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STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF YOUTH FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOOD IN AGRICULTURE

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SDGs:



Countries:

Samoa

Project Codes:

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FAO Contribution

USD 199 000

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Contact Info:

FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands

FAO-SRC@fao.org



Implementing Partners

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development's (MWCSO) Division for Youth.

Beneficiaries

Young farmers, young food processors, school-aged youths and staff from the MAF.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Outcome 1: Improved market opportunities and returns for small farmers through enhanced supply chain coordination and stronger market linkages;

Output 1.6: Strengthened technical capacity in farming communities (with particular focus on women and youth) for fruit tree propagation and cultivation.



BACKGROUND

Approximately 80 percent of the population of Samoa resides in rural areas, yet the contribution of the agriculture sector to the national gross domestic product (GDP) is relatively low. While agriculture accounted for around 50 percent of the GDP in 1980, this contribution decreased to less than 10 percent by 2013. In contrast, remittances accounted for 18.2 percent of the GDP in 2011.

The 2009 Agriculture Census found that 15 786 of the 23 164 households surveyed were agriculturally active. However, only half of these agriculturally active households derived some income from their produce, with the remainder of households producing purely for the purpose of consumption. In addition, an estimated 37 300 ha was being used for agriculture at the time of the census, representing 57 percent of the total agricultural land. More generally, 82 percent of agricultural production value is generated from crops. Only 24 percent of the value added to products, however, is achieved through commercial agriculture, with subsistence farming accounting for most of the value-added products in the sector.

In Samoa, there are five crops that account for 76 percent of production value. These include taro, swamp taro, coconut, banana and pumpkin. Additionally, cabbage (15 percent) and tomato (3 percent) account for most of the remaining production value. Critically, shortcomings in the domestic production of high-value horticultural crops contributes to the high cost of both local and imported vegetables compared to substitute foods. This in turn, contributes to the Samoan population's high dependence on purchasing imported foods, which is estimated to account for over 70 percent of their diets. As a result, there are high consumption rates of prepared and convenience foods that contain high levels of salt, sugar and saturated fat, which contribute to poor nutrition and obesity.

Despite the existing challenges, the agriculture sector has been at the forefront of economic growth in Samoa and remains crucial to national food security, income generation and export potential. Therefore, the vision for the Agriculture Sector Plan 2011–2016 focused on "Agriculture for Food and Income Security" and was guided by the "farming and fishing first" theme. In particular, two of the key areas that have been explored are improved fruit tree development and value addition for selected crops.

Youth employment in the agriculture sector has great potential to bolster economic and social advancement in Samoa. However, youth unemployment also remains a critical development challenge, with rural-to-urban migration for education and employment placing a growing pressure on the Government to create adequate opportunities for Samoan youths. Moreover, when youths fail to secure employment in urban areas, they often return to rural areas, where they become engaged in subsistence agriculture.

Youth unemployment was recently estimated at 16.4 percent, which is more than double the national unemployment rate of 8.7 percent. Young women face greater challenges in securing employment than young men, which is reflected in the 2012 Labour Force Survey results that found female unemployment to be at 20.2 percent (compared to 14 percent for males). Further complicating matters, young women traditionally engage in unpaid family work with limited opportunity for developing their skills and enhancing their employment options.

One of the key areas for addressing youth employment concerns in Samoa is the creation of opportunities for unskilled and unqualified individuals. The 2012 Labour Force Survey also found that 40.3 percent of young people did not graduate from school, most of whom left the education system during secondary school.

These numbers highlight an urgency for the implementation of effective policies and programmes that support the development of skills and entrepreneurship. However, the composition of the agriculture sector in Samoa has made it difficult to accurately estimate the value of agricultural production, which further complicates policy development and planning in the sector. Nevertheless, it is clear that the relatively small commercial agricultural sector in Samoa has struggled to maintain its competitiveness both locally and internationally.



