

**MEMORIA PASSIONIS**

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**RETURNEES FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
TO IRIAN JAYA**

**Dealing particular with returnees to  
the Waropko-Mindiptana area**

**Survey Report**

The Office for Justice and Peace  
Diocese of Jayapura

January 1999

# **PART ONE**

## ***THE SETTING***

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In April 1984 a substantial number of people fled Irian Jaya (the 26th province of the Republic of Indonesia) and crossed the border to Papua New Guinea (PNG). It is one of the events that have marked the history of Irian Jaya over the last thirty years. The event took place in the Waropko-Mindiptana region, close to the PNG-border. It was not the first of its kind as ever since 1963 people have fled the province crossing the border to PNG. Up until 1984 people crossed the border into PNG from various areas of the province; from the Jayapura and Kerom district in the north; from Biak, Waropen and Jayawijaya; from Manokwari (the Arfak tribe) and even Fakfak (mainly from the Amungme tribe) and the Sorong district (Ayamaru tribe) in the extreme west of the province.

The event in April 1984 is remarkable however because of its massive character and its limited area of origin, namely the Waropko-Mindiptana area, exclusively involving people from the Muyu tribe, residents of the region between the Kali Kao and the border with PNG.

After the April 1984 event in the Waropko-Mindiptana area, people involved, regardless of the place of origin and regardless of the year they crossed the border, became known as ‘border-crossers’. They were spread over a number of refugee-camps in PNG<sup>1</sup>. Keeping track of the real figures involved during the whole process was difficult with only the border-crossers from Waropko-Mindiptana area reported on in a reasonable reliable way, although not covering the groups who never registered on their return. Hence we will mainly concentrate on the “Waropko-Mindiptana group” in this report.

Between April 1984 and July 1985 the local church-representatives in Waropko-Mindiptana report that 9.435 people had left their villages and homes; 7.500 of them have been reported as reaching PNG while the other 1.935 went “some place” (nobody knows exactly where they went, but it can be assumed that they moved around in their own traditional forest/land around the border area, on both sides, just leaving the villages empty). The important fact is that by mid 1985 the whole Muyu-area was deserted (as far as the established villages were concerned) and

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<sup>1</sup> At a conference (exact date unspecified) the following list is presented as factual at April 1987: Blackwater camp (1.000), Kamberatoro (900), Kwek (900), Green River (500), Mamamura (300), Komopkin (2.000), while in the Kiungga area: Logi (947), Atakamba (1.160), Kugim (929), Banki (1.107), Weam (28), Niogakan (438). Total 10.209, while at that very moment officially 1.123 are reported returned back to Irian Jaya.

only a small number of people stayed on in Mindiptana, the main government centre in the area.

In February 1986 a number of people started coming back to the area and the majority of them resettled back in their old villages, while some (a small minority) were resettled in villages outside their traditional area in the transmigration area around Merauke. By mid 1987 a total of 1.804 Muyu-people are reported to have resettled back in the Merauke-Mindiptana area, while by the end of 1990 the figure has gone up to a registered number of 3.104. The number of unregistered returnees can only be guessed. According to informed sources a fair guess is that a total of around 5.000 (of the original 9.435) have come back, which still leaves another 4.435 unaccounted for and these people are probably those living the UN-supervised refugee camp East Awin<sup>2</sup>. An official government' report in 1997 mentions a returnees' figure of 5.845<sup>3</sup>.

A rough picture of the situation can be concluded from some statistics given in Table 1, made available by the Catholic Church (the very large majority of the local population of the Muyu area are Catholics)

Table 1	Population		balance (-)
	1983	1997	
Mindiptana and surroundings	5.168	3.260	-1.908
Waropko/Ninati and surroundings	3.947	1.667	-2.280
Kawangket/Mokbiran and surroundings	1.666	670	- 996
TOTAL	10.781	5.597	-5.184

Looking at these figures three things should be kept in mind:

1. the past has proved that there is a hardly any natural increase of the population in the Muyu-area. This reality has even motivated some people to state that the Muyu-tribe will slowly disappear from the ethnic map.
2. the lack of increase can be caused by (a) a factual low birth rate, and (b) the habit of leaving the area looking for opportunities, mainly economic, elsewhere.
3. 197 border-crossers have been resettled outside their traditional area for example in Tanah Miring, the transmigration site near of Merauke.

Data on the returnees from other parts of the province are not as complete as for the Muyu area, however the data shows that some 782 people have been registered as returning in the Jayapura

<sup>2</sup> Personal communication with the Catholic priest, Rev. Jacques Gross CM, serving the community in East Awin confirms that nowadays more than 4.000 people is living in East Awin, the only government recognised border-crossers settlement; according to the same source even more (!) border-crossers are living spread over several settlements close to the border.

<sup>3</sup> Pemerintah Kabupaten Daerah Tingkat II Merauke, Proposal Penempatan Transmigrasi di desa-desa/kecamatan perbatasan dan disepanjang jalan Trans Irian, June 11, 1997; p. 3.

and Kerom district while another 35 have returned to the Timika area.

For this survey and report we have to limit ourselves to the rough picture described above as we feel it is almost impossible to get more reliable figures. The difficulty is partly caused by the fact that population figures in the past are not always reliable -if there are any-; there were no reliable data collected on people crossing the border over the years before 1984 and the whole refugee matter proves to be a highly sensitive political one.

## **1.2. THE SURVEY AND ITS PURPOSE**

A large number of returnees have been helped out by UNHCR during their stay in the refugee camps in PNG as well as on their return and initial settlement back in their villages. Because of this UNHCR is interested to know whether the returnees have succeeded in integrating themselves back into the local situation back home.

In order to obtain an insight into this, it was decided to carry out a basic field survey. The survey was to be concentrated on the Waropko-Mindiptana area and also on the Tanah Miring the transmigration area where some of the border-crossers from Waropko-Mindiptana have been resettled.

### **1.2.1. The villages visited during the survey**

(1) Waropko-Mindiptana area (see Figure 1, 2, 3 and 4):

- a. Niyimbang: 280 people<sup>4</sup>
- b. Imko: 53 people
- c. Waropko: 347 people
- d. Ninati: 210 people
- e. Upyetetko: 383 people

(2) Merauke area (see Figure 1, 2 and 6):

- a. Tanah Miring: 155 people (1986); 90 people (1998)

To get an idea of the special situation ex-border-crossers find themselves in, a simple comparison has been made with a nearby village (in the Mandobo area) which was not abandoned. The name of the village visited is Tinggam.

### **1.2.2. The focus of the survey**

During the survey attention was focused on four main living standards:

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<sup>4</sup> population-figures as mentioned in: Proposal Penempatan Transmigrasi, p. 24 and p. 28, with a correction for Waropko and Upyetetko, based on church-figures.

- (1) socio-political situation
- (2) socio-economic situation
- (3) educational situation
- (4) health situation

### **1.2.3. Time-schedule of the survey**

1. Preparation stage: October 1998.
2. Visit to Merauke-Waropko-Mindiptana: 6 to 24 November 1998.
3. Finalising the reporting: December 1998.
4. Presentation of the report to UNHCR at Jakarta: 28 December 1998.

### **1.2.4. Personnel involved in the survey**

The personnel involved in the survey consisted of:

1. Drs. Theo van den Broek ofm (teamleader)
2. Sdr. J. Budi Hernawan ofm (permanent staff)
3. Mr. Robert Kambun BA (team assistant for Merauke-Mindiptana area)
4. Mr. Sam Oyap BA (team assistant for Merauke-Mindiptana area)
5. Ms. Sue O'Farrell BSc MBE (team assistant for editing and mapping)

## **1.3 GENERAL BACKGROUND**

Before studying the actual situation it is worthwhile to have some information on the reason why people left their villages. We will limit ourselves to the factual background of the Waropko-Mindiptana event.

