

WE ARE CRYING FOR OUR LAND

STORIES FROM THE PANGUNA LISTENING PROJECT



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BOUGAINVILLE



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Ruins of copper concentrator

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We also gratefully thank the significant contributions from the community. Many people took the time to respond to share their stories, experiences and hopes for the future. Their enthusiasm and participation is noted and appreciated and together we hope and pray for a safe and peaceful future.

We also gratefully appreciate the support of Misereor e.V.



MISEREOR
IHR HILFSWERK



Photo credits: Diocese of Bougainville Media team

Moitaka village

PROLOGUE

It is with great pleasure that I write this Prologue for the book 'We are crying for our land: Stories from the Panguna Listening Project'. This book is the outcome of another important step in the journey of the Catholic Church Diocese of Bougainville (DoB) together with the people of Bougainville, in particular also the people immediately affected by the Panguna mine.

From its mission days onwards, the Catholic Church has always acted single-handedly on behalf of the people of Bougainville through its priests and its bishops, particularly in areas affected by the Panguna Mine.

The Catholic Church has done so by nature of being the Church, on the basis of the Church's social obligation stemming from faith, and because the people lacked education and did not know their rights.

These people are now confronted with a new situation through the withdrawal of Rio Tinto (the former CRA) from Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), the company that affected their lives over the last forty years. In June 2016 Rio Tinto walked away from BCL, giving its shares to the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) and the Government of Papua New Guinea. At the same time, Rio Tinto made it clear that it does not see any obligation to address the impacts of the Panguna mine - environmental, social, health and spiritual. Rio Tinto is abandoning its obligation to do three things: 1. compensate for environmental damages 2. clean up the damage 3. rehabilitate the environment.

The mine has had a massive impact – social, spiritual, and environmental. The effects of the mine are still felt today and will be felt in the years to come. The stories presented in this book talk loud and clear about these effects, for example: relocation of communities, land shortages, changed river conditions, polluted waterways, changes in social life and wellbeing. While the effects were largely negative, there have been benefits too, for example roads and access to communication. The stories told in the Panguna Listening Project (PLP) unearth both sides of the mine effect on the people. And the stories make it clear that communities hold the strong belief that whoever caused the wrong and the damage has to address the wrong and the damage.

I strongly support this project because it aligns very well with the DoB's aims and values. My plan is to use this project and its results as a basis for a next phase which will work to improve the living conditions of the people in the mine-affected areas in practical ways, according to the PLP's motto 'making the voices of the people heard, making the people safe'.

It is my deep conviction that in the current situation, the Catholic Church has to be present in a new way in her "eternal ongoing presence and action" on behalf of the people of Bougainville. Thus the Catholic Church is engaged at various levels for the people, especially, but not exclusively, in the areas affected by the Panguna Mine. We trust that this engagement will help to release our people from the bondage of suppression, freeing them to act for justice on the path towards a better future.

It is our hope that the future will be filled with solace for all.

The DoB is grateful again for all involved.

In great cooperative striving with partners and the people,



Bishop Bernard Unabali,
Diocese of Bougainville

"Serving the people of God today"



ABBREVIATIONS

- ABG (Autonomous Bougainville Government)
- ARoB (Autonomous Region of Bougainville)
- BCL (Bougainville Copper Limited)
- BPA (Bougainville Peace Agreement)
- BRA (Bougainville Revolutionary Army)
- CDA (Collaborative Learning Projects)
- CPCS (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies)
- CRA (Conzinc Riotinto of Australia)
- DoB (Diocese of Bougainville)
- PLP (Panguna Listening Project)
- PMAR (Port Mine Access Road)
- PNG (Papua New Guinea)
- SML (Special Mining Lease Area)

TERMINOLOGY

The crisis: From 1989 to 2001, Bougainville experienced a violent conflict often referred to as ‘the crisis’.

Listening conversations: Listening methodology conducts flexible and non-prescriptive conversations gathering people’s direct experience as evidence.

Listeners: The listening research methodology relies on teams of researchers from the geographic area in which the project is being conducted. These researchers are referred to as ‘listeners’.



Near Dapera village, SML

INTRODUCTION

The Panguna Listening Project (PLP) is an initiative of the Catholic Diocese of Bougainville (DOB), led by Bishop Bernard Unabali seeking to make the voices of the people heard and making the people safe in the Panguna mine-affected areas.

It is a neutral project and does not take a position on the future of mining in Bougainville.

PLP is a Bougainville project serving the Diocese providing expert knowledge via training and reflection. The PLP team is led by Project Manager Bonaventure Kenulei working with a research team including community members from the Panguna mine-affected communities. Additional technical support is provided by consultants Amie Kirkham and Dr Erica Rose Jeffrey.

Developing from the Bishop's interest in supporting communities in the mine-affected communities, community consultations were held to engage further input. An initial 2-day scoping meeting was held at Tunuru Mission Station in 2017 and key stakeholders and local members were invited to discuss the potential of PLP. Based on the positive feedback funding support was sought by the Diocese of Bougainville from Misereor e V. from Germany. To launch

PLP, a Stakeholder meeting was held at Manetai Mission Station in May 2018, led by Bishop Bernard Unabali and Project Manager Bonaventure Kenulei, bringing together stakeholders and community members to provide project information as well as to engage in collaborative planning.

This book outlines the responses and comments from community members in the first two stages of PLP. It documents the main themes from the community data and meaningful comments from the Listening team from their experiences of listening to conversations in the mine-affected communities. It also includes individual stories and photos from the Panguna mine-affected communities which were collected through community "storytelling sessions".

Many conversations and stories were shared during the Listening and storytelling sessions. Given the limitations of this project, it was not possible to speak with everyone in the mine-affected areas, or to share all of the stories in this book. This book is intended to raise up the voices that have been unheard and to encourage the exchange of further stories to remember the past and to share hopes for the future.



Near Siganare, Upper Tailings

LISTENING & STORYTELLING PROCESSES

Phase 1 of PLP used a listening methodology working with a team of 22 local Listeners from the Panguna area. In June and July 2018, listening teams spoke with over 330 community members in the Panguna mine-affected areas of Bougainville. Conversations were conducted by the Listeners in Tok Ples (Indigenous local language) or Tok Pisin. A targeted effort was made to speak to a diverse group of community members representative of gender, age, location and roles in community. Given the limited scope and timeframe of this project, it was not possible to speak with all members of the mine-affected communities.

Listening methodology employs a flexible, conversational approach that enables analysis based on the direct experience of the identified groups. The main objective of this methodology is to access and raise unheard voices, and to diversify narratives by speaking to people directly affected by challenging situations.

This approach seeks to elevate the voices of communities that have experienced difficulty. It provides a comprehensive and systematic exploration of the ideas and insights of people who live in, or are affected by, a situation such as environmental destruction or violent conflict. It also creates space for different narratives to emerge, as well as for identification of practical solutions to address the issues. It has been used by peacebuilding practitioners in conflict and post-conflict contexts such as Myanmar/Burma, India, Mali, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands.

Phase 2 of PLP provided a further means of documenting the experiences of people in the mine-affected communities

through community “storytelling sessions”. Based on a process called “collaborative narrative practice”, the PLP team returned to communities in the mine-affected communities to share the results from Phase 1 and to engage communities in further dialogue and storytelling. During these storytelling sessions, the PLP team presented the key themes from the Listening component and asked participants to share with us and with each other what sustains them in dealing with life during and after the operation of the Panguna Mine. Many stories and songs were shared about challenges and hardships as well communities’ hopes for the future. The PLP team wrote these stories down in English with the help of local team members. The stories were then printed and read back to the participants who had a chance to check, correct or add to them. We then printed out a book and presented it to the local community. With the permission of the community members, these stories were shared with other groups in the mine-affected areas. Permission was also granted to share the stories with the whole of Bougainville and with the international community.

The outcome of the Listening component and the storytelling is this book. While the results from Phase 1 provide an overall view of key themes gathered from hundreds of listening conversations, Phase 2 provides personal stories and experiences. There are many more stories shared than there is space in this book and they are with the communities who shared them. All stories gathered through PLP will remain archived with the DOB.



Tokunamiring, Mid Tailings

KEY THEMES FROM LISTENING TO COMMUNITIES-PHASE 1

Across the communities that the Listeners visited, the community members enthusiastically shared many stories. These stories were documented and discussed during the debriefing process. Through the debriefing process with the Listeners, similar ideas emerged falling under common themes which are expanded here. Through the process of analysis it also developed that there were key differences that will be addressed in a later section. The common themes that arose from across the different mine-affected areas are elaborated below.

COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO BE AFFECTED BY POLLUTED WATERWAYS AND CHANGED RIVER CONDITIONS

Concerns about about polluted waterways and changed river conditions were key similarities across communities. Communities described the flooding of land that was caused by sediment dispersion and changing river courses. For example, some areas where people used to make gardens are now underwater.

Environmental concerns which were brought up by communities during mine operation are still concerns today for many areas. The Jaba river was described as flooding and changing course. When the river floods it covers the heads of the smaller streams and tributaries and does not follow its original course. The Jaba river is still bright blue which concerns community members regarding its safety and they don't drink the water or go in the river if possible. Despite concerns regarding the river, some communities need to cross through the Jaba river on foot as there are no bridges.

“Nature is our life.”
- Male, 60, Upper Tailings

A big landslide in Panguna during the operation of the mine was described as destroying lowlands, river areas and also land boundaries, causing land conflicts which still exist today. The Eme'eto river was filled with mud and dead bodies at this time, which remains a traumatic memory.

Artificial lakes were created during the mine operation and these are now inhabited by crocodiles. Communities are also concerned that there are chemicals in the water and that it is unsafe to drink, or to wash in and cook with. People described how walking through the rivers in order to cross to the other side causes itching and skin sores.

All communities mourned the loss of marine life in both rivers and oceans. The variety and numbers of fish were perceived to be reduced overall, people cannot see any fish in some of the rivers. Fish were also described as having sores, which communities are worried is linked to chemicals in the rivers. There are many questions and uncertainties about the safety of the water.

Connected to social wellbeing, communities noted the loss of recreation areas and gathering places. They described how children no longer have places for swimming or for families to gather for picnics and social events on the river banks.

Women told a story about how the river used to be a place that the women from Pinenari would gather after visiting the garden and that they would all lay out their garden produce and then make sure that every family had enough to eat. For example, if one woman didn't have any taro, the other women would share their garden foods. This no longer happens as the river is no longer a place for gathering.

“Skin infections while bathing in the new water diversions.”
“Rivers had abundant fresh water fish, eels and crustaceans.”
- Male, 50-60 SML



One of the Listeners from the Lower Tailings described his own experience as a child and how it connected to the stories that he heard.

“I saw the destruction. I was maybe around 5 years old, and I saw my place was virgin forest, but I didn’t see any fish as the river was already infected. The place where we were living is now covered by the desert (tailings waste), it is in the area of the tailings which in some places is 30-50 meters down. One night, there was a very big rain during the night. The Jaba river basin was covered, the company was using hydraulic hoses to move the rocks to the tailings. There was a pool at the end of the creek where we usually had a bath in the morning. The day after the big storm we woke up and went running to the pool and to our surprise it was filled with mud. We asked the older people what is happening and they said –there is a company, CRA up at Pankirangku. We asked what’s that? Ever since that day I left that place, I have felt all those experiences that people described.”
-Male, Lower Tailings

“You can’t see any fish in the Kavarong River. Because there is chemical pollution still there.”

- Male, 56-60, Mid Tailings

DAMAGE/CHALLENGES RELATED TO LAND

Communities described how before the mine, the land used to be fertile with plenty of animal wildlife. In many places the land has been contaminated or there is now a lower crop yield than in the past. Many people are no longer able to hunt animals such as possums or to fish in the rivers.

There are land shortage issues caused by population increases especially related to relocation and damaged land. In some cases, communities were relocated during mining operation to areas that have challenging geography such as steep mountains, gorges, or swampy areas which make it difficult to garden or expand living areas. In other areas, communities were relocated to areas which are not their traditional clan land which contributed to further social challenges.