Given these challenges, the project was designed to primarily address issues related to youth unemployment in the agriculture sector. More specifically, it aimed to develop solutions to the challenges that have traditionally prevented young Samoans from entering and succeeding in the agriculture sector, which include (i) the limited income generated from agricultural activities, (ii) the limited access to improved production and extension services, such as access to improved fruit tree varieties and management practices, (iii) the limited use of value addition and processing methodologies, (iv) poor technical and vocational knowledge/education and (v) the limited access to markets.

The 2013–17 FAO Country Programming Framework for Samoa identified the need to both improve the capacities of youths in fruit tree propagation and create job opportunities for young people in agriculture. Unlike prior FAO efforts in Samoa, this project adopted a value chain approach and was designed to assist beneficiaries not only in production but also in value addition, agribusiness and marketing. Thus, it was envisioned that the project would enable young farmers and youths to grow cash crops and fruits trees, to process foods and create value added products, and to export these value added products via international markets, ultimately strengthening livelihood opportunities in the agriculture sector. In addition, the project sought to promote and encourage youth engagement in agriculture.

IMPACT

The project was designed to increase youth employment in the agriculture sector in Samoa by raising awareness and increasing the capacity of youths to access employment opportunities.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project strengthened the capacities of youths in various aspects of agricultural production. Twenty five young farmers, teachers and staff from the MAF completed a series of Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions on production practices for improved crops. These sessions covered rock bedding, seedling preparation, crop production, keyhole gardening, integrated pest management (IPM), farm management and post-harvest management. In order to deliver the TOT sessions, a demonstration plot and nursery were established at the MAF. In addition, demonstration plots were established for ten youth leaders, who each trained an additional ten youths (100 in total) on production practices for improved crops. Plots were also constructed for two youth groups in Manono Tai and training was delivered to 51 participants from the youth groups, allowing the project to attain a wider reach than anticipated. Overall, 137 youths and young farmers received training on the production of improved crops through the 37 training sessions carried out under the project.

The adoption of improved value addition techniques for agricultural products, as well as their subsequent use in small-scale businesses, was promoted under the project. Two five-day food processing and value addition training workshops were conducted, reaching a total of twenty-six youths and young farmers from Upolu and Savai'i. Practical training was delivered for several improved value addition techniques, including (i) freezing taro, bananas, pumpkin and breadfruit, (ii) dehydrating tea leaves, spices and coconut and (iii) making fruit jams from oranges and papaya. Pilot trials were also carried out and several products were developed, including herbal tea, taro fries, frozen taro slices, desiccated coconut with complementary tauaga, and breadfruit products. A preparatory meeting was held to identify suitable marketing approaches and venues, after which the marketing strategy was rolled out on both islands. The products were showcased at agriculture shows in Upolu and Savai'i. Finally, a workshop was organized for youths and young farmers to share their experiences and the results of the initiative.

The project made a concerted effort to raise youth awareness on agriculture and agribusiness opportunities. Four crop production demonstration sites were established in selected schools and roughly 25 students at each school received training on agricultural production practices. The schools included Aleipata College (in Satitua, Upolu), Sagaga College (in Afeaga, Upolu), Palauli I Sisifo (in Salailua, Savai'i) and Asau College (in Asau, Savai'i). The first four trainings primarily covered the goals, objectives and outcomes of the project, as well as building fences and greenhouse nurseries, soil bed preparation and sowing seeds. The second round of four trainings focused on seedling transplantation and discussions on organic versus non-organic farming. In addition, teachers were trained on keyhole gardening and trainings were delivered on their preparation and maintenance. Finally, teachers were also encouraged to include relevant growing techniques in their curricula.

An awareness-raising campaign was developed based on the stories of three participating youths. Videos on "Successful Youth in Agriculture" were created and promoted on national television. Additionally, the MAF used these videos to further advocate for livelihood opportunities for youths in the agriculture sector. The youth awards were held for participating youths, youth groups and schools at the Agriculture Show, which coincided with World Food Day. This ultimately allowed the project to acknowledge the efforts of participants and advocate for additional agriculture-related activities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

All project activities were implemented within the originally approved budget, with a series of no-cost extensions being approved to account for the delays experienced in procurement. More specifically, these delays meant that the originally planned videos for the awareness-raising campaign would not have been completed within the project timeframe. Therefore, the stories of three project beneficiaries were used as an alternative. Notably, at the project inception meeting in April 2017, the project objectives were adjusted to better reflect the resources available to Samoan youths. An agreement was reached to focus on domestic markets (rather than exports) for the value added products that were to be developed under the project.