### **1.3.1 Reasons for the mass exodus**

There is no one single reason why people suddenly left the area in such a massive way. It is more a matter of a number of factors coming together, combining with each other and at the end leading to the mass movement of people mentioned above. The factors that led to the exodus are:

- a) increasing OPM activity in the area
- b) long lasting frustrations about developments in the area (government programmes)
- c) experiences with the behaviour of army-personnel
- d) rumours about involvement of Muyu people as security informants in the Jayawijaya area hence the fear of revenge
- e) traditional belief in very down to earth "salvation" movements

#### **1.3.1.1 OPM activity**

Ever since the sixties an independence movement, known as Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM), has been active in the area as it had/had been in a number of other districts in the province. In April 1984 the OPM movement was quite active and responded to feelings of increasing frustrations among the people, promising them a better future and motivating them to leave their villages. People in the Waropko area in particular got especially frustrated with government projects which weren't implemented well; seem never to work out well; payment which had been promised but never received; or just the feeling that no real progress was achieved.

The Waropko area is quite poor as it is a difficult area to develop because of its isolation, and hilly terrain and steep slopes. Even during the time of the Dutch administration the government considered moving people from this area to more promising ones, such as the Asiki area to the South.

Beginning in 1983 it seemed that the people around Waropko got more and more nervous and unsettled; a number went into jungle joining the liberation movement (OPM) and there was a growing hostility against their own people who worked for the Government such as civil servants, teachers etc

### **1.3.1.2 Behaviour of the army**

The OPM movement's activities have also been fuelled by the experiences of the local population in dealings with security people; individual army-personnel often proved to be very arrogant by demanding or simply by taking from the people garden products and livestock for their needs; by tempting young people to drink and fight and by sexually misusing women. This behaviour intensified the fear and anger, which already had been building up over the years, especially as people felt powerless facing this kind of abusive treatment.

One special event connecting OPM-activity with army's response should be mentioned. In 1982 Gerardus Tomy (an OPM-leader) took some young people into the bush for military training. The army reacted by arresting a number of young men, and made them sign in public a statement/promise that they would not respond to any OPM-activities or invitations in the future. The head of the army (Panglima) told the people in his speech at the ceremony that "if this would happen again, he would order a military action to wipe the local people out completely, -operasi tumpas-, a similar operation to the one which had been ordered in the Baliem Valley in 1977". That threat made people very frightened. When in 1983 Gerardus Tomy started his actions again in the area, attacking some military posts in Waropko, the people remembered the threat by the Panglima and the promise the people had made to him; so, they were really afraid that they would face military operations. Hence it was not too difficult for Gerardus and his friends to get the people to leave the area.

Another specific act which occurred around March 1984 involved a security officer raping a girl

when she was detained (she later committed suicide by drowning herself in the river Kao) led to direct action by the OPM group. OPM started direct attacks on military personnel and government/army centres. This led in turn to more military being flown into the area. The troops clashed with the OPM group along the Mindiptana - Waropko road resulting in casualties. Fearing worse developments people started fleeing the area, while others were taken in custody by the army, and were wrongly accused of being involved in the attacks. Arrest and detention only led to more people leaving. Military action took place in already empty villages like Ninati and Timka and houses, including the houses of catholic pastors were destroyed.

### **1.3.1.3 Troubled intertribal relations**

Another factor leading to the movement of people was the rumour that in 1977 two Muyu teachers were involved in reporting people as OPM sympathisers to the army in the Baliem valley in Jayawijaya. A military operation was carried out in the area which led to a large number of people reported being killed. Since that time people from the Baliem (Jayawijaya district) had been looking for revenge, and especially looking for the Muyu teachers involved and who in the meantime had moved back to the Muyu area. One of them, living in Wanggatkibi was handed over by the Ninati community to the Jayawijaya people and was killed by them. This created fear among the Ninati community that the Wanggatkibi community would retaliate, so they felt it better to leave their village.

Although this story is not confirmed by hard evidence, the very fact is that in 1992 ‘ransom-money’ (an amount of Rp 2,000,000) was made available by the Ninati community and was handed over to the Wanggatkibi community. Shortly after the ransom had been paid the Ninati community started returning from PNG to start living in their old village again. As an atmosphere of fear, distrust and caution is identified by scholars as one of the striking features of the Muyu culture, this factor might have had a very real impact on the situation<sup>5</sup> back in 1983/84.

### **1.3.1.4 Promise of a better future**

Promises by the OPM that everything would be better in the future if people moved to PNG, and that they would arrange things once there, found a willing ear in the local communities as Muyu people are very sensitive to material well-being (one of their traditional characteristics)<sup>6</sup>. People responded to these promises as they had got frustrated with the lack of development in the area. The eagerness to look for wealth easily leads to belief and trust in “salvation movements” which has been proved by the popularity of such movements in the past. The economic aspect in these movements is very important. “The aim is to fulfil the desire central to Muyu culture: a wealth ‘of ot’ (the traditional form of money)... the salvation movements give expression to this main point of orientation in Muyu culture”<sup>7</sup>. The promises made by the OPM were often combined

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<sup>5</sup> see Schoorl, J.W., Culture and change among the Muyu, 1993, KITLV Press, Leiden; p. 141-142.

<sup>6</sup> see Schoorl, J.W., Culture and change among the Muyu, 1993, KITLV Press, Leiden; p. 142-143.

<sup>7</sup> see Schoorl, J.W., Culture and change among the Muyu, 1993, KITLV Press, Leiden; p. 138.

with physical threats as well which scared the people

### **1.3.2 Chronological list of events**

Chronologically the 1984-1985 event can be summarised as follows<sup>8</sup>:

#### **1984**

- April 9: the body of a girl raped by a security officer was found in Waropko
- April 11: an army man attacked by 400 OPM-people at Kanggewot
- April 12: an army group attacked by OPM-people at Kakuna
- April 13: additional army troops flown in from Merauke
- April 14: troops moved from Mindiptana to Waropko; clashed with OPM-group; the first villages reported empty (Kanggewot and Upyetetko; people of the Kakuna village followed suit).
- April 15: three local catholic leaders arrested in Mindiptana, although they hadn't been involved in anything; Waropko village reported empty
- April 16: more arrests; more people leaving
- April 16-18: villages Ninati and Timka already empty; troops destroy properties in these villages
- April 19: troops clash with OPM
- April 25: Sesnukt village reported empty
- May 2: Angkamburan village reported empty; people refusing to leave were reported tortured by the OPM
- June 10: many people left Mindiptana; OPM prepared an attack on the main centre Mindiptana; more people fled
- June, 11: OPM group moves into Mindiptana; some of them were killed (according to a reliable report 3 people were killed); people still living around Mindiptana looked for security in the centre
- October: some 20 people from the Kakuna village who had been hiding in the forest came back to Mindiptana

#### **1985**

- July 25: Wangkatkibi and Awayanka that had remained populated during the April-June troubles were abandoned
- August, 4: an OPM group enters the Womsim village in the North Mandobo area: Muyu-people fled the village

### **1.3.3 Tribal groups involved in the exodus**

A special note should be made on the fact that exclusively Muyu people fled the area, while their direct neighbours, the Mandobo people, just across the river, stayed on (with one exception; in September 1985 the people of Selil, a village north of Muting, were physically forced by the

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<sup>8</sup> Mainly based on a report by the Catholic Pastoral Team at Mindiptana, September 28, 1986.

OPM out of their village and took refuge in PNG). The fact that no Mandobo in the Mindiptana area moved is remarkable as they too were under threat by the OPM. Looking for an explanation we had at the end to be satisfied with a kind of an anthropological insight picturing the Mandobo tribe traditionally having a kind of an ‘antagonistic’ partnership with the neighbouring tribe, the Muyu. This meant that when the Muyu started abandoning their villages and moving to PNG the Mandobo reacted in the opposite way and stayed put.

Another important factor might be that Muyu people are closely related to their neighbours just across the border, while the Mandobo people are not. In addition to this the OPM movement in this part of the province has been mainly made up of Muyu people, with very few Mandobo becoming members.

#### **1.3.4 The situation in PNG**

Once across the border a number of the “border-crossers” reported to the local administration and were slowly placed in refugee camps. From the very beginning there have been reports that people were eager to return to their villages as they loved their “dusun” (traditional owned land and economic base of their daily life) back home. In addition they were worried about the health and education of their children. The actual process of returning to their home villages was not easy as the OPM tried to keep them from going back even resorting to threatening physical beatings to those wanting to return. Nevertheless by mid 1986 the first groups of border-crossers started returning to Irian Jaya

### **1.4 AID PROGRAMS**

Since 1984 a number of institutions have been concerned about the wellbeing of the border-crossers. The main actor (besides the local recipient people of PNG) has been the UNHCR, especially where it comes to supporting the border-crossers in the camps, their juridical status, and the negotiations with the PNG Government.

