

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

IMAGE: KYLE STICE



FO4ACP

FARMER ORGANISATIONS FOR AFRICA CARRIBEAN AND THE PACIFIC



EUROPEAN UNION





Poverty is prominent in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries where 65-70 percent of the population live in rural areas and practice farming at subsistence level.

With an implementation period of 54 months, the Farmer Organisations for Africa Caribbean and the Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme is expected to directly benefit 150 000 farmers in the Pacific region.

PIFON Manager, Kyle Stice says this will comprise of 72 000 men, 64 000 women and 14 000 youth involved in Pacific Farmer Organisations.

"In order to reach 150 000 farmers and improve the income and food and nutritional security of small holder farmers, the Pacific has been given \$4.8 million euros in nine countries including; Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste, Solomon Islands, Samoa, and New Caledonia."

"The next few days will be about taking the Pacific context, taking the activities our members want to do and then taking this global project including a logframe and its design and work them together, that's the challenge," he said.

In his presentation to members of PIFON at Nadi's Tokatoka Resort, Stice outlined the concept of FO4ACP.

"What is FO4ACP about? (1) FO4ACP very critically is about Partnering with Pacific Farmer Organisations, this is really a project about farmer organisations."

"So the very end beneficiaries is the farmers but also the mechanism of partnering with farmer organisations, that's the essential part of the project," he said.

"(2) Farmers Helping Farmers, (3) Linking Farmers to Markets and (4) Farmers Having Their Say."

With an overall goal of increasing income and improving food and nutritional security for small holder farmers, Stice says PIFON will not only make it their mission but actively engage with various value chains in the Pacific.

"We want to place an important emphasis on increasing incomes, improving the food and nutritional security of the farming communities that we are working on."

"It's also about getting farmers involved in value chains and lot of our members are involved in them but we also have a lot of farmers in our countries who are not very involved in direct marketing or value chain activities," he said.

"They're growing things for subsistence making a little bit of money so we want to get them involved."

Stice says PIFON's Learning & Planning Meeting will identify key steps for members.

“Every project has an initiative, most agricultural projects have the same goal but not everybody has the same approach.”

“The next few days we’ll be working with our members to formulate an identity for our project here in the Pacific; what do our members want for this project to achieve? And what is the impact of these goals?,” he said.

“One of the main initiatives is to help the farmer organization deliver better services both technical and economic so the focus is on the farmer organization.”

The FO4ACP Programme presents three core initiatives which Stice explains is working with Pacific Farmer Organisations.

“We believe one way to improve the income, the food and nutritional security is to work with farmer organisations.”

“We want to help farmer organisations so that they’re delivering technical services like training or access to information on markets which also extends to economic services where farmer organisations are involved in buying and selling something in providing inputs in doing service provision,” he said.

“One of the ways that FO4ACP believes we can help achieve that overall goal is by working with the farmer organisations to strengthen them to deliver better technical services and deliver better economic services, so the focus is on the farmer organization.”

Empowering farmer organisations to influence policy and decision making is also a core initiative of FO4ACP.

“In order to achieve that overall goal we believe the farmers themselves through their farmer organisations need to be able to have some say on the policies that are being developed within their country and for us within our region.”

The programme which is in partnership with the European Union, ACP, IFAD and PIFON will also focus on strengthening farmer organisations to grow and better serve its members.

Stice says this will be important to achieving the goals of FO4ACP.

“We all want to make an impact in our communities, we all want to be able to do trainings and workshops and maybe even sell or buy things for our members or co-ordinate certifications.”

“But we have to make sure that the farmer organisations of our members is strong; it’s about things like governance, transparency, financial management and representation,” he said.

“When we stand up in a meeting and say, ‘I represent 80 000 farmers in the Pacific’, do I actually represent 80 000 farmers in the Pacific?”

“The only way I can represent them is if I have some mechanism from actually hearing from them, to have that voice to hear from and then to be able to flow back information,” he said.

Stice said this was going to be fundamental in helping national governments recognize farmer organisations in both their respective countries and at a regional level.

