

Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP)

Working towards resilient communities in the Pacific

Fast Facts

May 2015

Knowledge Hubs for Agriculture

Communities and agriculture ministries in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu are set to benefit from agriculture Knowledge Hubs that promote climate and disaster risk-resilient farming for better food security, particularly during disaster times.

Knowledge Hubs link with existing networks of community farmers who focus on three activities, to: share farming information such as mixed cropping, to share planting materials, and to work together as a group to establish their demonstration plot to trial sustainable or climate resilient farming systems.

Agriculture departments are connecting with these farmer groups to better coordinate and strengthen the networks by building capacity through training, and by guiding them to better plan for resilient farming practices and interventions – in this way they evolve from ad-hoc farmer groups to coordinated and supported networks known as Knowledge Hubs.



Knowledge Hub in Nemba, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands

This is a strength-based-approach that builds on existing community and government networks and practices. In this way, Knowledge Hubs are established in each target country through a partnership between agriculture ministries and communities, with support from the Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP).

With agriculture central to the economies of the four countries, the Knowledge Hubs provide governments with a smart and cost-effective way to outreach to many farmers through each united Hub. On a practical level, it helps fill the 'supply-demand' gap for Agriculture Extension Officers who typically are overwhelmed with the volume of communities they manage.

Agriculture Extension Officers work closely with the Knowledge Hub members so their farming plans consider climate change and disaster related-risks, and to ensure their plans become part of the Agriculture Extension Development Plans which feed into the National Agriculture Development Plans.

More broadly, this 'risk governance' approach enables decision makers at local and national level to better understand community-based needs, which helps embed risk-sensitive agricultural and community priorities into routine community, sub-national and national development planning processes.

VANUATU

Four Knowledge Hubs have been established across three islands in Vanuatu's Tafea Province: two in Tanna, one in Aniwa and one in Futuna. An additional five are planned for 2015 in Shefa and Sanma.



Women and men in Futuna, Vanuatu planting demonstration crops that focus on risk resilient root crop varieties.

Agriculture Extension officers for the Tafea Provincial Agriculture Department are taking the lead in establishing the Knowledge Hubs, introducing climate-resilient crops, and providing training for hub members. They are being supported by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Vanuatu Research and Technical Centre (VARTC), and PRRP.

Knowledge Hub activities link directly to the community's self-designed Community Development Plan that sets local priorities for future planning and development, and with consideration of future climate change and disaster related risks.

The two Tanna demonstration plots are now supplying root crops to the provincial agricultural station, with the Tafea Provincial Government distributing these crops as food for the entire province.

Tanna's Knowledge Hubs were originally established through LLEE's Climate Change Adaptation and Food Security project, which ended December 2014. PRRP is continuing to support these Knowledge Hubs, along with the new ones in Aniwa and Futuna, and the five planned for Shefa and Sanma.

The next phase of work will continue with the development of KHS as 'risk governance' models for the integration of climate change and disaster related-risks into local level community planning in Tafea and Sanma.

Communities can become more resilient to climate change and disasters if routine government, community and other planning takes these risks into account. This risk governance approach is delivered through a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and international non-government organisation Live & Learn Environmental Education (LLEE), and supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). PRRP is being delivered in four countries: Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

OVERVIEW

- **Vanuatu:** 4 Knowledge Hubs established in Tafea province, with 5 more planned for 2015
- **Solomon Islands:** 8 Knowledge Hubs involving more than 2,000 community members in Temotu Province, with more planned in Guadalcanal Province in 2015, along with a 'super' hub
- **Tonga:** Knowledge Hubs planned for 17 communities in Ha'apai and Vava'u in 2015
- **Fiji:** 7 communities will soon have Knowledge Hubs, to evolve from existing farmer networks and a new Private Sector Engagement initiative called Food Banks, which will help with food security for remote island communities during disaster times.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands has eight Knowledge Hubs in Temotu Province's Santa Cruz Islands, involving more than 2,000 community members. The Knowledge Hubs were initially established to help communities affected by the 2013 Tsunami, and were developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) and Temotu Provincial Government, with support from PRRP.

Farmers are applying new approaches to organic and mixed cropping, with all growing more resilient crops, and many relocating their own food gardens after determining high-risk areas.

The eight communities are now joining forces to create a 'Super' Knowledge Hub, through which risk-resilient food crops and information on climate and disaster resilient agriculture can be shared between communities. One hectare of land has been allocated to this project, which commenced April 2015.

Similar Knowledge Hubs projects are planned for Guadalcanal Province, based on the success of Santa Cruz.

TONGA

In Tonga the Ha'apai and Vava'u Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (CCDRM) District Officer, and Tonga's Ministry of

Agriculture, Forestry, Food and Fisheries (MAFFF) are planning new Knowledge Hubs, with support from PRRP. Initial plans propose for Knowledge Hubs in 17 communities in Tonga's Ha'apai and Vava'u Islands.

The programme will coach the CCDRM District Officer and CCDRM Officer in MAFFF to set-up the Knowledge Hubs, and to help train members on establishing food banks, and on risk-resilient farm technologies, crop selection and land management. CCDRM District Officers will advocate for the engagement of young farmers, women farmers and primary school groups to be involved in the planned 17 Knowledge Hubs in Ha'apai and Vava'u.

FIJI

Knowledge Hubs and associated Food Banks, unique to Fiji, are in the process of being established this year in the Yasawa islands.

Food Banks are being established in seven villages in the remote Yasawa Islands throughout 2015. The Food Banks will better prepare the communities to have food supplies in times of disaster, even if their crops are destroyed as it includes crop planting and storage so there is food during a disaster period, plus selling excess crops to bank funds for post-disaster recovery. The Food Bank project is starting in Soso and Kese villages of Naviti Island, where there are some already existing farmer networks, including disaster risk committees, village development committees and agriculture committees.



Villagers involved in Fiji's Food Bank help to prepare the land for planting. (Vinaka Fiji)

The Food Bank initiative is the result of a partnership between Commissioner Western's Office, Ba Provincial Office and Vinaka Fiji – the volunteer arm of Awesome Adventures Fiji – and with support from PRRP. The initiative is also assisting Fiji's Department of Agriculture to provide agriculture training on resilient crops and food storage, including traditional knowledge approaches.

The Department of Agriculture plans to build on these farmer networks to also establish Knowledge Hubs, which will facilitate the growth of Food Banks and other agricultural and farming initiatives. PRRP is supporting government and communities to develop both the Food Bank and Knowledge Hubs, and to ensure these link into broader development planning objectives, such as the priorities

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