

## Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM)

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# PACAM NEWSLETTER



**Resilience Champion in the Com**munity. Selina David, vice-president of the Community Disaster and Climate Change Committee (CDCCC) of Lawenata village in Vanuatu, shares a traditional meal with students from the local primary school. She champions disaster preparedness, nutrition and women's economic empowerment in her community. Through the "We're Ready for Climate Change: Increasing Small Island Resilience to Climate Change in Vanuatu" project, CARE International in Vanuatu and Save the Children supported 32 CDCCCs across Tafea and Sanma regions. The project took care to involve women in community-based disaster risk reduction actions to ensure that the needs of vulnerable community members are addressed.

**Displaced Micronesians Are Now Growing Their Own Food** 



Photos: These vegetable gardens are making a difference in the settlement communities. Photos © PACAM

After 2004's Typhoon Sudal devastated Yap State's outer islands, entire communities moved to governmentdesignated settlements on Yap island. However, the soil on these lands is badly degraded and water is scarce. USAID's Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM) supported the Climate Adaptive and Agriculture Resilience (CAAR) project by the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) to introduce innovative solutions to improve water and food security in these communities. *Continued on page 2* 

## **Special Feature / Resilient Gardening**

Displaced Micronesians/Continued from page 1...

In anticipation of the rainy season at the end of the drought in mid-2016, the project distributed portable rainwater harvesting bags commercially known as bob bags (a trademarked product developed by Relief International) to the first batch of 40 families. Each of these bob bags comes with a faucet and holds 350 gallons of water for domestic use and gardening.

"The bob bag is really convenient. Now I don't need to fetch water anymore (from the community rainwater tank some distance away)," said home gardener Romina Lemaisaf, of Daboch community.

After the bob bags were installed, the settlers were trained and mobilized to start up their home gardens.

"In the beginning, people wondered why this USAID project was making us plant vegetables. Some of them even said, 'We are Micronesian islanders. We eat fruits, roots, and fish, not leaves!'," said George Chuwmai, CAAR research assistant.

Vegetables were scarce and expensive on the islands, and for this reason, were usually missing in the

regular diet of islanders. Once in Yap, the settlers got into the unhealthy habit of eating canned meat with rice. But the outer islanders' attitude quickly changed when they started harvesting vegetables just a few weeks after planting.



Each participant household received a portable rainwater harvesting bag, commercially known as the bob bag, for gardening.. Photo: PACAM

With the help of the project's nutrition team, they learned not only that vegetables are really good for their health, but also that vegetables can be delectable dishes if they know how to prepare and cook these. Romina now usually makes salads, soups, or sauteés the vegetables with meat.

"We are growing our own food again just as we did when we were on the atoll; now it's even better as we're growing and eating all these vegetables unlike before when I only planted taro and cassava," said Romina.

Denitha Palemar, the Maternal and Child Health Program Coordinator of the Yap State Government said that the project has made a difference in the settlers' diet: "Most households (in the settlements) now consume vegetables in their meals, including pregnant women who need it most," she said.

The project has in fact become synonymous to high-quality vegetables in Yap. Romina and several other project participants are producing even more than what they consume, and they now regularly supply hotels and restaurants in Yap with greens as well. The project has since doubled the number of thriving home gardeners in the settlements to 80 families.•



CAAR project manager Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai giving a soil management training. Photo © COM-FSM

From Barren Lands to Green Gardens

The settlers brought with them seeds and plants from their atolls when they moved to higher ground in Yap, but the land's soil was low in nutrients and highly acidic. COM-FSM trained community members intensively on how to restore and manage the land's topsoil by mulching and adding compost and crushed coral, how to prevent erosion in the garden, and how to choose the right spot for planting. "We built on the lessons learned from our earlier project in Gargey community funded by the United States Department of Agriculture from 2006-2012, where we started by restoring degraded lands to grow traditional crops, and from there we moved on to training community members in adaptive agriculture strategies. This time, with PACAM, we also addressed

the water security in the communities through the bob bags," said CAAR project manager Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai. After working on the soil, settlers adopted small plot intensive gardening for high-nutrition vegetables, raised bed gardening, rotating and diversifying crops, container gardening using polybags, and other methods that make it possible to grow crops even in degraded soil.