EU ACP & IFAD Partner With PIFON In \$4.8 Million Euro Programme

Pacific Farmer Organisations As Development Partners



The FO4ACP Programme was officially launched at Suva's Holiday Inn (January 27) IMAGE: First Fighter

Three quarters of the Pacific population live in rural areas, largely reliant on agriculture and fisheries based livelihoods.

"Agriculture is the basic industry of most countries in the South Pacific and it is one of the main source of livelihood for rural communities," said Agriculture Minister, Dr. Mahendra Reddy.

"In most countries the largest proportion of the GDP is generated by agriculture as is most foreign exchange, in addition, the largest number of people in these countries are employed by the agriculture sector."

Speaking at the launch of the \$4.8 million euro ACP European Union & International Fund for Agricultural Development Funded project — Farmer Organisations for Africa Caribbean and the Pacific — Dr. Mahendra Reddy said the role of farmer organisations is important to supporting agricultural development.

"I have been informed that ninety percent of the funding allocated to the national level will be used for 'boots on the ground' activities with farmers."

UN Resident Coordinator, Sanaka Samarasinha said the role of farmer organisations offered a new paradigm for partnerships in the Pacific.

"It is exciting for the Pacific as farmer-led enterprises look to improve technical and economic services along the value chains as well as influence policies and business environments."

"In addition to the national level activities, the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network will organize activities at the regional level, such as farmer-to-farmer learning exchanges between countries; representation at regional and international meetings and forums; and the development of regional policy positions that represent farmers' interest," he said.

"The transformation of family farming and the development of sustainable, adaptive economic initiatives and farmer-led enterprises is now within reach for every Pacific farmer," he said.

In welcoming the partnership the Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation for the Pacific, Christoph Wagner highlighted that the the project, FO4ACP would benefit nine Pacific Island countries over five years.

"The farmers organizations in the Pacific region are increasingly taking an active part in rural economic development, tackling the challenges of reducing rural poverty, securing and improving access to development opportunities for smallholders — including market and agribusiness opportunities — and deepening engagement in agricultural value chains," he said.

"I am confident the project will help raise the capacity of Farmer Organisations to represent the interests of a broad range of producers from different socio-economic categories (including vulnerable groups such as women and youth), and will contribute to increase income and to improve livelihood, food and nutrition security and safety of the family farming".

"The EU and the Pacific Region shared common values related to the promotion of family farming. The European Union strongly believe in this type of farming as it is a key element of rural economies, as well as foundation for sustainable, market-oriented agriculture that meets society's expectations", said Mr. Wagner.

Vice Chairman of Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network, Minoru Nishi Jnr said they looked forward to working with Pacific island farmers.

Strengthening Partnerships for Sustainable Climate Financing in the Pacific

United Nations Development Partners Dialogue Forum



UN Resident Coordinator Sanaka Samarasingha said the role of farmer organisations offered a new paradigm for partnerships in the Pacific

In the Pacific, there is limited progress to country driven partnership platforms for dialogue and consultation on development priorities.

"The reality in the Pacific is that we are still only scratching the surface in terms of the number, and quality, of partnerships required to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)."

United Nations Resident Coordinator Sanaka Samarasingha says dialogue, particularly in the Pacific, provides a strong platform to catalyze necessary collaborative action.

"The scope and complexity of the transformations required for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs that are at its core are unprecedented."

"As a result, no government or stakeholder will be able to address the multi-sectoral, cross-pillar global challenges of today alone," he said.

Fostering Development Partnerships for the SDGs

The United Nations Development Partners Dialogue Forum took place for the very first time at Suva's Holiday Inn in January this year.

The dialogue Samarasingha says is the United Nations response to development partners who have demanded for regular updates on its work which in recent years have focused predominantly on climate change.

“It remains the single most urgent threat to the survival and livelihood for citizens of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Pacific.”

“Addressing these threats requires a wide array of adaptation measures, at a cost that far exceeds many countries’ financial capacities,” he said.

“While many Pacific SIDS have been able to access some funding through multilateral funding partners from substantial vertical funding sources, capacities in countries to manage these funds and delivering of results on the ground are key areas of concern and need.”

