

Social perspectives of different age and gender groups in selected communities in Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Madang Provinces, in PNG

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Abstract

Divine Word University (DWU) and DKA Austria are working together to identify the social perspectives of different age and gender groups in four communities from three provinces of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Four broad themes structure the analysis: 1) Marginalization and exclusion; 2) Influence of modernization on culture and traditions; 3) Violence in the community and families; and 4) Intergenerational conflict. In March 2022, a study was conducted in Sinsibai, Western Highlands Province as part of this project. The study draws on individual interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, surveys, and activities to identify perspectives from different age and gender groups, on social issues affecting their community. In total, 203 participants were involved in the study, comprising of 91 children, 77 adults, 10 young adults, and 25 grade 11 high school students. The study documents stories of safety and concerns, and hopes for the future for each gender and age group. The data generated from this project can be of use and interest to a range of audience, from the community to government and non-government agencies. The paper concludes with the authors' fieldwork reflections.

Keywords: conflict intergenerational conflict, generational gap, marginalization, violence, modernization, Christianity, culture, climate change, decision-making, conflict

Introduction

As PNG develops as a nation, issues arise such as violence, the effects of modernization, and marginalization of young people, and intergenerational conflict. The project of which this study is a part stems from the belief that such social issues should be addressed through a collaborative effort from the people who are experiencing these challenges as well as the government and other key stakeholders.

A project aiming to identify the social perspectives of selected communities in PNG was developed by DWU and DKA Austria. The first study was with an isolated rural community in the Highlands named Ambulua (McKenna et al 2020). The second was with a rural coastal community named Dimir, (Gibbs et al, 2021). In March 2022, a third study was undertaken in Sinsibai, a semi-rural community in the Western Highlands Province. The fieldwork team included DWU Staff, and a Post-graduate Masters in Research Methodology (MRM) student.

The study had the following project objectives:

- Define the dynamics of marginalization and exclusion of groups or people, young and old, who suffer from marginalization and forms of violence in the communities
- Review the potential and actual resources available to address the risks to family and community life
- Determine the participants' perception of modernization and its influence on culture and traditional governance and order
- Document peace-building capacities and initiatives in the families and communities
- Explore the hopes and expectations of the participants in the communities
- Understand how the participants are addressing their own issues locally

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- Identify the stakeholders and decision-makers in the community and review to what extent they work together successfully

This summary report documents the fieldwork activities and findings.¹ A short film about the visit is available at <https://youtu.be/UeYLT6sc-2c>

About Sinsibai

Sinsibai (variously spelled ‘Tsinsibai’, Tsinsipai’, or ‘Tsinjibai’), is located in Upper – Nebilyer, in the Mt. Giluwe Rural Local Level Government (LLG) of the Tambul- Nebilyer District of Western Highlands Province. It is located around thirty (30) kilometres south-west of Mt. Hagen, about 50 minutes travel by road. According to the 2011 census, the Mt. Giluwe Rural LLG had a population of 40,578 people. The National Department of Health in a 2015 ‘Due Diligence Report’ provided an approximate total population of 4,650 people in Sinsibai (National Department of Health, 2015).



Figure 1: Sinsibai primary school student leaders welcoming researchers

According to Strathern (1971, p. 6), ‘Hageners’ divide themselves into three linguistic classifications, the Melpa, Temboka and Kowul. The people of Sinsibai are part of the group that speaks the Kowul language.

Sinsibai is an area for subsistence and small-scale commercial farming. Crops such as sweet potatoes (‘kaukau’), ‘English’ potato, and cabbage are marketed locally or transported to other more distant markets. These activities allow people to earn a modest income enough for school fees, transport, health care, and other necessities. There is a fully functioning health centre in the community, and locally owned trucks that travel to and from Mt. Hagen. Food security from their gardens is sometimes, affected by pests or frost.

There are three schools within the area – Sinsibai primary school, Sinsibai elementary school, and the recently established Upper-Nebilyer secondary school. The majority of the people there identify as Catholic, followed by Seventh Day Adventists, Lutheran, and United Church, among others.

Fieldwork activities

In total, 203 participants were involved in the study, comprising 91 children, 77 adults, 10 young adults, and 25 grade 11 high school students. Focus groups, interviews, children, and young adults’ activities involved 180 participants. Additional data was generated from six structured questionnaires and 17 Menzies surveys.²

¹ Consent was received from the participants. When involving children, the team ensured parental consent prior to commencing the activities.

² Adapted from the [Parenting for Child Development](#) program developed by the Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin, Australia.