Throughout the implementation period, technical specialists were supported by FAO in monitoring the impact of potential risks to the project. The high level of assistance provided ensured that any minor risks were either avoided or mitigated in a timely manner.



FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

While the project successfully achieved its envisioned goals, several areas for follow-up attention were identified to ensure that the advancement made under the project will be sustained. Future efforts should aim to develop more supportive policies and a stronger enabling environment for youth involvement in agriculture and agribusiness. Additionally, continued efforts should be made to strengthen the capacities of a greater number of farmers in improved crop production and value addition practices. Perhaps of greater relevance, young farmers' access to finance also needs to be improved beyond the project.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

Under the project, the capacities of the MAF, youth leaders and schoolteachers were strengthened in various aspects of improved production and agribusiness practices. Beyond project closure, national institutions are therefore expected to continue to provide technical support to farmers, while participants at the TOT sessions remain in a strong position to deliver ongoing training. Although the project also successfully raised awareness on the importance of utilizing improved crop production methods, modern food processing techniques and stronger agribusiness management strategies, the Government of Samoa is encouraged to further invest in these areas.

2. Gender equality

The project featured a strong focus on gender equality. Men and women participated equally throughout the project, with 50 percent of the participants at the various capacity development trainings being women. Moreover, men and women are expected to benefit equitably from the results of the project.

3. Environmental sustainability

While environmental sustainability was not a primary focus of the project, the methodologies introduced are not expected to negatively impact the environment.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The creation of employment opportunities for youths in the agriculture sector was central to the project. Importantly, a value chain approach was adopted, which will ultimately support the creation of employment not only at the level of agricultural production, but also through value addition and agribusiness activities.

5. Technological sustainability

A concerted effort was made to ensure the appropriateness and suitability of technologies and methodologies introduced under the project. This was achieved through a series of stakeholder workshops that were designed to identify and prioritize production practices for improved crops, value addition activities and practices to support market access (contract farming). Importantly, the development of local knowledge and capacities were key outputs of the project. Capacity building materials were developed, numerous training workshops were delivered and new practices were implemented, including keyhole gardening, pilot food production trials and contract farming. To support the progress made under the project, further efforts and additional financial resources need to be directed to the creation of employment opportunities for youths in agriculture.

6. Economic sustainability

The sustainability of the practices introduced under the project, as well as the creation of employment opportunities for youths in the agriculture sector, will depend largely on further investment in these areas. The Government of Samoa will be responsible for ensuring that adequate financial resources are mobilized to achieve these goals and could look for investment opportunities in other programmes/projects, such as ongoing World Bank and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) efforts.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

Documents

- ❑ National Consultant – Progress Report 1. TL Vaimalu. 2017. 5 pp.
- ❑ National Consultant – Progress Report 2. TL Vaimalu. 2018. 4 pp.
- ❑ National Consultant – Progress Report 3. TL Vaimalu. 2018. 3 pp.
- ❑ National Consultant – Final Report. TL Vaimalu. 2018. 10 pp.
- ❑ “Agribusiness management and contract farming” training manual. S Sherzad. 2018. 43pp.
- ❑ Back to Office Report – Manono. S Sherzad. 2018. 4pp.
- ❑ Back to Office Report – Savai’i. S Sherzad. 2018. 6pp.
- ❑ Letter of Agreement with the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS) – Final Report: “Building the capacity of young farmers to value add to agricultural produce and market them locally”. A Kuinimeri et al. 2018. 26 pp.
- ❑ Letter of Agreement Progress Report with SFFI – “Built capacity of young farmers, youth and students on improved production practices.” MA Emele and M Mikaele. 2018. 15 pp.
- ❑ Back to Office Report – Savai’i Agro-Show. UI Petelo. 2018. 5 pp.
- ❑ Back to Office Report – Manono Agribusiness and Contract Farming training workshop. UI Petelo. 2018. 6 pp.
- ❑ Back to Office Report – Savai’i, Agribusiness and Contract Farming trainings workshops. UI Petelo. 2018. 7pp.
- ❑ Report on the youth farmers awards. UI Petelo. 2018. 8 pp.



