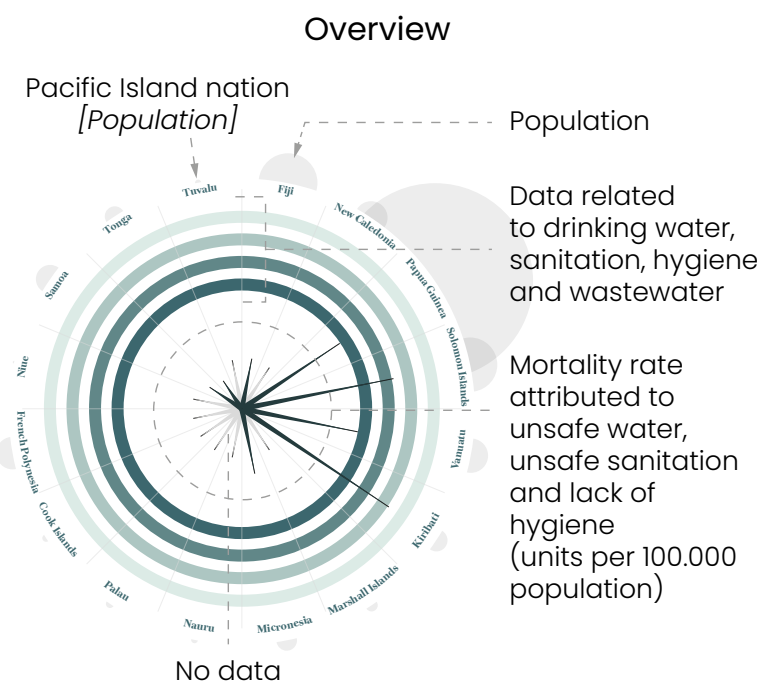


Water

Source of Life, Cause of Death

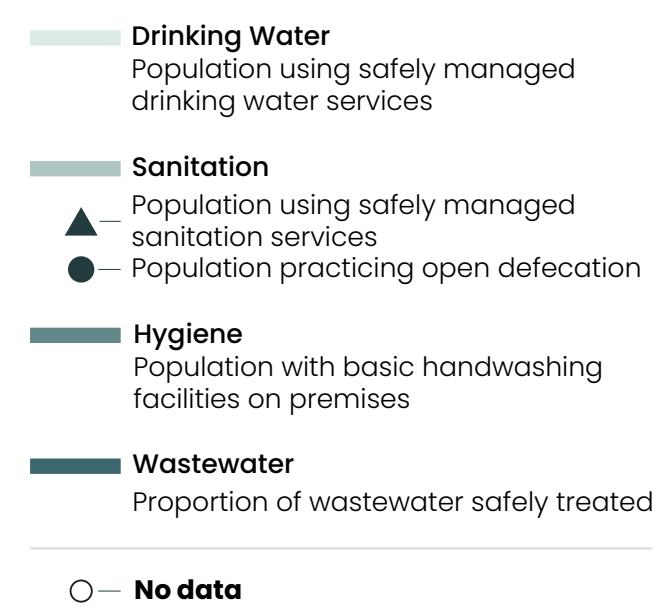
Water is essential for life. However, when it is unsafe, it becomes a serious threat. Millions of people around the world still rely on contaminated sources, leading to severe illness and even death.

The chart below shows the death rate linked to unsafe water in several Pacific Island nations, along with population figures and the proportion of people with access to basic drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

