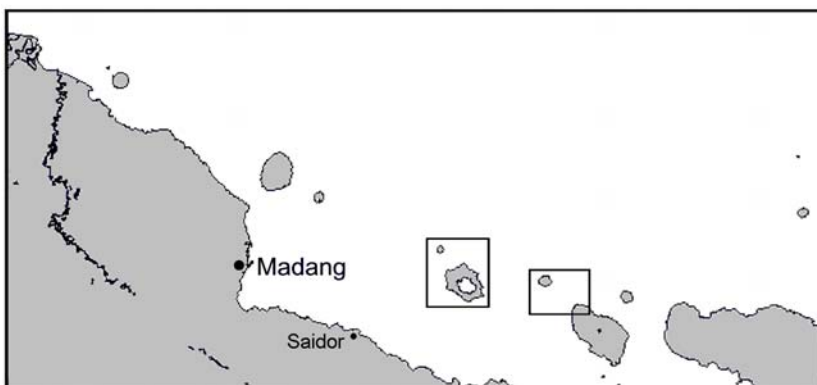


## Writers' Workshop Report Arop-Lokep Language October 2003

By Louise Brook and Jeff and Sissie D'Jernes

This is a report of a Writers' Workshop held at Bara Village, Long Island in October 2003. Long Island is under the jurisdiction of Saidor district, Madang Province. There are about 1900 people who live on Long Island and they speak the Arop dialect of the Arop-Lokep language.



Map 1: Arop-Lokep Language Area, Madang Province

### Logistical Information

Two previous Writers' Workshops have been conducted in this dialect. Both of them took place in 1999, one in Matapun village and the other at Bunu Village. Their success prompted the communities of other villages in the language group to offer open invitations to SIL workers, Jeff and Sissie D'Jernes, to come and do Writers' Workshops in their villages (a total of six villages in this dialect). In

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[Jeff and Sissie D'Jernes are translators who have been working in the Arop-Lokep Language since 1987.

Louise Brook was a GRIP student working in literacy with the D'Jernes' in 2003.]

response to this, a workshop was planned and taught at Bara village, from 27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> October 2003.

The course was held between the two main settlements of the village (referred to locally as Bara 1 and Bara 2) in a meeting house made available by the Lutheran Church. The Arop dialect of the Arop-Lokep language is spoken in Bara village and this is the dialect in which the course was taught.

The community provided accommodation for the course facilitators. Participants were all residents of Bara village or close by. A total of 35 adults attended this workshop. Since most of the participants were from Bara village, they provided their own accommodation and food. There was no charge to attend the course and, thanks to a grant from Wycliffe Bible Translators USA, each participant received a free copy of the t

**Map 2: Villages of Long Island.**

### List of Facilitators

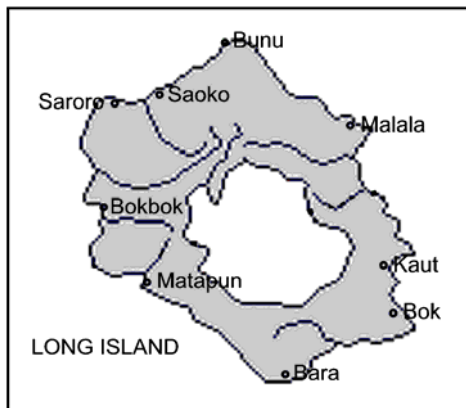
The facilitators at this workshop were:  
 Joe Ande (SIL National Translator, Bun  
 Peter Ezekial (Matapun Village)  
 Jeff and Sissie D'Jernes (SIL Translator  
 Mary Raymond (SIL GRIP – Linguistic  
 Louise Brook (SIL GRIP – Literacy).

### Type and Purpose of Workshop

The workshop was essentially a tra  
 Bara village to transfer their literacy sk  
 addition we did some (unplanned) first time vernacular literacy work with children.

The aims of the workshop were:

1. To work in a new part of the language area in order to:
  - a. expose more adults to the issues surrounding writing in their vernacular



- b. screen potential personnel for future literacy / translation roles
  - c. raise awareness of the work being done by SIL workers in the Arop-Lokep language-group.
2. To trial a modification to the orthography. The orthography developed for Arop-Lokep has so far differentiated between the two 'o' vowels<sup>1</sup> in the language. Although this causes few problems for readers, differentiating the vowels consistently has proven difficult, even for experienced writers. At this workshop we presented an under-differentiated orthography (one symbol for the two 'o' sounds) in order to assess its effect on reading and writing.
  3. To gather more vernacular stories, and from them, produce more books.

