



Newsletter

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PIFON supports Seed Learning Exchange to Asia

Seed selection, seed production, seed storage and seed marketing are all important issues facing Pacific Island farmers. Through PIFON's partnership with Asian Farmer Organisations under the Medium Term Cooperation Programme for Farmer Organisations in Asia and the Pacific Phase II (MTCP II), Pacific farmers and farmers organisation reps were able to see first hand the development of the seed industry in Taiwan and the Philippines.

Six participants and a consultant from the region were chosen by Farmer Organisations to participate in the Seed Learning Exchange Forum that was held in Taiwan from Dec 01—04 with a consecutive follow-on programme held in Philippines from Dec 05-07, 2014.

The Pacific-Taiwan Seed Learning Exchange took place in Kaohsiung City and Tainan City. A study visit on the Taiwan seed industry was undertaken coupled with training on the different components of the seed related industry: including seed research and seed preparation for commercial use and community retention. This research programme was under the direction of Professor Wen-Chi Huang of the Department of Agri-business Management at the National Pingtung University of Science and Technology. Participants were also able to visit commercial seed companies such as Known You Seeds and the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC).

The Philippines sector of the Learning Exchange involved participants taking part in a learning exchange forum entitled "Harvesting Experiences, Challenges and Opportunities on Seeds in Asia and the Pacific." This two day forum was followed by field visits to seed farms in Bulacan and the Institute of Plant Breeding of the University of the Philippines.

PIFON has recently completed a regional scoping study and project design related to: "Utilizing farmer organisations to improve the access to high quality seed for Pacific island farmers". PIFON will be working with its members to implement a number of identified activities in the various countries related to findings from the study and the recent learning exchange.



HARVESTING EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES ON SEEDS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: A LEARNING EXCHANGE FORUM



Pacific women farmers participate in Learning Exchange on Farmer Entrepreneurship in India

SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) organized trainings on 'Women Farmer Learning on Entrepreneurship' in Gujarat on November 24—27 and Dec 10—13, 2014 which were attended by female participants from Samoa, Tonga and Fiji.

Through the programme, the ladies gained knowledge about the functioning and management of farmer organizations, collective production, processing and marketing of producer groups, micro enterprises of members, and methods of federation providing various linkages to farmer groups. A visit to the farmer field schools was also conducted to provide a practical view of what they had learnt.

Participants of the Women Farmer Learning on Entrepreneurship at SEWA



SPC signs partnership agreement with PIFON and launches guide on Agricultural Value Chains

Farmers are the focus of the new partnership agreement signed between the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and PIFON. The signing ceremony took place on 24th October, 2014, at the Holiday Inn, Suva, where SPC Deputy Director General Ms Fekita 'Utoikamanu said that, "without the hard work of our farmers, there is no food supply, no food security and it will be difficult to sustain the growth of our communities." She said SPC is investing in a change process, restructuring and repositioning itself to better provide efficient and practical services delivering clear results for member countries.

The event was also attended by the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture in Fiji, Mr Ropate Ligairi, and representatives from IFAD, SPC and PIFON members. The partnership, which provides \$400,000 support to the network in two years to December 2016, aims to also increase the contribution of the agriculture and forestry sectors to national economic growth and livelihoods in the Pacific region.

The partnership agreement was facilitated by the SPC Land Resources Division's Pacific Agriculture Policy Program (PAPP), a programme funded under the European Union Intra ACP program encompassing the Pacific and the Caribbean region, of which eight million euro (\$F19.7m) has been allocated by the European Union for the Pacific component.

The occasion was also used to officially launch the 'Agricultural Value Chain Guide for the Pacific Islands'. The value chain analysis guide is targeting farmers, traders and policy makers. It is designed to be practical and useable and unlike many other value chain guides that exist, is directed primarily at actors in the value chain.

SPC Deputy Director General, Dr Fekita 'Utoikamanu and PIFON Director, Dr Andrew McGregor signing the FJD\$400,000 PIFON-PAPP agreement.



Value Chain Training with the FSA Spices Network on Vanuatu

PIFON will funding from the EU funded SPC-PAPP project has recently assisted FSA and their Spices Network to pilot the utilisation of the “Agricultural Value Chain Guide for the Pacific Islands”. This Guide was recently published by the EU-ACP Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development CTA and printed by PAPP. The training involved FSA/Spices Network running a participatory on-farm value chain exercise on the island of Malo with organic pepper farmers and the processor/exporter.

The training focussed on the quality requirements and costs of supply this remunerative, but highly demanding, value added market. This training was exceptionally well received by the participating farmers an immediate response being realised in terms of the quantity and quality of the pepper being supplied. FSA and Spices Network are now planning to conduct similar value chain training for vanilla farmers on Tanna early in the New Year.



VC Training participants discuss scenarios relating to their pepper farms.