For children there were exercises in drawing and mapping, questions about food and farming resources, and a transect walk through the community. For young adults (20 - 30 yrs old) there was a structured agree/disagree activity and a safety continuum activity. For adults the following questions were used as a guide for the focus group discussions:

- How are decisions about community matters made in Sinsibai?
- What changes have you observed with the culture and traditions of Sinsibai? Are the changes positive or negative? Why?
- How would you describe the relationship between the older generation and the young ones in Sinsibai today?
- What do you expect from your community, government, family, friends and leaders? What do they expect from you?
- What kind of services are available in your community and who provides them?
- If a child or person is beaten or abused, what does the community do?
- How is peace maintained in the community?
- Are there any widows, orphans or people living with disabilities here? If so, how does the community care for them or treat them?

Adult interviewees were asked the same questions as the above for focus group discussions, along with further probing questions

Voices of children and adolescents

Community mapping: Grade 8 students

Forty grade eight students were divided into four groups, and were given butcher papers to draw a picture of their community, then put a smiley face ☺ on places they felt safe, and a sad face ☹ on places they felt unsafe in. They then presented their work, and explained their choices.

There were differing opinions about some places, such as the forest, road, and aid post – some considered these to be safe, while others disagreed. Other than those minor difference, the students commonly identified places they considered to be ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’ on their community maps.

	Safe	Unsafe
Group 1	Church, school, health care facility, forest, river, and bridge	Toilet, market, and road
Group 2	School, church, store, garden, and own community	Forest, market, and road
Group 3	School, church, health care facility, and forest	Guest house, broken bridge, store, bingo house, and toilet
Group 4	Health care facility, church, school, bridge, garden, and road.	River, and market.

Table 1: List of ‘unsafe’ and ‘safe’ places identified by grade eight students



Figure 2: A section from one of the Community Mapping drawings

Most commonly mentioned safe places were church, school, health care facility, forest, river, bridge, and garden. Most of these places are associated with learning or education, good hygiene, health and nutrition, and consequently are considered safe. The places commonly considered unsafe were toilet, market, road, and bingo house. These areas were associated with bad hygiene, influence of undesirable habits, and distraction from studies, fighting, and parental disobedience.

Safety continuum: Grade 11 students

25 students engaged in this activity where statements concerning the safety of individuals and community members were read, and students were then asked to move to either side of the room depending on whether they felt very safe or very unsafe, on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being very unsafe, and 10 being very safe. Students were also asked to formulate statements or scenarios for their classmates who then responded by moving to where they felt safe or unsafe.

The graph below portrays the number of students in each position, according to how they felt about each statement. While some students feel safe and very safe walking to school alone, others (females or those living far from the school) are either unsure or feel unsafe and/or very unsafe. Although responses varied in each statement, ‘your parents are fighting’ was a statement that garnered a unanimous ‘unsafe’ and ‘very unsafe’ response from the students.

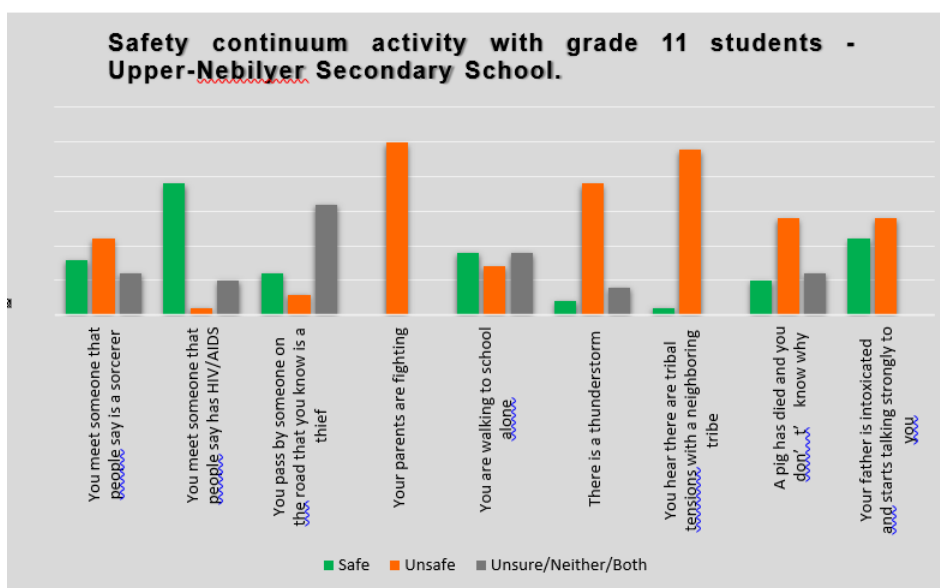


Figure 3: Graph of students’ responses to each statement for the safety continuum activity

The students shared their experiences that influenced their answers. While some students say meeting a sorcerer is unsafe for them, others say that because they are Christians they do not believe in such practices. While a majority of the students feel unsafe in that situation, meeting someone with HIV/AIDS is deemed 'very safe' as they understand how the virus is spread so merely shaking hands with them or embracing them will not cause any harm. There is a clear correlation between change and education and Christianity presented by the students.

