



"It's working in the bush or construction, or young people have to leave Eua. Coconut oil is giving them an option." Siva

Siva Siale, 21, lives an hour's walk away from Eau's virgin coconut oil (VCO) site. His role here is grating and drying the coconut, although he also helps out with all the other jobs that need doing such as cleaning. He receives pay weekly and it's regular, consistent work, unlike his construction job: "I prefer to work with VCO, it is easier than construction and I like working with the other young people." All his friends still work in either construction or in the bush.



IMPROVING THE LIVES OF 1000 GROWERS



FUNDING NEEDED \$150,000



PROJECT TIMELINE 2015-2020

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HELPING ORGANIC FARMERS IN TONGA FLOURISH

REMOVING BARRIERS TO ESCAPING POVERTY



Juliet Koloamatangai dries coconut at the virgin coconut oil processing site. So far, 16 sites have been built across Tonga. Credit/copyright: Kristian Frires/Oxfam.



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THE CHALLENGE

- Tonga has a vulnerable small island economy and is susceptible to natural disasters. Its isolation and small, scattered population create economic difficulties including high transport costs and limited markets.
- There are very few salaried employment opportunities for young people, which have led to a high level of outward migration.
- Oxfam's RESULT programme works together with The Tonga National Youth Congress (TNYC) to ensure that organic farming is sustainable for farmers. The goal is establishing a viable youth-led and community-focused business, selling virgin coconut oil and dried vanilla bean.

Meet Silaiti Laiseni.

She is standing with her 5-year-old grandson, Alibate. They live in a brightly painted breezeblock home set among 24 acres of tropical taro, tapioca, sweet bananas and coconut palms. Rural families like theirs face tough choices as high school fees and other monthly bills can push people to the financial brink. Parents have to choose which of their children to send to school.

"Education is so important; it changes people, the community. It makes a stronger Tonga."

This is a very useful source of money. My grandchild is better off because of this coconut project. I can now pay for his school fees and materials with our coconut money. I am able to make his life better."

Silaiti



65% OF THE COUNTRY'S EXPORTS ARE AGRICULTURAL



22.5% OF THE POPULATION LIVES BELOW THE POVERTY LINE



\$6,200 NZD IS THE AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME PER PERSON IN TONGA

THE PROGRAMME

- Oxfam's local partner TNYC is a Tongan civil society organisation that works with youth aged 14-35 to encourage and empower their talents and creativity. Oxfam and TNYC work to ensure that organic farming is sustainable for farmers by providing equipment, expertise and funding.
- Organic coconut and vanilla growers are provided with equipment and expertise to enable them to build their businesses over time. They are taught about organic pesticides and composting, creating a more environmentally conscious method of farming.
- We encourage and oversee TNYC staff visits to coconut oil sites across Tonga, so that experience and ideas can be shared. Organising field trips to Samoa to learn from similar schemes operating there.
- We help establish marketing and export strategies for organic grower groups, which includes working with local people on creating a label and logo for the products, and publicising products through the media. This will result in more demand for virgin coconut oil and vanilla bean, and increase income for farmers!