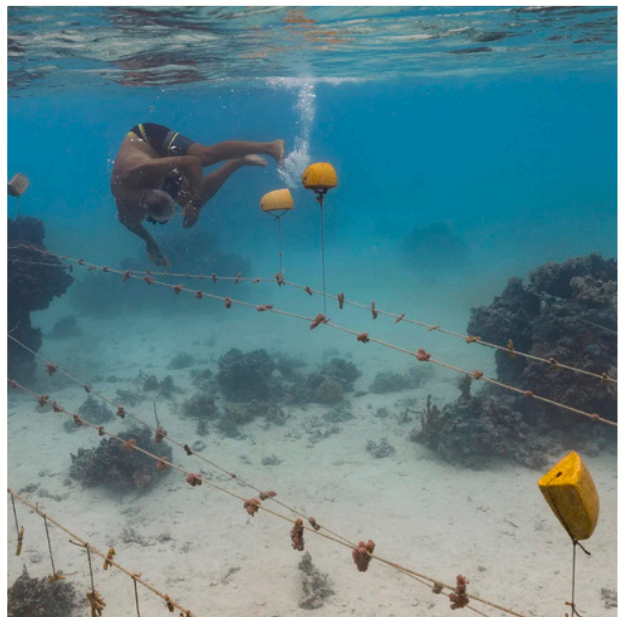
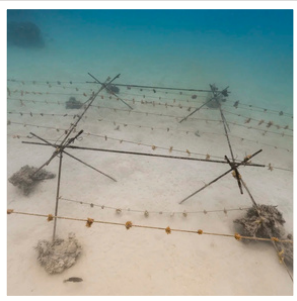


Coral Kids and the Coral Gardener

Coral Kids is a photographic marine conservation series in Aitutaki, Cook Islands. The project follows children as they learn to restore coral reefs under the guidance of a self-taught, self-appointed coral guardian. The series reveals how conservation, education, and culture converge in the search for solutions to urgent environmental challenges.



Restoring Coral in Aitutaki

Aitutaki's lagoon is a highly diverse marine environment, but warming seas and bleaching events have severely impacted local reefs. With no institutional support, a self-taught coral gardener began salvaging coral fragments and experimenting with ropes, nails, and natural techniques to keep fragile species alive.

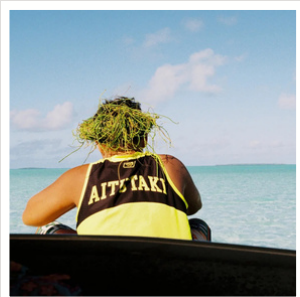
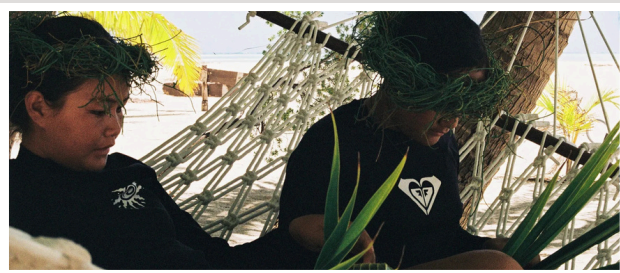


Coral Kids and the Coral Gardener



Children as Caretakers of the Ocean

Over time, schoolchildren joined him, many of whom had to learn to swim before they could even begin. Today, they help collect fragments, tie them to ropes, and tend the reef as part of their environmental education. Their work is not only ecological but also cultural, reviving ancestral connections to the sea while shaping a new generation of caretakers.



Photographing Marine Conservation by Raquel Trejo, Adelaide, Australia.

These images were captured during dives and community sessions in Aitutaki, September 2025. The series celebrates resilience, adaptation, and the fragile beauty of coral, while also documenting a profound act of hope led by children.

Support the Coral Kids project and help bring this story of community led coral restoration to the world. Your contribution directly funds their work, enabling the voices of Aitutaki's children and their vital conservation efforts to reach global audiences.