

ANU-UPNG Partnership: 2021 Semester 2 report

Name of Organisation:	Development Policy Centre, Australian National University
Project title:	ANU-UPNG Partnership
Project objectives:	To help realise a stronger UPNG School of Business and Public Policy, as well as a deeper and lasting relationship with ANU.
Reporting period:	1 July – 31 December 2021

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Implementation progress – 1 July to 30 December 2021

Stream 1: Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience

Faculty changes

We met a request from UPNG to provide a lecturer for one additional undergraduate course on evaluation in the second semester, which was taught remotely by Dr Peter Graves, an experienced practitioner and academic in this area.

Teaching

Seven ANU lecturers and three ANU-trained lecturers taught 14 courses with 151 female and 334 male students (485 in total) in the second and third trimesters and the second semester. Courses were taught through a mix of online and in person lectures and tutorials. A list of all courses taught is provided below.

No	Course	Lecturer	Tutor	Year Level	Students			
					Female	Male	People with a disability	Total
Trimester II (May-Aug)								
1	Global Economic and Policy Issues	Eugene Ezebilo	N/A	PG2	4	13	0	17
2	Issues in Public Sector Management	Nemat Bizhan	N/A	PG1	10	21	0	31
3	Qualitative Research Methods	Michelle Rooney	N/A	PG1	10	20	0	30
4	Macroeconomic Analysis and Policy	Martin Davies	N/A	PG1	11	19	0	30
Semester II (July-Dec)								
5	Monetary Economics	Dek Sum	N/A	UG4	6	23	0	29
6	Principles of Macroeconomics	Jollanda Mathew	Kingtau Mambon	UG2	38	55	0	93
7	Labour Economics	Jollanda Mathew	N/A	UG4	5	23	0	28
8	Advanced Macroeconomics	Maholopa Laveil	N/A	UG3	8	25	0	33
9	Quantitative Economics II	Maholopa Laveil	Raymond Dorum	UG3	8	24	0	32
10	Applied Economics and Business Statistics	Kelly Samof	N/A	UG3	9	23	0	32
11	Economic Policy	Kelly Samof	N/A	UG4	5	23	0	28

12	Policy Monitoring and Evaluations	Peter Graves	Raymond Dorum	UG4	18	22	0	40
Trimester III (Aug-Dec)								
13	Applied Cost-benefit Analysis	Manoj Pandey	N/A	PG1	9	22	0	31
14	Development Thinking and Policy	Nematullah Bizhan	N/A	PG1	10	21	0	31
	TOTAL				151	334	0	485

As usual, all courses were evaluated. The average course, lecturer, and tutor scores were 4.3, 4.3 and 4.2 out of 5 respectively.

MEPP

The Masters of Economic and Public Policy (MEPP) has been a major focus of the project. ANU staff teach into the project, supervise research students, and help coordinate the program as a whole. Australian Award scholarships are provided to up to 10 students. 2022 was the most successful year for the MEPP so far with over 30 students for the first time. 80 applications were received for 2022, and 60 candidates are offered admission to Graduate Diploma in Economic and Public Policy.

Key developments in the reporting period include:

- A research grant of K1,500 available to each MEPP research student to cover their research costs. To be eligible for this research grant, students need to submit a research proposal and receive approval from the ethics committee of UPNG. In trimester three, four students were awarded this grant for their research.
- More attention paid to tracking students to increase the completion rate – which remains a major challenge.

Given the importance of the MEPP, we have for the first time produced an annual MEPP report, which is currently being finalised and will be submitted shortly.

Initiatives to improve teaching

- **Lecturer and tutor guidance** ANU lecturers continued to mentor the three returned ANU scholars as well as two economics tutors.
- **Mobile internet:** The Partnership supported lecturers and tutors are provided a Digicel dongle with a monthly allowance of 50GB to help with online teaching. This allowed lecturers and tutors to share course materials effectively via Google Classroom and Moodle. This was particularly useful when SBPP had to close in October when a student tested positive to COVID-19.

