## 2016 May Trip Work Diary

Ben Heyward

### Tuesday 03 May, Cairns to Wapenamanda

7am-3.30pm

Flew Cairns to Moresby, Moresby to Mount Hagen by 12.45 where I met David Kulimbao, DK, coming up from Goroka. We travelled together by bus to Wapenamanda arriving at 3.30pm.

4pm-5pm

Discussed current reporting situation with David and Desmon Kolao and finalized Follow-up Visits program from Thursday to Friday week 14 May which will cover 6 Main Workshop and Trial sites being Sirungi Wednesday, Sari Sunday, Kompiam Monday, Kanamanda Monday, Birip Wednesday next and Tsak on the Friday.

7pm-8pm

Reviewed the individual Workshop reports from DK and summaries Peter Taul, PT, has prepared as well as the hardcopy comments that DK and I have in hand.

### Wednesday 04 May, Wapenamanda

8am-1.00pm, 2pm-5pm, 7pm-9pm

Spent the day with David Kulimbao collating individual workshop reports into a spreadsheet covering all 10 Main and Trial Workshops and preparing a template for tables of the key feedback from the Workshop participants. Prepared first draft Spreadsheet ‘Participants & Problems-Ideas-Learnings Simbu & Round 2 Enga Main Workshops’ and emailed to David Askin with updated GPS Waypoints file.

### Thursday 05 May, Wapenamanda

8am 2.30pm

Desmon took David and I to Sirungi for the Follow-up Visit Meeting there. At 9.30am we arrived at the Health Centre where we met Meke Lane, the CHW (Community Health Worker) and local fieldworker, and waited for several more participants. Because of tension around a recent death a group of Workshop participants from the adjacent clan centre were unable to attend the Meeting. We closely inspected potato plants in the Health Centre garden comparing the differences and asking about the source of the seed. It is clear that few people have any ideas where their potato seed originated and therefore, why one plot is far superior to another.

A small plot of plants from the virus-free seed distributed at the Workshop is growing well altho’ it had some leaf rot that is probably due to it being planted in heavy shade from morning sun. Since they would then receive little afternoon sun on any day that rain came, these plants could do better. Mek agreed to lop the hedging trees or might shift the plants.

We met with 8 farmers, 4 of whom had attended the Main Workshop on 13-15 February. We asked them whether or not they had planted new gardens then worked thro’ the M&E questions with those farmers who had. One man had used barriers between his large mounds to successfully hold soil within his garden but, he had mixed old kaukau runners and ‘rabis’ tubers into the compost. When David asked the other participants what they thought of this one woman thought a while then said, “He himself has carried the source of the infestation into his new garden”.

It became a good learning session for those who have planted, and those who are about to plant discussing the various techniques, the ones that people had tried and the ones they had forgotten. We had an important discussion about viruses, their symptoms and that plants were often hidden carriers just as a person might not realize that they were infectious with measles or a cold because their symptoms were yet to appear or had finished.

Finally there was a long discussion about potato marketing. Government people, including Dorothy Kukum the DAL person assisting us, are already talking about a producer’s cooperative or marketing association to coordinate continuous supply to retailers such as Porgera and Hides Gas/ Tari. As far as the Drought Adaptations Project is concerned we have a role in getting virus-free and blight resistant varieties to people then making them aware of the needs to keep track of where their seed originated and for regular replacement of seed, particularly as it picks up viruses.

3.30-4.00pm

DK and I met with Dorothy Kukum, to report on our morning at Sirunki and discuss our need to bring into the team another 2 people for delivery of the last few Main Workshops and make repeated Follow-up Visits to the Workshop areas. Dorothy said that she is willing to give us 2 days weekly from now through to the end of July to co-facilitate Main Workshops and Follow-up Visits.

