

WAKATU

— TAVEUNI —

Growing the Taveuni We Deserve



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This booklet is part of the Wakatu Fiji campaign, which was launched to encourage and empower people to better care for the land and sea that has taken care of us. It is led by the Fiji government, including the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Fisheries. The campaign was created by cChange, a nonprofit organization that specializes in communications and social change. Key partners include the Methodist Church of Fiji, and civil society organizations, such as Conservation International, and the Fiji Locally-Managed Marine Area Network.

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The PEBACC Project focusses on strengthening and protecting the role of natural ecosystem services to enhance resilience to climate change.

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Bula Vinaka! I am Mere, your Wakatu Taveuni guide. This short booklet was developed to help people better understand the reasons we are getting less from our land and sea and having a harder time meeting our food and income needs. The booklet will also share how we can turn it around and why we need to turn it around, and what's at stake if we don't. So let's get started.

So where should we begin? Isa, life is getting harder in the village. Just listen to the things we are hearing from people.



It's getting harder and harder to catch fish and our catch is getting smaller and smaller.

It's hard to make enough money to live.

We can't find traditional medicines around near our homes anymore.

We are having a harder time getting drinking water.

We are having a harder time getting firewood, having to go too far to collect it

Our crops are getting smaller and smaller, and sometimes, we lose them in big storms.

Our homes are getting flooded, more and more.





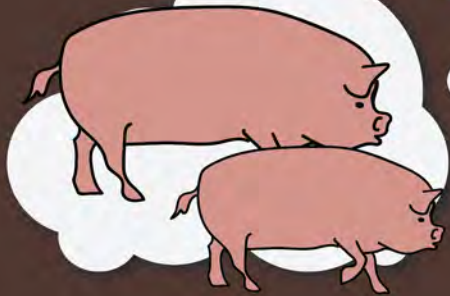
So why is life getting harder? Our population has grown and our lifestyles have changed. We have more mouths to feed and more needs than ever before.



