



Photovoice

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Painting "*Piksa givim yupela pawa*" by Pax Jakupa



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What is Photovoice?



- Developed by Caroline Wang and colleagues
- Based on Freirian principles of problem solving
- “A process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through photography” (Wang & Burris 1997)

Aims to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concern; promote critical dialogue and knowledge through group discussions; and reach policy makers



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What does Photovoice involve?

Key elements of the method include:

- Training of participants as co-researchers and photographers
- The taking of photographs, selection of illustrative images, and drafting of textual captions or explanations by the participants
- Group discussion of themes present in the images
- Preparation of public exhibitions of images, aimed at community leaders and decision makers



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Theoretical basis

- Participant-driven **documentary photography**
- **Feminist theory**: viewing research participants as actors in the world rather than objects of study; recognising the potential of knowledge-making to empower participants' actions
- **Freire**: particular his problem posing approach and emphasis on praxis



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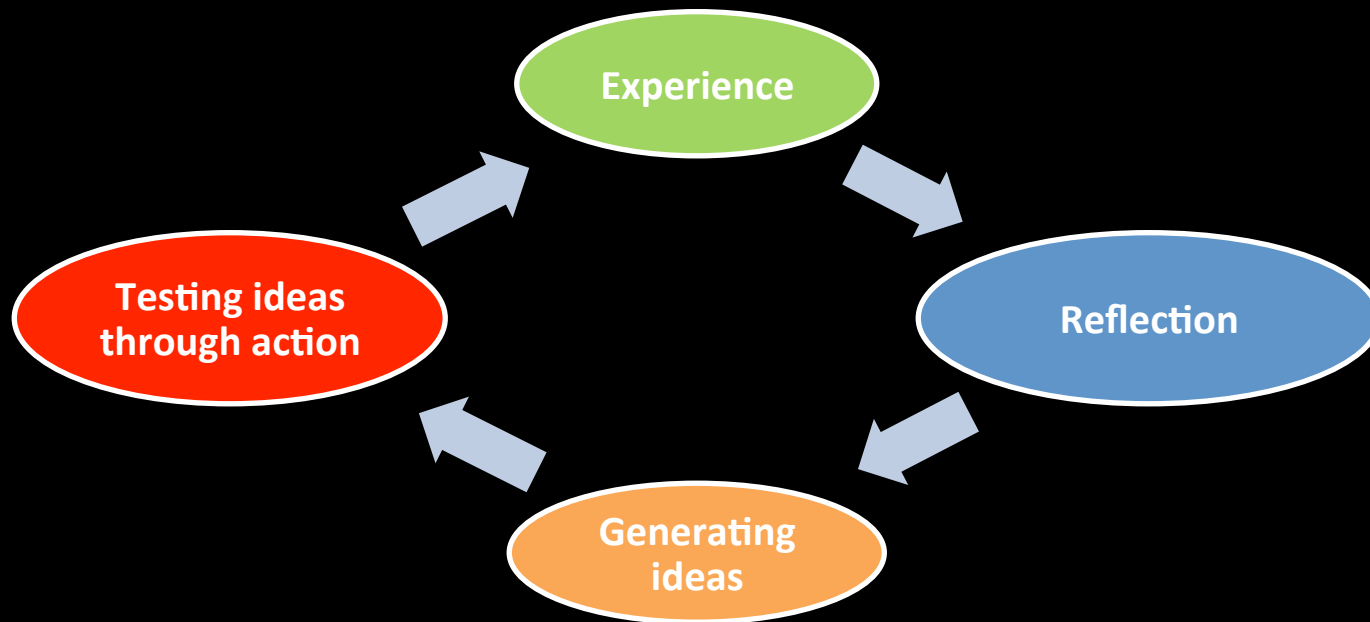
Underpinned by Freire's notion of *praxis*

Action without reflection = uninformed activism

Reflection without action = blah blah blah

Action + reflection = praxis ...

