.
"Storm subsiding. Course correction complete."

Isla's fingers relaxed on the rudder. Sunlight scattered across the waves, a promise of renewal.

Ahead, an unfamiliar island emerged from the mist – its shores silent, the coral broken. This *mo* had been neglected. It was grieving.

Isla stepped ashore, holding the shell in her hand, pressing it into the stone.

"The *mo* remembers. We return, not to conquer, but to restore."

She knelt and whispered again:
The mo remembers. Her breath is life.
We are one family. We return to the sea.

The tide shifted. Fragments of coral shimmered in the water, moving toward the reef. Schools of fish flickered into view, darting through the shallows. Life returned.

Isla sat in silence, watching the sea breathe.

On the horizon, more canoes appeared. They carried the wisdom of ancestors – songs, shells, stories. They came to shape the future with reverence, not to rebuild the past.

The sea, once forgotten, was now alive.

And the Pacific was leading the way.

Kōkā's voice echoed in her heart:
"We never leave the *mo*. We only return."

Isla smiled. The future was here. It was thriving. And it belonged to the Pacific.

A letter to the future

By Arieta Fa'aulu

Samoa

Dear Child of the Sea of Islands,

Saturdays in Samoa were lessons in patience, care and foresight. It was a time when every hand, every leaf, and every stone mattered. I remember our Saturdays vividly. Before the soft but fierce *tagi o alisi*¹ heralds evening devotion and therefore, official time to finish work, we set about our preparations. We would gather everything needed for the *umu*²: firewood chopped and stacked neatly, breadfruit, banana bunch, yam or taro collected, coconuts husked, bundles of banana leaves, *iofi*³ made, *lagolago*⁴ set, *lu'au*⁵ leaves picked, kitchen cleaned and the stones arranged carefully to form the *'ogāumu*⁶. Each task was deliberate. Every step mattered.

Early Sunday morning, we would *vavalu 'ulu, talo ma popo*⁷, *fofo'e fa'i*⁸, do the *faapusa*⁹ and when everything is set, *pulou le suava'i*¹⁰. Without the careful preparation on Saturday, cooking would take much longer, and the feast might not be ready in time for church. My grandmother would watch us work and remind me, "*Fai mea ma'ea'ea lelei*. Do everything to the best of your ability." From those moments, I learned foresight: thoughtful preparation saves time, eases effort, and honours both the task and the people it serves.

I left home for graduate school as the first in my family to step onto this path, with no one before me to light the way or show me what lay ahead. My mother's words echoed in my mind: "No one can prepare you for this journey." Her warning stirred a quiet fear, a knot in my chest that grew with each step I took. Yet it was not until I was thrown into the ring that I realized something profound. My upbringing had prepared me in ways I could not yet understand, giving me the strength, the foresight and resilience to face challenges I had never imagined.

1 Cries of katydid/crickets

2 Samoan above-ground oven

3 Tong-like wood used for moving around hot molten rocks

4 Support for the oven, usually banana or tree stems

5 Young taro leaves

6 Oven

7 Scraping breadfruits, taro(s) and coconuts

8 Peeling plantains

9 Tend the fire (coconut dried leaves, shells and husks, firewood)

10 Making the *umu* (everything inside and now closed for cooking)





Graduate school was another kind of *umu*. Assignments piled high, deadlines pressed in, and sleep became a rare gift. One night, I stared at a long, dense paper and I whispered to myself, “I can’t do this.” But then I remembered my father’s words: *E leai se mea e maua ma se filemu*. Nothing worthwhile is earned in comfort. I broke the work into smaller, manageable chunks: reading one section at a time, writing a paragraph before taking a short break, asking for guidance when necessary. Step by step, page by page, the work began to take shape. By the end, I realized that careful planning and persistence – just like preparing the *umu* on Saturday – had carried me through. The effort was salty, but it would turn to sweetness.

I was raised to value everything, even the smallest things. *O le faamaoni i mea iti e tofia e pule i mea e tele* – if you can be trusted with little, you can be trusted with much. Progress in graduate school came in inches: reading one more page, writing one more paragraph, asking one more question. Each small act became a stepping stone toward something greater.

I was also taught to listen more and talk less but most importantly to listen carefully – *faalogo lelei taliga/ faalogo ma le toto’a*. Wisdom is not always loud, but it is always present if you are patient enough to hear it. In seminars, I often stayed quiet, listening as others argued. Only after hearing every perspective would I speak. More than once, a professor nodded: “Good. You have been paying attention.” Listening first gave me clarity and purpose.

Above all, I learned and lived resilience – *ia lototele*¹¹ *ma ‘aua le faalogologotiga*¹². You cannot know the sweetness of success unless you have continuously tasted the salt of your own sweat. Resilience, I learned, is not just enduring the storm, but letting it make you stronger for the next challenge. Life itself is a series of tides, each one shaping the person you become.

Child, these lessons are not just about me. They are about us, about the Pacific, and the future you are inheriting.

Our sea of islands face challenges that will shape your world. Rising seas, stronger cyclones, ocean warming and acidification threaten coral reefs. Overfishing, pollution, and changing rainfall patterns are making freshwater scarce. These pressures intersect with socio-economic and geopolitical challenges: narrow economies, land disputes, political

¹¹ Be courageous in tough situations

¹² Power to withstand anything without feeling weakened or discouraged

instability, and growing external influence. These forces demand foresight, careful preparation, and the wisdom to act for the good of our communities.

I imagine you, fifty years from now, walking along the shore, proud of keeping it clean, protecting the sand, the sea, and the freshwater that nourish your community. You step into a classroom alive with curiosity, learning science, history and business in your native tongue, not just in theory, but through practice that shapes your daily life. Big subjects are taught both formally and informally, applied to real challenges. You take joy in self-sufficiency; harvesting fresh produce you have grown, preparing nutritious meals and managing your finances so you can afford what you need while respecting resources.

Communities across islands collaborate, sharing seeds, tools and knowledge. Pacific nations thrive together, sharing resources, supporting one another, and building enduring networks of trade and collaboration. You are dedicated to sustaining the environment, restoring the reef, planting mangroves, tracking native species and keeping cultural practices alive. Caring for the land, sea and community becomes second nature, a way of life. Every action, no matter how small, contributes to a larger, lasting impact. Culture and innovation thrive side by side; traditional chants, genealogies, and wayfinding exist alongside sustainable farming, renewable energy, environmental science, and industry.