Transport



Healthcare



Food

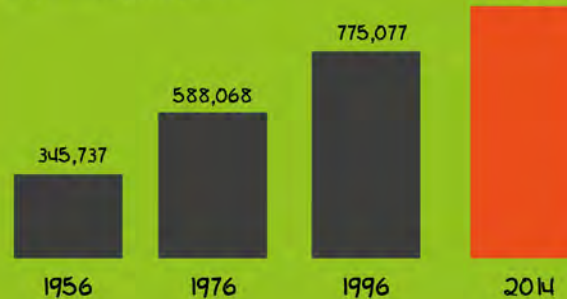


Mobile Credit



Church

Fiji's Population

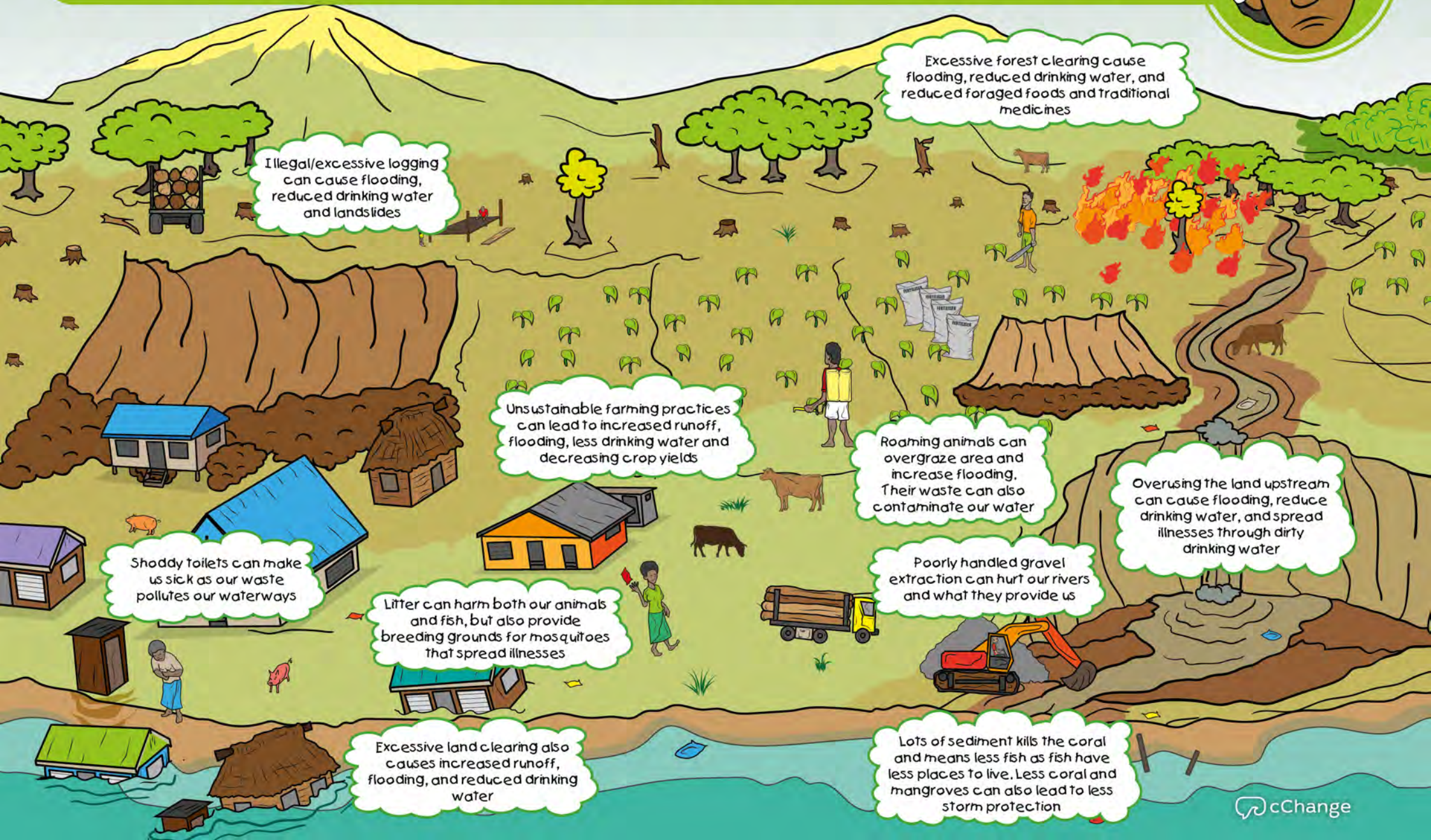


Education

So how do we meet those needs? Almost, everything we get is from nature.
Can you count the ones your community receives from the land? Any missing?



The problem is, as our needs have increased, we are using the land and sea more and more. And as we do, we are using the land in ways that makes life harder.



Illegal/excessive logging can cause flooding, reduced drinking water and landslides

Excessive forest clearing cause flooding, reduced drinking water, and reduced foraged foods and traditional medicines

Unsustainable farming practices can lead to increased runoff, flooding, less drinking water and decreasing crop yields

Roaming animals can overgraze area and increase flooding. Their waste can also contaminate our water

Overusing the land upstream can cause flooding, reduce drinking water, and spread illnesses through dirty drinking water

Shoddy toilets can make us sick as our waste pollutes our waterways

Litter can harm both our animals and fish, but also provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes that spread illnesses

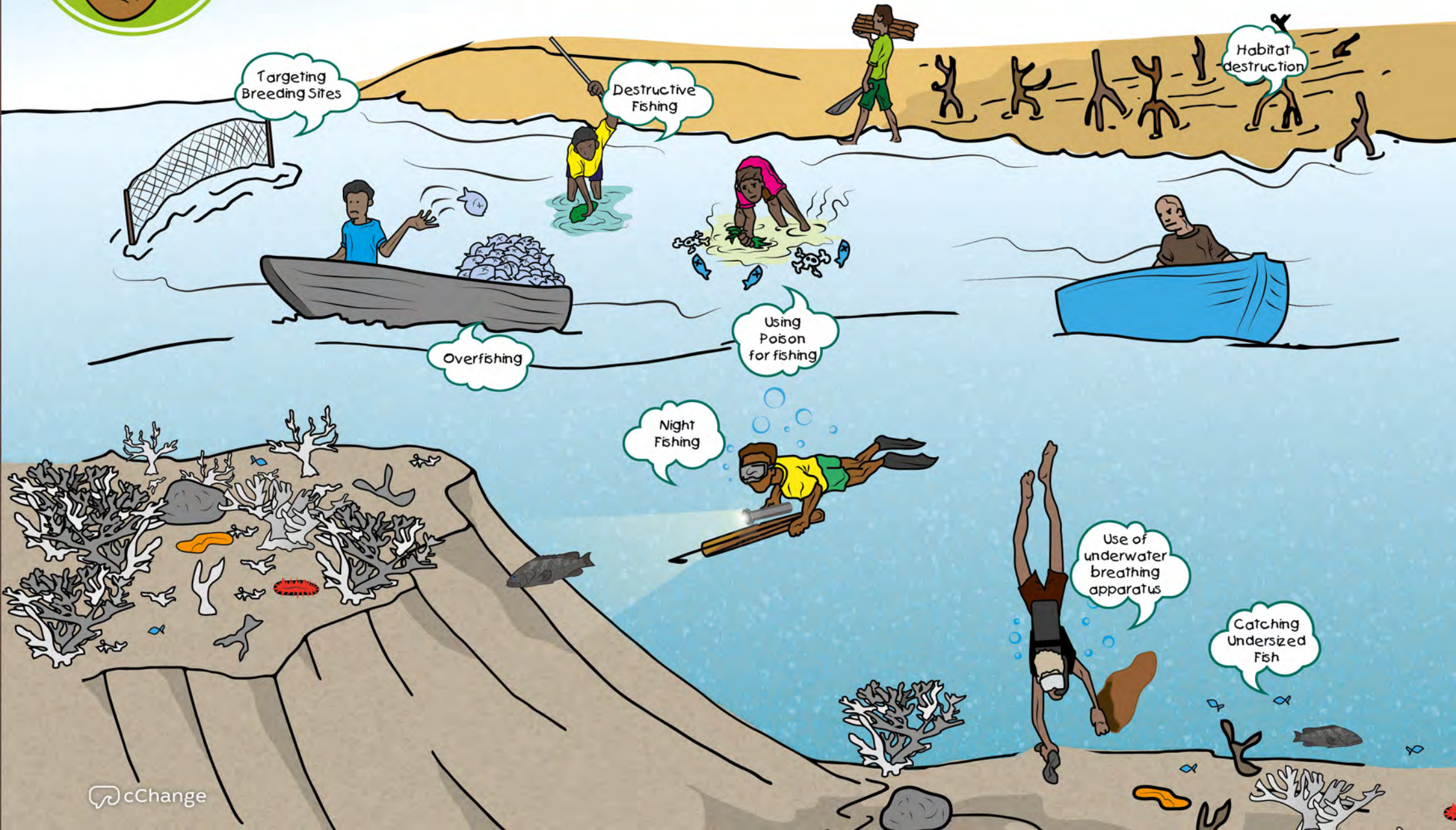
Poorly handled gravel extraction can hurt our rivers and what they provide us

