

# NEWSLETTER

J U N E 2021

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## UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT

STAKEHOLDERS AGREE  
TO REGIONAL COOPERATION  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## BREADFRUIT PEOPLE WEBINAR SERIES

NISHI TRADING WARNS OF EFFICIENCY  
& MARKETING CHALLENGES POSED BY PROJECT

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

TEL-A-WOMAN PROGRAM  
GIVES WOMEN MORE AGRICULTURAL CLOUT

## GLOBAL INDIGENOUS YOUTH FORUM

PROPOSE COLLABORATION  
WITH ACADEMIA & RESEARCH CENTERS

## TECHNICAL SESSIONS

GROWING VANILLA  
WITH PIERO BIANCHESSI

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## INNOVATION

# GLOBAL PANDEMIC PROMPTS DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR FARMER ORGANISATIONS



## COVER

### Innovation: Global pandemic prompts digital solutions for farmer organisations

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network has contracted the services of TraSeable Solutions to digitize its monitoring and evaluation framework.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has exposed a number of digital challenges in the Pacific and has prompted the adoption of digital technology.

Six farmer organisations from Samoa, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Fiji who are also members of the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network are pilot partners of the real-time data platform.

Limited ICT infrastructure and limited technical support has led to budget overspend and unmet expectations in previous digital projects in the Pacific.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made these challenges more difficult to overcome because of the closed borders and the need to do things entirely remotely across the Pacific.”

Kenneth Katafono, the founder of TraSeable Solutions said implementing digital solutions seamlessly across multiple Pacific Island countries in the agriculture sector can be challenging.

“It’s often caused by lack of appropriate in-country knowledge and experience, experience with moving systems from paper to digital and where only one or two people are trained.”

The system is built upon TraSeable Farms, an existing agritech product that will create and disseminate surveys and information to members of the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network as well as view and manage member organisations data.

“PIFON’s lead to adapt will fast-track the use of digital technology on farms in the Pacific but it must be done right.”

The project is also expected to benefit the members of the six farmer organisations piloting the platform.

“There’s been several projects along similar lines but those initiatives died when the projects finished, so we’ve taken the key lessons learnt to incorporate it into this project, and working with a local digital provider makes a big difference,” said Lavinia Kaumaitotoya, the Manager of the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network.

“We’re excited to work with TraSeable Solutions, they’re young, innovative and they’re physically here to enable the project.”

The six farmer organisations are Fiji Crop & Livestock Council (FCLC), Nature’s Way Cooperative (NWC), Women in Business Development (WiBDi), Kastom Gaden Association (KGA), PNG Women in Agriculture (PNGWiA) and Rise Beyond The Reef (RBTR).





## e-BULLETIN

### Stakeholders agree to regional cooperation for sustainable development

Stakeholders at the *United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 | Independent Dialogue Series in Asia-Pacific* early this month agreed to work together in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic to achieve sustainable development goals.

In discussions on Climate Change Adaptation, Agroecology & Organic Production Systems, Sustainable Fishing and Increasing Market Power of Farmers & Fishers, regional organisations in Asia Pacific promise to leave no one behind.

It comes as Tawfiq El-Zabri, the Country Director for the Pacific Islands at International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) warned agriculture is reducing biodiversity and contributing to pollution and greenhouse emissions, “either directly through production or through land use changes and particularly deforestation — 30 percent of total GHG emissions.”

He told stakeholders the food systems summit reflects a need for concerted collective action and transformation.

In recent years, population growth, deforestation and the intensification of crop production for commercial purposes has threatened soil conditions and fertility in many farming communities in Asia and the Pacific region where access to large areas of land is already an issue for many farmers.

A video message from the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network on Climate Change in the Pacific and Crops Disaster Management was played to stakeholders at the opening of the Independent Dialogue Series in Asia-Pacific on Monday (7/6) as they set out their plans for initiatives to Climate Change Adaptation.

Speaking beforehand, Tawfiq El-Zabri said: “COVID-19 has forced us to find new solutions, its’ been a game changer — in spite of the pandemic’s terrible toll — in some ways the medical crisis and its impacts has made us more efficient, and opened up new possibilities.”

“I would like to suggest that today, we might be at a watershed moment for food systems too: we have arrived at a moment after which things may not be the same, and we have the opportunity to change directions.”

