Social and Spiritual Development Strand
Social Science

Unit 1: Natural and Cultural Environments

Module 1.4 Culture

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# Unit outline

(Based on the National Curriculum Guidelines)

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## Icons

- **Book**: Read or research
- **Pen**: Write or summarise
- **Arrow**: Activity or discussion
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Module 1.4 - Culture

This module seeks to develop the understanding that culture encompasses many aspects of everyday life. It is designed to show the uniqueness of cultures in many parts of the world and the similarities between them.

Objectives

By the end of this module students will be able to:

1. Recognise, appreciate and accept the cultural values and practices of people within PNG and elsewhere
2. Determine factors influencing traditional and modern lifestyles
3. Compare societies within PNG touching on aspects which make each society unique
4. Develop thinking skills to enable informed decisions and positive attitudes
5. Apply a range of skills such as observing, measuring and recording data, using data to explain, draw conclusions, and make predictions
6. Recognise and discuss cause, effect and consequences
7. Describe differences in life opportunities in terms of social, cultural, economic and physical environments
Topic 1 – What is culture?

Culture – definition

Culture is a term used by social scientists for a way of life. Every human society has a culture. Culture includes a society's arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, inventions, language, technology, and values. A culture produces similar behaviour and thought among most people in a particular society. Culture includes all areas of life, and all human beings have a culture. To learn about a culture, one may ask such questions as these:

- What language do the people speak?
- What do the people of the society wear?
- How do they prepare their food?
- What kind of dwellings do they live in?
- What kind of work do they do?
- How do they govern themselves?
- How do they judge right from wrong?

People learn a culture by growing up in a particular society. They learn mainly through the use of language, especially by talking and listening to other members of the society. They also learn by watching and imitating various behaviours in the society. The process by which people—especially children—learn their society's culture is called enculturation.

Characteristics of culture

There are several important characteristics of culture.

Satisfying basic needs.

All cultures serve to meet the basic needs shared by human beings. For example, every culture has methods of obtaining food and shelter. Every culture also has family relationships, economic and governmental systems, religious practices, and forms of artistic expression. Each culture shapes the way its members satisfy human needs. Human beings have to eat, but their culture teaches them what, when, and how to eat. For example, many British people eat smoked fish for breakfast, but many Americans prefer cold cereals. In the Midwestern United States, people generally eat dinner at 5 or 6 p.m. However, most Spaniards dine at 10 p.m. Many Japanese eat their meals from low tables while sitting on mats on the floor. Canadians usually sit on chairs at higher tables.
Learning
Culture is acquired through learning, not through biological inheritance. No person is born with a culture. Children take on the culture in which they are raised through enculturation. Children learn much of their culture through imitation and experience. They also acquire culture through observation, watching what goes on around them and seeing examples of what their society considers right and wrong. Children may also absorb certain aspects of culture unconsciously. For example, Arabs tend to stand closer together when speaking to one another than most Europeans do. No one instructs them to do so, but they learn the behaviour as part of their culture. Children also learn their culture by being told what to do. In fact, most cultural learning results from verbal communication. Culture is passed from generation to generation mainly through language.

Using symbols
Cultural learning is based on the ability to use symbols. A symbol is something that stands for something else. The most important types of symbols are the words of a language. There is no obvious or necessary connection between a symbol and what it stands for. The English word dog is a symbol for a specific animal that barks. However, other cultures have a different word that stands for the same animal—the French word chien, for example, or the Swahili word mbwa. There are many other kinds of symbols besides the words in a language. A flag, for example, stands for a country. Colours have symbolic meaning, and the meanings vary from culture to culture. For Chinese people, white is a colour of mourning. In Western societies, black is the colour of mourning; white is a symbol of purity, and brides wear white. All human societies use symbols to create and maintain culture.

Forming patterns
Cultures are made up of individual elements called cultural traits. A group of related traits is a cultural pattern. Cultural traits may be divided into material culture and nonmaterial culture. Material culture consists of all the things that are made by the members of a society. It includes such objects as buildings, jewellery, machines, and paintings. Nonmaterial culture refers to a society's behaviours and beliefs. A handshake, a marriage ceremony, and a system of justice are examples of nonmaterial culture. Cultural patterns may both material and nonmaterial traits. The pattern for agriculture, for example, includes the time when crops are harvested (nonmaterial), the methods (nonmaterial) and machinery (material) used in harvesting, and the structures for storing the crops (material).
Most traits that make up a cultural pattern are connected to one another. If one custom, institution, or value that helps form a cultural pattern changes, other parts of the pattern will probably change, too. For example, until the 1950's, the career pattern for most women in Western societies was to work full-time as homemakers and mothers. By the late 1900's, the pattern was for women to have jobs outside the home. As part of the new pattern, attitudes about marriage, family, and children also changed. The new pattern includes marriage at a later age, a dependence on alternative child-care systems, and more frequent divorce.

**1.3 Activity 1**

*Add a PNG example to help illustrate each of the characteristics of culture described above.*

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**Multiculturalism**

Some societies--such as those of Tibetans in Tibet and various peoples of the Pacific Islands--have traditionally been associated with a single culture. Other societies, such as those of the United States and Australia, are multicultural societies. They include many distinct cultures.

A shared cultural background makes people feel more comfortable with other people from their own culture. Many people initially may feel confused and uneasy when they deal with people of another culture. The discomfort that people often feel when they have contact with an unfamiliar culture is called **culture shock**. Culture shock usually passes if a person stays in a new culture long enough to understand it and get used to its ways.