Excessive land clearing also causes increased runoff, flooding, and reduced drinking water

Lots of sediment kills the coral and means less fish as fish have less places to live. Less coral and mangroves can also lead to less storm protection



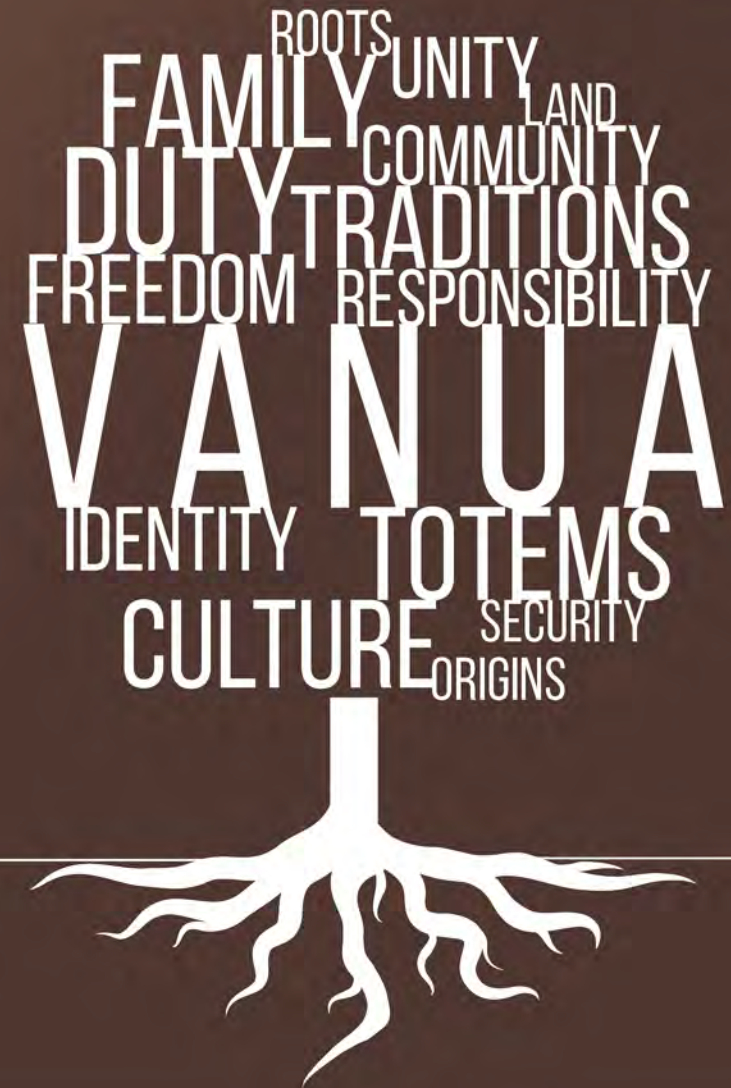
Our fishing grounds are tired, too. It's taking longer and we are traveling farther to catch less fish. Here are some of the reasons are fish are disappearing.



We tend to push the big problems till tomorrow and deal with the needs of today. But there is a lot at risk as we over-use the land and sea.



So what's at stake? If we don't change, we face losing our way of life in Taveuni. To help reflect on the value of the land and sea, we created the Wakatu Taveuni word tree. It captures some of the values people shared when we asked them what the land and sea meant to them. What would your Wakatu tree look like?





People from across Fiji are stepping up to champion the Wakatu Fiji campaign. They are starting discussions in their communities and helping lead the way forward.

Flood waters have entered our villages and rivers are now shallow because we gave our land to logging companies without thinking.

Seci Waqawai, Wailevu, Macuata



Unsustainable logging caused flooding and brought about conflicts within the community

I liesa Dulaki, Vuinadi, Cakaudrove



It's harder for us to catch fish now in our rivers because of the chemicals and the duva that we use and other fishing methods

Setefano Vodinauma , Naqelecibi, Ra



The land and rivers are the sources of life for us in the uplands and without them we cannot survive.