Climate Financing in the Pacific

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) for the very first time entered policy and development discussions with various stakeholders at the United Nations Development Partners Dialogue Forum.

PIFON Manager Kyle Stice who was part of the Panel Discussion says three quarters of the Pacific population live in rural areas and are largely reliant on agriculture and fisheries based livelihoods.

A figure he says will be critical to the future of agriculture in the region.

“The problem with current approaches to climate change is that they tend to ignore current threats and focus on ill-defined climate change issues per se.”

“In 2015, South Pacific Community published a book called Vulnerability of Pacific Agriculture and Forestry to Climate Change.”

“It’s the first comprehensive study on the impact of climate change on agriculture in the Pacific and brought together 23 main authors over 2 years.”

“One of the high level conclusions that came out of this book is that climate change is likely to impact agriculture by amplifying pressure of existing threats,” he said.

“The pragmatic approach therefore is to improve our capacity to address existing threats in agriculture — climate extremes, pest and disease outbreaks etc and also be looking at the knowledge gaps and identify future threats.”

While addressing the panel discussion on the implementation challenges for climate financing in the region, Stice says there is still a long way ahead for the Pacific.

“There appears to be a significant gap between the farmers of the Pacific who are working to grow food for their families and our countries and those that are working to access and channel resources to support climate change threats.”

“It’s one of the greatest challenges facing governments and development partners in terms of accessing and channeling climate financing to address the ‘real’ threats facing the agriculture sector,” he said.

Farmer Organisations as Development Partners

Stice believes a critical component of the solution lies in Farmer Organisations.

“Not just farmer organisations in name, but strong, vibrant, representative organisations that can deliver effective and relevant services to their members.”

“I am proposing that Farmer Organisations can be highly effective development partners to help address this enormous threat on our rural livelihoods and food security,” he said.

Stice said governments and development partners should take notice of their work in their respective countries.

“Give them an opportunity to have a voice in your planning processes and most importantly utilize their infrastructure in the delivery of key services.”

Fiji Bans Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid



The Fiji Beekeepers Association has successfully lobbied the Government to ban Imidacloprid

The lobbying efforts of Fiji Beekeepers Association has finally paid off.

Fiji's Minister for Agriculture Dr. Mahendra Reddy last week announced a ban on the insecticide Imidacloprid after its damaging effects was raised more than a year ago.

"We want to thank Fiji Beekeepers Association for bringing this matter up to us."

The decline in bee numbers is a concern for the Government who promote Bee Farming.

"Imidacloprid has a harmful effect on the colony of bees, it contaminates the beehive, affects their navigation and traces of it have been found in honey."

The ban has been welcomed by Fiji Beekeepers Association's John Caldeira.

"It's a big win for Fiji's beekeepers, our bees and honey consumers."

"Imidacloprid is the only neonicotinoid pesticide sold in Fiji and as far as I know, Fiji is the first Oceania country to enact this ban," he said.

The lobbying efforts of Fiji Beekeepers Association involved a large amount of time to foster change.

"We relentlessly lobbied government as our request escalated up the chain of command."

"We shared the evidence and other countries' bans with government, and we also listened to understand the perspective of the Registrar of Pesticides and the farmers who need alternative pest control tools to avoid damage to their production," he said.

"It's a good example of a farmer organization influencing policy and the process we used is essentially what PIFON has been promoting."

Ongoing communication played an important role in the Fiji Beekeepers Association's call to ban the chemicals.

"It took long strings of emails and two face-to-face meetings between government and FBA before the ban was approved and announced."

"This effort required many hours of work but hardly any financial cost."

The ban will come into effect in January 2020.

Improving Food Security & Nutrition



Agriculture is central to our food and health systems IMAGE: Jean Pierre Niptik

Agriculture has a phenomenal impact on the quality of life.

Unless it makes the agenda on health and economic platforms, Karen Mapusua forecasts a losing war on food security and nutrition across the Pacific.

“Agriculture is a significant contributor to global warming, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and it’s damaging our fisheries.”