Praxis is what is required for social change



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Why might you use this approach?

- Originally developed for participatory needs assessment, also commonly used in project evaluation and for advocacy
- To elicit participants' lived experience, and to support them to communicate this through 'rich language'
- To (emotionally) engage participants and audience



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Tok Piksa Project



Photo: Dalcie Philip, Goroka



Photo: Florence Aneto, Kainantu



Photo: Lucas Dorum, Banz

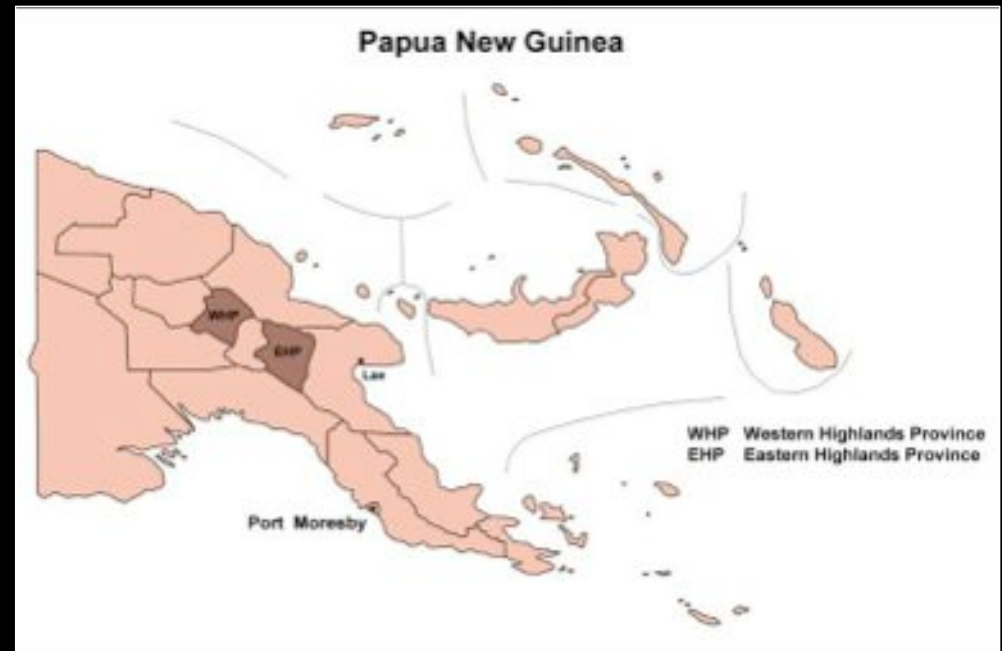
A Picture of Health: Participation, Photovoice and Preventing HIV with Papua New Guinean Youth

Research purpose

- Overall goal was to better understand how external actors can support young people to improve health outcomes in the Highlands of PNG
- Specific aims were:
 - To establish how young people understand health and make sense of where they think HIV ‘sits’ in relation to the many other factors impacting on their health in a local context
 - To explore the role that youth participation may have in the process of young people developing actionable strategies for reducing their vulnerability to poor health outcomes

HIV in Papua New Guinea

- Considerable variability in prevalence across the country
- Highlands region significantly affected (accounting for 60% of new infections in 2009)
- Youth prioritised as a 'target' population
- 'Meaningful' participation a key national strategy



Existing approaches to HIV prevention among PNG youth

- Awareness raising
 - Mass media
 - Community level through theatre and ‘peer education’
 - Promotion of A B C
- Condom promotion and distribution, especially in settings where transactional sex is negotiated
- Encouraging health seeking behaviour, particularly VCT and STI treatment
- Youth ‘participation’



Pre existing youth groups:

Save the Children's Youth Outreach Project
volunteers

(Kainantu and Goroka, Eastern Highlands
Province)

Kanaka Youth Group

(Banz, Western Highlands Province)