Sureti Aditukana, Naitasiri



We are have been irresponsible and reckless in the way we are using the natural resources that our forefathers preserved for us

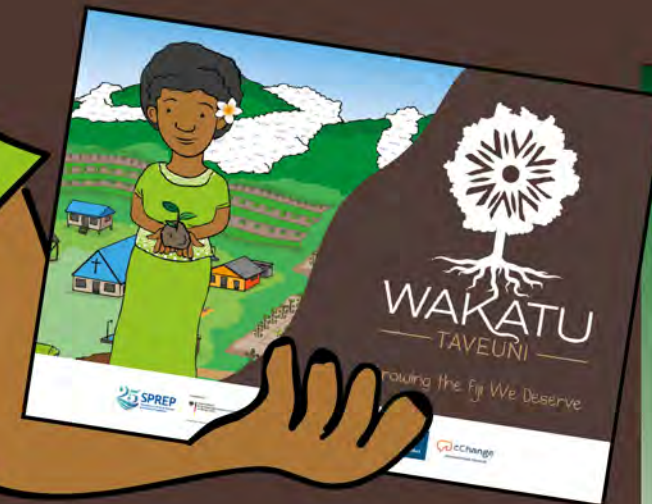
Maika Bolatolu, Moala, Lau



Perhaps now you are ready to act, but are not sure what to do? We can help. Because if there's a will, there's a way.



For reviving our fishing grounds, we created our Set Size booklet to help. That's part of a Ministry of Fisheries-led campaign. For reviving our land, you can just turn the page, and we'll get started. After reading this booklet, you can also contact your local provincial office and seek guidance from the iTaukei Affairs Board Conservation Officer. You can also follow us online at www.facebook.com/wakatufiji and www.facebook.com/setsize, where we will share stories and videos of people creating change.





Our No. 1 problem is we are farming in ways that deplete our soil. That's why we are farming in steeper areas, getting smaller crops, more flooding and less good drinking water. Let's break down the problem.

1. Imagine our soil like a tank of petrol for a car or generator. When you first start farming, the tank is full.



2. As time goes on, the crops get smaller and smaller as the nutrients get taken out of the soil. That's when we start using fertilizer to improve our crops.



3. And without replenishing the soil, the soil just depletes more and more, we need to use more and more fertilizer.



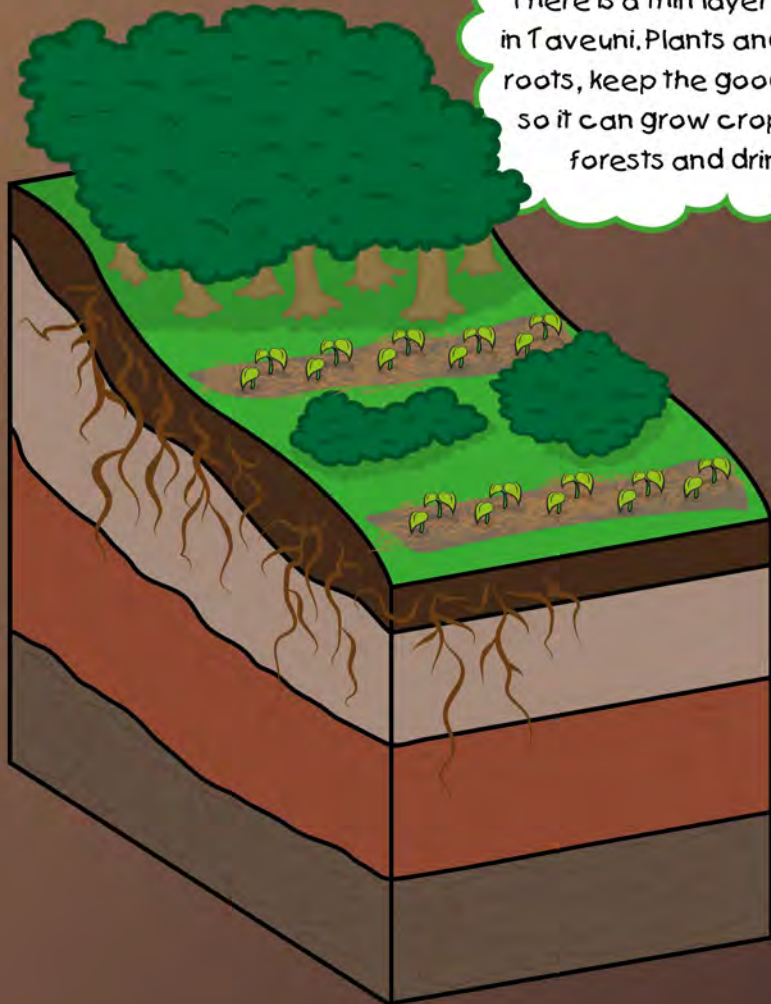
4. Eventually our land runs out of nutrients. The petrol tank is empty, so we move to clear new land for farming.