Andrew McGregor and Piero Bianchessi look on as VC Training participants engage in discussion.

Taveuni Taro Stakeholders participate in Value Chain Training — A PIFON-PAPP Partnership Startup Activity

Two value chain trainings were carried in November on the island of Taveuni in Fiji focused on the Taro Value Chain. The trainings were implemented in partnership with PIFON members Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC) and Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT).

The trainings were implemented using the ‘Agricultural Value Chain Guide for the Pacific Islands’. Participants of the value chain trainings consisted of Taro stakeholders of TTT and the staff and participants of the Young Farmers Course of TRTC.

TTT has plans to complete a value chain analysis for the Taveuni Taro Chain which will help illuminate the roles of the various actors in the chain along with their respective margins, it is envisioned that this type of analysis will help improve the relationships of all the actors in the chain.

TRTC aims to translate and incorporate some of the value chain training materials into the regular curriculum of the Young Farmers Course.



Taveuni Taro stakeholders present results of their group exercise looking at each ‘actors’ role in the chain.

A Floriculture Technical Exchange from Fiji to Samoa

In November 2014, Don and Aileen Burness of the South Sea Orchids Floriculture group travelled to Samoa to conduct a floriculture training workshop organized by the Samoa Farmers Association (SFA). This workshop was attended by approximately 30 growers and floriculture entrepreneurs.

The training was conducted using the Fiji Floriculture Handbook that was just launched in March this year in a bid to enhance the viability of floriculture businesses.

The Burness's provided hands-on training on how to grow and harvest cut flower and flowering potted plant varieties such as anthuriums, orchids, guzmannias, gingers and heliconias. They also covered the aspect of managing a floriculture business.



Samoa farmers benefits from Pineapple Technical Exchange

A farmer-to-farmer exchange was made between Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) in Fiji and the Samoa Farmers Association (SFA) very early this month at the request of SFA. To focus of the technical exchange was to introduce all year round production of pineapple and provide information for growers interested in establishing export of pineapple from Samoa to New Zealand. The training was conducted by commercial pineapple farmer and TTT board member, Peter Kjaer.

To begin the technical exchange a number of farm visits were conducted to understand the context of pineapple production in Samoa. These farm visits were followed up by a presentation to interested SFA farmers at the Alafua School of Agriculture Conference room on the pineapple growing practices of Vunivasa Estate in Taveuni, Fiji followed by a practical demonstration at the Tanumapua Plantation.

Key technical issues that were addressed through the training include: site selection, choosing a production model (intensive, semi-intensive etc.), selecting planting material, multiplying planting material, farm layout, spacing, planting, nutrition, weed control and general farm management.

Following the technical exchange a list of recommendations were provided to SFA outlining some possible support activities for farmers interested in expanding pineapple plantings and targeting off-season production.

PIFON supports Fiji-Vanuatu technical exchange on developing rural training centers

With funding from the EU Funded SPC-PAPP project, PIFON facilitated an exchange between the member organisations - the Taveuni (Fiji) based Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC) and Vanuatu's Farm Support Association (FSA). In 2011 the FSA Manager, Peter Kaoh, spent time at the TRTC where he identified the Tutu training "model" as applicable to Vanuatu's rural youth seeking remunerative self-employment utilising their own land resources. FSA, in collaboration with the community, have now established a pilot youth training program based on the Tutu "model" at the Napil Rural Training Center (NRTC) on Tanna. The motto of "The Vanuatu Young Farmers Development Course" is "Turning Farm into Business". The NRTC now has 20 young men and women selling crops grown on their own customary land. Under this initiative land was formally allocated to each young farmer, prior to their participation in the course, by signed agreement from their parents and the village chief. All the young farmers have opened saving accounts where the earnings from their farms are deposited and each participant has developed a 5-year plan. For Vanuatu, such land access arrangements represent a path breaking development for the involvement of youth in agriculture, particularly young women.

After two years of operation the FSA requested that PIFON support a review of the NRTC by a team familiar with the operations and principles of Tutu. A team comprising Father Petero Matairatu from Tutu and Andrew McGregor, the lead author of the FAO sponsored report "The Tutu Rural Training Centre: Lessons in Non-Formal Adult Education for Self Employment in Agriculture", visited Tanna in November 2014. The team assessed how the "Tutu" Model has been applied in terms of providing self-employment in agriculture and the lessons learnt from this experience. They made recommendations on the successful start-up of the Napil pilot could be consolidated and made sustainable in the long term. SPC/PAPP staff also secured footage that will be utilised in produce videos on NRTC and appropriate rural training in the Pacific.



Left: Fr Petero of Tutu Rural Training Center (Taveuni, Fiji) during a visit to Napil Rural Training center (Tanna, Vanuatu).

Below: The "fruits" of the Napil Rural Training Center at the Lenakel Market.



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