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Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Community

2017-2018  
BIENNIAL  
REPORT

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Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique



Investing in rural people



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This 2017–2018 Biennial Report has been published on behalf of the Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) by the Pacific Community (SPC) with assistance from the Building Prosperity for Women Producers, Processors and Women Owned Businesses through Organic Value Chains (BPWP) project; and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which is through the Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific Project (CBRAPP). The Building Prosperity for Women Producers, Processors and Women Owned Businesses through Organic Value Chains (BPWP) project is supported by the Australian Government and implemented by the Pacific Community.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

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<b>ACIAR</b>	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
<b>AUD</b>	Australian Dollar
<b>BPWP</b>	Building Prosperity for Women Producers, Processors and Women Owned Businesses through Organic Value Chains project
<b>CTA</b>	Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FAPP</b>	Fiji Agriculture Partnerships Project
<b>Farm to Table</b>	Engaging Youth in Vanuatu and Fiji in Organic Farming: UNDP Farm to Table Chain Approach
<b>Farmer to Farmer Resilience Series</b>	Series of information sheets (22) describing resilient agriculture practices in Vanuatu, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Cook Islands and Niue
<b>FJD</b>	Fijian Dollar
<b>FRIEND</b>	Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFAD CBRAPP</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific Project
<b>IFOAM</b>	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
<b>INTEGRE</b>	Initiative des Territoires pour la Gestion Régionale de l'Environnement (sustainable development project for the four European Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) in the Pacific)
<b>LRD</b>	Land Resources Division (SPC)
<b>MIOFA</b>	Marshall Islands Organic Farmers Association
<b>MITT</b>	Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>NIOFA</b>	Niue Island Organic Farmers Association
<b>NKA</b>	Natura Kuki Airani of Cook Islands
<b>NZD</b>	New Zealand Dollar
<b>PCDF</b>	Partners in Community Development Fiji
<b>PGS</b>	Participatory Guarantee System (organic certification system based on a peer review model)
<b>POETCom</b>	Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Community
<b>POS</b>	Pacific Organic Standard
<b>POTHS</b>	Pacific Organic Tourism and Hospitality Standard
<b>SAMOA Pathway</b>	Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SDG Fund</b>	Sustainable Development Goals Fund
<b>SPC</b>	Pacific Community
<b>UNDP Pacific</b>	United Nations Development Programme Pacific Office
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund
<b>YLLP</b>	Youth Leading Learning in Climate Resilient Value Chains in the Pacific project



# WHO WE ARE

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*We work with people and nature, leading the development of organic agriculture in the Pacific Islands region. As a tool for sustainable development, organic agriculture touches on key areas of the Sustainable Development Goals – SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13: Climate Action, and SDG 15: Life on Land.*

The Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) is a not-for-profit membership organisation. It is a programme of the Pacific Community (SPC).

POETCom's membership spans 17 countries and territories of the Pacific Islands region and beyond. It includes farmer support organisations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and research institutions.

Through partnerships and spirited engagement, we share information, coordinate and support networking and build capacity.

POETCom has established a regional certification scheme to support the growth of the organic and ethical trade movement and to contribute to a productive, resilient, sustainable and healthy Pacific Islands region.

## OUR VISION

Organics and ethical trade are key contributors to sustaining our culture and communities and improving farmers' livelihoods, people's health and the environment in the Pacific Islands region.

## OUR VALUES

We are guided by these values in all our interactions with our stakeholders, colleagues and the broader community:

- Organic agriculture
- Spiritual principles
- Pacific approaches to decision-making, values, traditions and cultures
- Preparing Pacific Islanders for climate change
- Food and nutritional security for all
- Enhanced biodiversity
- Equality of access, fairness, justice and partnership for all
- Youth for a productive agriculture sector
- Quality of life
- Networking and communication
- Inclusive Pacific community

## OUR STRATEGY

Our priority is promotion of organic agriculture. To support this priority, we invest in building capability in four areas:

**MINDSET** – Mainstreaming, recognition and adoption of organic agriculture as a solution to many of the region's challenges

**PRODUCTION AND ENVIRONMENT** – Organic production that meets market demand and ensures food and nutritional security for Pacific people

**VALUE CHAINS** – Development and strengthening of domestic and export organic value chains to provide livelihood opportunities for Pacific people

**SUSTAINABILITY** – Securing of partnerships and the human, financial and institutional resources needed to achieve our mission and goals

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017-2018

*Our stakeholders – farmers, producers and governments – are at the heart of our engagement.*

## OUR MEMBERS

**46 MEMBERS** in 17 Pacific Island countries and territories

**3127 FARMERS** gained organic certification under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), with assistance from Vanuatu's Farm Support Association

**40%** of participants in current POETCom project activities are women and youths

## OUR EVENTS

### POETCOM GENERAL ASSEMBLY

in Wallis and Futuna, October 2017, was attended by all our focal points.

### YOUTH LEARNING EXCHANGE

Resilient organic practices were shared by youths from five Pacific Island countries in Vanuatu.

### PACIFIC WEEK OF AGRICULTURE

We took part in the inaugural Pacific Week of Agriculture in Vanuatu, October 2017.

### YOUTH SIDE EVENT

The Youth Organic Farmers' side event during the Pacific Week of Agriculture attracted a large crowd.

### ORGANIC PRODUCTS LAUNCHED

Vanuatu saw its first major launch of organic products – manioc, coffee, vegetables and peanuts – certified under PGS.

### PACIFIC ORGANIC TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STANDARD (POTHS)

Members were trained in using the standard.

## OUR PARTNERSHIPS

### DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The support of donors, including IFAD, CTA, SDG Fund and UNDP Pacific, make POETCom's work possible.

### POTHS

The standard was piloted with Breakas Beach Resort, Vanuatu (private sector).

### ORGANIC POLICIES

were developed by the Governments of Fiji and Vanuatu.

PALAU

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SOLOMON ISLANDS (Kastom Gaden Association)

VANUATU (Farm Support Association)

WALLIS & FUTUNA (Chambre du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Métiers et de l'Agriculture – CCIMA)

AUSTRALIA

NEW CALEDONIA (Bio Caledonia)

UNITED KINGDOM

# OUR REACH

POETCom has members in 17 Pacific Island countries and territories. In the past two years, POETCom coordinated four projects, largely investing in the development of organic agriculture, empowerment of youths and women, and product development for income.



# PACIFIC HIGH LEVEL ORGANIC GROUP: CHAIR'S STATEMENT

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The path to, and ultimate objective of, organic agricultural farming and ethical trade complements efforts to implement the global commitments made under the Sustainable Development Goals, the SAMOA Pathway and the Paris Agreement.

The Blue Pacific narrative endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2017 emphasises the importance of a strong collective voice, and a regional position and action on issues vital to our development as a region. The elevation of organic farming in the Pacific will contribute to securing the well-being and potential of the Blue Pacific through the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development and the Leaders' commitments to national and regional collective efforts to ensure "no one is left behind".

Organic production and ethical trade cut across many of the global SDGs, including those relating to poverty reduction; zero hunger; health and well-being; food security; sustainable agriculture; clean water and sanitation; responsible consumption and production; and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

As Chair of the Pacific-High Level Organics Group, I am convinced that organic agriculture provides a key solution and vital tool that will contribute to more sustainable livelihoods for Pacific people, including through strengthening our cultures and communities, increasing farmers' productivity, improving our health and protecting our environment.

The growth in interest in organic production is a reflection of the magnitude of the advocacy work and dialogue that have taken place at the

national level, where supportive policy measures have been put in place together with farmers and communities. Interest is also inspired by the organic concept itself, which incorporates a holistic perspective and principles linking health, nutrition and food security. Furthermore, there is appreciation of the way that organic approaches fit with natural processes and with cultural contexts by recognising indigenous knowledge and traditional farming practices.

I encourage SPC and POETCom to continue their work in the development of organic farming and trade. I am pleased that once again POETCom took the opportunity to raise awareness of organic developments and their benefits during the Forum Leaders' Meeting in Apia in September 2017.

In terms of resources, the region has been able to secure greater interest from development partners, who together have endeavoured to provide the support and environment required to assist POETCom's efforts to meet its objectives in developing the Pacific organic sector. But we must continue to push forward and harness all available resources through genuine and durable partnerships and concrete action on the ground.

If organic agriculture offers so much hope, Pacific Island countries should no longer sit back but should pursue its cause in their national agenda for research, innovation and science, policy development, economic stability and food security.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment of POETCom, including the farmers who are the drivers and the heart of POETCom, and the Pacific membership for engaging proactively in the network and paving the way to enhancing the growth of the organic movement.

With my best wishes for even greater success in the years to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

**Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi**  
**Prime Minister of Samoa**

# LAND RESOURCES DIVISION: DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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Agriculture is at the centre of sustainable development efforts. It is a critical sector because it fulfils a basic human need – nutrition. An adequate and balanced diet provided through effective agricultural production results in healthier children and communities.

Currently, about 12 per cent (12%) of the global population, or 870 million people, are chronically undernourished in terms of energy intake, and about two billion people suffer from vitamin and mineral deficiencies.<sup>1</sup> The Pacific, along with East Asia, had the highest number of overweight children in 2017 with 8.9 million affected.

Better access to nutritious food, both meat and vegetables, is therefore important. Demand for good, nutritious food will continue to grow with increases in population and changing diets. This places more pressure on our natural resources of soil, water and air. Competition for their use from non-food sectors exerts further stresses, so much so they have become scarce resources. We have treated them as free goods for far too long.

To feed a hungry world, we must increase our production of nutritious food without causing too much harm to the natural environment. Organic farm production provides one solution. Improving mechanisation of the sector in the Pacific Islands is another.

No one solution fits all the challenges facing agriculture because of the diversity of conditions in different countries. However, organic agriculture is an optimum strategy in terms of ensuring high-yielding, productive soils over a long period of time. It also reduces the practice of shifting agriculture for cultivation, which results in large

areas of deforested land. Deforestation is a major contributor to the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.