Transect walk activity: Children from Sinsibai community

The children took the project team for a walk around the community and pointed out places where they felt safe or unsafe, and provided their reasons. During this transect walk, the children pointed out six places where they felt unsafe, and these are, the cemetery, the main road, power poles, and trees around the ceremonial ground, the swamp, and the main market. On the ceremonial ground, the children expressed their fear of tree branches falling on them. There were two separate incidents where an old man was injured, and a child was killed in that area, by a falling branch. The children also identified the cemetery as an unsafe place because of the fear of being followed at night by a ghost, when walking through that area. When asked how the community responded to their concern, they stated that those related to the deceased were asked to pray over the graves and to ask their deceased relatives to stop scaring people.

The children said the swamp was unsafe, especially when it is cloudy or raining because they cannot see clearly when they walk through the area, posing the risk of stepping on sharp and dangerous objects, because in most cases they are barefoot.

The children explained that the main road and market area is not safe because of the cars that drive by at high speed. Additionally, the children said that having electricity in their area is new, so they are afraid of the dangers that might come with having power poles and lines in their community.

Food and farming resources: Grade 5 students

This activity was added to the data collection instruments for the children to identify the type of food they grow, prefer and consume in their community, who is responsible for the farming, harvesting, preparation of the food, whether it was sold for income, and who was responsible for that.

It appears that potato and sweet potato are the most commonly consumed food within the household of the students in that class. This is obvious also when one enters the community, the mounds of sweet potato and potato gardens are hard to miss. Conversely, carrot is the third most grown or produced vegetable after the two aforementioned vegetables. Some food that is grown in family gardens is not included in their 'staple food' or 'food consumed daily' as one might expect. This could mean that some, if not all, of the food grown in their garden are not consumed daily, but are rather sold at the market — such as the cabbage, broccoli, carrots, and strawberries.

An important part of the activity was to get the students to identify who in their family is responsible for farming or for the gardening. Only one group drew a family working together, one other group drew a picture of a mother, and three groups illustrated a picture of a father. This points to the fact that fathers, are responsible for a large part of the farming or gardening. While some other families farm and harvest together, others may depend solely on their mothers or fathers.

Voices of adults and young adults

Violence

Seven questionnaires were returned, and out of this total, only two indicated that they do not experience any form of violence. The most common types of violence experienced or witnessed in their community are:

- Family violence - arguing with spouse
- Students taking marijuana, illicit drugs
- Neighbouring tribes over disputed lands (tribal fight)
- Verbal violence

- Physical violence
- Emotional violence
- Psychological violence

Interestingly, ‘students taking marijuana and illicit drugs’ is commonly noted as a form of violence. It could either be seen as a factor that contributes to violence in the community, or a violence to self (harming one’s own body). Respondents identified alcohol consumption and consuming marijuana as the main contributing factors to violence in the community. This is followed by individuals’ attitudes, behavioural problems, disagreements, land disputes, political differences, unemployment, poverty, and lack of basic services. A majority of the respondents indicated that women are the primary victims. Additionally, majority of the participants indicated that they do not believe violence is a private matter. Although a majority of them said they do not know of any available support services, the ones who did know listed the following:

- Village courts
- Police
- Meri safe house
- Counselling hotline
- Family & sexual violence unit (FSVU)

Participants not knowing any support services available indicates that people in the community may not be aware of such services, demonstrating a demand for awareness of these services in the community for those who may need this kind of support or assistance.

Peace-building capacities and initiatives in Sinsibai

Peace building initiatives and strategies are mostly headed by the leaders and involves both traditional and modern arrangements like the police, church leaders, the village court system, magistrates and councillors. While that is the case, many of the youth and female participants added that peace is maintained mostly because the people trust, respect and obey the leaders of the community. In doing so, there are minimal disturbances and disruption in the community. The church’s involvement in keeping the peace is through prayers, teachings and pastoral programs. Thirty-four different church denominations operate in the area. From this multiplicity, they have established an ecumenical Peace Steering Committee. One of the major roles of this committee is to carry out awareness on social issues such as drugs, alcohol abuse, tribal fights, and other related issues.