Outreach Materials

- ❑ Family Farming in the Pacific Islands Countries (Challenges and Opportunities). S Sherzad. 2018, Apia. <http://tiny.cc/wj9apz>.
- ❑ “Savai’i youth get training in agribusiness” <http://tiny.cc/go9apz>.
- ❑ “Manono youth and community farmers train in agribusiness” <http://tiny.cc/xp9apz>.
- ❑ “Getting young farmers to help address jobs shortage” <http://tiny.cc/mq9apz>.
- ❑ “Upskilling trainers to help tackle youth unemployment” <http://tiny.cc/kr9apz>.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Increased youth employment in the agriculture sector	
Outcome	Selected youth are aware of and have the capacities to access employment opportunities in agriculture	
	Indicator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of young farmers trained on improved production practices. 2. Number of young farmers trained in agribusiness management, marketing and farm-to-market linkages. 3. Awareness and capacity of school's youth raised on employment opportunities in agriculture.
	Baseline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth have limited technical capacity on agriculture production, agribusiness and farm management. 2. Youth have limited technical capacity on agribusiness management and marketing. 3. No schools with targeted agriculture for livelihoods programmes.
	End Target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100 2. 80 3. Multiple targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Outreach and awareness materials in agriculture developed and disseminated. –Short video and radio clips on activities of successful young farmers developed and aired. –Minimum of two agribusiness success stories written and widely shared. –Minimum of two awareness videos developed. –Youth and Agriculture event organized. –School demonstration sites established at four schools. –Trainings on improved production practices provided to the four schools with demonstration sites.
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A total of 137 youths and young farmers received training on improved crop production practices (across 37 TOT sessions). Follow-up efforts should be directed at developing stronger policies that aim to support a more enabling agribusiness environment for youths and young farmers in Samoa. 2. A total of 150 youths and young farmers received training on agribusiness management and improved market linkages. Additionally, 26 youths and young farmers received training on food processing and value addition. Ten demonstration farms were established for youth leaders, while one demonstration plot and one nursery were established within the crops division of the MAF. Beyond the project, efforts should be directed at further strengthening the capacity of farmers on improved crop production and value addition. 3. Capacity building materials were developed and disseminated to young farmers and agro-processors. An advocacy video was developed and showcased on national television, highlighting the various livelihood opportunities available in the agriculture sector. Future work should focus on improving young farmers' access to finance.