He said the speed and pace of change is “faster than ever; our collective experiences are more extensive’ and the knowledge, the possibilities, at hand are greater than ever before.”



## Nishi Trading warns of efficiency and marketing challenges posed by breadfruit project

Agriculture leaders meeting for the Breadfruit People webinar series on Friday 4 June have warned of the efficiency and marketing challenges posed by its breadfruit project in the Kingdom of Tonga, saying current equipment and production is a “high cost”.

Current research, they said, needed to improve procedures and processes to achieve greater efficiencies and savings.

Nishi Trading’s Managing Director, Minoru Nishi Jr warned marketing challenges “should be a Pacific wide approach” in market value and health terms.

But he stressed it was critical to plant more breadfruit trees and provide more community trainings to meet production.

Nishi Trading Co Ltd began as a commercial farm for exports in the 1970s, expanding and diversifying operations over the years to include imports, an Agri store, a quarry, pest management and control and a foundation for community support and training for farmers in the Kingdom of Tonga.

In a statement on Facebook, Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (MORDI) Tonga Trust supported the call by Nishi Trading to address challenges, “the possibilities are endless if we are able to capture 80% of breadfruit that goes to waste every season.”

“Process and preserve these in the form of flour that is nutritious and gluten free!” it added.

In recent years, Nishi Trading begun working with MORDI Tonga Trust and the Tokyo University of Agriculture to further develop existing work on Breadfruit.

Titled: *Improvement of Livelihood and Health Conditions of Tongan People by the Effective Utilization and New Processed Products of Breadfruit*, the 5 year project is funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency and will conclude in 2022.

The Breadfruit People Webinar Series is funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Asia Pacific Farmers Program.

## Farmer led initiative to help farmers adapt to climate change

Farmer organisations in the Pacific are emerging as key players in the agriculture sector, but it faces numerous challenges. The Pacific Breadfruit & Seed Programme, a farmer led initiative by the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) aims to boost domestic food production in response to the dual challenges of Climate Change and Food Security.

Lavinia Kaumaitotoya, Manager of PIFON, says it is otherwise a difficult task to address as current approaches tends to overlook current threats and focus instead on ill-defined climate change issues.

The pressure of climate change, population growth and the non-communicable disease epidemic has also placed Pacific farmers in great need of applied research solutions tailored to the production constrains they face.

“The pragmatic approach is to improve our capacity to address existing threats while continuing to address knowledge gaps and identify future threats,” says Lavinia Kaumaitotoya.





The Pacific Breadfruit & Seeds Programme was the first focus area chosen by PIFON and its members from 9 Pacific Island countries to mitigate climate change.

The programme aims to develop the important indigenous food source as an orchard crop across the Pacific region with the seeds component of the programme — the result of the Scoping Study on Seeds undertaken by PIFON in 2014 — encouraging members to grow local and relearn the practice of saving seeds for future planting.

“It took at least 3 years of various studies and technical collaborations to establish the breadfruit programme,” says Lavinia Kaumaitotoya. “It builds upon the successful work done in Fiji under the earlier Breadfruit Programme Initiative, while upscaling the research and results to the regional level.”

“Our 2014 study on seeds provided the background to address seed supply access issues amongst our members in the Pacific because it’s not only important to talk about climate change but take active measures to address it if Pacific farms and communities are going to remain viable.”

Lavinia Kaumaitotoya was recently addressing participants at the *United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 : Independent Dialogue Series in Asia Pacific (7/6)*, where she spoke on the role of farmer organisations in Climate Change Adaptation.

The independent dialogue is part of key preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit in September.

### **‘Climate change could accelerate the spread of pests and diseases’**

Fiji Crop Livestock & Council CEO, Jiu Daunivalu has said the severity of extreme weather events and natural disasters is expected to increase with ongoing implications on food sources in the Pacific.

She was recently addressing participants at the *Independent Dialogue Series in Asia Pacific* on Monday (7/6), where she warned climate change could accelerate the spread of pests and diseases.

“Climate change is a major contributor to the increased threats of transboundary plant and animal pests, diseases and invasive species,” she said, adding: “Normally, farmers rely on harmful pesticides and chemicals to control pests and diseases, without realizing the harmful impact on their soil, environmental and health risks.”

With membership close to 30,000 farmers from around the country, Fiji Crop Livestock and Council through its Advisory Support Services found that farmers, particularly women and youths, have limited access to information and financial resources, with heavy reliance on locally natural resources for their livelihood.

