

Lae Environment Morobe Province Last update: April 2015



Overview

Lae is the capital of Morobe Province and, with an estimated population of 200,000, is the second largest city in Papua New Guinea. It is located at the start of the Highlands Highway and has the largest cargo port in the country. From Lae, supplies delivered by sea are sent up the Highlands Highway to the land-locked Highlands provinces, and also to the Momase region; cargo leaves the port of Lae for the New Guinea islands, Port Moresby and other destinations. Far more accessible than the nation's capital, a large number of people migrate to Lae seeking work. LNG contractors and many of the country's shipping, trucking, agricultural, mining and manufacturing companies are based there. The main wharf is being redeveloped, and a four-lane highway is being constructed to link the city with Nadzab airport.

All this is increasing the population. Settlements and villages dot the Highlands Highway on the roads into Lae and also surround the northern and eastern parts of the city. There are new guesthouses and hotels and around 80 sites where sex is exchanged for money¹. Exchange of sex appears to be growing. Lae is different from other towns along the Highway in that, transgendered males and men who have sex with men are comparatively more evident – including those involved in sex work.

Environment of Risk

Tingim Laip has been active in Lae since 2005 with sites narrowly defined as Lutheran Shipping, Wagang village and Lae Ports. 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 occur at different times and locations, and involve several different people, including 'middlemen'. Understanding this process presents opportunities for multiple intervention points for Tingim Laip volunteers and field staff that may target: clients of sex workers (MMM) and their sexual networks, associated gatekeepers and relevant stakeholders. 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 Tingim Laip Lae Environment includes "top town" or Tutumang – the names given to Lae's old administrative centre; and, the industrial area leading to the main wharf. It comprises a range of guest houses, markets, clubs, bars and public spaces where sex is negotiated or takes place. Sex work in various forms takes place throughout this environment.

In the industrial and wharf areas, TL will focus on the following areas:

¹ An estimate made by Tingim Laip workers in Lae

- **DCA Beach.** Formerly the main *buai* market in Lae, the market has now shifted to Chinatown due to the new wharf. *Buai* traders (wholesale) continue to arrive by dinghy from Morobe, Finschafen and Popondetta and trade at DCA; their customers there are mostly middlemen and a few *buai* sellers (retail). (If weather is bad, the traders dock at Voco Point.) While most *buai* sellers have left, a few remain at houses opposite and in the market area where they are subject to frequent raids by the City Policing Unit. Because of this, they have erected temporary shelters where *buai* and smokes are sold during the day. Dinghy operators and crews also bring people and goods from nearby villages. Some transactional sex takes place.

- **Chinatown.** The market here has recently become the main *buai* trading area in the city. *Buai* is sold by middlemen to *buai* sellers, and by sellers to the public. It is open from 6am – 7pm. Chinatown is also a Highway PMV stop. Coastal and Highlands *buai* traders and middlemen, and PMV bus drivers & crew all spend a lot of time here as trading takes place. Most of Chinatown’s traders and sellers live in the nearby Bumbu settlement.
NOTE: Generally speaking, Lae’s buai comes by road October-March from Madang & Sepik, and by dinghy March-October from Finschafen, Popondetta and elsewhere in Morobe.

- **2-1-2/Highway Inn.** An apartment complex between 2- and 3-Mile, 2-1-2 has given its name to this immediate area where the Highway Inn is located. The Inn, owned by a Western Highlander, offers accommodation, drinking and a restaurant and is known for sexual activity. It is located at the start of the Highlands Highway and is frequented by women who exchange sex who live at nearby Kapiak Street. Businessmen and “big shots” from the Highlands stay there. The Inn recently changed ownership and although still operating there are rumours that it is to be turned into shops.

- **Old airstrip.** Located in the industrial area at the base of ‘top-town’ this is a long-standing hot spot undergoing change due to commercial development. Sexual activity still takes place in the bushes near the Air Niugini office on the south end but much activity is shifting north, and to the areas around drains and containers. Transactional sex “follows the drain” [Diddyman’s Creek] from behind the morgue at Angau Hospital all the way to DCA Beach. Most activity takes place during the day, in particular mid-afternoon. It is common for *buai* middlemen, PMV and dinghy crews and security guards to bring WES here. For years a public area known for transactional sex, increasingly the airstrip is used for negotiation with sex taking place nearby -- around the Fire Station, Mt. Lunaman (also called Namanula) and Wasara Camp.