To facilitate the return of the border-crossers once again the UNHCR has been responsible for the help needed in PNG which included a basic ‘transition help package’ for their return to Irian Jaya. In addition returnees have also received assistance in Irian Jaya from the Red Cross (ICRC), the Church and the local/provincial government.

ICRC and the Church have been responsible for some initial aid-programmes helping people to settle back in their villages. These programmes include providing food to help bridge the time before the gardens would produce the first crops; organising some skill-courses to facilitate new economic activities in the communities, and giving people the mental and emotional backing to feel safe and at home again. The government has facilitated the resettlement of the border-crossers from the administrative point of view. Co-operation among the various parties involved

has been smooth with each party leaving each other in charge of the programme they are best suited to implement. All registered returnees have been supported in a modest way.

The availability of aid has resulted in two disturbing side effects:

1. The aid was originally organised to handle the effects of the massive move by the Muyu people in 1984, which gained international attention. The availability of aid has led others, who moved to PNG long before (especially concerning people in the northern part) to register themselves as ‘border-crossers’ and look for their return to Irian Jaya to be supported by UNHCR, ICRC and the Church.
2. People who never left the area (especially the neighbouring Mandobo) started wondering why people returning from PNG got so much attention and help while they themselves who never left their villages and who consider themselves “good citizens” didn’t receive anything

## **PART TWO**

### ***OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SURVEY***

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

With a substantial number of border-crossers living in PNG, a lot of discussions were started to what should/could be done about the situation. Several organisations have been involved in looking for a way to try and solve the problem since the massive exodus in 1984. The Catholic Church, joined at a later stage by the Protestant Church - GKI were asked by the Government of Indonesia (GOI) to try and motivate the border-crossers to return. In addition diplomatic talks were started with the PNG Government and international institutions such as UNHCR and at a later stage ICRC became involved in the effort to find a solution to the problem.

The local communities initially received the border crossers in PNG. These communities were related to people that moved into their area, so there were no real problems as the people fitted in with local tradition and values. There however was a problem with food supply as while the gardens were adequate for the local population they were not productive enough to feed the increased population. The local community began to feel the additional burden, and hoped that other means of support could be found. Once the people who crossed to PNG were officially acknowledged as border-crossers most were moved and looked after in special camps.

The GOI tried to motivate the people to come back, promising that no harm would come to them on their return. The GOI was eager to obtain the co-operation of the churches, especially the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church (the Muyu-people are almost exclusively Catholic) discussed the problems with all the parties involved, attending meetings in Port Moresby, Merauke as well as in Jayapura. The Church opted for a 'wait and see attitude', which meant that while ready to help out once people returned to Irian Jaya, the church was not eager to actively motivate people to come back; the reason being that realistically the church could never effectively guarantee the safety of the border-crossers once back in Irian Jaya. This safety aspect was a matter exclusively in the hands of GOI together with the Indonesian Army.

While institutions like UNHCR and ICRC looked for some more permanent solution, the OPM forces within and around the camps tried to keep the people there, as they were wanted to keep the problem alive and obtain as much national and international publicity as possible. Information about developments in the home area, especially after the first groups had moved back to Irian Jaya, was often completely unreliable, so people in the camps had difficulties in getting a clear picture of what really had happened to groups that had gone back. On several

occasions the ICRC was used to pass reliable information to people in the camps who were curious to know the whereabouts of their friends who had returned to Irian Jaya. In a more informal way the Church also helped to get reliable information across.

Although more intensive in the initial phase, joint efforts to find a solution to the refugee problem have been going on for 14 years.

The results of the present survey are given below mainly focusing on the Waropko-Mindiptana area which was the area studied and which had experienced a mass-exodus in 1984. This area is part of the District Merauke.

## **2.2 WAROPKO-MINDIPTANA AREA**

### ***prelimanry remark***

The Waropko-Mindiptana area lies over 500 kilometre from the district capital of Merauke. the main villages of the area are shown in Figure 4. As mentioned in section 1.2.2 the field survey focused on four main items:

- (1) socio-political situation
- (2) socio-economic situation
- (3) educational situation
- (4) health situation

### **2.2.1. Socio-political situation**

Efforts by all parties involved created the situation that enabled the border-crossers to begin returning home as early as mid 1986. As promised by the authorities the border-crossers were received sympathetically and didn't experience any real difficulty as far as their safety was concerned. Initial help was waiting for the people who returned. The initial concept of having the returnees to stay in transit camps before being resettled in places outside their traditional areas had been revised (mainly because of pressure by the Church). The stay in the transit camp was limited to the minimum of time and people were in principle free to settle back in their own traditional village, which most have done. The army presence was slowly decreased and their dominating impact lessened. In summary therefore people were successfully helped to settle down, given initial basic help and they felt safe at home again.

The picture given above is relevant for the period from 1986 - 1992. There is a marked change in returnee's experiences after 1992. The change was mainly the result of renewed activities and a change of policy by the Indonesian Army as well as by the OPM movement. In 1993 the army presence was intensified with the setting up of control posts all along the Trans-Irian road and patrolling the area on a regular base. This situation created new fears in the area; people were

interrogated and punished if they were suspected of co-operating with the OPM, e.g. giving them food and shelters; people were forced to show the army places where the OPM were hiding out and were asked to get weapons from the OPM. Once again the local people were caught between the Army and the OPM, and returnees were prime suspects, with special attention being paid to local leaders or educated people.

A number of violations by army personnel during the 1993-1996 period have been reported on<sup>9</sup>. Besides damaging the whole setting and living conditions, it had a special impact on returning border-crossers, as once again they were prime targets for interrogations and suspicion. Some local people looking for a way to take personal revenge on traditional enemies or just clearing personal conflicts also cleverly used the atmosphere created during this period. They would report to the army that a person was an OPM sympathiser and the army would act on the information. This kind of attitude among the local people fits in with the traditional feature mentioned earlier; the result is mutual mistrust and splitting up the community.

In November 1995 a serious incident took place at Ikyan. Two road engineers were kidnapped by the OPM; one of them was killed and the other was released a year later in November 1996. The OPM group commanded by Willem Onde was again active in the Mindiptana area and it was not till May 1997 that a mediator Frans Leo, who is accepted by both the OPM and the Army, managed to persuade the OPM leaders to surrender. For a year the group which surrendered (80 people) has been sheltered in a former boarding house of the Catholic Church and in April 1998 they were moved into new houses especially built for them by the government on the outskirts of Mindiptana.

With the surrender of the OPM activists the army stopped chasing the OPM and the situation improved with the presence of army units which were better prepared to assist the local people in their everyday problems. If asked, people will almost unanimously say that the relation with the army has been good over the last two years (1997-1998). The army has taken part in local village development programs and shows interest in the daily problems and traditions of the local community. However the period 1993-1996 is marked as a real bad time, leaving people resenting and even hating certain army units, and for a number of people the mere presence of the army is enough to make them feel ill at ease.

***To illustrate and complete the general situation described above we can note a number of observations from the village survey:***

1. Villages where there is an army post generally look better organised, are kept clean and the gardens taken care of. All the villages visited in the Muyu-area have a clear, dominant

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<sup>9</sup> Reports by the local priests to the Panglima in Jayapura (4 Nov. 1996; 14 January 1997)

military presence; reporting to them is the first thing you have to do when coming into the village. The military presence is dominant already merely by the number of military personnel compared with the number of villagers. At Imko village there are 16 military personnel while there are only 11 families with a total number of 53 people living in the village. There is hardly any military presence in the adjacent Mandobo villages.