## **World Oceans Day Special**

On June 8, some 100 countries observed World Oceans Day; a global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future. This year's theme was "Our Ocean, Our Future". Many of the resilience efforts that PACAM supports have a strong focus on sustainable marine resource management. Here are just some of them.

### Local Marine Management Plans Launched in Eastern Papua New Guinea

CARE International-Papua New Guinea (CARE-PNG) launched 16 Local Marine Management Plans for remote communities in Nissan District in eastern Papua New Guinea. With these plans, the communities now host the first locally managed marine area in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, an area that experienced a decade of conflict which ended in 2001.

The plans will help communities manage marine resources including fish, invertebrates and coral reefs. Under the USAID-supported "Improving Community Climate Resilience in Nissan" project, CARE-PNG earlier completed the most comprehensive coastal and marine resource assessment on these islands since the end of the conflict.

The assessment, undertaken in partnership with the Bougainville Bureau of Environment and Conservation, established baseline data for habitats such as sea grass, mangrove



Marine survey of Bougainville in action. Photo © CARE-PNG

and coral reef, to guide marine resource planning.

The plans were made in close consultation with communities over a period of five months, and were endorsed by the Nissan District Authority.

The communities of Nissan District are entirely dependent on their local coastal and marine resources for income generation, food, building material and firewood. Despite some informal management of resources in place, the resources are over-exploited. A good example is the sea cucumber: a national moratorium on harvesting and selling it had to be declared in 2009 to allow the stock to recover sufficiently. The moratorium was only lifted in April 2017, allowing regulated harvesting of sea cucumber. •

### Sharing Innovative Mapping Technology with University of Fiji's Department of Science

On June 6, the "Developing Base Maps of Tropical Aquatic Resources in the Pacific" project team trained nine staff of the University of Fiji's Department of Science in using the Geographic Information System (GIS) platform services. The system's satellite imagery provides a tool for rapid and accurate assessments that can be compared over time and with other locations.

At the end of the one-day workshop, the participants learned to use the GIS software to develop maps and transform data into information. The training improved the participants' skills in carrying out mapping activities and developing a strong database. It will also help the University of Fiji to broaden its scope for scientific research, and explore use of GIS in research and development. •



plore use of GIS in Project staff doing field work using the Global Positioning System (GPS) meter. PACAM is helping the University of Fiji to use GIS/GPS technology in mapping and monitoring the reefs surrounding Votua Ba and Maui Bay on Viti Levu island. This project will enable the Fijian government and the communities to protect their coastal and marine resources for the future. Photo © PACAM/Matt Abbott

### **Humans of PACAM**

### "I Like Working in the Water"—Walden Lohn, MERIP Diver



Just another day in the "office". Photo © PACAM/Matt Abbott

It was my American stepfather who taught me to dive when I was 20. He used to work for the Marine and Environmental Research Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP). He used to have a sponge farm, and I helped him maintain his farm.

I have been working for MERIP for nine years now. I help farmers set up sponge and coral farms. I put the lines in the water. The farmers work in the shallow part and we divers handle the deeper part.

Before, there were very few farmers working with MERIP. With the sup-

-port from USAID's Pacific-American Climate Fund, we are working with more and more farmers. We give them all the equipment and broodstock they need to get started. We also train them how to maintain their farms.

tt Abbott I like working in the water. It helps the body to be active.

I dive one or two days a week to help the farmers plant the sponges

We also help them harvest.

and corals, and tend to the farms.

I have one sponge farm myself. I work on my farm once a week. If the local store needs sponge, they buy from me.

Just as I learned to dive from my stepfather, I taught my youngest son, who's in sixth grade, to freedive. He now helps me on our farm on his free days.+



Walden tending to an underwater sponge farm. Photo © PACAM/Matt Abbott

#### **ABOUT THE FUND**

The Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM), is a grant-making facility funded by the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and administered by Partners for Global Research and Development, LLC (PGRD) that assists 12 Pacific Island countries to reduce long-term vulnerabilities associated with climate change. PACAM awards grants to civil society organizations in support of climate change adaptation measures and related "co-benefits", such as livelihoods enhancement, improved health, food security, disaster risk reduction, or sustainable natural resources management.

In addition to building climate resiliency, the Pacific-American Climate Fund, through the awarded grants, assists in strengthening the managerial and financial capacity of civil society organizations. The countries in which PACAM operates are: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

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