Improving the student experience

- **Film discussion nights:** UPNG economics lecturer Kelly Samof continued to lead the coordination of the UPNG Inspired in the second semester. The number of attendees continued to grow, and one of the screenings attracted more than 150 attendees.



UPNG Inspired – September screening

- **Student associations:** The Partnership is continuing to support the Economics Student Society (ESS) Public Policy and Management Student Association (PPMSA). The ESS successfully held a Fun Day event in September. In the same month, the PPMSA also organised their first event since the COVID-19 pandemic started.



ESS Fun Day



ESS Fun Day group photo



PPMSA event

- **Alumni Association:** As part of the Partnership's effort to maintain contact with UPNG alumni, we are continuing to promote and expand the Partnership's economics alumni Facebook and LinkedIn pages for recent graduates. A WhatsApp group is also being used to maintain close contact with them. The three channels are actively used as a platform for sharing information about economic research, job opportunities, and other outreach activities.
- **Guest lecture:** In September, we organised a guest lecture by Wilson Jonathan, Manager of Monetary Policy Unit in Bank of Papua New Guinea, for the third- and fourth-year economics students at UPNG. The lecture covered various topics, including the challenges of monetary policy transmission in PNG and steps taken to address the challenges and monetary policy during COVID-19.

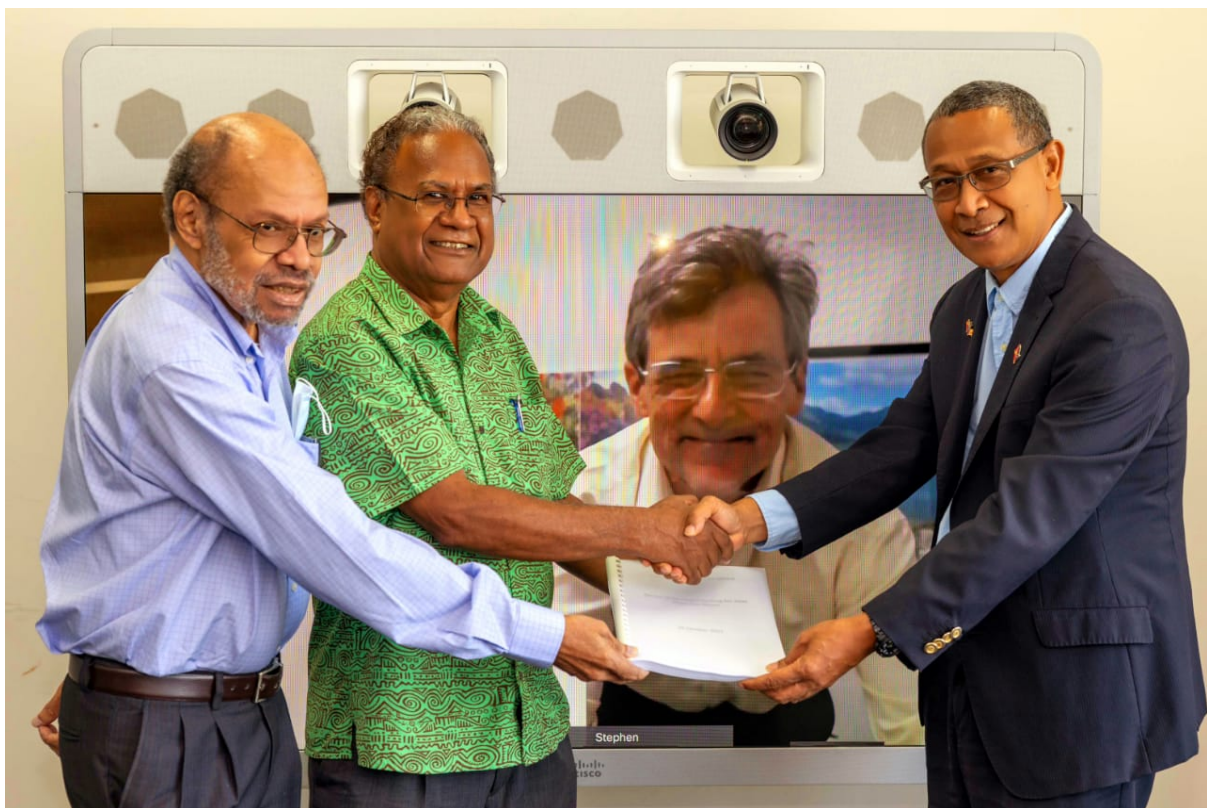
Stream 2: Collaborative research and outreach

