



Improving opportunities for economic development for women smallholders in rural Papua New Guinea

Overview

This project aims to improve the economic development of women smallholders and their families in Papua New Guinea (PNG), by building their agricultural and business acumen.

Women smallholders are key to PNG family livelihoods. They produce subsistence crops, while looking after their families and households. But they face significant hurdles, including:

- » limited access to productive resources such as financial services and up to date agricultural information
- » limited financial skills
- » low education attainment, as few have completed school and their access to training or extension services is limited
- » lack of understanding and access to markets
- » lack of agricultural knowledge
- » lack of business acumen
- » unequal gendered family roles and division of labour
- » restrictions to mobility due to the threat of violence
- » safety issues.

A previous ACIAR project (ASEM/2010/052) showed that when families see their agricultural work as a small family business, and use a team approach, farming families are more equitable and effective, and make a better living.

Grassroots village community educators were trained to share the Family Farm Teams program directly with farmers or through group learning activities.

This project now seeks to understand the effectiveness of that approach on a bigger scale, for a broader range of produce, and in other regions.

ACIAR project number	ASEM/2014/095
Start date and duration (years)	July 2015 – 3 years
Location	Papua New Guinea
Budget	\$3 million

Project leader(s) and Commissioned Organisation

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Partner country project leaders and their institutions

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Research

The research objectives are to:

- » develop women's capacity as community-based agricultural leaders
- » explore ways in which communities can develop partnerships with the private sector, schools and training providers that are relevant to the local context and culture
- » further develop the peer education model of agricultural extension
- » look at the uptake and impact of a family team approach to farming for women and girls.

Achievements

2015–2016 Highlands Hub

A total of 95 women and 21 men were trained as village community educators in the following Family Farm Team modules:

- » Working as a family team for family goals
- » Planning your family farm as a family team
- » Feeding your family team (a new module developed in response to the PNG drought)
- » Communicating and decision-making as a family team.

PNG agencies provided specialist training, as follows:

- » Nationwide Microbank—budgeting, banking and saving, plus training two village community educators per area as mobile phone bank agents (all areas)
- » FPDA—bulb onion commercial production model farms (Eastern and Western Highlands)
- » UniTech—poultry production (Jiwaka).
- » The village community educators trained 896 other farmers (573 women and 323 men).
- » A pilot project provided financial training for illiterate farmers, and professional development for primary teachers in agricultural topics.

2017 Islands Hub

A total of 75 women and 68 men were trained as village community educators.

- » In Halia constituency of Bougainville Women's Federation, Tinputz Local Level Government, 26 females and 24 males received training
- » In Ward 7, New Ireland Department of Primary Industries, Tikana Local Level, 25 females and 24 males received training

In Ward 11, New Ireland Department of Primary Industries, Tikana Local Level, 24 females and 20 males received training

Impact story

Rose Koyea is the Western Highlands area leader for five women leaders and

their teams of village community educators. She undertook the women's leadership and the Family Farm Teams training in 2015–16. These are her words.



Caption: Rose Koyea, Mul-Baiyer district woman leader, September 2016. Photographer: Barbara Pamphilon, University of Canberra

This training really helped me to humble myself and to be patient. I used to be a very shy person—I never had the courage to make a speech. Today, I am leading six communities. When I call them to come, they all come. I visit everyone in the community, and I have seen changes in some families.

The seasonal calendar has really helped me. In the past I would plant different crops on my plot, and would not plant another garden until I'd harvested the first one. I now plan what to plant, and when to plant it. We always have enough food these days. I have realised that the new technique of planting a single crop on one plot has increased the yields.

My husband is now attending church with me. In the past my husband and I never talked about the budget, but today we are planning our budget together. The training truly changed my family to be united and happy.



Caption: Sharing the fun of technology with the next generation in Jima, Jiwaka. Associate Professor Katja Mikhailovich from the University of Canberra with youth from Jima, South Waghi district and Jiwaka, Papua New Guinea, November 2016. Photographer: Sanna Harri, University of Canberra