

Noylene Levis

“Bringing women together to drive positive change”

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If you have arable land at your doorstep, please get your hands dirty. You don't have to sit down and wait for your husband or the government to come and tell you what to do. Find a spade or a digging stick and start planting so we can create our own change at home.

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- Noylene Levis, full time farmer, baker and business owner



Introducing the Watung Sisters

In 2019, Noylene Levis formed a 12-member strong agriculture association called the Watung Sisters, a subgroup of the [Markham District Women in Agriculture](#). Based in Markham District of Morobe Province in Papua New Guinea, the women joined forces to make the most of what their land had to offer. On top of overseeing 12 full time farmers, Noylene is a full-time farmer herself and also a baker who enjoys making scones to sell at Mutzing and Umi markets.

Cultivating local fruits and vegetables

With Noylene at the helm, her team of female farmers cultivate cabbage, taro, pok choy, onion and banana, shipping some of their proceeds overseas. Taro is especially popular with purchasers in Port Moresby. Initially, the buyers based in Port Moresby were purchasing only five bags of taro but have increased their numbers gradually over the course of the last year. Noylene's Taro is sold in supermarkets too. “Normally, two bags are sold to supermarkets and the rest I sell at the market in Gordons and Waigani.” She takes orders to [Pacific Adventist University](#) and [CPL Group](#). It usually takes Noylene four days to sell her bags of taro before she begins her journey back home to Lae, sharing the final numbers of her proceeds with the group treasurer and dividing her income from the day with the rest of her farmers.

Working closely with her local department of agriculture and livestock

Under Noylene's leadership, the farmers have seen first-hand the importance of farming on their own land, and understand that benefits from their sales, will one day return to them. Noylene and her team work closely with the Markham District Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL), who supply the farm's vegetable seeds. The DAL also conduct training sessions with Noylene's farmers, in partnership with the office of Fresh Produce Development, on things like pest management.

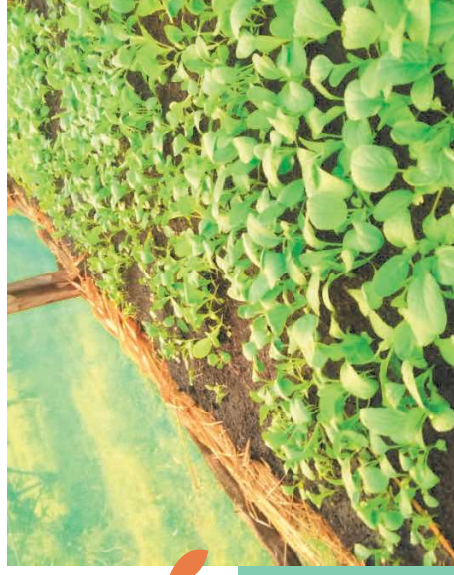


Planting preparations

"We aspire to purchase our own tractor to plough our land and transport our vegetables to the market. And we also want to build homes for all our families. This is our five year plan."

She believes that if all women set aside their differences - much like she has done with her group - and work together in unity, positive change can be achieved within their communities.

"Women need to realize they have the potential to drive change. Change starts with us."



Noylene grows pak choy, cabbage, banana and taro to name a few

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