Every day, traditional knowledge and the modern way of learning live in harmony. Gardens flourish beside solar fields. Festivals celebrate dances, chants, and crafts from centuries ago, while young people invent new ways to preserve them by recording and sharing. Knowledge flows from elders to youth, village to village, island to island. These are the foresight practices of our people – learning from the past to guide the future, building self-sufficient, culturally rich and resilient communities.

Our ancestors taught us to navigate by the stars. I learned to navigate by books and careful study. The future will ask you to navigate both by honouring the wisdom of the past while facing the challenges of your own time.

“These are the foresight practices of our people – learning from the past to guide the future, building self-sufficient, culturally rich and resilient communities.”



Remember, Child, the sweetness of success is always salted by effort, sacrifice and care. Walk with your ancestors in every step, every story, and every island, and let the Seas of Islands guide you. Nurture the land, protect the waters, honour your people, and carry forward the foresight, faithfulness, intentional listening, and resilience that have carried and sustained the generations before you.

With love and hope,

Your ancestor,

Who once learned the sweetness of sweat.

Xapetaa

Par Kayel Oué

Nouvelle-Calédonie

*L*a brise de vent de terre effleure la rosée du matin,
parsemée sur le tapis d'herbe de la prairie
"Ololoï, ololoa, ololo..."

Quelques mélodies de berceuse, portées par la fraîcheur se mêlent à la discussion d'Ito, l'huître perlière et de Kavivèdaa, l'étoile du matin.

– Gè vi na we we Ito ?
(*Ou vas-tu, Ito ? demanda Kavivèdaa*)

– Go boo boo nâ Xapetaa.
(*Je descends en bas, à Xapetaa*)

– Nae ki koyo ria !
(*Pour aller jouer en bas !*)

– Wârîco mâ nâ te we iju.
(*Ce serait mieux qu'on y aille tous les deux*)

– Bwa go rheme baye nâ ki viru.
(*Non, je m'en vais avant qu'il monte*)

Pendant qu'Ito et Kavivèdaa échangeaient des paroles, Parui, l'astre lunaire, celle qui illumine les constellations, achevait son trajet nocturne comme à son accoutumée.

– Bééré Ito, bayee ki luu nâ mexa. Nâ erê Kavivèdaa.
(*Fais vite Ito, avant que le temps ne file, dit Kavivèdaa*)

– Wânapwiri, ju mè coo nâbè târâ pwa jèkutâ mwârâ.
(*Alors, on se reverra tout à l'heure pour se dire encore des histoires*)

Pwiri, l'oiseau de l'aube, chanta trois fois, annonçant le réveil de Tootu, l'astre solaire qui éclaire, sous les pas des hommes, les sentiers battus. Ito poursuivit son chemin, son panier à la main, à travers la plaine boueuse, jonchée de bouses, de sensitives et des restes de garniërite venus de la mine en amont.

Makija, le poisson-globe sauteur, l'attendait sur une racine de palétuvier



pour lui indiquer le passage parmi la mangrove. En évitant pneus rouillés, sacs plastiques et bouteilles brisées, Ito se fraya un chemin.

La brume pestilentielle des cheminées de l'usine à nickel empêchait les rayons de Tootu de dévoiler l'union de l'eau douce et de l'eau salée. Ito se fia alors au vent : celui de la terre, qui brisait celui de la mer, signe qu'il approchait de sa destination.

À l'embouchure s'étendait enfin la grande baie de Foaè, qui abrite en son sein les vestiges de la civilisation Lapita. Ito marcha là où, pour la première fois, un tesson de poterie fut mis au jour. A cet endroit même, là où les autochtones creusaient pendant que le grand Blanc malentendant les observait, criant avec un accent américain :

"Where we are? What's your doing?"

Et eux de répondre :

"*Xapetaa* ! C'est l'endroit où l'on creuse, là !"

Au zénith, les nuages se dissipèrent, révélant sur le sable immaculé, une carapace et quelques pinces, enroulées dans un filet de pêche abandonné.

Too Amwâ, le crabe de cocotier, peinait à s'en libérer. Ito, le bienveillant, l'aida avec un fragment d'herminette trouvé sous une noix de coco vide.

– Ole bwati ! Go da ? Ka nyaae ? Go vwa da ? Go hane kanee ?

(*Merci ! Qui est-tu ? D'où viens-tu ? Que fais-tu ? Où vas-tu ?*)

– Wâgo nâ Ito .Go mè géé nâ cagabè baa go mè nâ nii. Baa go pwa kîrî o bééa kewe, wege ma tepaa jojooro, târà nââ tê we i ureparârâ-kôô.

(*Moi c'est Ito, je viens de là-bas pour venir ici, et je me fais petit devant vous, toi et les esprits, pour vous présenter mon geste de bonjour*)

– Atchan, ole xopween na ketepola-go ! Ani na Foaè na Xapetaa, ani na ketepola-ngaje, tchani taa paladjé !

(*C'est bien ; merci pour ton panier ! Ici, c'est Foaè, Xapetaa , c'est notre panier, notre maison. Fais comme chez toi*)

– Wâdé, go jè une baa nâ nâpô bèèni !

(*C'est bien, car j'ai rêvé de cet endroit !*)

Ito se sentit inspiré et traça dans le sable des symboles étranges vus en rêve. Toute la journée passa, quand Kavivèdaa, l'étoile du matin, reparut. Curieuse, elle observa ces graphèmes et reconnut des bribes de langue

entendues autrefois, il y a cela plus de trois mille ans. Mais ce qui attira aussi son attention, c'est la jambe enflée d'Ito.

– Ö köwi-i ka wiri
(Qu'est-ce qu'elle a cette jambe?)

– Töpëgë ê ânûrû âbôrô
(L'ombre de l'homme l'a déchiré)

– Ti yiö xèi ké bâ köyö ?
(Coupée à force de jouer ?)

– Nyê tē âco i â-ô.
(C'est à cause de mon pied)

– Te tia xèi ké bâ vi tēi
(Déchirée à cause de toujours marcher ?)

– é èti cè pé cèpo tē köcö,
(égratigné par l'herbe cèpo-tē-köcö)

– Rö nédê i pâ Colon ?
(Dans l'étang des Colons ?)

