

The VITAL update from Dannii

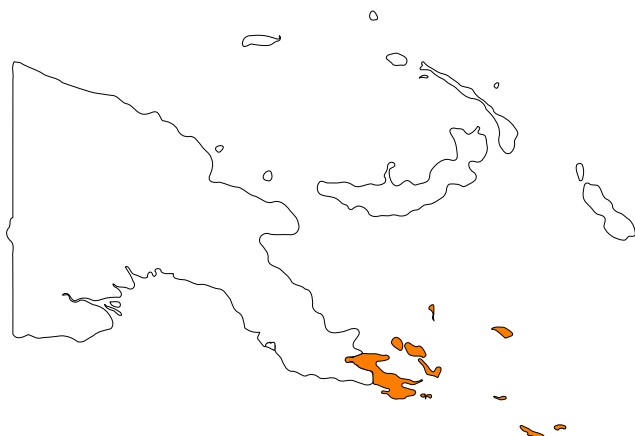
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Hello!

Last year I graduated from uni after finishing my honours degree in linguistics (the study of how languages work). In August this year I'll be moving overseas for an internship, and because that's going to be a fairly big thing for me, I'll be writing newsletters! This first one just says a little about the project I'll be joining.

I'll be moving to PNG for seven months to work with the VITAL project, which of course is what this newsletter is named after. VITAL stands for the Vernacular Initiative for Translation and Literacy, which means that the project was initiated and is driven by the local people. VITAL's main activity is running three translation and literacy workshops each year, each of which go for a month (starting on the first of the month, whatever day that is!) Up to fifteen languages from Milne Bay Province participate in these workshops.



Milne Bay Province consists of a portion of the mainland and many small islands in the surrounding seas. Many of VITAL's participants come from these islands so VITAL has its own boat to ensure they can make it to the workshops.

VITAL focuses on translating the Bible into these languages, however it also develops other language resources and trains literacy workers (who will then be able to teach others to read when they return home). You can find out more about VITAL at its home

page (<http://bit.ly/vitalhome>), read its most recent news update (<http://bit.ly/vitalapr11>), watch a YouTube video (<http://bit.ly/vitalyoutube>) and you can even follow it on Facebook (<http://bit.ly/vitalfb>)!

To prepare for my internship, at the beginning of the year I attended EQUIP Training's Summer School, in outer Melbourne. Most languages in the world aren't taught in language schools, so EQUIP focuses on training people to learn languages by meeting individually with speakers of those languages. As practice, during the six weeks of Summer School I learnt the basics of Macedonian! (To any linguists reading this: it was interesting to experience a language which marks evidentiality!) I also really enjoyed studying types of cultures in Anthropology. Most of us who enrolled in the school lived on site, and I was excited to learn a few of the others were avid board gamers! While I was there I also took the chance to visit my grandparents a few times, who I don't get to see very regularly.



My EQUIP graduation

During my internship I will make it to two of VITAL's workshops where I'll use my own linguistics training to help train the workshop participants in translation skills, and assist them in whatever else they need help with. Between the workshops I also will travel to a remote village for a couple of weeks to do linguistics field work.

I'm excited about going, and I hope I'll be able to write regularly (except when I'm in the remote village)!

-Dannii