On the first morning of teaching it became apparent that many of the children in the community were interested in the course, but could not take part as their literacy level was too low. There has never been a school in Bara village, and the nearest school, at Matapun village, has not been in session consistently for four years. Therefore additional aims of the workshop became:

4. To expose children to the vernacular alphabet, helping them develop fine motor control, letter formation and sound-symbol correlation skills.
5. To encourage children to continue practising these skills after the Writers' Workshop.

## Workshop Timetable

This was a one week workshop with sessions being held in both mornings and afternoons. (*See end of report for actual timetable.*)

## Workshop Content

Each day was started with devotions using vernacular Scripture. In the morning teaching sessions we covered the following topics:

- \* revision of letter formation
- \* discussion of differences between the Tok Pisin and vernacular alphabets,
- \* advice and discussion about spelling (particularly relating to word-breaks and vowel clusters)
- \* presentation of punctuation marks, when and how to use them

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<sup>1</sup> Both the close-mid and open-mid back rounded vowels are phonemes in Arop-Lokep, represented by the symbols 'oo' and 'o' respectively in the differentiated orthography.

- \* class exercises in punctuation
- \* discussion of what makes an interesting story
- \* reading stories aloud to fellow-participants and the facilitators.

During the afternoon and evening, participants were released to work on the assignments set in the morning session. Our two national facilitators, Joe Ande and Peter Ezekiel were available to help participants with spelling and to edit their work.

## List of Titles Produced

All the stories written in this workshop were compiled into two books:

<i>Animals of Long Island</i>	50 copies
<i>Stories from Bara Writers' Workshop, 2003</i>	40 copies

Both titles were produced after the workshop by silk-screen and Gestetner at Matapun village, Long Island.

## Conclusion

This workshop was successful since all the aims were met. The participants were very enthusiastic. They put a lot of effort into the course and began to grapple with reading and writing their own language. We heard many comments that indicated they understood the concepts and were beginning to see where the difficulties lay. The workshop was great PR because the people caught a new vision for literacy and translation in their own language.

We were also able to identify at least two individuals who would make a great contribution to the work, one possibly in literacy and one with terrific organisational skills who could help as part of the translation team.

It was encouraging to see our newest assistant, in training as a translation checker, practise his skills as he led group discussions and activities.

The trial on the modification to the orthography showed that people can learn to read equally as well when the /oo/ is not differentiated from the /o/ as they do when taught to recognise the difference between the two symbols. This is mainly because of their understanding of what vocabulary item to expect in a given sentence. However, due to the fact that there are some minimal pairs equally valid in a given context and we need to have the differentiation clear when reading unknown vocabulary, we plan to keep the orthographic distinction of the two vowels at the present time.✍

## Writers' Workshop Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Devotion	Devotion	Devotion	Devotion
Facilitators travel to Bara Village	<p>Presentation: differences between Tok Pisin and Arop alphabets. Modelling and practising of letter formation</p> <p>Morning Break</p>	<p>Revision of spelling Presentation: Punctuation marks, question marks and when to use them</p> <p>Morning Break</p>	<p>Reading Practice: Participants read aloud their assignment 2 stories</p> <p>Morning Break</p>	<p>Reading Practice: Participants read aloud their stories from Assignment 3</p> <p>Morning Break</p>
Opening Ceremony	<p>Discussion: spelling issues arising from the orthography.</p> <p>Assignment 2: Write a personal experience story about the first time you did something</p>	<p>Presentation: What makes an interesting story? (descriptive words, direct speech, surprise, humour)</p> <p>Morning Break</p>	<p>Revision of spelling and punctuation with classwork example. Assignment 3: Write a longer story of your choice (personal experience or ancestor story)</p> <p>Morning Break</p>	<p>More reading practice</p>
Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
<p>Devotions, Course opening, Presentation: Why write in Tokples?</p> <p>Assignment 1: In groups of 5/6 produce a short informative story and a picture of an animal that lives on Long Island</p>	<p>Participants are free to work on Assignment 2</p>	<p>Participants are free to work on Assignment 2</p>	<p>Participants are free to work on Assignment 3</p>	<p>Bung kai and singing to celebrate end of course</p>