Farmers as a result are receiving ongoing trainings and awareness programs that aim to improve existing knowledge on the impacts of climate change, pest and disease as well as mitigation.

The initiative has seen several successful outcomes for Farmer Organisations who are strengthening key partnerships in government agencies and agricultural stakeholders on climate change, food and nutrition security and livelihood of farming families.

The partnership is driving more engagement amongst farmers on best farming practices in Fiji including the digitalization of information by the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network and Traseable Solution.

Organized by the Asian Farmers Association and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network, the Independent Dialogue Series in Asia Pacific is part of key preparations for the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 in September.



## TAW program gives women more agricultural clout

When Bula Agro founder Sant Kumar announced his plans for more agricultural training for women who had lost their livelihoods as a result of the global pandemic, he was preaching to the converted.

“The best chance we’ve got in ensuring families have access to nutritious food is involving the women. They have a great support network of neighbors and friends with whom she shares her experience, plants and recipes — which is going to be important to the health and nutrition of our various communities”.

The Tel-a-Woman program (TAW) puts the focus for policy on women and girls, where it is not only to their benefit but also the community and the whole country.

Focusing on women makes sense simply because they are disproportionately affected by poverty, conflict and corruption.

Through its’ Women in Agriculture and Nutrition Program, the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network made the role of women in agriculture and technical linkages two of the main priorities.

Big strides have been made in both areas since its formation in 2008 — though it is important to note there are still as many women outside of agriculture who require the proper support as they are in agriculture to encourage women to grow local, nutritious food to feed their families and provide them with a safer and healthier future.

Funded by the Farmers Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (FO4ACP Programme) — a joint partnership between the European Union (EU), Africa Caribbean and Pacific Region (ACP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) — the TAW Program “represents a vessel of nurturing”, a concept Sant Kumar said is widely recognised in the Pacific.

“One woman will tell 10 women, who in turn will share with a further 10 women. Our communication networks may shut down during a natural disaster but it’s our women, who through their support networks keep some of our most important developments like backyard gardening going at the grassroots and community level”.

The TAW program was piloted at the Bula Agro Nursery in Nadi following the closure of borders in 2020 to contain the global COVID-19 pandemic; women have since extended these trainings in their respective communities in and around Nadi, plans are currently in development to further expand the program to other parts of the country in the next 3 years.

Sant Kumar is a renowned farmer and is the Director of Bula Agro; the 84 year-old has a wealth of experience in agriculture and continues to promote healthy living, he also shared his knowledge and continues to do so through his work and collaborations with farmers in Tonga, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Niue and Fiji.





## Experts urged to engage with flour processing companies

Experts attending the Breadfruit People Webinar Series on Value Add are being urged to engage with mainstream flour processing companies amid growing concerns on national food security.

Agricultural Economist, Dr Andrew McGregor, said the development of breadfruit orchards will be critical to attracting the interest of flour processing companies and realizing its full potential.

Existing cropping systems, however, are unable to make a major impact to national food security due to insufficient supply of produce to meet quality and consistency standards.

Currently grown “wild” in forests, household backyard gardens and around villages, the transition from “wild harvest” to orchards is necessary to food security in the Pacific.

Dr Andrew McGregor added breadfruit is tolerant to climate extremes and has the ability to secure food energy from the atmosphere, making it a crop of the future.

International Food Policy Research Institute forecasts by 2050 rice prices will increase by 35% in real terms as a result of climate change.

While the substantial increase is expected to have serious food security implications for the Pacific Islands, climate change is expected to have less impacts on traditional Pacific Island food crops.

Due to its efficiency in converting energy, Pacific staples are showing an increasing comparative advantage over issues arising from population growth, agricultural production, scarcity of arable land and escalating fertiliser and energy.

Find out how experts and breadfruit farmers in Fiji are making progress on developing breadfruit orchards and cottage industry scale processing here : <https://cutt.ly/ymiglFO>

The Breadfruit People Webinar Series is funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Asia Pacific Farmers Program.

# GLOBAL FORUM ON INDIGENOUS YOUTH

## LEADING UP TO THE UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021

### FAO: Global indigenous youth forum propose collaboration with academia and research centers

The global indigenous youth forum of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is set to propose a collaboration with academia and research centers to establish exchanges of knowledge.

