

Environment Strategy Central Province Last update: April 2015



Overview

Central Province is located on the southern coast of Papua New Guinea and has a population of approximately 200,000. The Province is divided into four political districts: Abau, Goilala, Kairuku-Hiri and Rigo. The Province shares borders with Gulf Province in the west, Morobe and Oro (Northern) Provinces to the north and Milne Bay Province to the east. Its capital is Konedobu in NCD.

Most villages are located along the coast, the largest of which are just west of Port Moresby and speak Motu. Inland and mountain villages have distinct and varied cultures.

Central Province's proximity to NCD is both a benefit and a disadvantage. There is generally very weak service provision throughout the Province, with most people relying on NCD services for health, education and communication. This is particularly severe in mountainous Goilala and Abau districts. This puts extreme pressure on families - in particular women - to provide food and financial security. Roads (even the main highways – Hiritano to the west of NCD and Magi to the east) are often in poor condition.

In the western districts, there is a significant *buai* trade that draws on Gulf Province and Kairuku-Hiri District and moves east along the Hiritano Highway to Port Moresby; some *buai* also moves west from Rigo District. Although some people travel from NCD to purchase *buai*, most trading is done in NCD. (The impact of the new – October 2013 - NCD *buai* ban, introduced since TL conducted its micro-mapping, will need to be further assessed.)

Central Province is home to the LNG Project headquarters and has enclave development in oil palm and logging. The mostly Motu-speaking villages¹ impacted by the LNG Project are Roku, Porebada, Boera, Papa, Keiva, Bogi and Lea Lea. The impact of LNG is wide-ranging: cultural disruption, increased employment opportunities, regular incomes, company induced alcohol / marijuana tests, which can reduce regular consumption and contribute to binge consumption. The absence of government services creates a vacuum, which is currently filled to some extent by companies, creating dependency.

There appears to be an increase in expatriates and PNG nationals from other provinces buying land and/or marrying into local clans. New development is industrial (especially LNG), commercial (often related to LNG) and residential. Villages traditionally located on the coast are growing and villagers are moving to blocks next to the highway to build make-shift homes and set up markets. In the Tubuseria/ Barakau/ Gaire area (near Johnson's farm)

¹ Villages such as Porebada, Boera and Lea Lea are Motu-Koita and speak Motu. Papa is inhabited by mostly Koitabu people who speak the Koita language. ("Listening to the Impacts of the PNG LNG Project", Oxfam)

Koiari people have for generations been moving from their traditional highland areas to settle by the coast. Believed to have originally been drawn by trade, Koiaris now have a traditional kinship with the Motuans in this area through intermarriage. More recently, Koiaris are also migrating to access the Highway.

Fishing is an important source of cash along the coast. Garden produce is also important, but mostly for personal and family consumption and small trade, rather than participation in larger markets.

Churches (especially Catholic and United) play a strong role in people's lives, contributing to a more conservative approach to sexuality.

Environment of Risk

Through its micro-mapping, TL has learned that transactional sex is often arranged and then takes place through a series of complicated steps that may involve several different people at different locations and at different times of day. Understanding this process presents opportunities for multiple intervention points for Tingim Laip volunteers and field staff that may target: clients of sex workers (MMM); women engaged in sex work; associated gatekeepers; and relevant stakeholders. Further, the timing of these interventions can be done at key stages of the process: contact establishment; negotiation; socialising before transactional sex; transactional sex; after transactional sex. This section describes the network of connected settings in which there is increased risk of HIV transmission, and in which HIV makes a greater impact.

The *buai* trade makes a significant contribution to the economy and livelihoods of people in western Central Province. Approximately 20 Dyna trucks travel to NCD each day loaded with 120 or more 10-20kg bags of *buai*. Vehicles travel in convoy for security reasons and make stops along the journey to pick up more *buai*, cargo and passengers. Despite the combination of mobility and available cash, more investigation is needed to determine to what extent *buai* traders regularly engage with sex workers (as found in other Project locations). The impact on the enforcement of the *buai* ban in NCD on movement of people, particularly those at risk, is unclear at this time and will need further investigation.

There are a number of hotels in Central Province, mostly located within a couple of hours' drive from NCD. March Girls (at Gaire) in particular is commonly known to be connected with sex trade. Others include the Kokoda Trail Hotel, Bluff Inn and the Sorgeri Lodge (Sorgeri area); the former Hisiu Guesthouse (Kairuku); and the Konebada Guesthouse (Boera).

NCD attracts people for sex work from villages, both nearby (Gaire) and more distant (Gulf Province and Abau). Sex work is often connected to the city through pimps located there and through negotiation or sex taking place there. Away from the eyes of rural communities and families, the distance is thought to reduce the stigma attached to selling sex. Poor services, few opportunities for income generation and increasing need for money - it can

cost K1 to travel to a local water source simply to collect water for the family - puts increasing pressure on families and women to provide. Many women and young girls (15 yrs and younger) turn to sex work for much needed income.

Many young women engaged in sex work come from the villages located along the Magi Highway heading east from NCD. Gaire, Barakau, Ben's Market and Johnson's Market all have night markets that can also serve as pick-up spots for women engaged in sex work. Many young women also come from Rabuka and Tubusereia.

Many women are connected to pimps who hang around the 3-mile Guesthouse, and the bus stops at Gordons and Boroko looking for clients. They arrange for a pick-up in the village (with the client) or call the women to come into town. TL's local contacts estimated that approximately half of the young women in these villages are engaged in sex work. The villages have high levels of stigma and discrimination towards women in sex work as well as other people associated with this group. Women are secretive about their involvement and will often walk some distance away from their village for pick-up. Despite the stigma, pressure for cash is so high that some families introduce their young girls into the sex industry as a source of income for the family.