People of one culture who move to a country where another culture dominates may give up their old ways and become part of the dominant culture. The process by which they do this is called **assimilation**.

A multicultural society supports the view that many distinct cultures are good and desirable. The multicultural view encourages such diversity. Thus, in the United States, millions of people speak both English and the language of their own culture. They eat both American food (apple pie and hamburgers) and ethnic food. They celebrate both national holidays (Fourth of July and Thanksgiving) and their ethnic holidays. For example, many Mexican Americans celebrate Mexican Independence Day on September 16. In Chinese communities across the country, parades and other festivities mark the Chinese New Year.

Multiculturalism succeeds best in a society that has many different ethnic groups and a political system that promotes freedom of expression and awareness and understanding of cultural differences. Ethnic groups can bring variety and richness to a society by introducing their own ideas and customs.
1.3 Activity 2

A multicultural society supports the view that many distinct cultures are good and desirable. The multicultural view encourages diversity.

Read the article on the following page describing multiculturalism in Australia. To what extent could PNG be called a multicultural society?

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The world's melting pot

By Doug Conway

Australia is a social laboratory whose 19 million people hail from over 150 lands. One of Australia’s first official acts was to bar coloured immigrants. Now it is one of the most ethnically diverse nations on earth, a social laboratory whose 19 million people hail from over 150 lands. As the world population booms towards seven billion in the 21st century, the Australian experiment may prove a key test of how different cultures can survive, even thrive, side by side.

The nation that started life as an English goal has spent much of this century giving freedom - political, economic, social and religious - to millions from all corners of the globe. Though its multiculturalism has been tested the old White Australia policy has long been submerged by waves of immigrants. Half of Australia’s inhabitants were either born elsewhere or have a parent who was. One in four was born overseas. The country’s transformation has been as remarkable for its harmony as its speed. It has not been blemish free but phrases like ethnic cleansing, race riots and sectarian violence are heard here only in the world news.

Almost all of this has happened since WWII, when 90 per cent of Australia’s seven million people were Australian-born. Since then almost as many again 5.7 million - have settled in Australia from abroad. During that time Australia has also accepted permanently over half a million refugees - more per capita than any country except Israel - from the ashes of Nazi Europe to southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. “These people have helped to make
Australia a middle ranking economic power and a nation which has, peaceably, become as multiracial and multicultural as any on earth,” said former prime minister Bob Hawke. “No single factor has been more significant in determining the character and potential of this great country.

Multiculturalism has faced many stiff hurdles. Colonial Australia was wary of the Chinese who flocked to the goldfields in the 1850s, though they never made up much more than three per cent of the population. A wave of anti-German hatred during WW1 led South Australia to ban the teaching of German in schools and to anglicise many German place names. Ironically Adelaide escaped, despite being named after the German wife of William IV. Asians were referred to as inferior and vile during debate in Australia’s first parliament, which passed a law effectively excluding coloured people by making them take dictation tests in languages they did not know. This move ended the recruitment of Pacific islanders called Kanakas, once used as slave labour in Queensland’s sugarcane fields. Such laws were not completely abolished until the Whitlam government came to power in 1972 and, in the words of then immigration minister Al Grassby, “wiped Australia’s legislative face clean of racism for the first time in modern history”.

Culture in PNG

In PNG, there are many different cultures. These traditional cultures share some common features:

- Small, self-contained communities
- Leadership seldom extended over large areas
- Technology based on wood, stone, bone and plant fibre
- No written stories
- Oral / spoken history and traditions
- Production directly from the land and / or sea
- Wealth comprising items that decay quickly, with shells, feathers and other lasting items as mediums of exchange (money)
- Settled communities, although villages moved within territories
- Agriculture domesticated pigs, dogs and fowls
- Religion based on the idea of unity between nature, man and the spirits, although Christianity changed some of these beliefs
Culture - comparative study

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<th><strong>Japan</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td>Traditional Japanese foods include tea and eat rice at almost every meal. They supplement the rice with fish, tofu (soybean curd cake), pickled vegetables, soups made with miso (soybean paste), and on occasion, eggs or meat. Younger people eat fewer of the traditional foods. They eat more fruit and consume larger amounts of eggs, cheese, and milk than their parents. Instead of rice, many prefer bread, doughnuts, and toast. In fact, by 1990, total rice consumption in Japan had dropped to about half its level in 1960.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most communities grow their own food – taro, yams, sago, coconuts, sweet potato. People everywhere also eat some smaller nuts, leaves, fruits, and vegetables. Europeans have introduced other vegetables and fruits, including maize, pawpaws, and tomatoes. For most people in Papua New Guinea, pork and chicken provide the only meat. However, many small animals are hunted, and fish is important on the coasts.</td>
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<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Japanese is the official language of Japan. Spoken Japanese has many local dialects. These local dialects differ greatly in pronunciation. However, the Tokyo dialect is the standard form of spoken Japanese. Many Japanese can also speak English to some extent. A number of Japanese words, such as aisu kuriimu (ice cream) and guruupu (group), are based on English. Written Japanese is considered one of the most difficult writing systems in the world. It uses Japanese phonetic symbols that represent sounds as well as Chinese characters. Each character is a symbol that stands for a complete word or syllable.</td>
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<td><strong>Clothing</strong></td>
<td>Nearly everyone in Japanese society engages in some religious practices or rituals. Those practices are based on the two major religious traditions in Japan, Shinto and Buddhism. A variety of religious groups called New Religions developed in Japan during the 1800's and 1900's. Many of these religions combine elements of Buddhism, Shinto, and in some cases, Christianity. In addition, a small percentage of the Japanese population is Christian.</td>
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<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td>There are many beliefs about spirit beings especially ancestor spirits. Other important spirits are also respected. These non-human spirits are often thought to live in deep pools, large trees, or other special places. Some spirits are associated with natural events such as winds or with carved emblems stored in spirit houses. Christianity has been introduced widely, but traditional rituals are still frequently preserved. The major Christian denominations are Roman Catholic, with 975,000 people; Lutheran, with 650,000; United, with 350,000; and Anglican, with 220,000.</td>
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United States

