Locally Led Adaptation: Empowering Cook Islands Communities
Cook Islands Profile

- **Composition:** 15 islands
  12 inhabited & 3 nature reserves
- **Land mass:** 236.7 km²
- **Terrain:**
  Northern: low coral atolls
  Southern: volcanic, hilly islands
- **Elevation:**
  Lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m
  Highest point: Te Manga 652 m
- **Ocean area:** 2,200 million km²
- **Population:** 20,200 (2023 est),
- **GDP:** NZD 165.4 m
- **Average temperatures** 26 and 30 degrees, colder months 20 °C
Locally Led Adaptation: Empowering Communities

Cool it down, synergy of traditional insulation and renewable solar energy on Pukapuka Island, Cook Islands. PEARL Mission 2020

Importance of Partnerships & Collaboration

- communities, local stakeholders, and government agencies
- adaptation measures are tailored to the specific needs and context of local communities
- promote local ownership and sustainability
- facilitates knowledge sharing
- resource mobilization
- exchange of best practices

Community Engagement:

- Innovation, Capacity Building, & Community Empowerment
- Establish mechanisms to encourage and facilitate locally appropriate climate change responses, including traditional knowledge and science-based initiatives.
Locally Led Adaptation:
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Community Engagement:
A commitment to community engagement and involvement in the design and implementation of adaptation projects, ensuring that local knowledge and needs are considered.

- National level - Government agencies and Island governments
- National & Island Governments - Grassroots engagement with island residents, public and private sectors, civil society groups and ngos, interest groups
- Consultations, educational, awareness raising, workshops
Achievements of LLA

- Enhanced our national capacities and country ownership for adaptation and mitigation of adverse climate change effects.
- Enhanced community resilience to climate change impacts.
- Preservation and revitalisation of traditional knowledge and practices.
- Implementation of nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation.
- Increased awareness and understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation strategies among local communities.
- Informed decisions and manage climate change driven pressures in a proactive and strategic manner.
- Strengthened partnerships and collaboration between communities, local stakeholders, and government agencies.
Challenges:

- outward migration of our youth
- limited resources and infrastructure
- climate change impacts
- vulnerability of small population size
- remoteness from international markets
- High transportation costs
- vulnerability to external economic shocks
- fragile land and marine ecosystems

Lessons:

- Decentralized design projects
- Tailored grant amounts
- Capacity building of Local Actors
- Inclusive decision-making processes
- Long term institutionalization Local partners - Government

Empowering local actors
Promoting local ownership and sustainability,
Tailored adaptation interventions
Specific needs and contexts of local communities
Future Directions for LLA

- Scaling up successful locally led adaptation initiatives to reach more communities.
- Strengthening capacity building and knowledge sharing among local actors.
- Integrating traditional knowledge and practices into adaptation strategies.
- Enhancing monitoring and evaluation of locally led adaptation initiatives to assess their effectiveness and inform future actions.
- Advocating for policy support and financial resources to sustain and expand locally led adaptation efforts.
- Local-led approaches to be integrated into the overall climate change response in the Cook Islands.