Peace building processes can vary considerably depending on the context, for example, in the event of a minor problem like a family argument, the two parties usually first seek mediation assistance from church leaders and when they reach a compromise, they both return home. In the event of a disagreement, the unresolved issue is referred to another level involving the councillors, clan leaders and village court magistrates who issue new demands or conditions to the accused to bring about peace.

Community response to a child badly beaten by parents

Instilling discipline and obedience in children through physical punishment (i.e. slapping and/or beating) is encouraged in Sinsibai and considered morally right, as part of counselling for deviant children. A majority of the participants interviewed were of the view that when a child misbehaves or disobeys, it is good to beat them so that they will learn the difference between right and wrong. When children are caught doing something wrong (e.g. stealing, fighting), beating them is not viewed as child abuse, but a form of discipline. It is considered abuse if the beating is unjustified and this is when community members intervene.

Influence of modernization

The influence of modernization is often associated with services that have been made available such as roads, electricity, schools and the health centre. Additionally, they noted the introduction of Christianity, and the important roles it plays in the community. They also mentioned the introduction

of the internet and technology, and the influence these bring in terms of the dressing and lifestyle of the people, especially the youth, in the community.

Dress is an important aspect of culture. Whereas in the past ‘all men used to wear ‘tanget’ (cordyline plant) at the rear and a net bag in front made from the bark of the trees’, presently they wear modern clothes like ‘trousers’ and ‘shoes’ (Adult Male FGD). The traditional cultural aspect is said to have been ‘completely lost’ (Adult Male FGD). In the past, people would wear ‘purpur’ [traditional grass skirt] but these have been replaced by factory made clothes such as coats and glasses which are worn during rainy and sunny days.

Modernization has brought multiple and varying changes in culture and traditions within the Sinsibai community. The main drivers of these societal changes were identified as education, religion, political leadership (politics), new technologies, and modernization. Respondents in the questionnaire affirm that modernization has affected them personally through politics, manufactured goods, their way of living, and dressing. One respondent mentioned that because of modernization, he has no knowledge of how to build houses as in the past, and does not know how to garden. The traditional housing design, style and construction materials are gradually changing due to the influence of modernisation and exposure to new technologies.

While tribal fights, and practices and accusations of sorcery were common in the past, they now occur very rarely or not at all. Interestingly, while accusations of sorcery in other parts of the Highlands region lead to the torturing and killing of individuals, people in this particular community seldom act on these accusations. Those who are accused or suspected of practicing sorcery are either frowned upon or simply left alone.

The decrease in the frequency of tribal fights and disputes is a positive outcome of change in the community, due to modernization. Some of the cultural aspects they maintained in the past to enhance tribal relations like tribal exchanges and killing of pigs have been abandoned. Social relations seem to have improved and there is peaceful co-existence of formerly warring tribal groups. There are still cultural obligations such as ‘bride price’ and contributing to compensation or to funerary obligations involving money and pigs. However, youth participants scornfully observed that these obligations are mostly done out of pride and building popularity in the community. They further mentioned that sometimes community resources are used for personal gain.

Some other changes mentioned by respondents in the questionnaire are:

- Electricity
- Schools within the community
- Lamps and lights
- Women wearing trousers instead of skirts
- Road for travel
- Type of food consumed

All participants agreed that despite the disadvantages brought about by modernization; overall these changes are good for the development of the community.

Factors contributing to the changes and its effects in Sinsibai

The most influential factors of change in the community are the institutions of ‘education’ and the ‘church’. The most visible changes seen in the community are the changes in houses, attire, infrastructure, and people’s attitude. Although some positive changes have been noted, there are some negative aspects that came with these changes, such as alcohol, drugs, loss or erosion of traditional knowledge and cultural practice, and the introduction of internet where (sexually) explicit materials are available for the public to view. This has posed a great concern for the people in the community.

Technological changes have brought about improved means of communication from the previous calling or shouting out and sending messages to neighbouring communities at the back of the mountains compared with the current use of mobile phone networks.

Another significant change has been perhaps in the food diets and consumption habits. In the past, the ancestors used to consume fresh garden food, pork, potatoes and sweet potatoes, among others. However, they have adapted imported and manufactured foods like rice, cooking oil, canned foods, and others, which are associated with several negative effects, including decrease in physical activity through gardening, a decline in household food security, frequent sicknesses, reduced capacity to do daily work, and apparent reduction in longevity.

