

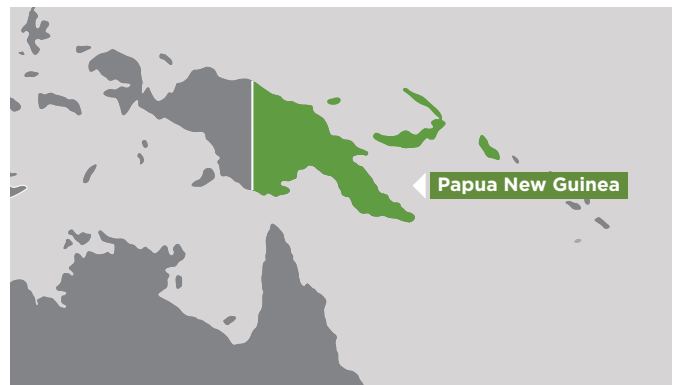


Australian Government

Australian Centre for  
International Agricultural Research

Social Sciences

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



## Overview

**Women smallholders are key to Papua New Guinea (PNG) family livelihoods.**

They produce essential subsistence crops, whilst also undertaking valued social roles such as family care. However, women smallholders face significant agricultural constraints including limited access to productive resources, low banking rates, limited financial skills, lack of access to credit, poorly developed transport systems, lack of understanding and access to markets, unequal gendered family roles and division of labour, restrictions to mobility, and overall safety. They also have educational disadvantages due to low school completion rates and limited access to training or extension services.

Although most women aspire to improve their family livelihoods, a previous ACIAR project (ASEM/2010/052) demonstrated that very few women smallholders have the necessary agricultural and business acumen. This project aimed to address this issue with the goal of supporting women's economic development in order to improve gender equity, family livelihoods and food security.

## KEY FACTS

**ACIAR Project No.** ASEM/2014/095  
**Duration:** June 2015 to March 2019 (4 years)  
**Target areas:** Papua New Guinea  
**Budget:** A\$3 million

### Project leader

Prof Barbara Pamphilon, University of Canberra

### Key partners

- Baptist Union of PNG
- Bougainville Women's Federation
- CARE PNG
- Fresh Produce Development Agency
- National Agricultural Research Institute
- New Ireland Provincial Administration
- Pacific Adventist University
- PNG University of Technology
- Voice for Change

### ACIAR Research Program Manager

Dr Jayne Curnow

## Objective

The overall aim of the project were to enhance the economic development of PNG women smallholders by building their agricultural and business acumen.

### The project's specific objectives are to:

- Examine the capacity development of women 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.
- Examine the uptake and impact of a family farm team approach to farming for women and girls.
- Explore the capacity development of PNG agricultural focused agencies in gender inclusive and gender sensitive extension delivery.

## Outcomes

- Enhanced the knowledge base of social scientists seeking to develop gender-inclusive research and training approaches for women and girls, especially for those with low literacy in the agriculture sector.
- Trained 165 women and 101 men as village community educators (VCEs) in the Family Farm teams modules. These VCEs have trained approximately 1,622 women and 869 men in their own local communities.
- Contributed information and knowledge about effective ways to improve women smallholders' agricultural production, business acumen and financial skills. This knowledge will enable PNG partner institutions (for example, FPDA and UniTech) to inform their own agricultural extension practice and/or teaching.

- Provided data to other development projects that have an agenda to improve gender equality in the PNG rural agricultural context and identify further indicators of gender equity. The research will enhance understanding of the social and cultural norms and practices that influence family decision making and access to income for women in smallholder families.
- Built knowledge about effective elements of leadership training in the PNG agricultural context. This will have value to NGOs and governments seeking to enhance the capacity and role of women in leadership positions.
- Contributed to new knowledge of village-based participatory action research for development. This can inform social scientists and development staff in provincial and local level government, as well as the Department of Agriculture and Livestock, Department of Primary Industry, universities and extension providers.
- Informed practice (through knowledge generated) in other developing countries that are supporting gender equitable economic pathways from subsistence farming.
- Two new resources developed:
  - » *Business training for family teams, first steps to starting a business: a trainer manual* — a program for farmers with low literacy
  - » *Educating PNG rural children for their farming futures* — a professional development program to assist teachers integrate agriculture into primary school

