



ACIAR
LEARN

Stories of Impact

2021 – 2024



About ACIAR

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is the Australian Government specialist agricultural research-for-development agency.

As world leaders in agricultural research, Australian scientists are encouraged and supported to use their skills for the benefit of partner countries, while contributing to solutions to meet Australia's own agricultural challenges.

ACIAR supports research projects in the Pacific, Asia and Africa.

Research projects focus on agribusiness, crops, fisheries, forestry, horticulture, livestock systems, social systems, soil and land management and water with all new projects also having an emphasis on climate adaptation and mitigation.

To date, ACIAR has commissioned and managed more than 1500 research projects in 36 countries,

partnering with 150 institutions along with more than 50 Australian research organisations.

Capacity development within partner countries has long been a key activity of ACIAR aimed at bolstering the capacity of individuals, organisations and systems to perform agricultural research for development, effectively, efficiently and sustainably.

This is pursued through a parallel approach of activities integrated into research-for-development projects and collaborative partnerships, as well as specific activities, such as ACIAR Learn, which are driven by the Capacity Development Program at ACIAR.

ACIAR Learn is an ACIAR initiative designed, developed and delivered in partnership with The University of Queensland, with support from Currie Communications.



Australian Government
Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

About ACIAR Learn

ACIAR Learn is an online learning platform that aims to strengthen the professional development and collaborative connections of agricultural researchers affiliated with ACIAR. The platform offers a range of courses to enhance skills related to undertaking effective agricultural research for development projects.

Participants learn through bite-sized online lessons that can be accessed through their smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer. Researchers can learn anywhere, at any time, at their own pace.

Courses have been designed by academics from leading Australian institutes including the Australian National University, Central Queensland University, the University of New England, and The University of Queensland.

A key goal of ACIAR Learn has been to facilitate peer learning amongst participants from around the world, encouraging valuable discussions and meaningful connections.



**50+ course
intakes**



**500+
participants**



**97%
satisfaction
rating**



**92%
work relevance
rating**

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Josephine Laka

Josephine Laka has completed 15 courses throughout her ACIAR Learn journey. She found that they provided invaluable benefit to her personal growth and her skills as a researcher in her roles at the Ok Tedi Development Foundation (OTDF) and at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Having worked on the ACIAR project *'Developing alternative small-scale fishery models in the Fly River, Western Province, Papua New Guinea'*, she believes that ACIAR Learn's focus areas are strongly aligned with her own interests in research.

Josephine found that the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research course helped her to design and implement projects that prioritised inclusivity, integrated strategies to ensure active participation for women and marginalized groups in her vanilla extension and research in the field at OTDF.

She used knowledge gained from the Mentoring Skills and Value-Based Leadership courses to greatly enhance her leadership abilities, enabling her to mentor younger generations effectively, serve as a role model for young girls and women in agriculture, and inspire youth to become knowledgeable and impactful role model farmers for their rural communities in PNG.

One of the major highlights for Josephine has been the community she gained through ACIAR Learn.

Her recognition as an ACIAR Learn Champion has increased her visibility among other researchers, fostering meaningful exchanges with peers who share similar goals and interests. This recognition has also strengthened her relationships with colleagues, as they share knowledge and experiences that enhance collaboration.

"I am deeply grateful for the ACIAR Learn platform and the incredible team behind it.

Their dedication to creating impactful learning opportunities has made it possible for professionals like me to excel in our fields"



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The program has been instrumental in shaping my career, and I am proud to be part of such an empowering initiative. Thank you for fostering learning, inclusivity, and growth across the agricultural and research sectors.

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PHILIPPINES

Loren Banayag

ACIAR Learn has made a significant impact on Loren Banayag's professional development. She has completed 8 ACIAR Learn courses:

Introduction to Academic Writing, Introduction to Research for Development, Research Proposal Skills, Principles of Ethics in Research, Ethical Research in Practice, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research, Policy Influencing Skills, and Values Based Leadership.

Loren is a researcher at the University of Southeastern Philippines and is working on the ACIAR-supported project '[An integrated response to the spread of Fusarium wilt of bananas in Southeast Asia](#)'.

Loren mentioned that each course is thoughtfully structured and focused on clear objectives, enabling them to develop skills that can be directly applied to her work.