Food
Americans eat a wide variety of foods. A typical dinner consists of meat and potatoes, plus a lettuce salad or a vegetable, and sometimes rolls or bread. For lunch, many Americans eat a hamburger or a hot dog, or a sandwich made with meat or sliced sausage, cheese, peanut butter, chicken salad, or tuna salad. Americans eat out often. Fast-food restaurants have wide popularity.

Language
The United States has never had an official language, but English has always been the chief language spoken in the country. Emigrants from the British Isles—who included the nation’s founders—spoke English. Many emigrants from other lands who spoke little or no English also came to the United States. They learned at least enough English to be able to communicate with other Americans. Their children learned English in school. The immigrants’ children generally spoke both English and their ethnic language, and the immigrants’ grandchildren often spoke only English.

Religion
About 60 per cent of all the American people are members of an organized religious group. Among them, about 52 per cent are Protestants, 37 per cent Roman Catholics, 4 per cent Jews, 3 per cent Mormons, and 3 per cent are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Religion has played an important role in the history of the United States. Many people came to the American Colonies to escape religious persecution in other lands. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which was adopted in 1791, guarantees every American freedom of religion. It also provides that no religious group be given official recognition as a state church. Although all religious groups in the United States enjoy freedom, Christian traditions have had a stronger influence on American life than those of any other faith.

1.3 Activity 3

Use the library or available textbooks to complete the missing sections in the table above.

Choose another country from anywhere in the world and describe the main aspects of its culture using the headings from the table.
**Topic 2 – Lifestyles**

**Traditional lifestyles**

**Agriculture**: For tens of thousands of years all the people in PNG had a subsistence lifestyle, where the goods and services were used by the members of the group that produced them. Cultivation of land followed a bush fallow system. Gathering plants, fishing and hunting provided extra food. Within each community, goods were bartered or exchanged and money was not necessary. Some communities still have this subsistence lifestyle.

**Customs**: Customs are the traditional rules of the community. They have guided people for thousands of years. They are not written down in a book, but are passed down in the memory of people and told orally. Many village elders are experts in customs and know how the rules were applied in disputes and decisions generations ago. Customs can govern many other things, apart from settling disputes:

- The giving of babies’ names
- Changing adults’ names
- Relations among different clans
- Gardening, hunting and fishing
- Making feasts
- Treatment of a sick person

**1.3 Activity 4**

*Interview two fellow students from different cultural backgrounds. Ask them to describe a traditional custom from their culture. Ask them to write their description in the vernacular, with an English translation.*
Ceremonies: Ceremonies are an important part of traditional cultures. Singsing' is Tok Pisin and 'tane moale' is Motu for a special village ceremony. In a ceremony:

- Pigs may be killed
- People may sing and dance to music
- People may exchange gifts
- People have a big feast

The numerous feasts are a necessary part of PNG life. Equally important are the planning, preparation, food, dance, music and ceremonial objects, which may represent spirits. Traditionally, the ceremonial ground is a large clearing near the men's house in the village. Although many musical instruments are used in ceremonies, flutes and drums are the most important. PNG ceremonies are held for many different reasons, for example:

- Naming a person;
- Each stage of a child's growth, including
  - the first haircut and first tooth
  - First trip to the garden
  - Tattooing on the body or face
- Recovery from a disease
- Planting a garden
- Before fishing and hunting
- Before and after tribal fighting
- Building a house or a church
- Paying compensation
- The death and burial of a person
- Initiation of young people
- Into adolescence
- Marriage

1.3 Activity 5

Collect information about two traditional ceremonies, one from your own and one from another culture. Present the information in a small illustrated booklet.
Clans: PNG people live in groups whose loyalties usually do not extend beyond the village or the collection of houses that make up the community. Over 700 different language groups show that people remained in their own areas.

Over the years, there have been important migrations. People gradually moved in from the coast to the highlands, then, spread out into their present areas.

Members of a clan are all descended from the same ancestor. Although clan members may live some distance apart, they remain loyal and helpful to each other. These extended families work together and share what they have as part of the 'wantok' system.

Some stories, legends and histories of a village or clan are owned by that village or clan. They are known to the elders and may not be told by members of different groups. Many clans have a special animal, bird or plant as their symbol or totem. Elders hold sacred knowledge of hunting, gardening, making clothes and bilas, and rituals and ceremonies, in trust for the succeeding generations:

In most PNG cultures, people belong to their father's clan. The males receive their land from their father's clan (patrilineal inheritance). Their father and father's brother will teach them the ways of the clan. In some PNG cultures, people belong to their mother's clan, so land and possessions are passed through the women of the clan (matrilineal inheritance).