It will welcome innovation between indigenous youth, members states and other stakeholders.

The international forum is held every two years where indigenous youth and member countries discuss food security, traditional knowledge and climate change contributing to the 2030 Agenda.

Their summary report outlining contributions between indigenous youth, member countries, United Nations, research centers and universities is primed to accelerate the 2030 SDG Agenda.

The forum is a demonstration of FAO's growing confidence in the global indigenous youths domain.

In 2017, FAO convened a meeting with the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus 3 in Rome to include their views into the organization's work, resulting in the "Rome Declaration" and the adoption of 2 key recommendations on traditional knowledge and climate change into FAO's work with indigenous peoples.

The prime objective of the Global Indigenous Youth Forum is to create a space for dialogue between indigenous youth, member states and other stakeholders to mutually learn from each other.

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network pushed for the restoration of traditional food systems, technical knowledge and traditional food crops to mitigate climate change.

"We serve 23 farmer organisations across 9 Pacific Island countries and with a reach of 80,000 members of which 20% are youths," said Lavinia Kaumaitotoya, Manager of Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network. "Agriculture is re-establishing itself as a pivotal tool for livelihoods in conversations amongst our youths. Under our current project — Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific — 30% of our youths in agriculture are receiving on the field training, effectively contributing to their local food systems and economies. If anything, we need more of our youths to return to the land and in this pandemic it's the best way to serve your country."

The Global Indigenous Youth Forum opened on Wednesday 16 June and will conclude on Friday 18 June.

The forum will offer policy and decision makers an opportunity to discuss issues affecting indigenous youth and contribute to the 2021 World Food Summit in September.





## Asia-Pacific region struggle with traditional foods

Bhutan. Philippines. Indonesia. Cambodia. Laos. Vietnam. Nepal. Bangladesh. India. Sri Lanka. Pakistan. Taiwan. Mongolia. Fiji. Samoa. Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan. Timor-Leste.

These places in the Asia Pacific region were all consulted to seek information and set priorities from collective action to promote research, innovation, education, sustainable production, processing, marketing and consumption of forgotten food.

All were able to identify initiatives to facilitate and promote the cultivation of traditional food crops through progressive actions like technological development, with plans for a comprehensible and actionable draft Manifesto on Forgotten Foods in the Asia-Pacific region.

It will provide stakeholders in the wider community a basis for global actions linked to local initiatives.

Yet over the past decades, many of these nations are being challenged by modern and industrialised agriculture with consequent changes in policies and programme priorities that has effectively replaced traditional foods and now almost a forgotten food.

Meanwhile, the Pacific appears to be surging ahead with the Pacific Breadfruit & Seed Programme that aims to boost domestic food production in response to climate change and food security. Prioritized by the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network, it means more farmers than ever before are now taking active measures to effectively adapt to current challenges.

Let's look at how Sri Lanka and India are currently managing the promotion and cultivation of traditional foods:

Sri Lanka — *Affiliated Farmers' Organizations of the Lanka Farmers' Forum (LFF) and Ecological Agricultural Producers' and Entrepreneurs Cooperative Society (EcoAPECoop)* are working with food producer organisations and their members in 9 districts.

LFF and EcoAPECoop are lobbying for national and regional level policy changes to enable and protect the farmers rights to grow, conserve and market indigenous and traditional crop and seed varieties.

India — The *Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)* in India has established a rural distribution network called RUDI, which buys local crops such as pulses, turmeric, spices, from their farmer members, and then process and package these in their RUDI centers, subsequently it is distributed to rural women through women members called RUDIbens or to feeding centers for children.

Knowledge exchange, seed exchange, farmer-to-farmer exchange and technical exchange was one of the first and most effective measures taken by farmer organisations, the fact that many of the crops are traditional made its promotion and cultivation easy.

Long-standing challenges surrounding traditional crops including access to resources, markets, fair prices, appropriate programs and extension services means the solution requires an innovative approach that ensures holistic food to enhance nutrition security.

With public awareness of traditional food crops becoming increasingly important, the Manifesto on Forgotten Foods in the Asia Pacific region will empower custodian farmers, particularly women and youth, in their practices to conserve, cultivate and sell forgotten crops and foods for nutrition, climate change resilience and identity conservation.



## Asia-Pacific dialogue report says there is a need for policy investment

Small scale fishers have recommended the need for policy investment and policy research in fisheries ahead of the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 in September.