– au tââ dö bēwâri gé..
(où arrivent les parts d'offrandes ..)

– Kaa vi rua i kù ...
(Là où monte le petit crabe des palétuviers..)

– ... nâ-wé au-u ânyê.
(... dans le chenal où l'on ravive le feu)

– ... Tawawî wêyê !
(... Gardant le chemin !)

Dans un éclat de rire si profond qu'il traversa le firmament, Parui, composa dans la Voie lactée une partition de supernovas, de nébuleuses et de constellations.

Le grand hameçon de Maui, la pirogue de Wansolwara et les Pléiades de Wanpasifika tissèrent un ensemble de symboles mystérieux.

Aux abords du rivage, les signes tracés par Ito trouvèrent leurs reflets dans l'eau. Reliés aux motifs Lapita, ils formèrent une écriture céleste, miroir du monde des vivants.



Alors, la voûte étoilée sembla interroger :

*Que reste-t-il de nos liens, quand la mer monte et que la terre s'effrite ?
Quand les langues se taisent, que les forêts brûlent, et que nos savoirs
s'effacent ?*

Ito contempla le ciel et l'eau, leurs reflets se confondaient.
Les symboles dans le sable se mirent à briller doucement, comme s'ils
cherchaient à unir ce qui était dispersé.

Il est une mer qui ne sépare pas, mais relie.
Une mer d'îles vivantes, mouvantes, conscientes.
Une mer où chaque rivage se répond, où les souffles se croisent comme
des pirogues en pleine houle.

Dans cette mer, l'Océanie, il y a les peuples, les
langues, les rêves et la mémoire du monde.
Comme l'écrivait Epeli Hau'ofa, "nous sommes la mer
qui nous unit".

Et c'est de cette mer-là, de cette unité-là, que jaillit
notre avenir.

*"Dans cette mer,
l'Océanie, il y a
les peuples, les
langues, les rêves
et la mémoire du
monde."*

Nos ancêtres Lapita ont tracé les premières cartes,
non pas avec des mots, mais avec des signes. Sur
les poteries, sur la pierre, dans les gestes et les danses, ils gravaient les
premières formes d'un langage commun, un alphabet de la mer et du
feu. Ces motifs n'étaient pas simples décorations : ils étaient pensées du
monde, reflets d'une cosmologie partagée, mémoire de la navigation et
de la relation.

Aujourd'hui, face à l'urgence du changement climatique, face à la
fragilité de nos langues et de nos cultures, nous avons le devoir de
réactiver cette graphie Lapita unifiée non pas comme un retour
nostalgique au passé, mais comme une projection vivante vers l'avenir.

Cette graphie, c'est le langage du lien :
elle tisse ensemble les voix dispersées de nos archipels,
elle relie le visible et l'invisible, le présent et l'ancestral.
Elle est à la fois pétroglyphe et parole, terre et eau, souffle et trace.
Dans ses spirales se lisent les chemins de nos migrations,
les courants de nos alliances, les blessures et les promesses de nos
humanités.

Comme l'évoquent Luc Enoka Camoui et Georges Waixen Wayewol,
notre force réside dans l'essentialité du singulier à l'universel :

chaque île, chaque culture, chaque mot est une lumière unique,
et pourtant, toutes ces lumières se rejoignent dans une même
constellation.

Dewe Gorodé, quant à elle, nous rappelle *Sous les cendres des conques*
que la parole des femmes, la mémoire des lignées, la résistance par
l'écriture et par la poésie sont les veines profondes de notre identité
océanienne.

Ainsi, la graphie Lapita unifiée n'est pas qu'un symbole :
c'est un outil de reliance, un appel à l'unité, une éthique du vivant.
Elle invite à penser l'Océanie depuis elle-même, à reconnaître que nos
langues, nos cultures et nos savoirs contiennent déjà les réponses aux
crises que nous traversons.

Car l'urgence n'est pas seulement climatique.
Elle est culturelle, linguistique, spirituelle.

Elle nous demande de réapprendre à écouter :
les arbres, les courants, les ancêtres, les jeunes, la terre, la mer.
Et d'y lire à nouveau les signes, ceux de la graphie Lapita, qui veille
encore sous nos sables et nos peaux.

Dans cette Océanie de la graphie Lapita,
les cultures ne s'opposent plus : elles dialoguent.
Les langues ne s'effacent plus : elles s'enlacent.
Les identités ne s'enferment plus : elles respirent ensemble.

Et dans ce souffle commun,
se lève une Océanie unifiée,
consciente d'elle-même,
gardienne du vivant,
prête à écrire,
dans la graphie de la mer,
les chapitres à venir de notre humanité partagée.

Une écriture tissée entre passé et futur,
où la technologie écoute la nature,
où les îles dialoguent d'un même appel
d'Hawai à Aotearoa, de Kanaky à Papua

*“nos langues, nos
cultures et nos
savoirs contiennent
déjà les réponses
aux crises que nous
traversons.”*



Tel Ito, le petit bivalve des profondeurs, gardien du souffle et des mémoires, apprenons à tisser nos savoirs anciens avec les lignes de code du monde moderne :

L'énergie tellurique des roches sous-terraines dans l'axe du chemin de construction, l'énergie marine des phytoplanctons qui génèrent toute l'oxygène à nos poumons, et l'énergie vibratoire des herbacées de nos pharmacopées qui inspire le sentier à poursuivre.

Celle d'une vision Pacifika, où les étoiles qui précèdent Kavivèdaa, guident les enfants des îles, vers un horizon commun, au sein du Lapita d'Océanie.

"We should not be defined by the smallness of our islands but in the greatness of our oceans.

We are the sea, we are the ocean. Oceania is us."

Nâbwé ! Cowâ !

(Fin !)

Xapetaa

By Kayel Oué

New Caledonia

*The offshore breeze ruffled the morning dew
dappling the carpet of grass covering the plains
“Ololoi, ololoi, ololoi...”*

*Lullaby melodies, carried in on the cool air, mingle with the discussion
between Ito the pearl oyster and Kavivèdaa the morning star.*

– Gè vi na we we Ito?

(Where are you going, Ito? asked Kavivèdaa)

– Go boo boo nâ Xapetaa.