Generational gap and intergenerational conflict

Generally, in Sinsibai there is a good relationship between the younger generation and the older generation. The majority of the participants have expressed that the youth in the village have respect for their leaders, elderly, and parents. Therefore, out of this respect, they obey them when they speak. The older people provide advice and instruction to the young people and although the young people obey them, there are slight disagreements in areas such as dressing. One FGD participant expressed as follows:



Figure 4: Community event that required cooperation of both young and old – witnessed by researchers

When young girls wear trousers, older women sit in groups and talk about it. But we young people think that we are living in a modern world. The community has changed, the world has changed. We are seeing new things from the outside world. So we think that with these changes, we can wear trousers and do what we want, but in the eyes of the older people, it is not good. That is why they talk (Adult Female FGD)

The older generation and adults expect their youths to obey them and respect them, and the youths also expect them to provide for and help them with their needs, especially in education, and in allowing them to be involved in decision-making. While the above responses reflect a positive and even healthy relationship between the two generations, the respondents from the questionnaires state otherwise. All of them stated that the relationship is not as strong or close. They further mentioned that the causes attributed to this negative relationship is modernization such as technology, cultural rules changing, television, music, mobile phones, and the like.

Another consequence mentioned by a participant is teenage pregnancy, the increase of single mothers, and polygamy, where a young woman or girl ends up becoming a second or third wife to a man. The relationship between the two generations is slowly becoming strained due to the distraction and influence brought about by the modern culture or way of life.

Although some of the responses appear to be polar opposites, generally, their ability to cooperate and work together as a community is astounding. There is overall good cooperation and a respectful relationship between the older generation and the young ones.

Marginalization and exclusion

There exists a form of marginalization and exclusion from decision making within the community of Sinsibai with regard to orphans, widows, widowers, and people living with disabilities. Participants express sympathy for those who are disadvantaged, however helping them has proven to be a challenge. Additionally, decision-making in the community seems to involve only a certain group, even though there are others who wish to express their views and provide input. While some respondents think those living with disabilities should not be involved in decision-making, others agree that they should be allowed to at least air their views to the community.

People living with disabilities, widows and orphans in the community

All participants admit that there are orphans, widows, widowers, and people living with disabilities, in their community. One adult participant stated that it was hard to provide for and help another individual or family who are disadvantaged, because they need to provide for their own family too. Some of these individuals are taken care of by their immediate family, but there is little or no community support. A female participant shares her experience by saying:

Yes. There are many of them. Me too I am one of them. In terms of the way the community care or treat us, I would say that they don't even help me. It's only through my courage and strength I look after myself and my family. The community doesn't help us in terms of gardening, building house. I for one through my own strength and courage I do them and look after my kids. It was all through my determination, courage and strength that kept me going with my kids up until now no one in the community, or government ever helped me. It's only God who looks after me up until today. (Adult Female FGD).

Female participants from the first focus group discussion agreed that although the community does not collectively help these groups of people, individuals and small groups in the church visit them, pray with them, offer help, and other items they may need. Occasionally, women also assist widows by working in their gardens. Individual family members including women and men are primary care givers for most vulnerable groups like widows, orphans or people living with disabilities in Sinsibai community.

Additionally, excessive marijuana consumption has led to mental illness or mental disturbances among some community members, which is seen as a form of disability. Generally, the community is not as sympathetic to such individuals also known as "drug bodies", because they believe that it was their choice to consume drugs in the first place.

Decision-making in Sinsibai

There are key groups or individuals who often make decisions in the community. According to the majority of the female and youth participants, it is the leaders, elders and men in the community that are part of this key group. Youths are occasionally given the opportunity to speak, however, according to youth participants, this does not happen as often as they would like. Respondents in the questionnaire expressed that women should be given the opportunity to be involved in decision making, as their input can be valuable. However, two respondents stated that there are cultural rules and Biblical aspects which would run contrary to that.

Some participants said that decisions concerning the community are made collectively. For instance, doing a community project such as constructing a school classroom or church building is discussed widely in the community and the decision is made by the community, not the village leaders or councillors. One participant explained:

As a leader and councillor of the people, it's hard for me to make a decision by myself. Yes, I am a councillor but different people in the community have different views and opinions.

Hence, I get the views from the community and make a collective decision. It's not a one-man decision but a collective decision" (Adult Male FGD).