2. Military personnel we talked to explained their presence as “assuring the security in an insecure area” and as “guiding people to development”. Since the 1st October 1998 patrolling has been cancelled as the military status of Irian Jaya was changed and it is no longer categorised as “Daerah Operasi Militer” (DOM) which means “an area of active military operation”.
3. In Kawangtet (31 Dec.1995-1 Jan. 1996) the army shot at a number of OPM people after inviting them via the head of the village for a New Years Eve celebration. The local leaders were interrogated and punished. This experience and other similar ones make people say: “Nowadays the army is okay, but I still feel nervous and will feel only relaxed and secure when they (the army) have all gone”. This fear however does not override the feeling that the decision to return was right; a lot of people feel happy to be back; when asked why they returned the main reason is that “they love their own land” and that they were anxious to get their children educated.
4. Regardless of the presence of the army and its impact, it has to be kept in mind that the Muyu-people carry a traditional feature of mistrust, caution and atmosphere of fear with them. This characteristic shows in contact among themselves as well as with outsiders (including the military).
5. One of the criteria that might be relevant in measuring the socio-political situation and the returnee’s ability to integrate back into the larger setting of Irian Jaya, is whether their former status as civil servant has been restored or not. Among the border-crossers there is a relative high number of former civil servants (mainly teachers). Listening to the experiences it can be said that during the first period (1986-1992) their status was restored with little problem. Starting in the nineties it proved much more difficult and a number of people are still fighting for acknowledgement of their status. The following story seems to illustrate the situation of quite some people. “For years I have been a teacher at Waropko<sup>10</sup>. I came back in 1990, and was put through a political screening in 1991. Passing the screening was a condition in the process of getting back my status as a teacher and getting my salary paid again by the government. Although I have asked for information on the progress of my application on several occasions I did not get the letter of clearance (the evidence that I passed the

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<sup>10</sup> As much as possible we keep the names of our interlocutors confidential.

screening) till this year (1998). Yet I am still not yet 'restored' as a teacher, although I have started teaching on my own initiative without being paid, as I understand the need of my own and other's children". This man is not the only one facing this type of problem; a list of 6 similar cases was handed over to us. It looks like the people responsible in the administration (in Merauke as well as in Jayapura) are playing around using all kind of bureaucratic reasons (as e.g. forms not being filled in correctly and such) for not restoring people's civil servant status.

6. During the visits it wasn't always easy to discuss the topic of OPM or the issues concerning people who have been victims of military or OPM actions; fear restrained them from being open on these issues. However this sensitivity is a general one, which can be found in other areas as well, e.g. in the Mandobo area, where there is hardly any military presence.
7. Some people (especially in the community of Waropko) feel that they are still "marked" as OPM, hence mistrusted. They point at the empty government offices in the village as a proof that civil servants are reluctant to be assigned to their area; the civil servants still have the idea and perhaps are told "that we still are all OPM-people and thus not trustworthy or not to be served properly".
8. People feel happy to be back in their own villages as their experiences in PNG were not all positive. The PNG people often demanded compensation for the use of their land and hence the good feeling of being back on their own land, where they feel free to plant their food gardens and take care of their needs in their own way.
9. As far as people are concerned who are still in PNG, they mainly "wait till the situation on this side has really improved which means Irian Jaya has got its independence". They are partly relying on promises by the OPM and also because they feel satisfied with their present standard of living in PNG. This is demonstrated by the relative high number of them applying for PNG-residency the moment that possibility was recently made available<sup>11</sup>. There is an easy communication between people on this side of the border and the people still across the border. Regular visits by both parties are just part of the normal pattern of life
10. As the population of the villages consists exclusively of returnees, there are no special problems of integrating back with the people that stayed behind; and as far as relations are concerned with people outside their own 'returnees-circle' no special problems have been mentioned.

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<sup>11</sup> See Enclosure II.

### 2.2.2. Socio-economic situation

The Muyu area is a hard area to develop because of its physical constraints, the hilly terrain and steep slopes and also because of its relative isolation. On the other hand Muyu people unlike several other tribal groups are mainly interested in material well being and development. We have already described that basic cultural feature of the Muyu, and it has a real impact when people start judging the recent developments and aid-programs by the Government or when they compare developments on the other side of the border with what they face at home. In general the judgement of the people on governmental programs is rather negative, but it should be said that that view is not restricted to the Muyu people; people in other areas in the province often voice the same experience. It implies that there is poor planning and implementation of programs handled by the government via their local representatives, the Camat, Kepala Desa etc.

The Muyu area because of its recent history has in fact been given special attention by the government. One of the most striking developments is the building of the Trans Irian road which is meant to connect the area with Merauke in the future, the district centre 500 km to the south (see Figure 5). To the south a large industrial program is under development, including a plywood-factory at Asiki which has been operating for some time and the recent large scale planting of palm-oil trees. While the Trans Irian has been built for some years bridges over the major rivers are just now being constructed which means that trucks will be able to carry goods between Merauke and Mindiptana, the moment the construction of bridges is completed. The Muyu area is at the northern end of this main road connection and as yet does not really benefit from its presence. In addition it may not have a real economic impact on the Muyu area itself, as the road itself will not be enough to overcome other constraints like steep slopes, poor soil fertility etc. To the south of the Muyu area the road has had more impact with the aforementioned industrial development like the plywood-factory at Asiki and the recent large scale planting of oil palm.

In the Muyu area as in other areas the Government has regular programs such Bantuan Desa (village-aid) program and the Inpres Desa Tertinggal (IDT) program. These programs make money available for local economic initiatives. Although geared to basic development on a regular yearly base both programs don't really function and have become a battlefield for private profit for people involved in their implementation. In addition the IDT program is implemented via "community groups" (national criteria) which is completely contrary to the fundamental cultural feature of the Muyu who are strongly orientated to individual development<sup>12</sup>. Above that with the IDT program there was no clear system of control and reporting on the use of the money. In summary: the implementation of these programs is rather a mess and a source of frustration and anger for the people who should be supported by the money. Other special programs being implemented in the area is the provision of housing materials (mostly limited to

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<sup>12</sup> See Schoorl, J.W., Culture and change among the Muyu, 1993, KITLV Press, Leiden: p. 139-140.

roof material and nails) which has been quite successful in Waropko, while in other villages this special aid has become a matter of hot discussions as the aid only covers a limited number of families in each village. This seems to be the normal pattern in all areas where it is implemented as for example at Tinggam, a village in the Mandobo area, housing materials has been made available by the government for just 17 families while the whole village totals 53 families. The unavoidable conclusion is that the general administration (including implementation) of governmental programs is very weak in the area, and therefore does not fulfil the trust people might be willing to have in the government.

Although the government's programs in the Muyu-area are considered poor, they still seem to be looked at as much better than in the neighbouring area of the Mandobo. The Mandobo people complain that they don't get any attention from the government, while all attention is given to the Muyu. Once again it shows that people are always making comparisons, and in this special context the comparison is between the attention given to people who have been away for years and the attention given to people who have stayed on and therefore should be considered "good citizens". It might be stated that the contents of the comparison is biased, but at the same time it is a reality in the region, and we can not deny the impression that the government programs in the Muyu-area are strongly political motivated.

Another comparison is provided by the experiences of the people when they were on the other side of the border in PNG. Looking at developments and especially the possibility for traders; PNG is once in a while referred to as "almost heaven"; there the road is near, cars pick up your products and you can make your way to the market to earn money (and for a Muyu to be looked upon as successful he/she has to make money)<sup>13</sup>. The comparison might again be biased, but once again it indicates what people are expecting from the government namely a situation which enables them to be economically active, trading and making money on an individualistic basis.

***To illustrate and complete the general situation described above we can note a number of observations from the village survey:***

1. According to survey information, the villagers can make his/her daily living as long as they are ready to work for it. This basic aspect assured, they are looking for more profitable opportunities in terms of trade and marketing their products; in terms of obtaining money for additional needs such as education and health and basically to improve their standard of living or in their thinking "getting rich". Complaints about the economic situation are mainly connected with these aspirations. The main impression is that people can survive, but only on a minimal standard. The local economy improves on a seasonal basis during the fruit harvest with the marketing of durian and rambutan.

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<sup>13</sup> From personal communication with Rev. Jacques Gross CM we conclude that this positive experience might have been changed since the UNHCR does not take any responsibility anymore for other settlements then East Awin.