(I’m going down there, to Xapetaa)

– Nae ki koyo ria !

(To go down there and enjoy myself!)

– Wârico mâ nâ te we iju.

(It would be better if we both went)

– Bwa go rheme baye nâ ki viru.

(No, I will be gone before it comes up)

While Ito and Kavivèdaa spoke, Parui, the lunar star, the one that illuminates the constellations, was coming to the end of its usual nocturnal trajectory.

– Bééré Ito, bayee ki luu nâ mexa. Nâ erê Kavivèdaa.

(Be quick Ito, before time runs out, said Kavivèdaa)

– Wânapwiri, ju mè coo nâbè târâ pwa jèkutâ mwârâ.

(Then we will meet again later to tell each other some more stories)

Pwiri, the dawn bird, sang three times, foreshadowing the awakening of Tootu, the solar star that, under men’s feet, lights up the beaten tracks.

Ito continued on his way, his basket in his hand, across the muddy plain, littered with dung, sensitive plants and garnierite fragments from the mine above.

Makija, the leaping globefish, was waiting for him on a mangrove root



A vertical illustration on the left side of the page. It shows a yellow, box-like structure on a sandy beach. The background is a sunset or sunrise sky with purple and orange hues. In the foreground, there's a large orange fish with blue spots, and a smaller blue fish is visible in the water. The box has a small window on its side.

to show him the path through the swamp. Avoiding rotting tyres, plastic bags and broken bottles, Ito made his way through.

The toxic fog from the nickel plant's chimneystacks prevented Tootu's light from revealing the union of fresh water and salt water. So Ito relied on the wind – the offshore wind that held the sea breeze at bay, a sign that he was approaching his destination.

The river mouth at last stretched out into the big bay of Foaè, harbouring the remains of the Lapita civilisation. Ito walked where, for the first time, a pottery shard had been uncovered. At the very spot where the natives dug, the big hard-of-hearing white man observed them, and called out in an American accent:

"Where we are? What's your doing?"

And they responded:

"*Xapetaa!* This is the place where we are digging, right here!"

When the sun rose to its highest point, the clouds melted away, revealing on the immaculate sand a shell and some claws, enveloped in an abandoned fishing net.

Too Amwâ, the coconut crab, was struggling to escape from the net. Ito, well-meaning as he was, helped it with an adze fragment found under an empty coconut shell.

– *Ole bwati ! Go da ? Ka nyaae? Go vwa da ? Go hane kanee ?*
(Thank you! Who are you? Where do you come from? What are you doing? Where are you going?)

– *Wâgo nâ Ito .Go mè géé nâ cagabè baa go mè nâ nii. Baa go pwa kîrî o bééa kewe, wege ma tepaa jojooro, târà nââ tê we i ureparârâ-kôô.*
(I am Ito, I've come from over there to come here, I humbly pay my respects to you, you and the spirits, and offer you this object as a goodwill greeting.)

– *Atchan, ole xopween na ketepola-go ! Ani na Foaè na Xapetaa, ani na ketepola-ngaje, tchani taa paladjé!*
(Good; thank you for the basket! Here, we are at Foaè, *Xapetaa*, this is our basket, our house. Please feel at home.)

– *Wâdé, go jè une baa nâ nâpô bèèni !*
(Good, because I have dreamed about this place!)

Ito felt inspired and drew some strange symbols in the sand from a dream. The whole day had passed when Kavivèdaa, the morning

star, reappeared. In her curiosity, she observed these graphemes and recognised remnants of languages spoken in the past, more than three thousand years previously. But what drew her attention was Ito's swollen leg.

– *Ö kōwi-i ka wiri*

(What's wrong with your leg?)

– *Töpëgë é ânûrû âbôrô*

(The shadow of the man tore the skin)

– *Ti yiö xèi ké bâ köyö ?*

(It was lacerated because you enjoyed yourself for too long?)

– *Nyé tē âco i â-ô.*

(It's because of my foot)

– *Tē tia xèi ké bâ vi tēi*

(Was the skin was torn because you had to walk all the time?)

– *é èti cè pé cèpo tē kōcō,*

(scratched by the cèpo-tē-kōcō grass)

– *Rō nédê i pâ Colon ?*

(In the Settlers' pond?)

– *au tââ dô bēwâri gé..*

(where parts of the offerings end up..)

– *Kaa vi rua i kû ...*

(Where the little mangrove crab climbs up..)

– *... nâ-wé au-u ânyé.*

(..in the channel where we revive the fire)

– *Tawawî wéyê !*

(..Guarding the path!)

With an outburst of laughter so powerful it crossed the firmament, Parui composed a score of supernovas, cloud formations and constellations in the Milky Way.

Maui's big hook, the ocean-going canoe of Wansolwara and the Seven Stars of Wanpasifika wove a collection of mysterious symbols.

Close to the shore, the signs drawn by Ito were reflected in the water.





Connected to the Lapita motifs, they formed a celestial script, a mirror to the world of the living.

And the star-studded canopy seemed to ask:

*What is left of our bonds, when the sea rises and the land crumbles away?
When languages cease, the forests burn and our knowledge dies out?*

Ito contemplated the sky and the water, as their twin reflections merged into one another.

The symbols in the sand began to shine softly, as if they sought to unite what was scattered.

It is a sea that does not separate but binds.

A sea of living, moving, sentient islands.

A sea where each shore answers the other, where life breaths meet like canoes in the ocean swell.

In this sea, the Pacific Ocean, there live peoples, languages, dreams and the memory of the world.

Epeli Hau'ofa wrote,

“We are the ocean that unites us.»

And it is from that ocean, that unity, that our future will flow.

*“In this sea, the
Pacific Ocean,
there live peoples,
languages, dreams
and the memory
of the world.”*

Our Lapita ancestors drew the first maps, not with words, but with signs. On pottery, on stones, in movements and dances, they engraved the first outlines of a common language, an alphabet of sea and fire.

These motifs were not merely decorative; they were thoughts of the world, reflections of a shared cosmology, the memory of exploration and relationships.

Now, faced with the climate emergency, faced with the fragile nature of our languages and cultures, we have had to reactivate this unified Lapita language

not as a nostalgic journey back into the past
but as a living projection into the future.