Through ACIAR Learn, Loren has strengthened her writing skills and developed a greater awareness of research best practices such as structured sampling techniques, to ensure the precision and consistency of data.

"The program has increased my confidence in my ability to communicate research, which has helped me teach younger researchers, clarify complicated ideas, and work with others more successfully."

The program's emphasis on ethics has also supported Loren to plan extension studies with greater awareness of community values and ethical standards.

She said building her confidence in both her research abilities and the value of her contributions has helped her become more proactive, considerate and dedicated to delivering competent research.

Loren said interactive elements including live sessions and guidance from experienced course convenors set ACIAR Learn apart from other learning platforms.

"ACIAR Learn has created a deeper sense of responsibility and purpose and recognises our abilities to deliver our purpose in the research community," Loren said.



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ACIAR Learn encourages teamwork and lets us benefit from peers' varied experiences, which has inspired new thoughts and insights in me.

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ETHIOPIA

Temeselew Woldetsadik Mawugatie

A lecturer at Wollo University, Ethiopia, Temeselew Woldetsadik Mawugatie has used ACIAR Learn to expand his academic and professional capabilities. Completing 16 courses, he found the experience to be a transformative and bright journey, equipping him with the advanced skills and knowledge to amplify his research in development and agricultural economics.

Temeselew applied his learnings from the Introduction to Academic Research, Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods courses into the lectures he delivered to his students, helping to develop research proposals, prepare research articles and conduct literature reviews.

He also developed stronger time management, task prioritisation and communication skills as a result of participating in ACIAR Learn.

As an early career researcher, Temeselew found that ACIAR Learn has helped him to realise his research aspirations. His favourite element of the program has been the quality and content

of each of the courses, as well as the expert knowledge delivered by course convenors.

Live sessions and networking with other participants enriched his experience, bringing together their research skills and knowledge from their research and country experiences during the group discussions, live sessions and discussion forums.

“Renowned professors delivered courses that were well organised, managed, and accessible through an online learning system and library access from The University of Queensland, Australia.”



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ACIAR Learn is the land of opportunities, which has given me a lot of experience in different research aspects, which are fundamental for attaining my aspiration to be a good researcher in a multidisciplinary topic.

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LAOS

Souphalack Inphonephong

Participating in ACIAR Learn has built Souphalack Inphonephong's professional skills and confidence.

Souphalack completed 10 ACIAR Learn courses: Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research, Introduction to Research for Development, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning in Research, Policy Influencing Skills, Qualitative Research Methods, Quantitative Research Methods, Research Project Management Essentials, Research Proposal Skills, Research Proposal Skills, and Writing an Empirical Journal Article.

Souphalack is leveraging the knowledge he gained from ACIAR Learn in his research at the International Water Management Institute, based in Laos.

The skills he acquired from the Qualitative Research Methods course now shape his approach to formulating research questions, while the writing techniques he learned from the Academic Writing course enhance his technical and research reports.

Additionally, Souphalack applied concepts from the Policy Influencing Skills course to his research, identifying the governance elements and policy requirements necessary to facilitate integrated rice-farming practices.

He found ACIAR Learn's live sessions, which featured presentations from experienced course convenors and interactive discussions, particularly helpful.

Souphalack shared that **ACIAR Learn has significantly enhanced his confidence in communication and in conducting research activities**, including policy engagements, which are essential aspects of his role as a National Researcher focused on Social and Policy research.

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ACIAR Learn helps increase my confidence to communicate and undertake my research activities and areas, including policy engagement as part of my career as a National Researcher on Social and Policy research.

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MALAWI

Annie Musisi

Annie says that ACIAR Learn has had a significant impact on her professional development, improving leadership qualities, data analytic skills and her understanding of gender equity.

Annie has completed six ACIAR Learn courses, and she shared that participating in the program has been a transformational experience. She believed that ACIAR Learn has equipped her with the technical expertise to tackle complex agricultural challenges while also enhancing her communication, leadership, and critical thinking skills.

Through the courses' interactive sessions and hands-on exercises, Annie has gained the confidence to apply her knowledge in realworld scenarios, such as the ACIAR-funded project **'Virtual Irrigation Academy Phase 2: From Water Monitoring to Learning to Governance'**, and contribute to a positive impact on communities.

