

# How My Life Goes On

by

**Raymond Hiraya**

I would like to tell you about my situation and how my life goes on.

Firstly, I would like to introduce myself. I am Raymond Hiraya and I am from the Southern Highlands Province, Tari District, Koroba Village. This place is Pandu, Papua New Guinea.

The situation and my life in my home place was almost alright, but there were some bad things happening like killings and fighting. People from different villages were always fighting. Life was very difficult to live there.

Me and four friends decided to travel on a journey to find a better life and better education, so we struggled hard to travel to other towns and cities. On our travels life was very difficult too. We were climbing mountains, crossing rivers, going down very steep valleys and we crossed many swamps. It was a very hard journey just to get to Tari. This journey took one whole day.

From Tari it was okay because PMV's and busses went back and forth from Lae and there was also an air strip. We did not catch an airplane. We got a PMV from Tari to Lae. The PMV ride to Lae took two days and it cost each person K50.00 to make this journey. When we got to Lae we slept one night with relatives.

The next morning we went to the *Stop & Shop*. We bought biscuits, travelling bags, some drinks and also one bush knife each. When we started our journey from Tari we had about K150 each.

We wanted to get to Port Moresby. But we were newcomers to Kokoda and we were given directions from some local people who live at Kokoda

to travel to Popondetta. We did not know how to get to Popondetta. Some locals from Kokoda gave us directions on how to walk there. The journey was very difficult.\* There were very big mountains that we had to climb and we had to cross many rivers and also go into some very steep valleys. It took us two days of walking and at night we slept in a cave.

We arrived in Popondetta and then we each paid K20 to get a PMV to Port Moresby.

I have now been living in 8 Mile Settlement for one year. The journey I told you about happened in 2008. Life in Port Moresby is too difficult, because to live in Moresby everything depends on money. So a person such as me finds it too hard to get the money I need for school fees. In 2007 I did Grade Ten, but here in Moresby I can not get any education because some times it costs K1000 or K2000 to pay for the fees. Therefore I have to struggle hard for here it is survival of the fittest.

This is the difference between living in Port Moresby and living in my Southern Highlands Province homeland. Now I am looking for some money so I can go back home to Southern Highlands. I don't want to stay there either but I want to move back and forth between here and there.

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*\*In 2007 Cyclone Guba wreaked destruction in Oro Province and Central Province. The area between Kokoda and Popondetta was heavily affected by the cyclone. Many people were killed and many homes and bridges were destroyed. There are many river crossings between Kokoda and Popondetta, and at the time of Raymond's journey, most of the bridges crossing these rivers were destroyed or washed away. Most of the bridges would have been impassable. The rivers in this area are immensely strong and it is very dangerous to cross them. The power of these rivers can wash people away in a matter of seconds.*

*Still two years after the cyclone, the area between Popondetta and Kokoda has not been repaired.*