

OLGETA SAMTING SENIS (EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED): SOCIAL IMPACTS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION ON GENDERED SOCIO-SEXUAL RELATIONS IN TARI TOWN, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Introduction

Papua New Guinea is undergoing rapid socio-cultural transformation with the expansion of resource extractive industries; industries that have brought unprecedented cash to communities traditionally reliant on agriculture and claims for modernity. Tari, the capital of Hela Province and home to the largest LNG project has undergone enormous but poorly charted gendered and socio-sexual relationships.

Methods

Using Photovoice, a participatory action research method, two gendered workshops were conducted in Tari among people on the margins of the resource extractive industries and who were involved in an HIV awareness programme. A total of 24 participants took photographs, wrote or digitally recorded narratives of the meanings behind the images and chose how their stories and images were to be presented. Standard process of participant de-identification, data processing and analysis applied. Ethics approval was given by appropriate partners and bodies. A total of 23 photographs and stories were thematically analysed.

Results

The shared experiences and perceptions, visualised and narrated, showed participants creatively documented lived experiences pertaining to money driven transformations. Money as catalyst, affected the lives of people socially, culturally, economically and sexually. The rapid social change highlighted gendered experiences where women and children felt the impacts differently. Three key findings include: (1) land and livelihoods; (2) marriage, family and sexual relationships; (3) and health and wellbeing.

Conclusion

These shared experiences show us the complex and diverse ways in which the industry has impacted on the people on the margins – people who are not direct beneficiaries. Important to document how large scale extractive industries change these gendered socio-sexual spaces and implications this has for sexual health and wellbeing and risks to HIV. Such alternative creative media are feasible to apply among marginalised communities to bring out their voices to be heard and engage wider community's attention for the design of sustainable development programs.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.