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PACAM NEWSLETTER

Building Back Better through Organic Farming in Fiji

Two years since Tropical Cyclone Winston, farmers of the most devastated province in western Fiji have rehabilitated their farms by turning to organic farming.



Fijian farmers are rediscovering traditional organic farming. © PACAM/Matt Abbott

Rising from an Epic Disaster. Tropical Cyclone Winston hit Fiji in February 2016. Older Fijians describe it as “the most horrific” disaster they have encountered in their lifetime. Ra province was declared as Winston’s ground zero. On August 2, 2016, PACAM launched a new project with FRIEND to improve the disaster resilience of Fijian communities through organic farming and food preservation techniques, building on traditional methods. The aim was to improve livelihoods and ensure adequate food supply of communities even during weather extremes. ♦



Launch of the PACAM-funded project in Ra province, Cyclone Winston’s ground zero, a few months after the disaster. Photo © PACAM

With the support of USAID’s Pacific-American Climate Fund, (PACAM) the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) has trained and assisted over 100 farmers in Ra province — declared as Tropical Cyclone Winston ground zero — to become certified as organic farmers, which means additional premiums for their produce.

The organic farming training provided through the project focused on how the farmers can refrain from using chemicals and still increase production through all-natural or organic methods. Earlier surveys conducted by FRIEND revealed that use of chemicals (especially weedicide and pesticide) was rampant among the farmers who struggled to meet market demands.

Of the four organic farmers groups established in the communities of Ra province, the group of Naya-vutoka village has been identified by the project as a model in improving food security. This farm has been supplying fresh produce for community occasions. The village’s women and youth are also applying food processing and preservation skills they learned from the project to provide their families healthy meals throughout the year. ♦

Special Events

50th Yap Day Highlights Food Security, Livelihood and Sustainability



Left to right: CAAR's Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai with U.S. Ambassador Robert Riley, U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Joanne Cummings, Australian Ambassador George Fraser and Japanese Ambassador Ryoichi Hori at the project's booth; (Right) Yap Day parade float. Photos © COM-FSM

From February 28 to March 2, Yap State in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) celebrated its 50th Yap Day by showcasing traditional Yapese culture as well as local development programs. The festivities highlighted the themes of food security, sustainability and livelihood by showcasing USAID's Climate Adaptive and Agriculture Resilience project.

The project's beneficiaries sold fresh produce and food products from their home gardens at official sites of the festivities. U.S. Ambassador Robert Riley and Deputy Chief of Mission Joanne Cummings were among the dignitaries who visited the project's booths.

The College of Micronesia-FSM

Yap Campus trained atoll communities in resilient gardening techniques which made it possible for them to produce high-nutrient vegetables despite the degraded soil and water scarcity in some parts of Yap. Atoll communities have migrated to the main island of Yap due to environmental problems such as flooding, saltwater intrusion, lack of freshwater, among others. ♦

USAID Deputy Mission Director for the Pacific Islands Visits PACAM Projects

USAID Deputy Mission Director for the Pacific Islands Clay Epperson visited several PACAM-funded resilience projects in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Papua New Guinea (PNG). During his extended stay in the region early this year, Epperson met with key partners and toured project sites where USAID is helping Pacific Island countries overcome some of their greatest environmental challenges.

Epperson interacted with staff from PACAM grantee organizations Aquaculture Technologies of the Marshall Islands, Inc. (ATMI), Chuuk Women's Council (CWC) and



USAID Deputy Mission Director Clay Epperson (2nd from left) visited a school garden in Chuuk, FSM. Photo © PACAM

ChildFund-PNG.

All these organizations boost resilience through food security and livelihood using innovative solutions in aquaculture and resilient

agriculture. ATMI is sustainably farming moi fish and produces fish feed. CWC is helping families and schools grow vegetable gardens. Lastly, ChildFund-PNG introduced farmers to resilient agriculture. ♦

In Action

Indigenous Public Health Responses in Tuvalu and Solomon Islands



Community members from Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands turned out in droves to participate in an indigenous knowledge research workshop by FSPI. Photo: FSPI

The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSPI) presented to Tuvalu government officials its research findings on indigenous and local knowledge used by communities in health responses. FSPI held a knowledge-sharing workshop for representatives from the Ministry of

Health, Climate Change Division, Meteorology Office, Department of Agriculture and Department of Rural Development as well as the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organizations to discuss how they can integrate indigenous knowledge in public health adaptation measures.

