

PWM Derimbat Community CEPF Project Social Assessment

Project Title: Derimbat Community Reforestation Project

Organization: Partners with Melanesians Inc. (PWM)

Application Code: GA 14-09

This document was developed for CEPF and other donors so that the planning and implementation of project activities were in line and complied with the Safeguard Policy on Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous People of the Project Area

The indigenous people of Derimbat originated from inland Manus. They consisted of three main clans known as Lonur', Ndritian and Pahndranpat. The clans are further divide into ten (10) sub clans namely: Posolok Puli-iu, Poslok Ei'i, Ndrongkosu-un Mbrunei, Ndruturu'u, Tasih, Paeu, Wahau, Pondrelei and Lenknan. The three clans are led and customarily oriented, managed by its leaders with constant dialogue with its sub clans.

The people once lived inland at the vicinity of Mt. Pawih range where the Derimbat people originated from and its surroundings in what is now referred to as the Ndrukul people before moving to the coast. Derimbat village was officially declared as a community in 1951. Before that each clan or sub clan lived on the ridges and coastlines until the establishment of the Baluan Local Level Government Council led by the late Sir Paliau Moloat in the late 1940s and early 1950s. When the nominated councilors formed the local government and decided to build villages, this resulted in the establishment of the Derimbat village in 1951. The establishment of the Derimbat village was led by the founding Ward Councilor Mr. Miur Pihwas.

In 2014, PWM partnered with the Derimbat Community Development Foundation Inc (DCDF) and Manus Environment Community Conservation Network (MECCN), a local CBO in Derimbat and a local CBO in Manus Province respectively to implement a pilot project on the rehabilitation of degraded forest in the Derimbat area. The project area is located on the north coast and extends to the central part of Manus, but is within the Pomotu N'Drehet, Kurti and Andra(PNKA) LLG. PNKA are the four tribal groups within this LLG.

However, the specific project area is within Council Ward # 10 of PNKA LLG and the village is called Derimbat. The people of Derimbat are from the Kurti tribe and within Derimbat Village; there are 4 major clans namely: *Lonohur, Pandrapat, N'Dritian and Tolngoru (sub-clan)*. The population of Derimbat is approximately 1100, each clan includes approximately 280 people (Men, Women and Children).

The neighbouring village of Liap within Council Ward # 9 has several clans who are also Members of the Kurti tribe and share the same traditional customary practices and language.

Customs

The Derimbat community life is structured around the Ndrukul customs and rituals which are called Kurti culture. The Kurti culture socially interacts and revolves around a solid but dynamic social interaction structure of the clans and sub- clan way of doing things. The beliefs, communication and activities are all centered around the spirit, physical and natural world, which are passed down from generation to generation. This is still practiced today's society by way of;

- Decision making and community dialogue
- Improving community social standards
- Improving economic and environmental impact and Spiritual aspects of life

In Kurti custom and anywhere else in PNG, land ownership is a sensitive issue that continues to affect many progress of development.

Location

The Derimbat village is suited in the Pomotu Ndrehet Kurti Andrah (PNKA)LLG area in the mid-north coast of Manus Province .The village is about 30km west of Lorengau and is accessible by an out boat motor (40hp Yamaha) which takes about 40-60 minutes. Its coastline is approximately 8km linearly starting from its eastern border with Liap to its western border Lomoei /south and stretch 12km linearly inland to Pundru and then west to Mundrau to Western and back to the coast which is an area of approximately 110km²..The main striking landmarks are the 400meters Mt Pawih, Mt Ndruturu'u,300 meters Pat Kamal-Pat Pehin, its green forest ,rocky shore line and clear sea. Its two main rivers Hurungeu and Lowo mark the boundary east to west with their upper catchments in Mt Pawih.

Population

The village has a population of approximately 500 plus people who speak the Kurti dialect, the third largest dialect of the 18 different dialects spoken in Manus.