“It impacts our food and health system, so I say to farmers we can either be the best friend of the planet or we can be the worst enemy and we need to work out where we want to sit in that picture,” she said.

The Manager Operations, Performance and Systems at the Pacific Community’s Land Resources Division said most health and economic platforms in the Pacific often underestimate the impact of agriculture.

“Every government will say it’s the backbone of the economy but agricultural ministries are always often underfunded.”

“Agriculture shouldn’t be an afterthought, it is central to our food system and it should be central to all our policies,” she said.

“It’s only when people start to make the connections between agriculture and the big issues between climate change, disaster risk reduction and health that I think perception will change.”

In the Pacific region where more than 50 percent of the population are overweight, about 40 percent of the region’s 9.7 million have been diagnosed with a non-communicable disease including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension according to World Health Organisation.

Mapusua said Pacific islanders are eating themselves to death.

“We are very price sensitive consumers in the Pacific.”

“If the taro is \$15 Samoan Tala and the rice is \$10 Samoan Tala, we’ll buy the rice,” she said.

“That’s because we don’t have a lot of cash in our pockets and it’s a big issue when it comes to access to food.”

“We all know we have plenty food in the Pacific but can we afford to buy the good quality food? Or are we going to buy noodles which is barely food at all?,” she said.

Mapusua says agriculture needs to make the agenda on health and economic platforms.

“By the end of the decade most of us would have diabetes and that’s just the reality of our health in the Pacific.

“We all die far too young from diseases we shouldn’t be dying from and they are largely diet related,” she said.

“Ofcourse there are other aspects as well but the change in our diets has had significant impact.”

Mapusua says consumption of imported processed foods in the Pacific is taking its toll on children.

“The reality is, pre-colonization we ate a lot more of our local nutritious vegetables than we do now.”

“Now when we think about vegetables, we think about lettuce which has no nutritional value,” she said.

“We’re seeing increasing rates of micronutrient deficiencies particularly in children which means they’re stunting.”

“It not only affects the size of the body but the brain development and these rates are increasing across Pacific island countries.”

Mapusua says there are however unresolved issues with traditional based diets.

“We have a lot of local greens that we don’t eat anymore that would help us address these micronutrient deficiencies.”

“But now we have a behavioral problem because people haven’t eaten it for a while, so how do you get that taste back and re-introduce it to people so that it becomes part of the diet?” she said

The use of and exposure to pesticide has also in recent years been linked to many health issues.

“It’s not something we think about a lot because we tend to believe in the Pacific that we’re all organic.”

“Some countries in the Pacific where access is more difficult use so many chemicals that insects are now resistant to it,” she said.

“You’ve got farmers reaching out for a cocktail of various different pesticides and spraying not just when they see a pest, but spraying every couple of days which only builds more resistance to the pests and makes life impossible long-term.”

“Exposure to pesticides either inevitable through what we eat or the farmers is a health risk from agriculture I don’t think we are taking seriously enough,” she said.

Are We Killing The Environment? Or Is It Killing Us?



The economic cost of degraded agricultural land now amounts to up to US\$10 trillion a year. IMAGE: Shutterstock

Pacific island nations are among the most vulnerable in the world where the well-being of island communities are compromised by population growth, industrialisation and climate change.

And our soils are taking the hit for it.

A report by the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) states that while the quality and the health of soils are under threat, degradation can be reversed.

"The world soils are rapidly deteriorating due to soil erosion, nutrient depletion, loss of soil organic carbon, soil sealing and other threats."

"But this trend can be reversed provided countries take the lead in promoting sustainable management practices and the use of appropriate technologies," the report stated.

Described as 'humanity's silent ally' by FAO's Intergovernmental Technical Panel, the report Status of the World's Soil Resources brings together the work of 200 soil scientists from 60 countries.

"Soils are vital for producing nutritious crops and they filter and clean tens of thousands of cubic kilometers of water each year."

"As a major storehouse for carbon, soils can help regulate emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases which is fundamental to regulating climate," the report stated.

The United Nations FAO report identified an overwhelming 33 percent of the world's land as severely damaged.