This script is the language of the connection;

it weaves together all the scattered voices from our islands, it binds together the visible and the invisible, the present and the ancestral.

It is at once petroglyph and discourse, land and water, life breath and vestige.

In its spirals can be read the pathways of our migrations,

the currents of our alliances, the wounds and promises of our humanity.

As Luc Enoka Camoui and Georges Waixen Wayewol say,
our strength resides in the essentiality of the singular to the universal;
each island, each culture, each word is a unique light,
and yet, all those lights gather in a single constellation.

Dewe Gorodé, in her writing, reminds us in “Under the ashes of the
conch shells”
that women’s words, the memory of the lineages,
resistance through writing and poetry,
are the deep veins of our Pacific Island identity.

Thus, unified Lapita script is not just a symbol;
It is an instrument for connections, a call for
unity, an ethic for the life space.

She invites us to imagine Oceania from within,
To recognise that our languages, our cultures
and our knowledge
Already contain the answers to the crises we are
living through.

Because the emergency is not just in the climate.
It is cultural, linguistic, spiritual.

She asks of us to learn anew how to listen to:
the trees, the currents, the ancestors, the young, the land, the sea.
And to read the signs with fresh eyes,
those of the Lapita script, that still watches over our sands and our skins.

In this Oceania of the Lapita script,
cultures are no longer in conflict; they use dialogue.
Languages no longer die out; they embrace one another.
Identities no longer look only inwards; they breathe together.
And in this common breath,

Rises a unified Oceania,
self-aware,
guardian of the living world,
ready to write,
in the script of the ocean,
the chapters of our shared humanity.

*“Our languages,
our cultures and
our knowledge
already contain
the answers to the
crises we are living
through.”*



Writing woven between past and future,
in which technology listens to nature,
where islands converse around the same call
from Hawai'i to Aotearoa, from Kanaky to Papua.

Like Ito, the little bivalve from the depths, the guardian of breath and memories, let us learn how to weave our ancient knowledge into the code lines of the modern world.

The telluric energy of the subterranean rocks along the path to progress, the marine energy of the phytoplankton which generate all the oxygen for our lungs, and the vibrant energy of the grasses in our pharmacopeia that inspire the pathway to follow.

That of a Pasifika vision, where the stars that preceded Kavivèdaa, guide the children of the islands towards a common horizon, within the Lapita of Oceania.

"We should not be defined by the smallness of our islands but in the greatness of our oceans.

We are the sea, we are the ocean. Oceania is us."

Nábwé! Cowá!

(The End!)

Lanterns across the reef

By Alex Lew

Samoa

The village of Falealupo lay cradled between the mountains and the sea, its coconut palms swaying like guardians of ancient wisdom. Talia often wandered along the shore at dawn, listening to the waves whisper secrets only her ancestors could understand. Her grandmother, Mei-Lin, had arrived in Samoa generations ago from Guangdong, a Hakka woman who carried resilience like a second skin and a quiet defiance against hardship.

“In every difficulty, there is a bridge to our future,” Mei-Lin would say in soft Hakka, “每逢艱難，便有通往未來的橋。” Talia had memorized the phrase, feeling its weight every time a storm churned the lagoon or a drought withered the taro patches.

But the world had changed since Mei-Lin first told the story. Rising tides had begun to swallow the coconut groves, and the coral reefs that once teemed with life were bleaching, ghostly and silent. Technology had arrived in bits and pieces: smartphones, drones, AI programmes – but Talia knew that data alone could not save the islands. It needed the guidance of those who understood the rhythms of the land and sea.

Talia’s father, a fisherman, spoke little of the future, except to warn her of its fragility. Her mother, who cooked meals of taro and fresh fish, reminded her daily of the strength of community. And Mei-Lin, with her wiry hands and silver hair, sang the Hakka lullabies she had brought across oceans. “夜深人靜，海浪也在歌唱,” she would hum: “In the quiet of night, even the waves sing.” Talia sang back, letting the melodies mingle with the ocean’s rhythm, her voice floating across the lagoon like a prayer.

One evening, after a cyclone had ripped through the northern reefs, Talia sat on the veranda, staring at the horizon. The wind still carried the scent of salt and fallen palms. She opened her laptop and began sketching an idea – a project she called Lanterns across the reef. Lanterns fitted with sensors would drift over the lagoon, monitoring water temperature, acidity, and coral growth. AI programmes would analyze the data, predicting changes and guiding reef restoration efforts.

But the lanterns were more than technology. Mei-Lin insisted that each one carry a blessing, a song, or a small talisman. “Without our spirit,”





she said, “even the smartest machine is blind.” Talia carved miniature figures from driftwood, inscribed Hakka proverbs on tiny scrolls, and taught her younger cousins to hum the lullabies as they launched the lanterns into the water.

The village watched with curiosity. At first, elders frowned. “You mix the old ways with machines?” one asked, squinting at the glowing orbs drifting over the reef. Talia nodded. “Yes. The sea listens to both.”

As weeks passed, the data revealed patterns the villagers had never seen. The lanterns’ sensors detected pockets of warming water before they bleached the coral, allowing the community to plant protective algae and shift fishing areas to avoid stressed reefs. Children learned coding alongside weaving pandanus mats; elders consulted both AI charts and ancestral signs to plan fishing seasons. Knowledge flowed across generations, like the tides that connected their islands.

The festival of *Fiafia o le Moana* – a celebration of the sea – arrived that year, and Talia invited neighbouring villagers to see the lanterns. Canoes glided under the starlight, lanterns drifting beside them like tiny galaxies. Mei-Lin stood at the water’s edge, her hands folded in gratitude. “看吧, 孩子, 未來就在這裡,” she whispered: “See, child? The future is here.”

In the quiet moments, Talia reflected on her heritage. She imagined her Hakka ancestors crossing oceans centuries ago, carrying nothing but hope and resilience. She thought of Samoan navigators who had read the stars, felt the currents, and steered entire villages safely across the sea. Their wisdom had survived storms, colonization, and migration. Now it flowed into her hands, guiding technology to serve life, not replace it.

By the next season, schools across the islands adopted the project. Lanterns floated in lagoons from Savai’i to Upolu, transmitting data to a central network monitored by young Pacific coders. Festivals merged Hakka lullabies with Samoan chants, and children grew up singing both, learning that their future was stitched together from many threads.