Case study – sorcery and magic

Sorcery and magic are the way to make contact with the 'spirit beings', to gain their help, or even to get control of them. All PNG traditional cultures believe that there are hidden spiritual powers ('puripuri' in Tok Pisin) at work in the world.

The spirit beings may be ancient gods from the time of creation, heroes from legends, the ghosts of dead ancestors, or the spirits of well-known villagers who have died. All these spirit beings have power over present-day people and events. The spirits may be friendly, helpful, unfriendly or destructive. Spirits are often thought to inhabit natural features, such as a pool, a cave, a mountain or hot springs.
Magic is an attempt to gain the help of the spirits in day-to-day affairs, including:

- The planting of a new garden
- The launching of a new canoe
- The start of a fishing or trading journey
- Persuading the rain to fall, if the season is too dry
- Searching for something which is lost
- Making someone fall in love with another person

Ceremonies, such as those at marriages, initiations, and especially the mourning of the dead, involve magic. If a dead person is not honoured with the proper funeral rites, his spirit may become angry, and will spoil the work of those who ought to have shown him more respect. Such a discontented spirit may try to cause physical hurt, or even death. Magic is practised:

- Through ritual and ceremonies
- Through the saying and repeating of secret words and phrases (spells)
- Through the singing of secret songs
- By cooking special plants or burning or burying them
- By wearing special ornaments
- By using sacred objects which have been hidden until this special occasion
- By playing musical instruments

Every single detail in a magic process must be exactly right. If a mistake is made in the ceremony, or some ingredient is overlooked, the magic will fail. These details are often very complicated, and only the oldest and most experienced men will understand perfectly all that must be done. Individuals who are ambitious to become 'big men' spend much time mastering the magic of their people. Often, it is the man that knows the magic that gains power. Magic in a traditional society is a force of great social importance. Its magic lore is one of the most precious possessions which a clan or tribe can have.

Usually, sorcery is the unfriendly or evil use of magic. Sorcery is more the activity of an individual than part of the friendly social life of the community. Sorcerers are usually thought of as solitary (alone) and secretive persons. Most sorcerers are men, but there are a few women. Their usual intention is to spoil, frustrate, harm and often to kill.

When someone in the village, except a very old person, gets sick or dies, sorcery is often blamed. The method used may have been ceremonies and spells. The sorcerer may have secretly obtained a piece of hair or a fingernail clipping of his victim and mixed it with other mysterious ingredients to create a harmful spell. Sometimes, sorcerers charge money (fee) to harm somebody's enemy or rival. Great efforts will be made to find the sorcerer. If he comes from another village, and if the patient dies, fighting may break out. The sorcerer's village may be attacked for revenge. The sorcerer is said to have made 'poison' against his victim. Magical methods can be used to counter sorcery. Sometimes traditional herbs and medicines will help recovery.
1.3 Activity 6

Find examples of similar practices in other parts of the world eg the magic of Australian Aborigines, American Indians.

Case study - the wantok system

Common to many Melanesian societies and fundamental to every level of PNG culture is the idea of wantoks. In Tok Pisin (Pidgin) wantok simply means ‘one talk’ and your wantoks are those of your fellows who speak the same language - your kin and clans people. Every Papua New Guinean is born with a whole set of duties and obligations to their wantoks but they are also endowed with privileges that only wantoks receive. Reciprocity is the central idea of Melanesian generosity.

Within the clan and village, each person can reasonably expect to be housed, fed and to share in the community assets. All wantoks, regardless of whether they are in Moresby or Madrid, can expect to be accommodated and fed, until they can make more permanent arrangements.

The wantok system is both an organic safety net and social security system - and the plague of democratic politics. There is no level of PNG society that is not affected by the wantok system. If you tender out a construction project and a wantok bids, then you will give the contract to the wantok. If your PMV driver is a wantok, you won't have to pay and if you have a wantok in the judiciary, maybe you won't go to jail.

Some people say that the wantok system is simultaneously the best and worst thing about PNG. For most of the country's people - rural villagers - it is an egalitarian way in which the community can share in its spoils in a rapidly changing world the village and the clan can provide basic economic support as well as a strong sense of identity and belonging. PNG has no social security system and a very low rate of people in paid employment.

However, when these ideas are transposed to the political and public affairs arena, it simply becomes nepotism and, at worst, outright corruption. In the public service, the police, the army and especially in politics, this is a huge problem. Candidates don't get to run without the generous support of their fellow wantok 'bigmen', who of course expect that when their candidate is elected their generosity will be repaid in some form or another.

1.3 Activity 7

Debate

Either debate the topic “The wantok system hinders progress” OR

List the advantages and disadvantages of the wantok system.
**Topic 3 – Cultural adaptation and change**

**How cultures change**

Every culture changes but all parts of a culture do not change at the same time. For example, science and technology may sometimes change so rapidly that they lessen the importance of customs, ideas, and other nonmaterial parts of a culture. At other times, changes in ideas and social systems may occur before changes in technology. A number of factors may cause a culture to change. The two main ones are contact with other cultures and invention.

**Contact with other cultures.** No society is so isolated that it does not come into contact with other societies. When contact occurs, societies borrow cultural traits from one another. As a result, cultural traits and patterns tend to spread from the society in which they originated. This spreading process is called diffusion.

Diffusion can occur without firsthand contact between cultures. Products or patterns may move from group A to group C through group B without any contact between group A and group C. Today, diffusion is rapid and widespread because many cultures of the world are linked through advanced means of transportation and communication.