"The majority of the world's soil resources are in only fair, poor or very poor conditions which are getting worse than they are improving."

"The land is moderately to highly degraded due to erosion, salinization, compaction, acidification, and chemical pollution of soils."

"Further loss of productive soils would severely damage food production and food security, amplify food-price volatility, and potentially plunge millions of people into hunger and poverty," the report stated.

With a global population of 7.7 billion, more than 35 percent of the earth's ice-free land is used for agriculture.

According to FAO this will continue to affect the condition of soils as population and economic growth remain leading factors in decades to come.

“The result is that soils that have been cleared of natural vegetation to grow crops or graze livestock suffer from sharp increases in erosion and steep losses in soil carbon, nutrient and soil biodiversity.”

“But urbanization is also taking a major toll, the rapid growth of cities and industries has degraded increasingly wide areas, including by contaminating soils with excess salt, acidity and heavy metals; compacting them under heavy machinery; and sealing them permanently under asphalt and concrete,” the report stated.

The report also found climate change to be a strong driver of soil change.

“Higher temperatures and related weather events such as droughts, floods and storms impact on soil quantity and fertility in a number of ways, including reducing moisture and depleting the layers of nutrient-rich topsoil.”

“They also contribute to an increase in the rate of soil erosion and shoreline retreat.”

The United Nations FAO says achieving healthy soils requires the participation of a broad level of stakeholders ranging from governments to small-holder farmers.

IFAD Global Farmers Forum 2020

A Dialogue for Farmers & Producers



Asia-Pacific with a display of products and a range of publications at the Global Farmers Forum

The 7th IFAD Farmers' Forum was recently held last month in Rome, Italy.

It brought together more than 80 farmers' leaders from around the world, who represent millions of smallholders and rural producers who have interacted with the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and its Member States.

Attending the forum was Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) Programme Manager, Lavinia Kaumaitotoya.

“Representing the Pacific is challenging as we fight for our space against the big giants of Africa, Latin America and Asia but, small as we are, the Pacific because of our remoteness perhaps and our ingenuity, I'd like to say — punches above our weight at this global stage, thanks largely to the work of many of our members and partners in the Pacific countries that we work in.”

At the Interventions of the Opening Session, Kaumaitotoya presented Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (MORDI) Tonga Trust.

“We asked to use MORDI in Tonga as our example, and in the Pacific, it is our hope that we continue to work with IFAD to have similar instruments negotiated to allow our national Farmer Organisations to also be able to implement national programmes on the ground.”

Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands



Participants of the Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands Value Chain Workshop with Mary Jane Hou Kaikari (in white)

Understanding the Agricultural Value Chains is still a relatively new concept in the Pacific. Following a 2 Day Workshop in Honiara, Kokonut Pacific's Maryjane Hou Kaikari says there is room for more training.

"Prior to the workshop a lot of our coconut oil producers didn't see themselves as entrepreneurs so it was an eye opening experience for them. The OPPO tools not only help increase their incomes but encourages them to produce work to a higher standard," she said.

The workshop focused on optimizing the performance of the Pacific agricultural value chains and brought together 10 actors of the coconut value chain including an exporter, transport provider, aid donor, distributor and producer.

"I made the decision to split the 8 tools over 2 days so that the participants can have ample time to digest the concepts. Day 1 started with an introduction to the OPPO approach before exploring its first tool; Farmers Business Cases, Farmer Profiling, Governance Management Performance Tool, Capital Pentagon Tool before finishing off with the Value Chain Analysis," she said.

"We also touched on farmer entrepreneurship which lead the discussions of Day 2 on action planning for inclusive business models and the collective actions for Farmer Organisations."

Kaikari said participants found the training valuable as they shared their experiences and plans for the future.

"Most commented on the importance of the Governance Management Performance Tool particularly for Producer Organisations to assess their managerial, governance and performance for its members because it shows areas for improvements."

"The farmer profiling tool also generated a lot of interest in the way it can also be used as a marketing strategy to tell the story behind products produced by farmers," she said.