Issues on the poor economic status and often marginalized social status of fishers' has left the voice of many across the Asia-Pacific Region unheard by policy makers.

The Asian Farmers Association said the Asia region contributed about 68% of the global catch in the fishery sector, while providing around 80% of employment in the region, many of whom the majority are small scale fishers.

The Asia-Pacific dialogue report by the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network said "small scale fishers are facing a crisis" in addition to climate change and depletion of species with "constant debate on who gets the priority — development, or democracy, or the environment".

It also cited the importance of accessibility to markets to increase fishers' income.

Ravadee Prasettcharoensuk, the Executive Director of Sustainable Development Foundation said: "There is a need to create a Department of Fisheries or National Statistics to formally include the small-scale fishers including fisher women because there is no guarantee they are included in the planning stages when the government creates a policy."

Lily Chow, a woman fisher from the Pacific, emphasised several key messages including gender.

"We need to do more to support women in fisheries' many of us are actively involved in selling fish and we can thrive in this area but we're facing many challenges".

Esther Penunia, Asian Farmers Association secretary general said access and control of natural resources was a "contentious issue".

"Fisher folks face hurdles to access the seas, beaches, to park their boats and drive their nets due to indiscriminate grabbing of coastal lands for tourism and other industrial purposes".

"Existing social schemes, various pensions and insurance schemes fall short of their needs simply because schemes are not developed with their issues and challenges in mind."

Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network manager, Lavinia Kaumaitotoya said many government pensions schemes in the Pacific have a mandatory age of attainment at 60 years and that gender issues add to the industry's lack of recognition.

"It is almost near impossible for fishermen or women to carry on fishing up to the age of 60 to feed his or her family because it is hazardous and strenuous for them. Frugal old age pension is inadequate for decent living for fisherwomen on top of these challenges".

Co-organized by the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development and the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (9/6), the dialogue also acknowledged the pivotal role aquatic food systems address in complex food and nutrition security issues.







## FO4ACP NEWS

### Te Tango Enu Beekeeping Pioneers Graduate

**Rarotonga, Cook Islands** — The first lot of thirteen students have successfully completed the beekeeping programme organized by Te Tango Enu.

The aim of the course educated members in bee health and bee retention where eight hives were distributed to the eight families who participated.

“Graduation was a great time to share what had been learned in the two sessions in theory and practical sessions,” said Treasurer, Heather Webber.

“Next on the agenda is to ensure everyone has a beekeeper suit, weather permitting we’ll be catching bees to populating our beehives — the first hive we set up is thriving after 6 weeks!”

Heather Webber said, “Our members are talking to friends and family which has led to another request to hold a second theory beekeeping session, a collaboration we have with the Ministry of Agriculture.”

Te Tango Enu hopes to organize more beekeeping trainings through the Cook Islands and making honey readily available at an affordable cost, giving beekeepers another source of income.

The training was funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).

### ANAPROFIKO Strengthens Network With Stakeholders

**Dili, Timor-Leste** — ANAPROFIKO has strengthened its network with various stakeholders following a soybeans and black beans harvest where forty-five participants attended the activity.

“The objective of the activity is to strengthen our network and also promote seed products at the national level through seed harvest activities,” said General Secretary, Joanico Ximenes

“Food availability is one of the four major components of food security and we are trying to improve it through commercial seed production.”

“This component is much more sophisticated at the national, regional and local level, and it requires government to fix our current seed system laws.”

The harvest activity was funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).



### **SFA Conduct Training For Farmers With The University Of The South Pacific**

**Apia, Samoa** — In a collaboration with the University of the South Pacific, the Samoa Farmers Association held a technical training for farmers following a proposed strategy for yams.

“We’ve identified at least 20 existing yam farmers to work with and plant at least 50 mounds of newly established yam,” says President, Afamasaga Toleafoa.

“We’re working with the School of Agriculture and Food Technology of the University of the South Pacific to conduct the necessary training on pruning management and planting, spacing and soil nutrient application.”

Afamasaga Toleafoa said: “Our members are privileged to be working with the future of the agriculture sector in the region and learning from each other.”

The training was conducted by Professor Siaka Diarra and Resource Personnel — Senior Crops Lecturer, Afioga Amosa.

The technical training was funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).

