

Newsletter

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Tropical Cyclone Winston causes widespread destruction in Fiji— Some important lessons are emerging for farmer organisations

Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Winston struck Fiji on 20th February 2016. The cyclone, with winds gusting to 230 km/h (145 mph), was the strongest tropical cyclone to make landfall over Fiji on record. Cyclone Winston's devastating impact across Fiji rendered tens of thousands homeless, and prompted a major international humanitarian response. An estimated 350,000 people (40 percent of the nation's population) were moderately or severely affected by the storm. Approximately 250,000 people required water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance due to power outages and damaged infrastructure. Through the evening of 26 February, approximately 62,000 people were housed in evacuation centres across the country, primarily in the Western Division.

According to a report released by the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture on 17th March, the damage to the Agriculture sector by Tropical Cyclone Winston stands at FJD 208.3million. The Ministry of Agriculture Permanent Secretary Uraia Waibuta says the damage includes crops, livestock and infrastructure but does not include the sugar sector. He said Vanuabalavu, Lomaiviti, Cakaudrove, Bua, Tailevu North and Ra were identified as the most affected areas.

Many PIFON member farmer organisations across Fiji were significantly affected in terms of infrastructure and farm losses. Various farmer organisations are working in close collaboration with the authorities related to relief efforts and planning for agricultural rehabilitation.

Despite the devastation, there are emerging several important lessons related to pre and post cyclone crop mitigation as well as appropriate roles for farmer organisations in supporting post-disaster rehabilitation. PIFON hopes to work with its members to capture some of these lessons to share within the network.

With much uncertainty about the impacts of climate change on Pacific Islands agriculture, most experts confirm that the Pacific should expect less cyclones overall however the cyclones that do hit will be much more powerful. Certainly the recent TC Pam in Vanuatu and now TC

Nature's Way Cooperative Research and Extension officer conducts post-cyclone damage assessments with collaborating nursery operators. Building 'disaster ready' nurseries in Fiji has proven to increase the rate of rehabilitation of cash crop farms.



Pacific Farmer Organisations represented at Sixth Global Farmers Forum

Pacific Farmer Organisations from Fiji and Samoa were represented at the Sixth Global Farmers Forum held in Rome from February 15-16, including Serenia Madigibuli from Tutu Rural Training Center (Fiji) and Afamasaga Toleafoa from the Samoa Farmers Association.

The Farmers' Forum, established in 2005, is an on-going, bottom-up process of consultation and dialogue between smallholder farmers' and rural producers' organizations from all over the world, IFAD and IFAD's Member States. The Forum is rooted in and aims to strengthen effective partnerships and collaborations between IFAD and Farmers' Organizations (FOs) in country programmes and investment projects, as well as building their capacity and engaging in policy dialogue initiatives.

A total of sixteen representatives from nine farmer organizations participating in MTCP2 in Asia and the Pacific took part in the event which provided for an opportunity to share about the work that is being done at the regional and national level to support farmer organization development.

Pacific Island farmer organisations are gaining invaluable exposure to farmer organisations around the world through involvement in these types of forums, and the fruits of these networks are already beginning to take shape in the form partnerships related to seeds and rural training materials which have been facilitated by PIFON under the IFAD funded MTCP II programme.



 #FAFO2016

Asia Pacific Farmers' Forum
Supported by the Medium Term Cooperation Program Phase Two (MTCP2)

WE ♥ YOU
Small farmers feed the world and care for the earth

PIFON looks to extend network to farmer organisations in Timor Leste

PIFON recently undertook a scoping study on the current status of National Farmer Organisations (NFOs) in Timor-Leste, and on the opportunities for engagement with PIFON. A local consultant was hired to carry out this work in consultation with the Timorese Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and other relevant stakeholders.

The scoping report identified that thousands of “informal” farmer groups have been established and supported to some extent by government and aid partners over the years. Of these many informal organisations, there are five larger organisations with formal registration which have been recognised for their good service delivery to members. These are: (i) ANAPROFIKO (ANA for short) - which is the National Association of Commercial Seed Producers in Timor-Leste; (ii) CCT (Cooperative Café Timor) - CCT is not an NFO but is the largest coffee producers' cooperative in Timor-Leste; (iii) Federasaun Pescas Arturo (FPA) (a network of five fishing cooperatives on Arturo Island); (iv) UNAER (a network of eight coffee cooperatives); and (v) CSALT which is the marketing arm of 30 cooperatives.



PIFON will be meeting several of these farmer organisations during the Seeds of Life Conference which will be held in Dili, Timor Leste from April 12-15th 2016. The conference will be attended by the PIFON manager as well a representative from PNG Women in Agriculture and PNG NARI.

It is envisioned that following the meeting in Dili, We will have a new farmer organisation member in Timor Leste which will further the

network.

Timor Leste Farmer Organisation ANA is involved in representing the interests of the commercial seed producers and to promote the development of commercial seed trade.



PIFON Concludes AGM— First Female Board Member Elected

PIFON held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 4th at the Anchorage Beach Resort, Vuda, Fiji Islands. The AGM was dovetailed to the PIFON Learning and Planning Meeting to allow for maximum participation from PIFON members around the region.

An AGM is the members day to hear all the information about the management of the organisation over the preceding year . The AGM is also where the members are provided with audited financials from the preceding year which they can review and ask questions to the management or directly to the auditor who was present at the meeting.

