

WEST COAST DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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Cupidam acia



2023 Annual Report

Community Empowerment for Change

West Coast Development Foundation

C/- P.O. Box 497, Kavieng, New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea

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West Coast Development Foundation (WCDF)

Organisation Name:

West Coast Development Foundation

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Vision Statement:

Community Empowerment For Change

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8th April 2016

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IPA Registration:

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GST Registration:

Not registered for GST

Introduction to WCDF

It is my pleasure to bring to your attention the West Coast Development Foundation (WCDF) Annual Report 2023.

This year was a very busy year for our work. A lot of programs were carried out and most of these programs were successful. It is all because of the support we have received from all of our partners. You made this year successful. We are very fortunate to be partners and we believe we have a long way to go in our amicable relationship.

- Jonathan Mesulam, Founder

Vision

To be a leading non-government organization in actively empowering our local communities to achieve positive change & sustainable development.

Mission

We are mission-oriented to providing quality output in our specialized area to ensure improvement in the livelihood of local communities, creating an environment conducive for living.

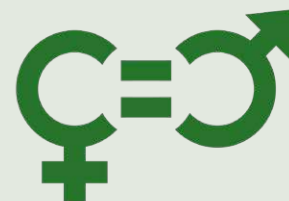
Goals & Objectives



To be honest and transparent in our engagement



To provide employment opportunities for ordinary Papua New Guineans



To work towards providing gender equality



Our culture is our identity. Culture, like the medicine, the dressing and the food, is important to our sense of who we are. When we lose all of those, we lose our culture. When people lose their culture, they lose their sense of community.

Jonathan Mesulam, founder of West Coast Development Foundation and spokesperson for the Alliance of Solwara Warriors, updating a community in New Ireland province on the status of the Solwara 1 deep sea mining project.
Image by John Cannon/Mongabay.



WCDF founder and coordinator of the Alliance of Solwara Warriors, Jonathan Mesulam (far left) with Pelantita Kara, Deep Sea Mining campaigner, Civil Society Forum Tonga, Nat Lowrey, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator, Deep Sea Mining Campaign and Roderick Holness, Deep Sea Mining campaigner, Solomon Islands at the 2nd Global Social Thematic Social Forum on Mining and the Extractive Economy (TSF-Mining).

Attracting over 330 participants from around the world a side session and workshop on seabed mining titled *Pacific Talanoa on Seabed Mining & Climate Justice* was held with 40+ participants attending. Several recommendations were made to TSF-Mining 2023 including the call for a ban on seabed mining.

Core Activities

WCDF currently works on land grabbing including logging and mining in New Ireland Province (NIP). Locally, nationally and internationally WCDF campaigns on the issue of deep-sea mining.

WCDF engages in Community Environmental Education and Advocacy work conducting awareness on Climate Change, Logging, Mining Activities, Land Grabbing and Business Human Rights on Environmental and Indigenous Peoples Rights.

Lessons Learnt

- **Transparency and Accountability:** vital for our work to succeed
- **Value our Partners:** over the past 8 years, WCDF has developed valuable and ongoing relationships with Local NGOs, FBOs, Churches, Government Agencies, Donor partners and International NGOs and Researchers.
- **Empowering local communities:** WCDF remains humble and committed to our community advocacy and awareness-raising programs so our local communities know their rights and are empowered to peacefully resist land grabbing, unsustainable developments and corporate impunity on our culture, lands and seas.

Challenges

The daunting task of working with communities remains and we hope we can be able to do better as we move forward in the next few years.

- The main challenge we faced was the logistics support to cover a remote part of our province as well as for those we work together through the ASW network.
- Network coverage connecting our focal point or team leader within the ASW network.

2023 Highlights

Warden Hearings

- Two warden hearings were scheduled for 2023. The first one on EL 2537 was scheduled for the 25th of January and EL 1196 was scheduled for 28th of November.
- Both warden hearings were cancelled and did not eventuate.
- WCDF and ASW were present at the communities during these two scheduled dates.
- Communities' resistance still stands and is growing as more people are becoming aware of the potential impact of Deep Sea mining.



Photos taken on the 25th of January and 28th of November. The warden hearing was cancelled due to unknown reasons.



