



A MAN OF HIS OWN

Fighting climate change in Papua New Guinea by planting mangroves

You wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of Dominic Makis. His demeanor speaks to his a decade-long military career. Now he says the military tactics he learned serving his country translate well as he fights climate change. As his coastline recedes, he's got a defence plan: mangroves.



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Dominic lives in Wanam, a village in the north-west of Madang Province. Madang, on the northern coast of mainland Papua New Guinea, contains over 350,000 people. Since the 1970s, Dominic has watched the coastline shrink by over 300m. His words evince a steely resolve: “We’re going to fight. What else are we going to do?”

A father of seven, Dominic considers each of the >1,000 mangrove trees he’s planted further progeny. His seedlings cover nearly half a kilometre of coastline; Dominic plans to eventually cover over three kilometres of coastline around his village.

In recognition of their increasing exposure to climate change impacts, the Government of Papua New Guinea, via its Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD) - in partnership with UNDP, initiated a project to “Enhance Adaptive Capacity of Communities to Climate Change-related Floods in the North Coast and Islands Region of PNG”. With funding provided by the Adaptation Fund, the project’s objective is to enhance the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities to make informed decisions about and adapt to climate change-driven hazards affecting both coastal and riverine villages. In particular, the project worked to build community resilience to coastal and inland flooding events.

For project activities in Madang, UNDP partnered with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) PNG, who reached out to 16 Madang coastal communities. There is now a total of 21 mangrove nurseries, and approximately 3.69 kilometres have been planted using over 4,000 seedlings. Dominic’s defence plan is well stocked with reinforcements: nearly 20,000 seedlings are currently in Madang’s nurseries, ready to serve as the region’s living redoubt in the battle against rising seas.



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