UPNG SOCIAL WORK HONOURS STUDENTS PRESENT AT MAPS SEMINAR

Preliminary findings made in 2012 by two Honours students from the University of Papua New Guinea were presented at the Melanesian and Pacific Studies (MAPS) Seminar this year on March 20.

Mr. Ephraim Sawa and Miss Sarah Euling, both Social Work honours students at the University of Papua New Guinea presented their research findings at the seminar on different new approaches to understanding and addressing two issues in PNG.

The two qualitative studies resulted in very interesting outcomes that presented new approaches to solving these issues.

According to Mr Sawa’s abstract, since the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement in 2001 which officially ended the 10 years conflict, weapons disposal was still a critical issue, imposing insecurity in Bougainville’s future.

He said that despite numerous attempts to remove firearms, proliferation of firearms was still an issue on the Island.

The study revealed that strategies to contain and dispose firearms in Bougainville should not only be the physical containment and disposal of firearms in Bougainville but rather it must include a community reintegration approach.

The study by Miss Euling revealed that all children handle divorce and separation differently and are attributed to the socio-economic conditions in which the child is raised amongst others.

Mr. John Kamasua, the Social Work strand leader said that this was the first time social honours students were given the opportunity to present at a MAPS seminar.

He added that the presentation did get the attention of many including staff of the US Embassy in Port Moresby.

And the presentation provided a platform for other honours students to make presentation in future.

University Of Papua New Guinea’s input on development

University of Papua New Guinea is the premier university in the Pacific.

It is known for producing many great leaders who have contributed to the development of this nation (Papua New Guinea) and the world.

Despite the aging infrastructure and limited resources, many grandaunts have gone out into the world with a positive input.

The dedicated staff make sure that their students are well equipped to tackle the challenges in their chosen career.

The Social Work Strand produces a good number of students every year.

On April 12th of this year, the university saw another batch of students graduating out into the work field.

Social Work Strand saw 26 students graduating, most of whom are successfully working already.
Welcome to the first issue of the newly revived PNG Social Development Newsletter.

We bring you news that for the first time two of our social work honors students presented at a Melanesian and Pacific Studies (MAPS) Seminar.

Our two tutors had completed their Post-graduate pathway program with Monash Social Work Program—Melbourne last year.

A Short documentary on social work in PNG was made with the support of AusAID funded Go8 Project.

Also two profiles of our social work students are presented.

There is a small piece on domestic violence to reflect the seriousness of the issue and the recent public outcry against it in PNG.

There’s also the current reviewing of the global definition of social work. Leads for this and explanations are provided.

It is indeed an exciting time to be studying social work at UPNG.

Enjoy this first issue!

The editor.

UPNG SOCIAL WORK STRAND: Developing the Human Resource

With human resource being the best area of development in a developing country, the University of Papua New Guinea has seen two of its tutors completing two courses each under a newly introduced Post-graduate pathway program with the Monash University, Melbourne.

Joshua Goa and Dunstan Lawihin, two tutors from the Social Work strand at UPNG, completed the year long course for two straight semesters last year, 2012.

The courses taken were offered by the University of Monash under the Masters of Social Work Course Work Program.

According to Mr. Goa, the courses were taken and completed as an online intensive program where all its lecture notes and other materials were provided via internet.

He said: “This is a bridging program between Honours and a PhD basically to build and equip students with skills towards taking up a PhD.”

The scholarships were offered to the two young tutors under the G0A partnership between the Australian Universities and the University of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Goa said that the course was a very big benefit to him personally, especially to his learning and his teaching.

He said the program was very enriching and it pushed himself and his colleague to a new level to find their inner potential.

They both have their transcripts and a letter to certify that they have completed this pathway program.

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) are leading the review of the global definition of social work.

The new draft for the global definition is as follows:

“The Global Definition of The Social Work Profession [i]: Regional and national definitions [ii] may be more specific taking into account their regional and national contexts.

Social work facilitates social development and social cohesion [iii]. Core to social work is supporting people to influence their social environments to achieve sustainable wellbeing. The profession is underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, and indigenous knowledge [iv]. Principles of human rights, collective responsibility [v] and social justice are fundamental to practice [vi].”

[i] This title reflects that the definition applies to social work professionals and not necessarily to people to people working in non-professional social work roles.

[ii] Regional and national interpretations must not undermine the global definition.

[iii] The word ‘facilitate’ has been chosen rather than ‘promote’ as it is more active and indicates actual change rather than intention.

[iv] Indigenous knowledge has been included to show the importance of cultural knowledge and to highlight that there is more than just Western theoretical models.

[v] “Collective responsibility” has been included along with human rights to highlight that rights and wellbeing can only be fully recognised when citizens/people take responsibility for their actions and for others. It is implicate that the Social Work profession advocates for human rights legal frameworks.

[vi] The word ‘practice’ has been included to highlight that social work is a practice based profession.

For reference, the current definition of social work can be found at: http://ifsw.org/policies/definition-of-social-work/
Constatb furthers knowledge in Social Work

...he supervised criminal investigations, obtained statements from rape and sexual violence victims...

Being a Law enforcing officer constantly brings one face to face daily with social issues.

This was the case with Senior Constable Detective Kelly Ikiute before he decided to further his knowledge in Social Work.