Staff

Research Officer Rohan Fox left in October after being involved in the Partnership for seven years. A new Research Officer will join the Partnership in February 2022.

PNG Central Banking Act Review

The First Phase report of the review of the Central Banking Act 2000 was handed over to the Minister of Treasury in November. ANU project director, Stephen Howes participated in the three-person Independent Advisory Group to conduct this review. Research support was provided by both ANU and UPNG economics staff. The report and Issues Paper are available on the Review website, which the Partnership manages: <https://pngcentralbankactiag.org/>. As a result of the Review, the Central Banking Act was amended.



Independent Advisory Group handing over the First Phase report to the Treasurer of Papua New Guinea, The Hon. Ian Ling Stuckey

Books

The page proofs of the edited volume, *Papua New Guinea: Government, Economy and Society*, are with the authors for final review. It is expected that the book will be published in the first half of 2022. The PNG economic history book was delayed due to the demands of the PNG Central Banking Act Review, but drafting nevertheless progressed over the reporting period.

PNG Databases

In the second semester, we finalised two new databases while keeping the three existing databases up to date.

- **[PNG Economic Database](#)**: This new economic database was officially [launched](#) by the Minister of Treasury in September. The database contains economic data for PNG back to independence.
- **[PNG MP Database](#)**: We developed and published a new database on members of the National Parliament of PNG. We will start publicising this database in the first semester 2022.
- **[PNG Budget Database](#)**: Up to date.
- **[PNG Elections Database](#)**: Up to date.
- **[PNG District Level Database](#)**: Up to date.



Treasurer of Papua New Guinea, The Hon. Ian Ling Stuckey launching the PNG Economic database

ANU-UPNG seminar series

We continued the monthly seminar series co-hosted by ANU and UPNG throughout the second semester in a hybrid format (in-person and online). All seminars were well attended with 90–150 registrations for each seminar. We plan to continue this monthly seminar in 2022, starting in February.

PNG Project

Research is being pursued under the headings of economics, governance and elections, service delivery and gender. Highlights include:

- **[‘Whose Right? Forceful Evictions of Informal Settlements from State Land in Papua New Guinea’s National Capital District’](#)**, a discussion paper by ANU lecturer Michelle Nayahamui Rooney.
- **‘Do DSIP funds help PNG MPs win?’**, a discussion paper drafted by ANU Research Fellow Terence Wood and UPNG lecturer Maholopa Laveil. The paper is being copyedited and will be published in the first semester 2022.
- Devpolicy blogs authored/co-authored by UPNG academics:
 - **[‘PNG’s MP funding: volatile and unaccountable’](#)** by Maholopa Laveil

