MARCH 2026
TNYC LOCAL PROJECT

ACCOMPLISHED

THE KIWA INITIATIVE IS FUNDED BY:

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

KIWA INITIATIVE

Empowering youth in biodiversity management and conservation in Tonga

Project coordinator : Tonga National Youth Congress

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

July 2022 – Mar. 2026

AMOUNT OF FUNDING

€ 99,000

Theme

Terrestrial Ecosystem Management and Restoration

Main co-benefit, in addition to climate change adaptation

Biodiversity conservation

In Tonga, climate change is intensifying existing issues like poor management, poaching, and habitat loss, while stronger weather events and limited resources hamper both ecosystem resilience and local conservation efforts.
This project supports the conservation of **Tonga's unique ecosystems by promoting effective resource management practices.** Local communities utilize Nature-based Solutions as adaptive responses to the specific climate change impacts and threats faced in each area.

Specific Objectives:

- Implement a minimum of **ten preventative measures of poaching** in each area that by the end of the project, poaching at each project site has decreased by at least 20%.
- Implement a minimum of **three effective resource conservation management strategy** per project site.
- Implement and management **five species specific conservation activities** at each project area targeting the most vulnerable species identified by the baseline survey.

The Kiwa Initiative Programme team with the TNYC grantees
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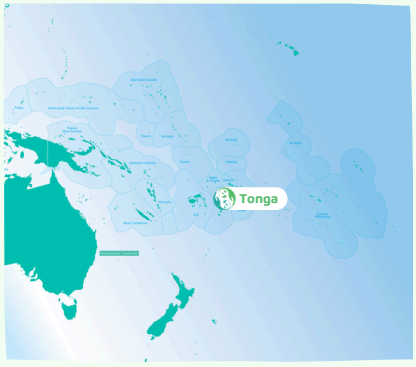
Subregion: ☐ Melanesia/Timor-Leste ☐ Micronesia ■ Polynesia



Tonga

There are 4 project sites, representing each of the 4 island groups of Tonga: Tongatapu (mainland) ‘Eua, Ha’apai, and Vava’u.

- Sopu Reef, Tongatapu
- Lokupo Park Rainforest, Eua Island
- Ano Hehea Lotofoa, Ha'apai Island
- Moungalafa, Vava’u Island

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Beneficiaries:
The total number of beneficiaries for this project is estimated at 25,090 people. Of this population, approximately 51.5% are women and 48.5% are men. It is also estimated that youth make up 31.8% of the total population across all project areas. The total number of households across all project sites is estimated at 4,570.

Key results:

Establishment of protected areas & baseline surveys

- Worked with parks & reserves authority to secure protection status for identified sites.
- Conducted biodiversity and invasive species assessments to identify vulnerable species and track ecosystem health.
- Periodic monitoring of conservation areas established.

Community-led resource management

- Formed local youth conservation committees linked to village councils to oversee project activities.
- Developed species classification logs and trained youth park rangers for long-term monitoring.
- Periodic ranger meetings conducted,

Anti-poaching & sustainable livelihood strategies

- **Implemented 10 preventative measures to combat illegal hunting.**
- Created community-led policing programs to enforce conservation regulations.

Habitat restoration & reforestation

- Planted primary forest species to enhance biodiversity resilience.
- Removed invasive species, boosting ecosystem recovery.

Marine & wetland restoration efforts

- Developed sea cucumber conservation traps and **benthic species restoration programs with the local youth.** Species vary per project site and focused on species identified by the local communities as endangered in their ecosystem.
- Created floating plant islands in areas impacted by eutrophication.

Capacity Building & education

- Designed educational materials (pamphlets, posters) for local engagement and distribution.
- **Conducted monthly conservation forums** to share knowledge and improve practices.

DATA UNDER IUCN-ORO VALIDATION

"What we have learnt and achieved from the TNYC Project sites is, this has been an opportunity for youth in the communities to be involved with the biodiversity conservation, and understand the importance of conservation. These projects are inspiring youth and communities to prioritize activities such as planting native trees and monitoring bird and wildlife populations. These efforts are the only solution towards mitigating environmental damage."

Ms. Taina MATOTO, Community member

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