2023 Highlights

Community Awareness Program

Several communities were visited during the year throughout the country by the ASW network.

- 15 communities in New Ireland and a total of 12 communities visited by the ASW network in Manus, ENB, AROB, Madang and Milne Bay.
- Awareness conducted was based on Seabed Mining, Climate Change, Sustainable Development Goals, Human Rights, Logging and Law and Order Issues and the importance of our Customs and Culture.
- There was positive feedback from the communities and requests for updated information sharing over time.
- Some communities have taken the lead in organizing and starting up programs that contribute to addressing some of the issues faced in the communities. Such as the registration of the Wokisok Association in Kono Village focused on preserving the Shark Calling Culture.
- There is some communities request but we cannot be able to visit due to limited resources and time factors.
- Some communities needed more time and follow-up programs to support their work in addressing issues they are currently facing. The lower-lying islands of Ward 1 in Tikana LLG are affected by sea level rise and the need to continue discussion and negotiations for their relocation programs, that is under Climate Migration programs.



Photos of community awareness at Upuas Community Ward, Ward 1 Tikana LLG (above) and Tembin Community Ward 20 Sentral Niu Ailan LLG (right).



2023 Highlights

School Awareness Program

School Educational Awareness program is very important as these young people growing up have to value their environment and take appropriate action to address environmental Issues.

- As an organization, we feel that Environmental Education should be a priority for schools.
- A total of 15 schools visited. 4 Secondary Schools and 9 Primary schools.
- Important events such as World Environment Day, World Ocean Day and Human Rights Day were observed with these schools to remind students of the importance of celebrating these days.
- More requests from other schools were submitted but will find time and resources this year to continue School Awareness Programs.
- Feedback from the School Administration is very positive and hope we can continue to build other similar programs with these schools.



Awareness was conducted at Moiko Palpal Elementary School (above) and Mongop Secondary School (right).



2023 Highlights

Tertiary Students Industrial Training Program

2023 saw our 3rd intake of students from the University of Natural Resources and Environment (UNRE) for their practical training.

- Five students studying Agriculture, Fisheries and Marine Management, Forestry and Climate Change came to Namatanai for Industrial Training with WCDF.
- The students spent 8 weeks in Namatanai working closely with the WCDF, Alliance of Solwara Warriors (ASW) and Caritas team.
- The team and the students visited project sites to carrying out awareness and meet with Namatanai Urban LLG officers.
- Students shared their knowledge and skills with the team and carried out specific assignments.
- The training based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Human Rights gave the students a broader their knowledge of the SDGs and how they can be implemented.



Students supporting the Ban Seabed Mining campaign at Labur (above) and University of Natural Resources and Environment (UNRE) Students during the SDG training with WCDF (right).



2023 Highlights

WCDF Public Forums

Two forums were held in Namatanai and Kavieng respectively:

- The team held the 1st forum in Namatanai on the 5th of October 2023.
- A petition calling on the Government to cancel all Seabed Mining Licences was presented and received by the Namatanai LLG President. The Namatanai LLG President gave a positive response to the petition pledging his support to cancel all seabed mining licenses.
- Unfortunately no representatives from LLG Administration or Local MP, Hon Walter D Schnaubelt's office attended despite being invited.
- A second petition was presented to cancel all Seabed Mining Licences on the 24th of November in a forum held in Kavieng town.
- Representatives from the Governor's office and the New Ireland Provincial Administration attended the forum and received the Petition on behalf of the Governor Sir Julius Chan. A formal response will be given to the communities in 2024.
- All communities and stakeholders who attended the forums received copies of the petition.



The petition received by Namatanai LLG President at the Namatanai Forum (above) and First Secretary to the Governor receiving the petition at the Kavieng Forum (right).



