

Major risks posed by destructive plant and animal pests

By Veronica Hatutasi

THE country's economy, food security and survival could be at risk from destructive plant and animal pests if immediate steps are not taken to address the issue.

This arises from the fact that PNG's major revenue earning crops including cocoa, coffee and coconut, as well as food crops such as bananas and potatoes are being destroyed at a fast rate by organisms, pests and insects.

Some of the pests and organisms are local and have always been present while others are foreign, and are passed on or enter our soil through international borders and all modes of transport.

The problem is also spreading to other palm trees

Since 2006, the sago trees, one of the major food sources while since time immemorial, its leaves provide building materials for houses to thousands of Papua New Guinea families nationwide, have been the victim of insects which have always been present, however multiplying at a faster rate and changing their eating habits. This has therefore led to the death of many palm trees.

The current sago palm trees problem is confined to the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB) where new trees only grow from seedlings, unlike through suckers in the other provinces.

As a result, many families in all areas of the ARoB, specifically in the south and west coast Bougainville, are now facing dire problems in the shortage of sago palm leaves to build houses.



Senior NAQIA Entomologist, David Tenakanaiis working at the Sabama, Port Moresby laboratory on a bio control agent for Mimosa Pigra, a disastrous weed which poses a great threat to the productivity of pastoral and agricultural industries, the wetlands and can alter entire landscapes. Prevention and eradication of this weed is vital. Photo: Nicky Bernard

Climate change as a result of global warming is the single biggest contributing factor to the problem. This has seen a population increase of the black weevil beetles and a change in the eating habits of these pests and organisms. The movement of people, cargo, plants and animals both locally and internationally is another factor.

The National Quarantine & Inspection Authority (NAQIA) has a very important task which continues working towards the containment of the pest and plant disease risks in this country, through research, investigative surveys, monitoring and control mechanisms.

NAQIA is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament for the administration and delivery of the biosecurity functions of the PNG government.

What is biodiversity in PNG?

"It is the effective minimization, mitigation and, wherever feasible prevention of risks and consequences associated with the emergence, introduction, establishment and spread of pests and diseases harmful to animals, plants, humans, biodiversity, the economy and environment of PNG and other nations," a NAQIA brief on its role in border management to a heads of missions brief in August 2013, says.

NAQIA is currently working on a new PNG biosecurity bill, but to date, operates under various relevant acts one of which is the Plant Pest and Disease Control Act 1953, internal biosecurity for plants.

The *WantokToday* spoke to one of NAQIA's Senior Entomologist, David Tenakanai, on the status of plant diseases affecting

export and food crops in PNG.

"NAQIA cannot work alone, but it is working with commodity institutions such as the Cocoa & Coconut Institute (CCI), Coffee Industry Corporation (CIC), Kokonas Industri Kopresen (KIK), Oil Palm Research Association (OPRA), Fresh Food-Product Development Authority (FPDA), NGOs and the provincial Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL), to maintain and control animal and plant diseases as well as food security in the country," Mr Tenakanai says.

He says NAQIA depends on the government Public Investment Projects (PIP) funding as well as from donor agencies such as AusAID, ACIAR, SPC and others to carry out its many projects and research work in PNG.

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Editors Note:

Wantok Niuspepa has come up with a 4 page monthly English Insert, *Wantok Today*, to give readers a two in one option of reading in both languages, English and TokPisin, of pressing or current hot topics affecting communities at all levels.

The insert will also focus on youth issues, their dreams and success stories, entertainment and IT. Mining, transport and financial markets will also be accommodated.

On the lighter side, travel and adventure stories will be featured. Students from high to secondary schools up to the university levels, as well as other readers are invited to contribute articles and photos.

The Editor will have the final discretion on the inclusion of articles in the insert. Send your articles to: The Acting Editor, P O Box 1882, Boroko, NCD, PNG, or Fax to: 3252579 or email to: vhatutasi@wantok.com.pg/editorial@wantok.com.pg. You can also call us on 3252500 or drop in to our office at the Able Computing Complex, Section 58, Lot 02, Waigani Drive, NCD, Port Moresby.

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YOUR SAY

with
Issac Liri



Road traffic today is a major problem in Port Moresby and other urban centres across Papua New Guinea. The problem is visible today and the government, the organisations who deal with road traffic, and even the general public is aware. Here is what some people generally think about road traffic in the nation's capital and the nation as a whole.

