
The Oil Search Sustainable Agriculture Programme empowering women and fostering peace

PNG Media Release

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The Oil Search Women Sustainable Agriculture Programme (WSAP) empowers women in our host communities by creating opportunities for them to learn basic farming and business skills to create a sustainable livelihood that contributes to the family income.

These covers areas such as rice farming, improved vegetable farming, chicken farming, a commercial egg laying project, basic business advice and training and, most recently, how to grow and cultivate an introduced vegetable - the bulb onion.

The Homa Paua area of Hela Province was once a no go zone for Oil Search officers and vehicles as a result of tribal conflicts.

This was until the WSAP was introduced into the community with the support of a local woman leader Shirley Iragali and her husband Bill Keadeg. The couple embraced the WSAP which led to the formation of the Homa Paua WSAP Development Centre. Soon after, the community witnessed the reopening of the Paua Primary School which was forced to close for six years due to the conflicts.

The Oil Search Community Affairs Women Development team in collaboration with the Christian Leaders Training College (CLTC) then ran a series of workshops in improved vegetable farming and new or introduced vegetable farming techniques. There the Onion Project was established and is now thriving in the Homa Paua area, thanks in part to Oil Search and Shirley and her husband Bill.

Apart from onions, the group farms rice, cabbages and other improved vegetables sown in their nursery following useful demonstrations by CLTC.

Since 2012, Oil Search has been supporting over 300 Huli, Fasu and Foe women as they create and grow five small sustainable agricultural enterprises.

Some achievements include:

- improved diets for individuals and families
- income generation for the five WSAP groups and families
- the WSAP groups have come together and are establishing WSAP Development Centres
- formation of the Moran-Kutubu Women Umbrella Business Group called Mokut Women Business Group
- egg production and selling to PNG Mining Petroleum Hospitality and Catering Services Ltd, Oil Search's contracted catering company

- introduction of new farming methods and soil management, basic bookkeeping, financial literacy and learnt skills or training in food handling, food security and nutrition
- introduction of solar power for egg incubation and capacity building

Ends.

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Photo



Caption:
Shirley Iragali along with family and members of her community showing off their home grown bulb onions. They are seen in their nursery funded by Oil Search.