Participants were also given the opportunity to understand their role along the value chain.

"Mapping the value chain was interesting because participants saw the many actors that were involved, they also began to understand the increase in the value of their product as it moved from field to fork," she said.

Kaikari said the training also highlighted for participants the importance of self-reliance.

"The principle to heat up 'cold' money for approaching agriculture development gets everyone differently which is applicable to many agricultural projects in the country."

"Farmers realize they must work hard to achieve what they want, as well as align their business needs alongside support programmes that aid donors provide," she said.

Tutu Rural Training Centre



Dragon Fruit Orchard in Tutu Rural Training Centre

In Papua New Guinea alone, the population is young and growing at 7.5 million.

With an abundance of natural resources and geographic proximity to rapidly growing markets, youths continue to face limited opportunities in rural areas with over 3 million people living below the national poverty line — what are we missing?

“For many Pacific Island youths, farming is only seen as an option when nothing else is available,” said PIFON’s Lavinia Kaumaitotoya.

“So what we’re seeing is an increased urban drift where youths are leaving the rural areas in search of employment in the urban areas.”

First sighted by Abel Tasman in 1643, the Garden Island of Taveuni is home to Fiji’s Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC) who specialize in non-formal education for self-employment in agriculture.

Established in 1969 by the Society of Mary, TRTC’s Serenia Madigibuli says their training including the Young Farmers Course (YFC) is aimed at empowering the people of the Cakaudrove province.

“Our Young Farmers Course is helping shape young single men to take responsibility of their lives, to uphold integrity in their decision-making process and to be of service to their people.”

Since opening their doors more than forty years ago, Tutu Rural Training Centre today offers 5 courses; Young Farmers, Married Couples, Young Single Women, Parents and Villages Courses.

“To enter the programme, students need to show an aptitude for farming and they must have access to land,” she said.

Tutu Rural Training Centre is building a new wave of enterprising young minds and it’s creating quite an impact.

“Most of the graduates have returned to productive lives and earning a livelihood from the farming of their land,” said PIFON’s Lavinia Kaumaitotoya.

“It’s economic impact has been huge and we saw it in its total annual income earned by the Young Farmers who graduated in 2007 and 2011 which was estimated at \$1.27million.”

“Had it not been for Tutu, these young people would have largely been unemployed in the village or they would have migrated to the urban areas with limited employment prospects,” she said.

Serenia Madigibuli says the experience of attending TRTC has shown that rural youth can earn good livelihoods from the farming of their own land.

“The programmes aren’t for ‘drop outs’ from formal education or a substitute for formal agricultural training but rather, training towards self-employment,” she said.

To date the educational model of TRTC has also been implemented in Tonga and Vanuatu.

Paddle Me Tausi

A Powerful Collaboration Between Women



Paddle Me Tausi by Samoan artist and co-founder of Manamea Art Studio, Nikki Mariner-Peseta

Amazing things happen when the paths of talented women cross.

The visual identity for the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network’s (PIFON) Side Event at the Pacific Week of Agriculture (2019) was unveiled as the book cover of *Afakasi Women* by Lani Wendt Young.

The painting *Paddle Me Tausi* by Nikki Mariner-Peseta of Manamea Art Studio was originally commissioned by a client in Milan.

“We’re so thrilled! To have authors and artists who work and live in Samoa working together is a proud moment for all Samoan creatives,” she said.

“I’ve been lucky to preview the book and it was riveting and unforgettable, Manamea Art Studio is so proud to be associated with Lani’s work.”

Published by OneTree House Press New Zealand, the book which features a revised collection of short fiction stories will be released this month in Australia, New Zealand and Samoa.

“I’ve followed Nikki’s work for a long time and admired the fiercely unapologetic Samoan feminist that she is, as well as the richly complex and varied themes she explores in her art; of identity, love, relationships, culture, heritage, tradition, gender and more,” said Lani Wendt Young.

The author said she was honoured to feature the painting on the cover of *Afakasi Women* as it complemented the collection of short stories.