2. There is hardly any difference between the economic situation before and after their time as border-crossers in PNG. With the exception of some special facilities for example there is now electricity in and around Mindiptana (Niyimbang village). On the other hand electricity provided by the church in Ninati back in 1982 is not longer functioning as the church took out the facilities when the people left the village.
3. Back home people have access to their sago-area, and with that available they can survive. This is especially clear where people have resettled back in their village without any help from outside, as is the case of Ninati (and anywhere where people resettled back outside the official schedules or registration). The 210 people now living in Ninati started coming back in 1992 and just relied on their sago while developing their garden and constructing their houses. Nowadays there is no striking difference between villages like Ninati and villages, which received initial help provided by UNHCR, ICRC, Church or Government.
4. Although programmes such as Bantuan Desa and IDT should have helped people to develop their economic (market) activities on a relative large scale, these activities are still very limited. Mainly it is individual initiative (outstanding traditional feature of the Muyu-people) which is behind activities such as livestock breeding, planting cash crops, especially fruit trees like durian, rambutan, pineapple and other tree crops like rubber and coffee and such. It should be mentioned as well (Ninati village) that people aren't that interested in pig breeding, as a lot of pigs are available in the area. The potentials for developing tree and food crops look good however the marketing opportunities are limited for Muyu people as well as their neighbours, the Mandobo. The Mindiptana market is small and therefore there is an overproduction of similar produce so prices are low which means people are not motivated to increase production in their gardens. Access to the larger markets of Asiki and Merauke is restricted because of the distances involved and transport difficulties. In our talks the lack of 'starting-capital' has been mentioned as one of the reasons that it is difficult to start economic activities. In a number of cases this remark can also mean that some returnees still think they "should be specially taken care of", or that it is just in line with their general expectation, shared with other tribal groups, that the government has to help out (wide spread project-mentality often leading to a kind of "culture of poverty").
5. During the talks with the returnees attention was drawn to the fact that to motivate people there needed to be more extension workers available helping the people to see what opportunities there are and how to develop them. Their input should be long term and they should be prepared to visit the villages on a regular basis. Without them new efforts would be just short term gains and would not be sustainable. How to fit in this demand with the mentioned features of the Muyu-people (individualistic, relative dynamic and mobile) is still a question to be answered.

6. In the Mindiptana area and further south in the Getentiri and Edera areas the cultivation of rubber trees was introduced in the Dutch time and planting has continued since then. The impression is that the people's interest in rubber production is decreasing and whole plantations are being abandoned. A reason for this is the fact that the rubber price has been very low over the years and several years ago the marketing organisation (Jodefo) went bankrupt. What is worrying is the fact that since the bankruptcy of Jodefo nobody has been seriously thinking about whom should take over the marketing of rubber.
7. Remarks made by the villagers on government programmes are mainly cynical or just angry comments on the effectiveness of the programmes. As mentioned above the standard of implementation of the programmes is very poor or almost non-existent. For example Ninati has not received either Bantuan Desa or IDT assistance although people returned to their village in 1992. "The officials are eating up our money", is an often repeated comment. Results from IDT programme are hardly visible with the failure being blamed on the fact that a condition of the programme is that the money should be channelled via "economic community groups" (Imko, Tinggam and other villages visited) or on the lack of explanation of the purpose of the money made available. In Waropko some activities worked out quite well in the initial phase but then got slowed down as some people of the group claimed it as their private property/responsibility. With the other national programme, Bantuan Desa there has been widespread corruption involved in the distribution of the funds. The 1997 funds have not yet been made available; it has been promised that it will be available soon but instead of the Rp. 6.000.000 per village only Rp. 3.500.000 will be given. The cut of Rp. 2.500.000 is being made to cover 'losses in the administration circle'. People get really frustrated with this kind of practice.
8. It is very hard to estimate the real income of the average family in the villages. They live from their garden and 'dusun' (sago-area); by selling produce in the market they obtain some cash money. In some places some trading is going on, including trading with people on the other side of the border. The presence of civil servants is a source of money as they get a steady salary; in some places there are some skilled people who earn some money mainly by construction of houses. How much money is really circulating has still to be found out. Nevertheless the general complaint about prices of education, medicines, food etc as well as high bride prices indicate that the amount is rather limited. But there it can get confusing as we hear the people are still able to arrange bride prices of Rp. 3.000.000 to Rp. 5.000.000.
9. Infrastructure and services are still very poorly developed in the area; the Trans Irian road now connect the area to Merauke in the south but the lack of bridges over the main river restricts the effectiveness of this road. There is a market in Mindiptana but the capacity is limited and the main markets are to the south, however a better road and river system of

transport is a necessity to the development of the area. A bank branch has been established in Mindiptana and efforts are being made to motivate people to save. However some people who have savings (e.g. at Imko) are reluctant to deposit their money in the bank as last year a lot of teachers savings were lost in a bank scandal in Merauke where the savings were deposited. Saving is not yet a real issue as in general little money is available (information from Waropko). Formerly there were a number of small shops all over the area (organised by the church or via the government backed co-operatives) but slowly a lot of them have shut down and so people mainly rely for salt, sugar, cooking oil etc. on the shops in Mindiptana only. In Waropko and Upyettko a small shop still survives selling some basic daily items.

10. A traditional item that should be mentioned is the fact that young people are less eager than before to help their parents; they are more interested in their own possibilities and future. This might have a positive impact as young people are therefore more motivated and eager to use new opportunities open to them. It might also have a negative impact as well as they are not eager to strengthen the economic position by using the opportunities already available and by joining in to make the efforts more effective.

### **2.2.3. Education and health situation**

Two fields of service which are meant to contribute substantially to the development and well being of the people are the education and the health services. The developments of both services have been given quite a high priority in Indonesia over the last 25 years. Special programs, known as Inpres programs (programs based on direct instruction by the President) were implemented. The results of these programs are visible in Irian Jaya with almost every village having a school building (at least an elementary school) and basic health-facilities as well as education facilities for secondary school in the sub-district towns. Although basic physical facilities have been set up over the years, the physical development has not been balanced with equivalent developments in providing qualified personnel and other supporting facilities such as medicines and teaching materials. This has been the situation over a period of years and the Waropko-Mindiptana area is not different from other areas in the district of Merauke.

With the exodus of the population in 1984 all services came to standstill with buildings left empty and not maintained for several years. In villages where people have returned the buildings have begun to be repaired and used again however the necessary personnel and support facilities are well below what is needed. The dominant picture in the village is that the basic building for education and health services are there but there are hardly any teachers and nurses. With the population of the villages getting back to relatively normal the number of school age children is increasing and the people requiring health care is back to what might be considered normal; yet they are unable to obtain proper education and the necessary health care.

## **[A] Education services**

The education issue is a sensitive one because many people gave the concern they had for their children's education as one of the main reasons for their return. In addition the development of education has been one of the priority policies in the area ever since the area has been opened up in the thirties by the Dutch Government together with the catholic mission. From that very moment the setting up of an education system has been the number one priority<sup>14</sup>, with a teachers training centre established in the early days in Mindiptana<sup>15</sup>. It is not surprising therefore that among the border-crossers there are a lot of teachers. Many of them are still in PNG, while others have come back but some are still waiting for official acknowledgement as teachers.

The need for teachers is still high, and this fact is recognised as well by the army personnel in the area. Filling in the gap the army has started to demand its personnel to do part-time teaching, while other people as well are recruited by the army to teach. The recruitment is made from people with only elementary school education, while they are paid a very low fee of Rp. 20.000 a month. These teachers are known by the name "guru pamong". Quite some villages nowadays depend on these teachers or on a poor combination of one or two qualified teachers with assistance from the guru-pamong for the education of their children. The situation is still made worse by qualified teachers, those with an appropriate training, not being in their allocated villages. They often leave their posts for weeks on end travelling to Mindiptana and even Merauke with little concern for the children they are supposed to be teaching. This situation is not limited to the Waropko-Mindiptana area as it is found in many areas of the district of Merauke (and other districts in the province).

Another feature that seems to become more and more common in the area is the fact that the elementary schools only receive new pupils once every two years. This is the logical effect of the fact that the village school limits itself to only three classes: one year class 1, 3 and 5, the next year class 2, 4 and 6. For secondary education people depend on Mindiptana as the regional centre.