What do you think about our roads today?



Benjamin Kose

Security Guard (G4S)
Origin: Gulf

Road traffic in the urban areas are so crowded today, and as a resident of the National Capital District, I have seen that the roads are not enough to accommodate the many vehicles that run on the road.

I think that the introduction of the used car dealers has given the opportunity for many families in Papua New Guinea to own a car, however, it imposes the problem of crowding the road with vehicles. Our population is booming like

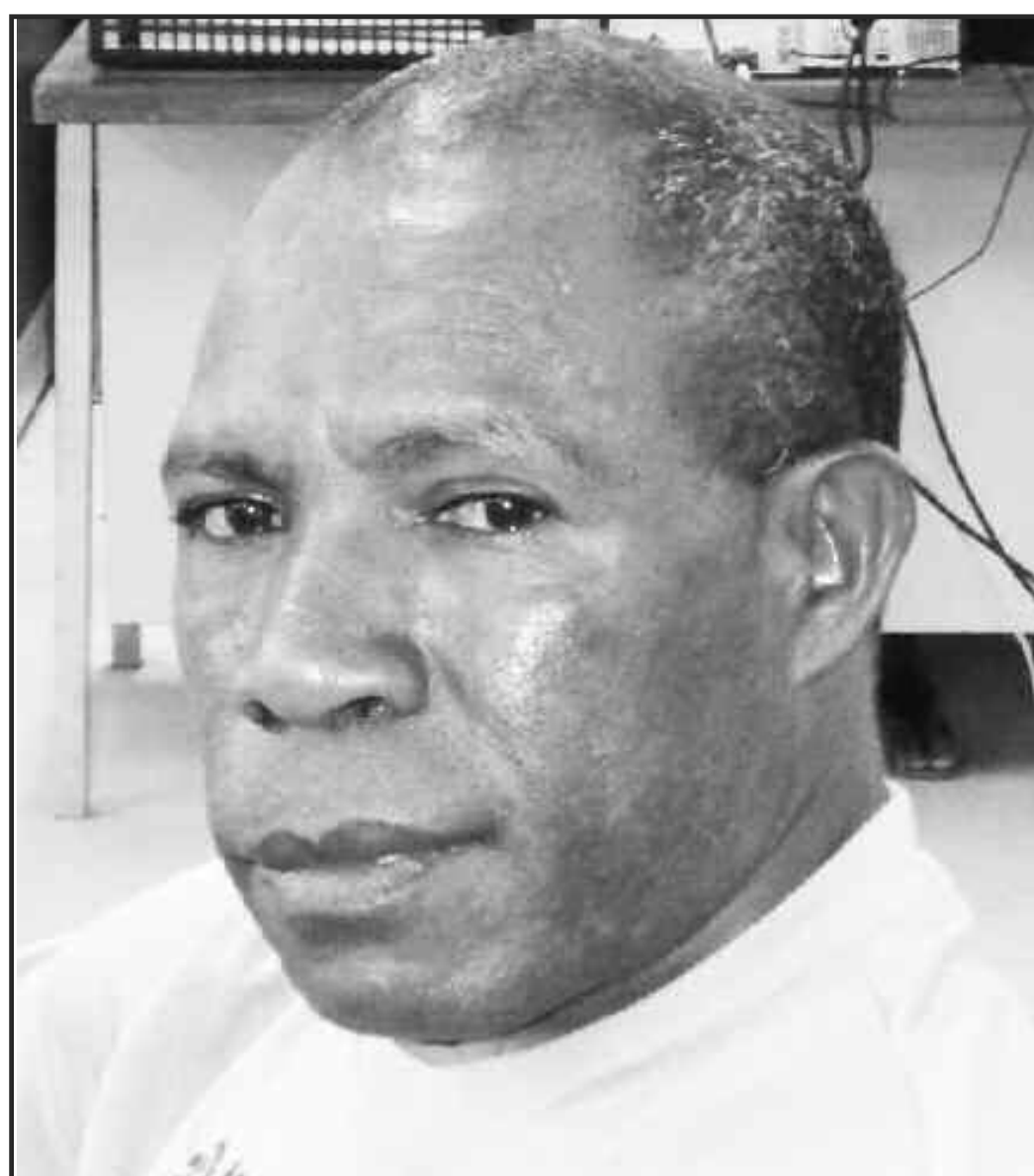
wild fire, and the more our population increases, the more vehicles are needed to provide service for the growing population.