Climate change directly affects the food and nutrition security of people, potentially undermining progress towards a world without poverty and hunger. Organic farming systems have boosted resilience to climate change and helped safeguard yields. Better yields are important for addressing hunger.

Another big challenge is rural poverty. To meet the dual challenge of producing enough food and alleviating poverty, yields will need to improve without placing more stress on natural resources. Organic agriculture is a proven solution, as demonstrated by organic farms around the Pacific. As well, organic products are in demand. The growing billion-dollar global organic market is creating opportunities for income generation that the agricultural sector is capitalising on.

Organic agriculture offers a solution to many of the challenges that face us as Pacific people, while simultaneously allowing us to meet the commitments our leaders have agreed to at the global level.

Organics and the SDGs make sense.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan Helsen', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Jan Helsen**  
Director, Land Resources Division, SPC

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<sup>1</sup> FAO, WFP and IFAD. 2012. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012. Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition. Rome, FAO.  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3027e/i3027e00.htm>

# POETCOM BOARD – OUTGOING CHAIR’S STATEMENT

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***“I thank God, the creator of this universe, for his guidance in keeping my life safe to see the great leaps this organisation has taken to overcome challenges and reach the heights of today. A decade ago, a group of passionate practitioners saw the path clearly and started this movement, which I was part of. Some of my founding brothers have gone ahead to be with him. With his protection over my life, I humbly remain to witness.”***

It is a great pleasure to present the POETCom 2017–2018 Biennial Report. The report provides updates on the organisation and its members’ activities, outputs and achievements, as aligned with the goals of the Strategic Plan 2013–2017. There is also a special focus on young people’s achievements.

With the challenges, successes, impacts and outcomes reported, 2017 and 2018 can only be described as a year of achievement for POETCom, which made real strides in promoting organic agriculture through its four thematic areas: mindset, production and environment, value chains and sustainability. This report celebrates these achievements, particularly our contributions towards achieving the SDGs.

We are utterly mindful that all our efforts will be wasted if there is no next generation to carry on the work of the organic movement and we salute the youths who are already involved. Their stories are shared in this report.

Without funding and support from various outstanding individuals and organisations, the achievements of 2017 and 2018 would not have

been possible. A big thank you to SPC for its ongoing support, and to the Director of SPC’s Land Resources Division, Jan Helsen, and all staff members. We are also extremely grateful to our development partners, including the European Union, SDG Fund through UNDP, Australian Government and IFAD, which has been an invaluable partner since the first meetings were convened to develop the Pacific Organic Standard (POS).

As the outgoing Chair, I would like to personally thank the outgoing board members, namely Adi Maimalaga Tafunai (Samoa), Bob Bishop (Palau), Francois Japiot (New Caledonia) and Gilles Parzy (French Polynesia). They have given me great support in the leadership role of chairing the POETCom Advisory Board. Without their support, we would not have arrived here. I would also like to welcome the newly elected board members and Chair.

I must express my admiration for the expertise and leadership of Stephen Hazelman, Organic Extension Systems Officer and now Acting POETCom Coordinator. Almost everybody in the region knows who he is. The support of his POETCom team – Organic Production Systems Officer, Osea Rasea, Programme Assistant, Lily Wong, and Communications Officer, Theresa Fox – has been tremendous.

Thank you especially to POETCom members. Even if I have not visited you in person, you are in my heart as you are the heart of the organisation – you who are touching and working the soil. Best wishes for you all in 2018 as we strive to make organic agriculture the norm and not the option.

Organics for changed lives.



**Nambo Moses**  
Outgoing Chair – POETCom Advisory Board

# POETCOM BOARD – NEW CHAIR’S STATEMENT

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***Au vakatulou ki na veidelaniyavu vakaturaga ena vei Matanitu Vanua ena noda wasa Pasivika. Na kena vei Turaga, Marama bale au cavu baleta. (My humble tulou (pardon) to the various traditional chiefly clans, the respective traditional leaders/chiefs – both men and women – across our Pacific region).***

*Bula Vinaka* to everyone in the Pacific Organic family, friends and the network of partners and stakeholders. It is an honour and a privilege to be part of this great movement and to be working alongside men and women leaders who are farmers, producers, social workers, public servants, and policy makers from across the various generations.

POETCom has come a long way since its founding years and stands strong, as it is rooted in the founding principles of the Pacific region’s culture and values. We are very thankful for the founding visionaries who navigated us through the early years of our journey, which has allowed us to have global recognition and credibility as an organisation.

We therefore challenge ourselves to take Organic Pasifika to the next level – especially amidst the issues confronting us such as: the increasing non-communicable diseases; the decreasing food security and nutrition; climate change adaptation and the rise in sea-level; unemployment, including youth unemployment; the ageing farming population; and the geographical challenges of farm to market links.

Our team at the Secretariat comprises inspired and motivated individuals who are ever ready to assist. My experienced and expert colleagues of the Board all share the same enthusiasm and ethics, which enables us to achieve our collective goals.

This report is a collection of what we have done in the past two years, how we have planned and implemented funded activities, as well as our visions of the future.

We continue to acknowledge the assistance and partnership of the Pacific Community; especially the Land Resources Division (LRD) for providing us with an environment that has enabled us to flourish and allowed for easy access to Pacific leadership forums and platforms.

I encourage all to read this with a critical mind and provide us with a valuable appraisal that will allow us to better serve the growth and sustainability of the organic movement in the Pacific and the POETCom family.

Vinaka vakalevu and may God’s blessing continue to be in abundance for us all.



**Dr Jone Hawea**  
**New Chair – POETCom Advisory Board**

# POETCOM BOARD

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The new Board was elected for a two-year term at the POETCom General Assembly held in October 2017 in Wallis and Futuna. (The General Assembly decided it will now be called the POETCom Board, rather than the POETCom Advisory Board as formerly.)



**Chair, Dr Jone Hawea**  
Medical surgeon fighting to combat the high rate of amputation due to diabetes by increasing the production and consumption of organic food.



**Gilles Parzy, Board member**  
Consultant in agro-ecology and POETCom founding member.



**Francois Japiot, Board member**  
Agronomist and project manager of the project, 'Regional Technical Cooperation for the development of a network of Chambers of Agriculture in the Pacific', based at New Caledonia's Chamber of Agriculture.



**Alberta Vitale, Board member**  
Associate director, Women in Business Development Inc., Samoa.



**Dr Shane Tutua, Board member**  
Soil scientist and owner of Zai Na Tina Organic Demonstration and Research Farm in East Honiara, Solomon Islands.



**Drew Havea, Board member**  
Social development campaigner and President, Tonga National Youth Congress.



**Nambo Moses, Board member**  
Animal health livestock specialist, paravet trainer and serologist.



POETCom acknowledges the efforts of the outgoing board – some of whom were founding members of POETCom – for leading the work of organic production in the Pacific Islands and setting the pace for the new Board.



*The outgoing board: (left to right) Acting POETCom Coordinator – Stephen Hazelman, Moses Nambo, Francois Japiot, Robert Bishop, Adi Maimalaga Tafuna'i and Gilles Parzy. Some board members have continued on their service in this new tenure.*





**OUR STRATEGY: MINDSET**

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Arin Atoll

## FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE TO BE MAINSTREAMED, WIDELY RECOGNISED AND ADOPTED AS A SOLUTION TO MANY OF THE REGION'S CHALLENGES



We raise awareness through outreach events, communication strategies and products, and conversations at regional, national and community levels, showing the benefits of organic agriculture as a solution for regional challenges and issues related to youth employment, gender equality, climate change, food and nutritional security and sustainable management of natural resources.

## ORGANIC PASIFIKA SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



➤ To raise awareness, infographics and videos were posted on the Organic Pasifika Facebook page and Twitter and YouTube channels. This is an optimal way of reaching a mass audience since more and more Pacific Islanders are engaging with these platforms. From 2017 to 2018, 1200 posts were made on Facebook, including shares from other pages on organic techniques, certification, products and research; pictorials on POETCom field activities; and infographics promoting specific issues such as youth earning incomes through their organic farms, and using organic technologies to build the climate resilience of farms.

➤ Infographics were posted on social media for the International Day of Forests, International Women's Day, Wisdom of Organics Campaign and World Soils Day.

## EVENTS



➤ POETCom hosted a booth at the inaugural Pacific Week of Agriculture in Vanuatu. Information sheets on organic technologies, certification, and organic agriculture were shared. About 500 people passed through the booth over a week.

➤ On Earth Hour night in Fiji, hundreds of people attended a demonstration of compost production, linking organics with climate change, at Sukuna Park in Suva.

➤ The Youth Organic Farmers' side event at the Pacific Week of Agriculture was attended by at least 100 Vanuatu youths. The event demonstrated how organic certification can lead to an income for young people.



➤ An appreciation plaque was presented to Samoa's Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting in Samoa, promoting organics at the regional leadership level.

➤ A Youth Learning Exchange, promoting organic technologies for climate resilience and income generation, was held in Vanuatu. While advocating organic agriculture for young people, the exchange gained media coverage in Vanuatu throughout the week.



➤ Marshall Islands Organic Farmers Association (MIOFA) served an organic morning tea at the Micronesian Women’s Conference in August. It was the first time that MIOFA had engaged at the national level, let alone the Micronesia level. This major conference was an ideal platform for promoting local, organic food.

➤ The Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development (FRIEND) launched “Organics Simplified” in Suva in June. “Organics Simplified” is a four-page newspaper lift-out with tips on natural pesticides that can be easily adopted by anyone.

- Fijian stakeholders met to set up the national PGS structure. The event brought together different sectors of the Fijian government, the private sector, farmers and producer organisations at Ranadi Plantation in Deuba.

➤ POETCom hosted an organic afternoon tea for Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry and Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry at Iririki Island during the Pacific Week of Agriculture in Vanuatu. It was an opportunity for regional leaders to hear about the progress of the organic movement.

➤ In Vanuatu, Organic Pasifika-marked products were launched at Tanna Island.