### **FSA-Vanuatu, NRTC Conduct Value Chain Vegetable Production For Young Farmers**

**Tanna Island, Vanuatu** — Napil Rural Training Centre have concluded a refresher training for its graduates and current students on nurseries building following challenges arising from volcanic and COVID-19 impacts.

“The objective was to uplift the skills of young farmers and practice their farming knowledge,” says Peter Koah, the Association Director of Farm Support Association.

“The nurseries built will support the young farmers to produce off season vegetables to restore the income generating activities during COVID-19 and volcano ash falling training gaps.”

Peter Koah said the training was conducted by the Napil Rural Training Centre as hands on exercise in the respective location identified by young farmers.

“Twelve nursery shade houses were built in twelve different locations for thirty-two young farmers and graduates.”

A total of twenty-three males and nine females participated in the training.

The activity was funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).





### **Growers Federation Of Tonga Improve Connection To Markets For Farmers**

**Nuku'alofa, Tonga** — The Growers Federation of Tonga are improving connection to markets for five farming organisations.

“We’re assisting the Vani Youth Group, Tupou College, Tonga College, Women in Horticulture and Ha’apai Nursery,” says CEO, Sinai Tuitahi. “To date we’ve distributed farming tools, fuel, fertilizer, equipment and seedlings that will help generate further income for the local market and exports estimated to earn between TOP\$20,000 — TOP\$100,000.”

“In doing this we’re looking to improve their capacity to connect their members to markets and also strengthen food security in schools.”

The activity was funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).

### **Kastom Gaden Association Facilitate Backyard Gardening For Women**

**Honiara, Solomon Islands** — Kastom Gaden Association have successfully facilitated a backyard gardening training for women living in urban areas.

Close to twenty women from the Matariu Women’s Fellowship, South Sea Evangelical Church group attended the two day training in Burns Creek.

Kastom Gaden Association Manager, Tikai Pitakia said the training was important to ensure women learn ways to grow their own food at their backyard gardens.

“With COVID-19 affecting the world, it’s important for all households to have their own backyard gardens to support them especially for households who have only the father or mother working.”

“It will help families have different nutritious food on the table and not rice and noodles,” said Tikai Pitakia.

“The women we trained will also be able to go back and share the idea of what they learnt to their families, communities and even the church about backyard gardening.”

The activity was funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).



### Samoa Farmers Association Lead Ornamental Program

**Apia, Samoa** — The Samoa Farmers Association are in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries and Samoa Tourism Authority to revive ornamentals.

Close to thirty youths and women have been identified to work with the Tama'ita'i o le Eleele Group led by trainers, Lemalu Amy Chan Mow and Leaupepe Lasa Aiono at the Atele Horticultural Center.

“The training covers the management of white ginger, torch, ground orchards, heliconia’s and asters,” said Leaupepe Lasa Aiono.

“Prior to the training, we’ve had the land cleared and the boundaries have been identified and confirmed by Samoa Tourism Authority.”

Leaupepe Lasa Aiono said: “Our monitoring and maintenance work will continue for at least once a month for four months, and we’re looking forward to the results of this project.”

The activity is co-funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).

### Te Tango Enuu Improve Capacity Building For Farmers

**Rarotonga, Cook Islands** — Te Tango Enuu have begun capacity building for farmers as part of key plans to enhance productivity of farmers.

“Pruning can be labour intensive work which can normally take up to 3 days manually,” says Heather Webber, the Treasurer of Te Tango Enuu. “We’ve purchased an Electrocoup F3015 electric pruning shears that will enable farmers to finish ½ an acre pruning in one day!”

She said investments was also made to strengthen capacity in IT.

“We purchased a computer to improve financial accountability of our farmer organisation’s, major editing on presentations and reports as well as improve the presentations we give.”

The capacity building exercise was to funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).





### **Kastom Gaden Association Supports Rural Training Centre Students**

**Honiara, Solomon Islands** — Kastom Gaden Association has begun practical training for thirteen agricultural students at the Kastom Gaden Association’s model farm.

The comprehensive training includes organic farming and provide students with reading material on nursery management, composting, seed saving and production, honey bee and soil management.

“The students are involved in farming areas such as; nursery management, seed sowing, seed saving & seed productions and packaging, integrated crop management, Pest & diseases management, composting, soil fertility improvements, planting patterns, seed germination test, and small livestock (chicken production, bee keeping),” said Kastom Gaden Association Manager, Tikai Pitakia.