- [‘The crisis of governance in PNG’s power sector’](#) by Michael Kabuni, Kingtau Mambon, and Stephen Howes
- [‘PNG’s plummeting vaccination rates: now the lowest in the world?’](#) by Stephen Howes and Kingtau Mambon
- [‘Does MP funding work \(politically\) in PNG?’](#) by Maholopa Laveil and Michael Kabuni
- [‘Should PNG abandon Limited Preferential Voting?’](#) by Terence Wood, Maholopa Laveil, and Michael Kabuni
- [‘PNG: parties need to do more to help women get elected’](#) by Maholopa Laveil
- [‘PNG’s 2022 elections: parties, policies and women candidates’](#) by Michael Kabuni, Russel Kitau, and Minetta Kakarere
- [‘PNG’s plan to balance the budget’](#) by Stephen Howes and Kelly Samof
- [‘Hasten slowly: PNG’s redistricting challenge’](#) by Maholopa Laveil
- Routledge has agreed to publish the volume on state fragility, edited by Nemat Bizhan, which includes a chapter on PNG, co-authored by a UPNG lecturer, Emmanuel Gorea. The book will be published with open access.

SBPP librarian:

The Partnership continued to fund a UPNG librarian in 2021 to maintain a dedicated library in the SBPP building. Over 3,000 books are available for more than 500 library membership holders, which include both students and staff.

PhD supervision and examination

Our academics were involved in the examination of PhD theses by SBPP candidates. From 2022, ANU academics will be involved in supervision of PhD candidates of SBPP.

Research workshops

We organised two research workshops in the second semester.

- **Stata training workshop co-hosted with International Food Policy Research Institute and Australian Bureau of Statistics:** In September, ANU lecturer Manoj Pandey remotely conducted a workshop on the statistical software, Stata, and core analytical skills. The workshop had 41 attendees, which included MEPP students and PNG public servants. The returned lecturers and UPNG economic tutors assisted the attendees in person at UPNG. The feedback survey was conducted, and the overall satisfaction score was 5.8 out of 7.



Stata training workshop in September

- **Reading groups:** ANU lecturer Dr Michelle Nayahamui Rooney held a reading group in October to discuss selected literature on social and gendered processes in PNG's agriculture export sector. In response to many requests, we also held a second reading group in November on PNG's marine and fisheries sector. There were 11 attendees, which included both ANU and UPNG academics as well as UPNG students. The coordination of the reading groups was led by the returned lecturer Jollanda Mathew with support from ANU lecturer Dek Joe Sum. We will continue this reading group series next year based on demand. Unlike other research workshops, this small informal reading group series aims to have a high level of participation from attendees through discussions.

Workshop on research methods and free data sources was scheduled for October 2021, however, it was postponed to 2022 due to the increase in COVID cases in PNG.

Research collaboration and mentoring

This occurs via our research projects, such as the book, and via the blogs.

Outreach

- **The Devpolicy Blog:** Devpolicy.org is the online public outreach portal for the Development Policy Centre at ANU. In the second semester, Devpolicy.org continued to publish a number of posts related to or directly on PNG. Many of those blogs were authored or co-authored by Papua New Guineas. These blog posts are widely read in PNG, and those focusing on PNG are often republished in PNG newspapers. The Blog Incentive Scheme continued in the second semester to encourage blog submissions from UPNG staff and students and other PNG writers (K200 per published blog).
- **PNG project newsletter:** The newsletter is sent out to approximately 1,800 subscribers every four weeks. It covers partnership related research and blogs, and provides general partnership related updates. ANU's Research Communications Coordinator, Karen Downing, has taken over the role of coordinating this newsletter since Rohan Fox left in October.

Stream 3: Student and faculty exchanges in economics and public policy

Masters students

- **ANU scholarship:** The fifth recipient of the ANU scholarship, Bobby Kunda, completed the Masters in International and Development Economics (MIDEC) and returned to PNG in December. He will start lecturing at UPNG from the first semester 2022. Besides Bobby, four ANU scholarship recipients have completed their studies at ANU and returned to lecture in economics at UPNG. Three are now working as lecturers; tragically, one died. The sixth recipient, Kingtau Mambou, safely arrived in Canberra in early January after tutoring at UPNG for two years, and will start the first semester of MIDEC at ANU. As we were unable to have a scholarship student in Canberra for the 2021/2022 round, we have selected one male and one female student for the 2023/2024 round. The recipients, David Poka and Anna Kapil, will start tutoring at UPNG from the first semester 2022 and commence their study at ANU in 2023.
- **UPNG MEPP scholarship:** In 2020, we started providing scholarships to two tutors/future lecturers in public policy, Kenneth Baliwasa and Moses Sakai, to undertake MEPP. Currently, they are working on their dissertation. They are expected to graduate during graduation to be held in April 2022. The selection process for the 2022/2023 round has been completed, and the scholarship was awarded to Raymond Dorum and Loretta Dilu. They will commence their study in the first trimester 2022.