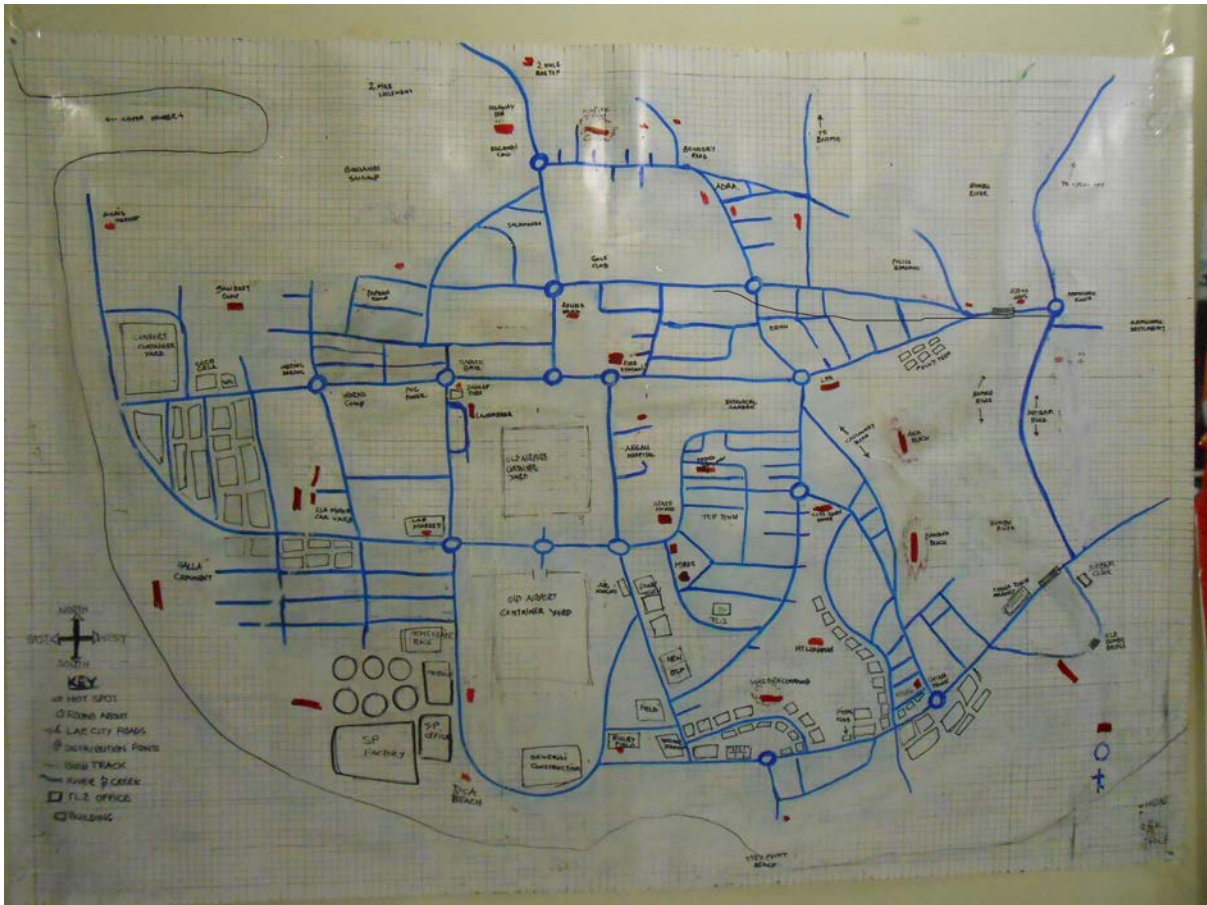
- **Raunwara.** Located at the start of the Highlands Highway opposite the Old Cemetery, this is a well known sex worker pick-up spot. Security guards, MSM, PMV drivers and truck drivers come here during the day to negotiate for sex with male and female sex workers. There is a beer outlet at the Mobil station opposite. By the drain next to Dunlop/DHL there are some shacks that are used for sex during the day. At night sexual activity is generally limited to security guards and women who exchange sex. People play cards, visit Steven’s Trading, and hang out at the bus stop opposite Steven’s. Other WES and their clients move to the 414 Guesthouse

(opposite SP Brewery) and on to Dunlop or Steven's Trading; some go to top town clubs and guesthouses.

