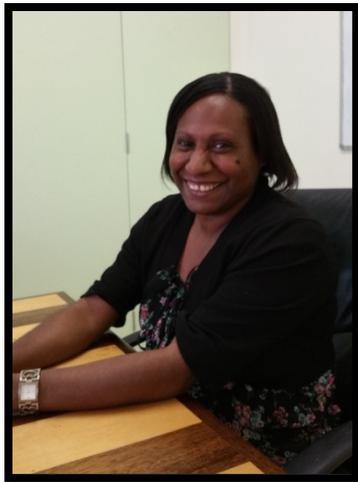


Interview by Jemma Purdey with Lavarah Haihavu, Port Moresby, 16 December 2014

MA (Human resources), University of Newcastle, 2009



[00:00:16]	Originally from the Gulf Province of PNG, a difficult place in terms of economic activity, it's isolated. Lavarah's father was a head teacher at government primary schools and they moved every two years so she grew up in rural places all over the province. She is the youngest of seven. Moving a lot didn't bother her.	Family background; Childhood
[00:03:24]	Her father had a diploma from teachers college. His parents were missionaries and they travelled around so her father was sent to boarding school. Her mother went to school until Grade 3, she can't read or write or speak English. The children wish their father had taught her. Lavarah and her siblings all finished school. After primary school she went to a boarding school in Keremah, then did Years 11 and 12 in an Adventist school. She went to Pacific Adventist University (PAU) soon after.	Family background; Early education; Undergraduate education
[00:06:33]	It was always her goal to go to university. Just her sister and Lavarah went to university of her siblings (four girls and three boys). She had always wanted to be an economist, the Prime Minister's advisor. She finished Year 12 in 2000. [Story about clandestinely teaching her economics class in Year 12 and deciding to do teaching instead of economics.] She was accepted at University of PNG (UPNG) but chose to go to PAU because her friends all went there. She did four years teacher training and began working [as a tutor] at the university soon after graduating.	Undergraduate education; Early career
[00:10:03]	[Anecdote about getting divine guidance for which course to take.] She hadn't thought of doing further studies and during 2004 to 2007 she	Early career; Motive to study overseas

	worked at PAU. In 2008 a friend did an MBA at UPNG and inspired her to do more study. The university required staff to upgrade their qualifications but she wasn't keen until her friend did.	
[00:13:58]	She applied for an AusAID scholarship in 2008 and went in 2009. There were some Australians working at PAU, they were hard to understand. That was her only connection with Australia, she wanted to understand Australians better. At PAU she was teaching in the business school so chose to study human resource management. She met a Papua New Guinean alumnus of University of Newcastle (UON) at the UON booth of the university road show and he helped her with her application and she was accepted on the first try.	Application process; Existing connections with Australia; Alumni network; Scholarship opportunity
[00:18:13]	She chose Newcastle because it was close to Sydney and sounded nice with good academic support. She did an MA by course work in human resources. Newcastle felt close to Port Moresby and there was a good PNG student community there and Papua New Guineans working there who were members of the Adventist church. The Newcastle alumnus let them know she was coming so they went to find her at the uni the day after she arrived. [Story about AusAID going to Sydney to meet them but their flight going straight to Newcastle.]	Studying in Australia; PNG community in Newcastle; Church community in Australia; Alumni network
[00:21:46]	She had culture shock when she first arrived. Her first impression as how clean it is, with a nice transport system, but so quiet. People were not overly friendly, just minded their own business, so the five from PNG stuck together and had fun with the African students who lived downstairs. The orientation program was helpful, introducing them to campus life, academic programs, English, essay writing and critical thinking. Critical thinking had not been taught in PNG. Her course started before the orientation program finished and that was overwhelming. She could understand what she was being taught but had trouble applying it. There were so many new things to adjust to and human resources study was new to her too.	Arriving in Australia; Challenges; PNG community in Newcastle; Studying in Australia
[00:25:09]	First trimester was hard, at the end of it she felt like she wanted to drop out. She was getting help from student support but still couldn't understand what was happening to her. She was determined not to give up though. She talked to friends but she was the only one from PNG doing business. After the first trimester she worked out that she lacked the skills to apply what she knew, so she got help with that and then she began to enjoy her studies. Everything else got easier too. She was	Studying in Australia; Challenges; PNG community



