

Interview by Jemma Purdey with Christine Wamalu Uru, Port Moresby, 17 December 2014

Advanced Diploma, Community Services Welfare Work, TAFE, Newcastle, 2010



[00:00:21]	Her family is from Masho [?] Labu [in the Abau District of the Aroma Coast]. Christine is the eldest of five, two girls and three boys. They all grew up in Port Moresby and live there now. Her father was a medical officer, based in Port Moresby but served in Wewak and Lae as well. From 1963 to 1966 the PNG Defence Force and the Australian Government sponsored him to do medical training in Melbourne. He told stories of Melbourne when she was growing up.	Family background; Childhood; Existing connections with Australia
[00:03:16]	Christine was born in 1967 in Port Moresby. Her mother was a housewife. Her father lives in the village now. Christine went to school and college in Port Moresby. Education was important in her family. She went to business college after finishing school and then worked at the PNG Banking Corporation for sixteen years in a number of different departments. She worked full time and had four sons. Her partner died in 2009.	Childhood; Early education; Career; Family
[00:07:32]	She left the bank because she wanted to have more time with her family and work for an NGO. She got a job with Cheshire Disability Services in 2005 and worked in accounts. She wanted to gain skills so she could work with people so she contacted the PNG Scholarships (now Australia Awards) office and they suggested she do an Advanced Diploma Community Services Welfare Work.	Family; Career; Community service; Scholarship application process
[00:10:24]	She had been to the Gold Coast to compete in the Asia Pacific Games in 2002 and met an Australian Awards scholar who told her how to contact Australia Awards to apply for a scholarship. She had been to Australia for holidays before that because she had family and friends living in Brisbane.	Existing connection with Australia; Alumni network; Social network

[00:13:18]	She applied for the scholarship in 2008 and was accepted to start in 2009 but had to postpone taking the scholarship when her partner died so she went in 2010. Her eldest son was finishing Year 12, the next was in Grade 8 and the two younger ones were nine and ten years old. The older boys stayed in Port Moresby with family and the younger boys went with Christine. It was a challenge for the boys at school in Australia at first but they got involved in a mentoring program for indigenous students and that helped them settle in. It was a big challenge for Christine too, studying and helping her sons.	Scholarship opportunity; Family; Living in Australia; Challenges; Social network in Australia
[00:17:13]	She went to Newcastle TAFE and the boys went to Linton Primary School, nearby. The older boys stayed to finish school in PNG. Christine couldn't go home to see them until she had finished her studies. Studying again after a long time was challenging but interesting. She learnt how to work with people of different ages and abilities.	Studying in Australia; Family
[00:21:22]	A colleague from Cheshire, Joyce, was studying too and they supported each other. Joyce had children and her husband stayed to work in PNG. Their children went to the same school and they lived within walking distance of each other. They chose to live near the TAFE and school. The TAFE support officers helped them and there were orientation activities when they first arrived. There were four students from PNG and they all helped each other. The wider PNG community was very supportive and welcoming too.	Friendships; PNG community in Australia; Scholarship experience
[00:25:10]	She had to stretch the stipend to pay for everything but it was OK. Food was cheap compared to Port Moresby and she could find all the types of food she wanted. The children had fast food for dinner during the week because she didn't have time to cook except on weekends. The boys were very independent and helpful with housekeeping and looking after themselves. They went to Islington Baptist Church and people from the church took the boys out on the weekends. Christine concentrated on her studies but went to the beach with the PNG community or out on Saturday night. She found a team to play sport with but didn't have the time. Her son played soccer at school.	Scholarship experience; Living in Australia; Family; Church community in Australia; Leisure activities in Australia
[00:29:24]	The boys made friends with Indigenous and African children from school, and have stayed in touch with them. Christine got involved in school activities too. On campus there were students from many cultures – Arabic, European and Asian. She worked with Aboriginal, African	Family; Living in Australia; Friendships; Studying in Australia; Alumni network; Scholarship experience



	and white Australian students and stays in touch with them still through Facebook. The lecturers were good. Kate O'Connor was the scholarship liaison officer and helped whenever they needed it.	
[00:33:09]	She travelled to Sydney on church activities and special events for TAFE. The church was very multicultural too, the congregation and the ministers. She chose Newcastle and NSW because she wanted to work with indigenous communities and be independent of her family in Brisbane. In PNG she had quite a protected life and hadn't worked with people from different cultures. [Comments about challenges in her work at Cheshire dealing with different ethnic groups and crime in Port Moresby.]	Travel in Australia; Church community in Australia; Existing connections in Australia
[00:38:04]	She does a lot of advocacy work and collaborates with other agencies. [Comments about the challenges facing people with disabilities in PNG and working with national and provincial government and international aid agencies.] She has been to conferences in PNG but not overseas.	Post-scholarship career
[00:41:59]	She did field work with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance in Newcastle. [Comments about her work as Research Advocacy and Awareness Officer at Cheshire and history of the organisation.]	Fieldwork experience in Australia
[00:46:00]	[Discussion about services that Cheshire provides.] Came back to PNG in 2012. The boys went back to school and have done well at school in Port Moresby. They missed their friends when they first got back and had to adjust. Her eldest son has done two years at university and now works with a retail management company CPL (City Pharmacy Limited) in their finance section. Her second son is graduating today with a certificate in Accounting. Employment is very competitive in PNG, you need to have high marks to be considered for a job.	Returning to PNG; Family
[00:49:58]	Christine is an executive member of the PNG Australian Awards Alumni (PNGAAA), which is facilitated by the Australian Awards Personal Development Initiative (AAPDI) team, headed by Scott Trent, at the Australia Awards office. [Discussion about PNGAAA activities and events and the relationship with the Awards office and DFAT.]	Alumni network; Leadership
[00:55:16]	PNGAAA has eight executive members, the executive meets monthly. [Discussion about PNGAAA events, regional chapters and Ayola Tantu who is the AAPDI program coordinator.]	Alumni network in PNG
[00:59:44]	The AAPDI team also run regular training	Alumni network

	sessions, e.g. in management skills and public speaking, every three months and in other provinces as well as Port Moresby. There is a quarterly, or monthly, email newsletter too.	
[01:02:13]	[Discussion about possible dates in February 2015 for a seminar about Jemma's project, and who in the current PNG government are Australian alumni.]	
[01:05:46]	She still has connections with the PNG community in Newcastle and other students. She would like to go back there but doesn't have time at the moment.	Alumni network; Connections with Australia
[01:06:35]	END	