- **Steven's Trading:** Located near Ela Motors, this store is open all night and offers cooked food and beer for dock workers, security guards and company men on night shifts. Men can negotiate for sex with women who exchange sex who hang around in this area. It is particularly active at night time when WES move between Steven's snack bar, the Raunwara, the Huon Gulf Motel and the old airstrip. They move during the day, hanging around; near a small *baret* [drain] there are some shacks used during the day. By nightfall, WES and clients move around (as described in Raunwara, above).
- **Kapiak Street:** Near 2-Mile, women who exchange sex rent rooms on this street and meet their clients at Highway Inn. Sex takes place in the Inn's rooms, or the women return to Kapiak Street with their clients.
- **Fire Station:** Near Freddy's snack bar and opposite the botanical gardens, this is site for meeting and pick-up; sex also takes place in surrounding bushes.
- **NOTE:** *The Laurabada K10 house (which burned down in September 2013) and other K10 houses are no long active. The latter were targeted in a City Policing Unit crack-down in July 2013.*

In 'top-town' TL will focus on the following areas:

- **City Guest House/'Guerrilla Farm':** Offers low cost accommodation as well as a bar and food. It has a large outdoor area where sex can be negotiated. The spot is popular with *buai* traders, security guards and local residents, particularly on pay fortnights. Women who exchange sex hang out at the guesthouse looking for clients and use the rooms there, or move out to the Awa and Banana blocks (settlements near the Bumbu River). *A former TL condom distribution point – it will be reactivated once it has exhausted the supply received from PSI.*
- **Eddie's Saloon:** This is the only club in town that offers gambling and daily 'happy hour'; it is popular on Fridays and Saturdays, especially pay fortnights. The club is known for attracting many young women. *TL is not currently active at this site.*
- **Mt Lunaman/Half Street:** Located towards the eastern end of top town, this is a dead-end street where people come to relax, drink and have sex in their cars and the surrounding bushes. It is popular with Lae residents, police, security guards and mine workers.
- **Mykos Bar:** Open every night and is a popular drinking spot where sex negotiation takes place.
- **Eriku oval:** Next to the Highway bus stop this is a traffic circle near some gas cylinders where women who exchange sex sit and wait for customers. *A new site, TL is not currently active.*



Key Populations

In Lae TL will work with these members of key populations as its priorities:

- WES

The “hidden” populations of women at risk are difficult to identify and reach. For this reason WES have also been prioritised. These are separate from the FSW targeted by Save the Children’s Sexual and Reproductive Health Project (formerly the *Poro Sapot* Project). TL will partner with Save the Children to reach the clients of FSW in those locations where TL’s work with MMM overlaps with Save the Children’s work with FSW.

- Clients of WES and FSW, including:
 - Security guards
 - *Buai* traders
 - Highway truck drivers
 - Highway PMV drivers and crews – in particular, those associated with *buai* trade
 - Dinghy operators

These male key populations are prioritised because most clients of sex workers and WES are believed to come from these groups. They appear in large numbers because of Lae’s status as a major port located at the eastern end of the Highlands Highway.

Not prioritised for specific interventions at this time are people living with HIV, men who have sex with men and male transgenders. Lae has an existing network of positive people – the Morobe Network of Positive Living. TL will maintain its partnership with members of this Network and collaborate with a VSO volunteer who is working with the Network to strengthen organisational capacity.

Also in Lae are the networks of Friends Frangipani (representing female, male and transgendered sex workers) and Kapul Champions (representing men who have sex with men and transgendered males). TL will work with these networks and include HIV+ people and MSM/TG in its workforce, outreach and referrals.

Gatekeepers

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

TL has identified these gatekeepers; those marked ** are a TL priority at this time:

- Police
- Mommy bosses, pimps
- Security guards *Planned for 2014*
- Leaders or respected members of FSW in an area** (through Friends Frangipani)
- Transport companies (Transport Fleet Mgr, Safety Officer) *Planned for 2014*
- Guest house/hotel staff and club/bar staff** (City Guesthouse)
- Identify staff in key top town locations
 - Actively seek feedback on the types of questions asked condom distributors
- Buai sellers** (Chinatown, DCA Beach, condom distribution points)
 - Identify sellers in key top town locations (such as DCA beach)