“The saddest part was when the village women wept and rolled on the ground to say goodbye to their land.”

- Male, 50-60, SML

Landslides and changing waterways have brought land boundaries into dispute. These disputes cause unrest and uncertainty in the communities and are difficult to resolve, with some still existing from the time of mining operation. Waste gravel from the mine operation destroyed land areas, especially in the Mid and Lower Tailings. Some areas are buried under meters of gravel resulting in loss of traditional places and less land for both living and gardening.

LOSS OF SACRED SITES

All the communities described the loss of sacred sites as contributing to the fraying of the social fabric. These sacred sites were central to social and spiritual life for many communities. For example, where the mine pit is today used to be a sacred mountain (Pankirangku) even taller than the current surrounding mountains.

The loss of sacred sites meant there was no place to hold customary ceremonies such as those related to rites of passage for young men and women. Sacred sites were lost due to road construction, the mine pit, sediment deposits and landslides. Some stories illustrated how upsetting it was for community members to watch sacred sites being destroyed by bulldozers.

Communities members mentioned the loss of sacred sites as being connected to a loss of identity. When sacred sites were lost it brought up questions of how and where to place one’s self in the present if there are no sacred sites linking to the past.



Storytelling at Morgan Market, Itakara, PMAR

DESIRE FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Across all conversations, communities and Listeners described a lack of accurate and current information regarding environmental pollution perceived to be causing many concerns and worries. Many people live in uncertainty, wondering if the place they live in or where they get their food is contaminated. There are concerns around sites where chemicals were stored during the mine operation. In some cases, there are now gardens and houses on these areas and people are worried about the safety of the health of their families. This uncertainty about the safety of their living areas detracts from an overall sense of wellbeing. Communities expressed that they currently do not have access to clear information and requested that neutral experts provide more detailed information about environmental pollution.

“Marine life and corals were contaminated with chemical pollutions.”

- Anonymous, PMAR

“Baseline studies/chemical research must be prioritized.”

- Female, 60-70, PMAR

ON-GOING RELOCATION ISSUES

Ongoing relocation issues which are connected to mining, the mining infrastructure and mine waste were reported across all conversations. In many cases, people were relocated to land that does not belong to them or their clan. Relocation contributed to there being a shortage of land for gardening. These difficulties in accessing adequate land to garden have contributed to some community members moving to areas where gardening is more difficult (such as steep mountainsides), population increases in some areas, and damage to existing land.

“Everything was about them, everything was not about us”

- Male 40-50 PMAR

Community members shared the opinion that no proper planning was done for relocations. Housing was not appropriate or well made. It was also too small, it was designed for nuclear family units not communal groups and there was a misunderstanding of how people in Bougainville live. The houses were designed with Western ideas of family, living and land, rather than understanding the ways of the people in the relocated areas.



View from Panguna, includes the Tailings and downstream areas

The land was described as being used to sustain people for foods and cash crops. When people were relocated they often found it difficult to engage in economic activities. There were also limited or no services provided. Toilets built in the resettlement areas for Dapera were poorly constructed and filled up in six months, polluted the surrounding areas and were never repaired or properly addressed.

Families are continuing to grow and the relocated areas are not able to support this growth in terms of housing and gardening space. Connected to social wellbeing, relocated communities reported a fear of losing identity and of what land belonged to them.

DAMAGE CAUSED DURING MINING MUST BE REPAIRED OR COMPENSATED FOR

There is a strong belief among community members, with links to customary practices, that whoever caused the wrong must address the wrong. In this case, it is the damage that was caused by the mine operation. In some contexts, this was connected to customary ideas of reconciliation and a sense of healing. In others, it was more specifically to deal with environmental damages such as issues of contamination or waste management. Communities described different ways of addressing the wrongs, for some it was in the form of development such as education programs, for others it was monetary compensation. For other community members, they requested that contaminated and damaged areas be repaired.

Communities expressed clearly that all damage needs to be addressed in both lease and non-lease areas.

“BCL must pay for the damages.¹”

- Male, PMAR

“Compensation of loss of lives and properties by the responsible party.”

- Female, 55, PMAR

“After listening to interviews with 30 people within the mine-affected areas, in the Mid and Lower Tailings and from the Fish Owners Association, I learned many things. I thought these problems based there were just for the people of the Lower Tailings, but listening these three days and sharing with the presentation with the 22 Listeners I saw and I felt that the struggles are in each and every one of the mine-affected areas. I had a big surprise when I was in the Lower Tailings in a place we call Kokore. There is a village that is divided by a road that the company was using. The people there told us that the road divides the village, and both sides of the village are in the mine-affected area- but one side of the village is in the lease area and one side is not.”

-Listener, Female



¹ This quote refers to the company BCL backed by Rio Tinto who opened the mine in 1972.

Memory of first big machines during the operation of the mine

THERE WAS NOT ADEQUATE COMMUNITY AWARENESS BEFORE MINING STARTED

All of the communities shared the opinion that there was inadequate or no awareness before mining started. Some conversations regarded elders as being manipulated by exchange or goods such as tobacco. In areas such as the PMAR and Loloho, there were protests and the company was described as coming in forcibly, in some cases with the police and with bulldozers. The decision to come into the area was perceived as being between the government and the company, but did not engage adequately with the local people.

This lack of community awareness is mourned as it is perceived to have contributed to many of the losses that resulted. Adequate community awareness is also mentioned in regards to any future steps in the Panguna mine-affected areas.

DESIRE FOR UNITED, TRANSPARENT LEADERSHIP THAT IS PEOPLE CENTERED

Conversations across communities expressed a desire for united, transparent leadership that is people centered. This is linked to perceptions that leadership approaches have changed since mining started and connected to this, communities have seen unequal distribution of benefits. Mining benefits were described as being mismanaged or not shared equally.

Communities shared the opinion that the leadership of the chiefs and custom was important, but that it has lost influence.

Some communities strongly emphasised leadership as one of their biggest challenges. People across the area are interested in peaceful and effective leadership. For some, this involved personal responsibility describing leadership starting in the home and family and extending through the clans and community structures.

“Our future is in our own hands, respect for the authorities must be restored.”

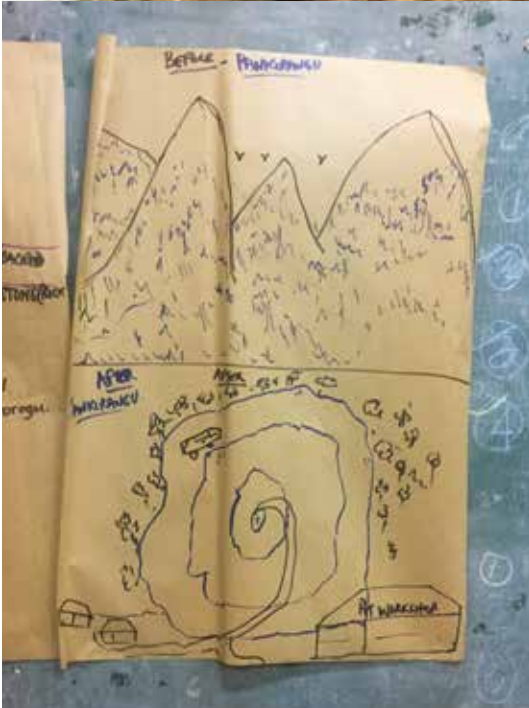
- Male, 50-55, Mid Tailings

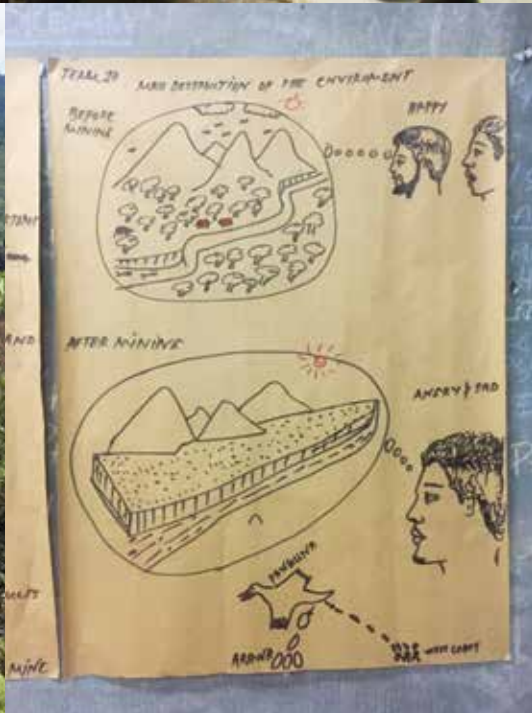
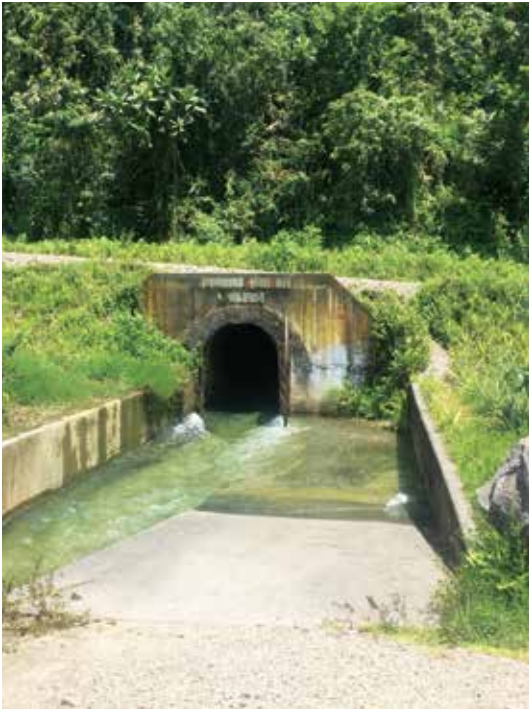
“Bougainville is like being in a bank safe where only the owner knows the code. The inside is made of iron coated with cement bricks. Francis Ona was the leader who freed us from these bounds, but today this leadership has vanished. And the question is who has the key today, where is the nature of the leadership today?”

- Youth leader, SML



Panguna mine pit, Pankirangku





DURING MINING PEOPLE DID NOT BENEFIT EQUALLY

Communities felt dissatisfied with how people benefited unequally during mining. This set up an “in or out” group dynamic which has caused lasting divisions and inequities. Conversations described how this included unequal sharing of lease compensation. In some cases, elders did not share equally with families and communities. The establishment of businesses by the company was also perceived as unfair in that income generating projects such as raising chickens or pigs were not given to local communities and that the company was benefiting both from the mine as well as the surrounding businesses.

Despite many promises of employment, conversations reported that the most frequent sign people saw on the company door was “sorri no got work” and many people were disappointed that there were no opportunities.

“Community based developments were inadequate.”
- Female, 59, PMAR

Some people benefitted from mining, for example they experienced a good education for their children or themselves, especially those who had family members working for BCL. ²

MINING IMPACTED ON SOCIAL LIFE AND WELLBEING

Community members spoke of the changes regarding social life and wellbeing that were brought during and after mining. In some cases, these were described as positive changes in that there was increased access to roads, and improvements in communication and healthcare. There were also social programs which were viewed positively. These positive elements were not experienced by all and the majority of those who were seen to benefit were in the towns not the rural areas.

*“Namung tampa demounamung otoa.
Namung tampa mangtomarunamung otoa”*
“Not a day of happiness, not a day of satisfaction have I come upon.”
- Male, 70, SML



Members of the Listening team in the Lower Tailings



Members of the Listening team at Tunuru Catholic Mission Station

² These comments indicate the company hiring workers during the mine operation.

“Culture and tradition are dying out”

- Youth, 20, SML-

After mining stopped, many social activities, such as sporting events, and healthcare services decreased, declines which are still seen today. There was a perceived loss of communities’ social wellbeing and there were many conversations filled with a sense of frustration and helplessness.

Communities perceive that there were new social problems that emerged such as drinking and loss of culture which still effect wellbeing today. Many people described “not having hope.”