Tok Piksa process



- One week initial training workshop with each of three groups in the Highlands. Three follow up workshops (2-3 days in length) with each group
- Observation and interaction over 10 months
- 138 cameras developed
- Participatory analysis of youth-identified themes
- 136 photographs selected for local exhibition with accompanying stories
- Stories written about process of participation
- Follow up joint workshop (3 days) with members of all three groups, followed by major joint exhibition during the Goroka Cultural Show
- Production of short film

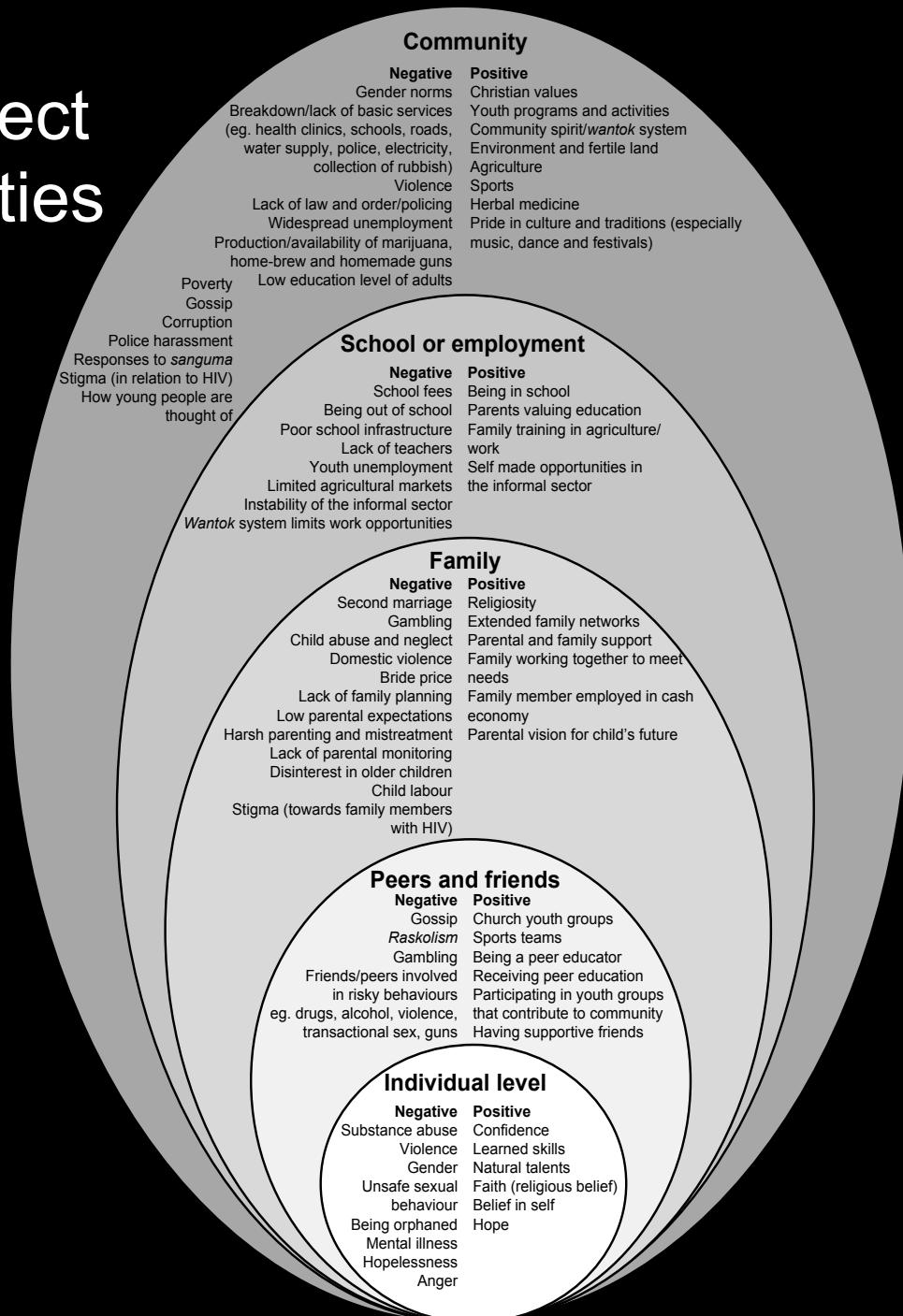
