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Restoration of Tubi Tress by Hageulu Community in Isabel Province, Solomon Islands



About Hageulu

- Hageulu has been identified as a critical site for Tubi (*Xanthostemon melanoxylon*) forest conservation in the Sixth National Report to the UNCBD (2019).
- Tubi forests are endemic to Isabel and Choiseul Provinces in Solomon Islands
- The Hageulu community, deeply rooted in traditional Melanesian culture, sustains itself through subsistence farming, fishing, and the utilisation of local natural resources for their livelihoods..
- Tubi is culturally significant and sacred to local communities, deeply tied to their identity.
- Interest from both local communities and national government to collaborate on forest restoration and conservation, by enlisting the support of the Network for Indigenous Peoples - Solomon (NIPS).
- Communities maintain strong cultural traditions and practices, including customary land ownership and local governance structures.



Reasons for Restoration: *Tubi trees support culture, livelihood and resilience*

- Tubi trees are native to the area and sustains the local ecosystem.
- Tubi trees are used in traditional ceremonies, rituals and sturdy construction.
- Supports livelihood by offering sustainable timber harvesting, agro-forestry practices, and potential eco-tourism.
- Tubi trees mitigate environmental damage from mining and logging by promoting reforestation and preventing soil erosion.
- Restoring Tubi trees empowers the community and fosters self-reliance and sustainable development through ownership of their natural resources.

Threats and Challenges

- Low awareness & community support for conservation.
- Illegal logging & mining persist.
- Climate change threatens the health and survival of Tubi trees.
- Invasive species like African snails endanger ecosystems.
- Limited expertise in conservation and restoration hinders training and capacity building.
- Socio-cultural practices complicate conservation efforts.

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During Restoration: Women and community-led actions

- Women in Hageulu established their own nursery of young Tubi saplings, which they managed and monitored until replanted in the forest.
- A rapid assessment of the Tubi forest was conducted during restoration with the goal of using it to aid in decision-making and planning for the community's proposed protected area, livelihood activities, and ongoing resource management and development programs.
- Capacity Building workshops were held to support community efforts in restoring and protecting their territory from increased mining and logging threats.



Sustaining Restoration: Community involvement and women's leadership

- In 2022, the Isabel Provincial Government signed a MoU to support Tubi Tree conservation in Isabel Province, focusing on women-led restoration in Hageulu.
- Holistic conservation was established combining monitoring, ranger training, signboards, and enforcement.
- Sustainable management strategies developed for forest use, threat mitigation, and community involvement.
- Monitoring the forest ecosystem and collecting data guided conservation efforts, and helped awareness raising.
- Knowledge of legal frameworks like the Protected Areas Act 2010, and UNDRIP provided tools against exploitation.
- Clear land mapping reduced disputes and strengthened governance.
- Community engagement and women's leadership stood out as critical lessons.



Recommendations

- Recognise Indigenous governance systems and women's roles in biodiversity conservation and restoration, support global targets like Target 23 in the KM-GBF.
- Formally acknowledge Indigenous ecosystem restoration strategies under Article 8(j) of the CBD.
- Ensure Indigenous women's access to land and resources for livelihoods and conservation.
- Promote collaboration among NGOs, CSOs, and CBOs to advance gender equality, inclusive conservation, and women's leadership.
- Provide flexible, sustainable funding for Indigenous women researchers to apply and strengthen traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in restoration projects.



Read the full story by Network for the Indigenous Peoples - Solomon (NIPS)

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