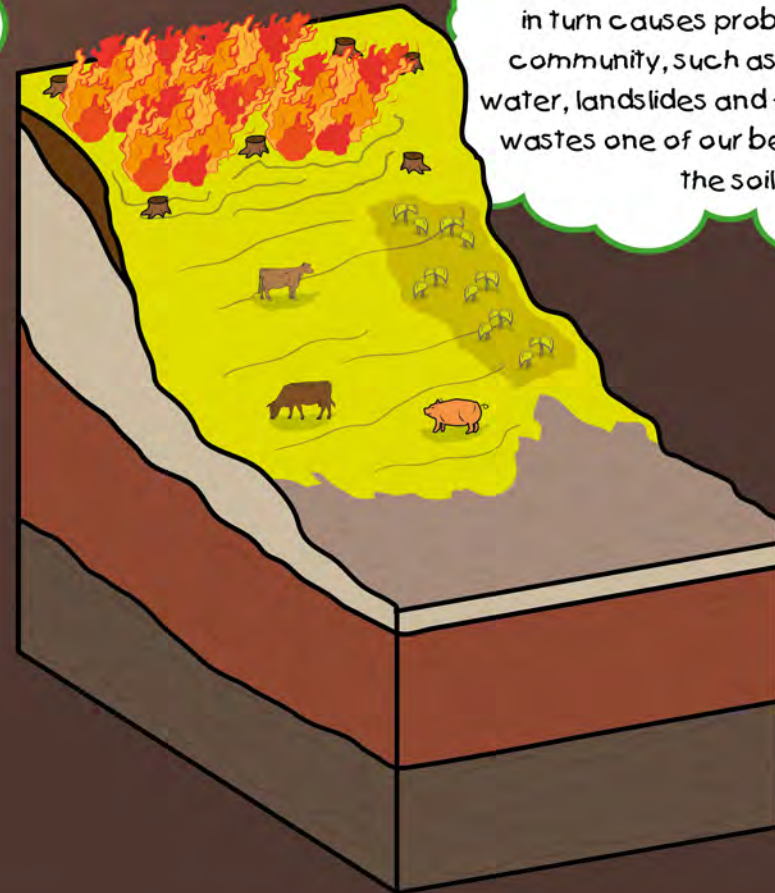
Problem No. 2 is that Taveuni has only a thin layer of rich top soil. When we clear steep land, burn farm land to prepare it, or let animals overgraze, we squander that rich top as there are no plants to keep the soil from washing away.




There is a thin layer of good top soil in Taveuni. Plants and trees, and their roots, keep the good soil on the land so it can grow crops, supports our forests and drinking water.



When we burn off the trees and plants, or let animals overgraze, the good soil quickly erodes. That in turn causes problems for the community, such as dirty drinking water, landslides and flooding. It also wastes one of our best resources, the soil.





Problem No. 3, we are losing our forests. Plants and trees at the tops of our mountains, like a sponge, suck water out of the clouds, and helps feed our streams and aquifers.

Forests are some of the most important land in the Pacific as they make sure we continue to have water to drink, and supply our many other needs. It also creates new opportunities for activities such as ecotourism.



That's why communities are working to protect those areas and also replant barren areas. Without forests, it's hard to get drinking water, flooding increases, and it's hard to forage food, find building materials, firewood and medicines.



So what can we do to better care for our soil, and protect our way of life?
Let's start with improving with how we farm on slopes.