2023 Highlights

Meetings, Conferences & Workshops

WCDF participated in several meetings, conferences and workshops in 2023 that allowed WCDF to raise awareness and voice to WCDF campaigns:

- February 2023: Invited to speak and attend the 5th International Marine Protected Area Conference (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, Canada.
- March 2023: Participated in the International Seabed Authority (ISA) 28th Session in Kingston, Jamaica.
- April 2023: Attended the National Conference on Community Coalition Against Corruption Campaign in Lae, Morobe Province, PNG.
- June 2023: Participated in the Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) Workshop in Suva, Fiji.
- October 2023: Participated as a member organisation in the Yes to Life No to Mining (YLNM) global network's strategic planning session in Bali, Indonesia.
- October 2023: Participated in and spoke in three different sessions at the 2nd Global Thematic Social Forum on Mining & The Extractive Economy (TSF-Mining), Semarang, Indonesia.
- Attended the Caritas Social Accountability Workshop in Port Moresby, PNG.



WCDF's Jonathan Mesulam attended the IMPAC 5 conference and protest in Vancouver (above) and with the Greenpeace delegation at Kingston, Jamaica for the International Seabed Authority (ISA) meeting (right).



2023 Highlights

Deep Sea Tailings Placement (DSTP)

New Ireland Province has two operating mines in Lihir and Simberi Islands both using DSTP as a means of disposing mine waste into the ocean. Currently, there is no independent Environmental Assessment conducted and the communities are very concerned about the health of their ocean.

- In our Petition to the Provincial Government on the 24th of November 2023, one of the recommendations made was to ensure *“companies operating in Lihir and Simberi to cease implementation of Deep Sea Tailings Placements (DSTP) as it poses great environmental risks and there needs a proper Independent Environmental Assessment conducted”*.
- One of the clan groups in Tabar objected to the renewal of the exploration licence for mining in Tabar to ensure the marine ecosystem is protected.
- Communities have requested WCDF to run more information sessions.
- WCDF identified that local community groups in Lihir have been divided and are not working together, the company is taking advantage of the situation and continues to push its agenda for DSTP.
- WCDF identified that there are health concerns in Lihir Island, a proper health survey needs to be conducted.
- DSTP broken pipes in Simberi mine in 2020 has affected the communities, however this has not been reported properly by community members in fear of their safety of repercussions from a few locals supported by the company.



WCDF meeting with Lihir Landowners Association (above) and discussion with Natitua ILG executives of Tumudar, Big Tabar (right).



2023 Highlights

Logging and Forestry

Logging issues continue to remain one of the major challenges for WCDF in New Ireland Province.

- WCDF was elected to be part of the NIPG Provincial Forestry Management Committee, however no meetings have been held to date.
- Logging operations are currently underway from Mussau Island in the Kavieng District to Las Kona area in the Namatanai District.
- There are two current logging operations in Sentral Niu Ailan, ewith particular concern at Konos and Naiyama.
- Most of the logging arrangements and agreements are bbeing finalised in Port Moresby which bypasses Provincial Authorities, therefore loggers are getting away with suppress the rights of resource owners.
- The WCDF Logging awareness campaign is still active and ongoing, however, there need to be adequate resources to maintain the campaign effectively to get outcomes and postive impact.



Logging camp at Nayaima (above) and the logging camp at Konos (right).



2023 Highlights

Locally Managed Marine Areas/ Marine Protected Area Program

The threat to our ocean is increasing due to these following factors; climate change, plastic pollution, seabed mining, over fishing and population growth. WCDF is now working with relevant stakeholders to try addressing these issues at the community level.

- LLMA or taboo area is not a new concept. This has been practiced in our communities and its community or clan driven.
- The concept of marine conservation raises expectation from the resource owners and they think they should be compensated for looking after the LLMA/taboo area.
- Being involved in marine conservation programs without supporting livelihood projects will result in community or clan not cooperating.
- Livelihood programs such as installation of Fishing Aggregate Devices (FADs) or purchasing boats to assist in Fishing Programs to support clans actively involved in this program should be taken very seriously to ensure this LLMA programs are looked after.
- Community trainings and surveys should be led in the community to ensure locals are aware of what is happening.
- Support should also be given by local government and private sectors.



Delivering a short training on LLMA Programs to Kantangas Clan in Danu Village (above) and Meeting with Staff of the Ocean Affairs Office in Port Moresby (right).



2023 Highlights

Culture & Customary Programs

Our customs and culture play a significant role in addressing community-related issues. We have been introduced to foreign concepts, some which help address our issues, however some have created division in our communities.

