

Papua New Guinea

Health and human wellbeing

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Papua New Guinea

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Video chapters online

1. Papua New Guinea: a country profile	(3' 20'')
2. HIV and AIDS in PNG	(3' 51'')
3. Nutrition: child and maternal health in PNG	(5' 02'')
4. Tuberculosis in PNG	(3' 47'')
5. Water-based diseases in PNG	(3' 03'')

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Papua New Guinea: human wellbeing

Unit scenario

“Geographies of human wellbeing focuses on investigating global, national and local differences in human wellbeing between places. This unit examines the different concepts and measures of human wellbeing, and the causes of global differences in these measures between countries ... They explore programs designed to reduce the gap between differences in wellbeing.”

This unit is a case study using an enquiry-based approach to explore human wellbeing, health and disease in Papua New Guinea. It invites students to work in small groups with the following scenario:

- “You are workers with an Australian aid and development non-government organisation (NGO) and have been invited to work with the PNG Government to help improve health outcomes for the people of PNG. Before starting your research, spend time brainstorming all you know about Papua New Guinea and make a list of questions to guide your research. Make sure these questions address social, economic and environmental issues.”

Skills: observing, questioning and planning

- “Watch the PNG country profile video without audio. What further questions does this raise about life in PNG and the health issues facing the people of PNG? Watch the PNG country profile with audio and read the PNG country profile. State your hypothesis regarding patterns, impacts and efforts to address health issues in PNG.”
- “Watch the other video chapters on **HIV and AIDS, Nutrition, Tuberculosis** and **Water-based diseases** – and read the documentation on these topics. Undertake further research and collect data. Watch the AusAID in PNG video below.”

https://www.youtube.com/v/p6JvlzTMK5E?version=3&f=videos&app=youtube_gdata&rel=0

Skills: collecting, recording, evaluating and representing

- “Analyse the data to make generalisations and propose explanations for patterns and predict outcomes. You may need to confirm, reject and/or modify your hypothesis. What is being done and what could be done by groups, NGOs and governments to limit the impact of these diseases on development?”

Skills: interpreting, analysing and concluding

- “Make a series of recommendations to improve the health and human wellbeing of people in PNG – and communicate your recommendations to the PNG and Australian governments. Propose individual and collective action in response to this challenge, taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations; and explain the predicted outcomes and consequences of your proposal.”

Skills: communicating, reflecting and responding

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Papua New Guinea: a country profile

Land

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is located to the north of Australia and is our closest neighbour. The climate is tropical, with high temperatures and humidity levels. Tropical forests which covered much of the country are rapidly being logged. At the same time, the connections between people and their land are very significant and central to their identity.

People

PNG is the most linguistically diverse nation in the world with over 800 indigenous languages spoken. However, the dominant language is Melanesian Pidgin, and English is the official language. Christianity and indigenous animist beliefs are the main spiritual beliefs. One of the challenges for the people of PNG is to reconcile their traditional way of life with the introduced ways of life in a modern, urban economy.

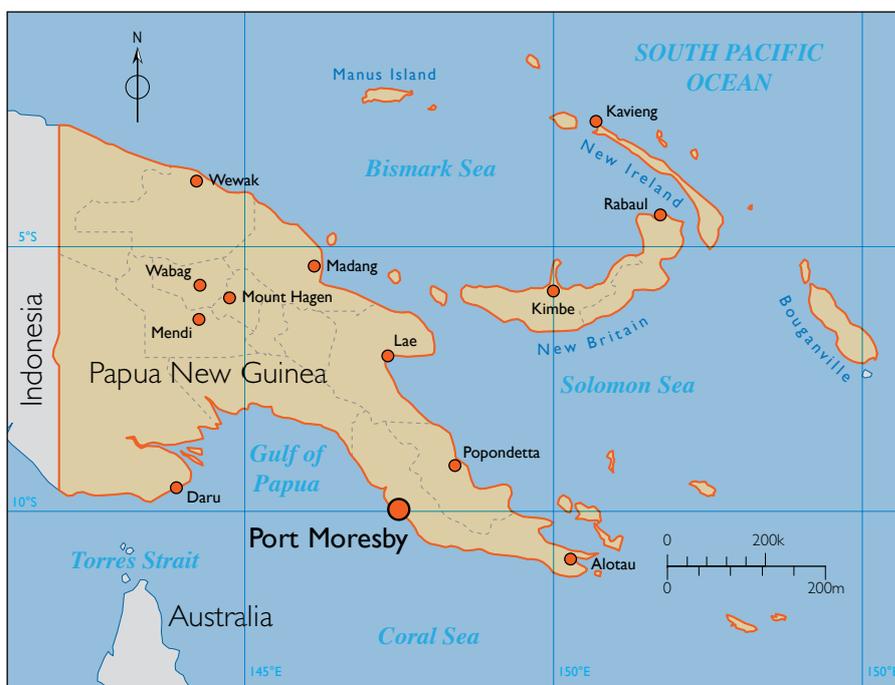
History

Evidence indicates that humans arrived on New Guinea at least 60,000 years ago. In 1885, the eastern half of the island was divided between Germany (north) and England (south). During World War I (1914-18), Australia occupied the German area, and continued to administer the combined areas until independence in 1975. Australia continues to have strong ongoing ties with the country.