# FERME-PILOTE BIO

du lycée agricole  
d'Orléans

## 1 CULTURE DE COMPOSTAGE

Le compostage est un processus naturel de décomposition de la matière organique. Il permet de transformer les déchets agricoles et domestiques en un engrais naturel riche en nutriments.

## 2 PRODUCTIONS EN FERTILISATION ORGANIQUE

La fertilisation organique est une pratique agricole qui consiste à apporter à la terre des engrais naturels riches en nutriments. Elle permet d'améliorer la structure du sol et de favoriser la croissance des plantes.

## 3 PRODUCTIONS EN AGRICULTURE ORGANIQUE

L'agriculture biologique est une pratique agricole qui consiste à produire des aliments sains et respectueux de l'environnement. Elle évite l'utilisation de produits chimiques de synthèse et privilégie les méthodes naturelles.

ATEGRE



## **OUR STRATEGY: PRODUCTION AND ENVIRONMENT**

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## FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTION TO MEET MARKET DEMAND AND ENSURE FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY FOR PACIFIC PEOPLE

We promote organic food production as a source of nourishment free of harmful chemicals. The food that is produced must meet market demand and standards and satisfy the food and nutritional security needs of Pacific people. To facilitate organic food production, we provide training to farmers and technical support for the implementation of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for organic certification as an alternative to third-party certification. With partners, we build knowledge banks of information that any farmer can use.

## ORGANIC TECHNOLOGIES BUILD FARM RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



A basket of organic technologies was developed and widely shared. Twenty-two information sheets on compost-making, mulching, fixing nitrogen in the soil with *Gliricidia* and making organic fertilisers such as fish emulsion were produced with the support of focal points in Cook Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Niue and Vanuatu. The basket also included information on planting traditional crops that are resilient to extreme weather events such as droughts.



## PGS TRAINING (PEER REVIEW TRAINING)



Several PGS training sessions were held at various locations for 1000 farmers (coffee, cassava, vegetables and peanuts) in Vanuatu (Efate, Tanna and Espiritu Santo Islands), and vegetable farmers in Saivou district in Ra province, Fiji. The training in PGS certification also involved sharing knowledge of organic food production. As a result, PGS groups were set up to provide certification.

Support for the PGS training and establishment of groups was provided through the IFAD CBRAPP and Farm to Table projects. With POETCom's support, members (e.g. Loving Islands and The Earth Care Agency) are now involved in expanding the reach of PGS by holding training of their own. Some members, e.g. in French Polynesia and Bio Caledonia, have been providing training in organic production for many years.





## ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTION TRAINING

Under the Farm to Table project, POETCom member, FRIEND Fiji, set up three model farms in villages in the Natokaimalo district in the upper ranges of Ra province. The project trained farmers in specific techniques for crop production, seedlings, sustainable land-use practices, crop management and post-harvest handling.



## PACIFIC ORGANIC TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STANDARD (POTHS) TRAINING

Two separate training sessions were held in Vanuatu in 2017. The first in January in Port Vila focused on vegetable suppliers and chefs from Breakas Beach Resort, where POTHS is to be trialed. Five farmer trainees were familiarised with the expectations of the resort and types of vegetables needed. Chef trainees from Breakas learned about the types of local organic produce they could source.



The second training session was held in July with nine participants from Fiji and Vanuatu. Training coordinator and POETCom Board member, Gilles Parzy, focused on the requirements of POTHS and demonstrated how audits are conducted using the standard.



## YOUTH LEARNING EXCHANGE

About 20 young men and women from Vanuatu, Fiji, Niue, Cook Islands and Republic of the Marshall Islands met in Port Vila to share resilient farming practices. They demonstrated the use of practices including mulching, intercropping, contour planting and pit planting.



## NATIONAL PGS STRUCTURE FOR VANUATU

The Vanuatu Certification Committee was set up to govern certification and the use of the Organic Pasifika mark. Use of the mark is defined in an MOU between the committee and SPC. Four of the committee members studied PGS governance structures in New Caledonia.



## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Seven Vanuatu farmers received support to learn about composting and biochar production at Zai Na Tina farm in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

## “ORGANICS SIMPLIFIED”

POETCom supported the launch of “Organics Simplified” – a newspaper lift-out on natural pesticides produced by FRIEND and circulated to thousands of people.

THE TREE...



  
**TANNA COFFEE**  
A Taste of the South Pacific  
**DARK ROAST**  
Single Origin Arabica Coffee  
GROUNDED  
Since 1988  
PRODUCT OF VANUATU



  
**TANNA COFFEE**  
A Taste of the South Pacific



  
**TANNA COFFEE**  
A Taste of the South Pacific  
**MEDIUM ROAST**  
Single Origin Arabica Coffee  
WHOLE BEANS  
250g  
PRODUCT OF VANUATU



  
**TANNA COFFEE**  
A Taste of the South Pacific



**OUR STRATEGY:  
VALUE CHAINS**

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TANNA COFFEE  
A Taste of the South Pacific

MARKETS \$\$



FARM

## TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN DOMESTIC AND EXPORT ORGANIC VALUE CHAINS TO EXPAND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR PACIFIC ISLAND PRODUCERS

We assist communities to develop PGS organic certification based on the Pacific Organic Standard (POS) to ensure production is in accordance with desired social and environmental welfare standards. After achieving certification, producers are able to use the Organic Pasifika mark, which guarantees their product is organic. The certification has inspired product development for markets, based on a trusted value-chain system that promotes the flow of monetary benefits back to communities.

## PGS VALUE CHAINS

Value chains for several products certified using PGS were set up in 2017.



### ORGANIC MANIOC FLOUR

Nine farmers from Espiritu Santo Island in Vanuatu supply Lapita Café with *manioc* (cassava), which is dehydrated locally and then ground into flour at the Lapita Café outlet in Port Vila. The finished product is also certified.

### TANNA COFFEE

Tanna Island farmers (952) formed a group to certify their coffee beans, which they supply to the Tanna Coffee factory outlet in Loukatai.

### ORGANIC PEANUTS

About 184 peanut farmers registered with Nasi Tuan Christian Services on Tanna Island to supply peanuts for processing into chilli peanuts and salted, dried and roasted nuts, which are sold by Nasi Tuan to markets in Australia and Vanuatu.





## NIUE'S ORGANIC NIGHT MARKET

Organic farmers, some with third-party certification, supply the domestic Niue market. The Niue Island Organic Farmers Association began staging the "Organic Night Market" as a selling platform.

## COOK ISLANDS ORGANIC FOOD

Organic food, certified using PGS, is sold at local Rarotonga markets on Saturdays and at roadside stalls. Ten farmers were certified using PGS in 2017.

## MATUKU ISLAND, LAU PROVINCE, FIJI

Seventy-six farmers, trained and certified in organic production, supplied a range of organic products (virgin coconut oil, root crops, vegetables, ginger and breadfruit flour) for sale to Suva consumers at the Suva ROC Market. This effort began in 2016.



## NAPIL VEGETABLES

Thirty-five farmers, who have been learning about organic production with the Napil Rural Training Centre on Tanna Island in Vanuatu, supplied PGS-certified vegetables to the Lenakel Market in Blackman Town.



## SUCCESS OF ORGANIC MARKETS IN MARSHALL ISLANDS

Local organic food, certified through PGS, was sold locally in Majuro for the first time. The markets, which were organised by the Marshall Islands Organic Farmers Association, lasted less than an hour as the vegetables sold out so rapidly.

## SAIVOU FARMERS SUPPLY ORGANIC RESTAURANT

From Saivou district (Ra province, Fiji), 135 farmers, certified using PGS, supply vegetables to the country's only organic restaurant *iTukuni*, which is run by FRIEND, a POETCom member.





PO

Pacific Or

**OUR STRATEGY:  
SUSTAINABILITY**



DE Com  
Organic & Ethical Trade Community



## TO SECURE THE PARTNERSHIPS, AND HUMAN, FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO ACHIEVE POETCOM'S MISSION AND GOALS

Our activities are implemented in accordance with POETCom's Strategic Plan. We work closely with donors and under the guidance of the POETCom Board. We collaborate with partners and stakeholders to implement organic activities and maximise their impacts. We are building strategic alliances to secure sustainable funding streams for the secretariat.

2017

### **19TH ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS**

A fifteen-member POETCom team attended the Congress in New Delhi, India, in November 2017. The team attended the meeting of the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations (networking with farmers from around the world), the main congress and the General Assembly of IFOAM.

### **POETCOM GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The General Assembly in Wallis and Futuna held in October 2017 was attended by 10 focal points. The focal points gave members in the various countries a voice and enabled discussion of issues pertinent to the movement. The General Assembly also elected the new POETCom Board.

### **INTEGRE PROJECT MEETINGS**

A POETCom programme staff participated at INTEGRE meetings in Wallis and Futuna and New Caledonia. The Wallis meeting covered the winding up of the project and touched on the French Overseas Countries and Territories component of the EDF 11 funding, which focuses mainly on organics. Attendance at the meetings supported the goals of building relationships with the French territories and seeking opportunities to leverage more funding for the organic movement.

### **COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY**

A POETCom Board member attended to represent Pacific interests and position organics as a critical contributor to food and nutritional security. An alliance with the Committee will help gain recognition of the Pacific organic movement as a key player and attract more funding for the work that needs to be done to expand the adoption of organic agriculture by Pacific people and governments.

### **KEEPING UP WITH ORGANIC TECHNOLOGY**

With the support of the INTEGRE project, a POETCom programme staff and a delegation of organic farmers from French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna attended "Tech & Bio" in Bourg-lès-Valence, Paris, where advances in agricultural techniques, both conventional and organic, were on display. The show included field demonstrations, conferences and workshops.

### **ANNUAL IFAD SOUTHEAST ASIA AND PACIFIC HUB FORUM**

Southeast Asian and Pacific project representatives met in August in Jakarta, Indonesia, for the presentation of updates on all IFAD projects. A POETCom programme staff attended and participated at this event.