When two cultures have continuous, firsthand contact with each other, the exchange of cultural traits is called acculturation. Acculturation has often occurred when one culture has colonized or conquered another, or as a result of trade. In addition to adopting each other’s traits, the two cultures may blend traits. For example, if the people of the cultures speak different languages, they may develop a mixed language called pidgin in order to communicate. The cultures may also exchange or blend such traits as clothing, dances, music, recipes, and tools.

**Inventions** have led to many changes in a culture. The invention of agriculture, for example, made it possible for people to settle in farm villages. Their values and social organization changed. They placed importance on using land and animals to produce crops. They began to build permanent housing. They developed systems of irrigation and a number of tools.

The invention of spinning and weaving machines and an improved steam engine in the 1700’s produced another great change in the way people lived. These inventions led to the opening of factories. Many people who had worked at home in rural areas flocked to the cities to work in the new factories. As cities became more crowded, new kinds of political, economic, and social systems developed.

The invention of the electronic computer in the mid-1900’s has had an enormous impact. Computers have brought far-reaching changes in communication, education, entertainment, and numerous other areas of modern life.
Cultural change in PNG

The traditional cultures of Papua New Guinea are changing more rapidly in some areas more than in others. In remote areas, change is still slow but in districts close to major towns, where the presence of plantations has brought much new wealth, the modern goods that make life comfortable are more easily obtained. In these areas, most children go to school and their social lives are influenced by ways of life outside their villages. Young people who leave home to work in distant areas return with many new ideas. Many leave the villages to live permanently in towns.

Old skills and ideas are sometimes lost as new ones are learnt. For example, when many people accepted at least some elements of Christianity, many traditional village ceremonies that had been performed for hundreds of years began to lose their importance.

As families earn money from new crops and from employment, they are able to buy food and other essentials and no longer depend so much on the cooperation of kinsfolk. Money and employment are bringing people into new kinds of relationships that are often less personal in nature. Education has brought to many young people a chance to obtain a good job. Now they are no longer dependent on the support of the elders, whose ways are rooted in traditions. The most widespread result of rapid change is probably the loss of unity of the family and the loss of the feelings of respect for maturity on which that unity depended.

In most cases, the first change brought by Europeans was the banning of all fighting. As peace between villages became more common, people began to move more easily between villages. The rapid growth of general languages such as Pidgin, Hiri Motu, and, more recently, English, has greatly increased the ease with which people can communicate with each other. The majority of people can now read and write and most villages have at least one radio so news travels quickly, and most people hear about other groups of people in the country and new developments in the towns. People are becoming increasingly aware that they belong to a community that is national, not one that is limited to their own local village.

Another major change brought by Europeans was the introduction of money. At first, money was used to pay for work done on plantations but as families began to grow crops for sale, more people began to get cash incomes.
Despite the changes that have come, many people still live in small villages and do not often travel far from home. Rivalries still exist, particularly among older people. Each group still proudly preserves its own customs and language. Many children have no school to go to and have had few opportunities to learn about the people who live in other parts of the country. Many of these small villages are remote and will be difficult to develop. Because of the rough mountains, the main towns are still not joined by a good network of roads.

1.3 Activity 8

Through group discussions, identify ten inventions or other aspects of ‘western culture’ that have had the greatest impact on traditional life. Interview some village elders and see if they agree with your list.

Global culture

Every human society has a culture. People who grow up in the same nation can be said to share a national culture. However, people may also be part of other societies within the nation that have separate cultural traditions.

Social scientists sometimes use the term subculture to describe variations within a culture. Social groups often develop some cultural patterns of their own that set them apart from the larger society. Subcultures may develop in businesses, ethnic groups, occupational groups, regional groups, religious groups, and other groups within a larger culture. For example, Amish people in Pennsylvania, USA, make up a subculture, as do members of a teenage street gang in an Asian city.

Many cultural traits and patterns are limited to a particular culture, but many others are common to more than one culture. Some cultural traits have spread throughout the world. For example, some clothing, music, sports, and industrial processes are the same in many areas of the world. Cultural traditions that extend beyond national boundaries form what is called international culture. International culture often includes such elements as television, radio,
recordings, advertising, sports, hobbies, fads, and fashions. This can also be known as pop culture.

1.3 Activity 9

Identify the aspects of your lifestyle which you have in common with students or young people in other parts of the world.

Survey the class to determine the most popular foods, leisure activities, music and TV programs. Compare your lists with what older people in the community liked at a similar age

Case study - cargo cults

To many New Guineans, the strange ways and mysterious powers of the Europeans could only have derived from supernatural sources. In religious systems where it is necessary to invoke the help of spirits to ensure, for example, a good yam harvest, it is logical that the same principles be applied if you want manufactured goods.

Cult leaders theorised that the Europeans had acquired their machines and wealth from some spirit world and there was no reason why they too could not acquire similar 'cargo'. Some went further and insisted that the Europeans had intercepted cargo that was really intended for the New Guineans, sent to them by their ancestors in the spirit world.

If the right rituals were followed, the cult leaders said, the goods would be redirected to their rightful owners. Accordingly, docks were prepared or crude 'airstrips' laid out for when the cargo arrived. Other leaders felt that if they mimicked European ways, they would soon have European goods - 'Offices' were established in which people passed bits of paper back and forth. However, when locals started to kill their own pigs and destroy their gardens (as a prerequisite for the better days to come), or to demand political rights, the colonial government took a firm stand. Some leaders were imprisoned. However, arresting cult leaders simply confirmed the belief that an attempt was being made to keep goods rightfully belonging to the New Guineans, so some cultists were taken down to Australia to see with their own eyes that the goods did not arrive from the spirit world.

