



Hon. Robert Agarobe MP Governor for Central Province (second left) addresses the community with Dr Andrew Moutu, Director National Museum and Art Gallery; Lieutenant General Rick Burr, Australian Chief of Army; and Australian Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for International Development and the Pacific.

Efogi community museum officially opened

The Efogi Community Museum and Trade Centre was officially opened on ANZAC Day 25 April to promote tourism and livelihood opportunities along the Kokoda Track.

The building was officially opened by the Hon. Robert Agarobe MP Governor for Central Province with special guests Dr Andrew Moutu Director National Museum & Art Gallery (NMAG), PNG Defence Force Chief Brigadier General Gilbert Toropo, Australian Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston

Assistant Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Lieutenant General Rick Burr Australian Chief of Army.

Local curator Gaksi Siosi and his family collected the artefacts on display in the museum over a period of more than 20 years following the end of World War II.

The community helped erect the building to encourage tourism and trade with visiting trekkers.

Located right on the track, it provides visitors an opportunity to stop for a snack, buy some local handicrafts, and see military artefacts.

Two similar facilities will be open to trekkers later this year in Alola at the northern end of the track and Buna on the northern beaches.

The museums are part of NMAG's Military Heritage Management Plan for the Kokoda Track launched in September 2018.

Etoa war remains repatriated

In February, the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG), in partnership with the Japan Association for Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties, led a four-day expedition to Etoa with archaeologists, historians and recovery experts.

Etoa was the site of fierce battles between Australian and Japanese soldiers during World War II. Villagers from nearby Alola provided local expertise and guidance and worked alongside the research team to excavate the 34 weapons pits discovered in the area.

Human remains will be repatriated while artefacts will form part of museum collections in Port Moresby and in small community museums along the Track. NMAG's involvement in the mission was supported by the Papua New Guinea Australia Partnership, through the Kokoda Initiative.



Japanese, Australian and PNG researchers prepare to excavate a weapons pit at Etoa.



Sanitary hygiene kits



Efogi primary school girls with their sanitary hygiene kits.

In February, the first of 1,000 sanitary hygiene kits were distributed free-of-charge along the Kokoda Track to ensure women and girls can manage their monthly cycle with dignity.

Girls from grades six to eight at Efogi Primary School in Mount Koiari were presented with the kits by Efogi Village Health Volunteer, Filma Nick, in March. Ms Nick explained how to use the kits and also answered questions from the girls.

The kits were sewn and assembled by Network Kokoda and the Adventist Development Relief Agency, with support from the Kokoda Initiative. Kits contain reusable sanitary pads, a wash cloth, underpants, soap and a chart to monitor the monthly cycle.

Track maintenance works



Representatives from the Australian High Commission, Kokoda Track Authority, Kokoda Initiative and partners officially open the 25-metre long Agulogo bridge in time for the 2019 trekking season.

Bridge upgrade and maintenance works along the Kokoda Track were completed in April, in time for the busiest months of the 2019 trekking season.

Kokoda Track Authority's Chief Executive Officer Julius Wargirai said maintenance work along the entire track was a great success, giving credit to rangers and community members who applied their local knowledge and expertise.

Specialist assistance was also provided by national park experts from Australia,

with logistical support provided by the Papua New Guinea Australia Partnership, through the Kokoda Initiative.

The bridges replace those destroyed in some of the worst flooding in recent years and include a wire handrail to guide local people and trekkers safely across waterways. Feedback from local rangers, village elders and trekkers has been overwhelmingly positive.



New classroom furniture for Alola

The recently refurbished Alola elementary school has received new furniture to create a more comfortable and conducive learning space for teacher and students.

Supported by the Kokoda Initiative, the school received 15 new chairs and desks for students, four chairs and tables for the teacher, and two bookshelves.

The school building was originally built by the Kokoda Track Foundation who also supports teacher resourcing at the school.

The Alola classroom is one of over a dozen classrooms being improved under the Kokoda Initiative, working in conjunction with Central and Oro Provincial Education Offices and the Kokoda Track Foundation.

FODE for Kokoda health and education workers



Kokoda College FODE students display the issued tablets containing training and learning materials.

Twenty elementary teachers and health workers from across the Kokoda Track region attended a course in April to upgrade their education levels at the Kokoda College in Northern Province.

The inaugural Kokoda College Flexible Open and Distant Education (FODE) program in partnership with the Kokoda Track Foundation (KTF) and the Papua New Guinea Australia Partnership is supporting further training for teachers and health workers.

Eight elementary teachers and 12 health workers are studying for their senior high school education, formally recognised within the National Education and Health systems.