Output 1	Youth capacities in agriculture production strengthened		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of young farmers trained on improved crops production practices.		Yes
Baseline	Samoan youths and young farmers had received little capacity building assistance on agriculture production and had limited access to planting materials and equipment.		
Comments	A total of 25 young farmers, schoolteachers and MAF staff successfully completed three TOT sessions on improved crops production practices (including rock bedding, seedling preparation, crop production, keyhole gardening, IPM, farm management and post-harvest management). Moreover, a demonstration plot and nursery were established at the MAF to deliver the TOT sessions and ten demonstration plots were established for youth leaders. Each youth leader, in turn, trained ten neighbouring youths (100 in total) on improved crops production practices. In addition to the targeted lead farmers and youth farmers who benefitted from the extension training, the project also established plots for two youth groups in Manono Tai and delivered relevant training to 51 participants from the youth groups. Hence, the project reached a greater number of youth participants than anticipated.		
Activity 1.1	Train (ToT model) selected MAF staff and lead young farmers in propagation, improved production and nursery management		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A total of 37 young farmers, schoolteachers and MAF staff took part in the three TOT sessions on improved crops production practices, which covered rock bedding, seedling preparation, crop production, keyhole gardening, IPM, farm management and post-harvest management. The first session was delivered on 4–5 April 2018, the second on 2–3 May 2018 and the third on 6–7 June 2018. All TOT sessions were held at the MAF Crops Advisory Centre in Nu'u. Of the original 37 participants, 25 completed all three TOT sessions.	
Activity 1.2	Train selected young farmers on improved production practices		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Ten demonstration plots for youth leaders were established (Four in Savai'i – Samalaeulu, Safai, Foailalo and Lalomalava; four in Upolu – Lalomanu, Fusi Safata, Faleasiu-uta and Siumu; and two in Manono – for the EFKS and Metotisi youth groups). The establishment of plots was completed in October 2018. Planting materials and equipment were provided for all the demonstration sites and were distributed by the MAF and the service provider. Ten selected youth leaders participated in TOT on improved crops production practices at two separate sessions held on 4–5 April and 2–3 May 2018, respectively. Each youth leader then trained an additional ten neighbouring youths (100 in total) on improved crops production practices.	
Activity 1.3	Facilitate access to markets for fruit trees and cash crops through contracts development		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The training manual, entitled Agribusiness Management and Contract Farming, was prepared. Four Agribusiness Management and Contract Farming training workshops were delivered – two in Savai'i on 17–22 September 2018, one in Upolu on 29–31 October 2018 and one in Manono on 8 October 2018. Overall, 150 young farmers, youths and community members attended the training.	

Output 2	Adoption of improved value addition techniques as a small-scale business by young people		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of youths trained on food processing and value addition.	20 youths trained on food processing and value addition.	Yes
Baseline	Youths and young farmers have limited knowledge on food processing and value addition.		
Comments	Twenty-six youths from Upolu (17) and Savai'i (9) were trained on food processing and value addition. Two five-day food processing and value addition training workshops were organized to train the selected youths and young farmers. Pilot trials were conducted and training was provided for the production of herbal tea, breadfruit, taro fries, desiccated coconut with complementary tauaga, and frozen taro slices. The developed food products were showcased at agriculture shows in both Upolu and Savai'i. Finally, a results sharing workshop was organized for youths and young farmers.		
Activity 2.1	Assist in the selection of youths and young farmers and producers for value addition		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Twenty-six youths from Upolu (17) and Savai'i (9) were selected for the food processing and value addition training. Taro, bananas, pumpkin and breadfruit were identified as the products to be used for the training on freezing; coconut, tea and spices (turmeric, ginger and lemongrass) were identified as the products to be used for the dehydration training; and papaya and orange were identified as the products to be used for making fruit jams.	
Activity 2.2	Train selected youths on selected value-added products (including breadfruits) food processing techniques		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The selected youths and young farmers were trained on food processing and value addition during two five-day training workshops. The first workshop was held on 22–26 July 2018 and the second was held on 29 January–2 February 2018. The practical aspects of the training looked at the processing of products using different preservation methods – freezing (for taro, bananas, pumpkin and breadfruit), dehydration (for producing tea, spices and desiccated coconut) and making fruit jams with sugar (for papaya and oranges). A final workshop was conducted on 5 December 2018, which involved the training attendees. The main purpose of the session was to share experiences, as well as the information/knowledge gained. A total of 14 youths attended.	
Activity 2.3	Conduct pilot trial (production and marketing) for selected added-value products (including breadfruits) for domestic markets		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	In September 2018, pilot product development trials were conducted (and training was delivered) for herbal tea, breadfruit, taro fries, desiccated coconut with complementary tauaga, and frozen taro slices. Ten youths from Upolu and Savai'i attended the sessions. After a preparatory meeting that addressed marketing strategies and identified suitable venues, the marketing strategy was rolled out at various locations on both islands (including popular stores and restaurants). In addition, two FAO-supported events, namely the Youth Expo (hosted by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development) and the Agriculture Show (hosted by the MAF) were attended, and participating youths set up tents at these events to market their products.	
Activity 2.4	Organize workshop and sharing the pilot trial results with trained youths and young farmers		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The developed food products were showcased at the agriculture shows in Upolu and Savai'i in October 2018. A results sharing workshop was organized on 5 December 2018 for youths and young farmers. The workshop was attended by 14 of the participating youths.	