Accidents are also likely to occur frequently and many people who travel by vehicle or even those ones who walk beside the road are always scared of accidents. Living in Port Moresby I have witnessed a lot of road accidents. Some of them occur because of the overcrowding of vehicles on the road.

From my own observation, coming up from the years 1990 to 2003, overcrowding of vehicles on the road was not a big problem. But from the years 2006 up until now it has become worse.

For myself, I think that the government should build more roads or expand the roads so that the problems related with road traffic will decrease.

An example of an initiative to cut down on the overcrowding of road traffic is the fly over road that the government is working on. The people and the country as a whole need such projects to counter attack the road traffic problems.



Yakam Kelo

Public Relations Officer
Origin: Morobe

Road is getting congested with traffic everyday slowing movement of people, business, services, school children and the general public to do daily business.

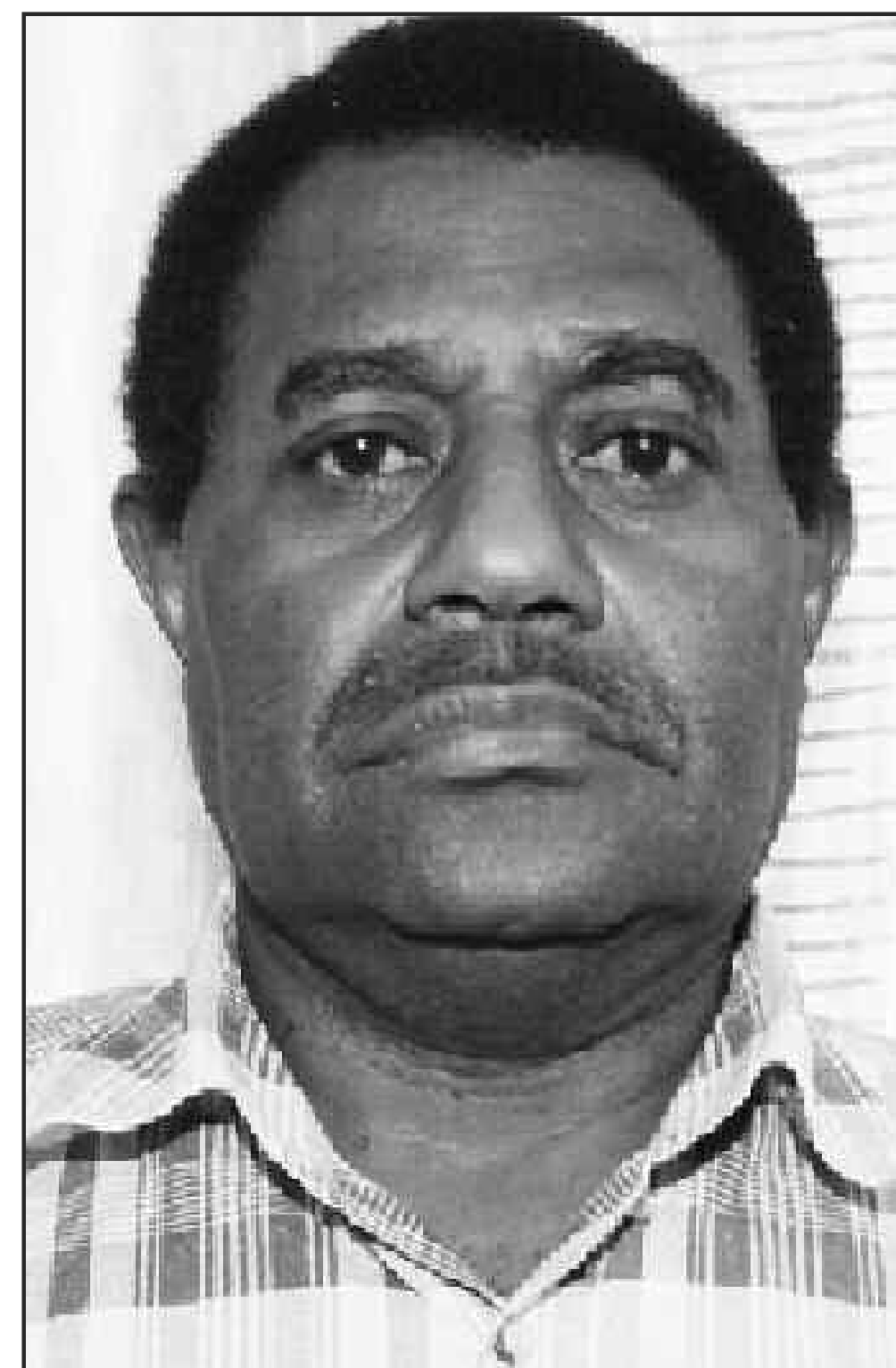
Too many used car dealers, many outdated vehicles are still on the road which are not road worthy and internet buying of vehicles from