As part of the program learning criteria, android tablets are being distributed to teachers and health workers to work

remotely from home and to complete lessons and assignments.

Elementary teacher Ms Noelyn Watt of Bisiatabu Primary and Elementary school in Sogeri said she always wanted to upgrade her marks and matriculate from year 12.

“This program will help me a lot and upgrade my grade ten marks. I am not a failure. I want to be able to teach in primary level and educate my children and the rest of the community,” she said.

The course involves two weeks in the classroom followed by six weeks of home study. The training is a joint initiative between the Oro and Central Provincial Governments, Kokoda Track Foundation and the Adventist Development Relief Agency.

SBC training for teachers



Mount Koiari teachers display their certificates after graduating from a week-long training.

Over 100 teachers from the Sogeri catchment and Mount Koiari area have attended workshops to learn about the revised Standards Based Curriculum (SBC) being implemented by the National Department of Education.

The training gives teachers a better understanding of the SBC for implementation in their schools, ensuring Kokoda Track students are taught to the same standard as other students across the country.

In December 2018, over 70 teachers from nine primary schools in the Sogeri catchment of Central Province attended the week-long program at Sirinumu Dam Primary School. In February 2019, 30 teachers from five primary schools along the Mount Koiari catchment area completed the week-long training in Port Moresby.

In partnership with the Central Province Education Office, the Kokoda Initiative assisted with the supply of training materials, printing of teacher guides and workshop logistics, including travel and accommodation.



Manasi Lamu, 65, from Alola village with one of his solar-powered lights.

Solar brightens up Kokoda

The Kokoda Initiative in partnership with the Kokoda Track Foundation has rolled out over 700 basic solar kits to communities across the Kokoda Track region.

Providing light to many off-grid communities for the first time, distribution of the kits commenced in November 2018 for installation in homes, schools and health facilities. The kits include solar panels, batteries and lights for households, and solar LED TV screens for schools.

Solar power is a renewable source of energy and is cheap to operate. When placed under direct sunlight for only four hours a day, solar panels can generate enough power for batteries to run three lights, charge mobile phones and use small appliances in the home.

Local volunteers have also been trained to maintain household solar kits following installation and can make minor repairs when needed.



Association for Kokoda campsite and guesthouse owners

From the Track

Cecily Joseph
Village Health Volunteer



Clare Atava of the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority addresses representatives of the new Kokoda Track Campsite and Guesthouse Owner's Association meeting in Sogeri, Central Province.

Seventeen campsite and guesthouse owners from the northern and southern side of the Kokoda Track met in Sogeri in March to formalise an association representing their interests.

The new Kokoda Track Campsite and Guesthouse Owner's Association will represent the 79 owners along the Track, and address improvements to the quality of accommodation for trekkers and tour operators.

Representatives met to appoint office bearers and to finalise a constitution and code of practice for the association.

Five committee members were elected. They are Deputy Chairman John Erero and co-chairs Bartz Batia representing the south side of the Track and Sai Lami representing the north side. Cynthia Harika was elected Secretary and Junior Gibson is the treasurer.

The meeting followed extensive community consultations along the Track led by the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority, with support from the Kokoda Initiative.



Where are you from?

I am from Kagi village in Central Province. I am a single mother with a 22-year-old son.

What do you do on the Kokoda Track?

I work as a village health volunteer (VHV) and also assist health workers in our community.

How long have you been a VHV and what does it involve?

Since 2009, with the first lot of volunteers recruited through the Kokoda Initiative.

I am also a trained HIV and AIDS counsellor and raise awareness on health issues in my community.

What is your most memorable experience as a VHV?

I like to think of the time I assisted our health workers deliver a child from a woman who went into labour and could not make it in time to the hospital.

This was after a training I attended on safe motherhood and delivery with Marie Stopes.

Now the baby boy is six years old and greets me every time he sees me.

What are your plans for future?

Having a lot of experience working under health and assisting community health workers, I want to be more involved with community health work with our provincial health office.

Owers Corner road rehabilitation

Owers Corner road maintenance was completed in December 2018 to ensure year-round vehicle access to Sogeri at the southern end of the Kokoda Track.

In March, further minor works were undertaken after heavy rain early in the year. The works were funded by the Papua New Guinea Australia Partnership, through the Kokoda Initiative who committed 1.5 million Kina in total for the rehabilitation of 18-kilometres of road.

Local liaison officer Billy Narei, who worked with the road contractor, said the project created income for the local community, with more than 25 men employed as security officers, road workers and traffic controllers.



Locals engage with road contractor, Global Construction, to install culverts in the road.

