



Australian Government

Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research

Social Systems

Landcare – an agricultural extension and community development model at district and national scale in Fiji.



Overview

Agriculture is an important sector for Fiji's economic progress, providing rural employment and food security. However, the sector has seen a steady decline because of agricultural, trade and land policy, and because of the increasing challenges and impacts of climate change.

Research in Mindanao, the Philippines has highlighted how certain types of community-based extension principles can rapidly enhance agricultural livelihoods by improving both farmer-based learning networks and community social capital. This research led to the development of an extension model known as Livelihood Improvement through Facilitated Extension (LIFE). LIFE draws on Landcare-based approaches for livelihood improvement outcomes, based on the notion that caring for land and water is underpinned by community empowerment and collective action.

The Philippines and Fiji are highly compatible for cross-country activity, with mutually intelligible cultural and social values, farming practices, land and water challenges and climate-change impacts. This project presents an opportunity for building partnerships between the Philippines and Fiji through cross-country networking, knowledge and skills sharing. Integrating and customising Landcare and LIFE for Fiji will test how this approach in the Philippines can be adapted for Pacific conditions.

KEY FACTS

ACIAR Project No. SSS/2019/140

Duration: March 2021 to April 2025 (4 years)

Target areas: Fiji

Budget: A\$2,999,550

Project Leader

Dr Mary Johnson, RMIT University

Key partners

- RMIT University
- Fiji National University
- Global Landcare
- Landcare Foundation of the Philippines
- Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji
- Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development
- Tei Tei Taveuni
- University of the Philippines, Los Banos
- University of the Philippines, Mindanao

ACIAR Research Program Manager

Dr Clemens Grünbühel

Objective

The project aims to test whether a Landcare approach, using the Livelihood Improvement through Facilitated Extension (LIFE) model, can be adapted from one country context to another by:

- Improving climate change resilience, management of natural resources, agricultural productivity and gender equity in Fiji.
- Building on the existing projects and initiatives to address these issues and apply and evaluate the implementation of Landcare/LIFE at district (community) level pilot sites in three provinces.

Expected scientific results

- Increasing our understanding of how technical, social and economic factors of a Landcare approach using the LIFE extension model can be adapted under different country contexts.
- Contributing, through a trilateral collaboration and testing of the adaptability and scalability of an extension approach, to development initiatives elsewhere, including the Asia-Pacific region.

Expected impact/outcomes

- Improved agricultural livelihoods and natural resource management practices in rural communities.
- Increased resilience to cope with climate change through enhanced extension systems.
- Established collaborative partnerships between Fiji, the Philippines and Australia.
- An escalation of the Landcare approach delivering sustainable land management outcomes with government and civic partners.
- Increased gender equity and female participation in rural community and household level decision-making.
- Identified points of mutual interest, such as conserving natural resources, where landowners and managers including iTaukei and Fijians of Indian descent can work together.
- Supported community/farmer groups and extension services that take transformative action leading to increased opportunities for rural communities; strengthened farmer groups, expanded networks and partnerships.



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