The first recorded cargo cult outbreak was noted in British New Guinea in 1893. A similar occurrence in Dutch New Guinea dates back to 1867. Cargo cult outbreaks have occurred sporadically ever since. One of the largest outbreaks took place in the Gulf area just after WWI. It was known as the Vailata Madness and was considerably spurred on by the arrival of the first aeroplane in the region - as predicted by one of the cult leaders.

The cults took another upswing after WWII, especially in Manus Province, when people witnessed even more stunning examples of western wealth. Seeing black American troops with access to desirable goods had a particularly strong impact.

Some of the cult leaders can be regarded as early nationalists and in several cases the cults developed into important political movements. In Manus Province in 1946, a movement started by Paliau Moloat (called the New Way, or Paliau, Church) was initially put down as
just another cargo cult but Paliau was a clever, if enigmatic, man and went on to live a long life in public office. His movement eventually became seen as one of PNG’s first independence movements and a force for modernisation.

Cargo cults are not just in PNG. They are in other places where Europeans have colonised indigenous cultures, such as in Fiji and New Zealand.

Case study - sport

Traditionally, Papua New Guineans walk, run, cast spears, chop trees, build houses and carry stones and large loads. Their lives depend on physical abilities and their skills as hunters, craftsmen, gardeners and builders.

Males use bows and arrows to hunt for food. To improve their skill, they practise by shooting at things that do not move, such as nuts on trees. To show their accuracy, they set up targets and compete against each other. These competitions are part of sporting and social events in many PNG areas. Urban shows offer money prizes for these sports.

The sea is important to coastal Papua New Guineans. Paddling and sailing canoes are daily routines necessary for fishing and trading. Men and children often race through the water showing their rowing and sailing skills. Organised canoe races are conducted in many villages and towns. A highlight of the Hiri Moale Festival in Port Moresby is the sailing race.

1.3 Activity 10

Although the usual sporting rules have been accepted in PNG, there are some special traditions: Describe some of these traditions eg Trobriands cricket.

Draw up a chart which shows how some village games are played

Interview a young person and a village elder about sport – what sports do they enjoy playing or watching? Why?

Try to explain the interest Papua New Guineans have in Rugby League, especially State of Origin games.

Which sports are most popular in PNG?
Topic 4 – Extension study

1.3 Activity 11

Read the newspaper articles on the following pages. Identify the aspects of traditional and modern culture they relate to. Identify the issues raised by some of the authors. Summarise their opinions. Discuss the issues in small groups. To what extent do you share their concerns?

Discuss the following statement “Custom is always changing. The customs of Papua New Guineans are not those our ancestors lived by before the white man visited this part of the world but they are the customs that apply to us, the present generation. And the customs that apply to the present generation are a mixture of “pasin tumbuna’ and the modern ways.”

Readings

Celebrating birthdays
...and saving for school fees

By FRANCIS TEKEI

Betty celebrated her sixth birthday on Sunday in a Port Moresby settlement. Her father Simon Koia said he has always made it his responsibility to ensure that there is a birthday party for his daughter ever since she was born. But Betty will not be expecting a seventh birthday party. Instead, Koia will save all budgets for parties in an account for his daughter. This is because Betty will go to school next year and Koia wants to ensure she receives a good education.

For Betty’s birthday party on Sunday, her parents spent around K800. All their settlement relatives were on hand to say ‘happy birthday’ to Betty and brought with them a variety of food, fruits and drinks. There were no presents wrapped in fancy packages, no toys, clothes or other items a six-year-old would want. The cake was small, only reserved for the kids, but there was plenty to eat - chicken, vegetables, soft drinks, fruits and much more. There was also joy and togetherness in the faces of the whole extended family originally from Yobakul in Salt-Nomane, Simbu province, now settlers in the city.

Why there was so much to eat falls back to tradition. In Simbu as in all other cultural groups, the family is the community; there is no such thing as a nuclear family in the western definition of the family. Despite the vast changes affecting PNG families, some things never change, such as the extended concept of a family event such as a birthday. Amongst many influences from the West which PNG societies have adopted and accepted, birthdays have become firmly entrenched, especially in modern urban families. Every day is someone’s birthday. On radio ‘Birthday Greetings’ are aired daily. Newspapers allocate a page everyday to birthday messages that are often decorated with colourful words.
Cultural gap

By TIMOTHY KWARA

The presentation of a fana highlights the gap that remains between the traditional and the modern in PNG society. We were invited by Chevron Niugini to attend the handing over ceremony at Erave, one of those underdeveloped areas of Southern Highlands Province, for police and school facilities constructed from the tax credit scheme earned from the Gobe oil project. For the rural dwellers it was an important occasion as they rarely have important visitors to their area.

Not long after the plane landed a group of traditional dancers emerged dancing and chanting to the beats of the Kundu drums. Then some students, girls from the nearby Erave High School, started dancing the hulahula to welcome the guests. For the 48,000 people from the area, the handing over of the K700,000 worth of facilities was a historical event according to many community leaders. It was also seen as the first sign of development since the pre-independence era.

After all the speeches, the community leaders presented a Kina shell and a traditional tapa cloth specially worn by chiefs in the area. The special laplap known as fana was given to the General Manager for external affairs for Chevron Niugini, John Wagambie. The fana and the Kina shell are highly valued in the Erave society and are kept by chiefs who are responsible for the welfare of their people. When the Erave people presented the fana it was a symbolic gesture to show that the company would look after their needs. According to an elder, the person who receives the fana must provide for the needs of his people. The owner of the fana must kill many pigs during feasts and other important occasions.