One morning, a storm stronger than any in living memory rose from the horizon. The villagers gathered on the cliffs, watching waves claw at the reef. Talia and Mei-Lin launched the lanterns with trembling hands. The AI predicted shifts in the currents; the songs and blessings infused them with courage. By nightfall, the storm had passed. Many trees were down, but the coral had survived, and the fish had returned. The

villagers wept and sang, understanding at last what their ancestors had known; resilience is not a single act but a practice woven into daily life, into song, prayer, and shared labour.

Years later, Talia returned from university in New Zealand, where she had studied environmental science and AI. She found Falealupo thriving. Children ran along the beach, casting lanterns into the lagoon; elders shared stories of storms, tides, and distant ancestors; and the reef shimmered beneath the moonlight, vibrant and alive. The AI dashboards glowed softly in the village hall, translating sensor data into colours that even those who could not read the graphs could understand.

“Lanterns across the reef, songs across the ocean... this is our future. Not as we imagined it, but as we dreamed it together.”

Mei-Lin, now nearly a century old, pointed to the horizon. “Lanterns across the reef, songs across the ocean... this is our future. Not as we imagined it, but as we dreamed it together.”

Talia watched the lanterns drift into the night, the Hakka lullabies and Samoan chants blending into the rhythm of the sea. In every wave, every pulse of light, she felt the bridge her grandmother had spoken of: a connection

across time, culture, and knowledge. In that bridge lay hope – a future that was alive, shared, and luminous.

And for the first time, Talia understood the words that had guided her family across centuries and oceans: resilience is a gift, wisdom a compass, and love – the quiet, persistent care for people, sea, and land – the most enduring technology of all.





Water of tomorrow: A story from Efate

By Rafoi Simo

Vanuatu

The sea always spoke before the radio did. Malia stood at the edge of the *nakamal* and watched as the horizon darkened, waves clawing at the reef. The frigate birds had already gone, and the silence of the bush told her all she needed to know – a cyclone was on its way.

Her grandmother's voice echoed in her memory:
“*Ol saeklon oli talem stori fastaem long solwota.*”
Cyclones tell their story first in the sea.

*“Cyclones tell
their story first
in the sea.”*

Inside the council house, the debate had already begun. Chief Taso tapped his walking stick, his silver hair catching the lamplight.

“We cannot put all our trust in machines,” he warned. “Our ancestors read the winds, the stars, the reef. Kastom never fails.”

“But Chief,” said Liva the fisherman, “kastom alone cannot face this new world. The storms are stronger now, the tides higher. The tablet warns us in ways our eyes cannot.”

Malia took a breath. “What if both are right? Kastom and machines do not need to fight. They can walk together.”

The house fell silent.

Bridging worlds

That evening, Malia carried her small solar-powered tablet to the edge of the village. It connected her to Vatu, an AI built by Pacific researchers – not just satellites and codes, but also oral histories, kastom knowledge, and the wisdom of elders.

“Vatu,” she whispered, “when will the cyclone reach us?”

The calm reply came.

“Landfall expected in 48 hours. Winds over 120 kilometers per hour.

Traditional signs – frigate bird migration and tidal shifts – confirm severity.”

Malia smiled. The ancestors and the satellites were speaking the same language.

But storms were not the only threat. The wells had grown brackish, and the old water tanks were crumbling. Near the school stood a half-finished rain-harvesting system supported by GOV4RES. If they could finish it before the cyclone, the community would not go thirsty.

The debate

The village gathered the next morning at the site. A concrete tank stood waiting, gutters stacked nearby.

Chief Taso frowned. “Why rush? We have survived on yams, coconuts, and streams. This is not kastom.”

“Chief,” Malia replied, “kastom is also adaptation. Our ancestors built traps when tides changed. This tank is our trap against drought.”

The Chief’s silence was heavy, but then Liva stepped forward. “If the girl says kastom and technology can walk together, then let us walk.”

The village set to work. Men hammered gutters, women smoothed plaster, children carried sand in their small hands. Malia checked the forecasts on her tablet while asking elders which winds had broken strongest in past cyclones. For the first time, old knowledge and new tools worked side by side.

The cyclone

The storm struck hard that night. Winds ripped trees from the earth, seas clawed at the shore. Families huddled inside the school, voices rising in prayer and song.

Malia’s tablet flickered but held.

“Winds at peak,” Vatu reported. “School stable. Tank intact.”

Amid the roar, she heard the drumming of rain on the roof, pouring down gutters into the new tank. While the cyclone raged, life was being stored for the days ahead.



An illustration on the left side of the page shows a large, light-colored water tank on a sandy beach. The sky is a mix of purple and blue, suggesting sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, there is a large orange fish with blue spots. The water is a deep blue with some white foam near the shore.

After the storm

When dawn came, gardens were flattened, roofs torn away – but no lives lost. The new water tank stood full, brimming with fresh rain.

Children dipped their cups first, splashing one another. Elders drank slowly, tears mingling with the water.

Chief Taso laid his hand on the tank. “This is kastom too. Kastom is not only what is behind us – it is how we live together today. If this water is built by our hands, then it belongs to us.”

Malia felt her chest swell. The Chief had given his blessing. The future had been welcomed into the nakamal.

Water as memory

That evening, Malia sat with her grandmother. The smell of roasted taro drifted through the air. Children’s laughter rang across the schoolyard.

Her grandmother lifted a cup of water from the tank. “You save, Malia – water is not only life. Water remembers. This tank will remember the rain of today and give it to the children of tomorrow.”

Malia raised her cup to the fading light. In the water she saw resilience, foresight, and the future of her island – the future of their sea of islands.

“In the water she saw resilience, foresight, and the future of her island.”

Author’s note

Living through cyclones and droughts has taught me that our survival depends on combining kastom with new ideas. This story is my way of imagining a Pacific future where ancestral wisdom and innovation walk together, ensuring our islands remain strong and connected for generations to come.

