

PNG Update 2014

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Livelihoods in ATS settlement, Port Moresby

Slide 1 Title

The title of my presentation today is “Livelihoods in ATS settlement, Port Moresby”

Slide 2 seminar outline

I will start off with a brief background to this research project, I will then describe the fieldwork, methodology and summarise the data. I will talk about some of the emerging issues in the research and finally I will share some of the preliminary findings on employment, incomes and livelihoods.

Slide 3: Research background

The aim of this research is to contribute to the understanding of livelihoods and survival strategies in urban informal settlements. This is undertaken with the following issues in mind:

Firstly, urbanisation in PNG is growing rapidly. The population of PNG is currently at 7.2 million people and is growing at a rate of 3.1% per annum. Based on the 2000 census the urban population is around 13% of PNG’s population. According to the 2010/2011 national census the National Capital District population is over 360,000 people and is growing at a rate of 3.3% per annum which is faster than the national growth rate. Around 5% of PNG’s population now live in the NCD.

According to various reports on PNG and the Pacific, it is estimated that around 45 percent of the urban population currently live in informal settlements.

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Secondly, I hope this research will contribute to a number of areas of interest for policy makers. These include urban development and social policies, such as the emerging policy discussions on social support for those on lower incomes and vulnerable population groups such as the elderly, disabled, children and HIV infected people.

Thirdly, with the PNG economy and government revenues anticipated to grow significantly in the coming years it is important that we continue to think about how this wealth will be equitably and fairly distributed in the form of inclusive social policies. By inclusive, I mean policies must include all people regardless of their social status, ethnicity, and gender – including marginal population groups such as refugees, youth, women and people who live in informal or illegal settlements.

Although my research focus will be on an urban population, this does not take away the importance of other parts of the population such as isolated rural areas. The research is a case study and a way of highlighting that policy needs to be context specific especially in a country like Papua New Guinea which is very diverse.

At the outset, I wish to highlight that this research was conducted within the community and therefore much of what I am exploring is focused on the perspectives of those who live in the community.

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I approached the research with the goal of gaining a better understanding of the issues that people face when trying to make enough income to meet their survival needs. I asked about the risks that negatively impact on their livelihoods. These risks may affect the entire community or only one family or household. I also explored what people do when they face hardships in their lives.

Many times we talk about what it means to have 'gutpla pasin' or 'pasin blong lukautim famili' –Good character, generosity, caring and sharing are all virtues of what makes a moral PNG person.

And yet as many people here would experience often it is not easy to balance being '**gutpla man**' or '**gutpla meri**' (good man or woman) with the realities of modern - especially urban - life. Rentals, bills, bus fare, fuel, school fees, health costs and so on are costs that people face daily. People increasingly find themselves having to make hard choices about whether to keep on supporting extended family or start to focus on their own nuclear family.

The judgements are often very harsh. If someone is greedy, selfishness or does not share often this person might be referred to as having the characteristic of '**rabis pasin**'.

This research explores how people perceive who is poor or rich in their life and how they reach decisions on whether to help or not help; or whether to ask for

help or not ask for help. This includes, where do people turn to when they are no longer welcome to live in a relative's house and all other alternative options for housing fails them in Port Moresby. And for an increasing number of people this means asking how do they access land in the settlement?

With these questions in mind I commenced fieldwork in the ATS settlement in January 2013.

According to various sources the population in ATS settlement ranges from 4000 to 6000 people.

The settlement is mainly made up of people from the Oro province but there are many other ethnic groups also living in there. Within the Oro population the settlement is divided into several ethnic groupings based around groups in the Oro province for example Kokoda, Tufi, Musa Sauga, Kaiva, Afore and Ioma. I undertook my fieldwork among the **Tufi ethnic group** – which is made up of families who come from the Tufi coastline in Oro province that stretches from the area of Spear point all the way down to Kewansasap near the border between Oro and Milne Bay province. There are four language groups – Miniafia, Korafe, Ubir and Maisin.

Slide 6: Methodology

I conducted semi-structured interviews in the form of conversations that lasted on average over an hour. Throughout my fieldwork I also had many opportunities to talk with various leaders and people within the settlement

and to make my own observations. The questionnaire revolved around six (6) themes:

The first theme of the interview was on basic household demographic information. I asked about the following information on each member of the household: gender, place of birth, age, education levels, income earning activity, gardening and relationships with the household head.

The second theme looked at basic household characteristics such as type of house structure, type of latrine, electricity, fuel energy used for cooking and main water source.

The third area of the interview involved incomes and livelihoods. Here, I asked what the main source of income was; who in the household was engaged in some form of economic activity, whether anyone in the household had a roadside market, whether or not the household had a food garden; how often people get paid and how much.

I also asked if they faced shortage in food or cash and what they did to access cash or food in times of shortage.

The fourth area asked about how the person ended up living in ATS and how they acquired the land they currently resided on.

The fifth interview area asked what people thought were the big risks or threats to livelihoods that cause hardship. I asked about the things they felt affect the entire community jointly and what affects individual families.