She mentioned that the practical knowledge gained from ACIAR Learn has been crucial to her professional development.

For instance, the Science Communication course provided her with the skills to simplify complex irrigation concepts for diverse audiences in Malawi, contributing to her winning the People's Choice Award in the photo competition "Bring ACIAR Learn to Life".

The newly acquired skills have also enabled Annie to confidently take up mentoring roles, manage community-driven projects, and advocate for inclusive policies in Malawi's agriculture sector.

"ACIAR Learn is more than just a platform; it is a network of innovators and problem solvers."

Her favourite aspects of ACIAR Learn are the interactive learning format and the real-world case studies, which have made it easier to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. She also values the opportunity to connect with a global network of committed professionals, which has been incredibly valuable.



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I am really appreciative for the opportunity to be a part of this initiative and look forward to applying my expertise and abilities to achieve positive change in the agriculture industry.

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PAKISTAN

Dr Rehan Riaz

Dr Rehan Riaz is a researcher at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan. He has completed 14 ACIAR Learn courses, and has used them to strengthen his concepts, approaches and methodologies of interdisciplinary research.

Dr Riaz found that the skills acquired through the ACIAR Learn courses have helped him to improve relationships with different stakeholders, including his team and policy makers by sharing feedback on project interventions and communicating successful project outcomes.

Using his new skills, and knowledge Dr Riaz is engaging more effectively with his project teams including researchers, field staff and community and developing their capacity to meet their project goals.

Technical skills such as those gained through the Writing an Empirical Journal Article course have also helped him to develop a strong foundation for publishing inclusive value chains related work in reputable scientific journals.

A key benefit for Dr Riaz was the interactive peer-to-peer learning delivered through live sessions,

discussion boards and a buddy system that allowed him to learn from other participants.

He also enjoyed the flexibility of the online courses, enabling him to continue learning at his own pace.

"ACIAR Learn allowed me to learn and share experiences with other participants from the other countries and the Australian mentors in similar jobs within different contexts."



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It should be mandatory for early career researchers and ACIAR project team members to take part in ACIAR Learn!

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INDONESIA

Arom Figyantika

Arom Figyantika has completed 11 ACIAR Learn courses. She believes the platform has enabled her to enrich and update her research knowledge and skills, which has increased her confidence as a lecturer and researcher at the Department of Silviculture, Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia.

Responsible for teaching, research, and community development, which we refer to as Tri Dharma Pendidikan, Arom has incorporated methods for preparing data for analysis, enriched by materials from courses such as Quantitative Research Methods and Scientific Data Analysis & Interpretation.

In the field of community development, Arom applies key principles learned through Science Communication.

Arom's favourite aspects of ACIAR Learn have been the flexibility in learning time and the live sessions.

With an often unpredictable schedule, she found the ability to work through courses at her own pace to be highly beneficial.

Live sessions allowed her to cross-check and deepen my understanding of the material, connect with other participants, and incorporate these experiences into my teaching approach.

"Thank you very much for creating ACIAR Learn, which has brought so many beneficial impacts to my career."



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The learning process, materials, course convenors, and all other components provided through ACIAR Learn make me feel confident and up-to-date in my career.

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SRI LANKA

Senathera Digamadulla

Sena has completed 13 ACIAR Learn courses and believes these courses provide practical knowledge and skills for professionals working in agricultural or fishery research. He also said they evolved his perceptions, attitudes and approaches for a better research for development approach and day to day operations.

Senathera (Sena) Digamadulla is part of the team at the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka that is working on the ACIAR-supported project 'Improved productivity, efficiency and sustainability of the culture-based fishery for finfish and giant freshwater prawn in Sri Lankan reservoirs'.

Social and gender inclusion in research were new concepts to Sena, introduced through the ACIAR Learn program. This exposure to prompted Sena to explore these notions further, and appreciate their relevance and importance in the context of fisheries management.

Being able to interact with highly experienced course convenors and peers throughout the Asia-Pacific region and Africa was a highlight of

ACIAR Learn for Sena.

"Every aspect of ACIAR Learn is constructive, truly it's hard to point out a single element. For me the holistic theme behind the ACIAR Learn spreads optimism and harmony – by assembling, connecting and creating a space to learn, discuss and disseminate knowledge across the diversified people working on agriculture research for development."