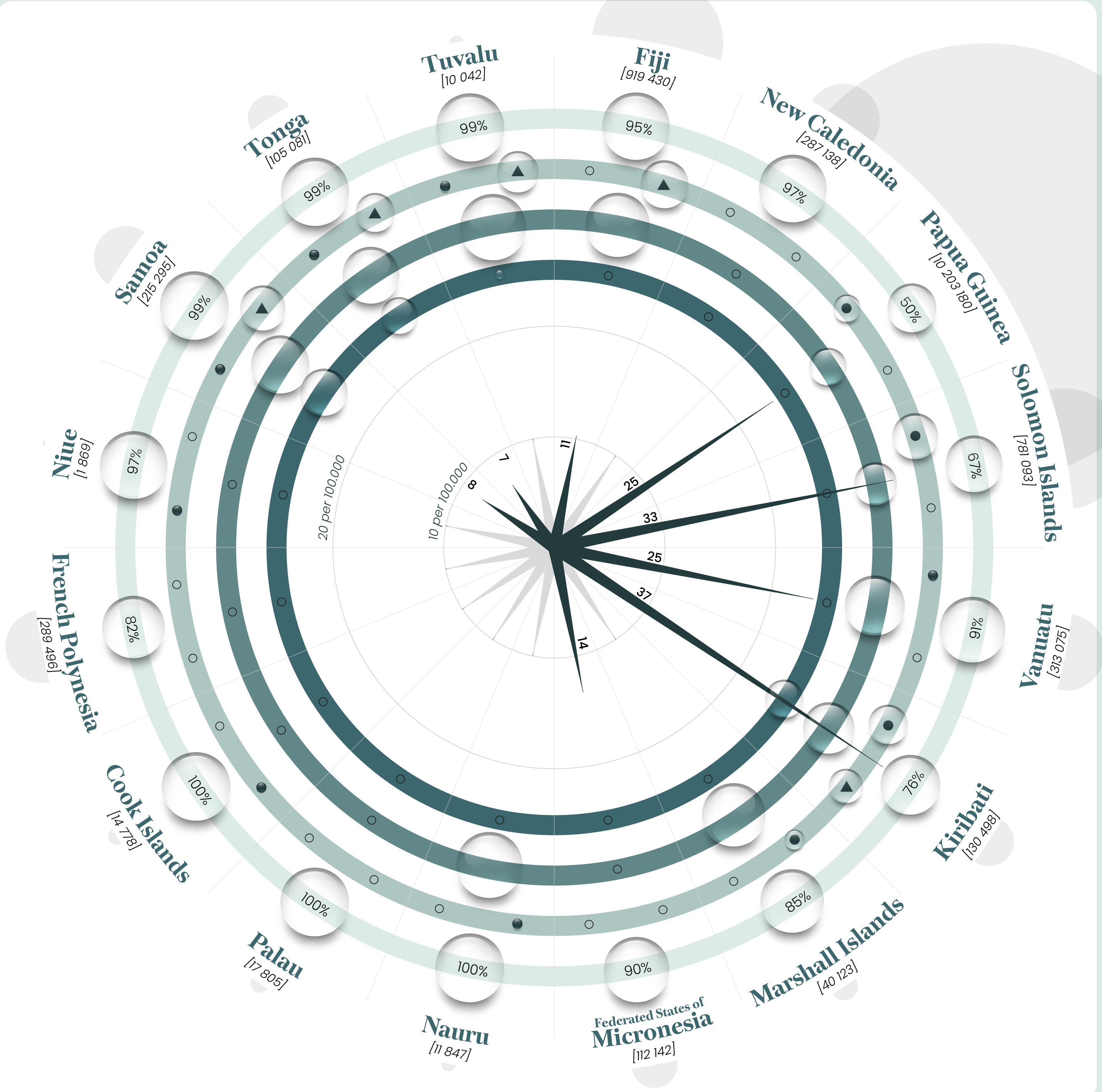
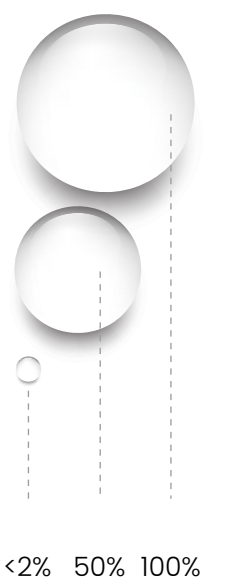