Institutions and structures of politics, justice and rule of law, religion and culture play a significant role in the decision making process in Sinsibai community. The decision making process involves different types of decision-making methods particularly community meetings or fora where they have open discussions to assess the issues and best options or solutions available and upon reaching mutual agreement, final decisions are made.

Food and farming

The farming or production and harvest of food in the community is generally everyone's responsibility. Food harvested may be consumed, taken to church as an offering, sold at the market for some income, or contributed to gatherings, special events, activities in the community, and even given to visitors. It was observed that families in the community have their own gardens, either near the main road, on the valley or up on the hills and mountains. Adult participants' responses to questions on food and farming are strikingly similar to those of the grade 5 students' responses in the "Food and farming activity".

Time and location for farming of food

Farmers do not have a specific time or season for planting and harvesting of crops. Garden work activities including planting of crops can be done at any time. The maturity period for potatoes and sweet potatoes from planting to harvesting is about 4 months and one year respectively. However, most of the vegetables take 3-4 months. Importantly, families continuously establish new sweet potato gardens at intervals of 6 months on other plots to ensure regular supply of food when they harvest on a six months' basis. Food gardens vary in size and are usually established in different locations and spots especially around roadsides and houses, but also in bush lands, near the top of mountains, valleys, swamps, forests, grasslands and savannahs. The soils are generally reported to be 'fertile' and the weather is mildly cold throughout the year.

Responsibility and decision-making of the farming and use of food

Farming and food production is largely conducted at the family rather than at the community level. It is a shared responsibility of all family members since they are essentially dependent on gardening for their subsistence. Decision making issues vary but often include the time for garden activities like planting and harvesting and marketing, and type of crops to be planted among others.

In respect of local customs, the mother takes the lead in the preparation of the daily meals, harvesting of garden food from small farms and subsequently transporting it to the local market or the market in Hagen town for sale. Meanwhile, for relatively larger farms, approximately from ½ to 3 acres, all family members participate in gardening activities from planting to harvesting, carrying food from the garden to home and stacking (packing) it into bags before it is transported to the market for sale.

Threats to food and farming in the community

There are several threats and challenges to food and farming in Sinsibai community. These are frost, high and increasing cost of agricultural inputs, low market prices for garden foods, few access roads to farms, walking long distances to farms, and shortage of land for food production. Although fighting is a potential threat to food and farming, it has not reoccurred in recent decades.

Frost repeatedly occurs after 10-20 years and it completely depletes and destroys all crops and the natural vegetation in the area. Being a natural disaster, some farmers are resigned thinking that they can neither avoid it, prevent it nor undertake any effective impact mitigation measures. Frost is perceived as the leading threat to food and farming in Sinsibai.

The increasing and high cost of agricultural production inputs reduces the profits available for farmers who are forced to purchase and spray chemicals to manage the increasing outbreaks of pests and diseases on their farms.

Farmers own varying landholdings in Sinsibai community. Some farmers tend to have small plots of land around their residential areas, which often limits expansion of their farm production. A recent coping strategy adopted by some farmers in response to this issue has been hiring of about 1-2 hectares

of farming land elsewhere. However, they have to face the difficulty of walking long distances to the farms located 2-3 kilometres away. Nevertheless, they are prepared to accept the challenge.

Measures to address risks and challenges to food production and farming

Little is being done to address the challenges to food and farming. Frost brings dreadful consequences on livelihoods and food security of community members in Sinsibai community. It usually wipes out all food crops and farmers do not harvest anything out of their efforts and investments. Risks and challenges on food production and farming are largely managed by and within individual families as only a few or none of the existing community based organizations or groups are involved. It was pointed out that farmers wait for the frost period to end and then search for new seeds for replanting. As well as that, they also try to prepare for the frost by stocking up when they start seeing changes in the climate. However, when their stock runs out, they have no option but to purchase store goods. Even then, only those who are able to afford these items do so. Nonetheless, one adult female participant stated that the Catholic Church in the area provides relief for those who are unable to afford store goods.

Measures such as the introduction of improved agricultural production technologies, proper storage facilities, and equipment, formation of new community based organizations and strengthening of existing ones, and dissemination of market information could help in addressing some of the threats to food and farming in Sinsibai community.

Services and support in Sinsibai

Basic services such as electricity, a health centre, the establishment of roads, churches, schools, and semi-permanent houses are available in the community. These are provided by different bodies, including the National PNG central government, Western Highlands provincial government, former and current Members of Parliament (MP), Divine Word University (DWU), the Catholic Diocese of Mt. Hagen (Bishop), PNG Bible Church, businessmen in the community, and educated and professional or formally employed individuals in the community, and other local politicians.