“The state of Emergency declared by the Prime Minister in March last year as well as other restrictions that followed had disrupted three students from completing their practicum which they will complete in April 2021.”

The practical training is funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).

### **WiBDi Build Stronger Financial Platform To Enhance Efficiencies**

**Apia, Samoa** — In a move to improve institutional capacities, the Women in Business Development Inc are updating and migrating existing financial control systems.

The action is expected to ease new government tax management requirements that will enhance efficiencies for financial reporting and auditing.

“We’re improving monitoring, evaluation and learning evidence collection and data analysis to implement a stronger financial platform from which to operate,” says Programme Manager, Gillian Stewart.

“There’s significant improvements to be reported this quarter around farmer organisation internal positioning to commence 2021, and with an enhanced clarity of purpose and pathways for targeted outreach and action.”

“The combined external and internal focused project activities linked to FO4ACP, compliment the collaborative approach to better farmer organisation management in this continuing unpredictable landscape.”

The activity was funded by the Farmers’ Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) Programme, a joint partnership between the European Union, Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).





## BLOG

### United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 | A People's Summit

In 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will convene a Food Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Guided by five Action Tracks, the Summit will bring together key players from the worlds of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, as well as farmers, indigenous people, youth organizations, consumer groups, environmental activists, and other key stakeholders.

Agnes Kalibata, the United Nations Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit said the Summit will awaken the world to the fact that we all must work together to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food.

“It’s a summit for everyone everywhere — a people’s summit. It is also a solutions summit that will require everyone to take action to transform the world’s food systems.”

“The Summit will raise awareness and elevate public discussion about how reforming our food systems can help us all to achieve the SDGs by implementing reforms that are good for people and planet.”

“It will generate action and measurable progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and identifying solutions and leaders, and issuing a call for action at all levels of the food system, including national and local governments, companies and citizens.”

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network and its partners including the International Fund for Agricultural Development will be sharing information and engaging in discussions expected to conclude by June end 2021.





## Tutu Rural Training Centre

### Boosting Food Security

By Father Petero Matairatu, Principal Director of Tutu Rural Training Centre

At Tutu we are working towards boosting food security and we are looking to address issues that better utilize fruits and root crops, and replacing imported wheat flour with more nutritious breadfruit flour.

Our breadfruit orchard consists of more than 600 trees and it's coming into full production, most of our table foods are imported and through our Food Development Unit we're training participants in value-adding of products.

We want to revolutionize value-added products and breadfruit flour and chips are some of the products derived from the fruit.

Our training is also enhancing the knowledge and skills of participants, and they're taking these skills back to their villages and using them to establish their own cottage industries.





## Technical Session

### The Vanilla Journey

**By Piero Bianchessi, Former Owner and Operator of Venui Vanilla**

Vanilla is indigenous of Mesoamerica: mainly south-eastern Mexico, Guatemala and other parts of Central America.

Around the 16th century the Totonac people living on the east coast of Mexico (the Vera Cruz region) harvest the beans from the vanilla orchid growing wild on the humid coastline. They had been doing so for centuries.

When the Aztecs conquered the Totonacs, they soon developed a taste for the newly discovered beans used as a sweetener for a cocoa drink, and forced the Totonacs to pay tribute by sending vanilla to the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan. The vanilla 'discovered' by the Spanish conquistador Hernando Cortez (1518) was probably part of one of the Totonac tributes.

Vanilla then began its long and slow journey around the world, first to the court in Madrid (early 1500s), where for a number of decades it was used as a flavoring for a cocoa drink exclusively for the King and the nobility. However, by the end of the 16th century, the French and the English were able to obtain beans on a regular basis, and by 1602 Hugh Morgan (Queen Elizabeth I's apothecary) suggested the use of vanilla in its own right. At this time Mexico was the only supplier of vanilla beans, and remained so until about 1860.

Meanwhile throughout the 16th and 17th centuries there was high demand for the exotic vanilla plant, particularly in Paris and London. During this period (probably before 1730) vanilla cuttings were smuggled into the French and British capitals, where they were kept in botanical gardens like the famous Charles Greville collection at Paddington (circa 1807).