Certainly the ceremony was an eye-opener to the gap between the traditional and modern society despite the rapid changes taking place among the Erave people.

Entertainment: Village style

By FRANCIS TEKEI

Post Courier 22 March 2000

THESE days when one talks about entertainment, it has to do with discos and social pastimes at nightclubs and hotels at the end of the week. Nightlife in Port Moresby is well and truly alive with a variety of venues, a wide range of activities and an atmosphere of liveliness that keeps the tempo going until well after midnight. But nightlife and entertainment in villages around Port Moresby and along the Papuan coastline are not as dead as some might assume or imagine.

Papuan villages have a long tradition of social entertainment and despite new forms of entertainment, they have maintained their traditional style. There are four clans at Kalo and one of them, Kamoga, staged a social dance for a group of visitors from Port Moresby to the village.

Unlike the deafening noise of metallic drums and ear piercing loud speakers, the Kalo singers harmoniously sang through the night as their women danced with the guests in a pleasant atmosphere of friendship, hospitality and peace. Young men, girls, old men, old women and children all gathered in the clan conference ‘hausen bung’ or meeting hall for the event, which ended around midnight. They sang Ute and Peroveta songs with its gospel lyrics popular throughout the Papuan villages.
Unlike the urban nightclubs, village dancing, at least at Kalo was alcohol free, there was no need for security guards and no poker machines available. But there was a lot of fun, excitement and laughter as the community met to welcome the visitors as part of their clan. Their voices, the drumming, deep voices of the men and the sweet high-pitched voices of the women echoed into a perfect melody that brought harmony into the night sky. It was a perfect choir they had learnt from birth and practiced throughout their lives.

Our culture will live on

Post Courier, Monday July 12, 1999

FOREIGN cultures are fast dominating life in Port Moresby. But as long as there are settlements, not all forms of Melanesian cultures will be lost. This was highlighted two weekends ago when settlers from two Eastern Highlands communities pledged to ensure all their cultural practices were maintained despite the influx of foreign ideas and modern cultural trends. The event also signified the wisdom of communal relationship at a time when economic and social problems are affecting urban communities, particularly those in settlements.

Keremu villagers from Asaro gave K5000 in cash, a pig and other food and other material items to people from Lufa on Saturday. This was for the payment of an eight-year-old child Keryn. The Asaros referred to this in Tok Pisin, as “het pe bilong pikinin’ which was quite a task translating into English. But basically it was a goodwill gesture and present to the relatives of Willie’s wife for their child Keryn in accordance with Asaro tradition. The gift, a customary obligation, is not to be repaid in any way unlike other cultural events such as bride price ceremonies, funerals or food exchanges.

By tradition it is obligatory for an Asaro man to pay the uncles of one’s child or children to show one appreciated being married to a member of their clan. It also was a sign of manhood and a symbol of one’s social standing in society. “Paying bride price alone is not enough,” said Willie. “I have to pay my wife’s brothers and relatives for our children. In this way I show my appreciation of her and her relatives and earn respect and honour.

For onlookers, the greatest message was the continuation of one form of two Papua New Guinean groups’ cultural obligation in a growing urban environment. Western ideas such as the concept of individualism, competition and modern trends in fashion have transformed the cultural habits of many city residents. But as one witness to the aged-old Melanesian tradition said: "As long as we have settlements in Port Moresby, our cultures will never die."
‘PAPUA New Guinea is blessed with a rich diversity of cultural traditions expressed in more than 700 languages, and a multitude of ceremonies, rituals, songs, dances, carvings and bodies of knowledge. Unfortunately, these rich traditions are rapidly changing, and are being destroyed and eroded through rapid change, neglect and merchandisation.’ This is the forward to the book “Pasin Bilong Mipela (Our Way) - A Sogeri Publication - which was first published in 1991. The forward was written by Soroi Eoe, Director of the National Museum and Art Gallery.

This lament sounds true to this day. Evidence of the rapid erosion of culture and staining by external influences are seen in all that has to do with culture. Of particular concern are the dances and the songs together with all that goes with them like body decorations, paintings and costumes.

The Port Moresby Show and many other similar events are occasions where such explicit staining of culture, especially in traditional costumes, body decorations and patterns of dances can be observed. In this year’s Port Moresby Show, such cases were very obvious. There were cases where costumes were modified or altered or costumes traditionally belonging to other tribes and groups were incorporated into another's dance and songs –

* Simbu women wearing tapa cloths, when tapa cloths originally belong to the Orokaivans of the Northern Province.

* One group at the Moitaka Show were spotted carrying empty beer cans to substitute for kundu drums.

* Others wore heavy workman boots disguised by mud paintings and others wore big, dark sunglasses.

* One group of women from the Chimbu Province were singing songs in Tok Pisin.

Only a few groups showed the true values of their tradition, like the Tari dancers. Another was the Koriki Tribal Dancing Group from the Koriki Tribe of the Baimuru area, Gulf Province. Though they did not win an award, they proudly displayed a truly authentic Koriki warrior and war dance in its original and accepted manner. The dancers were all dressed in traditional costumes - the women wore grass skirts woven from young sago leaves and shoots from the nipa and coconut palm were carefully woven and worn on the arms and around the head and each held croton leaves. They danced around the men in jubilation because the men have just returned from a successful tribal warfare. The leaves are a sign of joy and happiness.