The other language spoken by at least all the educated people are Pidgin and English with occasional other dialects, especially Andrah, Arhus Kele, Mundrupulon and Kara.

Environmental Effects

The project sets out to create more awareness about the environment in the community through issues of globally significant biodiversity and climate change. This was to empower the people to take the lead and initiative to locally manage their natural environment and resources. The Project aimed to also raise awareness about the value of biodiversity and nature of the threats and drivers to biodiversity. The community were to carry out baseline studies on the tribal land and to setup a nursery for local tree species. Seedlings were to be propagated, raised and transplanted into the natural forest which was degraded through logging activities.

Since the land is communally owned by each clan, all major decisions are made by the clan at the family levels. It was very important that people in the clan and village level were aware of the process including staff from the project to use culturally appropriate methods of communication and engagement.

There are certain contributing factors that have urged the major clans of Derimbat to mobilize t to be a part of this project. The present dangers such as forest cover loss leading to the loss of biodiversity and over hunting of cuscus (a marsupial) for protein. The loss of forest cover from shifting cultivation and continuous uncontrolled bush fires and El Nino effects have all contributed to the degradation of the forest.

With only a small population at present of around 1100, it was however important to ensure the people were made aware of the impacts of population increase resulting in pressure on the natural resources in the forest seas, and rivers.

The rapid development progress in PNG has posed a major threat to the islands community such as Manus and its biodiversity, natural resources and environment. The people of Manus depend on the forest and mangroves to obtain timber for building their houses, canoes, and for firewood. This is because timber sourced from other parts of PNG and sold in the local hardware shop are quite expensive.

The people of Derimbat have unsustainably harvested the cuscus as a source of protein by cutting down trees where the cuscus nests thus destroying its habitat instead of using traditional traps.

Another very important natural resource that the people of Derimbat are rewarded with is the river catchment in their area. The people have become very conscious about felling trees along the river catchment, making gardens and many other traditional shifting cultivation processes.

Mitigation Strategies for Potential Impacts from Project

It is a known fact everywhere that whether small, medium or large scale activities there is always chances of both negative and positive impacts on the human social structure.

As for the Derimbat Community Reforestation Project, PWM sought to establish a process together with the local partner DCDF, the Clan Elders, Women Leaders and the Village Councilor to identify impacts and to develop mitigation strategies.

There were two (2) major issues envisaged during the course of the project implementation that posed potential challenges for the community:

1. Participation in Project activities and decision making

All the clan elders were involved in ensuring that all their members were fully informed of what the project is about, their involvement, participation and the importance of why the project is setup. Since all the families and clan elders meet regularly, any decision made was done through this traditional process. Decisions on participation in meetings, work programs, training and workshops were based on the requirement of the activity. In addition, the clan elders and the Executives of the DCDF informed the clan and sub-clans and they decided on who met the criteria to participate.

2. Use of forest and resources for livelihood

PWM, its local implementing partner DCDF, the local village Councilor and the Clan Leaders informed the people about the reasons for the project, and the issues of resource depletion, and climate change factors and for future sustenance of the local community. During the execution of activities and research, the people were informed through public village meetings so that they carried on their normal daily activities of gardening and gathering resources from their forest. Access to the forest is for hunting, collection of fruits, mushrooms, ropes for building canoe, timber for building houses, and medicinal plants.

As for bush meat or protein, the open sea is unlimited and unrestricted except with the use of poison or smaller nets or dynamites. The sea can provide more than enough of the entire Derimbat community with fresh fish as a protein source.

In general, since land is communally owned with all the natural resources, any decision making is made by the entire clan through consensus and all the rules whether long term or temporary are complied to by all members. Likewise, other Clan Elders also communicate amongst themselves, leading to a wider understanding which is announced every morning or on Sunday's at church.