STRONG DESIRE FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE GENERATION

A strong sentiment from all communities in the different areas was a desire for opportunities for the future generations. These opportunities were described as including a focus on education, both academic and skills training. There was also interest in seeing the youth and the future generations having better healthcare and access to services.

“I often cry while talking to the youths.”

- Youth, 30, SML

Currently, many people are concerned about providing school fees for their children as well as having access to quality education. There are also ongoing challenges around access to education. Some students need to walk across the Jaba river or up the waste heaps in the Tailings to attend school. In addition to academic education, there is also an interest in ongoing livelihood education for those who are out of school or who were unable to finish schooling due to the crisis to be able to continue to gain knowledge and skills.

“I could have been somebody somewhere if I had gained knowledge in school.”

- Widower-PMAR

“There has to be something provided for the youth to help minimise the issues.”

- Male, 70-80, PMAR

PAST AND PRESENT CONCERN AROUND FOREIGNERS COMING IN AND USE OF LAND

During the operation of the Panguna mine, there was an influx of foreign workers, people from other parts of Bougainville as well as from mainland PNG. Many people commented on how this negatively affected community wellbeing and that they felt as though they had no control or decision making power in this situation, that they did not have a say in things. The stories emphasised how the people in the mine-affected areas care deeply about their communities and way of life. In this period of rapid change many people felt worried about the influences of other people and their cultures. Some of these concerns continue today in regards to outsiders coming into the mine-affected areas.



Pipeline at Kuneka, Lower Tailings

“Squatter settlements all around towns were a high risk for our women”

-Male, 40, SML

MIXED PERCEPTIONS ON ALLUVIAL MINING

Throughout the conversations, there were mixed perceptions on alluvial mining. Some people see it as important source of income. In some cases, it was described as the only way of generating income and some families use it as a way to finance school fees.

Concerns were also raised around the environmental impact and the possibility of compounding existing issues such as the use of strong chemicals and the possibility of contributing to further pollution. For example, in the conversations concerns came up in Moroni regarding alluvial mining that is happening by the side of the road and underneath it. There are fears that the road is going to collapse, and that it is contributing to the sediment in the river yet there was also uncertainty expressed of how to address this issue.

RECOGNITION OF COMMUNITY ABILITY TO ADAPT AND INNOVATE EVEN IN THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

Despite many challenges, communities shared a sense of appreciation that during the crisis and until today they have been able to survive. Some conversations shared stories from the crisis such as creating ways to generate hydroelectric power, while others pointed to individuals who have been successful. One story included a Bougainvillean way to climb trees which was seen as innovative and useful in other areas for industry.

“I must think out of the box to survive.”

-Male, 45, Upper Tailings



Storytelling Dapera village, SML

KEY DIFFERENCES

A central learning that emerged from the Listening conversations was that while similarities exist, there are also significant differences between the communities and lease areas in the mine-affected areas. This is due to diverse communities as well as differing environmental contexts. In the process of analysis, this also became an important reflection point for the team of Listeners. In some cases, Listeners expressed how they were not aware of the challenges facing other areas of the mine-affected communities, and that this exchange was valuable and eye opening. Voicing these differences is important because through the Listening process it surfaced that many people did not know or were not aware of the diverse challenges facing each area, even if they were close by. Due to the limitations of the process, this analysis does not cover all possible variations between these areas. Key differences centre around the themes of: wildlife/marine life, access to clean water, garden and cash crops, traditional housing materials, and relocation. For example, in the Lower Tailings, access to clean water is difficult, while in the Upper Tailings there is more access to clean drinking water. The Lower Tailings reported great destruction to wildlife and the wasteland cannot be used for gardens any more. In SML there are also difficulties with garden crops, yet there have been some successful attempts at planting trees and reforestation.

“As [a] person who lives away from this I can almost feel the pain from listening.”

- Female, Listener, Arawa

INSIGHTS FROM LISTENERS

The 22 Listening team members came from areas both inside and outside the mine-affected communities. One of the most powerful aspects that emerged during the analysis of the stories collected by the Listening teams was the value of hearing the experiences of other Listeners and the voices of different communities. Listeners expressed that they had not known before what was happening in other places and communities, even if geographically they were fairly close. Some Listeners remarked that they remembered some of the things happening that were shared in the listening conversations with communities but that they had never known what they meant. One of the Listeners described how upset she was during some of the women’s stories and how it connected to her own childhood. The Listeners learned new things and there were many stories that they did not know about their own places. They also reported that some of the young people had no knowledge of what the landscape looked like before the mine, some youth were unaware that a valley had been covered by tailings, or that Dapera village was built on back fill from the mine.

Overall the Listeners emphasised how important it had been for communities to be able to share their voices. That the Listening process created a space for people to reflect and in some ways to relieve a component of the many heavy feelings that they are still carrying regarding their personal experience of living in the mine-affected areas.



Large trucks buried in Panguna mine pit

STORYTELLING SESSIONS-PHASE 2

The results from the Listening component were analysed and used to create an initial report which was taken back and shared with communities in the mine-affected areas. After presenting the results, community members were asked to share stories with the PLP team and with each other in response to the results and about what sustains them in dealing with life during and after the operation of the Panguna Mine. Participants shared multiple stories and songs, which were documented, printed and returned to the communities. These are stories of the challenges and losses people have experienced as well as what sustains them during hard times and hopes for the future.

Community members from the Lower, Mid and Upper Tailings, SML, PMAR gathered together to share stories of their experiences including representatives from: Dapera, Moroni, Kupe, Guava, Pirurari, Oune, Darenai, Enamira, Pinenari Ward, Marako Ward, West Apiatei Ward, East Apiatei Ward, (Ururwara) Rorovana Ward 1, 2 & 3, Simeku Ward, Baboku Ward, Sikolewa Ward, Koro Ward, Tokaku Ward, and the Coastal Corridor and Fish Owners Associations. Two day storytelling sessions were held in November 2018 at Morgan Junction Market, Dapera village and Moitaka in Bolave.



Bishop Unabali with PLP Listeners and Stakeholders at Manetai Catholic Mission

STORIES FROM THE PANGUNA MINE-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

SINGING PEACE INTO THE COMMUNITY

Our story is about things that happened in our communities. Our chief had a job, he used to lead the community. He used to make peace and the knowledge he used was wanbel (kastom). His words had power because his ancestors passed down the knowledge. The power passed down from father to son. He used his strength to make a peaceful life in the community and good relationships.

This is the song we sang when we experienced the changes caused to our land by the mining company.

- Hedwig

This is a traditional song in Nagovis language:

Kuiato

*Onoriko onoriko
Company porounung
Nikangko kansiko
Kera oarimaung
Oi...oi...oi...oi
Tumang nenkeaunung
Bake tampa masika*

*We were living here
When Company came
Came and Dug our Land
Oi...oi...oi...oi
They have dug so much
As though it is their land*

NEW STORIES

I will share what I experienced during the Listening process, many of the stories, I heard for the first time, they were new to me. By going to other places, I learned many things. At first, I was thinking that I would only speak to the chiefs, we faced challenges, so I took ownership of the project to interview the people. I learned about many of the things that the company did. From the older people I learned that there were many chemicals from the mine and that customs had been lost. Custom is one of the guides of identity.

- Pauline

STILL WAITING

I was a shareholder for BCL, I still have not received any dividends from the Bougainville Copper Foundation.

- William

A BLESSING OF FISH

My story is about fish. When the company came, it destroyed all the fish. Now when we want to eat fish, we get it from our relatives from the beach. When the company was here they used to buy fish that was brought from Australia. Then the company started putting tilapia in the Jaba and the tributaries. We still have tilapia today. That is a gift from God.

- John

WE ARE PROUD THAT WE ARE STILL ALIVE

My people, we have nothing here, our lives are very hard. There was no plan for what would happen when the mine closed. For many of us we have no hope and when I think of my people it is so hard, it is so sad when I think of my people. This is a man-made disaster and we need help to change it. This is not our natural land, it is waste from the mine. A young man died and yesterday we buried him in the village, we had to dig out the gravel to bury him.

We hope for education for our children, for future generations and that they know the story of what we have gone through, that they know the story of the people of Bougainville. I think that Bougainville history should be part of the required curriculum for the children here. Right now it is not included and they do not know about their place. Custom is very important and it helps to give us strength. We hope that BCL will come back and clean up the mess that they made. My people need support for long term plans as we have suffered so much. It is very hard to garden, we have to go up on the mountain as all the top soil was washed away. We are not able to grow any cash crops, but do the best we can with our vegetable gardens. We do have plenty of fresh water, it is cool even like you take it from the fridge, that is a good resource.

- Luke



Path to school through mine waste

KNOWLEDGE GAVE US STRENGTH

Before the mining came, I used to have a cocoa block and look after pigs. Everything was in abundance when there was no pollution. Always there is the question-How will I look after my family? When the mine was opened, some of us did not get the benefits from the mine. When the crisis came and affected the mine, our eyes were opened. We started to think about the things we used to do before the mine such as gardening, tending cocoa blocks and pigs. That knowledge gave us strength.

- Kolouwa

FOUR STRENGTHS

Our story is about four things which give us strength. First is spirituality, during the hard times everyone was committed in their prayers and these were very powerful, it was like we were seeing our prayers being answered. Our second strength is resources, the land was our resource. What little land we had we used it to sustain our lives, through gardening. During those days there were no income generating opportunities. The only way we survived was from our food gardens. The third strength is human resources and community groups, we survived because we helped each other. The people needed each other. From doing it and knowing it, we survived from the resources of the land. Our fourth strength is custom, families and our elders helped each other. We needed each other's support. Everyone contributed in their own small ways in trying to make ends meet. We also have songs which helped us through difficult times.

- Joanne

CUSTOM SONG IN NAGOVIS LANGUAGE

*Wilowilo maliai
Nil Bougainville
Nikam mesi wilo babiai
Kabani ke megebung
Megebuma lalobung
labai lada wela pirugo*

*Let's cry the people of Bougainville
Let's cry for our land
The company has dug out
Down to the river to the sea*

- Women's group



Storytelling Dapera village, SML

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

In 1969, when I was a little boy, the white man came. I saw how strength was lost. From 1971-1974 I went to school, and when I was in school the mining was operating in Panguna. At that time everything about the town was sweet so I left school and went to Arawa. I did not finish school. The people who finished school started working at the Panguna mine while I stayed at home.

In 1989 when the crisis started I didn't have any skills. During the crisis, I learned some new skills. I learned about carpentry, the school was through Boleuko Parish Human Development started by the Bishop when he was a priest. I also attended some other courses, skills about mediating, and then I took a course to become a Magistrate and now I work for the government as a Magistrate.

- John

IT IS HARD TO DO GARDENING ON OTHER PEOPLE'S LAND

We are sisters, not real sisters but from the same clan. We will both tell part of the story. I will talk about how I faced the difficulties. My land was destroyed. They gave me a piece of land here, when I had no land, my cousin brothers helped me and gave me some land to do some gardening. When the mining destroyed everything, the land that was left was split among three clans. Now there are lots of land disputes between the clans caused by population growth and a small land area. We have land disputes within our own clans. I am doing my gardening on other tribes' land because my land is covered by the mine waste. It is hard to do gardening on other people's land. When I am faced with all these situations, I always commit myself spiritually. When I do so, I find peace and assistance and some form from other people. This is why I always encourage people to commit themselves spiritually as there are always blessings and answers to your prayers.

- Regina

THE CHEMICALS DESTROYED THE FERTILITY OF THE LAND

I would not be here if the mine did not destroy my land down there. We used to eat balanced meals full of protein like wild cuscus (possum) and fish. The food was in abundance due to high crop yields.

The mining destroyed my cocoa plantation. My late husband planted that plantation for me and for my family. I have so many children and grandchildren who should be surviving from that plantation, but we are not getting help from that plantation today. The last time we harvested the crop we got 6000 kina and that was the end. My vegetables were also destroyed but compensation was not paid for these things as well. The company constructed the road, but the road was not built for my benefit it was for their own benefit.