5.00-6.00pm

David and I met with Matthew Faber to outline progress of the Project. We discussed with him also our need to bring in another 2 people for delivery of the last few Main Workshops and make repeated Follow-up Visits to the Workshop areas and said that David would like to train Desmon in co-facilitation and let him carry out some Follow-up Visits. Matthew said that he would take this request for Desmon to work with the team for 3 days weekly from now through to the end of July to co-facilitate Main Workshops and Follow-up Visits.

We explained that we would be discussing with David Askin the worth of adjusting the project model to deliver only 3 or 4 more Main Workshops then focus on carrying out a series of at least 3 Follow-up Visits with Participant Group discussions or focus groups about their experiences, ideas and trials with the techniques they had seen demonstrated and discussed at the Workshops.

We also requested Matthew to take note that we now wanted to hold the Project End Workshop in or around Wapenamanda and would come back to him with July or August dates. We would then like to work with him on finding and securing a venue suitable for up to 60 participants.

8pm-10pm

Consolidating all Workshop reports into a single spreadsheet file of 6 worksheets with all essential data viz, dates, local site names, district and province, lead and co-facilitators, number name and gender of participants their contact details and a table of problems identified, ideas and most important learnings for trainers or participants.

### Friday 06 May, Wapenamanda

8.30am 1.30pm

I completed all the reports for the first 2 Main Workshops and the Simbu and Enga Trial Workshops then David Kulimbao and I completed the table of ‘Problems Identified, Best Ideas from Participants & Trainers and Learnings from Participants & Trainers’ for the Workshops. This becomes his Main Workshops reporting template.

2pm

Desmon the District Driver took David and I to Wabag where I caught a PMV to Wapenamanda while David went on to Saris.

### Saturday 07 May, Kompiam District Hospital

8am 1.30pm

Attempted to access Satellite WiFi Internet then moved to Internet room where I successfully accessed through Ethernet cable and sent updated workshop reports file ‘160506 Participants & Problems-Ideas-Learnings Simbu & Round 2 Enga Main Workshops’ to David Askin in New Zealand. This file reports on all 8 Main Workshops and 2 Trial Workshops, Gumine in Simbu and Wapenamanda in Enga with dates, locations, all participants, facilitators and tables of Problems Identified, Best Ideas from Participants and Trainers and Learnings from Participants and Trainers.

Eventually managed to hold a 53 minute Skype to Fone conversation with David Askin in the mountains behind Christchurch covering these main topics:

1. Details provided in the files sent to him that morning covering all 10 Workshops so far
2. Steps followed in the Suringi Followup Workshop on Thursday
3. Discussed and sent to David a modified M&E Form for the Follow-up Visits which starts with stories from those participants who have planted new gardens since their respective Main Workshops
4. Proposal to adjust the Project Model by running no more than 4 more Main Workshops while focusing on repeated Follow-up Visits at 1 to several locations around the Main sites to track progress of participants in using the techniques demonstrated and discussed in the Main Workshops.
5. Proposed further Main Workshop sites are 2nd Tsak site, Minamba Valley, and Pausa in Wapenamanda District and Anditale or another location in the Ambum Valley,the western end of Kompiam-Ambum
6. No response yet from Dr Akkinapally the NARI Deputy Director to my request for a vehicle load of planting material on Wednesday 18 May from Aiyura

I then emailed Rama Akkinnappaly and received an inappropriate answer from him requesting our visit schedule. What I requested was contact details for his designated officer to organize planting materials Mr Johannes Pakatul at Aiyura.

2pm-4.30pm

Left Hospital for Laiagame, Red Kona, 1km from the station, where I met Janet Saumi the Kompiam Agricultural Women and Microfinance Group Coordinator.

On Monday morning Janet and I will jointly facilitate a Follow-up Visit with her group members to hear who has planted new gardens, what techniques they used and what they have to report so far. This will include me inoculating their peanut seed with the inert soil peanut Rhizobium I brought from Australia.

I met Janet and Tominame Saka, one of the clan women group leaders, in a large new garden that has been divided up for all respective groups to plant with their own selected sweet potato varieties and lines of corn (maize) intercropped with peanuts. They were planting beds allocated to their own groups. Using Wild Sunflower they have begun planting a single contour soil erosion shrub-herb barrier at a slope break 2/3 down the length of this garden.