- 2023 has been the best year for WCDF in prioritising our cultural programs and initiatives.
- There were four WCDF cultural programs held, that were well supported and attended.
- Cultural and Traditional leaders were involved in organising and participating in forums and other events.
- Cultural conflict resolution was followed to solve issues in the community.
- Registration of the Wokiosk Association is one of the WCDF achievements to empower local communities in valuing their cultural practice. The launch of the Wokiosk Association will held in April or May of 2024.
- WCDF has identified the need for more support and resources to launch the Wokiosk Association and associated programs and to enable this to be replicated in other communities in New Ireland Province.



Customary program held at Konogogo (above) and meeting with Kono Shark Callers (right).



2023 Highlights

20 Days of Human Rights Activism

The 20 Days of Human Rights Activism Campaign is an Annual National Awareness Campaign against Gender-Based Violence, Family and Sexual Violence and other Human Rights violations that are preventable in PNG.

The activism in PNG commences on the 20th of November commemorating the International Day for Children through to the 10th of December, International Human Rights Day.

The activism is used as an organising strategy by individuals, stakeholders and organizations around the world including PNG to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

- Until 2023 there has been no proper plan nor coordination in place in New Ireland Province. WCDF in collaboration with ASW and Caritas PNG planned programs and activities to coincide with this 20 Days of Human Rights Activism.
- The programs included an awareness drive, Human Rights documentary screenings, truck float and forum in Kavieng, as well as petitioning of relevant authorities to advocate for human rights issues within the province to be addressed.
- Some notable key stakeholders the WCDF worked with included the following organizations: NIPA Community Development, Caritas Kavieng, Kavieng Diocese, GBV Technical Working Group, Council of Women, Red Cross, NBC, Malas Foundation, Callan Service and Lutheran Lifecare.
- A petition was presented on 24th of November during the 20 days of Activism at the forum staged in Kavieng.
- In 2024, WCDF we will continue to raise the issues presented in the petition and organise for the 20 Days of Human Rights Activism.



Launching of the 20 Days of Human Rights Activism in New Ireland (above) and the closing program (right).



2023 Highlights

Media and Advocacy Coverage

Reporting of programs has been part of WCDF's work all throughout 2023:

- More than ten interview with New Ireland Province Media outlets including print, radio and television programs.
- More than ten overseas media interviews and documentaries.
- Two media statements released on issues of seabed mining.
- Updated social media posts on WCDF Facebook page and group.



Jonathan Mesulam, WCDF founder on NBC Current Affairs (above) and journalist, John Canon at Kono Village (right) and his article (below).



Alliance of Solwara Warriors

Strategic Meeting

The 1st Alliance of Solwara Warriors (ASW) Strategic Meeting was conducted back in 2019. Due to the pandemic and lack of resources it has taken until 2023 for the 2nd ASW Strategic Meeting to be held on 3rd & 4th of October:

- A total of six ASW members and 14 observers attended the meeting representing all ASW provinces.
- Unfortunately two members from Nissan, Bougainville and Alotau, Milne Bay did not make it due to flights cancellation.
- The meeting was held at Stemper Hall, Namatanai.
- The aim of the meeting was for these following reasons:
 1. To discuss advocacy and resistance against Seabed Mining.
 2. To advocate for a coordinated approach within the Alliance network.
 3. To highlight the significance of collaborative efforts and the need to document voices against Seabed Mining.
- Each ASW member was able to present their work, what they have experienced and their strategic plans.
- Each ASW member was given a Samsung Galaxy 14 Mobile phone for communication and reporting purposes.
- All members agreed to have WCDF coordinate the ASW Network because most members do not have capacity to report and seek donor assistance. WCDF organisational support relieves the ASW network from the huge challenge of seeking funds.
- For the time being WCDF encourages the network to build their capacity and to take the lead in programs to build their profiles.



ASW visit to St Martins Primary School (above) and ASW Strategic meeting (right).



Alliance of Solwara Warriors

Network Activities

The Alliance of Solwara Warriors (ASW) network continue to maintain the Seabed Mining Campaign at their respective provinces.