Legend

Colour and symbol key



Size

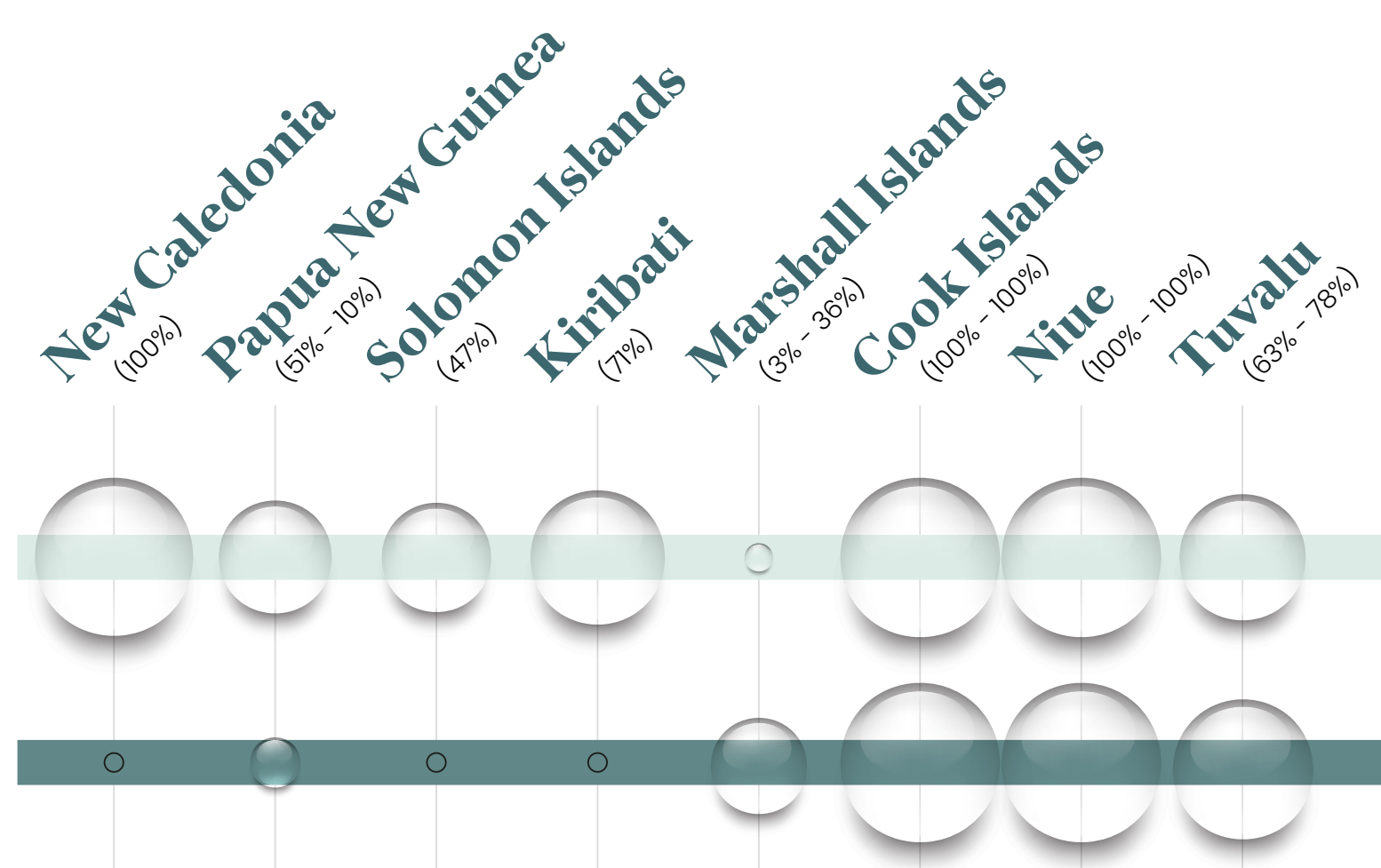


Water in schools

Access to clean water and safe hygiene facilities should not be a privilege—it should be a guaranteed right from early childhood. Yet in many Pacific Island nations, schools still lack the minimum conditions needed to safeguard children's health.

Contaminated water can harbor dangerous bacteria and other microorganisms that pose a higher risk to young children, whose immune systems are not yet fully developed.

This chart highlights a critical issue: the proportion of schools with safe drinking water and hygiene environments. Water is essential to all — but for children, it can mean the difference between health and illness. Protecting them begins with clean water.



Conclusions

Access to safe water should be a universal right — especially in schools, where it helps protect children's health and ensures a safe learning environment. However, many countries still struggle with inadequate water and hygiene services.

Data reveals a clear link between limited access to safe water and higher mortality rates. Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Kiribati are among the most critical cases, facing serious challenges such as low access to safely managed drinking water, high rates of open defecation, poor sanitation infrastructure, and limited hygiene facilities. **Papua New Guinea is particularly affected due to its large population**, which amplifies the impact of these issues.

Gaps in data remain a barrier. Information is incomplete making it difficult to fully assess the scale of the problem. Strengthening data collection is crucial to identifying needs and guiding effective responses.

Data Sources

- Population related data:** Population projections from the Statistics for Development Division (SDD) of the Pacific Community (SPC).
- Data related to drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and wastewater:** Indicator data for the Blue Pacific 2050 Thematic Area 2: People-Centered Development.
- Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene data:** Indicator data for the Blue Pacific 2050 Thematic Area 2: People-Centered Development.