Output 3	Youth awareness of agriculture and agribusiness opportunities raised		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of demonstrations plots established in selected schools.– Number of students trained on improved crops production practices.– Number of students trained on agribusiness management practices.– Availability of awareness videos to increase the awareness and capacity of school-aged youths on livelihood opportunities in the agriculture sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Four demonstrations plots established in selected schools.– 15 students trained on improved crops production practices.– 15 students trained on agribusiness management practices.– Prepare and disseminate at least one awareness video on livelihood opportunities in the agriculture sector.	Yes
Baseline	Students have limited knowledge on agricultural production and the benefits of agriculture		
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Four crop production demonstration plots were established in selected schools.– 25 students were trained on agricultural production practices.– 25 students were trained on agribusiness practices.– Three videos advocating for livelihood opportunities for youths in the agriculture sector were produced and disseminated.		
Activity 3.1	Conduct awareness campaign on agriculture and agribusiness opportunities		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	This activity was not implemented as originally planned as the necessary procurement was not carried out in time to ensure that the materials for the stories/videos were gathered within the timeframe of the main project activities. Instead, the stories of three participating youths were developed. Three videos on “Successful Youth in Agriculture” were created. The stories were promoted on national television and have been further utilized by the MAF in advocating for opportunities for youths in agriculture.	
		The youth awards were held for participating youths, youth groups and schools during the main agricultural event of the year, the Agriculture Show, which coincided with the World Food Day. The awards for young farmers, schools and the two religion-based groups involved in the project provided an opportunity to acknowledge the target participants’ efforts, as well as to advocate for and encourage further agriculture-related activities. The MAF, FAO and Samoa Federated Farmers Incorporated (SFFI) carried out inspection visits for the selection of the winners of the individual categories on 3–5 October 2018.	
Activity 3.2	Train youth in school on agriculture production techniques		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Four demonstration plots were established and approximately 100 students (25 per school) were trained on agricultural production practices. The four schools were Aleipata College, (Satitua, Upolu), Sagaga College (Afeaga, Upolu), Palauli I Sisifo (Salailua, Savai’i) and Asau College (Asau, Savai’i). Participating student were from grades 9–13. In addition, eight in-field trainings were conducted across the four schools. These trainings were arranged through the agricultural science teachers and representatives from each school. The first round of four trainings increased awareness on the project goals, objectives and outcomes. It also included outdoor activities, such as building fences and a greenhouse nursery, land preparation, soil bed preparation and sowing seeds. The second round of four trainings were held three-to-four weeks later and focused on the transplanting of seedlings and discussions on organic versus non-organic farming. Training 2 specifically discussed the most common pests and diseases that affect vegetables (Chinese cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, etc.). Pamphlets and brochures on vegetable production and management were distributed after each training. Teachers were trained on the concept of keyhole gardening, which became a new option for them. In-field trainings on how to prepare keyhole gardens, vegetable growth and garden maintenance were provided. The capacity building aspect of the training focused on growing techniques, which teachers were encouraged to incorporate into their curricula. A review of the existing training materials for the schools was not carried out; instead, the schools agreed that the training and information provided by the service provider would be incorporated into their own training guides.	
Activity 3.3	Train selected youth on agribusinesses management.		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The “Agribusiness management and contract farming” training manual was prepared. Four agribusiness management and contract farming training workshops (two in Savai’i, one in Upolu and one in Manono) were delivered. A total of 150 young farmers, youths and community members received training during September–October 2018.	



DEDICATION

*We would like to express our gratitude and our respect to our colleague, the late **Ms. Unasa Iulia Petelo**, whose drive and determination ensured the successful implementation and completion of this project. Rest in peace, Unasa.*

Outreach, Marketing and Reporting Unit (PSRR)
Business Development and Resource Mobilization Division (PSR)

For more information please contact: Reporting@fao.org