overseas fill the roads, leaving it with limited space.

Road Traffic has slowed down the flow of services, working time, schooling time and so on. Many school students and working people are going late to work and school.

From my observation, I have seen that since 2011, urban roads started to queue up with vehicles and today it is a nightmare to many.

Regarding this issue, I recommend that the government or organisations that are looking into this issue should impose proper regulations for road traffic in the country. These regulations must become obligatory after carrying out in depth research on the matter.



Sam Teteret

Advertising and Marketing Manager (Wantok Niuspepa)
Origin: East Sepik

I think the problem we face in road traffic today is the number of vehicles that are on our roads today and the capacity of the road which is not enough for the increasing number of vehicles on the road.

We need to plan and or-

ganise our roads well in order to limit the traffic congestions. We also need to implement policies that will remove vehicles that are not road worthy, that are not registered accordingly, and also, we can look at the vehicle's number of service on the road.

If these vehicles were bought from 2000 and onwards, then they will be allowed on the road, but if they are purchased from 1999 and back, those vehicles should not be on the road.

One alternative we can do as well is to carry out a study or research on where people reside and where they go to work or school. A study like this can help policy makers to come up with effective policies that will minimize the problems of road traffic in the country.



A talent that runs in the family

By Nicky Bernard and Isaac Liri

THERE are a number of young individuals out there who have the raw talent in music, yet they do not expose it.

These hidden musicians have reasons that keep them away from exposing what God has given to them.

Kora Alu, a young lady from Hanuabada and Hula in the Central Province was first seen by Wantok Today at the beginning of this year when she was on stage at the Lamana Gold Club singing with her uncles of the Gwadu Band of Hanuabada who play in and around Port Moresby.

Kora loves singing however, her busy schedule at school keeps her occupied most times leaving her with limited time to sing. The only time she has the opportunity to sing is when she is at home or at church, and according to those who have heard Kora sing, they say that they love to hear her voice every time she hits those high pitch notes.

"I just love it when she is carried away with singing as her voice can really ease the mind," said one fan.

Early this year at the Lamana Gold Club, Kora had no intention to sing, but she did not want to let her uncles down, so she had no other choice but to get on stage.



Richard Alu helping out the Gwadu Band on the keyboards.

The look on the faces of many in the crowd clearly showed that they were touched by the sound of her lovely voice. The crowd wanted her to stay on stage and entertain them the whole night.

After Kora's first performance, some members of the crowd who were familiar with Kora's parents were so pleased with her singing, and indirectly begged her parents to let their daughter sing again.

Kora said that she was nervous

because it was her first time to sing in such a place and in front of a lot of people.

But with the encouragement of her parents and uncles, she found the courage to stand in front of the crowd and sing again.

She said that she gets her inspiration from her elder brother Richard, who is a self-taught talented musician. Richard plays various musical instruments like the keyboard and guitar, and at times, he is asked by the Gwadu Band to

help them with their live performances.

"I am like a substitute musician, when someone in the Gwadu Band is unavailable, I cover for that particular person," said Richard.

Richard is 23 years old and is currently studying in Australia to become an engineer.

He started playing the keyboard when he was 8 years old. Richard's father, Lesley Alu, bought a keyboard and a guitar for him when he was small, and he grew

up with these musical instruments around him which helped him to practice more often.

While growing up, Richard's parents always took him to church, and from there, he developed his talent and shared it with the church by volunteering to participate in praise and worship.

So any time you hear the Gwadu Band playing live, keep an eye open for these two young talented brother and sister.



Kora Alu singing at the Gold Club.