Although the Derimbat community has seen a lot of influence from outside and with the introduction of new rules by the LLG and the Provincial Government; the project has tried to help the community reinforce the traditional systems of natural resource management and helped build their capacity in developing community development projects. This also included formulating common rules for managing and utilizing collective natural resources, and determining benefit distribution schemes for community eco-enterprise businesses.

Community Participation and consultation

This project was planned for 24 months, with the option of further extensions subject to positive outcomes during that period. All the activities were invested into the traditional systems of clan and sub-clan group consultation process during the first six months of the CEPF Derimbat Project, a

participatory investigation and rapid assessment for the site was conducted by PWM and local partners (DCDF). The initial information about relevant community issues, attitudes toward and expectations of the reforestation project and other supporting activities were provided by the local partners to the project.

Community consultation meetings were to be held on a quarterly basis. The Project Team informed the community on participatory evaluation which was also conducted to acquire the local communities' attitude on the implemented project activities during the past year. All the information generated indicated that the local communities were willing to participate in such resource management practices and alternative livelihoods projects. In general these Indigenous communities welcomed the opportunity to be more actively involved in the management of the reforestation project and the natural resources within the Derimbat community land.

As part of the project startup, an inception workshop was conducted to brief all stakeholders from the Derimbat community to prepare them and to fine tune the project plan. All the activities were clearly aligned and scheduled within the 24 months' timeline. At the same time the community's inputs and comments through a thorough consultation and the results of that process were documented by the Project Team. Initial consultations with the Derimbat community provided a solid basis for the implementation of the project and will also set the basis for detailed social assessment and monitoring.

The first step after the project initiation was a well-designed community participatory baseline survey to gather the most precise information on the current status and potential problems of CCA management.

Opportunities to seek the views of different groups within communities – women, men, older and younger people– were sought, particularly during participatory mapping processes, and in consultations to assess the impact of restricted access to CCAs. Information on possible adverse impacts and mitigation measures have also been collected from the community members. Throughout the project implementation process, open discussions with communities about the challenges and possible adverse impacts have been encouraged by the established public management mechanism and the regular on-site monitoring.

To facilitate community participation, all the proposed activities have built on the basis of establishing a capable management body which can organize majority of the community members and represent their opinions.

Monitoring Plan

As above-mentioned, the first step after the project initiation was a well-designed community baseline survey to gather the most precise information on the current status and potential problems of CCA management. This was not conducted due to continuous disagreements by members of the community. The project was at its initial stages of consultation and trainings conducted on nursery management and GPS however, further collaboration to carry out the community baseline survey was not achieved.

Grievance Mechanism

Free, Prior and Informed Consent with the local communities was the guiding principle of the project implementation. Meetings were held with the majority of the community to discuss and formulate the management regulations and community participation mechanisms and rules. However, after

the initial consultations, there were disagreements which led to the absence of key leaders in the community to attend future planned meetings.

All the consultations and discussions were held in the local Kurti language and in Pidgin-English, to ensure that all the members of the community participated in the process. The consent of the community on the management regulations and benefit-distribution mechanisms were obtained before any designations and activities are implemented.

Minutes of the meetings have been kept and copies of the minutes filed and distributed.

During the project implementation, several levels of grievance mechanism were designed. Within the community, all the management regulations and benefit distribution mechanism are formulated and agreed by the majority of community members through open meetings and public voting.

An effective public monitoring and reporting mechanism was supposed to be developed by the community members. PWM and the local CBO partner DCDF and the PNKA LLG were responsible for the implementation of the sub-grants under the DCDF Management and Board of Director. However, this was not achieved as there was a lack of interest from the community to participate. The lack of cooperation and differences halted the progress of the project.

Any grievances raised with the Project Team or Third Party on the implementation and execution of this project, were communicated to the CEPF Regional Implementation Team at IUCN within 15 days, together with the plan for remedial action (if any required). While no formal grievance was raised, some social issues exist within Derimbat and the lack of mutual interest and cooperation shown to PWM led to the project not progressing as well as planned.

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