Findings - Young people's perspectives

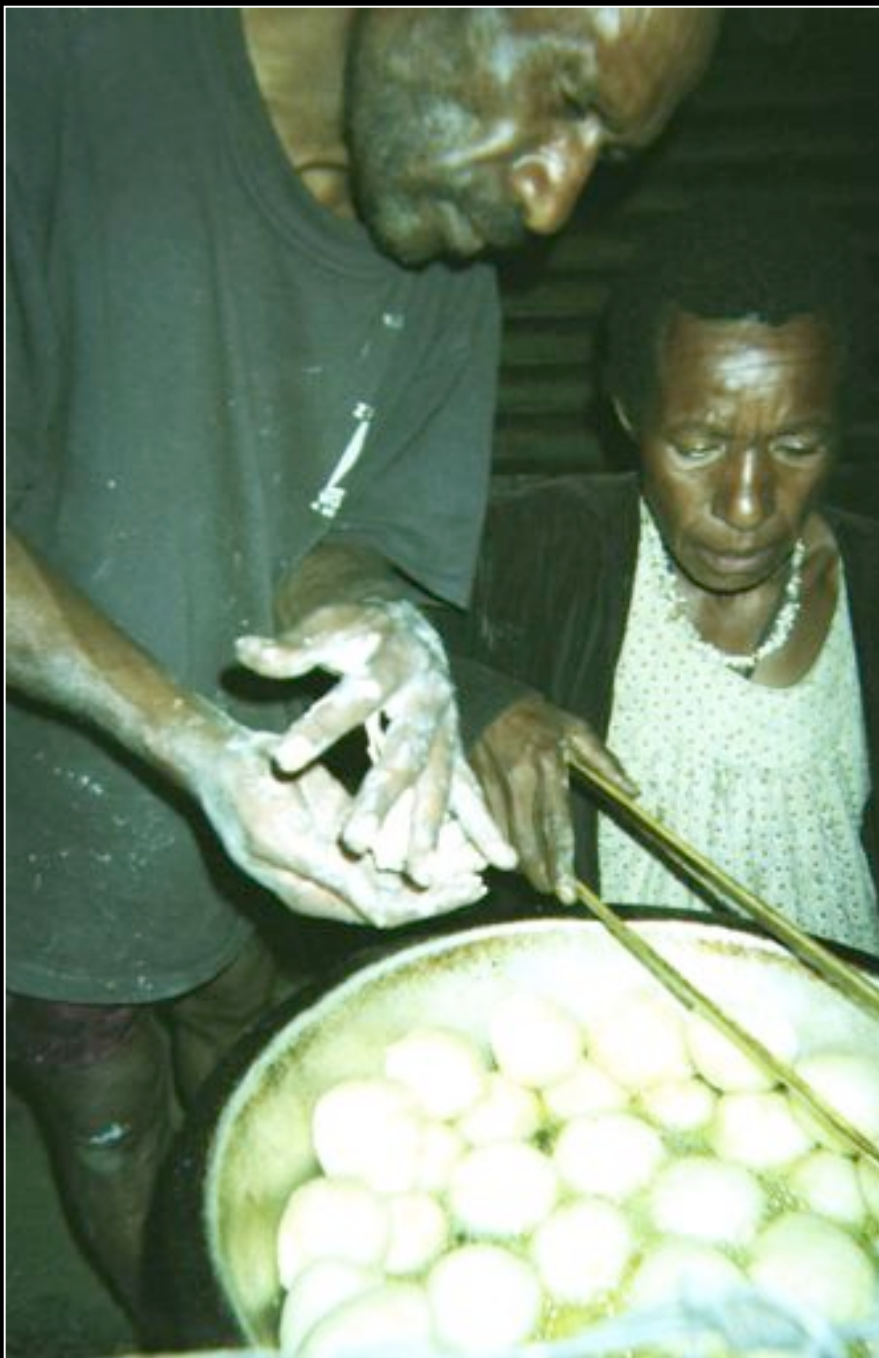
- Despite being a 'biased' group, HIV and AIDS did not feature as priorities in these young people's lives
- Number one **health** issue of concern in all three groups was the "school fee problem", followed by family relationships (and sexual violence)
- Critical thinking shown in photographs and stories developed over time
- Young people quite realistic about the factors which limit their possibilities (and increase vulnerability to HIV). They are frustrated and puzzled that these don't seem to be a priority in projects funded from outside

