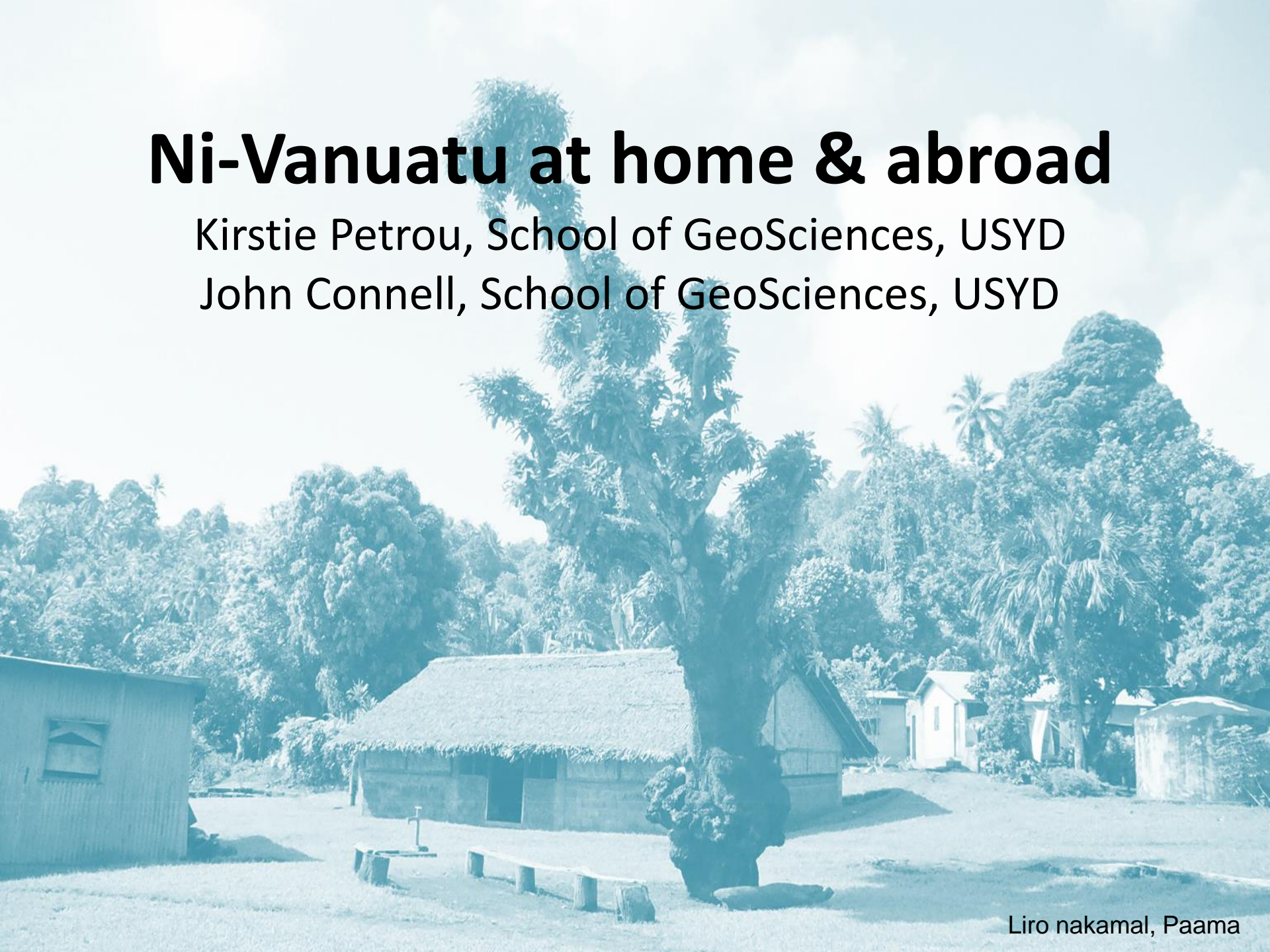


Ni-Vanuatu at home & abroad

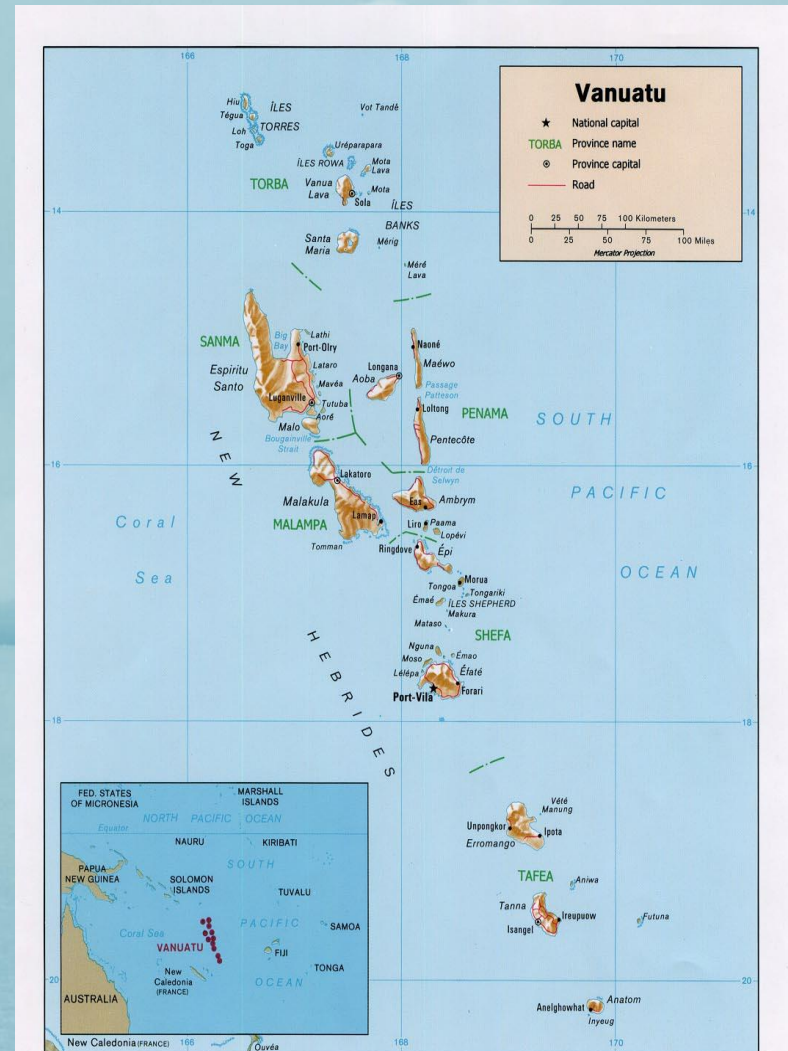
Kirstie Petrou, School of GeoSciences, USYD

John Connell, School of GeoSciences, USYD



The story from 'home'

- Paama population 1627 (2009 census)
- Paama April – July 2011.
 - 4 villages in the Liro area.
 - 109 interviews over 66 households.
- Port Vila July – November 2011.
 - Paamese migrants.
 - 110 interviews over 83 households.
- Relatively low participation in the RSE programme on both Paama and in Vila.



Paamese RSE participation

Rural Paamese:

- 5 (2 women, 3 men) usual rural residents working in NZ.
 - All early-mid twenties.
 - First time (2), second time (2), third time (1).
- 3 males (2 mid-twenties, 1 mid-forties) had been once.

Urban Paamese:

- 1 male in his 40's, second generation urbanite, 4 visits to NZ.
- 1 female mid-forties, husband had been to NZ.

Motivations & Constraints

- Generally vague about why family members have chosen to go.
- Mobility norms: age, houses.
- Many people interested in going: Australia vs. New Zealand.
- 11 usual rural residents wanted to work in NZ/Australia.
 - Passports/papers (3), Vila (2).
- Rural residents: no agent, limited knowledge about loans.
- 'Easier' for urban residents to go.

Outcomes

- Some visible outcomes
 - Start/invest in small business, build a house, school fees, bride price.
 - Consumer electronics.
 - No noticeable increase in school attendance.