Sena has established meaningful connections, recognizing the value of different perspectives and deepening his understanding of various research issues and challenges in diverse contexts. This has allowed Sena to enhance his ability to tackle problems from multiple angles, enriching his overall approach to research.



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The program has been instrumental in shaping my career, and I am proud to be part of such an empowering initiative. Thank you for fostering learning, inclusivity, and growth across the agricultural and research sectors.

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Courses delivered 2021 - 2024

To date, ACIAR Learn has delivered over 50 course intakes for over 500 participants.

COURSE NAME	
Interdisciplinary, Critical, and Participatory Approaches to R4D	Research for Development Design and Practice
Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research	Applying Gender Equity & Social Inclusion in Research
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Research	Research Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning in Practice
Principles of Ethics in Research	Ethical Research in Practice
Research Project Management Essentials	Research Project Management in Practice
Academic Writing - Introduction to Academic Writing	Research in the Field
Academic Writing - Writing an Empirical Journal Article	Research Proposal Skills
Mentoring Skills	Science Communication
Policy Influencing Skills	Scientific Data Analysis & Interpretation
Qualitative Research Methods	Values-based Leadership
Quantitative Research Methods	

Self-paced courses available in 2025

COURSE NAME	
Digital Communications for Research	Qualitative Research Methods
Facilitation Skills	Quantitative Research Methods
Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research	Research in the Field
Interdisciplinary, Critical & Participatory Approaches to Research for Development	Research Proposal Skills
Introduction to Academic Writing	Science Communication
Mentoring Skills	Scientific Data Analysis & Interpretation
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Research	Values based Leadership
Policy Influencing Skills	Writing an Empirical Journal Article

to learn more about courses
currently on offer



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It has been a humbling privilege to lead the ACIAR Learn program over the past 3.5 years, working collegially with academics from many different areas.

Participants have consistently demonstrated a profound dedication to enhancing their research capacities through online and peer learning, effectively leveraging the extraordinary diversity among them.

Their feedback at each course iteration has enabled our team at large to truly enact continuous improvement and adapt learning content and activities to meet evolving needs. I look forward to the continued impact of ACIAR Learn on research for development.

—Alessia Anibaldi, Team Leader

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It was my pleasure to coordinate and contribute to Research Project Management and Research Administration Management (and iterations). These courses provided skills to work as a team to effectively manage disciplinary research projects.

Workshopping with participants from such diverse cultures, perspectives and expertise gave great insights to the risks and challenges faced. It was a great experience to share solutions that were adaptable to different regional contexts.

—Dr Karen Harper,
Central Queensland University

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It has been a privilege to be part of the collaborative learning environment of the ACIAR Learn program. The dedication and enthusiasm of participants has been truly inspiring, and it has been a pleasure to work with such a talented and committed group of individuals.

—Dr Kathryn Page, The University of Queensland

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The Policy Influencing Skills course built confidence for researchers and practitioners to influence policy translating their research to real-world impact.

With 100% satisfactory rate in its first offering, participants rated high its ability to simplify complex topics like the policy process, stakeholder mapping, policy making stages, and tools like cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and systems thinking and interactive live sessions, empowering them strategically develop policy engagement strategies in their work areas.

—Dr Risti Permani,
The University of Queensland



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Participants of the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion course brought diverse insights. One participant acknowledged, ‘Our team has no female researchers, and that’s a huge challenge we need to address.’

Another shared, ‘When women face structural barriers, targeted strategies can work—we’ve seen success in building pathways for change.’

These experiences inspired meaningful discussions and boosted participants’ confidence in tackling gender and inclusion challenges.

The GESI panel discussion and poster competition further enriched participants’ understanding of practical applications.

—Dr Gomathy Palaniappan,
The University of Queensland



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From my perspective, the ACIAR Learn program has filled in many of the knowledge gaps, either perceived or real, and is inspiring a more skilled, motivated and empathetic research team. Everyone that I work with has personally gained something from the experience of being a part of the ACIAR Learn cohort.

—Dr Tony Pattison, Project leader: HORT/2018/192



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Read more about ACIAR at
www.aciar.gov.au/aciarlearn
For more information, contact
aciarnlearn@uq.edu.au



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