*To illustrate and complete the general situation described above we can note a number of observations from the village survey:*

1. In general children in and around the sub district centre of Mindiptana have a reasonable chance to get the education they need; there is no sign of any discrimination against the children who have come back from PNG. Education facilities in Mindiptana include elementary schools as well as lower and higher secondary school (SMP, SMU). In the villages the situation is very different, most have primary school buildings but the school is not really taken care of, a result of the fact that the number of children is very limited, but

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<sup>14</sup> See Schoorl, J.W., Culture and change among the Muyu, 1993, KITLV Press, Leiden: p. 199-208.

<sup>15</sup>This has long since closed down.

more often because there are no teachers.

2. It must be made clear that this situation is found not only in the Muyu area but also in other nearby sub districts. Tinggam the village visited in the Mandobo area had an active school. The school only has three classrooms so this year class 2, 4 and 6; a total of 71 pupils were being taught. The teaching staff consisted of one qualified teacher living in the village and one 'emergency teacher' (guru pamong) who just had two years of SMP education (lower secondary school). Officially there should be seven teachers: 5 fully qualified and 2 'guru pamong'. Although officially assigned to the school the four absent teachers stay in Mindiptana (across the river) and hardly ever show up to teach. This picture is repeated in the Muyu area outside of the main centre of Mindiptana. The village of Umap has an old school building, hardly in a condition to be used and has only 6 pupils who are given some schooling by two local 'guru pamong'. Officially the elementary school in Waropko (91 pupils and six classes) should have 3 qualified teachers and 3 'guru pamong'. Only one qualified teacher is active, while the three 'guru pamong' were on strike at the time of the survey as they are not satisfied with the very low wage of Rp. 20.000 a month. In Waropko therefore one qualified teacher runs 6 classes. At the village of Imko there is a simple school building for three classes. The 2 qualified teachers allocated to the school are not in the village and the school is taken care of by several army 'guru pamong'. Ninati has recently started its education programme (three classes) using one qualified teacher, one army 'guru pamong' and one 'guru pamong' who didn't finish lower secondary school (SMP). It is not surprising that parents are complaining that their children although theoretically having passed through six classes and passed the exams can in fact not decently read and write or do simple maths.
3. One of the main reasons people moved back to their area was to get their kids educated however the education services do not fulfil this aspiration. The parents were motivated to support their children to go to school, but seeing the level of education available results in a fair number of them becoming indifferent. The highly motivated people try to get their children into school in Mindiptana, paying substantial amounts of money to have them boarded and taken care of, often by relatives. This is quite a burden on both families involved and many would prefer to be able to board their children in supervised boarding houses. A number of people who stayed behind in PNG try to get their children educated there, but it seems that this has been limited by the local community, and the cost is high especially for secondary school education; there has been no real alternative but to return.
4. One of the disturbing things is that there are qualified teachers available and willing to teach but will not do so unless their status as teacher (which they had before leaving) is officially restored. It is difficult for them, the community and anyone else to understand why the government is so reluctant to use them again (even after they have successfully passed a political screening). Besides the direct benefit they would bring to the educational situation

there would also be an improvement in the social climate with these people getting the appreciation they deserve.

5. Teaching material is very poor if available at all; and the same can be said about the housing facilities for teachers. This lack of or poor quality housing is often a reason for teachers to stay in the main centre of Mindiptana and not in their assigned village.
6. It is not surprising that the number of elementary school-leavers that makes it to secondary education is very limited. In Tinggam (Mandobo-area) we were even informed that for the last two years there was no child that attended upper secondary school (SMU). Some other stories are more encouraging as there are still people 'making it'. The head of the Andokpit village is proud to tell that his oldest son has become a nurse in Merauke; another used his training in PNG to become a good construction worker, while two of his younger children are studying in Yogyakarta (Java). From the Umap village 6 pupils are at lower secondary school (SMP) in Mindiptana, 4 are at the SMU level, and two are supported for advanced training in Merauke and Ende (Flores). Children who once attended the elementary school in PNG seem to have no problems to succeed at the secondary level in Mindiptana.

#### **[B] Health-services**

There is a long established and still on-going programme to put primary health cadres in the village. The best known programme is the "bidan desa" programme, which aims to place midwives in every village. As with teachers it seems that it is difficult to keep the cadre in the village as quite a number of the newly assigned nurses have left the village after serving for just some weeks, at the best some months. Isolation and lack of support are often at the reason for this. In reality the villages do not have a functioning health service and are completely depending on the central service in Mindiptana which given the lack of good communications is often hard to reach. Some sub-centres health facilities do exist for example in Waropko, but they seem ineffective. In Mindiptana there is just one doctor and it depends on the doctors enthusiasm and dedication whether he/she will make regular visits to the outlying villages. There seems to have been very few visits by the doctor to outlying villages in recent times.

The diet of the people is quite traditional, based on sago as the staple food while additional foodstuff is grown in the gardens such as root crops and vegetables (often limited to leaves of the sweet potatoes). People can feed themselves as long as they are free to go to their sago groves and garden areas. The diet of the people is adequate but not a very balanced one, with a lack of protein and vitamins. This is illustrated by the high number of children in the villages with rather big bellies or reddish hair.

While traditional housing is still the dominant pattern in the area, efforts are being made by the government to improve the housing especially by providing roofing materials. Nevertheless it

should be said that there is nothing wrong with well-constructed traditional houses, using mainly local available materials, as long as parts of it are renewed periodically (roofing material taken from the sago-tree needs substantial replacement every 5 to 6 years). To replace the roof by corrugated iron sheets means that the roof lasts longer but does not lead to better health conditions as the iron roofing means the houses become very hot during the day. Important measures in the prevention of illness is the use of mosquito-nets to protect people against the malaria mosquito, the construction of hygienic toilet facilities, keeping food covered, keeping the house and yard clean and thus more hygienic. Government programmes however are mainly limited to providing construction materials, especially roofing materials, with no other more specific primary health care programmes planned or implemented.

*To illustrate and complete the general situation described above we can note a number of observations from the village survey:*

1. The traditional houses in the returnee's villages are generally okay and not different from houses in other (non-returnees) villages. A traditional house is often used by more than one family; each place in the house is marked by a fireplace. Materials for traditional houses are available in the forest: timber, sago-trees (for roofing and walls) and pinang-trees (for the floor). It takes time to gather the materials and to work on the neatly stitched together roof-parts and the weaving of the flooring. In Niyimbang the houses are mostly semi-permanent, a combination of the traditional and more modern one. In Waropko a number of modern houses have recently been constructed by the Department of Transmigration, while in other villages there are some more modern houses made possible by roofing materials provided by the Government. It is common to see the corrugated iron roofing just stacked next to the traditional house waiting for the people to gather enough other materials, mainly timber which is quite expensive if the wood is made into planks. There are government housing programmes planned for Umap, Kawangtet, Kanggewot, Wanggatkibi and Mokbiran.
2. Even when houses seem okay there is no real tradition in constructing special toilet-facilities; people bath in the river and relief themselves in the bush (close to their house). There might be some exceptions, as reported on by the village head of Umap. The use of mosquito nets is not yet common practice; most of people just sleep close to the fireplace in order to protect themselves against cold as well as mosquitoes. A mosquito net is expensive and cost Rp 50,000 for a single person net in Mindiptana. Clothing is generally very simple even poor; at Ninati (might be a bit of an extreme example) we hardly saw clothes which were not in bad need of repair, if repairable at all. This might at least be an indication that there is very little money available to buy some new pieces, but on the other hand observing the dirty state of some of the clothing, it is not surprising that 'modern' clothing does not always help to improve the health-condition.

