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## Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM)

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### PACAM NEWSLETTER



#### Pohnpeians Turn to Farming Corals, Sponges, and Giant Clams for Resilience

The majestic ruins of Nan Madol, an ancient city built on a coral reef, can be found off the eastern shore of Pohnpei. UNESCO describes it as a “globally significant masterpiece of creative genius”. Present-day underwater achievements can now also be found in the vicinity of Nan Madol; farms of corals, sponges, and giant clams flourish, helping Pohnpeians become more resilient.

Through a grant from USAID’s Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM), the Marine and Environmental Research Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP) is promoting sustainable small-scale aquaculture ventures among fishing communities whose livelihoods are projected to suffer as climate change impacts and overfishing decimate global fish stocks.

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Above: A diver tends to a coral farm. Photo © PACAM/Matt Abbott  
Below: Nan Madol, “the Atlantis of the Pacific.” Photo © PACAM



## Special Feature / Aquafarming in Pohnpei

*Pohnpeians Turn to Farming Corals/Continued from page 1...*

“We primarily get fishers to engage in aquaculture in the hope that they will be able to replace or supplement their income from fishing,” said Simon Ellis, Director of MERIP.

The PACAM grant has enabled MERIP to expand its operations and multiply the number of farmers involved in aquaculture. Its stock list of coral species has grown from one to 30 species. MERIP also introduced community-based clam farming and tested rabbitfish farming. Lastly, the number of aquafarmers the organization works with has risen from 10 to 45.

MERIP trains and helps the farmers establish and maintain the underwater farms. There is no capital investment needed on the part of the farmers, only time and labor.

The Alexander family is one family that now aquafarms together. Mariuch Alexander farms corals, his wife Wanihda maintains cages of rabbitfish daily, and their 24-year old son Withmark farms sponges. They

make at least \$120 a month in addition to their regular livelihoods of fishing and sewing.

In the Alexanders’ case, it is aquaculture that now brings food to the table for their extended family, including the families of their married children who live with them.

“Aquaculture provides money for our food and day to day needs, and it also pays our electric bill,” said Wanihda.

MERIP’s prospects are good. Its coral export, in particular, has grown significantly since the PACAM grant started, with a 20-25 percent rise in 2015 (albeit with a slight decline in 2016 due to a coral bleaching event caused by El Niño). More recently, MERIP has also started exporting colorful giant clams to the international marine aquarium market.

These underwater farms may be the future for Pohnpeians, giving them a fighting chance to weather the challenge of climate change.♦



*Some of MERIP’s coral farmers. Photo © PACAM*

### Community Projects Take Off

USAID’s Pacific-American Climate Fund also supports the Marine and Environment Research Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP) to conduct climate literacy outreach to fishing communities. Following these community outreach activities, MERIP recently helped four villages carry out adaptation projects of their own design. The projects, which are already being implemented, will establish a mangrove reserve, restore coral around marine protected areas, strengthen solid waste management, and improve water resource management. These community-level measures contribute to the area’s overall stability.♦

## Yap Day, the Biggest Cultural Celebration in the Island State



*The Micronesian island state recently celebrated its 49th Annual Yap Day on March 1-3 with traditional dance presentations. Photo: COM-FSM*



*U.S. Ambassador to Micronesia Robert Riley (center) on a visit to USAID’s Climate Adaptive Agriculture Resilience (CAAR) project’s booth during Yap Day celebration. Photo © COM-FSM*



# Earth Day Special

On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans from all walks of life rallied for a healthy, sustainable environment. Earth Day has since evolved into a global day to focus on the environment, an occasion celebrated by more than a billion people every year. Today, climate change gives the struggle for a clean environment greater urgency. Many of the resilience efforts that PACAM supports have a strong focus on the environment. Here are just some of them.

## Environmental and Climate Literacy

Community Centred Conservation Fiji (C3 Fiji) reached out to five communities in Macuata, Fiji this past month to raise awareness on climate change and natural resource management issues. The workshops on natural resource management have received positive feedback, with the communities requesting for follow-up sessions.

C3 Fiji also reached out to five primary schools to build the knowledge of schoolchildren on climate change, and empower them as agents of change within the community.

PACAM supports C3 Fiji to help the people of Macuata diversify their livelihoods, and reduce unsustainable activities such as overfishing and other destructive fishing practices. ♦



*Environmental and climate literacy outreach in schools. Photo © C3*



*Villagers of Natutu preparing for transplanting. Photo © WWF-Pacific*

## Mangrove Reforestation

On March 17, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Pacific transferred over 800 mangrove seedlings from the nursery to Natutu village in Fiji's Nailaga district for transplanting near the village's eroding riverbank of the Ba River. The villagers of Natutu also raised over 1,300 mangrove seedlings that will be transplanted later to other villages for riverbank stabilization. A total of 40 meters of the Nailaga district side of the riverbank have been rehabilitated using biodegradable coir logs made of coconut husk. Riverbank stabilization is part of improving the climate resilience of communities surrounding the Great Sea Reef. ♦

## Greening Schools

Children are instrumental in building community resilience as they learn about agriculture and nutrition in their school gardens and study climate change in the classrooms. PACAM has enabled the establishment of school gardens to demonstrate climate-resilient agricultural practices such as crop diversification, water harvesting, and use of resilient crops. CARE International in Vanuatu and Save the Children have established four school gardens in Tafea and Sanma provinces. The Chuuk Women's Council is also working to establish a school garden at Chuuk High School, and is developing an elective course on school gardening for Grades 8 and 9. ♦



*Dr. Susan K. Brems, USAID Mission Director for the Philippines, Pacific Islands, and Mongolia, recently visited the Mwan village nursery of the "Climate Change Adaptation through Family, Gardens, Food, and Health" project in Chuuk, Micronesia. Photo © IOM*

# Working with Government Entities

## Provincial Disaster Plans Launched in Vanuatu



*Mount Yassur, a stratovolcano on Tanna island in Vanuatu's Tafea province. Photo © PACAM/ Matt Abbott*

The provinces of Tafea and Sanma recently launched Provincial Disaster and Climate Change Plans. These are two of the first provinces in Vanuatu to have comprehensive climate disaster management plans. The plans have been developed by the Tafea and Sanma Provincial Offices with the support of the National

Management office and PACAM. The Tafea and Sanma Provincial Offices worked with CARE International and Save the Children, respectively, to develop the plans. The plans are the result of intensive workshops bringing together best practices in disaster management. ♦

## Tuvalu's Government Endorses USAID Project

The National Advisory Committee on Climate Change (NACCC) of Tuvalu recently endorsed the new USAID project "Mainstreaming Indigenous and Local Knowledge into Human Health Responses to Climate Change in Tuvalu" after a series of in-country meetings with stakeholders. The project is implemented by the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI) through a PACAM grant.

"Indigenous and local knowledge needs to be protected and appropriately utilized during disasters, especially climate change-related disasters and impacts," said NACCC

and Secretary to Government, Mr. Fakavae Taomia.

Other stakeholders have also expressed strong support for the project, including the Department of Environment, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organization. ♦



*A Tuvalu elder is a guardian of vital indigenous and local knowledge. Photo © FSPI*

## 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, will assist 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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