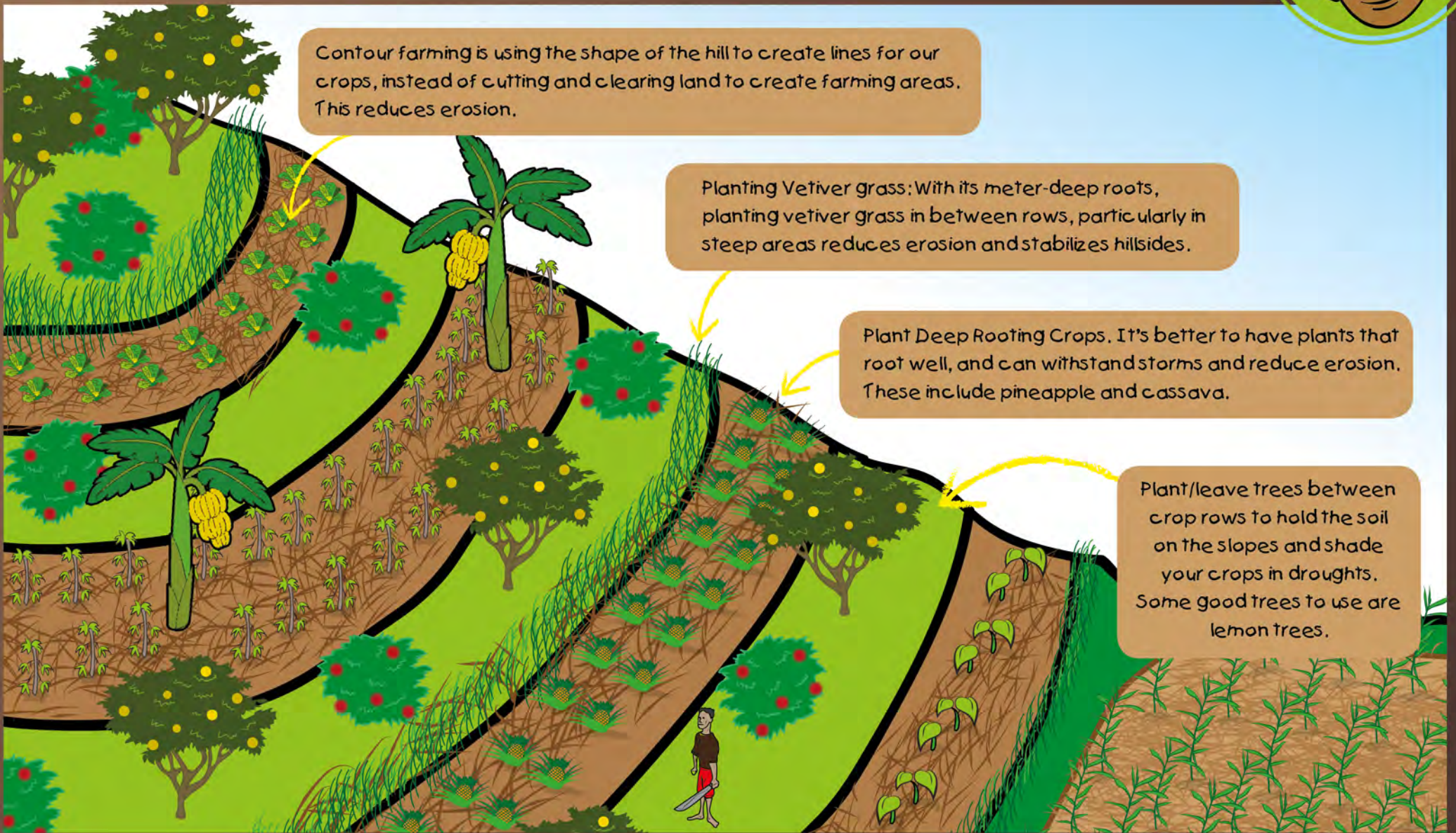


Contour farming is using the shape of the hill to create lines for our crops, instead of cutting and clearing land to create farming areas. This reduces erosion.

Planting Vetiver grass: With its meter-deep roots, planting vetiver grass in between rows, particularly in steep areas reduces erosion and stabilizes hillsides.

Plant Deep Rooting Crops. It's better to have plants that root well, and can withstand storms and reduce erosion. These include pineapple and cassava.

Plant/leave trees between crop rows to hold the soil on the slopes and shade your crops in droughts. Some good trees to use are lemon trees.



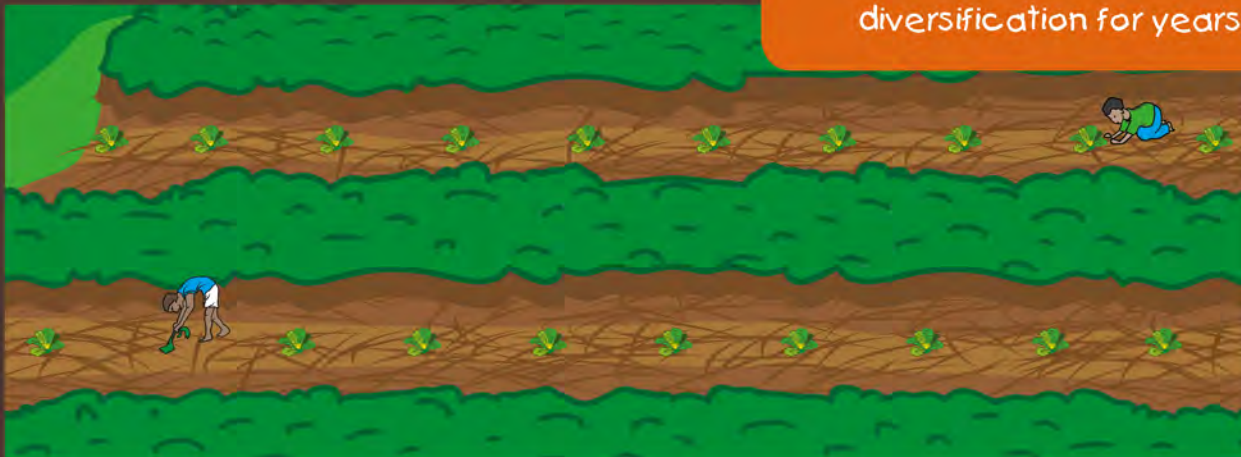


There are additional farming approaches, around what crops we plant, that can improve our soil and increase our crop yields.

Crop Rotation: Different crops use different nutrients in the soil, and some crops can replenish some nutrients in the soil that other crops remove. So by rotating crops, you can replenish your soil and get better crops. An example of crop rotation would be ginger and dalo.