3. People say that they normally use boiled drinking water; nevertheless we observed people drinking straight from rivers or water stored in bamboo (often stored for several days). The same observation can be made as to the use of vegetables; everybody will say that they eat vegetables and that they know their importance but it was observed that the quantity eaten was small and the kind was mostly limited to leafy types.
4. The direct surroundings of the houses are mostly clean though there is quite a variation. Often there is grass and wet spots which can be a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Pigs are usually kept in pigsties but a lot of livestock (including some pigs, chicken and goats) are just running around the houselots. Many dogs are also usually part of the household.
5. In a number of villages there is a special building (often recently constructed) for the health programme for mother & child (Posyandu-building), however many are not functioning as they depend on para-medical or medical staff coming in from the centres of Mindiptana or Waropko. In Waropko the Posyandu-program is implemented on quite a regular basis, once in three months but it is mainly limited to weighting babies. The same situation exists in Tinggam (Mandobo-area). We have already mentioned the lack of doctors, nurses and village midwives and the mobility of medical staff based in the sub district centres seems very limited. This lack of village visiting is often put down to the lack of an adequate transportation budget. Umap village seems once again an exception as the head of the village reported that medical staff make weekly visits but this information contrast strongly with information from other villages so its reliability is questioned. The medical program by the church is also very limited and hardly reaching out to the remote areas. The local pastor if he is interested in health matters will give some basic medical treatments while doing his pastoral visit to the villages.
6. Sick people mainly have to go to the medical centres in sub district centres if they want some treatment. This can be a very difficulty as the roads are bad, public transport non-existent and quite long distances are involved. For example it takes 45 minutes by motor bike from Ninati to Waropko, if the road is in a reasonable condition. Waropko to Mindiptana takes 1 hour 40 minutes by motorbike if the road is not too muddy and the journey gets even more difficult if forest tracks have to be used, as then the journey has to be made on foot. The reality of the situation was expressed in quite a cynical way: “if you get sick and can not make it across the river to Mindiptana, you better get ready to die” (village Tinggam). People close to the PNG-border such as the Ninati people often go to Kunkim (PNG) for medical treatment. In some places for example Ninati the local military have a first aid post.
7. Although they might not be representative for the whole area some disturbing stories on the level of medical treatment were heard in Waropko where there is a health centre with 2 nurses. The same medicine is often prescribed for a variety of sicknesses before any lab-

examination has been carried out. There is an evident lack of co-operation among the nurses in charge: “people who should have treatment over 5 times are only served twice or three times as the nurse in charge is out of the village and does not leave instructions for the other nurse”. People sadly conclude: “there is no difference in the situation before we left and now; when will there be some change?”

8. The common sicknesses are: worms, skin-diseases (the prevalence of skin diseases vary from village to village; we observed that Ninati has a very high percentage of children skin-diseases, while other villages like Tinggam, Niyimbang and Waropko show a lower frequency), infections of the respiration channels, TBC and malaria. Around Mindiptana (e.g. Niyimbang as well as in Mindiptana itself) quite a few people with mental problems are evident.
9. Limited medicines are available in Mindiptana but are said to be expensive; this is not surprising, as even in Jayapura medicines are very costly. This means that a lot of people turn to “traditional medicines and medical help” (dukun), and often only look for modern professional help when it is already too late.
10. As we have already mentioned there is no consistently implemented health programme in the area. When the national immunisation program was implemented in 1997, medical staff left the immunisation in the more remote villages to under-trained local people who had received a very short course on immunisation. An extension course on TBC and leprosy was mentioned in Waropko, but this was never followed up although promised.

### **2.3. SP-2 TANAH MIRING 1 AREA**

#### ***prelimanry remark***

Tanah Miring is a transmigration site located near Merauke (about 30 minute’s drive by car), Figure 6. The number of ex-border-crossers resettled in this location is small: originally 34 heads of family (155 people), and now only 19 heads of family (90 people) are still living in this location. The majority in the settlement is Javanese transmigrants (total population of the Tanah Miring 1 is 400 families, about 2.000 people). The ex-border-crossers returned from PNG in 1986 and were straight away settled in this location with the status of “local transmigrants”.

#### **2.3.1. General observations**

##### ***2.3.1.1. from 34 to 19 heads of family***

It might be surprising that of the 34 heads of family 15 have left the site over the last 12 years. Asked about the reasons of their moving, it is interesting that hardly anybody left the place to go

back to their native village in the Muyu-area.

The main reason behind moving is:

1. people have been assigned to new places as civil servants (6 heads of family);
2. people looking for decent education for their children (mainly in Merauke);
3. people who saw better economic opportunities (especially moving to the Muting-Asiki area);
4. because of death (9 heads of family) which resulted in the family deciding to move (4 cases).

#### ***2.3.1.2. related to interests 'back home'***

Although the returnees have settled down in the transmigration site, they are keenly aware of the fact that they still own traditional land (dusun) 'at home'. The rights on this land are watched carefully and normally taken care of by relatives on the spot. If needed they will travel to their land if there is a need to arrange something. They feel quite secure as to their rights and therefore there is hardly any eagerness to move back to their village. In addition they (especially the younger generation) have already experienced that more progress and development can be made on the transmigration site than "back home". One of the main favourable aspects is that the site is near the main district's town Merauke.

#### ***2.3.1.3. a multicultural setting***

The general impression is that the group is just a part of the big 'transmigration-family' without being looked at as "ex-border-crossers", given the same access to facilities provided by the government as the other transmigrants, and facing the normal problems of getting acquainted with people with another cultural background; this last aspect is quite important as the majority of the people have a Javanese cultural background.

### **2.3.2. Socio-political situation**

1. The returnees are generally known as "local transmigrants" and not as "ex-border-crossers".
2. Social integration with people from other islands proves to be a very slow process, as up till now the returnees have very little social contact with the other transmigrants; this problem is connected with the reality that Papuans have their own way of communicating, their own standards of social politeness, their own way of celebrating etc. Older people mainly face the problem while the children might have fewer problems as they go to school and mix easier with children from other cultural backgrounds.
3. In some cases the difference with others is felt also because of an economic gap: other people (people from Java, NTT or Madura) are better prepared to use the economic opportunities available; this economic gap leads often to the social feeling of inferiority.

4. There is hardly any difference in the way the returnees and “the others” value corruption or bad administration in their settlement; there their voices unite, facing common problems or feeling shared anger. Nevertheless some people (mainly women) feel that within the context of “local development programs” the returnees’ group has been discriminated against, because the “people in charge are people from outside” and give preferential treatment to their own kin.
5. Communication with relatives still staying behind in PNG is no problem; people are free to move or to contact their relatives.
6. There has been no intimidation by the army or other security-units since they settled down in the area. From the very beginning the local military commander has been very clear in his guarantee of safety and has threatened everybody with appropriate measures if they would try to make it difficult for the returnees. That situation of security and feeling at ease continues till today.
7. The civil servants among this group of returnees never have had real problems in getting their status restored and so can function as before; because of a relative high number of civil servants among the group, a number of families (6) have moved out because of new assignments. There is a slight difference in policy noticeable when compared with the policy applied in Waropko: salary due over the period they have been in PNG has not been paid to people back in Tanah Miring, while it has been paid to returnees (civil servants) back in Waropko.

### **2.3.3. Socio-economic situation**

1. The economical help given by the government to the returnees has been the same as the one given to other transmigrants at the location and includes gardening equipment etc.
2. As the area is suitable for rice-cultivation the returnees have been motivated to cultivate rice; this has been quite difficult, as the Muyu has no background at all with this rice cultivation. Slowly some have succeeded well, while others have put their energy into the cultivation of root crops that they are more familiar with. There is quite some difference as to the profit local people get from their rice-fields compared with what the Javanese farmer get. This leads to some economic gap and the feeling “loosing out against people from outside”.
3. From the different stories we got it might be concluded that the earnings are little more than sufficient to cover the daily needs. People survive, but that is all it, and you have to work for it! When extra money is needed for special needs or occasions there is a problem.
4. To improve their economic well being it has been mentioned over and over that more

appropriate extension work should be directed to them; extension workers are rare on the location. Some special help is obtained via a Merauke-based NGO (assisting with livestock - cattle breeding as well as seeds).

5. The usefulness of government-programs such as Bantuan Desa, IDT, is really questioned as the administration of the projects is not clear, and there is a feeling that certain groups are given preferential treatment.
6. As a number of people have moved out of the location, while in certain cases keeping their house as property, a number of pieces of land remain uncultivated, returning to bush, or are just taken over by other people settling down on it.
7. Transportation in the area is easy, and so there is no problem to reach the market if people like to sell some of their products. The location is situated along the Trans Irian road; a route that will be even more used in the future as a large terminal (buses and such) is under construction nearby.

