



# Sepik Plains to be PNG's food basket

By AJA POTABE

THE Sepik Plains is set to be the food bowl of PNG when a multi-billion-kina agro business venture eventuates in the next couple of weeks.

Following a recent signing of agreement between Kumul Consolidated Holdings (KCH) and Innovative Agro Industry Ltd (IAI) to develop the long proposed Sepik Plains Agriculture Project, plans are already underway to officially launch the project and give a green light.

A fortnight ago, Minister for Public Enterprises & State Investments, William Duma, Minister for Trade, Commerce and Industry, Richard Maru and executives of KCH and IAI have signed the final piece of joint venture agreement that will set the foundation for developing the massive Sepik Plains.

IAI is an affiliate of an Israeli business venture, LR Group. The company is specialized in the development, implementation and operation of agro-industrial projects in emerging markets.

It has over 400 profitable projects worldwide since its inception in 1986. One of IAI's maiden agro projects in the country is the 9-Mile aqua farm outside Port Moresby.

This farm is a commercially oriented, modern high intensive vegetable farm employing 160 workers and producing around 12 metric tonnes of prime vegetables per week.

The Sepik Plains Agriculture Project is located in the Yangoru-Saussia District of East Sepik Province and is situated in the Sepik Plains Special Economic Zone.

The JV between KCH and IAI will initially be a pioneering venture based on chicken production, a commercial cocoa plantation and grain production. Stock feed processing will also be associated with the chicken production venture.



Representatives of LR Group with Minister Maru and Jeffery Waffi during their recent visit to the Sepik Plains.

It is intended that the venture will cater for the needs of the local market and supply meat and eggs as a much-needed source of protein throughout the province.

It also has plans to expand the market further throughout the country and abroad to Australia, Fiji and New Zealand.

The venture will be conducted through an office to be established near the village of Huaripmo, where local villagers will be engaged in agricultural services with nearby communities.

This will also include training programs and the marketing avenue for local out growers.

A subsidiary of KCH called Kumul Agriculture Limited will be established to manage the office.

As the Minister responsible for Kumul Consolidated Holdings and its projects, William Duma said:

"The venture is expected to create some 235 direct jobs in a state of the art facility that will utilize advanced technology for the production of field crops for high intensive growth stock feed, a state of the art hatchery and poultry processing plants and an irrigated cocoa plantation which is expected to produce yields of some 400% - 500% more than

currently being obtained by existing cocoa plantations.

"The Sepik Plains Agriculture Project has a footprint of 5,000 hectares and is expected to bring increased employment opportunities, significant spin off business opportunities and new available sources of food and protein which will also bring health benefits to the region."

The project is co-sponsored by Minister Duma and Minister Maru.

Minister Maru said his people have suffered with the Cocoa Pod Borer and low cocoa prices because of their over reliance on cocoa for income and never had alternative businesses and cannot wait to see phase one of the project be developed at the cost of K50 million, resulting in many spin off business opportunities.

Just recently, villagers from Haripmo village dressed in traditional attires, danced and chanted songs to welcome the investors who were accompanied by their Local Member and Minister for Trade Commerce & Industry, Richard Maru and East Yangoru LLG President, Jeffrey Waffi.

The Local level Government Members and the people of Haripmo and neighboring vil-

lages in the Sepik Plains were pleased to see the investors.

They say they have waited for 47 years for investors and developers to come and bring about changes and developments.

"Our grandparents who gave the Kanauki land to the State have died whilst waiting for investors," said local leaders of Haripmo village.

The investors were touched by the way they were being welcomed by the people of Haripmo village and the peoples eagerness to see the project start so they can truly see changes and services including better roads, health services, seek formal employment opportunities and participate in outgrower chicken business as well as producing corn and cassava etc to sell to the Feed mill for chicken feed production.

The new Joint Venture Agriculture Company will be called Sepik Agro Industries Limited.

The initial owners of the company will be KCH (State) and the LR Group.

After the business is established, the local communities, the people of East Sepik, LLG's and East Sepik Provincial Government will be invited to buy shares in the new company.

## Inside: Today Music Scene



More than a performance - EMTV Vocal Fusion finalists - P2

## Education is Vital for Bundi's future P3



A Belgian volunteer's story - P4



# YOUR SAY...

by Josiah Ururu Kana

## What do you want to be the future and what must you do to be that person?

It is very important for our very young generation to have a goal and a strategy to apply to obtain their goal.