**ANNUAL IFAD CBRAPP PLANNING MEETING**

This meeting was organised by POETCom and held in Fiji, in January 2018. The sessions reflected on lessons learned from 2017 to which work plans for 2018 were set accordingly. The countries involved were Cook Islands, Niue and Republic of the Marshall Islands.

**COMMENCEMENT OF BUILDING PROSPERITY FOR WOMEN PRODUCERS, PROCESSORS AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES THROUGH ORGANIC VALUE CHAINS (BPWP) PROJECT**

Two POETCom staff representatives actively participated in the design of the BPWP project with the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development programme in January 2018. The countries that were consulted were Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. The project was signed in 2018 is supported by the Government of Australian aid programme through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

**MULTI-SECTOR AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP ON HIGHLY HAZARDOUS PESTICIDES IN THE PACIFIC**

A POETCom staff representative attended this workshop held in the month of March 2018, in Tonga and carried out a presentation on environmentally friendly fertilisers and chemicals that can be used as viable alternatives.

**IFAD CBRAPP VALUE CHAIN WORKSHOP, NIUE**

A POETCom staff representative conducted a value chain analysis training workshop in Niue for the Niue Organic Farmers Association held in the month of April 2018. Virgin coconut oil, coffee and local crop value chains were identified from this training, and then analysed.

**IFAD CBRAPP VALUE CHAIN WORKSHOP, REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**

In July 2018, a POETCom staff representative conducted this final workshop to assess and wrap-up the IFAD project in Republic of the Marshall Islands and acknowledged the support of the implementing partners Marshall Islands Organic Association, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Development.

**ASIA PACIFIC COCONUT COMMUNITY (APCC) CONFERENCE**

A POETCom staff representative attended the APCC conference held in Thailand in the month of August 2018 and carried out a presentation on the programme's work on coconuts under the PGS certification system in the Pacific.

**FRIEND/USAID SYMPOSIUM**

Similarly in August 2018, POETCom was represented and participated at the FRIEND/USAID Symposium on sustainable Agriculture and Community Resilience, Challenges, Achievements and Best Practices for Food Security and Economic Growth, held at Lautoka, Fiji.

**OPEN POLLINATED SEED PRODUCTION TRAINING**

POETCom in August 2018 conducted the above training in the Cook Islands with the support of the Pacific Community's Land Resources Seeds for Life Initiative.

**DESIGN AND VALIDATION OF AN ACIAR FUNDED PROJECT**

Around December 2018, POETCom and Land Resources staff members travelled to the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia and participated in the design and validation of the Policy Drivers for Public-Private Partnerships for Pacific Organics: Improving Extension Policy through Evidence-based Approach project that is funded by ACIAR.

**POETCOM HOSTING HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION FROM WALLIS AND FUTUNA**

Around December 2018, POETCom hosted the high-level delegation from Wallis and Futuna that was visiting Fiji's ministries, private sectors and businesses within the agriculture sector.

**NEWSLETTERS**

Three issues of the Cultivating Community newsletter were distributed within the 2017-2018 period.



A close-up photograph of palm fronds with a green and yellow variegated pattern. The fronds are arranged in a fan-like shape, with the yellow stripes running parallel to the central vein. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture and color of the leaves.

**MAJOR EVENTS OF  
2017-2018**

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## POETCOM GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WALLIS AND FUTUNA

The 2017 General Assembly in October was marked by 24 successful motions, including POETCom's registration as a legal entity.

Held on the shores of Mata'utu, the capital of Wallis on the island of Uvea in Hahake district, the General Assembly included POETCom's 10 focal points.

The Chambre du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Métiers et de l'Agriculture (CCIMA), the focal point in Wallis and Futuna, hosted the event.

### Key outcomes:

- POETCom to develop a new form of relationship with SPC with a two-year transition period
- General Assembly to be held every two years
- POETCom Board expanded to seven members
- Youth and Women Chapter of POETCom to be developed
- POETCom to develop a technical, innovative and scientific research arm
- 2019 General Assembly to be held in Samoa

## IFOAM CONGRESS

A POETCom delegation of 15 farmers, members and officials joined the global organic family for the 19th Organic World Congress (the world's largest and most significant organic gathering) in New Delhi, India (9–11 November 2017).

In addition to attending the World Congress, Stephen Hazelman and Osea Rasea participated in the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations, while Karen Mapusua, Stephen Hazelman and POETCom Chair, Nambo Moses, participated in the General Assembly of IFOAM. The delegation gave the Pacific Islands organic movement an identity and enabled strong advocacy for the role of organics in the region's sustainable development. Members also networked, built alliances with farmers and donors, and learned about topical issues to support the growth of the movement at home.

Karen Mapusua made history by becoming the first person from the Pacific region to be elected to the World Board of IFOAM – Organics International. Her nomination was put forward by IFOAM members Eden Parc (French Polynesia), the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture (Australia), the Soil and Health Association (New

Zealand), the Keystone Foundation (India) and the Italian Association for Organic Agriculture. The IFOAM General Assembly elected the ten-member board at its meeting in New Delhi, India, in November 2017.

The board oversees and supports the work of growing the global organic movement through the marketplace, communicating the benefits of organics, and supporting leaders and farmers. Karen's appointment has been widely lauded by POETCom members, who believe she is an accomplished advocate of the organic movement in the region with vast experience in organic agriculture. She has been instrumental in drawing up the Pacific Organic Standard – the bible that guides the development of organic agriculture in the region.

During 2018, IFOAM Organic International has had a strong focus on reviewing membership structures of the organisation to ensure greater inclusivity and also investigating how to engage more young people in the organic movement. Karen has been working with IFOAM members in the Oceania region to gauge their views and ensure that regional voices are heard in the decision-making process.

## PACIFIC WEEK OF AGRICULTURE

We hosted a booth at the largest Pacific gathering of agriculture stakeholders at Independence Park in Port Vila, Vanuatu (16–20 October 2017).

The booth engaged the interest of hundreds of people in the Farmer to Farmer Resilience Series, organic products and the organic certification process. It increased POETCom's visibility to a diverse range of stakeholders from across the region, supporting its role as a regional authority on organic agriculture.

IFAD CBRAPP and the Farm to Table project provided support for the booth.

## RAISING POETCOM'S PROFILE WITH REGIONAL LEADERS

With members, Lapita Café and Tanna Coffee, and the support of the POETCom focal point, the Farm Support Association, we treated Pacific Ministers of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests to an organic afternoon tea at Iririki Island Resort in Vanuatu. It was an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of POETCom with agriculture leaders, who in 2012 gave POETCom a mandate to grow the organic movement in the region. POETCom and the Pacific

Organic Standard have made considerable gains since then.

POETCom presented SPC with a plaque of appreciation for hosting it over several years, and also presented one to IFAD for continued funding support.

The ministers enjoyed organic pastries and Fiji lemongrass tea, a certified organic product.

## WINDS OF CHANGE FOR BIO CALEDONIA

The establishment of two new local groups in Thio and Yaté, in the southeast of New Caledonia's Grande Terre, ensured 2017 was a big year for Bio Caledonia. The groups are the result of excellent information dissemination and awareness raising by Bio Caledonia's local facilitator in an area that has been impacted by the mining industry. The members of these new groups produce mainly vegetables and coconut oil.

The association's General Assembly decided to give producers the opportunity to be certified by a third party. Farmers now have a choice between two certification processes: through the Participatory Guarantee System or a third party. This decision requires reconsideration of all the association's processes and guidelines. Two newcomers – Thierry Vanhaecke as director and Claire Lataste as coordinator – joined forces with the team to address these challenges.

## BIO CALEDONIA DELEGATION TO TECH & BIO

Tech & Bio is a professional show for organic and alternative farming techniques, which is held every two years in the south of France. SPC sent a delegation from French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna, which included BioPasifika certified farmers, members of the Chambers of Agriculture, François Japiot (POETCom Board member resident in New Caledonia) and Bio Caledonia's coordinator, Pierre Lecoeuvre. The delegation met members of the European organic farming sector and brought back many answers and technical solutions to the problems faced by farmers in the Pacific. They were impressed by the development of organic farming in France: 13 per cent (13%) of French farms are now certified organic, with a great variety of business models from family farms to agricultural enterprises with more than 30 employees.

The trip was funded by the European Development Fund in the framework of its three-year project, INTEGRÉ, which aimed to promote local initiatives for regional environmental management in French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Pitcairn Islands and Wallis and Futuna. INTEGRÉ also supported the development of a network of pilot organic farms in each territory, to experiment with and encourage adoption of environmentally sustainable practices. Training in seed production was organised with the local association, Male'va. Another output of the programme was testing of a local organic fertiliser made from papaya leaves, which appeared to be very effective for sweet potatoes.

## DESIGN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BWBP PROJECT

The Build Prosperity for Women Producers, Processors and Women Owned Businesses through Organic Agricultural Value Chains (BWBP) is a four-year project implemented by the partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) of SPC and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development.

The project was initially designed in January 2018 and came to fruition in June 2019. New recruits and capacities are now in place to design and implement activities that would economically empower women in the organic agriculture sector. The project now has a group of diverse capacities – from POETCom Coordinator; to the BWBP Project Manager; a Gender and Value-Chains Advisor; a Communications Assistant; and a Finance and Administration Assistant; who will all work together to the effective delivery of the BWBP project objectives.

The project will work with organic producers, processors, vendors and organic associations and focus on niche organic products that women can develop. Such niche products promise the best income returns because they sell for premium prices and as such, producers will be able to absorb high trade costs like transportation. Through BWBP, these women will learn business and financial skills, organic agriculture and certification, thereby empowering them by increasing their financial independence and agency within the household through what they earn. In this manner, BWBP promotes gender equality in agriculture.





## OUR PROJECTS

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# CAPACITY BUILDING FOR RESILIENT AGRICULTURE IN THE PACIFIC PROJECT

**DONOR:** International Fund for Agricultural Development

**VALUE:** USD 1,026,000

**TARGET COUNTRIES:** Cook Islands, Niue and the Republic of the Marshall Islands

IFAD CBRAPP was initially a three-year project that began in 2015. It has since been extended for a year to March 2019.