Jenny Jack (far right) of ASW East New Britain with villagers supporting the campaign to Ban Seabed Mining.



ASW Manus during one of the Awareness programs at Rambutso Island .



James Tomayaivu (far right) from ASW Milne Bay during their visit to Goodenogh Island Milne Bay Province.



Lawrence Smith of ASW Nissan in one of the awareness campaigns.

Achievements & Awards

In 2023 The DIGICEL FOUNDATION gave the MEN OF HONOUR AWARD to WCDF's founder, Jonathan Mesulam for Community Peace Building Campaign. In 2021 the Alliance of Solwara Warriors received the Bob Brown Award for COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD. Both awards highlight the important work that WCDF is doing at the community level.



 **BOB BROWN
FOUNDATION**

WCDF founder, Jonathan Mesulam was chosen to be a Men of Honour Ambassador in Papua New Guinea. Jonathan (above, second from right) at the award night. The Awards were presented by Prime Minister Hon. James Marape and Communication Minister Hon, Timothy Masiu. The event was held at APEC house, Port Moresby.



WCDF Building Project

Project Activities

Since the establishment of WCDF there have been many challenges and difficult times we have had to face, however we have worked hard to overcome these with positive results in 2023:

- 2023 has been a very productive year, WCDF is pleased to have achieved some projects that will boost its work on the ground.
- The motto for 2024 is "LOOK HOME POLICY". This means more focus will be given on livelihood projects that will support our campaign on the ground.
- Awareness and livelihood projects will go hand in hand to support WCDF messages we deliver at the community level.
- To set the foundation for our work some of the projects that we have completed in 2023 include building and setting up a WCDF office, fencing, powerbox, solar setup, VIP toilet and timber for the construction of a WCDF Resource & Training Centre.



Photos of building and setting up the WCDF.

WCDF Building Project



Photos of fencing.



Photos of VIP toilet.



Photos of power box and solar set up.

Finances

Our 2023 financial report is with the auditor and will be presented once the audit report is completed before the end of March 2024. This report is accompanied by each donor's financial statement. *(Note this is specifically sent to the donors).*

West Coast Development Foundation (WCDF) is grateful to our donor partners

for their ongoing support and trust in funding WCDF programs. This ensures that the WCDF can effectively implement and carry out our environmental justice and protection work with our communities. Without this support we would not have accomplished what we have achieved throughout 2023. Our donor partner include:

Synchronicity Earth
 Global Green Grant Funds
 Greenpeace Aotearoa
 Deep Sea Mining Campaign
 Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
 Ocean Defenders Grants
 Two anonymous donors

Recommendations

Based on what we have done in 2023 we would like to recommend the following needs for 2024:

1. More grassroots funding support to cater for programs at the community level.
2. With the seabed mining issue in PNG is not over, WCDF and ASW must continue to oppose the industry by mobilising more people and resources for our campaigns, and to strategically fund and resource projects that support the momentum of the campaign. For example, funding and support of community fishing projects in the Community Beneficiary Area (CBA).
3. Many community requests are coming to WCDF, therefore the organisation needs assistance purchase a boat and vehicle to ensure programs can be delivered to communities in a timely manner.
4. WCDF has identified the need for strategic focus on community livelihood projects to ensure we maintain positive relationships and relevant support to the communities we serve.

Conclusion

WCDF believes in teamwork, valued partnerships, and community participation and engagement to achieve the most desired outcomes for our people. WCDF has a proven record of commitment to advocating in the interests of our people despite minimal funds to operate. WCDF is proud to stand with our communities in advocating a future based on our Melanesian ways to protect our cultures, customs, lands and seas.

Community Empowerment for Change



IMAGE: WCDF delivering a short training on LLMA/taboo area Program to the Kantangas Clan in Danu Village, New Ireland Province as part of the WCDF Marine Protected Area Program.

The West Coast Development Foundation (WCDF) believes in teamwork, valued partnerships, and community participation and engagement to achieve the most desired outcomes for our people. WCDF has a proven record of commitment to advocating in the interests of our people despite minimal funds to operate. WCDF is proud to stand with our communities in advocating a future based on our Melanesian ways to protect our cultures, customs, lands and seas.

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