

Understanding School Food Provision in the Pacific: Scoping the potential of local food systems to improve diets, nutrition and livelihoods



Key details

Location

Fiji

Duration

Start Jan 2022

End Mar 2024

Budget

AUD 250,000

Commissioned organisation

University of the Sunshine Coast

Partners

Biodiversity International; Pacific Community;
University of the Sunshine Coast

Project Leader

Dr Sarah Burkhart

Program

Horticulture

Project code

HORT/2021/159

Overview

This project aimed to provide an understanding of the current extent and status of school food provision and environments in Pacific Islands countries. Focused on better understanding the enabling policy environment, institutional and farmer capacity to better support the integration of local agriculture into school meals, it aimed to build partnerships to seek understanding and consensus on those country contexts that provide the ideal conditions for linking agriculture to school food provision for future research opportunities.

School meals programs based on home-grown models can serve as platforms for transforming food systems, while improving education quality.

Locally grown and procured food is a nutritious, healthy, and efficient way to provide schoolchildren with a daily meal while improving opportunities for smallholder farmers. New research was required to address the knowledge gaps and barriers that have been identified to date.



Outcomes

- Identified and enhanced opportunities for nutrition-sensitive institutional food procurement, including school feeding programmes, to provide reliable markets for small-scale producers.
- Investigated the potential to scale up school feeding initiatives to promote and ensure a sustainable market for locally produced fresh foods and promote healthy eating habits among children.
- Increased investment in and support for school food and nutrition programmes and other public procurement programmes linked to local smallholder producers.
- Fostered community-led initiatives to enhance food security and nutrition, including backyard gardening and school feeding programmes.
- Enhanced and better coordinating support for the design, delivery, expansion and monitoring and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes, including school feeding programmes linked to smallholders and pro-poor agricultural development.
- Organised south-south visits to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, lessons and best practices relating to nutrition-sensitive public procurement programmes.



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