I moved back and I am residing at my original land. The chemicals from the mine destroyed the fertility of the land. Now there is nothing left here and there is not enough food. There was lot of destruction to our properties, so I think BCL should not come back as it might cause more damage.

- Putuari

THE ROLE OF MONEY

You can think that I am helping BCL, but I am not. All the people are blaming the company. Some of our men are still knocking at BCL's door, asking for money. Our leaders are only thinking about money. There is misconduct with money. Equal sharing of money is important. Services are not reaching the poor. When there is some funding only the people up there get the money. Almost 100% of the people are suffering from the effects of the mine. More destruction and damages should not be allowed to take place.

- William

OUR HOUSES ARE BUILT ON CHEMICALS

My story is about the Mid-tailings where the level of destruction is also huge. When BCL came and destroyed the land the people had to be relocated to the mountains. Life is hard, it is difficult for the children to have an education. The land that our houses is built on is full of chemical contamination and the posts become rusted from the chemicals and the houses start to lean. Relocation was carried out without proper consultation and was done poorly and the standard of the buildings was very poor. The buildings that were built during relocation are not there today as they were poorly constructed. Our story is similar to destruction of the Lower Tailings. Today we are rebuilding our own houses and the standard is acceptable.

- Michael



New river diversion, Lower Tailings



Quicksand on the Katauri Track

WALKING THROUGH QUICKSAND

In our area, there is no bridge and to get our goods to market we have to walk across a flooded area. There is also quicksand here. We have a way to walk on quicksand so that we don't get stuck, even when carrying bags of cocoa. It is difficult but we have found a way.

- Bonaventure

OUR RIVERS ARE DAMAGED

My story is about things that happened before the mine. Most of the story, I heard from my parents. Before the mine, everything was in abundance like birds, and food. My parents were relocated. They left their original village at Waruwaru and came to the Pangara river. Before the mine, they used to camp beside the river and build traditional traps called tolona, they would catch fish and also possum and then carry it back to the village.

Before mining started, a priest from Germany told my father, to buy some land from Lower Tailings so that later, his children would get some compensation from the mining company. My parents refused to purchase land from the Lower Tailings and my father said that if I stay here and bought land, where would the original land owners go?

Then the fish started to die in great numbers, even in the tributaries and then it spread towards the rivers, as the Jaba river was contaminated. Compensation was done for the fish only, not for the river. To make up for the lost fish, they are feeding tilapia in fish ponds, but when they made the fish ponds they are causing some destruction and soil erosion. Now the alluvial gold mining from the Pangara to the Kavarong river, is causing damage they are even using some machines. We must find a way to stop them as the destruction is continuing.

- Pauline



Storytelling, Morgan Market, Itakara, PMAR

THINK OF THE FUTURE GENERATIONS

A message to the people who bought land from people in Lower Tailings. If the compensation the mine gave you is not enough don't ask for more land as I will not give it to you again.

It is very important to mention that the destruction of the Tailings is continuing, very soon it will go out of control. We cannot get rid of the destruction because it is happening on a large scale. It needs to be fixed, we need help as the village people, we can't do it on our own, we can't handle it, it is too big. We need help with some large machines. The destruction is going out of the BCL activity boundaries, it is affecting our lives and is a threat to our land and our livelihood. Other areas will be affected soon as well.

During the mining the land was covered by waste, tons of sand. As long as the tons of sand stays up in Panguna the destruction will continue. If you block the tributaries, even the people up there on top, they will drown.

The chemicals in the environment are very dangerous, but we can't tell what is happening to our health. We don't know what the effect will be for our physical health.

Relocation is also an ongoing issue. BCL relocated people from the coastal areas and relocated them to our traditional land, when they should have been moved to their own traditional land. The population growth there with the relocated communities is causing problems. This is a long-term issue.

I always ask myself what is the objective of CRA, how do the Bougainville people benefit. Only a little bit of the objective was to distribute the benefits and services from the mine. The number one mistake they made was a forced landing. What BCL did to us we are still suffering from, some physically, some from trauma, some from the environment, and some from the crisis. I think that CRA/BCL did not have respect for the Bougainvilleans, they underestimated us. They did not respect the Bougainvilleans, the other provinces benefited more than we did. They did not do enough to sustain the people in terms of education. Don't think of yourselves now, think of the future generations.

- Michael

THE ANIMALS WERE WASHED AWAY

Before the mine you would see that the old people had strong white teeth because they had good food from the gardens. Today, our teeth are rotten because we eat modern food. Our nature was destroyed overnight with big brown tides which came down from the mine area and destroyed the trees.

When I was in school, the rivers washed away all the animals, like possums and pigs. It also washed away the sago houses and it destroyed our gardens, it looked like pigs destroying it. Today when you go on the vehicles you will see that we don't have any land, it is barren land now. The ones who are just newly arrived coming from Koiare, are building houses just along rivers. Our sorrow, our heartfelt sorrow, because of the land being filled up by the waste and the valley has been filled.

Before, the possums were just being collected on the ground. Today we don't have any hunting grounds and you will see that we are not fat. Fish are also destroyed. Before, our ancestors did a lot of feasting, inviting people from Guava and the surrounding areas for the feast. Today we don't do feasts like that.

- Teresa



Bridge covered by sediment

WE LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER

I will tell a story of our lives at Katauli. When we were relocated at first, we were so happy. We thought it was a good thing, being relocated. When they relocated us, they did not build proper houses. Straight after we were relocated, the houses had leaking roofs and our lives were not easy. The company built water tanks from cement and they broke. Today we don't have proper drinking water. We only drink rain water from our houses because of the broken tanks. During the raining season we line up all the pots to collect rain water.

Our land was destroyed due to the tailings. When the company started work, the tailings grew over the land and polluted the water. This destruction lasts till today. Where we live now, the land is swampy and our lives are hard. Our families had cocoa and coconut plantations, and the company promised that they would pay compensation for the crops destroyed. Even though we were being relocated they then told me that the crops were out of the lease boundary, and we did not receive compensation.

The company constructed roads for the relocation but today all those roads have been destroyed and it is hard to transport dried cocoa beans. Today we use our shoulders to carry the bags to where we can get to transport. We have to cross the polluted Jaba river, walking through it carrying bags, this is not safe. It is the same when people are sick as the hospital is far away. We carry our sick people across the river to the hospital.

For education, the students have to travel a long distance to go to school, it is dangerous for the students to cross over the rivers as they are polluted and there is also quicksand. It is very dangerous for them to travel to school, but still they go. We have plans to build a school at our location, but we are still looking for support to build the school. We are still hoping and planning for it.

During relocation, the company only built one house per family and the population has increased. The question is how and where will we get help for more housing. Now there are many families living under one roof. The only source of income is cocoa. We have some pigs, but we don't have a proper pig fence to look after them. Because our land is swampy, we tried to make gardens on the higher lands because the land is full of water.

One of our strengths is that in the past, people used to look after each other. For example, if your relatives see you have a shortage, they come and help your needs that is how our people survived. We continue to do this to help each other out today. During times of hunger, the older people would advise that if the potatoes are not producing so much you go and process sago so that you would have food to eat. For hunting if we got more than what we needed for that

day, we would smoke the meat to preserve it and keep it for another day so that it didn't rot away. Our traditional practices and effort of gardening helped us to survive. We continue to garden because we depend on food to survive. Even if the produce is not a big yield, we continue.

- Dominic

IF YOU WORK YOU EAT

My story is about the land destroyed by the mine. It is about how we survived in terms of food. When the mining destroyed our land we got creative with what remained. When I am doing my gardening I will leave some blocks free for the next garden to rotate crops. Sometimes I use grass to fertilize the ground because the land fertility was destroyed by the chemicals in the land. My grandparents told me, "If you work you will eat, if you stay idle you will starve. If you don't work in the garden your children will become thieves and steal other people's food." The elders also told me that before the mine, the garden foods were higher yield than today.

- Barbara

CHANGES IN EDUCATION

My story is about how the mine destroyed education. I used to teach people before the mine. Before the mine opened, the young boys were very strong. They used to walk a long distance over the mountains and they learned many new things about nature. When mining started, most of the boys went to work in the mine because of the high pay. Even some of the teachers left their schools to work in the mine. Only a few remained at home and teaching. Some of the good teachers who could have taught the children well went to the mine. After the crisis, the children didn't learn new things. They didn't have education. Two things contributed to the negative mindset of the children, the mine and the Bougainville crisis. After the crisis, most of the teachers are volunteer teachers, not full teachers and that is why the students are not doing very well at school. Some children are now going to school and getting good teachers because of the new graduates. Before the Panguna mine, there was a high level of education in Bougainville. Due to the crisis the education level became low. Now, the education level is starting to improve.

- Martin

WHERE TO GO?

I come from the most affected area, the Lower Tailings, from the mouth of the Jaba river. My story is about skills, knowledge and strength after relocation. Exploration started in about the 1960's, then after exploration, the operation of the mine started. When operation started around the 1970's, the Jaba river started to become muddy. The people were confused they thought it was a flood, but the flood didn't go down for a month, it kept coming and coming. After 2-3 months, there were no changes. After that the company came down, notifying us that we had to leave our place. My father is a chief and a landowner of the Mematanga clan. He gathered all the clan members and moved them up to a new location which is where I grew up. The Chief, my father, he had to build his skills, knowledge and value and relocate his people. The priority for us at that time was education and a hospital. Another Chief took his people to the coast line, my father moved us up and inland away from the coast. When we were relocated, BCL built us low-cost houses with no tanks. There was no drinking water, because it is a swampy land, we had to drink the water from the swamp. We stayed there, for years and the operation of the mine was still going on. We have a Lower Tailings Association, we have asked for things to be done, but nothing has been done. No help has come to the Lower Tailings since BCL left the island. We are still there today on my father's land. My family's traditional land has been completely destroyed. I can't grow anything.

Here it is a matrilineal society. My mother used the compensation from the mine to send me to school and to pay for school fees. That is a skill and knowledge that I have. I started my grade 1 in 1974, and completed grammar school and attended Buin High School and completed grade 10 in 1983. I value my education, as these are the knowledge and skills that I am using to help my people.

The population continues to grow with the 14 clans that my father moved up to that location. Now I have to stay on the swampy lands. There is a land shortage as we only have a small amount of land. To survive on the piece of land, we have a small cocoa block, this is different than our traditional lands. To help with this small block of land we have to go fishing to earn our income to help our families to live.

Many clans are living in the swampy lands. Some people are relocating again, some going this way and some that way. My father's clan started to complain, we are out of the land that my father owns and are causing population growth and that we have to move to land that is not my father's. The population growth is causing social problems and damage to the land. Each clan chief needs to make a decision to use their skills, knowledge and values to bring their people to their own traditional land because of these problems. So now, some clans need to go back to their own traditional lands. Some clans are staying with us. That is the issue during operation. Resettlement back to our traditional land needs to be done by BCL, that is our main issue. I am trying to move back to my former land, which is still destroyed. The land that my father gave me is swampy land, when my father dies I will have to leave as it is a matrilineal society. Our situation is different to the situation of Kataori, because these people were relocated to their clan land, while we were not on our own clan land.

For those of us, the generations that were there before the mine, there is a story for the generation of today because those generations did not see how beautiful the Jaba river was before the operation of the mine. It is very sad to tell them the land they live on is swamp.

- Bernard



Tang' river Leila area, Lower Tailings

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS

I am from Siwai, Haisi Motona Huyono Constituency. During the mine operation, I was working at the mine. When I was in primary school, my father died. My mother gave me strength so that I could go on and finish school so that I could go on and get a job. I finished grammar school in 1973 and 1974-77 went to high school. I completed high school, and my aim was to go out to further my studies. But I started working at BCL and was involved in sports. When I was playing sports there they gave me an offer for a scholarship. I didn't want to go as I had everything there, a good paying job and a sports team. I was working at the waste site and they were pumping waste into the Jaba river. While I was working there I did not realise the damage that was being done to other areas. BCL was giving on the job training, such as management training with the possibility of progressing to a senior position.

When I was working there I met my wife, Agnes and we got married. Then the crisis came. BCL wanted me to work in another mine, but I came back home. My third born child was born during the crisis.

