Case Study # 8 – Cecilia Popui– Cocoa farmer, Nakorei village, Buabake, Buin District, South Bougainville.

Cecilia Popui is a third-generation cocoa farmer who spends her days working the same land her grandfather planted decades ago.

But unlike those who came before her, Cecilia sees cocoa farming as much more than a way to meet her family’s immediate needs.

As part of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) project, *Developing the cocoa value chain in Bougainville*, Cecilia learned new skills and farming techniques that helped her and her family move beyond subsistence farming.

“(Cocoa farming) was not taken seriously as a business in the first two generations,” she said.

“My eyes are now open and my mind is broadened to think and act as an entrepreneur.”

Being part of the project had a significant impact on Cecilia and on her ambitions for her family’s future.

“It equipped me with new knowledge and skills… that assisted me to be a very good model farmer and a business woman,” Cecilia said.

The extra income has helped Cecilia and her family to pay for school fees, medical bills and buying nutritious foods.

“It has helped me and my family experience a new level of life.”

Cecilia said improving her own farming skills and knowledge also gave her the opportunity to help others do the same.

“I helped other women in the community by training them how to nurse and cultivate introduced vegetable seeds,” she said.

“My family and village changed by living a good healthy life.”

Cecilia said it was important to her to support other women farmers because she wanted to give them courage to “stand bold and do business just like men”.

“My family appreciate our farming business so much because each member has their own role to play in order to bring income,” she said.

“Taking equal share of farm roles is very important.”