The project's key goal is that farmers in the three target countries use agricultural practices that increase resilience to climate change and other natural hazards.

Activities are implemented in three major areas:

1. Building the capacity of producers' organisations.
2. Building the capacity of young farmers.
3. Sharing knowledge of resilient agriculture practices.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

### A. Strategic planning

Both the Marshall Islands Organic Farmers Association (MIOFA) and Niue Island Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA) developed strategic plans mapping organic agriculture development in their countries over a five-year period.

Objectives focus on partnerships with the government, communities, schools and individual farmers to reforest the landscape, promote organic food consumption and production through training and awareness, and eventually advocate for national organic policies. Natura Kuki Airani (NKA) of Cook Islands is expected to follow suit with a plan of its own in 2018.

### B. Training for Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) and high-school students

MIOFA farmers trained over 300 WUTMI members and students from Marshalls Christian High School on Rongrong Island in growing organic gardens. WUTMI is the country's largest women's organisation with members from all over Republic of the Marshall Islands. The collaboration will encourage more women to take up organic backyard gardening to improve family nutrition and reduce dependence on imported, processed foods. On Rongrong, students were able to incorporate vegetables in their usual diet, which consists



largely of processed meat and canned food. MIOFA also succeeded in obtaining organic certification for Eneko Island, a first for the Micronesian subregion.



### C. Establishment of PGS groups

PGS groups of about 10 farmers each were set up in Cook Islands and Republic of the Marshall Islands. POETCom Acting Coordinator, Stephen Hazelman, trained the farmers in the PGS system as an alternative to third-party certification. The training focused on peer review and keeping of proper farm records. The secretariat followed up with farm inspections to verify peer review reports for certification. Several farmers, especially in Cook Islands, gained organic certification, with NKA (as the approved PGS group) and the Cook Islands government (as the licensee) awarding the use of the Organic Pasifika mark.



### D. Training in organic principles

About 500 farmers have been trained in organic farming principles, propagation and animal husbandry in the three countries. The training covered the principles of composting, mulching, intercropping and cover cropping.

Eight farmers in Niue received support to attend a plant propagation workshop teaching marcotting, grafting and cutting.

### E. E-marketing of organic products

Social media and email platforms were used to market organic products produced by farmers in Niue, Cook Islands and Republic of the Marshall Islands. The use of ICT for e-marketing is a project output.

Young farmers, like Nephi from Niue, sell their crops through Facebook, which they also use to advertise the place of sale. For example, flyers on Niue's organic night market are circulated on Facebook and by email to inform the community of the market location and time. MIOFA farmers use similar marketing strategies.

### F. Knowledge management

"How to" information sheets and videos were used to capture knowledge of the organic principles applied in IFAD CBRAPP and the different styles of organic farming practised in the three countries. The information products are shared through social media, email and USB drives with a diverse range of enthusiasts.

This component of the project uses ICT to store farming knowledge for posterity. It will also help others take up organic farming.

### G. Climate resilience, soil health and post-harvest handling

Soil trials continued at three project sites in an attempt to compare the effects of organic and conventional farming methods in relation to soil health and climate resilience.

Organic systems consultant, Dr Shane Tutua from Solomon Islands, leads the trials. He developed a concept that links soil-resilience characteristics, measurable indicators and assessment methods with corresponding monitoring instruments.

POETCom purchased 11 types of equipment to monitor soil resilience under appropriate trial designs for each country. The equipment includes pH meters, plant sap extractors, infiltrometers and Solvita soil respiration test kits.

There are two groups of farmers in the trials: (1) the conventional, or control group of farmers; and (2) farmers implementing organic farming principles, such as composting, over a period of one to two years.

Trial results are expected in 2018.

To ensure good-quality produce, the farmers also received training in post-harvest handling beginning from the point of harvest to preparation for markets and storage.

### Youth Learning Exchange

Young organic farmers from Fiji, Vanuatu, Niue, Cook Islands and Republic of Marshall Islands met in Port Vila, Vanuatu (9–13 October), for the Youth Learning Exchange.

They shared ideas for climate-resilient farming by demonstrating practices such as composting, contour farming, mulching, organic pesticides and fertilisers, and atoll pit planting.

The exchange is a key output of three projects coordinated by POETCom: IFAD Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific; CTA Youth Leading Learning in Climate Resilient Value Chains in the Pacific; and Engaging Fiji and Vanuatu Youth in Organic Farming – A Farm to Table Chain Approach, which is supported by the UNDP Pacific Office and the SDG Fund.

Mare Sau (aged 24) and other young farmers from Tanna Island demonstrated how to make an A-frame for contour planting.

Cook Islands farmers demonstrated how Rarotongans use cardboard and coconut leaves (kikau) for mulching taro beds, while farmers from Republic of the Marshall Islands showed how pit planting is used on sandy atolls like Majuro. The Fijians demonstrated the use of intercropping to improve farm diversity, resilience to pests and diseases, and harvest yield. Sixteen-year-old Anzac Mokole from Niue made compost.

“This is one of the best workshops I’ve seen happen with young farmers because they were really learning from each other and having so much fun,” said Peter Kaoh of Vanuatu’s Farm Support Association.

Peter and his colleagues, George Videre and Olivier Lato, organised all the materials needed for the

exchange, which took place at two sites. At the Melanesian Hotel Conference Centre, the young farmers learned how to create narratives or story boards about their resilient practices. They also rapped, created poems, sang and learned how to document their practices using video.

At a farm in Teuma, the videos were played and the best resilience practices were enacted.

At a farm in Teuma, the videos were played and the best resilience practices were enacted.



### H. Awareness

Awareness efforts were scaled up in 2017. In Niue, night markets were organised and promoted widely on Facebook. Cook Island’s NKA joined the World Food Day show held in Avarua, Rarotonga, partnering with the Ministry of Health to set up a booth promoting the linkages between organic vegetables and crops and good health. To promote organic food and farming, MIOFA and its members hosted an organic morning tea for the Micronesian Women’s Conference, the largest women’s gathering in Micronesia. It was the organisation’s first major national/regional event.



# YOUTH LEADING LEARNING IN CLIMATE RESILIENT VALUE CHAINS IN THE PACIFIC PROJECT (YLLP)

**DONOR:** Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation

**VALUE:** USD 83,000

**TARGET COUNTRIES:** Niue, Cook Islands and Marshall Islands

YLLP engages young farmers in harnessing the power of the internet and web-based tools to document climate-resilient farming practices and value chains for product development, promote good soil health and ignite a passion for organic farming. This project builds on IFAD CBRAPP. It expands the impact of the IFAD project by increasing the use of ICT to facilitate value chains and establish social media platforms for exchange of learning on climate change and resilient agriculture between the participating countries and more broadly through the POETCom network.

Project objectives:

1. Train young people to provide technical production and marketing support to young farmers using ICT and specific social media platforms.
2. Assist young farmers to document and disseminate the eight best practices for climate resilience, including traditional practices, using ICT.
3. Develop a regional learning exchange.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

### A. Social media marketing

The training focused on equipping young farmers with skills in using ICT and social media networks to market organic produce. In Niue, NIOFA uses Facebook to promote its organic night market through flyers created with online graphic applications.

Social media marketing reaches a mass audience instantly and inexpensively – with its billion users, Facebook has been called the “the largest country” in the world.

Young farmers, like Nephi Poumale of Niue, are using social media to sell their farm produce.

### B. Pacific organic warriors

“Pacific organic warriors” is a Facebook page co-managed by youths from Vanuatu, Fiji, Niue, Cook Islands and Republic of the Marshall Islands, who collaborate to raise awareness of organic farming through social media.

They share videos, pictures, and snippets of information on organic farming and climate-resilient farming practices such as composting, pit planting on atoll islands, growing a variety of crops, mulching taro beds, and drip irrigation methods. Followers have increased as the young farmers demonstrate the knowledge that they gained from the Youth Learning Exchange in Vanuatu.

### C. Documenting resilient farming practices

Twenty-two videos were made to demonstrate resilient farming practices observed in Vanuatu, Niue, Cook Islands and Republic of the Marshall Islands. Examples include:

- mulching taro beds in Cook Islands – a distinctive method of farming and managing taro plantations using cardboard and *kikau* (coconut leaves) as mulch;
- pit planting in atoll countries like Republic of the Marshall Islands to improve plant growth and increase yields;
- drip irrigation, using PET bottles, to build drought resilience;
- cutting banana leaves before storms in Niue to bolster the plant’s ability to remain upright during strong winds.

Information sheets complement the videos by detailing the practices step-by-step.

# ENGAGING FIJI AND VANUATU YOUTH IN ORGANIC FARMING – A FARM TO TABLE CHAIN APPROACH

**DONOR:** SDG Fund

**VALUE:** USD 1 million

**TARGET COUNTRIES:** Fiji and Vanuatu

The project, which was implemented over a three-year period (2016–2018), aims to provide young people in Fiji and Vanuatu with skills in organic production to create income. It is designed to address the high level of youth unemployment in the Pacific.

Activities are implemented in the following areas:

1. Assist youth to develop knowledge and skills in organic production
2. Create employment opportunities in organic agriculture through a value-chain approach
3. Strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Youth Councils.
4. Address the vulnerability of youths working in the informal economy.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

### A. Scoping mission

As the project consultant, Robert Oliver – renowned chef and author of the award-winning book *Mea Kai* – worked with young chefs at Breakas Resort in Vanuatu to develop organic menus and dishes.

After an assessment of the existing menus indicated the need to include more local foods, new dishes were crafted using locally supplied vegetables. The creation of such dishes will inspire more use of local organic foods (fruits, vegetables and root crops) to sustain the supply chain from the farm to the tourist table.