The following list shows the services available and who provided them:

- Sinsibai DWU Matriculation Centre – DWU
- Sinsibai Primary School – Mt. Hagen Catholic Archdiocese
- Kamuga Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) School – PNG Bible Church
- Upper Nebilyer Secondary – Western Highlands Provincial Government
- Sinsibai Health Centre – Asian Development Bank
- Rural electricity- Hon. Win Bakri Daki – Member of parliament (MP) for Tambul Nebilyer
- Road maintenance- Hon. Win Bakri Daki – MP for Tambul Nebilyer
- Oamug Primary School – Mt. Hagen Catholic Archdiocese
- Sinsibai Catholic Parish – Mt. Hagen Catholic Archdiocese
- Sinsibai Elementary School – Mt. Hagen Catholic Archdiocese

The main road from the highway is currently undergoing construction, whereas in the past it was not sealed, and was rough to travel on. The electricity in the community is only accessible to some and needs to be extended to the inner parts of the community. Access to clean and sanitary water is problematic; although they have fresh water coming from the mountain, there needs to be an improved water supply, which includes public standpipes, boreholes, and, protected wells or springs.

The health facility is a level two facility, which is referred to as a community health post, in PNG. Generally, it meets the required standard with proper infrastructure and staff houses. According to participants, there is inadequate staffing, as there are only three staff members now. Additionally, female participants who are mothers indicated that the community health post does not have the proper equipment to aid in supervised deliveries or to assist mothers at the early stages of pregnancy. Consequently, most expecting mothers are referred to Hagen General Hospital in Hagen town.



Figure 5: Sinsibai community health post

Moreover, when mothers need to be transported to Hagen General Hospital, the health centre's ambulance is unavailable to assist them as it is normally used by the staff as their private vehicle, which results in mothers facing complications during delivery. There is also a shortage of medical supplies sometimes, which results in referrals to the other health centres, or adults being given children's doses. Other than Callan Services and Care International, which does frequent visits to the community and the community's own system and peacebuilding strategies and initiatives, there are no other support services. Participants mention that police rarely patrol the area, thus community leaders and members mostly maintain law and order.

Expectations of government, community and family

Expectation from the government

Youth participants expect the government to assist them in the community through scholarships for higher education, and establish good roads for safe and efficient travel. In addition, youth participants and female participants from focus group discussions expect more and consistent medical supplies and proper management of the health centre. In addition to the priority concern of paving the main road, study participants expect the government to improve the electricity supply and extend it further into the community.

They also expect the government to establish higher tertiary institutions particularly a teachers' college, a nursing college and a vocational centre. Currently, the families in Sinsibai send their children to Holy Trinity Teachers College in Hagen town while other professional courses are remotely accessible in the neighbouring provinces such as Madang, Enga (Wabag), Jiwaka, and Southern highlands.

Other services that are considered lacking in the community are in the areas of banking, law and justice, postal and energy (fuel distribution stations). Lack of such vital services hampers potential opportunities for economic development in the area. Until now, community members access these services from Hagen town which is located about 15-20 km away, and other provinces.

Expectations from community leaders

Community leaders are expected to be 'reliable and capable' in lobbying services on behalf of community members who 'can't go and talk' as well as ensure discipline, law and order within the community.

Leaders have been key in the delivery of essential services within Sinsibai community. In the recent past, for example, participants noted, that the councillors engaged the local Member of Parliament to extend electricity or power supply, open-up access roads, construction of primary and high secondary schools, and the health centre. There are also several churches within Sinsibai, a major factor responsible for the existing peace within the community.

There has been an increasing problem of drugs and alcohol consumption in the community, and the leaders are expected to organize and carry out awareness programs on drugs and alcohol in the community. People also expect that the leaders provide support and lobby for young people regarding tuition fees for their education.

Expectations of community members and families

Young people are expected to participate in community service activities. Individual community members are expected to promote and live Christian values, be honest and reliable citizens, provide support in garden work as well as participate in school, church and sports activities. Community members are expected to participate actively in the 'public good' initiatives particularly construction and maintenance of community infrastructure such as teachers' houses, school buildings, and health centres, among others.

It is worth noting that Sinsibai community members have a culture of actively participating in public infrastructural projects. For example, they usually go and clean the health centre, and help with projects and other activities in the local schools. In the past, they opened and created a community feeder road, voluntarily and freely contributed local materials and labour in construction of the existing health centre and schools.

