

# HOPE *worldwide* (Australia)

## UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES IN PNG MARCH - APRIL 2005

### AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Agriculture is the major industry in Papua New Guinea. Most people are subsistence farmers, and crops such as coffee and palm oil are exported. However, most farmers remain very poor due to population pressures, declining world prices, variable weather (including El Nino), and other factors. Many families can't afford health care or education for their children.

We believe that training and extension services can assist farming families to achieve both *food security* (adequate nutrition for the family), and *income supplementation through cash cropping*. These are needed in a country where there are formal jobs for only about 15% of school leavers.

Our Agriculture Program began in 1998. We promoted urban agriculture in and around the capital, Port Moresby. Half of the 300,000 residents live in squatter settlements where there is high unemployment, poor sanitation and frequent violence. Many children are malnourished. Food is fairly expensive. However, there is much untended arable land in and around the city. Market gardens can provide householders with some food for domestic needs, and also a small cash crop. Water supply is not always plentiful, but one or two crops can be grown each year.

We have assisted householders and small groups of farmers in Port Moresby's settlements and villages, training and equipping them in farming techniques. Numerous workshops have been conducted teaching basic skills in vegetable farming, farm management, post harvest techniques and marketing skills, small animal husbandry, and other topics. We have also assisted various individuals and groups with tools and seeds, and conducted soil analyses.



In 2003, we conducted a comprehensive survey of hillside gardens in partnership with NARI (National Agriculture and Research Institute). In 2004-5, we have continued our urban agriculture program, and also commenced "extension" services to farmers in rural areas in Central Province. This work includes developing crops new to PNG, such as rice and vanilla. Vanilla grows readily in PNG's climate, and has great potential as a cash crop. Rice is a very high yield crop and has potential in wetter areas. We have also introduced duck farming to residents in Port Moresby and villagers in Tapini in Goilala District.



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Workshop graduates



Youth program – watering bok choy seedlings

The program has three staff:

**Alex Aruai** – Alex is 26, he has a Graduate Diploma in Tropical Agriculture from the University of Vudal – a two year course. Alex joined our staff in 2002, and is from the island of Bougainville. He grew in tumultuous times during the island’s civil war in the late 1980s-early 1990s.



Alex



Vanua

**Titus Tobia** is 37. He has no formal agriculture training but has worked with our agriculture program for six years. He is highly practical and has outstanding community skills. He is married with three young children, and lives in Badili settlement. His work includes training and teaching his fellow tribesmen in the impoverished Goilala District of Central Province



Titus

**Vanua Geno** – Vanua is 24, he also has a Certificate in Tropical Agriculture from the University of Vudal . Vanua has worked with us from 2003, and is from Marshall Lagoon in Central Province. He is fourth amongst ten siblings. His father has passed away so he helps to support other members of his family.

**Thank you for your support of this crucial work.**

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