The keepers of the shore: A tale of two sisters

By Vanessa Gordon

Papua New Guinea

In the year 2100, the stories of the Bi Na Ta flowed like the tide, binding the past to the future of Rabaul. Two sisters, Kalami and Mamanim, stood at the heart of this legacy. Kalami, whose name meant “sweet,” was a devoted shore keeper, embodying hope and resilience. With her radiant chocolate skin and a stunning blonde, sea-salted Afro that danced in the ocean breeze, she was a vision of beauty and strength. Mamanim, whose name meant “bitter,” carried the weight of their family’s grief. Her dark, rich complexion glowed under the sun, framing her own beautiful, sun-kissed blonde Afro that spoke of their shared heritage. Their mother had given birth to them under the same moon, but only moments apart, and in that moment of joy, she had also said farewell to the world. This loss cast a long shadow over their lives, affecting their bond and their father, who struggled to embrace Mamanim, the child who had taken his beloved wife.

Seeking comfort in the sea, Mamanim chose to live on her canoe, floating among the reefs, while Kalami anchored herself to the shore. Each day, as dawn painted the sky, *Kalami* would paddle her canoe across the shimmering waters, feeling the rhythm of the ocean and the legacy of her ancestors surrounding her. As she navigated the gentle waves, she carried a recording device, a tool gifted by the elders to help her track the changing tides and document marine life.

This technology was a blessing, enabling her to preserve and share the ancient wisdom of her people.

However, the world beyond their shores was transforming. In response to rising seas and the pressures of climate change, the government had introduced a new visa called the “Homeland Passport,” inviting outsiders to seek refuge in the Pacific. Many newcomers were the descendants of the very colonizers who had once denied Kalami’s ancestors a safe haven. As the ships drew nearer, Kalami felt a swirling mix of hope and apprehension.





“Do you see how the tide has changed, sister?” Mamanim asked one afternoon as they paddled side by side, gliding past vibrant coral reefs alive with fish.

“Yes,” Kalami said, squinting at the horizon. “But it’s not just the tides. It’s them.” She pointed toward the vessels filled with faces carrying both dreams and uncertainties.

“We need to keep a watchful eye,” Mamanim replied, her brow furrowing with concern. “Our people are losing their voices. We must protect our culture and our land.”

As they reached their favourite reef, they marvelled at the beauty surrounding them. Mamanim dove into the water, revelling in the vibrant underwater world, while Kalami stayed above, feeling the dual connection to both sea and shore. She worried that their ancient practices – stories of fishing, gathering, and respect for the Earth – might be forgotten amidst the growing tide of change.

Kalami and Mamanim received news that their Melanesian cousins from Honiara, Lifou Island, and Viti Levu were facing similar challenges. Each year, the communities would meet on the water in the Pacific Ocean where all the Nesian regions meet, where vessels gathered to discuss the new migration schemes impacting their islands. The leaders in the region convened to share stories of resilience, echoing the words of their ancestors, reminding each other that they were a collective force to be reckoned with.

“The tide flows strong with our peoples together,” one elder proclaimed at a gathering. “Forty years ago, we halted the outside influence that threatened our way of life. We brought our own children back home. We are not your fruit pickers anymore; we are a new breed – the new Oceania!”

“The tide flows strong with our peoples together”

These words stayed in Kalami’s heart. They reaffirmed that the protection of heritage and identity was shared across the waters, woven into the fabric of their communities. As she paddled her part of the ocean, she felt a surge of hope rising within her, knowing their shared history could guide them through the impending changes.

Mamanim was always in agreement with her sister, her face illuminated with determination. “We must organize our own gathering to remind our people who we are before we lose our voices. They’ll try to drown us in their promises if we let them!”

As the sun began to set, casting a warm orange glow over the water, Kalami made her way back to shore. Each evening, as the tide receded, she followed a ritual passed down through generations: arranging small offerings of shells on the sand as tributes to the spirits of her ancestors. Listening to the waves and watching the birds, she captured the sounds and rhythms that defined her world.

The evenings in the village of Vunamami were filled with stories shared around glowing fires. Elders spoke of the Gunatuna – their people – who had once been deeply connected to the sea but now faced the threat of losing their identity. Concerns about erosion, societal change, and vanishing traditions weighed heavily on their hearts. Kalami listened, resonating with the fear that their way of life might slip away.

One night, a gathering took place to discuss the implications of the Homeland Passport. The mood was charged with tension as neighbours debated the future of their community. Kalami’s heart raced as she understood the weight of her heritage pressing upon her shoulders.

“Who are we if we allow others to shape our future?” an aunty asked, her voice steady and authoritative. “We must remember who we are.”

Taking a deep breath, Kalami stepped forward, her voice steady, despite the fluttering in her chest. “We can’t ignore those seeking refuge,” she began. “But we must ensure our land is protected. We’ve lived in harmony with the land and sea for generations. If we don’t establish boundaries, what will happen to our home?”

The crowd buzzed with a mixture of agreement and hesitation, reflecting the complexity of their situation. Their debate sparked a passionate discussion about how to protect their culture while adapting to the changing realities of their world.

As weeks turned into months, Kalami continued her patrols, now accompanied by others who shared her vision. With the tides came newfound energy, protesters emerged along the shores, demanding respect for their land. Their voices mingled with the ocean waves, creating a powerful chorus that echoed throughout the community.





One afternoon, standing shoulder to shoulder with Mamanim as the sun hung low in the sky, Kalami felt the strength of their connection. “We’re the keepers,” she declared, understanding that their roles extended far beyond mere protectors of the shore.

Mamanim nodded, determination shining in her eyes. “Absolutely. But we can’t keep the shore separate from the sea. Both are part of us.”

This understanding propelled them to work together in shaping their community’s future. The elders proposed embracing technology as a way to support their mission. If they could use artificial intelligence to teach Melanesian languages and cultural practices, it would help retain their identity amidst outside influences.

Kalami and Mamanim organised workshops, introducing AI as a resource for learning. They taught the children about traditional fishing methods and sustainable practices, ensuring that respect for nature remained paramount. The new arrivals were invited to learn the languages and customs of Gunatuna, creating a bridge of understanding.

As years passed, a vibrant sense of community began to emerge. The younger generation thrived, learning the old ways alongside modern techniques. The blend of old and new encapsulated the spirit of resilience that had defined their people. With every gathering, stories of their ancestors were retold, reinforcing the connection to their roots while embracing the changing landscape.

“The blend of old and new encapsulated the spirit of resilience that had defined their people.”

When it was time for the annual cultural celebration, excitement filled the air. On the morning of the ceremony, Kalami and Mamanim prepared to celebrate the success of their efforts. The shore bustled with people, Gunatuna families and newcomers alike, joining hands in unity.