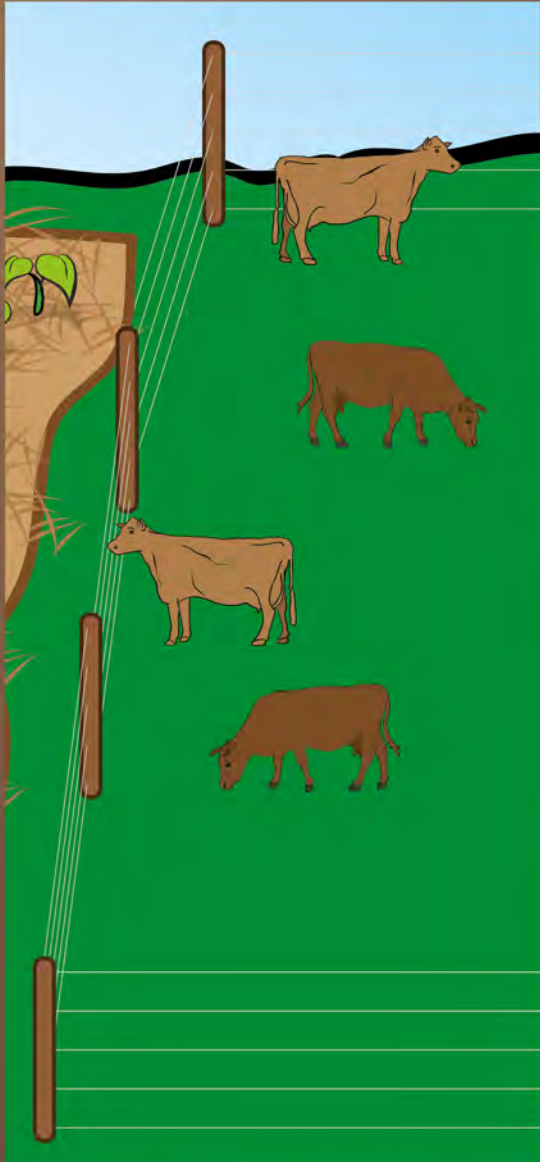


Fun Fact: In the old days, people planted different sections of the garden for food, for church obligations and for traditional obligations, essentially practicing crop diversification for years.



Inter-cropping: Intercropping means putting plants that help each, by replenishing the soil with things the other takes out, side by side. An example is planting cabbage with yams. By planting more diverse crops, you also protect against things like cyclones, where some crops fair better than others.

Other ways to improve our soil health and reduce such things as loss of drinking water and flooding are composting/mulching and controlling animals grazing.



Controlled grazing

When animals are left to graze anywhere, they can overgraze and leave land bare and exposed to erosion. This is particularly problematic near river and streams. Fencing or tying up animals can reduce erosion and flooding, not to mention keep animal waste out of your drinking water.



Composting and mulching

This means taking our food waste (composting) and vegetative waste (mulching) and using it to build new rich soils for farming. This is a very good alternative to using fertilizer, which requires cash and is not as effective as healthy soil to replenish farm areas.



To help avoid problems like loss of drinking water, flooding, these are some other things we can do to keep our land healthy.

Agro forestry

This means growing your crops under the shade of trees and not clearing all land to farm. Tree roots reduce erosion/flooding and reduces the need for costly fertilizers.