	living in a house with PNG friends and that helped. Also, the business course was trimester based, not semester based like other courses, so she would recommend to other PNG students that they start in the second trimester so they can complete the orientation and have more of a break before classes start.	
[00:30:06]	She loves travelling and went to most of the states, except for WA. She went by herself for a few days at a time, booked cheap tickets online, flew where she wanted to go and stayed in backpackers for a day or two. She went to Melbourne, Adelaide, Townsville, Cairns, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sydney. At first she had been too afraid to catch the train to Sydney but after seven months when she'd got over the culture shock and overwhelm she did. She had never travelled alone in PNG. She chose not to work so she could spend her spare time travelling.	Travel in Australia
[00:34:10]	She loved Melbourne! The lifestyle, the layout of the city, the food, the river but not the weather. Her sister was there for three months doing training and they looked around together. She enjoyed how there were people out and about around the clock. Her sister is a lawyer, and Lavarah was there for her graduation at the Supreme Court.	Travel in Australia; Family in Australia
[00:37:00]	She was in Australia for 2009, it was an eighteen-month or two-year program squeezed into one year. Hectic. Her other friends had eighteen months. She would advise others to do it differently but she got through and, by the time she finished, she didn't want to leave. She learnt a lot and wanted to leave teaching to work in human resources but she was bonded to the uni so she taught management subjects, including HR. After two years she told the dean she wanted to resign and find an HR job but he didn't want her to leave.	Studying in Australia; Post-scholarship career
[00:40:06]	She decided to teach her students critical thinking so they would be better prepared than she was if they went to study in Australia. The students found it very challenging and she ran extracurricular classes for them. The school supported that. In 2012 she left teaching to work in the academic office as assistant registrar. In November 2014, two months ago, she moved to HR. She likes it so far but her replacement in the academic office hasn't started yet so she's doing both jobs, half a day in each office, until the new year. Her work is different to what she learnt at Newcastle, more contract writing and job descriptions and less management.	Post-scholarship career
[00:45:10]	Friends from Australia? They are all teachers, she is still in touch with them but they don't get	Friendships; Connections with

	together. She gets emails from the UON alumni office but there aren't many events. She's still in touch with Filipino friends from Newcastle. She has been back to Australia a few times, for holidays and work. She's a member of the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) and has been to the annual conference three times. Is planning a presentation for the next one, in Wollongong.	Australia; Alumni network; Returning to Australia; Professional networks
[00:48:43]	This year, Lavarah applied for an Australian scholarship to do a research degree in education in 2016, she was shortlisted but didn't get it. [Discussion about trying again.] She observed that people who worked in the aid sector, had some connection with AusAID, were given priority. Public servants followed a different process. Her research proposal was about the possibility of online education in PNG and preparation of Year 12 students for that.	Further scholarship application
[00:53:17]	PNG Office of Higher Education is introducing Open University and her study would be in line with that. [Discussion about the possibility of doing her PhD at Newcastle and other scholarship opportunities.] The PNG higher education sector really needs to move forward. Through the university and ATEM she has connections with DFAT, Australian universities and Scholarships PNG. Some PNG universities are more involved than others.	Plans for further study; Connections with Australia; Professional networks
[00:57:23]	PhD programs in PNG? Divine Word University, UPNG and recently UOG have PhD programs. Six PhD scholarships, from 31 applicants, were awarded and about 60 for master's. [Discussion about a succession plan for academics and priorities and selection processes of the scholarship programs.]	Higher education in PNG
[01:01:10]	[Comments about an age limit for scholarships so more young people, who will be able to make more of a contribution, can study overseas.] Some students from PNG are not focussed and don't finish. [Anecdote about one man, at TAFE, and comments about having a clear purpose for going.]	Scholarship opportunity
[01:04:22]	It was difficult adjusting when she got back to PNG, even though she had only been away for a year. It took about two months e.g. to be able to get on a public bus. Coming back to work was OK, she was excited to go back. Now she can move between Australia and PNG quite easily.	Returning to PNG; Connection with Australia
[01:07:42]	She appreciates the individualistic lifestyle in Australia. Before she went she liked communal living but now she needs space. She doesn't have her own children but cares for her brother's children so life in PNG is hectic and full of	Connection with Australia; Family

	responsibility, when she's in Australia she has time for herself. Family is a burden for her, the children are eighteen and eleven and her parents live with her too.	
[01:11:12]	She's looking forward to going to Australia in March for a holiday to stay with her married friend on the Gold Coast. She gets seven weeks annual leave, five weeks at the end of the year and two mid-year. She plans to go back to teaching some time in the future, probably adults rather than children.	Connections with Australia; Future career plans
[01:12:50]	END	