 - No community projects.
- Predictable economic & welfare gains.
- Remote locations as a disadvantage.

The story from 'abroad'

- The Swan Hill 'problem'.
 - Were they poor workers, or is there another side to the story?
- 6 nights in Swan Hill January 2012.
- 32 (27) workers: 8 (5) women & 24 (22) men.
 - 8 male 'return workers'.
 - 11 interviews: 4 women, 7 men.

Who are the workers?

- Most from Sara Village, Santo but also workers from Ambrym (agent), Malakula, Tanna & Ambae.
- No 'rural' women.
- 1 married couple.
- Generally relatively well off.
- High interest VANWODS loans.
 - Borrow AUD\$1,000 pay back AUD\$1,500.

Why did they come?

Reason	Number of times mentioned
To build a house/develop land	3
To plan for the future	3
To earn money fast	3
To buy land	2
To pay school fees	2
To improve their standard of living	1

What were their goals?

Goal/project	Number of times mentioned
Invest in guesthouse/rent house.	4
Build a house	4
Invest in small business	3
Buy land	2
Pay school fees	2
Buy a solar panel	1
Invest in cows (a <i>bulok fence</i>)	1

- Little interest in consumer electrical goods.
- Return workers saved approx AUD\$6,000-8,500 each.
 - Built a house (2), paid back loan (1), paid for wedding (1), built a water tank (1), bought stock for store (1).

Experience of Australia

- Welcomed by the community.
- Appreciated invitations to cultural events.
- Main point of contact via church activities.