We finalized arrangements for Monday and discussed the current situation around Kompiam as far as kaukau availability. They reported that in the higher areas, Kompiam at 1700m ASL and above, the weevil problem had largely disappeared so that people were now eating tubers from the crops planted after Christmas.

It seems likely that the return of good rains in November through December, January and February has restored soil moisture levels beyond what the weevils could penetrate through to new runners and tubers growing in garden beds or typical Kompiam small mounds (500mm high, 600 to 1000mm diameter).

However, in the lower areas of Kompiam and Yangisa, Yangisa and east to the Yuat River, Lapalama, the Lower Wali Valley and the Kompiam Lower Lai, Lai River north bank area across the southern the Sau Valley Ridge people were still short of sweet potato. Weevils were still active in many gardens presumably because in these lower, hotter areas soil moisture levels had not recovered sufficiently to control weevil penetration into new sweet potato beds.

Finally, we looked at the first multiplication plots of the 3 NARI disease free/ resistant kaukau varieties planted last month during the Workshop. They are growing well. Janet has taken some runners to establish a 2nd small multiplication plot in the large new garden. I saw no signs of gall mite or weevil penetration in the runners.

### Monday 09 May, Laiagame, Red Kona, Kompiam

#### Follow-up Visit for Kompiam Main Workshop 15, 16, 17 March

8am-1.30 pm

Reaching Red Kona at 8am I met Janet Saumi the Agricultural Group Coordinator at the new group garden on her land where there were 2 other women leaders already tilling their respective group blocks. One woman was shelling peanuts ready for us to plant after I demonstrated inoculation with peanut Rhizobium bacteria in inert peat. We prepared blocks, inoculated the peanuts and planted the plots out till 1.30pm.

Janet is trying 2 new and interesting techniques in the garden:

1. The garden has been under pineapples since 2010. She has filled the main downhill drains with the old pineapple plants which are already collecting soil in little bays behind each one.
2. On most of the plots she or one of the women from the areas allocated the respective plots have planted cassava along the edges. She wants to use cassava plants as the start of the contour shrub/ tree lines within the garden for stopping soil washaway and for the leaf-fall to mulch/ fertilize the plots.

3pm-5.30pm

Janet and I facilitated the Follow-up Meeting with 6 women and 1 man who attended the Main Workshop. 4 of them have already planted gardens since the Workshop, all of them using short, 3 leaf runners.

3 of the women composted their kaukau without using infected kaukau runners or tubers and the same 3 have planted at least 1 contour line within their gardens using a range of legumes, ‘Muku’ and Wild Sunflower.

1 woman asked why the women in her clan all have weevils in their mixed gardens even though they are always planting into new bush plots where there has not been a sweet potato garden for many years.

Through discussion we all realized that it is highly likely that the groups of women who planted her newest garden, having not participated in the Workshop simply took what they thought were long healthy runners without checking them for weevil entry points. She now understands that her whole team have to check their planting material for signs of weevil activity. This is easier with short runners even if it does take a week longer for significant numbers of leaf to build up on the new shoots.

The women have given a lot of thought to selection of taro and sweet potato planting material. Janet herself has planted a number of varieties as a yield trial.

A worthwhile day for me to engage directly with Kompiam Workshop Participants so hearing all the details of what they had done in their gardens after their March Main Workshop for which I was also present.

### Tuesday 10 May, Wapenamanda

6am-10am

Travelled by PMV from Kompiam to Wabag then bus to Wapenamanda.

10am–5.30pm

SMS conversations with David Askin about categorizing and fotografing receipts for May while setting up a reporting spreadsheet for Follow-up Visits then began inputting feedback, ideas and requests from farmer participants at Sirungi and Saris Follow-up Meetings.

7pm–9pm

Completed input for Kompiam Follow-up Meeting and yesterday’s diary.

