

Rural Response to major disasters

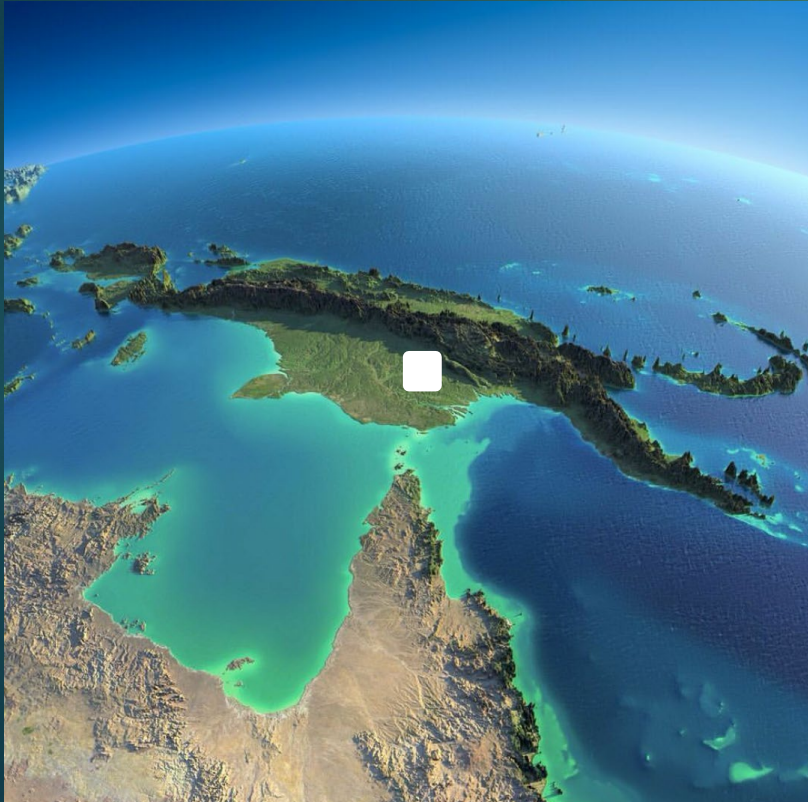
PNG UPDATE
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Effect and response in the remote Strickland and Bosavi regions, Hela and SHP borders

- * **Slow onset disaster eg 1997 / 2015-16 drought**
- * **Rapid onset disaster 2018 earthquake**

Strickland and Bosavi areas, like many remote areas across PNG have limited access and are often NOT HEARD. No roads, No river transport, No access to information such as current affairs, No major stores or warehousing facilities



2023 – CURRENT SITUATION

- **Dry season** already upon us.
No rain for extended periods –(tanks dried up, water streams low)
Communities already reporting hunger – students coming to school with no food (only consuming 1 meal a day).
No food at markets or no markets
- Criminal and gang activities in the area have sent people into the bush – inadequate gardening and selling going on
- Severely limited access for food transport – no funding or air services disrupted due to criminal activities

SLOW ONSET DISASTER

(1997 and 2015/16 drought)

- Lack of preparedness
- Slow response – often too late
- Response measures mostly aimed at quick relief – basic rice rations too late, no protein – long term malnutrition
- Seeds or supporting community initiatives were not achieved / poor resilience or long term outcomes
- Increased death rates
- Increase in disease and accidents – high risk to find food
- PLWDs at greatest risk
- Unseen due to remoteness
- Huge cost to development
- Long term crop losses



How can we make a change

Support with information and data collection through local village recorders and local sources – BE PREPARED – know our communities.

Ensure water and sanitation facilities are in place or being improved **prior** to disasters

Provide seed and agriculture support training/improved farming techniques

Education

Food drying & STORAGE

Seed saving

Drought resistant crops

Water pumps



2018 Earthquake - Rapid onset disaster

Major damage and some deaths – FEAR

Displacement of whole communities

Immediate food and water shortages, health risks

Faster response, Disaster committees, NGOs, Mining companies etc

- Fear and damage induced 'pause' in gardening and all activities.
- Communities congregated – easier to supply relief but caused longer term shortages.
- Dependency a danger
- Poor access – very expensive relief operation



Food shortages

Highlands region
Kau kau staple 3 to 6 months shortages

Lowlands region
Sago staple up to 10 years shortage.

El Nino induced drought will only further
impact the sago dependent
populations.
(food, shelter materials).

Sago garden at Huiya, Hela Province. 2018



Lessons learned

- * Local and previous knowledge invaluable
- * Ensure protein is included in relief food supplies
- * Put funding into installing water tanks (before disaster)
- * Education – local village volunteers / agriculture support etc can be on the ground immediately.



* ACCESS / DISADVANTAGE

Lack of access further impacts already struggling communities – during disasters this impact is drastically increased
Stressed communities need to walk great distances for support (relief, health)

Sometimes out of sight out of mind – communication is vital.



How can we have an impact for a resilient future?

- ▶ Work together with local communities and partners
- ▶ Focus on strategies for increasing resilience and sustainability
- ▶ Encourage equality, fairness, and that no one is left behind
- ▶ Implement strategies with a 'bottom-up' approach – facilitating training for local people in their own area and on their own projects
- ▶ Understand the needs from those who already know how to work in the area
- ▶ Act before disasters impact people
- ▶ Focus on agriculture



Respecting the past, learning for the future



Em tasol