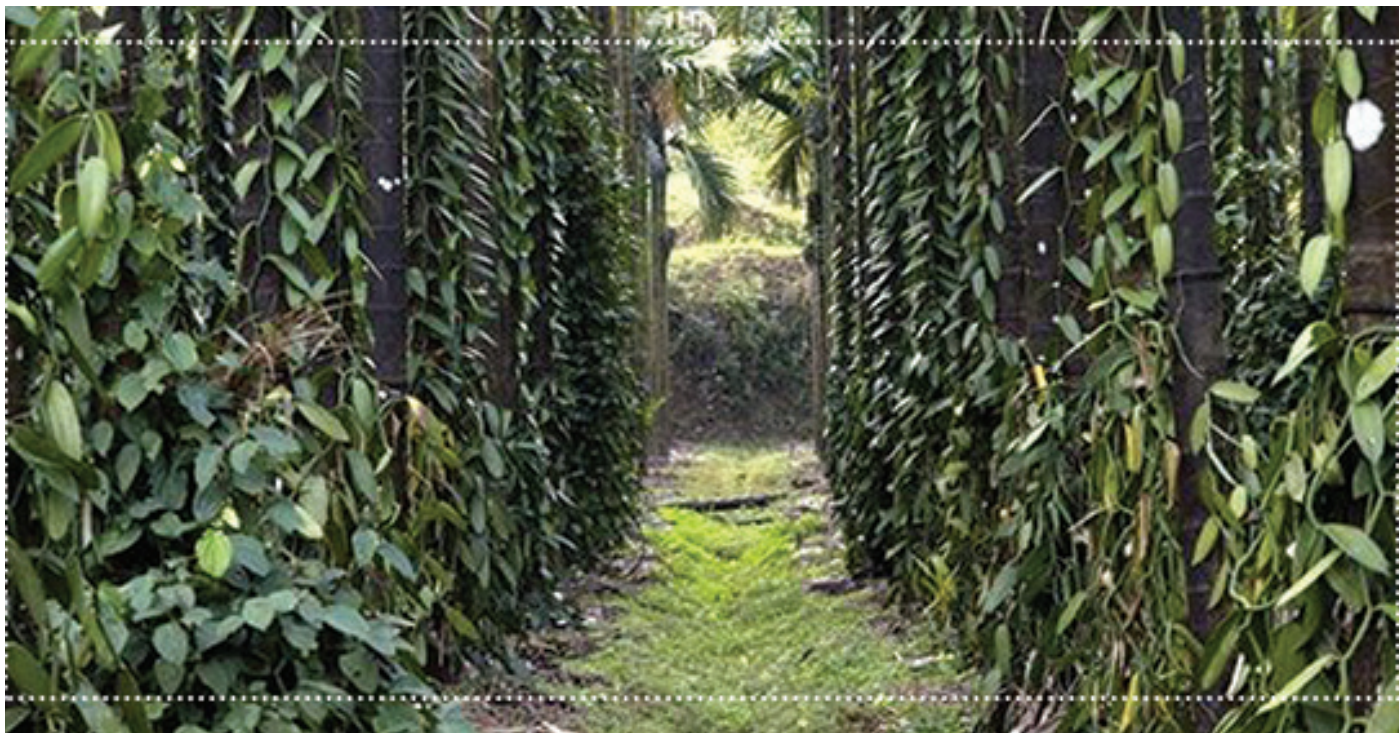
Compelled by the increasing demand for vanilla both entrepreneurs and plant collectors attempted to grow the plants from cuttings in recently colonized countries with similar tropical climatic conditions to vanilla's place of origin. In 1819 two plants were sent from Antwerp to Java, where one plant survived and bore flowers — but no fruit. Vanilla cuttings were also shipped by French entrepreneurs to the Reunion and Mauritius islands and to Martinique and Guadalupe in the French Antilles in 1839. While the plantations in these countries began to develop they did not produce sufficient crops.

Finally, in 1842 Edmond Albius, a 12 year old slave in Reunion Island, managed to hand pollinate vanilla for the first time. This was the beginning of the commercial success of vanilla. With the pollination technique perfected vanilla cultivation was reintroduced in Java (Indonesia) in 1846, and from there it travelled to Manila (Philippines). In 1848 a Mr Hamelin brought some plants from the Philippines to Tahiti. By the end of the 19th century the vanilla plants had reached a large number of countries including Seychelles (1866), Comoros and Madagascar (1893) and Uganda (via



Ceylon) in 1912. In 1898 Reunion, Madagascar and Comoros produced a combined total of 200 tonnes of cured vanilla.

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