As they watched the celebration unfold, Kalami turned to Mamanim, her heart brimming with pride. “We did it,” she whispered, her eyes glistening with tears.

“Not alone, sister,” Mamanim replied, her voice warm with affection.
“Together, we have centered our Pacific values. Our story will continue,
guided by the spirit of our ancestors.”

In that moment, as laughter filled the air and the wind danced through the palm trees, Kalami understood that the legacy of the Gunatuna people would endure. With the lessons of the past and the innovations of the future, they were well-equipped to navigate the currents of change, forever intertwined with the heartbeat of the Pacific.



An illustration on the left side of the page shows a yellow house on stilts in the sea. The house has a single window and a door. The sea is depicted with various shades of blue and green, and a large orange fish is visible at the bottom left. The sky is a mix of purple and blue.

Voices of the rising tide

By Rowena Wemahanua

Solomon Islands

1. The Waterline

They say the sea used to be farther out – back when my grandmother was a girl. She used to point to the place where the breadfruit trees once grew and say, “That’s where we had our market, just there on the sand.” Now, the tide covers it every afternoon. Only a few stones remain, scattered like broken teeth in the shallows.

My name is Mamalo. I’m seventeen, and I lived in a village, close by the sea. The sea is our home. It is also the thing we fear most. When I was younger, I thought the sea was just water and waves. But now I know better. The sea listens. The sea remembers.

2. The first disappearance

The first thing the sea took from me was my father’s canoe. He had carved it by hand – sanded the sides smooth, painted our family’s shark totem in red and white. He took me fishing in it almost every weekend. Then one stormy morning, after a week of heavy rain and tides higher than normal, it was gone.

We searched the mangroves. We walked the shore. Nothing. Only the frayed rope where it had been tied.

My mother said nothing. She stood at the edge of the sea, staring at the horizon, the hem of her skirt soaked and heavy.

3. The village shifts

It started with the gardens. The taro stopped growing in the lower fields – too salty, my uncle said. Then the yams turned bitter. So we moved the gardens inland, clearing bush on the hillside. But it was rocky and hard. Some families left to stay with relatives nearby. Others stayed and started building their houses on stilts, higher and stronger. We planted

mangroves too. At first, I thought it was just for show – something the elders did because outsiders came with cameras and notebooks. But then the first storm came, and the mangroves held the waves back like a wall of arms. That’s when I began to understand.

4. *Grandmother’s song*

My grandmother tells stories with songs. Some she learned from her mother, others she makes up.

One evening, as the tide lapped close to the fire pit, she sang one I’d never heard:

“The sea it shifts, the sea it sighs,

She feeds, she swells, she claims her prize.

But those who dance upon her shore,

Will rise again, forever more.”

I asked her what it meant. She smiled, all teeth and wrinkles. “It means we’re not going anywhere. Even if the sea wants us to.”

“It means we’re not going anywhere. Even if the sea wants us to.”

5. *Letters from the capital*

One day, men from Honiara came with plastic folders and tablets. They said they were from the Ministry. They wore long pants and shoes that weren’t made for mud. They asked us questions, wrote things down, took photos of our dying shoreline.

“We’re looking into relocation plans,” one said, not meeting anyone’s eye.

Relocation.

The word felt like a betrayal. This land held the bones of our ancestors, the paths of our childhood, the carved stones that told stories only the old women knew how to read. You can’t relocate those things.

That night, the village held a meeting. Voices rose. Some said we had no



A vertical illustration on the left side of the page. It shows a schoolhouse with a single window, built on stilts over a body of water. In the foreground, the head of a large orange fish with blue spots is visible. The background is a soft purple and blue gradient.

choice. Others said we would stay, even if we had to build boats to sleep in. My mother spoke quietly: “We do not run from the sea. We live with it. We listen.”

6. *Crabs and roots*

My cousin Omary and I often go crabbing in the mangroves. We wade knee-deep through the mud, lantern swinging, listening for the click of claws.

Last week, we found a giant mud crab missing one leg. It still fought us fiercely. We let it go. “It’s like us,” Omary said. “Damaged but not done.” The mangroves are thick now – rows and rows of young trees we helped plant years ago. Some kids named them. Mine is called Kaena, which means “resilient.” She’s tall now, her roots spreading wide, clutching the soil like fingers unwilling to let go.

7. *The storm*

The big storm came in the hot season. The air had been heavy for days. The birds flew inland. The elders warned us: “The sea is breathing fast.”

That night, the sky turned black and the sea roared like an angry god. We ran to higher ground, huddled in the schoolhouse. Rain lashed the tin roof. Wind ripped at the trees. In the dark, someone started singing one of Grandmother’s old songs. Soon, we all joined in – children, mothers, even the old men.

When the sun rose, the lower village was gone. Houses flattened. Trees snapped. The church roof blown into the lagoon. But no one had died. The mangroves held.

8. *Rebuilding*

We didn’t wait for the government to come. We rebuilt ourselves. The women wove new roofs from sago palm. The men raised stronger posts. The youth gathered driftwood and turned it into benches, shelters, canoes.

We built a raised platform for the water tanks and moved the solar panels uphill. We planted more mangroves. We dug trenches to redirect the tide. We even built a small seawall, not with concrete, but with coral stones passed hand to hand.

And every evening, we gathered by the fire and sang.

9. My letter to the future

Last month, my teacher asked us to write letters to the future. I didn't know what to write at first. But that night, I stood at the edge of the mangroves, looking out at the moonlit sea, and I thought of Kaena, still standing tall despite all the storms.

So I wrote:

Dear child of the sea,

I hope you still hear the waves, even if they've changed their tune.

I hope the mangroves still hold, and the crabs still dance.

We are not gone. We are here, in the roots and the tides, in the songs and the stories.

If the sea comes again, tell her: we remember. We are still dancing.

10. The sea listens

People still ask if we will leave. Sometimes I ask myself that too. But then I hear the sea, not roaring, but breathing – slow, deep, and ancient. I feel the mud between my toes. I see the mangroves swaying. I hear my grandmother's songs on the wind.

And I know: We are still here.

And we will remain – for as long as the sea remembers our names.



And how might we act today, with intention and care, for generations to come?



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