



Save the Children

MEDIA RELEASE

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Inception workshop builds momentum for climate ready schools across Tonga

Nukualofa, Tonga, 19 March 2026: The Building Resilience and Adaptation for Children and Communities through the Education Sector (BRACE) project marked a major milestone this week as government ministries, education leaders and partners gathered in Tonga for the project's Inception Workshop.

Jointly implemented by the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) and Save the Children, BRACE is a five-year initiative that will set the benchmark for climate-smart education in the Pacific by strengthening education systems and infrastructure, building community resilience and mainstreaming climate change into education curriculum.

Climate change is impacting children's education across the Pacific including Tonga, posing major risks to buildings, access and safety. Climate induced disruptions to school infrastructure, health and family life increasingly affect children's pathways to quality education. Tropical Cyclone Harold in 2020 disrupted the education pathways for 2,000 children, with 20% of primary schools and 30% of secondary schools severely impacted.

In Tonga, BRACE will strengthen the climate resilience of 100 remote schools against intensifying climate hazards such as sea level rise, droughts, floodings, and extreme weather such as tropical cyclones and heatwaves. More than 13,000 people will directly benefit from this project (13% of the total population); with 36,762 people benefiting indirectly (33% of the total population).

Minister for Education and Training, Hon. Dr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku, emphasized that building resilience begins with ensuring that every child has access to safe learning environments, a consistent and quality education and the knowledge and skills needed to navigate increasing climate risks.

"As the Government partner of the BRACE Project, we are deeply committed to ensuring that every child in our country can learn in a safe, resilient and supportive environment. BRACE represents an important investment in our children's future, and we are proud to lead this work on behalf of the Government of Tonga."

Kim Koch, Pacific Regional Director of Save the Children Australia said, *"Save the Children is proud to partner with MET to implement the BRACE Project. This project will help to ensure that children, especially the most vulnerable, are protected and able to continue their education during times of crisis."*

"The outcomes of this workshop reflect our collective commitment to put children at the centre of climate resilience. By strengthening schools, empowering teachers, and building community preparedness, BRACE will help create safer learning environments and stronger futures here in Tonga".

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Note to Editors:

The BRACE project is a five-year, USD46.7 million initiative in Cambodia, South Sudan and Tonga that will strengthen education systems by integrating climate resilience into school infrastructure, policies and planning.

BRACE's total direct beneficiary population is 607,098 (comprising 299,933 females) and total indirect beneficiary population is 8,640,844 (comprising 4,266,850 females). BRACE will address climate impacts and risks in 850 schools across the three countries.

BRACE is funded through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the world's largest dedicated climate fund, and co-financed by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

GCF is an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and serves the 2015 Paris Agreement. GCF's mandate is to foster a paradigm shift towards low emission, climate-resilient development pathways in developing countries. The fund has a portfolio of 314 projects with a value of \$13.8 billion USD (over \$51 billion USD including co-financing) delivering transformative climate action in more than 133 countries.

GPE is the largest global fund dedicated to transforming education in lower-income countries, and a unique, multi-stakeholder partnership. It has raised more than US\$11 billion for education and supported 372 million children with better education