HIV/AIDS kills! Stick to one partner...

PNG Life Education gives a second chance

By Frieda Sila Kana

PNG Life Education Institute (PNGLEI), a nationally owned private education institution is giving a second chance in life to many unemployed youths in Port Moresby.

In its 4th year since its establishment, PNGLEI has equipped more than 1,000 young people with skills and is now working in various fields.

The institute caters for students under the NCD Governor, Powes Parkop's scholarship scheme which targets under privileged youths to be trained to get education, training, employment and entrepreneurship. PNGLEI was established in 2011 by Rai Gini, a professional youth trainer from Milne Bay.

The PNGLEI held a Youths Trade and Career expo on Friday 28th March at Jack Pidik Park, National Capital District.

The Youths Trade Career expo was the first of its kind to be run by a private education institution which involved business enterprises to show case their products and services.

There were 13 companies who were invited to put up their stalls on that day to display some of their products and the way they trade as an exposure for the students. Some of the companies who participated had taken on board students to do their trade training with them.



Rai Gini, a professional trainer is the Director/Principal of Life Skill Education Institute.

They were companies like Pacific Industries, RD Tuna and others.

RD Tuna donated 15 cartons of K1, 000 worth of canned fish for display as well as for students to take away. Key note Music House donated equipment for display and for setting own music recording studio which is now in operation. The first of its products are jingles that are played by the National Broadcasting Commission at the opening of the station at 5am every day.

On Saturday 29th March, a mass graduation was conducted for 143

current trainees and the other 1000 that were already in the workforce. Certificates of Attainment were awarded to the successful trainees.

Director/Principal Rai Gini, said the school fee is K1, 200 but under the Governor's scholarship scheme students from NCD only pay K200. The scholarship pays K1000 and to meet the costs for the years 2012 and 2013. However, Mr. Gini said they are still waiting for the 2014 sponsorship to come through from the Governor's office.

The institute gives a second

chance for those who missed out on the formal education system and are left unemployed in the city. It is also open to the other provinces as well if they make their own way into Port Moresby with their tuition fees and get enrolled.

There are 4 batches of training annually and which happens after every 2 months. That is from February to mid-April and then May-June and July job placement. Then from August to September the 3rd batch with job placement in October, and the last batch from mid-October to December. Previously the institute enrol 100 students for any one batch, but this year they are enrolling up to 200.

The training programme includes two months of classroom theory and six weeks outside on the job training with companies to assess their skills and knowledge. If they are seen fit they are engaged permanently, but if not, they return to the institute with assessment report to say where they are weak. They are then assisted in the area of skills they are lacking in.

For private sponsorship, students pay K500, but some usually say they don't have enough money so they let them through with only K200 or K300, with the promise that they will return and pay after they get employed. But sadly not many of them do that.

There are 5 staff working at the institute including the principal and the cleaner.

"Since there is no driver, all the staff with drivers' license also do the driving for administration runs," says Jonah Marina, the Principal's back up staff.

"But despite the small number of man power, NCD can see that we have done a lot in a short while," he says.

Jonah Marina was one of the course participants who were in the work force but he returned to assist at the institute. He is now the Job Training Placement Coordinator.

Students are trained to upgrade their writing and reading skills, and to receiving training on human resource so that they can create their own business.

Some of the students leave school very early and so needed to upgrade and revise on their literacy in writing, reading and mathematics. There is no enrolment age limitation but the lowest grade level enrolled so far was a grade 3 drop out.

There were some who were qualified teachers but came back and went through trade skills training and are now in the sales industry. Philomena Sion is one example and she is now a sales executive for Ray White.

The course contents include sales and marketing, purchasing and merchandising. They also teach confidence building and personal grooming.

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An important animal disease control project which NAQIA is still conducting, and is at the monitoring stage, is the New Castle Disease (NCD). The disease comes into PNG soil from overseas via vessels and through foreign birds brought in across the PNG/Indonesia border.

NCD was first detected in East New Britain in 2006 and killed chickens, but it was contained.

But currently, NCD is present and causing deaths to chickens in Vanimo, Sandaun province.

It is believed that the disease is brought in by people who travel between PNG and Indonesia, to and from Jayapura, (Indonesia) for shopping and other purposes, and bring in live chicken and eggs to the PNG side.

