

Farm project for young men keeps on growing

Mercy Works Inc. is supporting an innovative project which is helping unskilled and unemployed young men at risk of joining PNG's notorious 'raskol' gangs to gain farming skills and employment.

The Emmaus Farm, located on 72 acres near Kiunga, is home to 20 young men at any one time, and is steadily being developed. Phase one involved the development of farm infrastructure, such as building a road, fences, houses and a bakery; installing irrigation systems and planting fruit trees, vegetable gardens and forest trees.

The farm is now moving into its second phase: growing chickens, ducks and fish. Not only will the young men learn vital skills, but by producing an ongoing supply of meat and eggs, the farm will have protein-rich food for its own consumption, but also to sell to the local community.



Frank is one of many young men who is benefiting from Emmaus Farm. He heard about the project through local radio.

According to the farm's Coordinator, Daughter of Wisdom Sister, Aurore Gagnon, Frank has a garden at his family's home, but after two years of cultivation, he wanted to know how to produce better soil and crops.

Photo: Some of the young men working in one of the Emmaus Farm gardens.

"The soil of the Kiunga region is not as good as the rich soil found in the New Guinea Highlands," Aurore explains.

"Composting was his answer and he came to learn different methods of composting. He is also enthusiastic about starting his own fish pond and duck pond. An eaglewood plantation interests him a lot but he understands that he cannot do that alone. He would need the help of his family."

Aurore says Frank is a hard worker. "I am confident that eventually he will succeed in doing all he wants to do on his land."

Source : http://institute.mercy.org.au/mercyworks/view_article.cfm?loadref=198&id=879