As young as they come, it is vital for us to not only recognise and acknowledge but also to help them in whatever ways we can as parents, elders and guardians of our young ones and those alike in achieving their goal.



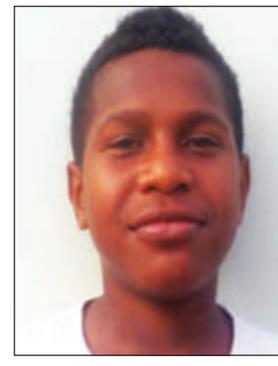
Name: **Peterson Nial Marola**  
Age: **11**  
Province: **Central and Gulf**  
What is your ambition? Pilot. I have to study hard to get there.



Name: **Carol Mision Yaki**  
Age: **12**  
Province: **Enga Province**  
What is your ambition? Study Law. I have to read many books and ask a lot of questions to achieve this.



Name: **Denise Lof Mathias**  
Age: **9**  
Province: **Eastern Highlands**  
Ambition: Aircraft Engineer. I have to study hard to get there.



Name: **Emanuel Hewali**  
Age: **13**  
Province: **Hela Province**  
Ambition: Economist. I must study hard, read more and have a good character to be able to achieve my dream.



## More than a performance – EMTV Vocal Fusion finalists

By Josiah Ururu Kana

IT has been a month since the last grand final and not much has been said about our 1st and 2nd runner ups of the 2016 EMTV Vocal Fusion show.

As Fidelish Metta coming in as 1st and Isaiah Manoha on 2nd runner up, these two young and humble singers surely do have a story to tell us.

High expectations wasn't a burden for Fidelish during the finals because all she wanted was to sing and win some money.

Fidelish Metta had her fingers-crossed as she made her way through the auditions and all the performances, and battled even harder in the finals, gaining herself a first place runner up and being a recipient of K20,000.

Now she has fulfilled her goal of ending the competition which is, to win some money towards making her way to Bringam Young University of Latter Day Saints in Hawaii. Although part of the K20,000 first runner up award is only the beginning of her struggle to obtain KUS\$19,000 towards her tuition to entering the university she dreams of, Fidelish is not stopping there.

Currently she is employed at a local doctor's surgery at 4-Mile, Boroko to keep saving up to further her education. She is however available for any gig or performances on request, as long as it's helping her dream to live on and help her to advance in her life's career.

And yes, she's a Christian believer, a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Lat-

ter Day Saints or commonly known as Mormons.

But as for Isaiah Manoha, the "size 28" rock star from Alotau, gaining a spot in the finals was more than a short term ambition, because he had taken part in season 2 of the competitions last year. But it didn't work out as he planned back then.

Isaiah knew what it felt like to go back empty handed to his home town and village. He knew that aching feeling of not having anything to give back to his family and friends who were very supportive of him during last year's performances.

Thus, he didn't want to let them down, so he came back fully prepared and battled hard to the finish, gaining himself a 2nd runner up position with a winning award of K10,000 prize money.

Cheers to these two winners who have stood through the tough songs and battled victoriously and fairly to the end.

They've earned it.

### Fidelish Metta

Age: **23**

**Wantok:** How far did you go in your education level?

**Fidelish:** Grade 12

**Wantok:** What sort of education are you aspiring for now?

**Fidelish:** Bringam Young University of Latter Day Saints, Hawaii

**Wantok:** Do you see your music career in any way assisting you in your personal life and education

**Fidelish:** Yes, alot! After joining Vocal Fusion, the prize money will definitely support my education and my family. And also, after the



Fidelish

competition, there were people who were already interested in having me sing for them and so, before I know it, my talent is already selling.

**Wantok:** So you are already making profit from your talent through vocal fusion?

**Fidelish:** Yes, right after the show, people started coming to us requesting us to sing for their events and companies and yeah, thanks to Vocal Fusion for exposing us.

**Wantok:** Now as a Christian, what sort of experience did you go through in such a worldly competition and how did you react?

