



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM)

July-September 2016

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Pearl Farming as Alternative Livelihood for Namdrik Atoll



A little girl holds Namdrik black pearls. The enclosed pristine lagoon of this atoll is favorable for black-lip oysters, which are used to produce black South Seas pearls or "Tahitian black" pearls. Photo © PACAM/Matt Abbott

The pearl farmers of Namdrik Atoll, Marshall Islands recently harvested over 1,000 pearls and seeded more than 1,200 new oysters to begin the next crop. This is the first major black pearl harvest of the Namdrik Atoll Development Association (NADA), a community-based organization supported by USAID's Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM). While Namdrik's pearl farm has been in a pilot stage for years, PACAM is now helping NADA move to a commercial level of production.

The USAID-supported "Linking Adaptation and Livelihoods" project aims to develop pearl farming as a new source of income for the people of Namdrik, where the traditional livelihoods of farming of banana and taro have suffered due to the sea level rise contaminating the freshwater lens as a result of climate change.

The value of the harvest is estimated at US\$40,000; most of it from a small number of pearls commanding high prices for their ideal shape, color, and blemish-free surface.

The project includes training pearl farmers, and enabling NADA to increase the production of pearl oysters to a sustainable level. In addition, the project supports developing pearl products as well as their marketing and sales.

The pristine condition of the water in the Marshall Islands is favorable for pearl farming and the country also has a willing workforce. However, Namdrik does not have a high abundance of wild pearl oysters, making the collection of juvenile oysters or spats a challenge; thus, the pearl oysters have to be produced in hatcheries. The key is

increasing the stock of black lip oysters to a sustainable level, estimated at 12,000-15,000 oysters, which NADA plans to do over the next few years.

According to Marshall Islands' Minister in Assistance Mattlan Zackhras, the pearl farm has received a tremendous boost from PACAM's funding and technical support.

The PACAM grant is helping pave the way for this remote island and its people to get a sizable share of the multimillion dollar market for pearls. A thriving pearl farm can employ dozens of people, which is good news for this outlying atoll where there are limited livelihood opportunities. These prospects make pearl farming a feasible development opportunity for Namdrik Atoll. ♦



The pearl farmers tie strings of pearl oysters to the holding lines in Namdrik Lagoon. Photo © PACAM/Matt Abbott

IN ACTION: Project Launches

USAID AWARDS EIGHT NEW CCA PROJECTS FOR THE PACIFIC REGION



Launch of the PCS and HOPE adaptation projects in Palau with President of Palau Tommy Remengesau, Jr. (left), U.S. Ambassador to Palau Amy J. Hyatt (2nd from right), and USAID Mission Director Dr. Susan Brems (right). Photo © PACAM



Organic lunch, sourced from FRIEND's community network, was served at FRIEND's launch. Photo © PACAM



U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Kolonia, Micronesia Joanne Cummings awards the grant to CWC's Kiki Stinnett in the presence of Federated States of Micronesia Speaker of Congress Wesley Simina. Photo © PACAM



U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa Mark Gilbert awards the grant to SUNGO's Roina Vavatau. Photo © PACAM



USAID Regional Coordinator for the Pacific Richard Edwards presented the award to FRIEND's Sashi Kiran, with Director of Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture Jone Sovalewa. Photo © PACAM

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM), recently awarded eight civil society organizations in the Pacific region a total of over \$1.9 million to help the communities adapt to the impacts of climate change. The new grantees are: Samoa Umbrella for Non- Governmental Organisations, Inc. (SUNGO); Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND); Chuuk Women's Council (CWC); Palau Conservation Society (PCS); Hatohebei Organization for People and Environment (HOPE); Solomon Islands Association of Community Learning Centres (SIACLC); Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership (SICCP); and Community Centred Conservation Fiji (C3).