### Wednesday 11 May Birip Highway Follow-up Visit

8am-3.30pm

We reached our venue at the SDA Church a 8.45, inspected gardens while waiting for slower arriving participants. A number of participants were mourning at Haus Krais. Nevertheless, 8 of the Main Workshop participants attended, 7 of whom have planted or started to plant gardens since the Workshop from 22 to 24 March.

We began our meeting at 9.30 with welcomes to us, introductions all round to remind us of participant names, a ‘tok bokis’ from David and a study from me to set the scene for the discussion.

All the farmers who have started new gardens have planted sweet potato, most of them in large mounds and they have used compost and or mulch. After the small number of farmers who were able to attend the Sirungi Follow-up Meeting the number of farmers at Sari, Kompiam and Birip who have followed the garden hygiene guidelines carefully is encouraging.

By late July people are likely to be digging the earliest post-Workshop sweet potato which will reveal how effective the guidelines are or how accurately people are reporting their selection of runners when they planted. Almost every farmer in the last 4 workshops has said they used short, 3 leaf runners.

All the Birip farmers have begun setting up or planting the recommended contour lines and, or live fences to retain soil in their garden plots with various modifications to suit their differing situations. These SDA farmers impressed us with their clear understanding of erosion, the need to restore fertility and ways of preparing for what threatens as another drought starting now a month before the usual rainfall decline leading into the Wapenamanda-Wabag July-August dry season. They are open to try different ways of retaining soil, adding organic matter and building cassava and taro ‘kongkong’ yields. Both crops can stay in the ground for long periods without rotting.

4.00-5.00pm

Visited several houses as prospective accommodation for the Project Close Workshop. One house with 3 double bedrooms, a kitchen with a gas stove and running water and power connections looked promising in the order of K1000 rent for 5 days.

8pm-10pm

Drafted a Follow-up Meeting feedback template and completed input of Sari Follow-up Meeting feedback. Partial input of Birip Follow-up meeting feedback and today’s diary.

### Thursday 12 May Wapenamanda

8.30am-4.30pm

David Kulimbao and I inputted Follow-up Meeting feedback to complete Birip, Sirungi, Kanamanda, and Kompiam Follow-up Meetings. Peter Zaccheus from Tsak came, partly in response to DK ringing him yesterday to remind him of tomorrow’s Tsak Follow-up Visit. We had a 45 minute discussion with him about the Workshop then fielded his requests for funds, cement, transport to purchase fingerlings and water tanks for the Tsak Fish Farmers Association.

### Friday 13 May Laiagame, Tsak, Wapenamanda Follow-up Visit

8am-3.30pm

Desmon picked us up then took us to Laiagame, Tsak where we did not find participants waiting. We went looking for Peter Zacchues and other participants. The 2 key women, including the Primary School Headmistress, had gone to Mt Hagen on their own business.

The indications are that the priority for Tsak leadership is business development and marketing. Evidently they see little need for drought adaptation!

We found several participants and the Council President, Johnny Tiptape who is an old friend of David Kulimbao’s but was not a Main Workshop participant. He invited us to his riverside meeting-place, a few more participants arrived and we eventually held a productive meeting with 5 people, 2 men and 3 women reporting on new gardens planted since the Main Workshop.

Councillor Johnny will be an important ally for subsequent Follow-up Visits and any future work.

4.00pm-7om

After a brief discussion with Matthew Faber about Project Close Workshop times, accommodation and participants we completed all Follow-up Meeting feedback entry into the template and emailed to David Askin. Also emails and fone calls especially about receipts and categorization with PT and DA.

Discussed different models for running the Project Close Workshop again shifting our thinking towards bringing in at least 1 woman and 1 man from each Main Workshop site, the best of the DPI RDOs and representatives from NGOs, interested LGC Councilors and Provincial Government people and those people with rural/ agricultural skills from church Community Development teams.

### Saturday 14 May, bus to Mt Hagen then DK to Goroka