Awareness has been conducted and people know the law, but are ignorant, which results in the introduction of such deadly animal and pest diseases.

The situation is being monitored by NAQIA and its partners

In terms of plant pests and diseases, it is a big problem which again, NAQIA and its partner agencies are doing surveillance work, containment, awareness and monitoring.

Coffee and cocoa are vital cash crops for PNG which have generated much income

for farmers, and towards the country's economy.

But they are now under threat posed by local and introduced pests, insects and organisms, affecting the agriculture industry and its contribution to the national economy, as well as the livelihood of thousands of

"Mr Tenakanai says the disease is brought in by people who travel between PNG and Indonesia, to and from Jayapura, (Indonesia) for shopping and other purposes, and bring in live chicken and eggs to the PNG side"

local farmers.

"Coffee is a major revenue earner for the country, to the tune of K500 million annually. It is an income earner for more than 3 million people in the highlands region. But destructive pests and diseases could lead to the loss of income and huge social problems. Therefore NAQIA is doing all it can to contain the situation.

"Work on maintaining the crop is being done in all regions and provinces of the country except Gulf, Jiwaka, Enga and Simbu," says Mr Tenakanai.

Of particular concern are the direct flights to

Mt Hagen, the heartland of the coffee industry, from Telefomin which is closest to Indonesia's Papua Province where there is an ongoing coffee disease.

"The main concern is for the disease being transferred through cargo, thus NAQIA and CIC must work together to prevent insects pests at all costs," says Mr Tenakanai.

He says that the disease entered PNG soil in 2009 through Yapsie in Telefomin, but was contained through an eradication program.

He says however that it is hard to put in effective control measures especially in an area likened to "no man's land".

The other major revenue earner for the country affected by pest and disease is cocoa.

Thousands of people and farmers in the coastal areas of the country including the Islands, Momase and some areas in the Southern regions, depend on cocoa for their livelihood and survival. It is also a major agriculture revenue earner for PNG.

But since 2006, damage to the cocoa industry by the cocoa pod borer (CPB) has been extensive and devastating to farmers and the industry.

The insect pest was first detected in East New Britain in 2006 where it has done much damage to one of the top cocoa producing province in the country.

It has since spread to the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB), West New Britain, East Sepik, Bogia and Karkar in

Madang, and recently, to Misima in Milne Bay.

The CPB insect has always been present and feeds on fruits, particularly, rambatans. But they have switched to cocoa after a change of eating habits brought about by climate change, Mr Tenakanai says.

He says that as a result of the CPB, many small holder cocoa farmers in East New Britain, ARoB and Bogia in Madang are neglecting their cocoa trees, with some ENB farmers turning to oil palm and coffee.

He says that prior to the CPB disease, small holder farmers constituted about 90 percent of the export crop, however it is the opposite now with major plantations and companies involved in the business such as Agmark, WR Carpenters and others, at the top of cocoa export production.

To effectively control CBP, NAQIA and its agencies have been carrying out awareness to cocoa growing provinces on the containment of CPB. These include the cutting down of shade trees in the cocoa plots, constant pruning of cocoa trees, harvest and burry infected pods to stop the cycle, clean the plot of weeds and apply chemical insecticides to spray and kill.

In the next edition of Wantok Today, there will be a continuation on plant diseases to coconuts, bananas and sago palms, and steps taken to address the problems.

A holiday visit results into a booming internet café business

By Lorraine Siraba

Who would have thought that a short visit to Kainantu town would end up in a booming internet café in a district where government services are very poor.

Dorothy Kerari, a mother of five is successfully managing the only internet café in the Kainantu District of Eastern Highlands Province.

For someone who had no knowledge of computers, technology, internet and everything else associated with IT, Dorothy is providing a vital service to a population of about 20,000 people including those in surrounding areas of in the Morobe province. Kainantu is the first major town along the Highlands Highway coming up from Lae and clients come as far as Ramu to access this service.

"I came to Port Moresby to visit my son who is an IT professional. He taught me the basics of computing and the internet so that I could help out at his internet café in Port Moresby during my time here."

"I found it very interesting and asked my son to set up an internet

café back home in Kainantu District. I started with 3 computers and now have increased that to 6 computers. Kainantu is the gateway to the highlands and government services in the district are very poor. It is very costly to travel to town for business."