The new grants will build the climate resilience of the most vulnerable communities in Samoa, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands, and Palau. PACAM has awarded to date 23 climate change adaptation grants valued at \$9.8 million to civil society organizations across the Pacific Islands. ♦



Lively dance number at CWC launch. Photo © PACAM

IN ACTION: Regional Symposium on CCA

Fifteen Organizations Share Adaptation Innovations at Regional Forum



PACAM staff and representatives of grantee organizations during the regional exchange forum held in Lautoka, Fiji. Photo © PACAM

In late July, USAID's Pacific-American Climate Fund gathered 15 grantee organizations across the Pacific region to share best practices and innovations in implementing climate change adaptation projects. The two-day regional forum was held in conjunction with the *Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific Region* held July 27-28 in Lautoka, Fiji. "It was an amazing opportunity for networking, exchanging ideas, and finding solutions to the challenges we face. The

best practices were not just interesting; they also inspired us to be innovative in our adaptation work," said Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai, project director of the *Climate Adaptive Agriculture and Resilience* project implemented by College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM). Dr. Krishnapillai's presentation about portable rainwater bags or *bob bags* as a game changer in domestic rainwater harvesting in Yap generated a lot of interest among the grantees. ♦

USAID Grantees Win Top Prizes for Papers Presented at CCA Symposium in Fiji



PACAM grantees Su'a Julia Wallwork and Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai with their trophies for Best Papers Awards at the regional symposium. Photos © PACAM

Congratulations to Su'a Julia Wallwork of Adventist Disaster Relief Agency Samoa Trust (ADRA-Samoa) and Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai of COM-FSM for winning the first and second prize, respectively, for Best Papers at the Climate Change Adaptation Symposium for the Pacific Region held July 26-28 in Lautoka, Fiji. Wallwork's paper was titled "Coupling Disaster and Financial Management to Reduce Vulnerability; Challenging Traditional Mindset; Experiences from the Community," while Dr. Krishnapillai's paper was titled "Climate-Friendly Adaptation Strategies for the Displaced Atoll Population in Yap." The symposium was attended by leading scholars, practitioners, and policymakers undertaking research and/or executing adaptation projects in the region and beyond. ♦

IN FOCUS: CCA in Palau

“Our very existence today is testament to the unwavering resolve and wisdom of our people to adapt. “ — Palau President Tommy Remengesau, Jr.

H.E. Tommy Remengesau, Jr. is the eighth President of the Republic of Palau, and the first Palau President to be re-elected thrice. He was awarded the top accolade by the United Nations Environmental Programme – The Champion of the Earth award — in 2014. He was also cited by Time Magazine as one of the heroes of the environment in 2007. He was the keynote speaker at the launch of USAID-supported adaptation projects in Palau on September 20, 2016.



President Remengesau delivering a speech at the launch of new adaptation projects in Koror, Palau. Photo © PACAM

I commend and congratulate the Palau Conservation Society (PCS) and the Hatohobei Organization for People and Environment (HOPE) for taking on these important adaptation projects. Over the past five years, Palau has experienced more natural disasters than it ever has in its recorded history. With two super typhoons devastating the country within one year, five more typhoons which barely missed us, and coming through the most severe drought we have ever experienced in this century, we must heed the warnings and advance our disaster resilience methods.

Indeed, Palau and Micronesia lie in one of the world's most vulnerable regions when it comes to the negative impacts of climate change. These changes have affected Palau and the region with dramatic revenue loss across sectors such as agriculture, water resources, forestry, and tourism; not to mention displacing so many families from homes they kept for generations. If not addressed, these changes will slowly take away our very identities as a people.

No perspective is more important than

the local perspective: the perspective that comes from everyday resource users like the people of Hatohobei and our outlying states, people of Yap and its outer islands that have been forced to relocate their families due to rising sea levels. These perspectives from the people living in, and through these impacts, bring the realities of climate change front and center. And it's the perspectives and efforts of organizations working directly with the people that provide the right tools and knowledge to succeed in the fight against climate change.

I am extremely pleased that these projects of revitalization, restoration, and resilience are taking place. Our very existence today is testament to the unwavering resolve and wisdom of our people to adapt. The work being done today with USAID, PCS, and HOPE attests to that continuing resolve, passion, and sense of responsibility. Only by working together can we ensure that Palau is prepared and resilient and will survive through disasters with our people, our culture, our resources, and our identity intact for generations to come. ♦

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.

Peter Collier

Chief of Party, Pacific-American Climate Fund
Unit 1003 The Trade and Financial 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
Annex 2 Building, U.S. Embassy
1201 Roxas Boulevard
Ermita Manila, Philippines
Email: sgulick@usaid.gov

REGIONAL OFFICES

Melanesia Regional Office

Regional Fund Manager
Jenne Cosmas
jcosmas@pgrd.org

Polynesia Regional Office

Regional Fund Manager
Praveen Lata
plata@pgrd.org

Micronesia Regional Office

Regional Fund Manager
Lara Studzinski
lstudzinski@pgrd.org