

HOPE *worldwide*

UPDATE ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA OCT-DEC 2005

EDUCATION FOR ALL – “HOPE AND A FUTURE”

The Six Mile settlement is on the South East edge of Port Moresby. People from literally hundreds of distinct tribal and language groups live in crowded, rudimentary dwellings that often do not have water or power. The area is notoriously unsafe for both residents and visitors - even our staff have experienced hold-ups and been stalked. Over one third of children in the area do not attend school. We have a school in Six Mile which consists of a preschool and a class for older children who are not enrolled in school. After the older children graduate from the class, we find them places in local primary schools. We then support their education through our school sponsorship program. This report tells the history of the school, and the stories of six extraordinary children in our class of 2005.

We became aware of the needs in the settlement in the mid 1990s and opened a preschool in 1996. The preschool thrived, but it became apparent to us that many older children were not enrolled in school. We conducted a survey of every house in the area. Over one third of children aged 8-12 years were not enrolled in school, and unlikely ever to school. Some had never attended school, and others had dropped out as their parents could not afford the school fees, or due to various social factors. Once they get too old to enrol, or are out of school for a year or so, they cannot get back into the formal system – the schools are already full. They face a lifetime of illiteracy, which limits their access to employment, and means that they will never escape the poverty trap that they were born into. Furthermore, they are vulnerable to economic and political exploitation, and unable to read health and other information that would benefit themselves and their future families (maternal education level is a key predictor of child health).



Cecilia, 13 years old, left school in 2004 as family couldn't pay fees, will go into Grade 5 in 2006

All of the children graduating from the Kisim Save Class are special. Some are extraordinary – the six children pictured in this report come from Goilalan families. Goilala is one of the poorest areas of PNG, and their families have moved to Port Moresby and live in the Bomana settlement, some distance from Six Mile. These children have travelled across the city every school day in 2005, three buses each way, to come to our school so that they can have a chance at getting into formal school. All worked hard and graduated, and have been enrolled in Bomana Primary School in 2006. We have paid their fees in advance.



Peter, 10 years old, no formal schooling as family very poor, will start Grade 1 in 2006

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Aloisus – 14 years old, no formal schooling as large family and couldn't afford fees, will go into Grade 2 in 2006



Madline, 15 years old, left school in 2003 because family couldn't pay fees, will go into Grade 6 in 2006.



Monica, 7 years old, no formal schooling as mother passed away and family is poor, will go into Grade 1 in 2006

Jacklyn, 13 years old, left school in 2003 because family couldn't pay fees, will go into Grade 5 in 2006.



Head teacher Fosse John says of these children: *“It is very touching to see the determination and eagerness expressed on their faces daily”.*

Inspired by the Yumanapusutra school that HOPE worldwide ran in a similar settlement in New Delhi, we commenced our non- formal school in 2000. This class enrolls children aged 8-14 years who are not enrolled in school. Literacy and numeracy skills are instilled, instruction given in science, health, physical education and oral expression, and a love for learning. The class is called “*Kisim Save*” – Tok Pisin for “*gaining knowledge*”.

At the end of 2000, nine children graduated from the class. The challenge was then to find a school that would accept them straight into grades 2-4 (depending on age and ability), when already these classes were full. A precedent had been established the previous year when five older children from the preschool had been granted places in Moitaka Wildlife Primary School, thanks to the compassion and openness of the headmaster. This set a precedent which was followed by two other schools in the area - Holy Rosary and Butuka Primary Schools. The National Capital District Education authorities approved the process, and since then we have been able to find places for all school graduates. The class now graduates over 20 children per year. We have also been able to further help these schools with library books and services and HIV/AIDS education, and, in the case of Holy Rosary School, with a computer classroom.

How can you help?

Our school sponsorship program covers the school fees of over 240 students in Port Moresby and the Highlands – in all grades from elementary to University - as well as supporting other programs in these areas. 86 of the children are graduates of the “Kisim Save” class featured in this update. If you would like to sponsor one or more of these children, please contact your local HOPE worldwide coordinator or e-mail Graham_Ogle@hopeww.org