**Fidelish:** At this level, you only have a few of people who share the same standards as you do as a Christian, which a whole lot of people don't. So during our performances in the club, we'd hear people swearing and we just have to put up with them. And when I was on television, random good looking boys would just come and say to me 'hey I want you'. It is tempting but I had to remember were I stand as a believer and maintain my position.

**Wantok:** In the TV, you said you



Isaiah

are from Gulf and New Caledonia and then Samoa, can you explain a bit more about your origin?

**Fidelish:** My mum is from Gulf and my dad is New Caledonian. My mum got sick and my father is away in New Caledonia so my grandfather (Gulf) took care of my siblings and I, so our church friends the Samoans, felt sorry for my grandfather and they sort of adopted my older sister and myself. So now I have a new extended Samoan family.

### Isaiah Manoha

Age: **30**

**Wantok:** Where in Milne Bay are you from?

**Isaiah:** My mom is from Suau and my dad is from Sariba, in the Samarai district.

**Wantok:** How does it feel to be in the finals?

**Isaiah:** Well, it was what I came here for so the feeling is just awesome and relief because when I saw Tehilah on TV during the Lae auditions, I knew she would be in the finals so I had to battle hard.

**Wantok:** You said you have a

band back in Alotau, can you tell us about the band and your relationship with the band?

**Isaiah:** My band's name is 'Primal Gruuve', please take note that it spells this way and not as 'groove', and I'm the lead vocalist of the band and I do most of the song arrangements. Our band was founded by Jezzreel Dickson, a music teacher and a member of the Sanguma band.

**Wantok:** In the competition, you performed on stage twice with a traditional flute.

Is the flute playing part of your band presentation?

**Isaiah:** Yeah, it's a traditional flute from the highlands called Kuakumba flute.

Our band founder, Mr. Dickson taught me how to play it because the songs we sing are mostly contemporary and original.

**Wantok:** What were you doing before you got into the competition?

**Isaiah:** I was a brick layer and the job was hard but I had to work to put something on the table for my wife and kids. I have four kids by the way, 3 girls and 1 boy.

And you know because I love music, I would sometimes leave work just to travel and sing and later go back home and look for a job again.

**Wantok:** How has Vocal Fusion helped you in your career path and personal life?

**Isaiah:** Well since the finals, I will be using the money first and foremost, to buy my son a new bicycle, pay for my kids school stationaries and some of the money will be used to buy something for the band.

# Education is Vital for Bundi's future

By Mathew Yakai  
MY Media & News Agency

**A NATION with an educated populace not only increases the literacy standards but also boasts of law abiding citizens, healthy, economically mobile and contributes towards nation building.**

Knowledge is power and can come from the classrooms or lecture rooms. It can come from mere experience and observation too. PNG government realizes the importance of education and injects millions of Kina into free education.

Life is not always comfortable for most people. Many pass through unbearable terrors and difficulties yet they survived. Criminals have been chained in paddle cells, strapped into straitjackets, and half drowned into ice baths but they survived. All of these because of their determination to succeed.

Who could have predicted that Dr. Ben Carson, a once deemed dull Black American student in a racist world in the United States, would become the world renowned and most sought after neurosurgeon.

The future is in your hand and what all we must look upon is that, "Education Paves the Way for a brighter future". Education has changed the world order, and not the wars.

Look at China. Though being the first to invent gun powder, wheelbarrow and brick laying, put education first since the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), and geared towards economic modernization.

The post-Mao Zedong Chinese Communist Party leadership viewed education as the foundation of the Four Modernization. In the early 1980s, science & technology education became an important focus of education policy. By 1986 training skilled personnel and expanding scientific and technical knowledge had been assigned the highest priority.

Today China has over 100 key national universities, including Peking and Tsinghua Universities. Chinese spending has grown by 20% per year since 1999, now reaching over \$100bn, and as many as 1.5 million science and engineering students graduated from Chinese universities in 2006.



Ramu NiCo reps welcome by students and their pet. Potos: MY Media & News Agency.



President Wang delivering his speech and encourages parents to send their children to school.



Students admire desks and tables



Traditional welcome by Enikuwai locals

As of 2013, China is the most popular country in Asia for international students, and ranks third overall among countries.

China is increasingly exporting its "soft power" through the establishment of Confucius Institutes throughout the world. China is always mentioned in the world renowned media.