Disconnect between project priorities and youth priorities

- Most youth focused programs in PNG focus at the level of the individual
- In contrast, young people identified the bulk of important influences on their health at the family and community level

Ref: Vaughan C. 2010. AIDS Care, 22(Suppl 2): 1644-1651





Cooperating to pay school fees

Parents working together to earn their children's school fees is better, rather than only the mother or the father carrying all this responsibility themselves. Especially for the ones without a steady job. Parents working in public sectors or other organisations are lucky. In Papua New Guinea there are lots of subsistence farmers, and when it comes to dealing with school fees they find it very hard because some of their food may rot while being transported to market on our bad roads, or some may be destroyed by pests etc. That's when their children are pushed out of school. The government should consider how to help parents solve this problem.

Photo and story:
Florence Aneto, Kainantu



Photo and story:
Godfrey Mal, Banz

Rolling drugs

This picture shows a bundle of drugs put together on a bag and a teenager wrapping them for selling purposes. This situation occurs because teenagers find that it is hard for them to get money, so that is why they do such things to earn a living. When young people have nothing to do they take drugs as fun and from that the drugs affect their body. If we want to stop them from taking more drugs, then we must provide them with something that is useful to teenagers who take drugs – such things as sports, education, job opportunities and more.



Photo and story:
Alice James, Goroka

Rape

This photograph shows clothes that were left behind when a girl was raped here. This happened by the big river in Goroka. Rape is an illegal violence. In Papua New Guinea today, rape is almost considered as a normal activity. This is because of disrespect over women. Women are considered as something else apart from human beings. Men and women should be considered fairly. In most parts of Papua New Guinea, rape is disregarded as a problem. But we young ladies are very worried about our lives because of the problems or sickness it causes us, such as unexpected pregnancy, HIV and AIDS, STI infection, suicide, and can result in death. Please, my concern is to do something for this rape business.

Power pole without lights

Photo and story:
Lobo Andi, Kainantu

This is one of the power poles without lights in the residential area of Kainantu town. During the nights this street goes very dark. This has encouraged the raskals, rapists, murderers and drunkards who take advantage of the dark and cause problems for the innocent public residents. Girls can be raped and boys can be robbed. As a result the crime rate in Kainantu has increased over the years.



Photo and story:
Regina Oveka, Kainantu



Lack of medical care

There are a lot of sick men, women and children who seek treatment at hospital who are not being treated quickly. Sick people suffer a lot while waiting to be attended to, by health workers. When patients are sent to the dispensary, they are told that there is no medicine.

Most of time there is no medicine at the dispensary shelf. Whoever is looking after the hospital, can you do something about it so the drug supplies can last longer, so there would not be anyone dying from this problem?

Young life

Photo and story: Jeff Kumie, Banz

This picture shows a group of young boys exploring in the forest. They normally participate in all kinds of activities such as clearing up the bushes for farming; taking part in church activities like church decoration; helping old men and women by providing them whatever they need. But the rest of the time, they would probably go around their beautiful forest to visit all kinds of places. Playing, laughing and sharing ideas are their common interests, which they like to do together day after day. I took this picture because I wanted to show Papua New Guinea and the world too that we have a beautiful environment here and we have waterfalls and all sorts of good things.



