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| **refs itemname** | Thesis |
| **Bibliography** | Vile, Joseph (2013) Coping with drought and frost: famine foods and migration during the 1997-98 El Nino event in rural Papua New Guinea68, Australian National University, Canberra |
| **Associated conference** |  |
| **Abstract / Content summary** | The thesis investigates the responses of people in rural Papua New Guinea (PNG) to widespread and severe drought and frost in 1997 and 1998. With over 80% of its population living as semi-subsistence farmers and a recorded history of extreme climate events, analysis of responses to previous climate variability may provide useful insights for planning future adaptation strategies in PNG. The research design incorporated multi-disciplinary vulnerability and sustainable livelihood frameworks, along with a review of relevant literature. Secondary survey data were analysed using a mixed-methods research approach to produce trends of famine food consumption, migration and alternative coping strategies. These strategies are identified as key responses to extreme climatic events in PNG. Famine foods are defined as plant or animal products that are eaten during periods of environmental stress, and migration is defined as temporary or permanent relocation. The use of famine foods and migration as adaptation strategies are analysed using the available information on social and environmental factors. This project finds that the coping strategies employed by rural Papua New Guineans during drought and frost in 1997-1998 had strong associations with their economic status and biophysical environment. Overall, the rural population widely adopted the strategy of consuming famine foods and many employed alternative livelihood strategies to obtain access to food. People with low and moderate incomes were more likely to migrate that those earning high incomes. In highland and high altitude areas, there were found to be lower rates of migration, hunting and use of alternative livelihood strategies. This appears to relate to the higher population density in these areas. Remittances payments are identified as an important mitigation strategy to environmental stress in PNG, and quantitative evidence of the sharp increase in these payments in 1997 in presented. The results show that coping strategies available to rural Papua New Guineans are strongly determined by their environmental, economic and social context. The important implication of this is that any changes in these conditions may alter the uptake and success of coping and adaptation strategies to future extreme weather events. This project has created a database for future use in more detailed and diverse research on the 1997-1998 crisis, and the coping and adaptation responses used by the rural communities of PNG. Future research is recommended to focus on coping strategies and their outcomes following drought and frost crises [Original abstract] |
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