Why not PNG and more so, why not Bundi? All can start small but can go a long way. So a donation of desk for the future development can be as valuable if our future is all we think of.

It is not late but all started at Enikuwai Primary School at Bundi LLG, that houses the only

nickel/cobalt mine in PNG.

On Thursday February 12, 2015 the President of Ramu NiCo Project, Mr. Wang Jicheng, accompanied by KBK Mine management, visited Enikuwai Primary school and donated 60 desks and 60 chairs for the children of landowners who spare their land for the benefit of PNG's economy.

"I am very happy to be present here today with you all, not only as the President of Ramu NiCo but also as a parent who believes in the importance of education for our children,"

"As the new academic year starts, I am sure the parents are working hard to see their children

attend schools so they can have a better future. This is encouraging because the future of our country lies with our children. What every one of us can do today is to provide our children the opportunity to explore and realize their potentials," the , Mr. Wang Jicheng said.

For the 150 students doing Grade 3 to 7 at Enikuwai Primary School it was a God sent gift, as they can now sit comfortably on chairs and write on their new tables. This will have positive impacts on more than 2,500 people from the nearby 11 villages in the KBK area.

"We realized that our children take a long day's walk to Danagari

to attend school. Most of them gave up along the way because of the very long distance," the President said.

Late David Tigavu, former landowner association Chairman of KBK had the dream and ensured the Enikuwai Primary School was part of the Relocation Program under the old MOA. He left a positive legacy behind.

While the Company is committed under the revised MOA, President Wang believes that educated Bundi people will lead their province and country in many fronts after 10 to 20 years, with the direct positive impact from Ramu NiCo.

"I would like to encourage all parents to send your children to school. This is important because if the jobs at Ramu NiCo Project are limited then we can produce lawyers, pilots, engineers and medical doctors who can find jobs in PNG and also overseas," Mr. Wang said.

I am reminded of the words of one of PNG's past leaders, Late Sir Iambakey Okuk, who proudly stood before the UPNG students at the Forum Square in Port Moresby during his flying leadership years and said, "Today, I want to see Papua New Guinean's graduate at our universities and find jobs overseas."

I have no answers but managed a smile and nodded in agreement that hundreds of Papua New Guineans are currently working and living abroad.

I think of great achievers like Narara brothers captaining the United Arab Emirate airlines, with their siblings following suit. You can add other great achievers.

Children at Enikuwai Primary school can be like those successful Papua New Guineans if we can turn the wealth at KBK Mine into tangible resource that produces results – human resources.

The dynamics of human ideology can fool me into wishful thought. But much of what is taking place today in our history is the reality of education that turned human mind into practical solutions and revolutions.

The desks and chairs donated by KBK Mine to Enikuwai Primary School, can have positive impact on our children's future.

And they will grow to accommodate China while appreciating the West.

# A Belgian volunteer's story

By Veronica Hatutasi

**VOLUNTEERS, be it church, non- government organisations, government and the private sector take great strides and sacrifices to leave the comforts of their home countries in order to serve people, and communities, often, in the remote regions of countries throughout the world.**

Churches in PNG have many volunteers who make great sacrifices to work in re-

mote rural villages and communities to uplift the lives of people spiritually, in the areas of health, education and integral development.

Wantok Today brings you a story of a Belgian family working as volunteers in remote South Bougainville and enjoying life and work there, a big difference from the bright lights of Belgium.

The Family hail from Belgium, a tiny country in Europe which is part of the European Union.

Guy Joris, his wife Denise and four children, Naomi, the only one born in Antwerp and the others, Emmanuel, Esther and Deborah all born in PNG, have made Mariga village in Southwest Bougainville their home for the last 16 years.

Guy and his wife first came to PNG in the early 1980's as volunteers for the Catholic Church and worked in Yule Island, in the Kairuku area and Gerehu Parish in the National Capital District before moving

to Bougainville in 2000.

Mr Joris has been involved in a brick-making program in South Bougainville where he has been teaching youths and other interested individuals, the art of brick making and laying to help them build permanent houses with materials made locally, thus cutting down on costs.

Wantok Today met up with the father, Guy Joris, and daughter Deborah, last year while commuting on a PMV on the Siwai to Arawa Highway, and did an interview with Mr Joris, thus this story.