Economy

Many tribes in the isolated mountainous interior have little contact with each other, let alone with the outside world. However, there is an increasing urban population. About 80 percent of the population is dependent on subsistence agriculture. A small proportion of the land is suitable for growing cash crops, including coffee, copra and cocoa.

PNG has extensive mineral deposits – including gold, copper and nickel – but the difficult terrain and inadequate infrastructure (poor roads and communications) make mining difficult. There are significant reserves of oil and natural gas and the country hopes to become a significant energy exporter. Oil, copper and gold account for two-thirds of export earnings.



Source: www.your-vector-maps.com

Australian Government aid (A\$491.7 million in 2012-13) is also a significant source of income and includes training for skilled and responsible leadership.

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Papua New Guinea: a country profile

Living conditions

Some 87 percent of Papua New Guinea's people live in rural areas with few facilities. The main problems are limited access to basic health and education services. Roads often don't exist or are of a poor standard. They are hard to maintain because of high rainfall and soil erosion. People must walk long distances to get to school or reach a medical centre.

People in rural areas live in a variety of traditional houses made from bush materials, while people in towns tend to live in Western-style housing. Diet consists of what can be grown in gardens – sweet potato, taro and greens. Only 10 percent of people have a telephone and less than two percent have access to the internet.

Education

Education is highly valued by the people of PNG. However, the public education system is poorly funded and under-resourced – particularly in the more remote areas. Approximately 30 percent of children never attend primary school.

Positively, there are moves to expand the use of *tok ples* (local language) in education programs. Also, there are increasing efforts to improve teacher training and make the curriculum more relevant to student needs.

Health

Health services are extremely poor across PNG, especially in rural areas, where roads often don't exist and there is a shortage of skilled healthcare workers. These limitations have a negative impact on the prevention and treatment of health problems.

In addition, people in remote areas have poor access to clean drinking water and adequate sanitation. This means that communicable diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera are major causes of illness and death, especially in young children. Malnutrition and HIV and AIDS are also long term health problems, and the use of tobacco and alcohol are increasing problems.

A major health challenge in PNG is the limited number of skilled healthcare professionals and hospitals available to the population. PNG has less than 400 doctors in total and only 51 work outside the capital Port Moresby. This is despite the fact that 87 percent of people live in rural areas. PNG has one doctor for every 17,068 people, compared to one doctor for every 302 people in Australia.

There is a similar shortage of nurses in PNG, with approximately one nurse for every 2,270 people. In Australia, there is one nurse for every 100 people (World Bank, 2010)

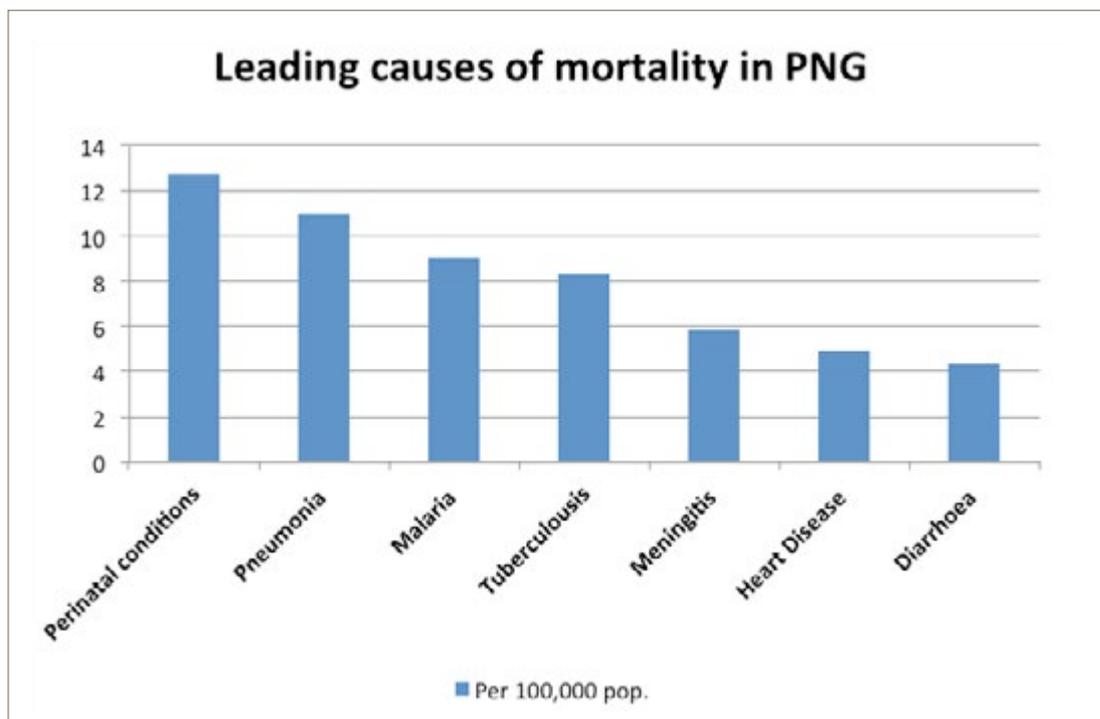
Category	PNG	Australia
Population	7.2 million	23 million
Urban population	13%	89%
Human Development Index	156/187	2/187
% of children reaching Year 5	68%	100%
Population using improved water sources	39%	100%
Adult literacy rate	Male: 63% Female: 51%	Male: 99% Female: 99%
Life expectancy at birth	63 years	82 years
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	58	5
Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births)	733*	7
Population under 15 years	41%	20%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2013
* PNG 2006 Demographic Health Survey