When working at the mine, I didn't realise the destruction that the mine operation was causing, but during the crisis I saw the destruction. Some of the skills I got from my time with the mining company were working with people and management skills. With these skills, I helped the communities at home during the crisis and for restoration of government services after the crisis in Bana district.

We have a land shortage due to the population increase. When I came home with my family, we didn't have enough land. We have a little cocoa block, and a little garden for kaukau (sweet potato). Because of the land shortage, we prioritised education. My wife and I see that only through education we will survive such issues of land shortages of the results caused by the mining and increase of population in the Lower and Mid Tailings of the mine-affected areas. We make sure that our children go to school to get an education and to get employment so that they can get money and stay and work. I encourage other families to send their children to school.

My strength is my family and my clan who continue to support me and my family to sustain us during hardship. With the management skills as a worker with BCL I continue to help people and get employed elsewhere. At the moment, I am working with the District Community Development Department. I am working to help the people.

- Joe

THE BENEFIT OF THE ROAD

I am from the Coastal Corridor. Before the mine, we didn't have a road. BCL did some destruction but also there were some benefits like building the road. Before BCL there used to be a road built by the missionaries, but it was not in good condition. Because of the road built by BCL we can sell our goods to other places.

-John

BALANCING THE GOOD AND BAD

I am trying to bring out the good things that the company brought in, also the bad things, I'm in the middle. We have to balance it, for the people of Bougainville look at it from both good and bad. The company caused big damages, they also did some good things.

On the good side they brought knowledge and skills. The knowledge the company gave us at that time is more than what we are getting now. Then the crisis came.

The people who were educated in 1980s they have much better knowledge than those at this present time. For whatever reasons are we not getting a good education at this time. Probably we don't have money, or we have corruption. Something is damaged. When the crisis came, the corruption has become worse.

On the bad side, BCL brought in chemicals and destruction. The first destruction it made was dividing the landowners. By bringing in money, people began to value money as something important. When BCL came they distracted us from the very start because they introduced money. They distracted from our land boundaries, the chief systems, and they divided the people and the chiefs. By doing that we still have arguments on the land even at the family level, also at the village level there are disputes over the land. In the past, our ancestors' living was based on sharing and caring, today there comes money which encourages land demarcation within clan's land boundaries. People claim to have more land with the intention of planting cash crops or doing business activities.

When the company was here, we had noise pollution from the equipment at Morgan junction and the crusher. Also, chemicals spilled a lot around those areas as they used it as a dumping ground. Dump areas should be far away from villages, this one was not.

- Peter



Ruins of the primary crusher from the Panguna mine.



Road between the Jaba and Kavarong rivers in the mine-affected areas.

RELOCATION

When BCL came, they relocated me. The place I live now I was relocated to. The place I live now I will not move from. There is no place for me to go now. There was not a good road system built in my area. When we tried to create our own income generating activities, the company came in with its own large business entities and that blocked the local people from generating their own income. The company benefited so much from our land from all the resources it was getting out from my land, but nothing of that kind came back to us. All it was paying us was 20 kina per hectare, that was all that was given to us for our land. I will not move away from where I am today as I have no other place to go to. BCL did not do anything good for me and my family. That is why we do not want them to come back again.

- Lazarus

ALLUVIAL MINING AFFECTS OUR PHYSICAL BEING, YET SUPPORTS US WITH INCOME

In Moroni we live in four hamlets and we are concerned about chemicals. Moroni Units 1, 2,3 are doing the alluvial mining on the road side, Unit 4 is at the concentrator. The concentrator has a lot of chemicals left by BCL. My Unit 4 is doing the alluvial mining where there are chemicals in the transformers and other radiation. We are having health issues like eye problems, cuts on our legs and it is affecting our physical being. There are some areas that we are very worried about.

We request that people and the food chain be checked by research specialists for heavy metals such as copper, iron, sulphur, mercury etc. We would like to know if they are at normal levels, so many parts per million (PPM) as per FDA Standards (Food and Drug Administration).

We would also like respiratory, blood and cervical checks. Lots of rubber, linatex, polyvinyls and motors were burnt out for months and no hospital checks were done on people who inhaled the gases. Women who wash gold are submerged in water that is waist deep. They must be checked as water contains sulphur, PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) and other things. People who have squatted next to switch yards and the transformers should be checked for PCBs in tissues and blood.

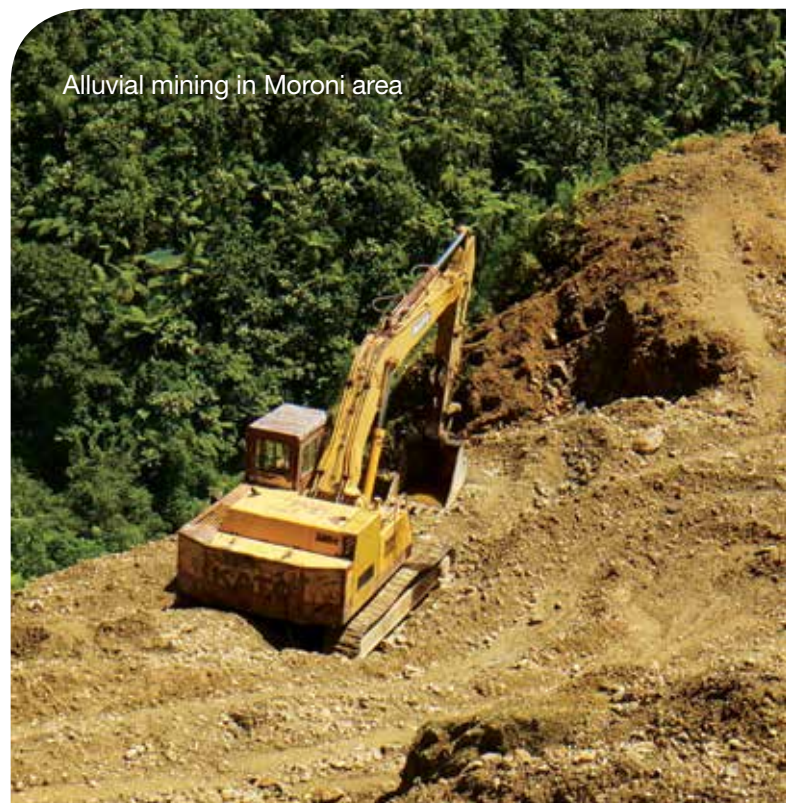
The concentrator complex has aged badly, especially the flotation section and floors have begun to collapse. Regarding alluvial mining, mercury and nitric acid have been misused at home in villages, and no precautions have been taken.

We have these problems, at the same time, by doing the alluvial mining we are supporting ourselves to have income.

We also have a food shortage problem. This whole year we have suffered with this problem and we have not had any support from the government or any other means. We are facing these challenges, we are struggling with no help. For all of these chemicals who is going to help us? We don't know how to change it and we are worried that our bodies will be affected by these chemicals and that we are dying at an early age.

Up till today, the pit mine is not in a good state. We think there is something happening with the chemicals in the mine and that they are now in the air. How will the company compensate us?

- Josephine



Alluvial mining in Moroni area

GROWING COCOA

This story is based on the pollution in the tailings. I have no crops. To help me to start over again, I would like some help with agriculture, we must have help to tell us about the modern ways of farming. We are especially interested in cocoa. We need help to be able to plant in any environment or condition. Now when we are planting cocoa trees we can't grow them as they grow in other areas.

- John





THE DESTRUCTION CONTINUES

The waste from the mine is still causing destruction, it is moving trees downwards and it is starting to block tributaries. The destruction is still continuing and affecting new areas. I think in the Upper Tailings the destruction has stopped, but in the Lower Tailings it is still continuing. The waste is still blocking the Kuneka river which is a tributary the Jaba river.

- Michael

SONG

*We are crying for our land
We are crying for our land that has been destroyed
They dug out our land and the waste has been washed
out to the sea.
We cry for our land.*

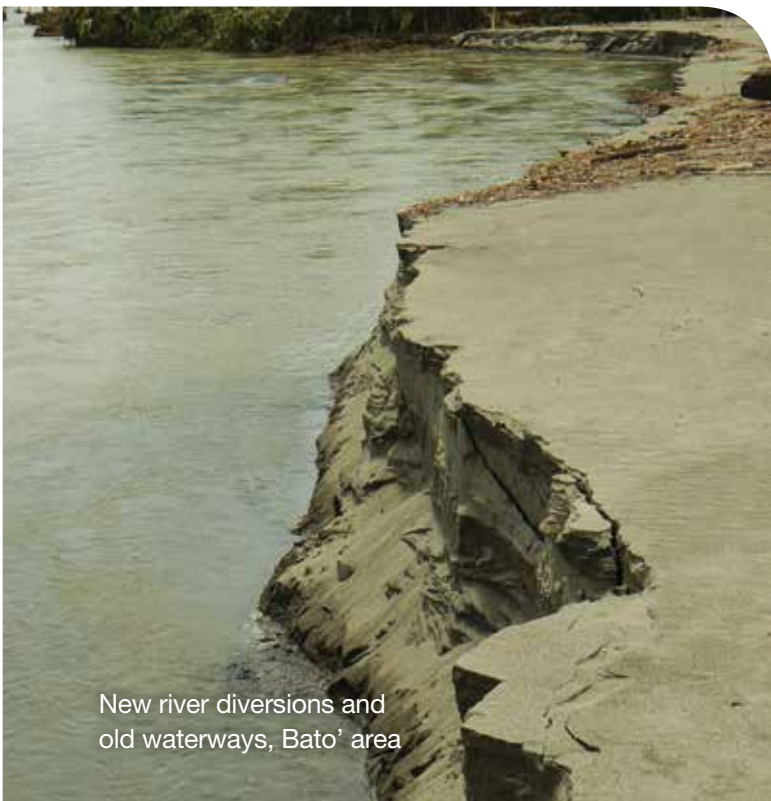
- Women

BIRONG BIRONG

*Birong birong maria ni osiokara
Nikaana kansj, birong panpiman
Kampani ke nenkeu, nenkenura duaung
Java ke danto pirungko*

The land that has been all the villages, we have to cry for the land that has been destroyed. CRA has destroyed our land, and the soil, everything has been washed out to the sea.

Company has destroyed our land.



New river diversions and old waterways, Bato' area

TAUKONAANG-SHARING KAIKAI, SHARING FOOD

We discussed and shared stories about three areas. We looked inside tradition, inside kastom. We came up with kastom as a part of women's knowledge, and taukonaang, sharing food. When the women came back from the gardens they used to share their food at the river, if one woman doesn't have enough taro, the women give her some. If one woman doesn't have kaukau, the other women will exchange to make sure she has enough. This sharing of kaikai, of food- feasting and singing, when feasting, we share food, during that feast, even if you don't have a lot. If a woman gives you good, you try to give something back to her at another time.

We also share food with family. If you don't have food, we share food at the family level, for example if your sister needs food you will give some to her. We also share food in a general sense. If you leave your child with a lady to look after, you need to give her some food, if she looks after your child, it is appreciation, it is responsibility, it is called taukoanang.

We also tell stories, when we are washing the clothes, weaving biriko (native umbrella), karamani (mats), tora (traditional bags for carrying) and when preparing food. We exchange stories, from the elders, for example about the passing of land. These are stories about how land comes to you, inheriting the land. We have songs for making babies sleep- lullabies, songs of love, and happiness, songs of sorrows, moro, time of feast.

Native sing sing, or siriroi, (songs) also teach us. For example, Derekona, it is a feast or special event of commemorating the death of a person. It is a special time, and initiations of giving honour take place at this time. Toro toro is composing a song, songs of happiness. We also compose songs about kansj (land) and the strength it provides, land is life. We also have kokonaang (lullaby) which we believe will help the child to go to sleep while we sing the kokonaang.

Our chiefly system is a strength. Our clan system passes on the sintoko sinto (traditions), to strengthen our communities. Chiefs help us to reconcile our problems.