Findings – impacts on participants

- Self-reported and observed increase in participants' confidence
- Strengthened communication skills
- Expanded social networks
- Thinking about the future
- Emotionally engaged participants and audience
- On occasion *dialogue* (co-construction of new knowledge) was achieved



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Building participants' confidence



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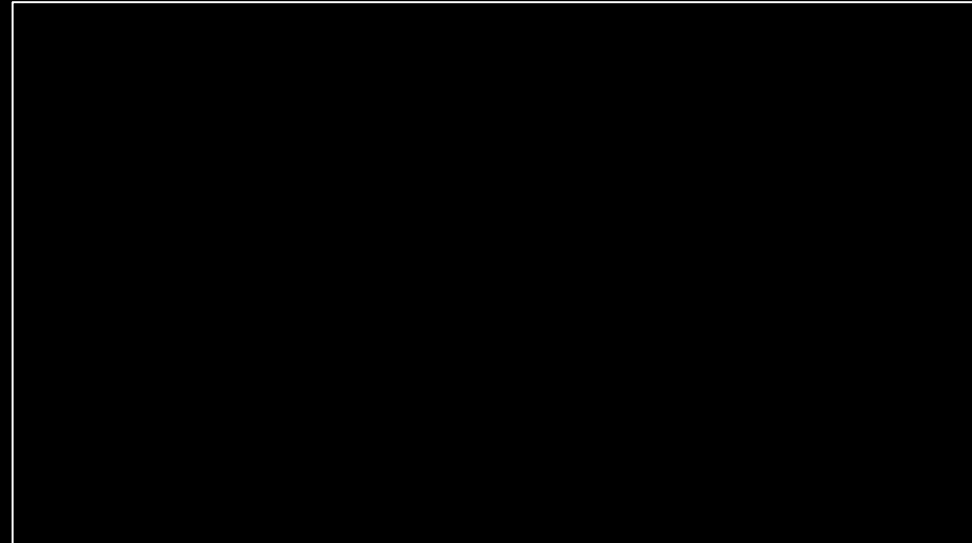


Strengthening communication skills

... “We had a good chance to hear from each other.

Sometimes I don’t agree on what they say, but we can learn from the other ones if we listen. Before I close my ears if I did not agree”...

(Alison Brian, Goroka, participation story)