Stakeholders/ Service Providers

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

	Name	Works with	Provides	Opportunity
Service providers				
1	ADRA	Gen population, KAP	VCT, STI, training in micro-credit	Referrals & sensitisation
2	Anua Moriri Day Care Ctr	PLHIV	ART	Referrals & sensitisation
3	Friends Clinic	Gen population, KAP	VCT, STI services	Referrals & sensitisation
4	Malahang Health Centre	Gen population, KAP	VCT, STI services; general health	Referrals & sensitisation
5	Susu Mamas	Gen population PLHIV	antenatal VCT, good atmosphere for PLHIV	Referrals & sensitisation
Stakeholders				
1	Friends Frangipani	FSW, MSW	Outreach, advocacy, training & support	Referrals, partnership, support for outreach

2	Kapul Champions	MSM, TG	Advocacy, training & support	Referrals, partnership, support for outreach
3	Morobe Network of Positive Living	PLHIV	Care and support, advocacy	Referrals, partnership, support for outreach
4	PNG Ports	Dock workers	Employment	Structural interventions
5	Save the Children's Sexual & Reproductive Health Project	FSW, MSW, MSM, TG, PLHIV	Peer outreach, referrals, care and support, advocacy	Referrals, partnership and coordination
6	PSI	Trucking and security companies	Condom promotion, training on SRH, couple counseling	Partnership and coordination
7	Security companies ²	Security guards	Employment	Structural interventions
8	Trucking companies ³	Truck drivers	Employment	Structural interventions

TL Workforce and Structure

TL now engages a variety of workforce types to deliver a broad range of interventions. The workforce in each project location is selected to best suit the target population and proposed interventions in that environment.

- **Field officers:** Two Field Officers will be recruited to target MMM: one will target *buai* traders, PMV drivers/ crew and dinghy operators; and the second will work with truck drivers and security guards. A third Field Officer will be recruited to support condom distributors at distribution points with regular monitoring and supplying condoms.
- **Independent volunteers:** Independent peer volunteers may be identified over time to work in security, transport, seafaring or stevedoring companies. These volunteers would receive some training (more than condom distributors, but probably less than committee-based volunteers) but would work independently within mostly mobile populations, conducting peer outreach and making referrals.
- **Condom distributors:** TL will establish 20 condom distribution points. TL has selected *buai* sellers and others in strategic locations where sexual negotiation and exchange is known to happen. These distributors will be given training in condom distribution, promotion and condom use troubleshooting. They will be supported and monitored regularly by a designated Field Officer. Importantly this FO actively seeks feedback: questions distributors were asked by the public; their ability to answer, and any problems with condom use such as breakage.
- **Advocacy groups:** Initially TL will not be recruiting volunteers in Lae. Instead it will support members of the Morobe Network of Positive Living, FF and KC to provide peer outreach, referrals, care and support for their respective peer groups. For Morobe Network, this could include WES, dock workers, PMV and truck drivers, securities, *buai* traders and boat operators living with HIV. TL will ensure members are trained in a range of prevention and care topics including SRH, treatment literacy, ART adherence

² Potential companies include: Armsec Ltd, Asila Security Ltd, Executive Security Systems Ltd, G4S, Guard Dog, JB Security Svcs, Kuima Security Svcs, Lae Security Service, Highlands Security Service and Pacific Corporate Security Ltd. *To avoid duplication, work with major companies is on hold pending an update about PSI's interventions.*

³ Potential companies include: EastWest Transport, iPi Mountain Transport Ltd, Kutubu Transport, Mapai, Trans Wonderland Ltd, Treisa, Waghi Valley and Wizzy Transport Ltd. *To avoid duplication, work with major companies is on hold pending an update about PSI's interventions.*

and responding to opportunistic infections. TL will also actively seek feedback from these networks on the kinds of questions asked by their peers, and their ability to answer, as well as any reported breakages or other problems with condom use.

- ***Structural interventions with security and trucking companies:*** TL intends to work with selected trucking and security companies so that employees can access training, receive condoms regularly, increasingly access health services including testing, and become peer educators to reach others within their workforce.

Note: PSI worked closely with many of the Lae based trucking companies up to the end of 2013, when funding for their program came to an end. TL is working closely with PSI and trucking companies to fill this gap and sustain HIV interventions amongst this mobile population. TL is also working closely with company management to integrate HIV and SRH interventions into company HR support programs and policies.