Establishment of organic supply chains for the tourist sector is a feature of the Pacific Organic Tourism and Hospitality Standard, which sets out rules and requirements that tourist operators must comply with (e.g. in food preparation) to achieve organic certification.

### B. Vanuatu National Organic Certification Committee

The establishment of the Vanuatu National Organic Certification Committee resulted in the certification of up to 1000 coffee, vegetable and root crop farmers on Tanna, Efate and Espiritu Santo Islands.

The farmers successfully enrolled and participated in peer reviews through the PGS for organic certification.

Committee members have extensive experience in third-party certification. They include organic farmer and agri-businessperson, Alain Jacobe; agriculturalist and former Director, Livestock, of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, Benuel Tarilongi, who is also the chairperson; George Bumseng and Peter Kaoh from the Farm Support Association; and Voutasi McKenzie, founder of Lapita Café, which produces organic-certified manioc flour.

The creation of a national body streamlines the approval process and enables prompt certification for farmers. Previously, POETCom handled all certification approvals, resulting in delays due to a lack of human resources.

### C. PGS and peer reviews

Vanuatu and Fiji farmers established PGS groups following training in the mechanics of organic certification by POETCom. The Vanuatu groups are aligned with crop type: coffee, manioc, vegetables and peanuts. Certification has been awarded and manioc flour, bearing the Organic Pasifika mark, is marketed by Lapita Café in major supermarkets in Port Vila and online. Farmers on Espiritu Santo Island supply Lapita Café with cassava for making the manioc flour.

Fijian farmers in Saivou district, Ra province, will achieve organic certification for their root crops and vegetables in 2018.

## D. Value chains

Farmers in Ra province, Fiji, supply the country's only organic restaurant, *iTukuni*. POETCom member, FRIEND, which implements the Farm to Table project, owns the restaurant. A freezer truck, purchased through the project, collects farm produce from the farmers and transports it to the restaurant, located about 200 kilometres away. The truck preserves the freshness of the crops. Tourists and locals alike are patrons of *iTukuni*.

Manioc flour, a gluten-free flour promoted as a healthy option to wheat flour, sells widely in major Vanuatu supermarkets and is also exported in visitors' suitcases. As noted above, the flour carries the Organic Pasifika mark. Farmers on Espiritu Santo Island supply the local Lapita Café processing plant where the cassava root is dehydrated before being sent to the Port Vila outlet to be ground into flour.

## E. One thousand farmers gain organic certification

The words "Organic Pasifika" rang loudly through Blackman Town on Tanna Island in Vanuatu as marchers made their way to Laminu Stadium. They were farmers, holding high a white banner bearing the Organic Pasifika mark.

A variety of products with the Organic Pasifika mark, including peanuts, coffee, vegetable and root crops and manioc flour, were ready to be launched.

Former POETCom Board Chair, Moses Nambo, and the Chair of the Vanuatu National Organic Certification Committee, Benuel Tarilongi, presented a basket of certified organic products to the President of Tafea Province, Geoffrey Nalau.

The gesture was significant. In receiving the basket, Mr Nalau accepted responsibility for encouraging farmers on Tanna to continue with their organic agriculture efforts.

The Vanuatu National Organic Certification Committee awarded certification to 1000 farmers in 2017. They form the biggest PGS group in the Pacific.

## F. Knowledge management

Practices used for farming peanuts and coffee, setting up organic nurseries and seed washing in Vanuatu, and use of natural pesticides in Fiji were documented to form the project's knowledge bank. FRIEND launched "Organics Simplified", a four-page lift-out describing organic soil improvement practices, such as composting, using *Gliricidia* for nitrogen fixing, making liquid poultry manure, and pest management methods. "Organics Simplified" was distributed throughout Fiji in major daily newspapers, reaching thousands of people.



# INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT – PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FIJI PROJECT

**DONOR:** International Fund for Agricultural Development – Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF)

**VALUE:** FJD 96,000

**TARGET COUNTRIES:** Fiji (7 Districts within Naitasiri, Ba and Navosa Province)

The establishment of participatory certification and the promotion of value chain linkages to identified exporters. The targeted group will include 41 villages spread across seven (7) districts.

## Outputs

The expected outputs are as follows:

- Farmers supported to put in place market-recognised certification systems to permit higher returns to producers.
- Fifty growers trained to be able to produce up to 500 megatonnes (MT) per year of organic certified ginger in an environmentally sustainable fashion.
- Fifty growers trained to produce up to 2000MT per year of organic certified bananas.
- Four-hundred village-based farmers trained to harvest up to 1000 MT of wild-harvest turmeric from the project area and adjacent locations.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

### A. Desk study of PCDF targeted areas

PCDF conducted a biophysical survey in the Highlands of Fiji – mainly Ba, Navosa and Naitasiri – and have identified the targeted areas for internal control systems for the Highlands, while POETCom – in close collaboration with Land Use Section of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) – assessed these areas using Geographic Information System and Google Earth maps to have a better understanding of its topography before the PGS work begins.

### B. Designing of the PGS system for the targeted areas

A one week PGS Training of Trainers programme was held in Lautoka between 21 and 25 January 2018.

A total of 25 participants attended the training, which included 14 men and 11 women with MoA extension officers, PCDF district field officers, WWF field officers, MITT economist officer, Agchem marketing officers, FRIEND officers, Organic Board members, and private organisations; those of which are interested in commercial organic agriculture. Trainees are able to help in the implementation of PGS to the communities under FAPP, and mainly for capacity building to FAPP staff members who are based within the seven districts in the Highlands of Fiji.

The PGS organic workshops for FAPP were conducted in the District of Nabobuco in the Province of Naitasiri; in Nadrau District in the Province of Navosa; and Noikoro district in the Province of Navosa. The workshop included 524 people (114 women and 410 men) in the three districts. A keen interest in organics has already been shown by 311 people (49 female, 261 male and 1 unreported), and they have signed the pledge forms to confirm their commitment to organics and to the project.

A farmer database has been developed for the three districts (16 villages). This database keeps a detailed record of all farmers under the project that have pledged to be organic (to keep their land and surrounding resources free from chemical fertilisers) as per the Pacific Organic Standard.

A draft value chain map for the first three targeted commodities – bananas, ginger and wild harvest turmeric – has been developed and land suitable for planting organic ginger has been identified along with two model farms for the propagation of organic planting stock, including ginger and bananas.

# BUILDING PROSPERITY FOR WOMEN PRODUCERS, PROCESSORS AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES THROUGH ORGANIC VALUE CHAINS (BPWP) PROJECT

**DONOR:** Government of Australia

**VALUE:** AUD 3,884,100

**TARGET COUNTRIES:** Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau and Republic of the Marshall Islands

The project works with individuals, families, producers and vendors, as well as organic governance structures to promote gender equality and women's access to sustainable livelihoods through participation in organic value chains. The four expected "end of investment" outcomes are as follows:

- Women have increased financial independence and influence in decision-making within the household.
- Women are increasingly participating in organic value chains, including decision-making processes.
- Women and men benefit from viable organic value chains that meet market needs and increase food security.
- The Pacific organic sector has more gender equitable policies and practices.

The project started in October 2018 and is being implemented in three phases over four years.

**Phase One** will establish the project through recruitment of personnel, development of project tools and training methodologies, and inception of project activities in Palau and Republic of the Marshall Islands. The first key steps of in-country inception will be completion of value chain and gender analyses to inform the tailoring of activities for national contexts. Development of the detailed monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for the project will also be done during the phase.

**Phase Two** will be the implementation with in-country actors in the selected value chains as well as substantive project engagement of government partner agencies and organic associations. This phase will focus on training, capacity building and monitoring/learning.

**Phase Three** will see advanced and expanded implementation in Palau and Kiribati as well as the initiation of activities in Federated States of Micronesia and Kiribati. This phase will also have a strong focus on assessment of lessons learned, documentation of evidence, and reflective adaptation of tools, training and activities.









# ACHIEVING THE SDGs

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Organic agriculture – with its low capital requirements, minimum harm to the natural environment, benefits for people’s health, and growing market demand – is a tool for sustainable development.

The following stories from POETCom’s members display the positive impacts of organic agriculture in relation to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 13 and 15.

POETCom also contributes to SDG 4 – Quality Education (educational and organic farming schools); SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy (biogas plants); SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities (through ethical trade); SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 14 – Life Below Water (safeguarding reefs from land-based chemical run-off); SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals (public-private partnerships that involve civil society)



## SDG 1 – NO POVERTY

***A comprehensive assessment of organic agriculture has indicated that yields are comparable with those of conventional farming, while price premiums for organic products offer significantly improved incomes through niche market opportunities. Organic agriculture invests in knowledge rather than synthetic inputs, empowering farmers to improve their farms.***

### Mekem Wan Haus (Vanuatu)

She lives in a grass home. She also lived in a grass home when Cyclone Pam struck some two years ago.

She remembers clinging to the rafters, terrified. Her family did the same, all five children and their parents resisting the furious winds, like human pegs anchoring their grass dwelling to the ground – somehow they succeeded. When the wind retreated, they walked outside to flattened grass plains, uprooted banyan and coconut trees, a bombed landscape. She felt lucky – this time around.

Melina Loui is a 19-year-old student in Year 7 (equivalent of Form 1) at Lamlu Secondary School in Middle Bush, Tanna. She should be in Year 12, but Melina has had struggles in her life. As the oldest child and as a girl in a strongly patriarchal society, much is expected of her. At various times, she is a mother to her siblings, a cook for the family, a labourer on the family farm. She was never really expected to get an education, let alone finish one. However, times and societal expectations have changed.

Melina started going to school much later than she should have. Ironically, her hopes for the future are not inspired by her classroom. She is not thinking about nursing, teaching or becoming a lawyer. All she wants is to “mekem wan haos” (make one house) – a cyclone-proof house made with modern materials and able to withstand another Tropical Cyclone Pam. It is going to be expensive, she knows, so she is not waiting to graduate from high school before making money. She has started already, soon after Pam.