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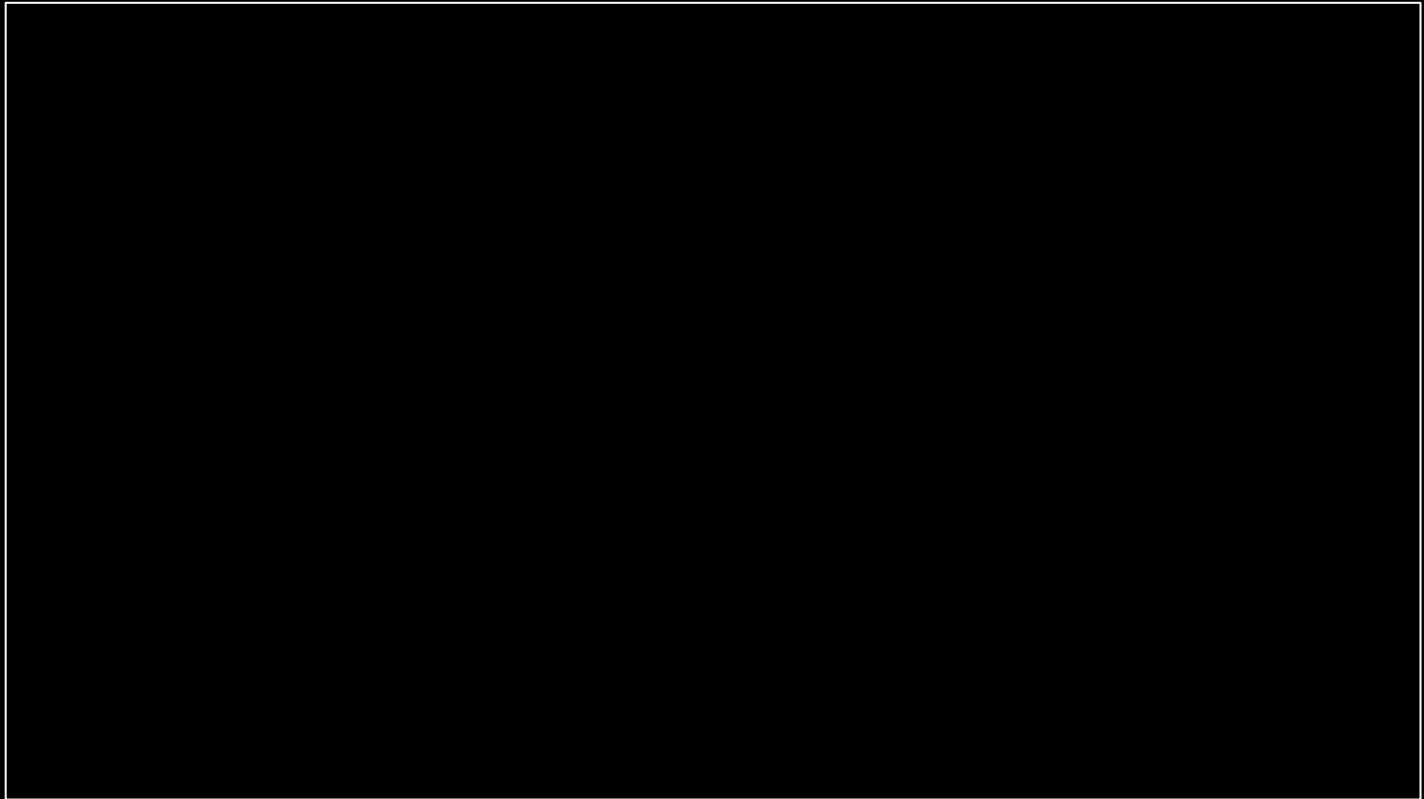
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Expanded social networks