I also asked how people and communities either individually or jointly went about managing these issues – that is, how do they manage the risks they face.

The sixth part of the interview focussed on how people socialised and interacted with family, friends, and general society in Port Moresby, elsewhere and Tufi.

Slide 7....Relationships

As a result of this process I have managed to record and obtain data that is not only based on household information at that point in time but life stories that shows patterns of decisions that people made over a period of time that led to decisions to live in the settlement and the important relationships both in accessing land as well for livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms. I was also able to establish which closest relatives lived in Tufi or Oro province, in ATS, in Port Moresby - but not in ATS - or in other parts of PNG or internationally. I focussed on family relationships although interviews also revealed that friendships and other networks such as colleagues, churches and education play an important role in people's lives.

Slide 8....: Summary of data

I conducted over 50 interviews with community and institutional representatives of which 32 were in depth interviews with households in the community which form the basis of my ethnographic and quantitative analysis.

I identified approximately 80 households in the Tufi community. Based on the patterns of family relationships and conversations with people I estimate that

there may be between 100 and 120 households. Thus the 32 interviewed households represents roughly 27%-32% of households identified as of Tufi origin. A total of around 230 people live in these homes.

Slide 9 : Emerging issues

Based on this field work and data that has been collected some emerging issues include: access to land; livelihoods, employment and incomes; access to services and utilities such as water, education and health, and violence and crime. On all these issues social relationship between settlers and 'other' actors including: customary landowners, the state, churches, family living outside the settlement and in Tufi, are important.

Today I will share some preliminary findings relating to incomes, employment and livelihoods

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Out of the 230 people who live in the 32 households around 82 were engaging in some form of income earning activity. Out of these 82 income earners roughly 55% of them work in the waged employment sector and just over 40% are engaged in the informal sector. Only 2 people were on pensions.

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Of those in waged employment most are engaged in the low skill services industry – as shop, bar or hotel attendants, security guards, or clerical services. A few are general unskilled labourers and a few are tradespersons.

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Over 90% of those working in waged employment are employed in the private sector.

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Of those engaged in the informal sector most operate residential market stalls which are located at the front of their homes. They usually sell betel nut, cigarette, biscuits and drinks. Those that are located at a main road may have a larger stall. Most are women who operate the stalls while attending to other household needs such as collecting firewood, cooking or taking children to and from school. For mothers with children, it is much safer and convenient to operate from this location than the nearest large market.

I now turn to household incomes.

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Around 27% of households are earning less than K300 (roughly USD 100) per fortnight. Over 60% of households are earning below K900 per fortnight (roughly USD 300).

The number of sources of income per household and the amount of total income in a household do not adequately reflect the reality of life when there are many people living in the one house. Higher household incomes may only be reflecting more people living in a house.

Therefore,

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If we look at household fortnightly per capita incomes, which takes into account the number of people who live in the household, then around 65% of households earn on average less than K100 per fortnight per person. This is roughly USD33 per fortnight or \$2.35 per person per day.

Therefore, even within a small community in a settlement, where incomes are already relatively low, income can be very unevenly distributed. Very importantly the choices of how to look after each other can boil down to daily decisions about whether there is food to eat today or not or whether a child is given bus fare to go to school. Some people shared stories about decisions they have to make about whether to share food when they are asked. These decisions sometimes meant their own household might face shortage in food.

I believe from my own experience in Port Moresby that these issues are not just important for those living in settlements but for many families who live in Port Moresby.

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Another important issue is that within this research group households that have a combination of a variety of sources of income have higher household incomes. Households that combine wage employment with informal sector

incomes or pensions tend to do better in terms of per capita incomes than households that rely only on informal sector incomes. I also noted that households that depended only on informal sector incomes and had low incomes were often headed by an elderly couple who were both unemployed and had other unemployed living in the home or those who recently lost their jobs and were in the process of looking for wage employment.

My analysis on this data will use the qualitative data from the in depth interviews to show how families address these inequalities within households and between households.

Even though I have presented household income here, often the incomes within households are managed individually by the person who earned the income so decisions about how money is spent are also important for understanding livelihood strategies. Here, many gender differences can be seen.

I will end my talk today by pointing out that although this is a very focussed study on a small group of people, by looking at relationships between people and how they go about addressing the challenges they face important insights can be obtained that are useful for broader social policy purposes. I have used the quantitative data today to highlight issues of employment, incomes and inequality. In an urban context it is cash incomes that are important. The in depth analysis about how people reach decisions on livelihoods will be derived from the qualitative data.

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I wish to thank the University of PNG and the ANU Development Policy Centre for this opportunity and for funding my participation at this conference.

I wish to thank the ANU for the scholarship that I received for this research and the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia programme in ANU for funding my fieldwork. I especially thank the ATS community in Port Moresby, and in particular the Tufi community, for sharing their lives and stories with me and allowing me to use these for my research. I thank my own family and friends both here and in Australia who have been my rock.