Menzies questionnaires

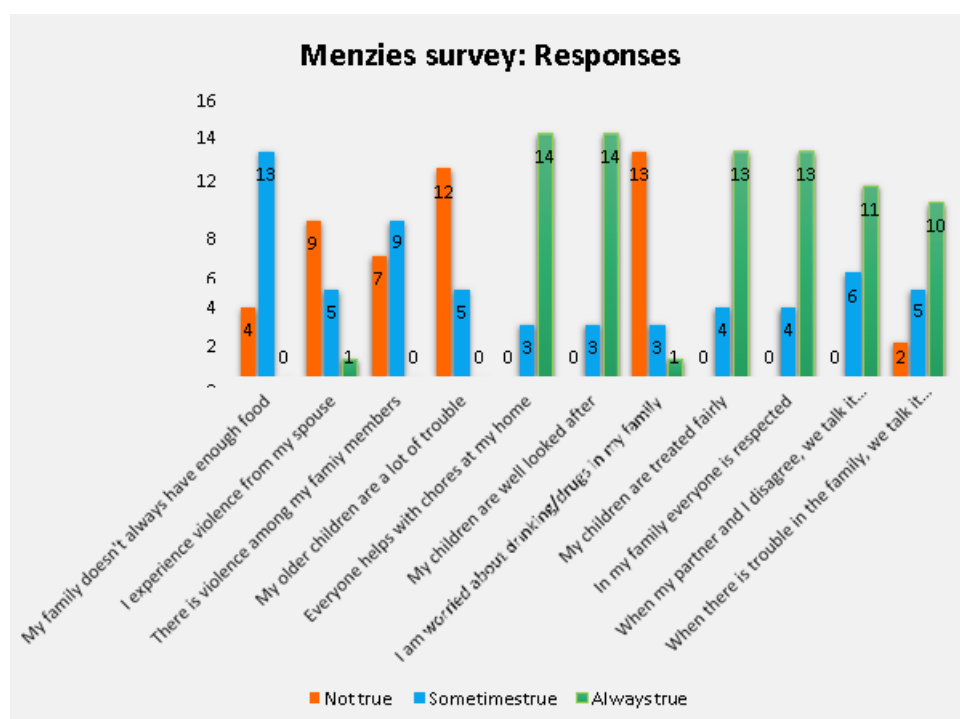


Figure 6: Chart displaying responses from Menzies survey

The chart above shows that generally, there is cooperation and peace within the family unit. Although there is minimal violence between spouses, there is some violence among family members and some concern for drinking and drugs within the family. It is true that families sometimes do not have enough food mostly due to changes in weather patterns and the climate, especially when there is frost. This is supported by responses from the participants in the interviews and discussions, that the main problem they face in terms of food and farming is the frost, which destroys their gardens. Nearly all of the members of the community are subsistent farmers, and so depend heavily on their garden crops. It seems that in most cases, a peaceful resolution to conflict in the family unit is sought for, rather than resorting to anger and violence. In contrast, two older female participants expressed concern for their older children causing trouble within the family after succumbing to the addiction of drugs (marijuana). However, this has been resolved in the family circle; although they worry, there has not since been an incident. This corroborates information from the individual interviews and focus group discussions that,

although it is a peaceful and peace-loving community, there are still issues, especially to do with alcohol consumption and drug use.

Fieldwork reflections

The research team is satisfied with the outcomes of this fieldwork. The objectives have been achieved and the team is confident in the value of the findings of this study. Some approaches that worked well were:

- The involvement of local people/leaders to introduce us to the community and encourage the local people to participate.
- The assistance provided by community members in translating the interviews from their local language to Tok Pidgin, and vice versa, and in taking the research team around the community.
- Having a local person as part of the research team enabled the team to move around freely, and easily engage in conversations with community members.
- The use of different data collection instruments enabled the participation of different age and gender groups.
- The involvement of parents, teachers and guardians, especially with the children's activities, made it conducive for children to participate freely.

What needs amending?

- Sinsibai was a big community, and reaching the different locations to administer questionnaires and conduct interviews proved to be challenging. Hence, for communities similar to Sinsibai, the days for data collection should be extended to ensure the targeted number of interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires are successfully completed.
- A majority of the respondents on the Menzies survey were women; it would be ideal to include an equal number of men for better representation and varied perspectives.
- Food and farming resources questions for interviews need to be amended to include *measures to address risks and challenges in food and farming*.
- Questions of food and farming resources should be included in the questionnaire.

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