Accommodation

- Overcrowded: bed sharing, lack of facilities, sleeplessness, price.

Last year, ples i moa gud ia. [...] Long home ating mi mi no save sleep tugeta wetem brother blong mi olsem. Mi sleep tugeta wetem wife blong mi, yes. Be mi no stap sleep tugeta wetem wan brother blong mi, no. Ating six manis taem, oh no. I nogud. [Male, 35]

- Close to the workplace, but 6km from town.
 - Isolation & claustrophobia.

Men's issues

- Pay: hourly rate to piece rate.

- Victimisation:

From mifala i luk olsem se, i treatem ol man Vanuatu nomo, olsem mifala nomo. Be ol nara staff blong em we ol i stap ia, i no makem, i no treatem olsem long mifala. Mo sometime em i givim hard toktok long mifala se yufala i go back. [...] OK, mi save go bak. Be taem we i trouble olsem yu luk se i nomo gat man, em i must ron i kam long mifala nao. Em i lucky long mifala too, mifala i makem work blong em i hariap. [Male, 39]

Men's issues

- Lack of motivation:

Salary em i stap change oltaem. Mo work blong farm em i strong tumas. Taem we salary em i stap change olsem ia, yu find, yu harem se yu slack blong work. [Male, 24]

- No problems last year:

Last yia i moa gud. I gud, last yia. [...] Be this year, mi no save, [...] em i talem se long yia ia, season blong fruit em i nogud. [Male, 35]

Women's issues

- Victimisation of casual staff by Indian supervisor.
 - False reports, conflicting instructions.

Yes, mi laekem work be wetem ol treatment we mifala i got long farm [...] Ating from colour blong skin. Tingting blong mifala plenty se ating from colour blong skin [...]. Be colour blong skin i no go insaed long box blong makem money blong [X] Farm. [Female, 33]

Women's issues

- Dread of the workplace:

I no mifala long Vanuatu nomo, i gat ol narafala [workers too.] Be mifala too i no feel free, uh? Insaed long shed mifala i no feel free nating. Mifala i work wetem fear. That's why, every samting mifala i fraet. Taem mifala i kam outside mifala i filim se wan heavy burden i kam aot long mifala. Taem mifala go bak olsem mifala i karem bak heavy burden. Olsem, mifala i work wetem fraet now. Be mifala i bin talem long [contractor]. Em i bin go toktok wetem olgeta be... Long tingting blong mifala se ol i no luk luk important long mifala tumas. [Female, 37]

- Days off.

- Worry about loan repayments.

How did they deal with problems?

- Concerns not taken seriously:

Yes, em ia [contractor] ia, taem we i karem toktok ia, em i karem olsem se i no wan serious something. Be long farm, yes. Taem we i bin toktok long em, em i karem se toktok long em i serious long mifala. Be long mifala, taem mifala i givim toktok long em, em i no karem toktok blong mifala serious. [Male, 39]

- Or sometimes things got worse...
- Didn't want to spoil their names in Australia.

How did they deal with problems?

- This led to frustration:

Be mifala i just humblem mifala. Mifala i just stap work kase m taem mi mi go bak, mi just pulum gud wind. [Female, 37]

Mifala i kam ia, i kam ia nao. Ol i treatem mifala olsem wanem, be mifala i must stap. [Male, 39]

- Is it worth it?

Sometimes mifala i, mifala i come back long haos, mifala i no wantem go bak antap. [...] Mifala i stap harem nogud. I more than em ia, mifala i stap long Vanuatu, happy now. Vanuatu, mifala i nogat work o whatever be from mifala i stap enjoyem mifala everytime. [Female, 37]

Insecurity

- 5 workers already left.
- Lack of explanations & understanding:

We have to work hard. That is another challenge for us here now. And people are just waiting to find what [is] the next list of people going. So it's a bit hard. Ating sipos yumi faenem wan stret, wan farmer we em i much different, ating bae i gat sam other ples... Be this one, we are trying to just cope with what we are going through. Be olsem nao, we are working with the fear in us now. [Female, 28]

- Constant threat of being sent home.

Would (should) they come back?

- **Yes, under different conditions.**

Em i wan important point we mifala i stap tingbaot. [...] Em i wan open visa mo [...] i nogat wan contract between farmer wetem mi. So taem mi kam, sipos mi kam long [Farmer X], wan crop. Mi work wetem em, taem mi faenem aot se em i no wan gud man, mi save go long wan narafala farm blong continue. [...] I no gud blong yu stap long wan farm no matter i nogud, o i gud be boss i stap long ples i... [Male, 33]

- All enjoyed the work and were eager to learn.

Lessons?

- Who is monitoring on either side of the equation?
 - Selection of workers.
 - Workers' rights & autonomy in Australia?