In a number of communities, the presence of transgenders and/or men who have sex with other men, is more public than in most parts of PNG. Hula area, Abau and the Motu-speaking villages in particular have a more visible presence from these key affected populations. Despite this, they still face stigma and discrimination from both their families and the wider community.

Stigma towards PLHIV also continues to be high, and actual support for them is low. Although each District is reported to have ART services, uptake is poor (which may be related to inadequate training or experience). Of the 1,633 patients tested in the Province for HIV in 2010, 28 were HIV+ (1.7% prevalence). Central had the 3rd lowest number of tests of the 20 provinces reporting. It is reasonable to speculate that these figures are low because many people seek treatment in NCD.

DoH reports that there are 26 clinics operating throughout the Province – all of which are said to provide basic (syndromic management) STI services. Including both church and government facilities, six of these are reported to provide ART.

Generally there is very little HIV prevention being done in Central Province. Among NGOs, Child Fund is said to have some HIV activities in rural Rigo District. PSI focuses on the Motu-speaking villages impacted by LNG where it incorporates HIV messaging into its couples counselling training along with social marketing of condoms.

Igat Hope, Friends Frangipani and Kapul Champions all report having members or contacts in Central Province but none have local networks.

Key Populations

Women engaged in sex work

- Focusing on areas along Magi Highway: Tubusereia village, Gaire and Barakau, Koiari settlements, Rabuka, Dabunari, Dogera, Johnston's Farm
- Young girls who are in contact with pimps in town and who get picked up

PLHIV

- There is an existing HIV support group attached to Igat Hope along the Magi Highway but it is inactive. Given the high level of stigma towards people living with HIV and issues with adherence, TL will work with the group on specific PLHIV interventions.

Transgenders and MSM

- Link transgender and MSM in Hula community to Kapul Champions

Gatekeepers

TL uses "gatekeepers" to mean *people who control or affect access to sexual networks*. In Central, as elsewhere, some gatekeepers are also members of key populations - police, security guards and street-based buai sellers as well as staff at clubs, bars, guest houses and hotels.

TL has identified the following as gatekeepers in the Central Environment:

- Pimps – some of whom are family members
- Peers – of FSW/ WES
- Hotel/Guesthouse staff outside of NCD (such as at March Girls) as well as selected locations in NCD that cater to clients
- People selling at or living by highway roadside markets

Stakeholders/ Service Providers

TL uses "stakeholders" to mean *any individual, agency or organisation with interest in a specific HIV intervention*.

	Name	Works with	Provides	Opportunities
Stakeholders				
1	Kapul Champions	Men who have sex with men and transgendered males	National network; training, networking, social support	Encourage MSM/TG to join network, especially in the identified villages along Hiritano and Magi highways
2	Friends Frangipani	Women, men and transgenders involved in sex	National network; training, support	Coordinate activities; provide training; encourage FSW/WES to join network

		work		
3	Igat Hope	People living with HIV	National network; training, support	Work towards supporting the formation of a network for Central Province through Igat Hope
4	PSI	Motu-speaking villages impacted by LNG	Provides couple training, water and sanitation support and social marketing of condoms	Use resource person to support TL trainings for couples, PLHIV, MSM, TG, FSW/WES
5	PNGIMR	Motu-speaking villages impacted by LNG	Conducts malaria prevention work	Maintain good communication
6	FHI – Salvation Army, Four Square Gospel Ghurch	General population; most-at-risk populations	FHI provides tech support to these church groups to conduct peer education in Bomana, 9-mile and other locations	Use resource people to support TL trainings
7	Catholic Health Services	General population	Provides a range of health services, including 3 clinics providing ART at Tapini, Inauaia and Veifa'a	Visit to ensure/ confirm ART rollout so TL can network for referrals
8	Oil Search Health Foundation	Motu-speaking villages impacted by the LNG	Funds PSI to conduct TNT (couples counselling training)	Maintain good communication
9	Exxon Mobil	Communities impacted by the LNG	HIV programs and maternal & child health	Maintain good communication
10	Central PAC	General population	Coordinates provincial response	Maintain good communication
11	Local church leaders	General population	Leadership re: community response to HIV	Maintain good communication as needed; keep open to true collaboration
Service Providers				
12	Provincial Division of Health	General population	26 clinics throughout province, 3 of which provide ART: including Moreguina, Bereina and the Hiri Rural Mobile Clinic (based at Konedobu)	Coordinate; develop strong referral pathways; provide sensitisation training
13	PSP	FSW/WES, MSM and transgenders, clients of sex workers	VCT/ART/STI services, Peer outreach, training, advocacy, support	Coordinate; engage with members of their client base from Central, including former volunteers trained as peer educators

14	World Vision	Motu-speaking villages impacted by the LNG	TB DOTS which has also been integrated into the 6-mile Clinic	Coordinate; investigate possibility of using WV community volunteers to reach key affected populations
15	Marie Stopes International	Women, men	Sexual and reproductive health services	SRH resources, particularly contraceptives
16	Medicine San Frontier	Victims of violence	GBV services	GBV referrals

TL Workforce and Structure

Based on the target populations, the workforce in Central is as follows:

- **Field Officers:** TL will support the placement of up to four Field Officers in Central
 - FO WES Magi Highway (3): Tubusereia/ Inland Central Koiari villages/ settlements – work with WES/ FSW
 - FO TG MSM Hula: – 1 FO to work with MSM/ TG (esp those living with HIV)
- **Condom distributors:** Increase visibility and availability of condoms:
 - Magi Highway villages and settlements (numbers to be determined)
 - Hula – (numbers TBD)
 - NCD locations associated with Magi Highway networks (numbers TBD)
- **Volunteers:**
 - Hula – to work with TG/ MSM esp those living with HIV
 - PLHIV support group