ANU Summer School

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Summer School for 2022 was cancelled. We will start preparing for the 2023 Summer School this year.

Stream 4: Project management

Partnership management arrangements

Since Rohan Fox left, his administrative roles have been distributed to other Partnership staff. A new Research Officer will join the Partnership in February 2022.

Management priorities

In the second half of 2021, we continued to monitor the development of COVID-19 transmission in PNG to ensure that our remaining staff in PNG, Dek Joe Sum, was safe. He safely travelled back to Malaysia in November for the summer holidays, and returned to PNG in January 2022 to continue teaching at UPNG.

As international borders are opening up, we paid close attention to Australia's and PNG's travel restrictions, so the ANU scholarship student, Kingtau Mambou, could travel to Canberra as soon as possible to start taking his course in-person on ANU campus.

We had monthly meetings with the UPNG team to keep effective communication and collaboration.

Performance

Reporting against partnership objectives

The project judges its progress against several important indicators as set out in each annual plan. Performance against these using a “traffic light” rating system is summarised below. The rating considers the fact that many functions, such as holding events were constrained by the global pandemic.

INDICATOR	RATING	COMMENTS
Strengthening SBPP teaching and the student experience		
ANU lecturers in place and teaching at UPNG (in person or virtually)		Australia-based lecturers continued teaching online with minimal disruption, and the PNG-based lecturer continued teaching at UPNG in person.
Virtual lecturing		Semester 2, and Trimester 2 and 3 were successfully completed with minor technical issues.
Teaching evaluations		The lecturers and tutors managed to maintain high evaluation scores. Average course score of 4.3, lecturer score of 4.3, and tutor score of 4.2.
Induction and mentoring programs		The ANU lecturers continued providing teaching and mentoring support to three UPNG lecturers and two UPNG tutors.
MEPP		The MEPP continues to grow; however, the completion rate remains a challenge.
Undergraduate programs		Most recent exit survey very positive.
Collaborative Research and Outreach		
Research outputs		Collected volume (“textbook”) is copyedited and with the publisher. Second draft of economic history underway. Project played a major part in CBA IAG.
ANU-UPNG research collaboration		Both major books, seminar series and blogs show a good level of collaboration.

Seminars/workshops/presentations at ANU/UPNG		Five ANU-UPNG seminars and two workshops.
Student and faculty exchanges in economics and public policy		
ANU scholarships		The fifth recipient has completed their study and is able to start lecturing at UPNG. Three others are lecturing. The sixth recipient has started their study at ANU in January.
Program management		
COVID safety		COVID action plan under implementation.
Adequate M&E and risk management		Timely reporting. Adequate risk management.

Challenges, risks and lessons learnt

Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to adapt and continue to work towards the project goals through effective collaboration with UPNG.

However, some risks and challenges remain:

- While this issue is now receiving much more attention, low rates of completion of the MEPP remains a challenge. Providing close attention to the progress of individual students is key.
- The COVID situation in PNG continues to be a concern. However, we aim to expand our in-country presence in 2022.
- The ANU-UPNG MoU still needs to be renewed. This requires additional effort.
- The Partnership currently requires ANU scholarship students to return to UPNG to teach once they've completed their study at ANU. UPNG hiring processes are slow, and this situation requires close monitoring.
- Sexual harassment remains an issue for UPNG, and more action by management is needed.
- Many reforms are needed at UPNG, and they are not happening or not happening fast enough.