Mr. Ikiute is currently doing his first year of the two-year Professional Studies Program under the Social Work strand at the University of PNG while also serving as member of the Police Force.

He has been serving in the field investigating duties as a Police Detective since 1997.

In 2006, he was internally transferred to join CID/Sexual Offences Squad and promoted to Team Leader of the section in 2007, having four police officers working under him.

In the field, he supervised criminal investigations, obtained statements from rape and sexual violence victims, attended workshops on gender-based violence and networked with NGOs, while giving evidence in the National Court on matters related especially to rape and sexual violence.

Kelly said working in partnership with relevant organisations and being exposed to such issues motivated him to apply to do social work.

The courses and the activities he is undertaking through the Professional Studies program are helping him to relate to his experiences and knowledge.

Mr. Ikiute looks forward to improving his performances in the field after the completion of the program, as by then he believes that he will be fully equipped.

A student's experience in Social Work

Social issues are common everywhere in PNG, and being exposed to it gives the drive to learn and understand ways to bring about positive change to a society as an individual.

A Social Work student at the University of Papua New Guinea tells her story on how she had become so fascinated to take up Social Work as her major.

Lian Fisher is a 3rd year Social Work major student from a small village in Kundiawa, Chimbu Province.

At first, she wasn't interested in taking Social Works but then after thinking back to the struggles of her people back at home, she realized the importance of Social Works in her own community.

A factor that affected her decision-making were the visits from her seniors to the high school she was attending back then to do pep talks about courses offered at UPNG. She was captivated by what some Social Works student said.

Miss Fisher, when asked about her experience as a Social Works student, said, “Being a Social Works student at UPNG is quite a challenge to me.”

Regardless of the challenges, she is now doing her Social Work Practice A (a course offered to 3rd year students who major in Social Works during first semester) with the National Aids Commission.

Miss Fisher said: “Being a Social Works student at UPNG is not about me doing well in my grades and getting the required credits points enabling me to graduate. It is also about me putting into practice what I’ve learnt to help my people back at my village.”

Domestic Violence: a National and Global issue

Domestic violence is a growing issue in the island nation of Papua New Guinea.

This trend of violence has been adapted over the years and the cultural superiority of men has been abused to bring the female population down.

According to reports, the issue is more visible in the urban areas of the country.

It has come to the attention of the authorities not only nationally, and also attracted global attention.

The acting Australian High Commissioner, Margaret Adamson confirmed this in The National daily on March 11th, 2013. She said that the issue of domestic violence is becoming a norm in PNG.

She went on to urge the PNG government to treat the eradication of violence against women and girls as top priority.

The Australian acting high commissioner also stated that gender equality was a critical ingredient of development.

She emphasised that equal participation of women is essential to the economic, social and political success of all communities and societies in PNG as well as around the globe.

Many well educated women are now seeing the importance of women involvement.

In Papua New Guinea, women have taken a huge step in fighting and struggling to access Parliament to take part in the country’s decision making processes.

A bill was made and read out in the parliament back in 2011. This bill was to reserve 22 seats onto the 109 seats in the parliament for women.

However, the bill was not passed as it did not for it to be passed due to the less number of votes it got in 2012.

Despite this, there are three female politicians who have entered the house of parliament after the 2012 general elections.

The government in PNG is now putting all effort into eradicating domestic violence and especially any form of discrimination against the women population in the country.
A short Documentary titled: “Envisioning Tomorrow—Social Work in PNG.” was made recently through the support of the Group of 8 (Go8) Project funded by AusAID. The focus of the documentary is social work in PNG.

It was part of the Go8 funded partnership between UPNG Social Work Program and the Monash Social Work Department—Monash University, Melbourne.

Social Work staff at UPNG actively got involved with participation from organizations such as the Hope Worldwide PNG, Anglicare PNG, and the Family Support Centre at Port Moresby General Hospital.

The documentary was filmed, edited and directed by Cameron Rose, who is a documentary maker and a lecturer at Monash University.

Esther Grimes and Tara Kornhauser—volunteers from Monash University under the Go8 Project—were the production assistants. Monash University Social Work Coordinators involved were Dr. Kerry Brydon and Dr. Catherine Flynn. Dr. Michael Cookson of ANU who was the Go8 Project Coordinator supported the initiative.

It was also supported by Prof. Betty Lovai, Executive Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Ethical clearance for the Project was given by School Research Committee.

It looked at central themes such as: How did you get into social work? What does social work contribute to PNG? And the future of social work in PNG. It provided an opportunity to reflect and analyze current practices and

The UPNG Social Work Strand is reviving the PNG Social Development Newsletter as a way to encourage the sharing of positive social development news around PNG. The Newsletter seeks to capture positive contributions made by individuals, communities, NGOs, donor organizations and the private sector in promoting social and community development.

It will also provide publicity of the UPNG’s Social Work Strand and its role in educating professional social workers/development practitioners to be agents of change in the country's development.

Short articles and newsflash for inclusion in the newsletter are welcome from social work graduates, individuals and community members and organizations doing social work and social development work with communities and groups in PNG.

Those who wish to be on the mailing list can send their email addresses to this email: sipakjk@gmail.com.

We also would like to hear from social work graduates from the UPNG Social Work Program, and what they are doing currently around PNG.

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