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Papua New Guinea: a country profile



Source: WHO 2013

Additional reading

- PNG health statistics
adi.org.au/health-in-png-2/png-health-statistic
- Discover how PNG's population has changed over the years at populationpyramid.net
- * **WATCH** the Papua New Guinea: a country profile video (3' 20'') at worldvision.com.au/schoolresources

Ringo was identified as malnourished and diagnosed with pneumonia. With supplementary food, treatment for pneumonia and immunisation he is now a healthy growing boy. Ringo's mother, Kila, received nutrition education. ▶



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Further information

Papua New Guinea

- At a glance: Papua New Guinea statistics
unicef.org/infobycountry/papuang_statistics.html
- Papua New Guinea Country Program
ausaid.gov.au/countries/pacific/png/Pages/default.aspx
- AusAID in Papua New Guinea
youtube.com/watch?v=0CfUIFUWnoc&list=PLCCE04032CC7ABABA

HIV and AIDS

- 10 Facts About HIV/AIDS
who.int/features/factfiles/hiv/facts/en/index.html
- MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
un.org/millenniumgoals/aids.shtml
- Fighting AIDS
theglobalfund.org/en/about/diseases/hivaids/

Tuberculosis

- 10 Facts About Tuberculosis
who.int/features/factfiles/tb_facts/en/index.html
- MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
un.org/millenniumgoals/aids.shtml
- Fighting Tuberculosis
theglobalfund.org/en/about/diseases/tuberculosis/

Nutrition, child and maternal health

- 10 Facts About Nutrition
who.int/features/factfiles/nutrition/facts/en/index.html
- MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml
- MDG 4: Reduce Child Mortality
un.org/millenniumgoals/childhealth.shtml
- MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health
un.org/millenniumgoals/maternal.shtml

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Further information

Water-related diseases

- 10 Facts About Cholera
who.int/features/factfiles/cholera/facts/en/index.html
- 10 Facts About Malaria
who.int/features/factfiles/malaria/malaria_facts/en/index.html
- MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
un.org/millenniumgoals/aids.shtml
- MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability
un.org/millenniumgoals/envIRON.shtml
- Fighting Malaria
theglobalfund.org/en/about/diseases/malaria/

Sources

- ¹ UNAID World AIDS Day Report 2012, p. 12
- ² Ibid, p. 12
- ³ UNAIDS Global AIDS Report 2012 – Country Progress Report: Papua New Guinea
- ⁴ Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report, 2012 - UN Inter-agency group.
- ⁵ 2009-2010 Papua New Guinea: Household Income and Expenditure Survey, p. 90
- ⁶ World Vision International, 2012, Never Had a Chance: Why millions of children still die needlessly every year, p. 6
- ⁷ AusAID, Maternal and child health. Accessed August 2013. <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/health/Pages/maternal-child-health.aspx>
- ⁸ Emma McBryde, 2012, Evaluation of Risks of Tuberculosis in Western Province Papua New Guinea, p. 7-8
- ⁹ AusAID, Tuberculosis management in Western Province. Accessed August 2013. www.ausaid.gov.au/countries/pacific/png/Pages/tb-png.aspx
- ¹⁰ AusAID, Tuberculosis management in Western Province. Accessed August 2013. www.ausaid.gov.au/countries/pacific/png/Pages/tb-png.aspx
- ¹¹ AusAID, Australia and the Global Fund. Accessed August 2013. www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Documents/australia-global-fund-fact-sheet.pdf
- ¹² AusAID, Tuberculosis management in Western Province. Accessed August 2013. www.ausaid.gov.au/countries/pacific/png/Pages/tb-png.aspx
- ¹³ WHO, 2012, Cholera Factsheet. Accessed August 2013. www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs107/en/index.html
- ¹⁴ WHO Global Task Force on Cholera Control, 2010, Cholera Country Profile: Papua New Guinea
- ¹⁵ DFAT, 13 November 2010, Australia provides support to PNG to tackle Cholera Outbreak. Accessed August 2013. foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2010/kr_mr_101113.html
- ¹⁶ Catherine Wilson, 2012, Papua New Guinea Casts Wide Net Against Malaria. Accessed August 2013. www.ipsnews.net/2012/07/papua-new-guinea-casts-wide-net-against-malaria