- Anna

THE WOMEN DID NOT GIVE UP

My story is how we came to this place, new Dapera. From the stories, during the time of our ancestors this land was like paradise. We had everything we needed. People were tall and strong, and we are short today. In 1974, we were relocated from original Dapera to this new Dapera. At first when we came, we thought everything was good. Once we were here we saw how big the gravel we were standing on was and it was like living in prison. When BCL came and relocated us it also strained our relationships with other families. When we moved here mothers began to give birth to disabled children. We did not realise that they built the houses on the chemicals. When we first came, our food productivity was good, but then it gradually started going down.

The church representatives called for us to organise women in church groups. We were then invited to attend a women's leadership course. In 1981, about 200 women attended a two-week leadership course at Mabiri. When we came back we started organising the women in each community. We started setting up small projects, like peanut projects or helping to make gardens. Within these activities, we had sing sing sirioi and we also helped to make baskets and umbrellas (biriko and siike). Although we were living in such a difficult situation we were keeping ourselves preoccupied.

The women's group in Dapera purchased two vehicles with their own money and we had contracts with BCL to transport the workers. These vehicles were burnt down during the crisis and we lost everything. During the time of Meekamui, we also helped them in our organised groups and cooked for them. The women's organisation was a volunteer group. Michael Pariu is one of the leaders who used to support us, the women's groups. We would have one day for doing handicrafts, the other for sewing and the other day for church activities. BCL is not good, but it did some other things to help support the women. Even during the crisis our women's groups did not give up. Today, we have skilled women here who sew and who know how to do handicrafts. We also have a need for government support to create more opportunities.

- Rita

CULTURE AS WISDOM FOR THE FUTURE

I am from Kupe in North Nasioi. Originally, my family was from Guava and we migrated to Kupe. When we settled in Kupe we stayed there and were happy and enjoyed our life with other people there. We settled there with the Chiefs from Kupe, who welcomed our family when we migrated from Guava. I was from Guava and Mosinai, some of my family is still up there. The Bovo river is being polluted by alluvial miners and now it is dirty all the time.

There are two locations in the Kupe area where the helicopters used to land and the other place is along the river where the company put thermometers to monitor the river. Both of these areas are my land and we were not compensated.

It is important to educate our children spiritually, I believe that through spirituality we can educate our children so that they can become good leaders in the future. I am concerned about the future generations. Today there are many problems arising among the youths, but the main problem is the use of mobile phones. Mobile phones are new technology and they are a big influence on the youths and the students in the communities. I am emphasising the value of culture, we must uphold our culture as for wisdom for the future. Things like dancing and blowing the pan pipes and weaving fans, baskets and mats.

- Berta



The abandoned machinery

WE WAKE UP ON TOP OF CHEMICALS

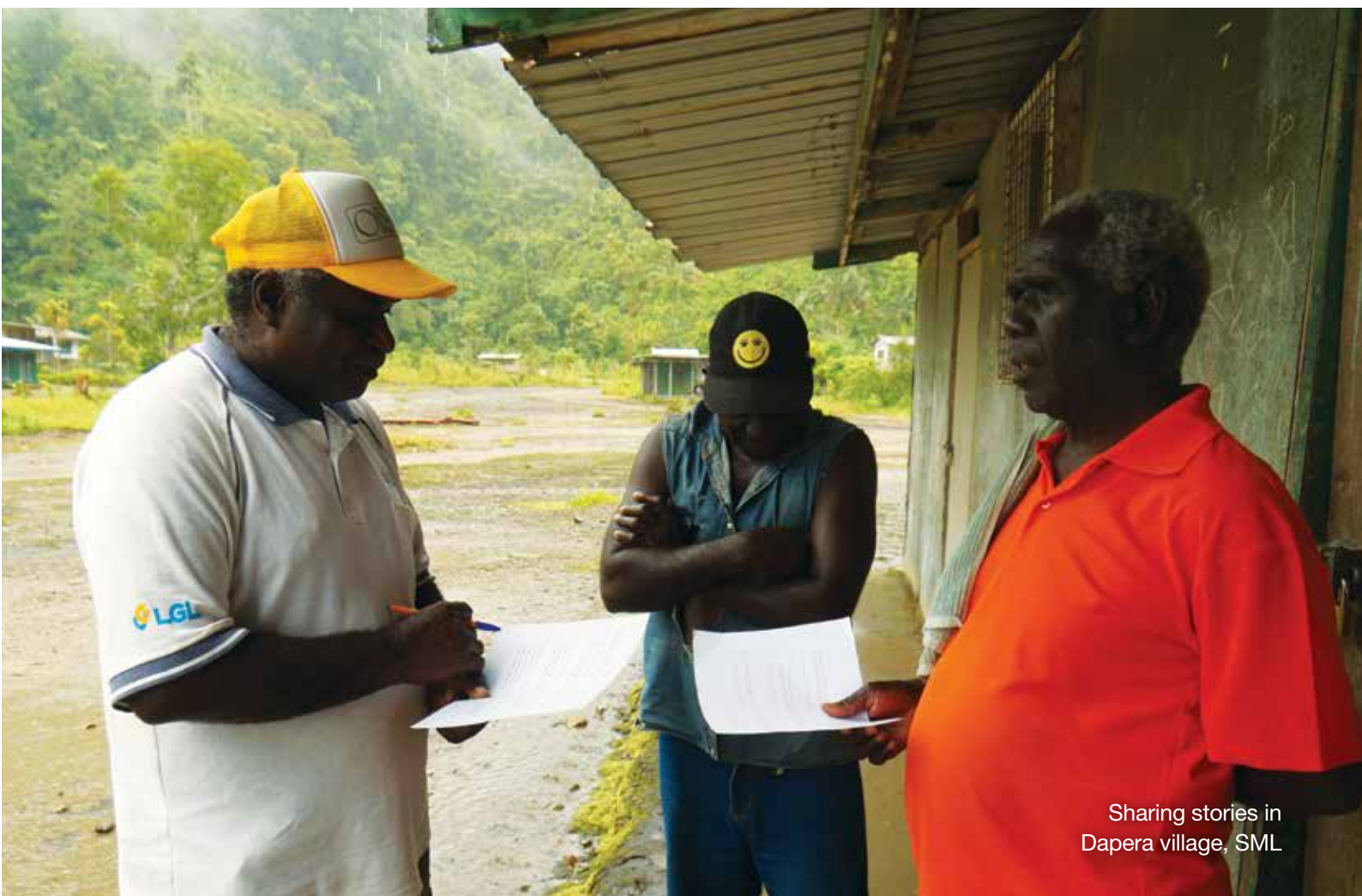
In Dapera village we are afraid of many things. The first thing is that we are not on our actual land, we are on a land fill. The second thing we are afraid of is the weather. If something happens with the weather or maybe an earthquake or landslide the village will be washed away. The village is on the backfill of the company and landslides can happen and wash us down the Jaba river. Third, this village is not on a good firm soil. We are living on top of chemicals. We wake up in the morning on top of chemicals, we go to sleep on top of chemicals, we die on top of chemicals, babies are born on top of chemicals. We don't know who will help or when we will have a proper safe place. Who will it be, will it be the government? We are still waiting for someone to help us to put us in a safe place.

We don't have a good harvest when we plant food crops. We believe that the area around us has been sprayed with chemicals. The land cannot help sustain us so we are concentrating on alluvial mining. We are doing alluvial mining to source funds to buy food. We see that even families today are not sharing food. If one of the family members needs something they have to pay the other family members. That is why we are concentrating on making money.

When we do the alluvial mining, we don't know if the places we are working have been affected by chemicals or not, but we keep doing it just for the money. Regarding our livelihood, before the mine everything was free, we could provide for ourselves and we didn't use money to buy food. Now that the situation has changed, we want to go back to the original way where everything was free and we could sustain ourselves. That is what we were crying for and what started the crisis. There was not enough money to go around for everyone. Our elders tell us stories about abundant food and now we miss that. We have been crying for help. When we started the crisis, the government sent in troops with guns instead of helping us to find ways to solve the problem. There were 20,000 lives lost to bloodshed. Compensation for loss of life has not been paid for.

Even the people who died in WW II were not compensated. The native Indigenous people, we lose. Our lands are destroyed and our people have been killed and we have not been compensated. From the losses during WWII and the crisis, we have paid for our independence.

- Michael



Sharing stories in Dapera village, SML

CHANGES IN FOOD

My story is about our ancestors and how they lived. Bougainville is a holy land, it is God's place and the company came and spoiled the island. Before that our ancestors had blessings on the land, all of the food was in abundance. The land was fertile and people could grow quality food from just small pieces of land. When BCL came it used chemicals to kill the trees and the food is not as big as before and is of lesser quality.

The rivers were very clean and full of food too. You could find fish and other proteins in the rivers, but BCL spoiled the rivers and now we don't have any way of getting protein. Today people wash gold to be able to get protein, otherwise they just eat rice. Today life is very hard. BCL covered our land with rubble and we can't get taro easily, we have to go far away to garden. Older people can't provide for themselves and it is hard to get firewood. Today, there are no animals around our place which are good for food. Since the company came all the animals are gone and people find it very hard to get protein from animals.

The people of long ago had better days than us today.

- Petronilla

CULTURE AND TRADITION

Before the mine there was freedom and rule of law in our culture. Our culture and tradition were strong. Today we are not following the rule of law like before. During mining, the Bougainville people were influenced by the Western ways, there was loss of respect for elders and for each other. That was an influence of the mine, we lost our culture and tradition.

After the mine, some things started to heal up but others are not. The waste and contamination of the mine are still down there like the polluted fish. When we eat fish, we don't know the level of contamination in the fish. I want BCL to come back and clean up the mess, not to start any mining again. I just want the area to be cleaned up. Once they clean up the area, they should create a monument for those who suffered and died in the crisis so that the future generations will know.

-Michael

TURNING WASTE INTO RESOURCES

Before BCL came, there was virgin forest, lots of animals, fresh water, plenty of fish, and the water was good, you could drink from anywhere. There was bush medicine, lots of spices for cooking and beautiful recreation areas. There were sacred places and a strong spiritual life. The soil was good.

During the mine operation, it was a surprise to see the rivers polluted, waste material going down, we could see the gravel. There are no recreation areas, they are all gone and the company used chemicals to kill trees. Eventually during the crisis, the company, left. The question is what are we doing now? We are requesting that we must have testing of the soil and the water to test the ground and prove what is there.

When the company left there was a lot of waste material. There are ways and means to use this gravel for road base, to turn it into a resource. We could make a sort of crusher and use it for bricks, it is a resource for us to build our economy. Because we don't have bush medicine anymore, we use money from these resources to buy medicine. There must be an aid post so that people can access medicine. As there is no access to protein for food, we must have fish ponds in each village as a source of income and for protein. We are also asking for swimming pools so that there are places for recreation, because of the pools we lost.

We lost our sacred sites, so now we should use the sacred places of the churches. We now worship in the Christian churches. Each denomination must build new churches. Sports and education are important values. We also encourage women to try things to plant for income generating crops. For example, to experiment and try to plant pineapple in the dry gravel, try some other new things. I will continue to try to find out about the chemicals. Also, I will continue to talk with BCL about compensation.

- Michael



Singing songs in Dapera village, SML

OUR BURIAL GROUNDS

I am going to talk about Dapera's cemeteries. I used to hear from our elders that the bones of our dead were scattered and buried on the other side of Dapera. They moved our burial sites. The cemetery the company dug for us was over gravel. Now our population has grown, and plenty of us are dying and the cemeteries are full. My sister was a Chief lady of Dapera, and she was always talking about the cemeteries. She died in 2016, and then the words that she used to tell the government representatives when they come to Dapera were sadly fulfilled. She was the first person to be buried on the gravel. Just yesterday we buried the second person in the gravel. There is not a good place for us to bury our dead.

Now I will speak about the toilets. When we were on good fertile land we would dig good pit toilets. On the gravel it is very hard to dig pit toilets. A number of families have to use one toilet and they are very smelly. We have access to water so we need to have septic toilets not pit toilets. Most of us go down and use the rivers as toilets. Only a few houses have septic toilets. We know we pollute the environment when we don't have toilets.

