

# West Morehead Area Profile

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Scattered over low, flat land in the far southwest of Papua New Guinea, roughly 4,500 people living in 30 villages and hamlets make up the West Morehead community. Vast grasslands interlace with stretches of forest between the town of Morehead in the east and the Indonesian border in the west. This beautiful land is rich in wildlife and distinctive for its forests, which are two-toned by the watermark of seasonal flooding. Wild game is plentiful and a valuable source of income for the people that live here.

Much of the area is flooded from January to June, but in the dry season, it is possible for residents to travel on foot, by bicycle or on motorbikes. Ease of travel facilitates a community-wide sense of solidarity and familiarity. The many different languages are related and people find it easy to learn one another's and often learn three or four different ones.

Every village has at least one church, and some concerns are shared by pastors and members across denominations in the area. One concern is that there is no place for people to buy Bibles. The church leaders who have Bibles have to rely on English translations. Only one language in the area has a translation but the Arammba New Testament has not yet been published. Sadly, Arammba is hardest to understand for speakers of the other languages in the area. Although English is used in the area and taught in schools, most people's English ability prevents them from understanding English Bibles.

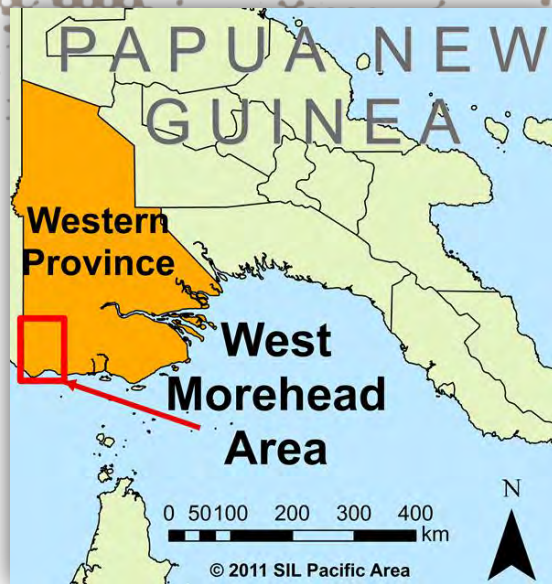
Church members find it easy to fear the power of sorcerers, whom they know about, but hard to trust the power of God, whom they don't feel they know well. Pastors say that it is hard to help people know the power of Christ in their daily lives.

Recently, mobile phone towers were constructed in the area and many leaders are excited about the prospects of West Morehead being less isolated in the future than it has been in the past.

*Mary proudly shows the first ever book in her native language of Guntai. SIL helped her develop the alphabet guide in a 2002 workshop.*



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## Pray:

- For workers to help volunteers like Mary (pic. on left) to continue to produce language materials
- For unity, grace and forgiveness between church denominations
- That people would truly know freedom from the fear of sorcery
- That resources, particularly people, would be provided for a project to involve all the communities in Bible translation
- For a deeper hunger to know Jesus and his power