One reason attributed to this downward trend of abuse of culture is related to the many cases where competitions are held between singsing groups. In order to add colour and glamour to their dances and body decorations, dancers season their body decorations or alter costumes to make their feat look bright and colourful so that they might win a prize.
The betelnut, which comes in different sizes varying from a walnut to a small orange, grows well only in the tropical climate and is reminiscent of a palm tree. When chewed the nut is spiked with a piece of a fruit called mustard or a mustard leaf, and a dab of lime (calcium oxide) which produces that familiar red substance in the mouth. The result stimulates digestion and gives chewers a kick that is mild when compared to alcohol or illegal drugs like marijuana and cocaine.

In Papua New Guinea today this crop has become the staple within the informal sector of the country's economy as the major source of cash income for ordinary people. Like other fresh garden crops, vegetables, and livestock, it is sold and bought in the markets, along the streets, and at roadside stalls.

Government authorities have long been trying to put some restrictions on the use of betel nut, and the conduct of those who chew it. The staining of street pavements by residue from the betelnut and the litter created by this item has always been a problem and of concern to both city and health authorities. But the fact is that it will always be quite impossible for any authorities to really discourage the purchase and chewing of the nut, let alone rid our society of its use.

One clear reason is because the betelnut is part of people's livelihood and evolves within the culture. Be it the top brass in government circles, the police themselves, Defence Force officers and men, lawyers, teachers, doctors, or the cleaner in the office - people from every walk of life seem to chew at one time or another. Many individuals and families in towns and cities depend for their livelihood on betelnut as a source of income. Marketed with energy, the little green nut can provide a decent meal, pay school fees, supply bus fares and lunch money, and even clothing and medical fees.

And traditionally in a Melanesian society the production and use of betelnut is an integral part of custom and culture and is a part of both the people's daily activities and special festivities. Whenever people meet and talk, betelnut is shared. It is chewed when fishing, hunting, and gardening. And by chewing betelnut social discords are harmonised, problems resolved and peace made. The nut is the token of friendship.

In the war against the betelnut, health authorities use one common description in a bid to discourage chewers. Betelnut is "a health hazard" and it causes mouth cancer. While definite statistics to quantify what percentage of mouth cancer is caused by betelnut chewing have yet to be compiled, health authorities believe that the nut is significantly responsible for numerous oral diseases. The research so far reveals that the act of chewing betelnut fibre creates friction and irritation to the lining of the mouth which accelerates harmful chemical reactions causing mouth cancer. Despite the health hazard, it seems unquestionable that the little green god will remain a vital social icon in Melanesia for generations to come.
Polygamy and inheritance rights

*The National 27 October 1999*

By JOHN NONGGORR

"My name is Ken. My father married three women including my mother. My mother got married to my father first. They married when they were both young. When my mother gave birth to her first and second born, my father got married to a second wife and then a third." There are 14 children in Ken's family. "The problem is that we are all arguing over our father's land and other properties."

These are problems faced by children in most families in which a man has married more than one wife. In many such situations, the wives remain each other's enemies throughout their married lives. Often, children take sides with their mothers, and half brothers and sisters become hostile to each other. And, in most cases as well, the father favours one wife over others in providing companionship and distributing goods and other property. In such cases, the father would normally favour the children of the wife he favours. Where there are many wives, the least favoured and her children may be neglected. Ken, who wrote the letter, seems to have fallen into the latter category.

The law of inheritance says that a Papua New Guinean can make a will. If a will exists, the properties belonging to that person must be distributed to the people stated in the will, except for customary land. If a Papua New Guinean has not made a will, the property belonging that person, when he/she dies will go according to the customary rules of the person. Under the PNG Constitution, custom has been preserved and recognised. The bulk of the population of PNG still live in their rural communities, and they live by their customs. Marriage and inheritance laws are examples where the Constitution accepts that customary rules must apply.

The problem is that in the areas or parts of PNG where modern influences, such as Christianity and western education and way of living has had major influence, it is difficult to figure out what the customs are on any particular thing. Some people would argue that the customs are those rules and ways of doing things, which are truly, and traditionally Papua New Guinean. Or, in Pidgin, they are "pasin bilong tumbuna." They will say that the Christian and western education influence and ways are not custom because they are not "pasin tumbuna!"

But, others will say that custom means "pasin tumbuna' and the new ways. Custom is always changing and that the customs of Papua New Guineans are not those our ancestors lived by before the white man visited this part of the world but they are the customs that apply to us, the present generation. And the customs that apply to the present generation are a mixture of "pasin tumbuna' and the modern ways. Polygamy is common in the Highlands and there exist rules that differ from area to area. Normally, when a father is living, the father decides what land which wife should cultivate. The land that the wife cultivates will go to that wife's sons. If the father owns land that has not been cultivated by any of his wives, that land will go to whichever son the father chooses. In relation to other property, while the father is living, the property will be treated as belonging to the wife (and children) whom the father had acquired the property with. If, for example, the father had raised a pig or got in exchange some other item with one wife, it is regarded as belonging to that wife and her children. Any property that is acquired solely by the father will go to whomever he wants to it give to. Upon the father's death most land and properly will go according to the same rules, except that in relation to land that has not been cultivated by any of the wives and if such land had not been
given to a particular son by the father when he was living, such land would go to the eldest son in the family. This is not always the case. There may be many variations.

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