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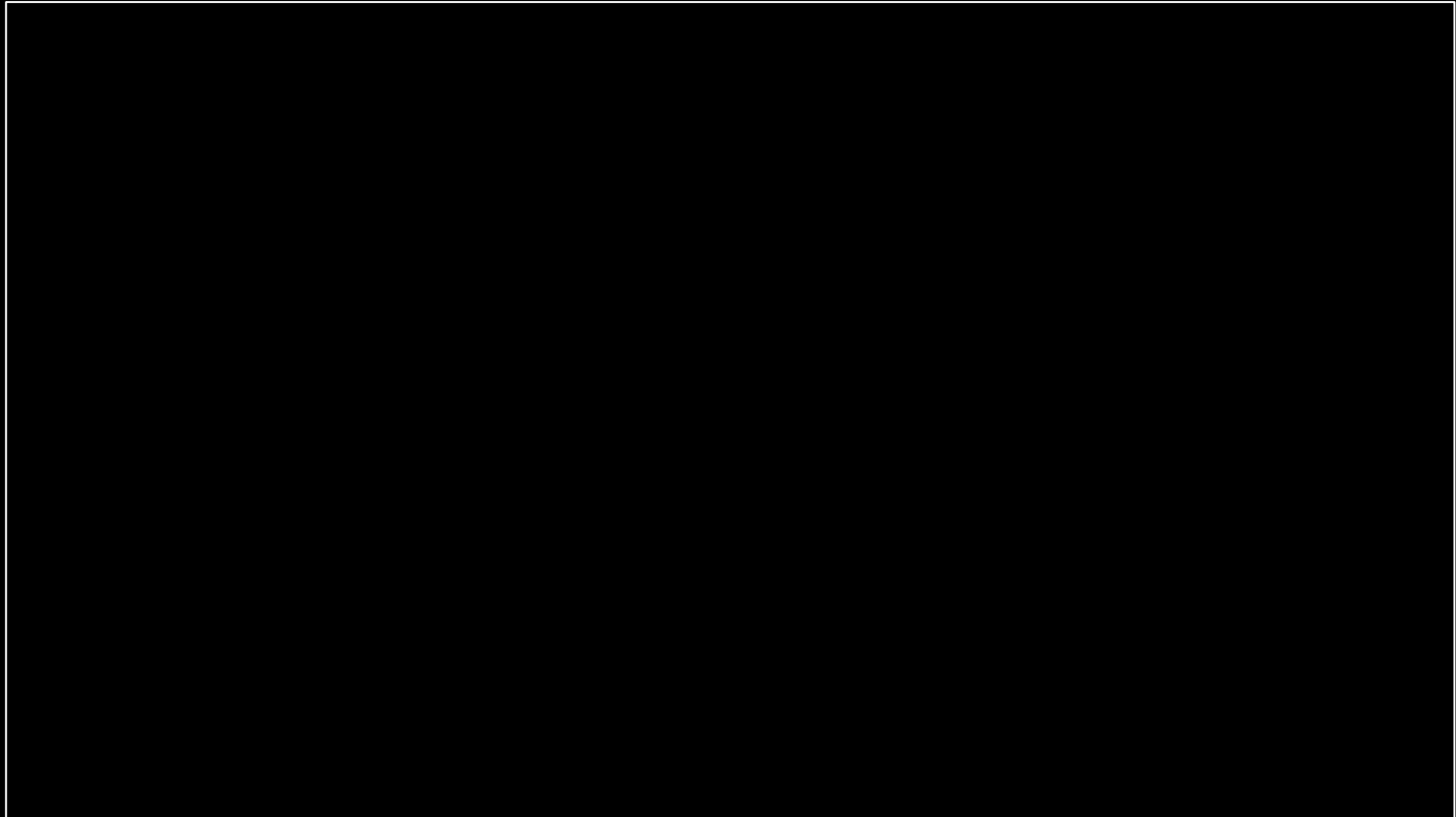
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Future thinking



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Emotional engagement

... “Some of the people crowding round were sad because they have their own children. People were asking me so many questions. Mamas would say “we hear about these things but we never see it”, especially the pictures about steam and marijuana. I felt proud I could explain to them because we youth know these things”... (Godfrey Mal, Banz, participation story)

Opportunity for self-reflection and self-representation engaged young people on an ongoing basis.



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Project artefacts as a mediating tool



‘Second marriage’ (polygyny)
problem tree, Kainantu



Mike (from Kainantu), with health worker at
combined Tok Piksa exhibition in Goroka



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Challenges associated with visual methods

- Particular ethical issues associated with visual (and participatory) methods
- The sensational, the mundane and the 'un-photographable'
- Rituals of photography and video, and how these are changing
- Time
- Analysis of visual data



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Implications or questions?

- Facilitating self-reflection, self-representation and spaces 'in-between' – a new role for health promotion programs?
- Should programs prioritise communicative skills as much as they currently do technical skills?
- Research as transformative communication

References and further information

- 22 minute film made to disseminate findings in PNG:
<http://www.mightyfilms.com.au/tokpiksa.html> (all clips taken from this)
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Bikpela tenk yu tru long:

The 46 Tok Piksa participants

Save the Children in PNG

Kanaka Youth Group

Western Highlands Provincial AIDS Committee

North Waghi District Administration

Peter Raynes

Rachael Hinton

Sean McPhillips

Cathy Campbell

General Sir John Monash Foundation

AusAID

*Painting: 'Piksa givim yupela pawa'
by Pax Jakupa*