

The impact of the 2015-16 El Niño on high altitude places in Hela and Enga provinces

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Frost and drought in high altitude places

- Drought started in April 2015
- Frosts destroyed gardens in July/August 2015
- Rains commenced again in November 2015
- Food shortages persisted in some areas until late 2016
- 140,000 people very short of food
- Lai LLG, Wage LLG, Upper Wage LLG and Pilikambi LLG and beyond
- Panduaga Elementary School

Persons Living With Disabilities (PLWDs)

- No records of PLWDs by Health in Hela and Enga province
- No consideration government funded food distribution
- Left behind with women and children
- No aids for mobility
- Secured wheel chairs – Tari hospital



Persons Living With Disabilities (PLWDs)

Disabled woman crawls to church as she is unable to walk upright



Sisters in their 30s lost ability walk as teenagers – suspected polio



Bushfire victim

- Ruth Gibson had just saved her two small boys from burning house and ran back for possessions when the roof fell in
- Husband was in Porgera.



Mothers took greater risks

- Mother of five left father and kids at home while she swam across the river to retrieve rice from relatives
- On her return crossing she drowned (with rice tied to her head)
- Photo dredging to retrieve late Anna Timbiya at Wage river of Tawanda village in November 2015.



Drought-related violence

During the drought, young boy died in the care of his mother while her husband was away. Her father in-law accused daughter in law for death of grandson in a community dispute settlement process



Husband then attempted to behead wife. Using her hand to protect herself she lost right lower arm.



Impact on men



More stories...

- Single mum attempted to commit suicide by jumping into river after no-one saved home from bushfire. 30 homes were burnt down. People are still rebuilding
- We heard stories of prostitution in exchange for bags of rice

Affects of water shortages on families



Listening to children's drought stories



8 year old boy at Panduaga Elementary School

- Abandoned by his parents during the drought
- During a fight over food his father chopped his mother's hand off
- The small amount of green leaves in his hands are his lunch
- He is one of the few students who had lunch that day.



9 year old girl at Panduaga Elementary School

- Abandoned by her parents during the drought
- No food all day
- Now lives with aunt who has 5 other children
- Only had some boiled choko leaves for breakfast and has nothing in her bag for lunch.



8 year old boy at Panduaga Elementary School

- “My parents were fighting and my mother murdered my father during the drought, my mother now lives in Porgera and I live alone... they were angry and hungry and she murdered him” – 8 year old boy

