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LOWERING EMISSIONS
IN ASIA'S FORESTS

PROGRAM UPDATE

Remote Villages in Papua New Guinea Realize Benefits of Land Use Planning



John Totowerek, Giginai Dobagira and Kawadina Yarovai, elders from the three tribes of Urumarave village, gather to talk about the impact of land use planning on their lives and their community.

"We have seen some positive changes under the land use plan. Because we have set aside areas of land for specific uses, we don't need to cut down big trees unnecessarily, we use the land more efficiently for gardening, and have seen a return of wildlife to the area. I have witnessed this myself."

*Kawadina Yarovai
Urumarave village elder*

implementing land use planning there is a greater abundance of wildlife and we have greatly improved our gardening techniques, resulting in less erosion."

Across Papua New Guinea, national and provincial governments have issued concessions allowing logging companies the right to clear hectares of virgin forest and are contemplating issuing more. Such large-scale logging clearly brings economic benefits to the country, but those benefits rarely flow to those living in remote areas, like Urumarave. The government approached tribal leaders about just such a concession, but collectively the villagers refused, despite any short-term benefits they might receive. Because of 15 years of experience with land use planning, the entire village knew of the disastrous effects logging could bring. Due to the biomass training USAID LEAF conducted over the last two years, they also knew and understood how dangerous it could be if the huge amounts of carbon sequestered on their land was released into the atmosphere.

Nine isolated and remote villages in the highlands of the Adelbert Range prove that with minimal assistance and targeted training, they are able to take control and manage the wide range of natural resources on which the livelihoods of their communities rely. Participatory land use planning is a bottom-up process where everyone who has a stake in conserving natural resources and mitigating the effects of climate change has a say. This very process formed the basis for USAID LEAF to work with these communities and a wide variety of other stakeholders to develop a set of options and recommendations for the Madang Provincial Government to create a province-wide low emission land use plan.

The United States Agency for International Development Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests program (USAID LEAF) is a five-year (2011-2016) regional project focused on achieving meaningful and sustainable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from the forest-land use sector across six target countries: Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

For More information:

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