- Hortence



Grave site in Dapera village, SML

SONG IN NASIOI

*Aung nikana kansi mekamui- mekamui kansi
Birong papinko birong papiko
Taborang kue tamarunung
Oibaka mekamui aremo- ong kongmareai
Oibaka mekamui aremo- ong kongmareai
Nikaning ovotung poromaung dei
Nikaning nanu nanu mantong papeung
Mantong papina birong ma ri maung.*

*This is our land Mekamui
Mekamui land we have cried for
We have cried for
The men from far have fought against us*

*Oh dear Mekamui, when will be all right
If you leaders come to us
If they feel our burdens
How we struggle and cry*

SAFE WATER

I will talk about drinking water. When it rains, a heavy flood comes in, there is no safe drinking water. It is all flooded. Floods come down and prevent us from crossing to the other side to get food and other things. The company built a water drain on the side, but when it floods it is always full. When the rain stops the flood goes down and then we can safely get drinking water. Heavy floods also cause worries of landslides and washing away the gravel.

- Rose

SONG

Bougainville is like a young woman
BCL is crying for her.

*Yumi krai na pait long ailand blong yumi
Yumi dai na karim pen yumi no laik BCL
Long rulim ailand blo yumi Bougainville
Bougainville ailand u olsem yanpela meri
BCL isave krai long em
BCL isave krai long em*

*Yumi les long gaveman na BCL kam na bosim yumi na putim
Kain kain lo long sensim kastom blon yumi long Bougainville.*

We cry and fight for our land
We die and bear the pain
We don't want BCL to rule our island
Bougainville
Bougainville island you are like a young lady
BCL admires you

We don't want BCL to take control and put laws that change our custom in Bougainville.

- Michael



Listening to stories in Dapera village, SML

ENCOURAGING CULTURE

I grew up in Panguna, I saw everything. I went to school and I came back again to work. During my young days, girls had very good dressing. They really looked like girls, today, the dressing we have is not really good. You can't tell girl or a boy. Especially when wearing trousers. We had jobs, we had work, but we were not selfish. When we got paid we used to share the money with our family members. Today there is no sharing, you can't share what you have with your brother's children or sister's children because of shortage. Today, some of our culture is not respected. Before, we wouldn't sit very close to our brother or sisters, today you will see girls and boys sitting together with no respect. Today, you will not look at the members of your family as your family members because now money rules. If we want to get our culture back, we will have to encourage our relationships in families with respect. We need to practice it so we can see how we can encourage culture. At all levels in the community. Instead of adopting white people's ways. This can start within our families first and then spread out to the community.

- Joanne

LAND SHORTAGE

The story is about land. There is not enough land for the people. Because the land was covered by rocks. Each family in the village makes gardens on small blocks of land. With the growing population of Dapera, we have shortage of land, and the future generation won't have any land to make gardens to sustain their living.

- Eileen

WE ARE STILL SURVIVING

The people of Dapera rely on money in order to meet their needs and the only means of getting money is alluvial mining and washing gold. The money that we get from the gold supports the little food that we harvest from the garden. If you don't have a garden you have to go to Arawa market to buy the food to cater for the family. If you don't go to the market there will be starvation at Dapera village. That's how BCL left us, that is the life that we live. How we live is still a blessing from God. Some villages they have proper land and have much more food than us. Our staple food is rice, before in the time of ancestors, their staple food was taro. Despite the ups and downs we are still surviving.

- Gaima

CHALLENGES

During the time of BCL operation of the Port Mine Access Road, we faced challenges. There were camps close to our village Kopei. My people did not have freedom to walk around freely even on their own land. Also, workers from the camps wandered into the bushes or trespassed and had picnics along the river banks. These workers from the camps were found stealing from the villagers' gardens. They beat anyone who walked alone to the garden. They also threatened and attempted to rape women when they were going to their gardens.

These workers of BCL also shot a man with a long spear and he suffered for 10 years and died. His name is Naueta and BCL has not compensated his family. Another person Joseph Maviba was killed and thrown into the river.

Additionally, the company destroyed our land and rivers. It changed the direction of the Pinei river from where it flowed in the past. Even today the river diversion is continuously affecting the villages by destroying the gardens, causing shortage of food and also washing away cocoa blocks causing a shortage of income. This makes it difficult to sustain our families.

- Clarie



Biringpi river near Pirurari village, SML

OUR HOUSING

My story is about housing, when BCL relocated Dapera village it built only houses that can't fit families with many children. New couples were living with their parents as they had no houses. Only couples with children were provided separate houses. During the crisis the houses built by BCL were burnt down. Up until this day, people don't have proper housing. Money that we earn from washing gold is not enough to afford to build houses. We use money to sustain our basic daily needs. We don't have any support from the government.

- **Joyce**

WHERE TO FIND SCHOOL FEES

This story is about school fee problems faced by the villagers. We face school fee problems, because we have nowhere to get money. For the children at the school, can't the government do something to help them? Apart from washing gold, we don't have any other resource to get money from. We are poor villagers, especially the widows. Even the couples, they work hard to get money to cater for their families. We don't have sources of timber to build houses. It is very sad.

- **Angela**

OUR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

I will share a story about our culture and traditions. If we look inside SML today, culture and our traditions are disappearing. Arts and crafts, can be seen in very small number within the community. The Mountain people make tora, the basket for carrying kaukau from their garden. Today, only very few people are producing all these traditional crafts. During deaths, we have funeral cries, but today this is not done in some areas they sing praise songs instead of funeral cries. Our sacred sites have been destroyed which is like a strength has been taken away from us.

As the days go, some of these skills are finishing off, so we have to organise youth to develop this culture and tradition in their activities. This must be encouraged in all communities by our leaders so that culture is embraced. It can be introduced at the elementary level. Lastly, I want to say, in the olden days people participated in cultural activities wholeheartedly. Distance didn't matter. For example, people from Moroni would walk to Guava even if it means one whole day and night. Today road transport makes transport easier. People do not value culture as our ancestors did before. If there is a feast at Guava only a few people will turn up because there is less interest in the community. So, what can we do to put our culture back into the community? Let's renew and practice our culture with everyone.

- **Beverly**

WHICH WAY TO GO

This is a story from Kupe about alluvial mining. The Bovo river has been polluted with mercury and the river is continuing to be dirty like the Jaba, all the way down to the sea. Some of the ponds along the river where people used to swim and enjoy and recreation have been filled up with gravel from the alluvial mine. Now people can't swim in the river. We had been blaming BCL for the pollution. Now we are causing pollution ourselves, just like the company we chased out of Bougainville. It is not only the Kupe people who are mining, it is across Bougainville. The people living downstream are concerned, when the river is flooding it is causing the fish and other creatures like shellfish and eels to vanish. That is the issue there now. We want the authorities, the ABG to address this issue before it gets out of hand. The miners do not seem concerned about their safety or the safety of others, sometimes the people are rolled over by rocks and a few people have died.

Another concern is about BCL. BCL made a promise to build a road to the village and until now there is still no road. The Kupe people are still carrying heavy loads for 15kms to the village. Some get sick from carrying these heavy loads. BCL also made a promise to connect electricity which has never been fulfilled. BCL should have created projects like chicken and piggery projects for the community, instead BCL made these projects for themselves. It was like a circle, BCL paid the royalties and then it went back to BCL as people were buying from their stores and people were not happy about that. People hoped to see BCL initiate projects for the people to improve their standard of living.

Most young people go to primary schools but drop out before they have trades or skills. Only a few people are practicing traditional weaving and arts and craft, very few people are doing it and not much is being taught to the young generation. The practice of traditional culture is slowly disappearing,

One of the skills that the people of Kupe have is that they are enjoying electricity now. They set it up themselves through using hydropower during the crisis and they are depending on that till today. For the future perspective, if a new company comes to open a mine, it must fulfil the wishes of the people. People must be aware of what the aims of the company are. Before there was not much awareness, and people must have a share of benefits.

Bougainville education board should install culture into the curriculum as a means of educating our young the value of traditional culture which our ancestors have been practicing over the centuries.

- **Charles**

HELPING EACH OTHER

This is a story from the crisis about how my family helped each other. I was living in Koromira where I married. In 1995, I came from Koromira to Guava with my small children, as I was a widow and my brothers were at Guava including the late Francis Ona. I was encouraging my children to go to school because of the shortage of land education could provide a way they can sustain their lives. Because of the crisis most of our children were out of school, although they were at the age to attend primary school.

My eldest son attended the self-help mechanical school in Arawa and became a mechanic. He started his own workshop and with the money from the workshop he was helping his younger brothers and sisters to go to school. Through this support from their brother, two siblings went to Polytech. The school fee was 4000 from the government subsidy and 4000 from their brother. My son was helping because I am a widow. One of the brothers who went to Polytech, he doesn't have work now as the there is no job he can do here.

When we pull our children back to the villages, they won't learn anything and they won't help themselves later on in life. Many young people are influenced by homebrew and involved with alluvial mining. With alluvial mining, they are already exposed to money and then they cannot go back to school, which is a problem.

- Lucy

AINTEI-ANG TABARARAMPIMA - THOSE PEOPLE THAT WE ARE FIGHTING WITH

Song in Nasioi from World War II era

*Ainteianing tabararampima,
Are birong parapimaang*

*Ainteianing tabararampima,
Are birong parapimaang*

*Wasie kare doremurio pantu-mongpantunang.
Wasie kare doremurio pantu-mongpantunang.
Siribirori baa-birori tarukongkopi*

*The people we are fighting them.
Why are we crying for them.*

*The people we are fighting them.
Why are we crying for them.*

*The bird voicing out for the war, you close yourself.
The bird voicing out for the war, you close yourself.*

As we are burying you the dead ones, our tears are falling.



Women singing kastom song, from Moitaka, Lower Tailings, Fishowners Association and Mid Tailings

THE VALUE OF LAND

The land of Uruawa is the land of the people of Rorovana, we really value the land. We value the land because our ancestors migrated from the Solomons, that land is the only portion that we own. Uruawa is the one small portion that we own. Uruawa land is one part of the portion of Rorovana land which we have for resettlement of our tribe. It was given to us by the Poraka people. During the time of the company, when they came the first time, there was no awareness given to the villages. It was the arrangement between the government and the company to put the boundaries on this land. The land was very virgin, the soil was good and it was very valuable. It was kept as it was, but we made plantations and gardens on that land that people benefited from the copra plantations. During those days, when the first- born goes to Uruawa we normally made a feast. It was the kastom of the people. When the company came they did not tell the people, they did not listen to the people. The government sent the police, the riot squad, and fought with the people, even the women they fought with the police. The police used the batons to hit the women, they even bulldozed them and used tear gas on them. The company took advantage by taking land ownership of Uruawa.

After all we were losers as the company owned the small portion we had. This is the only area that we have. We are connected to nature and land is our life. This is very sad for us.

We have many songs.

- Mary

YOU CAME AND TOOK OUR STONE

Song

It is a sad song if you know the language of Torau

The government and the company told lies to the people. This song was composed without knowing that there would be a crisis.

Before our ancestors used to think it is just an ordinary stone.

But it is of value. It is gold.

Government told lies to us to the villages, to free the land.

Na Balusu

Na balusu na gogomo pae

Na balusu na gogomo pae

Ene koropelala asaii matawegoro

Ene koropelala asaii matawegoro

Na helikoputa.

The plane

The plane is different from everything else

There is a propeller that turns in the air

It is a helicopter, really.