#### **2.3.4. Education situation**

1. Primary school facilities are available at the transmigration-site; there are no real problems with teachers either as the local primary school has 8 teachers, 3 among them are returnees. The main problem mentioned is the fact that quite some money is needed to assure follow-up education. School fees for SMP/SMU are still modest but for people living on a minimal budget, because of limited income it still is a real problem.
2. The motivation among the parents to have their children educated is rather high; their motto is often heard formulated as “they must have better opportunities than their parents”. The factual list of the original 155 returnees gives the impression that quite some children have made it to SMP/SMU, and some are reported as studying in Ujung Pandang and Bandung.

#### **2.3.5. Health situation**

1. Health facilities and health personnel are available to the normal standards of transmigration sites, if there are complaints about the lack of medicines or insufficient service, it doesn't just relate to the returnees but to the whole transmigrant community. If needed the hospital facilities in Merauke are within reasonable reach.
2. One of the main difficulties in the area is the lack of drinking water; this problem is especially felt in the dry season (6 to 8 months). In this area the soil is generally acid with the result that in the wet season ground water is even often not drinkable. During the dry season water is brought in from Merauke.

3. The housing is quite simple; most have corrugated iron roofing. However what is striking is that the housing has not improved that much over the past 12 years, with exception of the houses of some teachers and civil servants. Some houses just use the traditional roofing material (stitched sago leaves). House yards differ greatly in appearance related to the season: in the wet season it is mud, in the dry season the soil is stone hard.

## **PART THREE**

### ***CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

#### **3.1 CONCLUSIONS**

##### **3.1.1. General Conclusions**

1. The general impression is that the whole process of returning to Irian Jaya has been a generally smooth process; there has been hardly any publicity about people coming back to their villages, and this lack of publicity might have helped to keep the process on the level of an almost natural process.
2. The presence of international bodies (UNHCR and ICRC) as well as a trusted institution such as the church have helped the people in their decision to return and to feel confident that this step would work out well.
3. The fact that people are categorised as a border crosser is not something people are blamed for after their return; it might sometimes become an issue when there is a tense relationship with security-forces.
4. Most of the returnees are living on a 'subsistence level'; there is hardly anybody who really has improved his/her economic situation raising above the fulfilment of daily needs. This remark is not just relevant for the large majority of the returnees, but as well for the people living in nearby areas (such as the neighbouring Mandobo).
5. A large number of people came back "unofficially", which means not as an organised group receiving support by UNHCR or ICRC. These people came on their own initiative and settled back in their traditional area.
6. One of the major factors that made the returning process relatively easy and successful is the fact that people have not been forced to settle away from their traditional village; they have been given ample opportunity to settle back in their own area. Another wise decision has been that people have not been required to stay in a transition centre longer than absolutely necessary, as "transition centres" are normally viewed negatively and associated with indoctrination.

7. Significant improvement in the situation will involve a scope of development and institutional strengthening beyond the jurisdiction of the UNHCR. Hence some recommendations given below might serve UNHCR as well as other parties involved in the direct responsibility for developments in the area, such as the government, the church etc.

### **3.1.2 Conclusions concerning returnees in the Waropko - Mindiptana (Muyu area)**

1. The survey showed that there are many problems in Waropko-Mindiptana area; the area is relatively isolated; it is a long distance from the market of Merauke town; the terrain is rolling with steep slopes leading to erosion; the government programme are poorly implemented and therefore ineffective; the education and health services are poor and there is a lack of opportunities for the people to progress beyond the subsistence level. These problems however are not exclusive to the Waropko-Mindiptana area and are not connected to the fact that most of the population were border crosser and are now considered returnees. In the adjacent Mandobo area where there was virtually no movement of people to PNG and in many other areas of the district of Merauke the same problems are found. Even areas much nearer the district capital of Merauke have the similar poorly implemented government programmes, a poor standard of health and education service.
2. The important initial question of the survey about social integration of the returnees into the local community is hardly relevant in the setting of the traditional Muyu-area, as all the people resident in the villages can be categorised as 'returnees'. There is no problem of integrating again with people who stayed behind as nobody did stay behind (with exception for the Mindiptana town itself).
3. A relevant question would be whether they are reasonably okay? A question that can be answered by comparing them with a local community in the neighbouring Mandobo area (the area west of the Kali Kao). The answer to that question is: yes, they are reasonably okay as far as there are no striking differences in living pattern or welfare status with Mandobo people who did not move to PNG. It might even be stated that they are relatively better off, as because of its political sensitivity the returnees-area get more governmental attention (development-programs) than the Mandobo area.
4. There are no striking differences between the groups of returnees who have been given assistance at the time of resettlement and the groups who resettled on their own initiative, without officially registering themselves. This means at least that help/aid didn't have a long-term sustainable effect.
5. There is a striking difference in the way returning groups have been received over the initial period of 1986-1991 and after 1991; this difference is mainly a result of the different role of the army and the OPM starting in the beginning of the nineties.
6. Some issues/problems should be mentioned which give the 'returnees' area a kind of own character:
  - ⇒ a high presence of security people (army)

- ⇒ a clear resentment that governmental employees (civil servants) prior to 1984 have not had their status restored smoothly, properly, and sometimes have not yet received it at all
- ⇒ a fresh memory of their recent past experiences which leaves them confused, and feeling easily squeezed between the OPM and security forces
- ⇒ an always handy stigmatisation by government/army that they are OPM sympathisers; a stigmatisation which is used “when suitable”.
- ⇒ the lack of general facilities (health, education etc.) are blamed on the fact that they are “ex-border-crossers”, although a comparable lack of facilities is common in other areas with no ‘refugee-background’ e.g. the Mandobo-area

### **3.1.3 Conclusions concerning returnees in Tanah Miring SP2 (Merauke area)**

1. They enjoy the same facilities as other transmigrant-groups or individuals and deal with the same problems of building up “a new living and home” in an unfamiliar surrounding, far from their traditional home land
2. Their integration is helped by the traditional characteristic of the Muyu-people, who are used to leaving their traditional area and settling somewhere else, mainly attracted by better economic perspectives. There are large Muyu communities in Merauke, Jayapura, Sorong etc.
3. Their special problems are mainly connected with three elements:
  - ⇒ the feeling they need to compete with people from other areas in Indonesia who often are better prepared for competition
  - ⇒ how to deal with their ‘traditional land-rights’ back home in the Muyu area
  - ⇒ how to open up to other cultural patterns (especially to the locally dominant Javanese culture as most of the people on the site are Javanese) without feeling inferior?; as might be expected, young people are coping better with this problem than older people.

## **3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The presence of the army should be decreased, as this would make the people feel more at ease and in control of their own lives. As Irian Jaya is no longer designated as an active military area (DOM - Daerah Operasi Militer) there is no reason for such a high military presence in the area.
2. Attempts should be made to improve the education services in the area. More qualified teachers are required and some of these could come from the restoration of the official status as teachers of returnees. School buildings need to be rehabilitated and improved and teaching materials supplied. The church boarding house in Mindiptana might be improved and enlarged thereby making it possible for more children from the more isolated villagers to continue their education by attending junior and higher secondary school in Mindiptana.

Funds should be made available to subsidise boarding and school fees of the children

3. The health service should be improved by more active primary health care in the villages. This could be accomplished by more regular health visits to the villages by nurses either from the government or the Catholic mission and subsidising the cost of basic medicines like malaria cures, worm tablet, skin disease cream etc.
4. In case more people still opt to return to Irian Jaya, the returning process should follow the policy set at previous occasions. This means that the process should be handled “on low profile”; people should be given ample opportunity to settle back on their own traditional land and not outside that area; a stay in a transition centre should be avoided.
5. Although initial help to returnees is still relevant (including food support as well as garden equipment and kitchen utensils) it should be kept limited, and where possible support programs should effect neighbouring population groups as well. Therefore more thought should be given to public health care and education opportunities serving the returnees as well as other people in the area.
6. Support should be given to extension programs for economic development in the area, executed by any appropriate institution.