PIFON has a built-in mechanism to allow for the rotation of 1/3 of its board members every AGM. The election of board members is done by the members through a show of hands. During the most recent AGM two board members—Andrew McGregor and Clement Hadosaia stepped down as board members and then Clement Hadosaia was re-elected along with PIFON's first female Board member—Serenia Madigibuli. All of the board members and the current chairman remain the same.

PIFON is very grateful for the commitment of its board members who serve on a voluntary basis and provide invaluable guidance to the management of this young organisation.

Board member profile—Serenia Madigibuli

Serenia has served with the Tutu Rural Training Center on the island of Tavenui for the past twenty five years in many capacities including trainer and programme coordinator. Serenia has an incredible passion for the young men and women farmers that attend courses at Tutu and she helps to maintain the extensive alumni network across the province of Cakaudrove that gives Tutu so much support. Serenia provides the PIFON board with a wealth of experience in management, training and has keen insight into ways to encourage our youth to be engaged in agriculture.



PIFON Board members following the Annual General Meeting.

PIFON Hosts Learning and Planning Meeting

PIFON Hosted a Learning and Planning meeting from December 1st—December 4th 2016 including members from across six countries and key development partners. PIFON's learning and planning event was an important time to reflect on the achievements of 2015 and capture key lessons learnt. The event also provided an opportunity to carry out in depth planning for both national and regional activities for 2016.

Critical to PIFON's learning and planning events are the involvement of PIFON partners. This most recent event brought together representatives from IFAD, SPC PAPP Project and MTCP II coordinators (AFA and LVC). This forum provided all participants with an opportunity to share success stories and constraints that all contributed to the refinement of 2016 workplans.

PIFON has two active projects for 2016 that include: MTCP II and PAPP. These projects provide support for activities at the national level as well at the regional level. PIFON is also beginning its Pacific Breadfruit and Seeds Programme which will be implemented using existing project funds but will focus on these key areas which have been identified as critical to address such as climate change and the rising rates of NCDs.

PIFON LEARNING & PLANNING MEETING
'Reflect, Refresh and Move Forward'
December 01 – 04, 2015
Anchorage Beach Resort, Vuda, Fiji Islands

The banner features the PIFON logo on the left and a row of partner logos on the right: IFAD (Investing in rural people), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC (Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Confederazione Svizzera, Confédération Suisse, Confederaziun Svizra), Pacific Community (Communauté du Pacifique), the European Union flag, and PAPP (Pacific Agriculture Policy Project).

PIFON policy briefs launched

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) has recently published two key policy briefs highlighting the role of farmer organisations in agricultural research and extension. These policy briefs were funded through the EU-SPC Pacific Agricultural Policy Programme (PAPP).

Related to agricultural research, the policy brief concludes that a partnership between agriculture ministries, relevant public sector organisations and farmer organisations will increase the depth and quality of agricultural research as well as see a more comprehensive and widespread adoptions of the results.

Related to agricultural extension, the policy brief stresses that farmer organisations can effectively and efficiently complement the work of government and aid agencies by extending the outreach of support to farmers.

Both policy briefs highlight examples of PIFON member farmer organisations who are active in the areas of agricultural research and extension. These examples provide the 'evidence' to support the main arguments posed to policy makers.

PIFON Strategic Review Initiated

It was agreed at the most recent AGM that PIFON should commence a strategic review of the organisation in preparation for a new Strategic Plan to be developed for the period 2016-2018. It is envisioned that this review will assist the organisation to take stock of progress since inception and identify key areas for strengthening.

Dr. Lex Thomson has been appointed as the consultant to carry out the strategic review which includes the following terms of reference:

- Through reviewing available reports and consultations, assess the performance of PIFON in terms of meeting objectives of Strategic Plan (2014 – 2016) and make recommendations to be considered in developing PIFONs new strategic plan (2016-2018).
- Through consultations with PIFON members assess the performance of PIFON in terms of meeting the needs of its members and make recommendations to improve service to members. This will include visits to Fiji, Tonga and the Solomon Islands.
- Through consultations with key PIFON project partners (IFAD, SPC and AFA) assess the performance of PIFON in terms of project delivery and make recommendations for improvement.
- Assess the current organizational structure and articles of association in terms of suitability for PIFON now and in the future.
- Assess the business model of PIFON in terms of income generation and sustainability and make recommendations for improvement.

Field work for this review has already begun with consultations at PIFON office, Taveuni and Tonga. Further visits to the Solomon Islands are scheduled for mid April.

The key outputs for this review include:

- One review report with key recommendations for the PIFON Board and Management
- One lessons learnt publication highlighting key findings - suitable for circulation within the PIFON network

PIFON participation at the Global Forum on Agricultural Research

With many PIFON members directly involved in agricultural research, being a part of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) provides a great boost in terms of accessing information, expanding networks and tapping into new research partnerships.

The GFAR will be hosting its Partner Assembly linked to the Third Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD3) in Johannesburg, South Africa from April 5-8.

Nature's Way Cooperative (NWC) CEO—Michael Brown will be attending representing his cooperative and also PIFON as a whole. NWC currently has a very active research and extension programme that has delivered many research outputs which have been quickly adopted by industry. NWC is looking to foster new partnerships with researchers and research organisations which would not have been possible isolated in Fiji.