"FIRST of all we still are volunteer workers in the Catholic Church, not by our own choice, but by Gods providence and love.

"In this world things are changing very fast, and volunteer work is also absorbed into the bigger part of the new trends in society. Everything is very much seen only in respect to the government, big co-operate business groups and money.

"Sometimes we have the impression to be the last of volunteers.

"We arrived in Yule Island in Kairuku at the end of 1985. My wife Denise and I were invited to work as maintenance workers at the Yule Island Girls high school run by the Our lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) nuns.

"We did not have any children at that time. Later we had four children born to us. Three were born at the Port Moresby General Hospital with only one, the first born who saw the light just when we were back in Belgium after our first contract with the high school (Yule Island) expired. Naomi was born in Antwerp. Emmanuel, Esther and Deborah were all born in PNG.

"We worked for 6 more years in the Kairuku area. This time we were invited by the Diocese of Bereina to help the church in setting up a technical school at Namanama.

We were based at Waima village in the old nun's convent. The house became vacant after the last Australian nun, Sr Perpetua got killed on the highway.

"We had to go back to Belgium at the end of 1994 when our contract with the Bereina Diocese ended.

"We were invited back



Guy Joris



Deborah

to PNG in 1996 by the Diocese of Port Moresby, by late Archbishop Sir Peter Kurongku from Bougainville. We were to help the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Port Moresby Diocese, to set up a centre for praise and worship at Gerehu Stage 6.

"During this period the connection with Bougainville was made. The PNG ambassador in Belgium was a Bougainvillean, and one of the workers at the centre was a Bougainvillean from Mariga in the Bana district.

"He asked us for help on Bougainville in the form of a brick machine, so we could introduce his people to brick making and building like the project in Gerehu.

"After procuring the machine from Belgium, he took me over to his village at the end of 1997.

"It was a difficult trip due to the crisis situation on Bougainville. When the contract with the Diocese of Port Moresby was over in 1999, we moved in to Bougainville with the whole family by the year 2000.

"My job remained mostly in the building sector. On Yule Island we had to construct or repair classrooms, jetty walls and basis for water tanks.

"At Namanama, we had to construct double classrooms, teachers houses, power house and workshops, and at Gerehu, the prayer hall for the Renewal.

"On Bougainville we had to start from scratch to set up a training school for brick making with the help of the local community. This is what we are currently involved with.

"The children are fine with the local education. Naomi finished her grades at Bana high school and became dux at Marianville high. She is currently at a university in Belgium.

"Emmanuel completed Grade 12 at Hutjena Secondary School in Buka, and is currently helping out with us. Esther finished Grade 8 and became a young mother. S

he is married to a local young man from Mariga village, Southwest Bougainville and has two lovely boys, Patrick and Michael. Deborah is head girl at Asitavi High School and in grade 10."

As for their stay on Bougainville, Mr Guy's answer is, "I guess as long as our Lord want us here. Once we were recognised as volunteers in Belgium after two years of weekend courses and received our volunteer status, we had no idea where to go.

"Our Lord, by his providence through the church invited us first to work in Bolivia (South America).

We started studying Spanish, but after a few months a military coup in Bolivia spoiled our chances. The next call was Yule Island.

In those days we had no idea where PNG was and what the initials stood for.

The only thing we could find out was that it was known as the land of the head-hunters. The other locations on PNG were also the work of His Providence, and I am most pleased it stays like this," said Mr Joris.

Part 2 about the family's life and work on remote Bougainville will be continued in next month's issue, so keep an eye out for it!

STAP SEIF WANTAIM ILEKRISITI

TAMBU TRU LONG HOLIM OL PAWA LAIN I PUNDAUN. EM I DENJERES NA I KEN KILIM YU

LUKAUT LONG OL PAWA LAIN TAIM YU WOK ANINIT

I TAMBU LONG KLAIMIM PYLONS O POL I KARIM OL WAIA ANTAP LONG EN. EM I NO SEIF.

NOKEN USIM AIN STIK LONG PIKIM OL PRUT KLOSTU LONG OL PAWA LAIN. ILEKTRISITI I KEN KILIM YU SAPOS YU GO KLOSTU.

NOKEN LARIM DIWAI I GRO ANTAP OL PAWA LAIN

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