Replanting, particularly around riversides and steep/high erosion areas

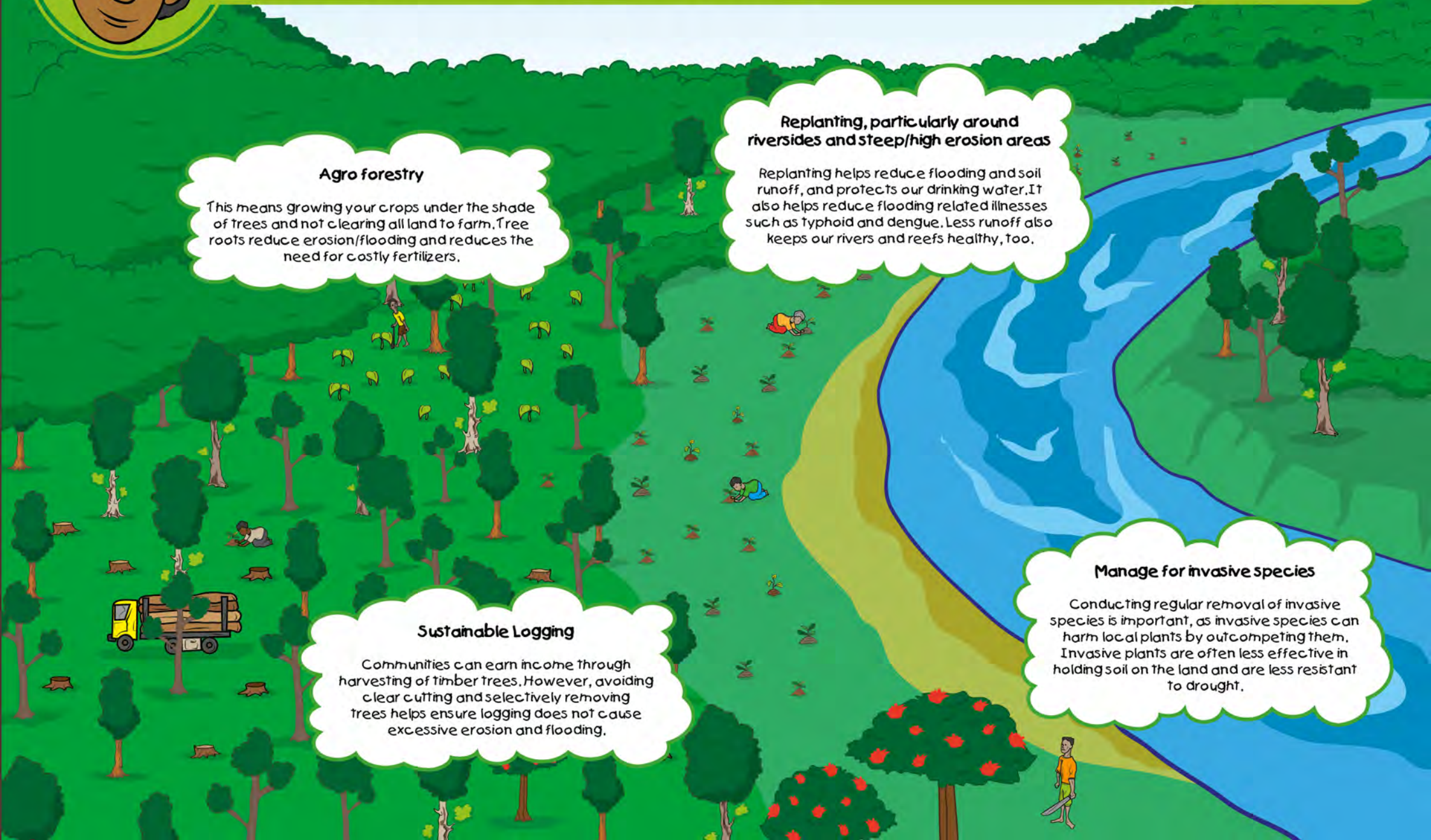
Replanting helps reduce flooding and soil runoff, and protects our drinking water. It also helps reduce flooding related illnesses such as typhoid and dengue. Less runoff also keeps our rivers and reefs healthy, too.

Sustainable Logging

Communities can earn income through harvesting of timber trees. However, avoiding clear cutting and selectively removing trees helps ensure logging does not cause excessive erosion and flooding.

Manage for invasive species

Conducting regular removal of invasive species is important, as invasive species can harm local plants by outcompeting them. Invasive plants are often less effective in holding soil on the land and are less resistant to drought.



Communities can protect some of the collective benefits they get from nature by establishing rules that everyone must follow. Here are some good ones communities in Fiji have taken:



•Controlled burning: The practice of burning land to prepare it for crops or pest control requires less work. However, burning does more harm than good as it increases erosion and often destroys adjacent lands when left uncontrolled. Banning it or requiring controlled burning can help.



Controlled grazing: If animals are limited to where and how long they can graze in areas, you can ensure that not all the vegetation is removed and thereby reduce these type of problems.



•Ban clearing of buffer zones: Areas near rivers and streams and steep slopes are the most prone to flooding. It is good practice to keep the areas around your waterways safe and intact by banning clearing near waterways or on steep areas.



•Tabu Forest Areas: This is to ensure communities maintain a good water source and to ensure access to traditional medicines, foraged foods and building materials.



So what do you say, can we start creating change in our communities and protecting our way of life? It all starts with you. Start a conversation in your family, at your village meetings. As you build interest, here are some good steps to follow.

1. Raise Awareness

Talking to people about the pages in this booklet



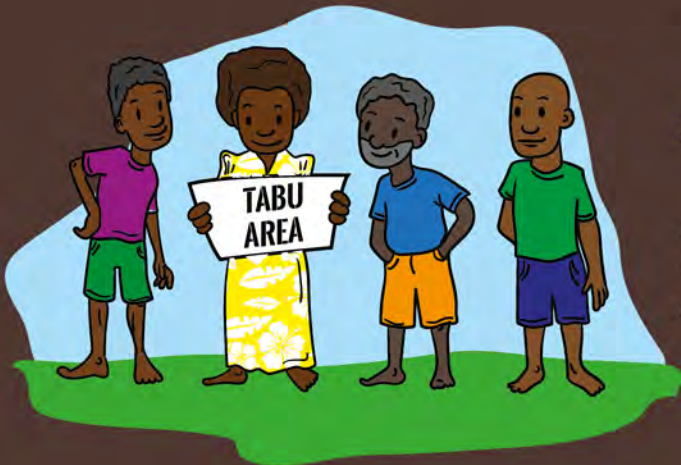
2. Get Organized

Getting the blessing of your leaders, and form a village committee



3. Make Rules/ Take Action

Agree to the actions or rules and commit to seeing it through




4. Assess

Step back and see what's working and what's not, and make adjustments





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