Melina joined Napil Rural Training Centre’s organic farming programme to learn about planting vegetables such as ball cabbage, lettuce, carrot, onion, spring onion and garlic that she could sell.

The Centre is a good distance from her home at Lenbubunipen, but on the days she needs to be there, she makes it. The programme is set up so that she spends two weeks farming the Centre’s gardens and the other two weeks building her gardens at home. At least once a month, Melina takes crops from both farms to the market at Lenakel, about 30 kilometres away. She saves all her income in her bank account.

In two years’ time, Melina will graduate from the farming programme. Then, the Centre will release her bank passbook to her care.

By then, she hopes she has enough to build her strong house.



## SDG 2 – ZERO HUNGER

***Organic agriculture supports and enhances ecologically sound systems of food production that can achieve food security by increasing and stabilising yields. Food insecurity, undernourishment and even hunger are, however, of growing concern. Traditional foods and methods of food preparation and preservation are slowly being replaced by imported foods and more convenient alternatives, often of lower nutritional value, leaving countries vulnerable to external shocks, including international price volatility. Food price hikes affect family food security. More families in the Pacific increasingly rely on less nutritious food such as white rice and flour. However, through POS diversified agro-systems, more resilient food crops and growing practices are being promoted and increasingly adopted, ensuring higher annual yields of good food.***

### **Bok choy soup (Republic of the Marshall Islands)**

It is a bright, clear Saturday afternoon on Rongrong Island. Young girls of Republic of the Marshall Islands Christian High School stoke the fire ready to make chicken bok choy soup for the first time.

“For the first time? Really?” ask the visitors from POETCom with incredulity.

“It’s mostly just canned mackerel stew and rice,” replied Karness Kusto, President of the Marshall Islands Organic Farmers Association (MIOFA).

Marshall Islands Christian High School is a boarding school.

Karness and the team from MIOFA have trained the students to make compost and grow their organic gardens. It’s part of MIOFA’s strategy to reach out to all the outer islands with knowledge about organic techniques such as composting, and to inspire people to grow their own backyard garden supplies of nutritious, organic vegetables.

“In the Marshall Islands, canned food and white rice are popular meals,” Karness said.

“Many health care workers believe the high rate

of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes, is due to this type of diet. Imagine children having popsicles and soda for breakfast and families dining on white rice, meat (Spam, canned corned beef, chicken, fish, turkey tails, pigs’ intestines) and sweet beverages for lunch and dinner every day.”

“I believe many Marshallese go to bed hungry on a full stomach. Their body lacks the nutritional sustenance needed for health and vitality.”

Rates of type 2 diabetes are among the highest in the world. The disease was almost unheard of 60 years ago. Tackling diets likely to lead to diabetes and preventing the occurrence of NCDs at a much earlier age are the biggest motivations for working with the high school.

At least 150 students were trained to grow gardens on the sandy atoll soil and to surround them with ditches to keep the island pigs away.

“The Marshallese ancestors lived free of diabetes. They were fishers and farmers who farmed the land,” Karness said.

“They had pandanus, breadfruit, coconut and taro patches. Fish was eaten more than meat and it did not come from a can. Now only 10 percent of the population farms.”

Within two months, the Rongrong students started enjoying their harvest.

For many, the bok choy soup looked strange. They approached it with trepidation, picking at the vegetables and devouring the meat.

“It takes getting used to. The island is a half-hour boat ride from Majuro atoll where the food market is located, so they need to grow their own gardens if there are to be any vegetables at all in their diet,” Karness said.

“Besides, most of the vegetables in the supermarkets are imported, low quality and expensive.”

“The outreach involves awareness as well that they can replace white rice with the breadfruit and taro that they’ve started farming.”

The plan is that when the school is nutritionally secure, surplus vegetables will be sold to nearby communities. More importantly, the students themselves are being trained to become organic gardening champions in these communities and when they return to their homes on other atolls.



## SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

***Organic agriculture uses agro-ecological methods of farming that eliminate the use of pesticides while growing healthy food for consumption and protecting farmers from exposure to chemicals, many of which are linked to chronic diseases. A widely used chemical pesticide was declared “probably carcinogenic” by the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization (WHO). By working with farmers to eliminate the use of chemicals in food production, we can make a significant contribution to reducing their harmful effects on people and the planet and contribute to the well-being of all.***

### ***Itukuni (Fiji)***

When the freezer truck started calling in at Nativi, the farming experience changed for the farmers of this remote village in Ra province on the northern side of Viti Levu in Fiji.

Ilai Nabole, a 31-year-old farmer, recalls feeling relief. “Now we don’t have to pay \$40 for a carrier van to take our crops to the market,” he said.

Instead they sell to *iTukuni* – a special kind of restaurant that plays an important role in addressing the high rate of youth unemployment in the country while promoting healthy eating options. The restaurant is perched atop the Tagaloli hills in Ba province with breathtaking views of the Ra coastline, where Nabole lives and farms 120 kilometres away.

Growing gardens in atoll environments is challenging because of the sandy soils and increasing instances of drought and saltwater encroachment. Using organic techniques will help combat these challenges and enable Marshallese people to protect themselves against NCDs by producing their own supply of nutritious food.

*Itukuni* uses only organic root crops, vegetables and meat in the special dishes it offers, from *lovo* to spicy Indian curries. Its clientele comes from near and far – foreign diplomats, tourists and some local residents.

The existence of the restaurant symbolises changing consumer choices. More are mindful about what they eat because of the prevalence of NCDs. There is also awareness of the benefits of organic food for human health.

The rise of NCDs in Fiji has been alarming over the past decade. As in many Pacific Island countries, NCDs are a major health risk, causing thousands of deaths every year. Unhealthy diets high in fat, sugar, salt and processed foods are largely the cause.

In its engagements around the country, FRIEND promotes healthy eating habits. Its efforts include the freezer truck, which maintains the freshness of the vegetables during the two-hour drive from Nabole’s farm. He is not the only farmer. Other young men and women involved in organic farming supply *iTukuni* through the project, Engaging Youth in Fiji and Vanuatu in Organic Farming: A Farm to Table Chain Approach.

The project is implemented by FRIEND in partnership with POETCom and supported by the SDG Fund and UNDP Pacific.

*iTukuni* is owned by FRIEND.

Fifty families from five villages in Saivou and Natokaimalo districts – Nativi, Nabalabala, Navuniyaumunu, Raviravi and Naivutu – supply vegetables to *iTukuni*. Together, the five villages, which are surrounded by more than 100 acres of potential farmland, are home to about 400 unemployed young people.

The link between the village farms and *iTukuni* demonstrates the farm-to-table value-chain approach promoted by Engaging Fiji Youth in Organic Farming. The project's goal is to use organic farming as a tool for increasing youth employment.



## SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

***“Fairness of opportunity for all” is one of the five pillars of the Pacific Organic Standard. The principle states that organic agriculture builds on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. In its engagements and projects, POETCom is mindful of gender equality. More women are participating in training on organic certification to ensure equitable sharing of benefits among all farmers. Women make excellent farmers and are renowned for their attention to detail, including in sowing, weeding, caring for farm animals, making plant tea fertilisers, crop preparation and packing, selling, marketing and accounting.***

### **If men can do it (Cook Islands)**

“Ladies and gentlemen, this is a woman, not a man,” Julie Uka stated dramatically to the camera as we videoed mulched taro beds, a resilient farming practice in Cook Islands.

All around the 43-year-old were the taro beds she had planted, mostly alone, sometimes with her children.

Julie lives by the mantra, “If men can do it, women can too.”

“To feed the taro patch, we put the grass and weeds back into the soil. This way we don’t have to use fertiliser,” she said demonstrating the steps involved in preparing a taro bed using the organic technique of mulching.

“Nothing is wasted, everything goes back into the soil.”

She used kikau to cover the wet cardboard already laid out over every inch of the ground. The kikau acts as a weed suppressor, eliminating the task of weeding or paying labourers to keep the farm clean.

The mulch creates a moist environment for the taro to grow even when the rains do not come, and the land is dry and the sun is blazing. The taro is ready within six months.

Every week, taro sales give Julie and her children enough money to pay the family bills and buy staples. Every day she works on the farm. Despite criticism about “doing a man’s job” and challenging cultural expectations about a woman’s role in the family, Julie has managed to grow an impressive farm.

“My husband’s away in Australia. There’s no man around so I just can’t sit around and not farm. It’s a really good way to make money,” she said.

At least once a week, Julie earns NZD 500 from her crop sales at the Rarotonga market. There’s taro, coconuts, pineapples and vegetables. She farms so much she’s defined as “the hardworking lady” by many.

“Times have changed. People are conscious about what they eat and don’t want chemicals in it.”

“I’ve learned a lot as an organic farmer – to make use of only things within my farm environment, to be more disciplined with farming, to appreciate nature because it has blessed me and the children.”

“I’ve stopped buying a lot of processed foods like bread and gotten my children used to a natural diet based on the food we grow,” she added.

“I even take them farming. They don’t always like it but I’m teaching my children to grow their own food, so no matter where they are they can always ensure their own food security.”

Julie Uka at her taro farm in Rarotonga.



Julie is an organic-certified farmer under the PGS and is one of the few women who belong to Natura Kuki Airani, the organic farming focal point for Cook Islands.

Organic production training and certification is supported by IFAD CBRAPP.

NKA farmers like Julie are part of the growing network of organic farmers who will be the main future suppliers of local organic food in Cook Islands.



## SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

***Organic agricultural practices eliminate the use of agrichemicals, minimising the seepage of chemicals into underground water reserves and river systems. Organic production systems also provide valuable ecosystem services by preserving forest cover, improving soil structure and maintaining the balance of microorganisms in soils, which serve as natural purifiers as water passes through the soil to underground reserves.***

### Water for life – A Tongan experience

Nakolo village in Tonga is the site of an irrigation initiative involving women, children and people with disabilities in replenishing the community's supply of nutritious food in the wake of Cyclone Gita.

The Tonga National Youth Congress (TNYC) spearheads the effort.