FSPI also presented its research findings to Solomon Islands government officials earlier. Solomon Islands' Director of Culture Dennis Manita of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism expressed appreciation for the project, which aligns with the Ministry's mandate to map and document various indigenous and local knowledge practices for resilience. Manita also suggested inclusion of the project's findings in the school curriculum.

Given their limited capacity to address various health risks that their populations are facing, the governments of Tuvalu and Solomon Islands have identified human health as a key sector that should be addressed by resilience efforts. Well-documented indigenous and local knowledge can be used to inform policies and improve health outcomes in these countries. ♦



Officers of Rarikisi savings club in PNG's Choiseul Province. Photo © NRDF



Women's Savings Clubs Make a Difference. With the communities' increased incomes from sustainable forest management and honey farming, the Natural Resource Development Foundation (NRDF) has encouraged women of remote villages in Choiseul Province of Western Solomon Islands to establish women's savings clubs. Over 170 women now comprise eight savings clubs in the province. The Rarikisi women's savings club has a chairwoman, vice-chairwoman, secretary, treasurer and two tellers or money recorders. Every other week, the women meet at a member's house, and deposit money into three main 'baskets'; one for personal savings, one for loans, and one for club administration purposes. The club has allowed members to use their savings to pay for school fees, and also started microlending to help start up small enterprises. ♦

In Action

Partnering with Local Governments and Communities for Biodiversity Conservation in Papua New Guinea



(Above) Workshop participants learned to use aerial images in mapping ecosystem services; (Below) A sample ecosystems services map produced during the workshop. Photo © ISF-UTS

To engage Papua New Guinea (PNG) communities in biodiversity conservation, the Institute for Sustainable Futures-University of Technology Sydney (ISF-UTS) held a two-day scoping workshop with local partners and community facilitators to guide the design of biodiversity and resilience workshop materials.

The workshop tested the use of Google Earth aerial imagery and participatory mapping to spatially locate ecosystem services valued by the communities. The interactive tool proved effective in generating rich discussion about ecosystem service values and potential threats. The process provided the ISF team with a wealth of information about local context and environmental changes

that will be useful for its upcoming series of biodiversity and resilience workshops for communities and local government officials of PNG's Madang and Chimbu provinces.

ISF-UTS and local partner Binatang Research Centre also conducted in-depth interviews with representatives from Madang and Eastern Highlands Provincial Governments.

Through a grant from PACAM, ISF-UTS will train local government officials and communities to undertake environmental vulnerability assessments and ecosystem valuation that will help them make informed decisions about future developments in their regions. ♦

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 develop and sustain their environmental resilience.

PACAM awards grants to civil society organizations (including local, national, and internationally-operating entities) in support of resilience measures that promote “co-benefits”, such as livelihoods enhancement, improved health, food security, disaster risk reduction, or sustainable natural resources management. Resources for managerial and financial capacity-building are also provided to CSO grantees, so as to ensure the sustainability of their efforts and improve their ability to access and manage funds from other donors.

PACAM has awarded to date 28 resilience grants to CSOs across the Pacific Islands, including four biodiversity and resilience grants awarded in the latest confirmed cycle.

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.

Contact:

Peter Collier

Chief of Party, Pacific-American Climate Fund
Unit 1003 Financial and Trade Tower
7th Avenue corner 32nd Street
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Manila, Philippines
Email: pcollier@pgrd.org
Web: www.pgrd.org/projects/pacam/

Sharon Gulick

Environment Officer
USAID/Pacific Islands
U.S. Embassy
1201 Roxas Boulevard
Ermita Manila, Philippines
Email: sgulick@usaid.gov

Regional Fund Manager for Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia

Praveen Lata
plata@pgrd.org