"People have to pay K20 return to go to Goroka town to access basic services like pay for airline tickets, business, banking and so forth. Since the establishment of this café, it has cut down the transportation costs of ordinary villagers who know they can now access that service through our café".

"We have had positive responses from the people who are able to print out their e-tickets from our café, seek jobs on line and search coffee prices especially for the coffee growers, without having to go all the way to Goroka town. We also provide a service to students from Kainantu high school and Alyura National High School who are able to conduct research for their assignments. I open on Sundays especially for the students and give them a discount".

In addition to providing internet

services, Dorothy's internet café is also an agent for MiCash microfinance mobile banking, where customers can deposit or withdraw money from their accounts. "We also look after the Kainantu community service program where we install computers and do maintenance to help run the community development program", Dorothy said.

"One of the biggest challenges I face is that we don't have a reliable power system. We have blackouts which hinders our service. The café currently doesn't have a proper internet service provider and as such we are operating on Digicel modem which is networked to the system.

Ms Dorothy said there is a demand for the use of internet for business and she anticipates to expand the café to meet that demand and find an alternative to the modem they are currently using.

"The business is something I like doing but then I wasn't trained for that job. I didn't have a broad knowledge of IT. I just used what I knew to do this business. I am thinking of doing further training to



Dorothy Kerari, a mother of five is successfully managing the only internet café in the Kainantu District of Eastern Highlands Province.

enhance my knowledge" Dorothy said with a big smile.

This story can be accessed on Lorraine Siraba's blog on

Women and Development
<http://lorraineaspbae.wordpress.com/>

PNG Life Education gives a second chance

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Basically it is to prepare the trainees to get a job straight away in the business environment. They teach them basic office procedures and human resource development to build their confidence in the work place environment. Some of the graduates are now running trade stores and self-employed while others are working in the sales departments.

"Companies hand picks the students to include in their work force, because the institute takes time to introduce them personally to CEOs and executive managers.

On the 7th of April, students were sent to several business houses to do their trade training, two of which were placed at Able Computing. The HR Officer for Able Computing, Sarah Kevio said so far Able Computing has hired 5 graduates from the institute in the past.

One is Margaret Oa who is the current receptionist at Able Computing. She was on trade training at Able Computing with 3 others but only Margaret passed the training and has been taken on



Margaret Oa successfully completed her training and is now a receptionist at Able Computing.

as a receptionist at Able Computing.

"Margaret showed good per-

formance and attitude and presentation so she was hired. We

"The PNGLEI is still seeking assistance from the government, especially from local Members of Parliament and donor agencies to sponsor youths to attend these essential training."

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Officer Mis Kevio said.

"The branch manager as a fa-

ther wants young people to have a good future in the end, so he is always open to accepting young people to do their work experience here." Mis Kevio said.

"Other companies should be open to accepting the students when they are approached. It's for a good cause to have most young people educated, trained and employed.

Students will grow ideas of a work environment when they are given a chance in a work place," she said.

Jones Urevo, another of the former trainees was first employed as a walking salesman but now he is a Small Management Enterprises Sales Consultant because he proved to be very good.

The PNG LEI doesn't have its own place but at the moment, it is using one of the training rooms at the National Youth Commission office building at Gordons in the vicinity of Seeto Kui and at the back of SP Brewery.

The Principal and Director of the Institute is a professional youth for 11 years who hails from Milne Bay and Central.

He started the training in 2011 and now has produced more than 1000 people placed in the work-

ing environment.

"Youths are recruited after a very thorough screening process. A training needs assessment is done so when they enrol, they are trained for the type of course relevant and appropriate for their interest and strength," Principal, Mr. Gini said.

There are successful former trainees like Mary Keas and Mavis Jepi who now run their own Shazel Medical Supplies renting at Waigani Jup Business Centre. Chris Pilio is another one who owns his own Trade Store at Hohola 4.

It is a very good initiative of a PNG citizen like many others, but it needs community and corporate support to continue serving the unemployed youths in the city.

The PNGLEI is still seeking assistance from the government, especially from local Members of Parliament and donor agencies to sponsor youths to attend these essential training.

If anyone wants to assist then they can contact the Principal/Director, Rai Gini, on mobile numbers; 77010050 / 72387260 or email to: pnglei.education@gmail.com.

Seat belts save life, so BELT UP!