Paddle Me Tausi was the visual identity for the art component of PIFON’s *Celebrating Women in Agriculture: Flowers, Food & Art* at the second Pacific Week of Agriculture held in Samoa last year.

A Catalyst for Change



The goal of Daily Bread is to be a catalyst for change and link to a growing, grassroots community Image: Gregg Segal

Childhood obesity rates are soaring.

Figures from World Obesity Federation indicate the Pacific Islands have the highest rates; in 2017 40.7 percent of Cook Islands children aged five to nine were obese compared to 40.6 percent in Nauru and 40 percent in Palau.

Photographer Gregg Segal says globalization is changing the way we eat.

Fast food companies in the Western world he said are sensing a change in attitudes about diet and the effects of junk food and have begun investing in foreign markets where Big Macs aren't junk but a status symbol.

"In 2015, Cambridge University conducted an exhaustive study, identifying countries with the healthiest diets in the world."

"9 of the top 10 countries are in Africa, where vegetables, fruit, nuts, legumes, grains are staples and meals are home-made, a stark contrast to the US where nearly 60% of the calories we consume come from ultra-processed foods and only 1% come from vegetables," he said.

His project Daily Bread, sees Segal traveling the world and asking children to keep a food journal of everything they eat in a week.

"Once the week is up, I make a portrait of the child with the food arranged around them."

"I'm focusing on kids because eating habits, which form when we're young, last a lifetime and often pave the way to chronic health problems like diabetes, heart disease and colon cancer."

The goal of Daily Bread is to be a catalyst for change and link to a growing, grassroots community that's moving the needle on diet.

"I've been encouraged to find regions and communities where slow food will never be displaced by junk food, where home cooked meals are the bedrock of family and culture, where love and pride are sensed in the aromas of broths, stews and curries. When the hand that stirs the pot is mom or dad, grandma or grandpa, kids are healthier," he said.

To view the project: <https://www.greggsegal.com/P-Projects/Daily-Bread/1/caption>

SOCIAL EVENTS

Tales of the South Seas



Orchids are one of the oldest flowers in existence.

In the rolling countryside of Nasau, a sugar cane farm has been elegantly transformed into a picturesque orchid nursery by the late Don Burness and his wife Aileen.

The 9 acre property evoked memories of an era gone by in intimate settings of a proud heritage among family and friends who had gathered in October 2019 to preview the South Sea Orchid's An Orchid Tale.

Mrs. Burness says the event is part of plans in expanding the business portfolio.

"Starting next month we will host an entertainment dinner show with catered dinner showcasing an island food menu."

"Tonight we have invited family and friends to not only preview the event but raise much needed funds for Mental Health which for us is a very special cause," she said.

Grown in almost every climate including the Pacific region, the entertainment dinner show is centered around Orchids.

"The Pacific was first discovered in the early 1500's by Spanish explorer Vasco Billboa and so we were always referred to as the 'South Seas' until the 70's era introduced newness and 'Pacific' became the new buzzword to what our world is now known today," said PIFON's Lavinia Kaumaitotoya who helped developed the event.

"Hawaii has many varieties of the Orchid dating back to the 1860's."

"Their depth and breadth of orchid farming was accelerated through extensive research by scientists in the sugar and pineapple business which were two of Hawaii's main industries," she said.

"Many of these scientists were orchid enthusiasts, so wherever they traveled within Asia and the South Seas to undertake research, they also took an interest in orchids and always returned with it."

"They also shared it with fellow floriculturists and today Hawaii is the Pacific capital for Orchids, which is where the South Sea Orchid's An Orchid Tale begins."

“They also shared it with fellow floriculturists and today Hawaii is the Pacific capital for Orchids, which is where the South Sea Orchid’s An Orchid Tale begins.”

With core operations in selling cut flowers and pre-booked eco tours, South Sea Orchids started an Outgrower Programme in 1996 in Fiji and around Pacific region which has seen a wholesale market for florists to buy orchid and anthurium flowers.

The preview event raised more than \$4000 FJD for Fiji Alliance for Mental Health (FAMH).



Invited guests at the preview of the Tales of the South Seas : An Orchid Tale