TNYC's Technical Organic Advisor, Navuso Tuiamei'api, said they chose Nakolo because it is an organic village. Nakolo farmers supply coconuts for the organically certified virgin coconut oil exported by TNYC.

Initially, 10 households will be given assistance to grow organic vegetable gardens. Those selected are widows, the elderly and people living with disabilities.

A drip-irrigation system distributes water to the gardens. Drip irrigation ensures efficient and targeted use of water while promoting productivity and reducing the manual labour and time needed to cultivate the gardens.

The drip-irrigation gardening project, which is being implemented by TNYC with partners such as Oxfam, will assist up to forty Nakolo households.

Forty households in another community, Kolomotu'a, and fifty on the island of Eua will also receive assistance. The use of organic gardening techniques to build nutritious food stocks will thus become more widespread. It is hoped other Tongan communities will follow suit.

TNYC's efforts build on national efforts to achieve SDG 6 by ensuring the availability of water for all. Given the importance of water for both agriculture and drinking, TNYC purified water tanks on Eua Island, which was devastated by Cyclone Gita, to ensure the water was safe. The tanks belong to 10 schools at kindergarten, primary and secondary levels, some households and a church.

Three teams were involved in the work – one focused on water purification and outreach, one distributed hygiene kits, and the third carried out surveys on water needs and the effectiveness of the outreach.

TNYC also reached out to residents on Tongatapu.



## SDG 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

***Organic agriculture uses agro-ecological methods to produce healthy food in an environmentally sound manner and contributes to replacing imported foods. It can also help address the problem of waste management in Pacific Islands by making use of organic waste in composts and mulches, which reduces the need for landfill and burning.***

### Zai Na Tina

Jemma Jackson is from Malaita province.

Zai Na Tina recognised her as the best student of 2017 and in the top group of her peers since the programme started two decades earlier.

About a hundred young people from the seven provinces of Solomon Islands and other Pacific Island countries, particularly New Caledonia, have become ambassadors for the organic farming knowledge they learned at Zai Na Tina. Some train other young people in rural training centres across the country. Others have started their own farming businesses.

Jemma stays on at Zai Na Tina, building its legacy as a “mothership” for organic farming knowledge in Solomon Islands. As its crop management lead, she will play a vital role in training new pupils and keeping Zai Na Tina at the heart of efforts to combat deforestation and biodiversity loss brought on by shifting cultivation and other unsustainable farming practices.

Zai Na Tina promotes farming on the same piece of land over 20 years using soil regeneration techniques.

“I think food security is an important priority for the Solomon Islands Government. Climate change and shifting agriculture endanger food security.”

“Traditionally, after farming an area of land for some time, farmers move to a new location. They slash and burn to clear the land. This deforests areas and harms the soil and when this cycle continues, food and nutritional security is eventually impaired. This is where Zai Na Tina fits in well.”

“Zai Na Tina employs composting, mulching, crop rotation, mixed cropping, use of liquid fertiliser from a duck pond, and organic pest management techniques to regenerate the soil.”

“Over 20 years, the farm has successfully produced crops and vegetables and steady revenue.”

Soil regeneration techniques are not widely known. Zai Na Tina fills this knowledge gap.

“We have increasing populations and more shifting cultivation and unless we learn better to regenerate soil, we will exacerbate climate change.”

“The focus must be on promoting a farming system that allows farmers to produce from the same piece of land for a long time.”

“Zai Na Tina trains young farmers in technologies that are applicable to a rural setting. It’s not high-tech farming and they get to know how they can farm in the same place for a long time.”

Trainees learn about mulching, composting, using organic fertilisers such as that made from fish waste, intercropping and other suitable land-use practices.

As the trainees spread their knowledge throughout the country, Zai Na Tina envisions more Solomon Islanders will switch to organic farming and more families will grow food sustainably.





## SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

***Organic farming provides strategies that will assist farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change, for example by establishing farming systems that are drought or flood resistant, supporting the conservation of water resources, and encouraging use of locally adapted varieties. Organic practices also increase the return of carbon to soils, thus reducing carbon in the atmosphere and mitigating climate change.***

### **Between the sea and sun (Republic of the Marshall Islands)**

Lien Jorren surprised himself in 2017.

He started farming organically, achieving success when his tomatoes, squash, papaya, bitter melon, cucumbers and herbs made it on to the shelves of a local supermarket.

The harvest of cucumbers alone was fetching USD 300 at a time. Things were indeed looking up, the farm was thriving, and the intense Majuro heat didn't suppress his plants too much.

Looking around, he picked up tips from other organic farmers on mulching, using compost and preparing 'pits' with an organic twist.

Pits have existed since agriculture began in Republic of the Marshall Islands. Without them, it's almost impossible to grow any food on the sandy surface of the atolls.

"Our ancestors would dig really deep – four to six feet. Many still do today. They think the good soil with nutrients is deep," he said while mulching tomato beds with grass clippings.

Behind him was a pit lined with coconut husks and layers of dark compost that he'd learned to make from his mentors at MIOFA.

MIOFA was established as the focal point of organic agriculture development with the support of the IFAD project, Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific. It has about 30 farmer members on Majuro Atoll alone. Jorren gleans his organic farming knowledge from these farmers.

Jabukja Aikne, who is a rich source of information, showed Jorren how to prepare a pit.

"An average pit is about three feet wide and deep and filled with the good stuff, coconut husks, compost, pig manure, copra meal, carbon material. It's not empty like this one," he said pointing to the pit behind him.

Papaya, lemons, bananas, in fact all kinds of trees grow well in pits stocked with organic material. Coconut husks capture and retain water. When they decompose, they provide nutrients for the plant roots, as do the compost and copra meal.

Pit-grown plants are known to bear fruit earlier and in greater abundance.

The Marshallese sun is intense, and droughts are frequent with the worst lasting nine months. Techniques such as organic pit planting, drip bottle watering, mulching and composting can save up to 75 per cent (75%) of crops because they retain soil moisture and give the plant enough organic material to thrive.

"It's my main source of income. I do a little bit of fishing just for eating. Other than that, farming really helps me pay my bills," he said.

Lately, a new threat looms. The sea is higher and closer and king tides have been known to wash across the landscape, wreaking devastation on both homes and crops.

"That doesn't occur often though. Droughts are a bigger worry. When they persist, we worry that we won't have any harvest. We grow short-terms crops and use drip methods," he said.

"In this way, before the droughts set in, we have earned something."

"We don't feel so helpless. It's like going to war with a gun. We are not totally hopeless. Between the sea and the sun, there's refuge of some form in organic farming."

His squash plants crawl over an old fisher's net, the fruits hanging like green chandeliers over a cool space where bok choy and thyme grow. Intercropping techniques ensure he is earning more from the small space of land hugging the side of his two-room concrete house.

A little girl of about eight, plays in the mud. It's the afternoon and school is out.

"Whatever I earn pays for her school fees and food and helps me with the family expenses. We have enough."



## SDG 15: LIFE ON LAND

***Organic agriculture provides a solution to biodiversity loss as it helps conserve environmental resources through the use of agro-ecological production methods. Some studies suggest that organically farmed land may host up to 30 per cent (30%) more species and 50 per cent (50%) more individuals compared to non-organic land. It may also support up to 72 per cent (72%) more semi-natural habitats.***

### Family farming in Niue

"All banks in the world will go bankrupt, but the land and sea will always be there for you," said Valu Tukiuha, renowned for his organic farming knowledge.

However, he said, the land can be bankrupted too unless traditional farming knowledge is kept alive and passed on from one generation to the next. The loss of such knowledge threatens life on land.

Valu and his wife Gina operate an organic farm at Vaimoui in Niue, as do their children and niece Lisa. They have been farming the same piece of land for many years.

"This farm has supplied our food needs for many years," said Gina.

"Organic farming is a family affair. Our children have gone overseas to study and work and no matter the length of time they are away, they remember."

"When they were small we all went into the forest to farm as a family. We teach them the traditional, organic methods."

Their farms are a sanctuary of life. This morning, as they walked into their forest plantation, the Tukiuhas called out, "Woh hoo, woh hoo, woh hoo," in clear loud voices.

"We are letting our ancestors know we are here to work with the land," Valu explained.

"We apply what they have taught us, planting yams and taro, using plants as weed control, cover cropping the soil with cucumbers and pumpkins, fixing nitrogen with Gliricidia and growing a variety of plants for biodiversity."

The Tukiuha farm demonstrates the application of a variety of organic technologies such as mulching, intercropping, cover cropping, nitrogen fixing, and using green manure and natural soil amendments. There is no scarred landscape as occurs after fires.

Cinnamon trees have been planted to repel insects.

"Can you see how the yam vines eagerly crawl there? That's indicative of an approaching storm. It's as if they sense it," Valu said.

"If there is a trellis and they still spread out over the ground, our forefathers said it was because a storm was coming and the plants got ready for it by clinging to the ground, not to be blown away," he explained.

Valu and Gina inherited their farming knowledge from their elders.

"Back in the day, Dad built a hut in the forest and during the school holidays that's where we camped," Gina said.

"We went to the farm as a family to help each other out. Everybody weeding and planting. Now we are passing the knowledge on to our children, who as custodians of it must pass it on as well to their children."

"Family farming plays an important role in this exchange," she said.

While many Niueans still farm together as a family, increasing numbers are doing it solo, using chemicals such as weedkillers to clear large areas of land and machines for planting. The manual support provided by the family unit is no longer necessary.

However, chemicals can do harm. They decimate soil-dwelling creatures and may result in a decline in soil health, which negatively affects crop production.

“Traditional farming knowledge is especially important now in the face of climate change. Our farms are regularly tested by unprecedented amounts of rain and sunshine. Storms are frequent.”

“We see that our farm doesn’t suffer as much during droughts. There is so much organic matter here. The soil is well covered with organic material and is rich.”

Use of traditional methods supports the resilience of farms and protects Niue’s food and nutritional security.

“Unless we all go back to family farming, all this knowledge will die and what then?”

