Dr Pyone Myat Thu
Research Associate
School of Anatomy, Physiology & Human Biology
The University of Western Australia

Negotiating Displacement: Access to Land and Livelihoods in Post-Conflict Timor-Leste

Tuesday 26 May, 2015 at 1.00pm
Room 1.81, Anatomy, Physiology & Human Biology Building North
The University of Western Australia (off Hackett Entrance No. 2)

The Seminar: Population displacement is a salient and recursive social phenomenon characterising the young nation-state of Timor-Leste. This paper concentrates on the twenty five years of Indonesian rule, which marks the most widespread and intensive waves of displacement and dispossession in Timor-Leste’s turbulent past. Drawing on ethnographic data, local accounts of forced resettlement as experienced in two communities in the central highlands of Same, and on the eastern coast of Laga will be discussed. It examines how these residents creatively mobilised available resources at hand to rebuild livelihoods. National independence brought with it the possibility of return to ancestral settlements. Nonetheless, the majority of settlers are reluctant to return permanently due to long term acculturation to the resettlement areas. To reconcile with the notion of return, settlers have come to lead multi-local livelihoods.

The Speaker: Dr Pyone Myat Thu joined the School of Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology (APHB) in November 2014 as a Research Associate on an ARC funded project that examines the socio-ecological influences on children’s growth in Rural Timor-Leste (led by Associate Professor Debra Judge). In particular, Pyone is working on patterns of child fosterage and growth outcomes. Prior to joining APHB, Pyone was a Research Fellow at the Australian National University. In this seminar, she will present previous research she has carried out in Timor-Leste, and briefly highlight the new research she is focused on.