Sharing stories, Morgan market

CRA

*CRA tau okumanima
CRA tau okumanima*

*Manilama toruia Pankirangku
Tau bebea*

*Manilama toruia Pankirangku
Tau bebea*

Manilama tatanisi

*Gavarmani muka lalamimani
Gavarmani muka lalamimani*

Tamani rutiino gavamani muka lalamimani

*Atu atumani sikulai tadi tu sadiato
Atu atumani sikulai tadi tu sadiato*

Dipalama tatanisi

*Ena atae tapae solaiama
Ena atae tapae solaiama*

*la paelama uaka wainai tau arausia
la paelama uaka wainai tau arausia*

Ke kabani

CRA

*CRA, you called us here
We are here now to see the Pankirangku
You opened it up.
We are crying now
Oh government, you did not have mercy on us.
When we refused to give up our land, you did not have
mercy on us.
Our children are going to school now.
When they come back they will cry
Where will they work with this education
How will they use it because you have finished it [the
land].
Oh, you company.*

Dapa-dapa Tanisi

*Dapa, dapa tanisi
Dapa, dapa tanisi*

*Tadato toruia madato waina na pau tawala
Tadato toruia madato waina na pau tawala*

Di sola rausia

*Awa anua ta ataena
Awa anua ta ataena*

*Talama toruia ma kaisia ma solaia
Talama toruia ma kaisia ma solaia*

Ena amatai.

Let's cry

*Let's cry
Let's cry*

*We saw the stones but we did not know their value.
We saw the stones but we did not know their value.*

Now they have gone with the rest of it...

*Because they know the value
Because they know the value*

*When it [the company] came it recognised the value and
took it and went away with it
When it [the company] came it recognised the value and
took it and went away with it*

To its home.



Singing songs,
Morgan market

BAMPUKO BAMPUI, THE PASSING OF TRADITIONS

Our story is about culture, traditional ways, and customary peace (bel isi). One area in our language we call it bampuko bampui (informal education), the passing of tradition from generation to generation. It covers all the things that the elders pass on. In the time of problems, we help each other when we have need. In families, when some might be short of a few things, we give out help to them as part of our society, the extended family system. We have good traditional ways. Our uncles and the chiefs have a responsibility to look after the families, as the family members. Today the children don't listen to their parents, this partly because the uncles are not supporting the parents. The uncles must follow their responsibility to their nieces and nephews.

We have many traditional values such as sharing money. This means, families must aid and protect each other within the clan. We also have skills and resources such as traditional materials for building, pigs and how we care for them, and how we make gardens.

We teach our young ones to fish. We also have a song about crying of the land of the Panguna pit.

- Jacinta

KRAI SORY BLONG PANGUNA PIT

Song in Nasioi

*Birong birong maria
Kansi birong pampiru
Kampani ke nenke'au
Nenke ama doraau
Arong biampa ko'o
Bera pisi demparu*

*Birong birong maria
Kansi birong pampiru
Kampani ke nenke'au
Nenke ama doraau
Arong biampa ko'o
Dangto pirung tabeko'o*

We cry
We cry
We cry for the land
Company has dug out
Dug out down the river
Has become sand

We cry
We cry
We cry for the land
Company has dug out
Dug out down the river
To the sea

USING CREATIVITY TO FACE DIFFICULTY

There are plenty of things that we can talk about - many issues, many good things. One good thing that the company brought was education- it is a skill. It is different from kastom where the skills and knowledge are within the customs. When the foreigners came, education became formal, and now students sit in a classroom and are taught to read and write.

The Company brought some formally educated people, and they equipped us with some skills and education. We still need education. Many people came, white men, people from PNG, when development comes, good things and bad things all come. The bad thing is that for uneducated people, we felt that we have been left out of the development processes.

There are many issues. During the BCL time, the mothers were afraid of the people from other places. The Dapera people, now they don't have a place to make gardens, no way to make gardens, the company has brought people to an area without gardens.

During the crisis, we used some of the skills we had learned to help the society. For example, things like creating hydroelectric power, or when there was no fuel we created our own. The crisis meant people had to find ways to improvise, that difficulty brought people's minds to be creative. When I came back I started working as a carpenter, I have a little money and I am sharing. In times of difficulties, you need to share to create a micro-economy.

It does not stop here, if a company comes, we need to do good negotiations, the government must negotiate and create laws to help everyone.

- Clement



Sharing stories, Moitaka village

THE ECONOMY AND BARTERING

Looking at the side of the economy when Panguna was developed, it was both good and bad. We all have different feelings, men and women in the area. When Panguna was developed, we saw a lot of change in the life and environment and customary ways in Bougainville. We have lost our tradition of sharing things among our families and our societies, our love has gone out and we are realising individualism. We are traditionally communal people.

We have changed our traditional ways, they showed us money and that changed things. We have changed our customs. In our kastom, we have a way of exchanging foods like barter systems. Today you can witness what is really making us broken is money we are finding it hard to get money. When we are in today's societies, money is important it is driving us away from our traditional ways, our values. Trying to pay for school fees is challenging. The barter system has been replaced by money so we are finding it difficult. With that I can say that money is an important value to get things from each other, money is there to give service to the people it is not the end. Some of the people used the money in wrong ways. Buying of women with that money. Homebrew, marijuana, there are good ways to use that money, manage it and use it in the proper way and you can get a better way of life. Teaching our small young ones to have a better life in the future, they are not really interested in looking after money.

- Eric

THE ROLE OF FOOD AND TOBACCO

The first people who came were the German missionaries who came and settled in plantations and then a plantation manager named McKillop. Then the Kiaps came, and settled in Arawa. When they were there, the village people were selling crabs. When the Kiaps bought the crabs, they saw gold in the crab shells which took their interest and they asked where were they getting the crabs from, and then they went upstream to Kupe. Afterwards they came across to Panguna and started digging the Panguna mine.

I was a small girl when the company came. When they came, we didn't know how they came in because there were no talks, no negotiation. Where they were building the roads, the land was being carried by the rivers, that destruction was happening to the land and the rivers. The company was giving food to the community as their gardens were destroyed. Many of the old people, they knew that the company would give them the food for that moment only, it was short term. They gave them tobacco and brown rice and while they were eating those supplies, they gave them more and more tobacco. This was given out for short term, so they have to sign anyone to get supplies of money. On this land the people were really worried about the land like the story in My Valley is Changing, the woman was crying for the land.

Most of the things many people did not know. The company was rushing things, the company was relocating people. During the crisis, while they were chasing BCL, those people who helped BCL burned our houses and my brother was killed during the first curfew. Our family must be compensated for all of these things that happened.

- Rose

THE STRENGTH OF EDUCATION

Education is good, from my view, I see bad and good things about education. We have to weigh these two things. In regards to the ex-combatants didn't agree to how we would complete the finish of the fight, there were no good agreements at that point. I am concerned about the lost generations. I suggest that youths and community leaders set up a law to address those issues in the lost generation who were born during or after the crisis.

- Eric



Sharing stories, PMAR

QUESTIONS

Did they come and dig copper or gold? To me, BCL lied to us and they should have named it a gold mine, not a copper mine. All these names that they gave it was a hidden thing.

The trainings that they brought were just for them to create human resources to do the job, not to really help the people. Development is good and can also be destructive.

Next time any company comes, we must make better negotiation and benefit sharing.

- Ambrose

THE ROLE OF MONEY

I will speak as a leader and as a ward member. What I see today is a problem with money. In our living situation in Dapera, only money can address our needs but it is very hard. I am going to talk about two places Dapera and Pirurari, in Moroni their daily life is different than these places. In these two places, we can only get 35- 50 kina per day by washing gold. This amount of money can only provide one meal only in the evening like dinner. It is very hard to provide for extra expenses like school fees or clothes. The ordinary people in the village do this sort of work. As for us, the leaders, we participate in other activities with NGOs and we have at least enough money to meet families' immediate needs. Helping and investing in the community is still very hard. Many times we look at our problems and as the Chairman I try to solve the problems. It depends on whether I have cash in hand if I do, I do what I can. If I have no cash, I cannot do anything.

Our daily food is rice and it is very hard to find protein at home. The bit of money we get for washing gold we use for rice or small amounts of food. There are no fruits and nuts. A Doctor told me that our bodies lack protein and that there are types of sickness that can happen to people when they don't have enough food. Here we think two people have died from this already, although it is very hard to identify this type of sickness. Some people are affected with sickness here and Doctors can't really tell what the illness is. There is a lady here who went to Buka and the Doctors can't tell what her sickness is. Maybe it is caused by consuming food grown on chemicals. In Dapera we get gold from the area around the concentrator which is polluted. Our future living depends on help from the government.

- Samsong

HOW WILL WE HELP OURSELVES?

My story is about money. During the BCL days money had a higher value, even with 20K we bought a lot of things, but now it is totally different. You will only buy two things for 20K.

Today we depend on store goods. Even pregnant mothers, work hard to find money for their children, even during the rain or the hot sun. Now the price for everything is sky high. The little money that we earn can't address all of our needs. Families with fewer numbers of children are okay. Families with many children are the poor ones who face many hardships. My question is how will we help ourselves?

- Martha



Sharing stories, Moitaka village

DEFENDING THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

I want to talk about the fight and a specific event when BCL was coming. My father was one of the leaders who started the fight. This fight was to defend the land and the people. That is why we fought because land is our life, we value our land in all of Bougainville. It was in 1968 when I was a small girl. We fought because the arrangement for BCL to come was between the government and BCL, not the people. My father, was one of the strong leaders, he had 20 fighters, they started the fight because BCL wanted a short cut road and they didn't negotiate with the people, BCL used force. Until today, there is no recognition from the government about that fight and where it took place, the Nakaraoma. It was in the big jungle in the mountains. The second fight was at Pakia village, and the police took them down to the Kieta police station. My father went to the Kieta court house and he won the court case and they sent him to Australia to negotiate with the CRA to survey the road to Panguna through Nakaroama and they agreed on building a different route.

- Pradix

CREATIVE WAYS OF BUILDING PEACE

I want to share a short story. One old man who used to walk with a stick passed on a story to me at the time of the crisis, when the fight was on. I am thinking of that story and how it has a connection to the situation we are in now between individuals, families, communities, even the districts.

A long time ago during our ancestors, the clans used to fight and many people died. Many of the chiefs tried to stop the fight, they tried their best but did not succeed.

After many years, one woman had an idea, this woman came from the Basikan clan. This woman went to the bush and got some leaves we call it biriko- bush umbrella. She came to the village and she dried out the leaves and did the design, from the leaves from the tree, it was the first bush umbrella with decorations, siike. The woman went with that umbrella to the place where they usually fight and began to dance with the biriko. The clans that were fighting were really surprised, it made them stop their fighting and because of what that woman did, it stopped the fight overall.

This story is telling us now today that women are peacemakers on Bougainville, that we can find creative ways for peace. Because of our matrilineal society, when these things are happening, we need to do something and speak our views, this is one of the chances that we can speak our views. It is time now to come out and air our views.

- Severina

CONCLUSION

The stories shared through the Panguna Listing Project illustrate the challenges people have faced in the past as well as current issues that persist in the mine-affected communities. While there are many hardships, there are also stories of strength, describing what helped communities get through hard times as well as expressing hopes for future generations. There is a strong desire to work towards a better future for the children and grandchildren of the mine-affected communities. Through sharing these stories, we are documenting the Bougainvillean history of the area, and lifting up the voices of the mine-affected communities, hopefully leading to a greater understanding of what has come before and possibilities for the future.

SONG

This was sung by all the elders in their own languages
- in all the areas that were affected.

*Balusi ninamuri
Balusi ninamuri*

*Bakana koropera meroke koroaramaung
Bakana koropera meroke koroaramaung*

Miring helikoputa.

*Different kind of plane
Different kind of plane*

*Its propeller in the middle
Its propeller in the middle
Its name is helicopter*

UPPER TAILINGS IS AILING

Last night, the previous night and the preceding nights were one NIGHT-MARE.

Today, tomorrow and the following nights are looming threats.

Water to fetch is miles away.

Food in the garden does not flourish.

Shelter over my head is a daunting task.

My appetite for a taste of delicious fish is only a dream.

I wonder what the future holds for my chubby new born.

Who is to blame?

Who bears the shame?

But I think,

The Responsible Should be Responsible.

- Listening team member from Eivo-Torau, a poem written after hearing stories in the Upper Tailings



Blocked river in Panguna
creating man-made lake



THE PANGUNA LISTENING PROJECT

Remains of the copper
concentrator plant from the
Panguna mine

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BOUGAINVILLE