

## The Ulau-Suain of Papua New Guinea



The speakers of Ulau-Suain live in the villages of Ulau, Suain and Tawak. Ulau and Suain are located on the Sepik coast and Tawak is located a little way inland. Ulau and Suain are broken into many smaller hamlets, with people living in clan groups.

People collect building materials for their houses from their own land, having ready access to sago palms, bamboo and other building materials. Most houses are built on stilts. There are now some semi-permanent houses with corrugated iron roofs.

People in the Ulau-Suain area mainly eat sago, made by processing pith of the sago palm. Sago can be cooked in a variety of different ways, the most common of which is to mix it with hot water and form small balls with a jelly-like consistency. People also have gardens where they grow fruit, greens and assorted tubers.

The Catholic Church was the first denomination to evangelize the Ulau-Suain area. They did some work before World War 2, but did not become really established until after the war. They started the two primary schools in the area. Most people would still claim affiliation to the Catholic Church although, since the 1970s, other denominations have started churches in the area.

A language shift is underway in the area. Most children only use Tok Pisin and cannot speak Ulau-Suain.

**Primary Religion:**

Christianity

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**

Less than 30%

**Churches:**

9

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**

None

**Population (date):**

2796 (2000)



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### Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian Comment	99% The vast majority of people would call themselves Christian.
Believe In Jesus As God And Only Savior	30% of the population are reported to regularly attend church. The percentage of true believers is probably less than that.
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is	0%
Is The Word Of God Translated?	The Bible is not translated into Ulau-Suain. However, there is language shift underway and people are using more Tok Pisin than Ulau-Suain. The whole Bible is available in Tok Pisin.
Forms of Gospel Presentations Available	Christian radio programs can be heard in both Tok Pisin and English. There is literature available in Tok Pisin and English as well as audio recordings and The Jesus Film.

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### Group Description

#### Geography & Environment

The villages of Ulau and Suain are located next to the sea. Tawak is located a short distance inland.

#### Literacy

Adult Literacy Percentage

74

Percent Literate for Men

79%

Percent Literate for Women

68%

Active Literacy Program

Yes

Comment

There are elementary schools (up to grade two) in Ulau which are using some Ulau-Suain. However, they are using mainly Tok Pisin as the children do not really understand Ulau-Suain.

#### Economics

Subsistence Type

Swidden agriculturalists

Occupation

Subsistence economy.

Income Sources

Their main source of income is cacao. People also sell garden produce, fish and other meat at local markets.

Trade Partners

Trade was traditionally held with the Kap islands and Tumleo Island, exchanging sago for fish and clay pots. In Tawak trade was also done with Drekikier (Urat language area), trading dogs (for hunting) for pots and tobacco.

#### Community Development

Health Care

Fair

Comment

There is an aid post at Suain and a health center at Ulau. However, there is sometimes a shortage of medicine. The nearest hospital is in Aitape, around 40 kilometers away.

Diet

Fair

Comment

The people have adequate land for gardens. They also harvest sago. They generally have enough food, but there is a shortage of protein in their diet.

Water

Fair

Comment

There is a project underway to construct a water supply to Suain village.

Shelter Description

People collect building materials for their houses from their own land, having ready access to sago palms, bamboo and other building materials. Most houses are built on built on stilts. There are now some semi-permanent houses with roofing iron.

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Electricity	A few houses have generators.
Clothing	Second-hand, western style
Transportation	Walking, sea-going canoes, PMVs (public motor vehicles), dinghies.
<b><u>Society and Culture</u></b>	
Social Habit/Groupings	The people live in three main villages. However, these large villages are broken down into smaller hamlets, generally along clan lines.
Identification With National Culture	Similar
Self-image	Neutral
<b><u>Education</u></b>	
Primary Schools	7
Comment	2 primary schools (up to grade 8), 1 Community School (up to grade 6), 4 Elementary Schools (up to grade 2)
Teachers	25
Comment	Four elementary school teachers, the others are primary school teachers.
Language of Instruction Early Years	Tok Pisin [tpi], Ulau-Suain [svb], English [eng].
Language of Textbooks Early Years	English [eng], Tok Pisin [tpi].
Language of Instruction Later Years	English [eng]
Language of Textbooks Later Years	English [eng]
Number of School Greater than 90% Homogeneous	7

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### Status of Christianity

#### Response To The Gospel

Attitude to Religious Change                      Somewhat receptive

#### Church Growth

Total Baptized    2500

Comment    The majority of people have been baptized in the Catholic church.

Christian Literacy Centers                              The elementary and primary schools are Catholic agency schools.

Number of Pastors    12

Comment    6 New Apostolic Church priests, 1 CBC pastor, 2 Revival Centers of PNG pastors, 3 SSEC pastors

Number of Missionaries                                      5

Comment    5 nationals: 2 Catholic priests and 3 Catholic sisters

Number Of Churches    9

Comment    2 Catholic, 2 Revival Centers of PNG, 3 SSEC, 1 Christian Brethren Church, 1 New Apostolic Church. Most people attend one of the Catholic churches; the other denominations are smaller.

Number of Communities                                      3

Comment    There are three major population centers: Ulau, Suain and Tawak. However, they are split up into many small hamlets, mainly based on clan groupings.

History of Christianity, Year Began                      1900s

History of Christianity by Whom                              German Catholic Church

Significant Event in Church History                      German missionaries from the Catholic church did some work in both Ulau and Suain before World War Two. However, the work had not become well established when the war began. After the war an Australian Franciscan monk began a school in Ulau and was in charge of a mission station there. In 1965 an Australian Catholic missionary became based in Suain and established work there. Other denominations came to the area later.

#### Religious Population

Religion #1    Other/small

Percent of Adherents    1%

Comment    Five families are members of the Jehovah Witness.

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### Scripture Use

Comment

As people are shifting towards using Tok Pisin rather than Ulau-Suain there is no need for translation in Ulau-Suain as the whole Bible already exists in Tok Pisin..

### Missions and Church

#### Organization #1

Main Ministry

Roman Catholic Church

Year Started

Church

Number of Adherents

1900s

Comment

2000

The majority of people are members of the Catholic Church. .

Number of Congregations

2

Number of National Workers

5

#### Organization #2

Main Ministry

South Seas Evangelical Church

Year Started

Church

Number of Adherents

1975

Comment

180

Around 180 members. There may be others who would claim affiliation with SSEC.

Number of Congregations

3

Number of Local Workers Using  
the Local Language

3

Language Used

The workers use more Tok Pisin [tpi] than Ulau-Suain, even outside of church services.

#### Organization #3

Country of Origin

Revival Centers of Papua New Guinea

Main Ministry

Papua New Guinea

Year Started

Church

Number of Adherents

1989

Comment

145

More people attend church services than this figure.

Number of Congregations

2

Number of Local Workers

2

Language Used

Both workers use mainly Tok Pisin [tpi] in church services. One worker uses more Ulau-Suain [svb] than Tok Pisin outside of services, the other uses more Tok Pisin.

#### Organization #4

Main Ministry

Christian Brethren Church

Year Started

Church

Number of Adherents

1980

Number of Congregations

70

Number of Local Workers

1

Language Used

1

The worker uses mainly Tok Pisin [tpi] both in and out of services.

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Organization #5	New Apostolic Church
Country of Origin	Canada
Main Ministry	Church
Year Started	1982
Number of Adherents	200
Number of Congregations	1
Number of Local Workers	6
Language Used	Workers use mainly Tok Pisin [tpi] both in and out of services.