



## LäjeRotuma Initiative (LRI)

### *“Mobilizing community to manage well their natural resources”*

LäjeRotuma Initiative (LRI) is a community-based environmental education and awareness development programme in Rotuma. LRI is a voluntary initiative which encourage youth on the island to actively participate in activities aimed at informing and strengthening the capacity of the island community to make informed decisions on sustainable management of its natural resources. LRI is part of a diverse network of the island communities, Rotuma Council, government departments and ministries, donor agencies, institutions, conservation non-governmental organizations, professionals of varied backgrounds that range from energy, agriculture, business, environment, fisheries, diving and sustainable development.

Initiated by young people with a passion for their home island, LRI has:

- Trained young adults in both rural and urban Rotuma communities and shared lessons and experiences with Solomon Island university students about the facilitation of community resource conservation at their own communities.
- Provided opportunities for 5 island youth to be certified PADI Open Water divers to enhance their capacity in basic scientific coral reef surveys of Rotuma’s coral reefs. These trained divers have also been contracted to assist in other marine surveys.
- Enhanced the opportunity of volunteers to acquire employment within the working network of partners.
- Conducted baseline information surveys to assess the economic, social, environmental status of Rotuma Island and produced reports to be utilized by communities in its development of management plans.
- Enhanced the level of communication and networking amongst island rural communities and schools, government departments and Rotuma Council.
- Represented in international youth exchange programs, national meetings of significance to the Initiative and established contact with a diverse set of partners that have provided support in-kind during LRI’s activities since its inception.
- Coordinated global events at the community level such as the Earth Day celebrations on April 22.
- Supported national and international initiatives such as the Turtle Campaign and being part of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network.
- Received an award during the UN Volunteers Award Program.
- Secured varied level funding from aid agencies such as AUSAID, British High Commission, PADI Foundation, GCRMN to support its education, awareness activities at the community level.

LRI is distinctive in its nature where young people have a vision to empower their communities, maximize environmental and sustainable options for the future.



## LäjeRotuma Initiative (LRI) PLAN OF ACTION

LRI was initiated in February 2002 by a group of young Rotuman adults committed to carrying out a community service by providing environmental education and awareness to their rural island communities. Rotuma is a 43 square kilometer Island with a population density of 61 people per square km (Fiji Census 1996). It is situated in the SW Pacific, about 465km North of Fiji. Rotuma's geographical isolation and an economy that is externally influenced from mainland Fiji, illustrates the high dependence of island community on its natural resources. There is also limited access to information and development options that are easily available to larger urban centers.

In its environmental education and awareness development program, LRI intends to provide service to the island rural community under the following programmatic themes:

- **Community Outreach** includes 4 project activities that range from the environmental education at schools, coordinated annual coastal cleanups to facilitation of communities in the development of their management plans.
- **Building Community Resilience to Climate Change** includes 3 project activities that encompass a range of adaptation measures to coastal erosion, monitoring of the health of reefs and climate witness awareness activities which enhance island community's understanding of potential impacts of global climate change on Rotuma Island.
- **Integrated Fisheries Management** currently focuses on revival of the traditional use of the canoe. Such tradition is fast disappearing, replaced by the use of outboard motors and becoming totally dependent on external supply of fuel and engine parts. This is an added cost also foreseen to create an adverse impact on the island ecosystem in terms of engine parts disposal and fishing intensity.
- **Sustainable livelihoods** options are currently being explored. According to baseline information collected by LRI, there is need for alternative income options in order to persuade communities make informed decisions on the development and proper management of their natural resources.
- **Research and Capacity Building** includes 3 project activities that range from the experimental removal and reuse of the *Kama*, training and internship opportunities for local youth and the potential research of Rotuma's Flora and Fauna.

LRI acknowledge major partners [Rotuma Island Council](#), [Rotuman Member of Parliament](#), [WWF](#), [AUSAID](#), [Marine Studies Program](#), [Institute of Marine Resources](#), [SISA](#), [University of the South Pacific](#), [GCRMN](#), [Global GreenGrants Fund](#), [British High Commission Suva](#), [SeaWeb](#), [Coral Cay Conservation](#), [PADI Foundation](#), [Project AWARE](#), [SPREP](#), [Ministry of Youth](#), [WAC Theatre Unlimited](#), [Rotuman Suva-7-Districts](#), [Rotuma website](#), [Rotuma Island Coordinator & Youth Volunteer Network](#).