



# VOICES FROM APLIM APOM

MIN FESTIVAL OF ARTS & CULTURE STAR MOUNTAIN REGENCY

NGALUM OK FESTIVAL OF ARTS & CULTURE: OKSINGSING 2017



Etol, District Tarup



Yimne



Yambir



Oksang, Oksingsing

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  - Yimne District Alempom
  - Yambir District Seram

**The 1st ever Festival of Arts & Culture held in Oksibil Star Mountain Regency: 11th—14th September, 2017**

# VOICES FROM APLIM APOM

## MIN FESTIVAL OF ARTS & CULTURE STAR MOUNTAIN REGENCY

### FESTIVAL BUDAYA URKALUM: OKSINGSING 2017



**C**ulture is an intrinsic part of a society everywhere. When one talks about a certain culture one actually talks about the life of that particular people in that particular society. Culture is a way of life of a particular society that cannot be separated from that society's people.

UKALUM is a combination of clans and sub-clans that united to form a single cultural grouping within the Star Mountain regency in the highlands of West Papua. The people are part of the Min Tribe sharing the same cultural affinity with the Min people of Western and Sandaun provinces of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. The Min people share common cultures such as penis-guard and grass-skirt dressing and the common ways of doing initiation, 'Haus man' or 'Bokam'.

The people of Min display a distinct way of life from other inland people due to the fact that the people in the region

practiced the same method of gardening, hunting, dancing, and other ceremonies that distinguished them from other inland people.

These activities are not here anymore in the Star Mountains. The people are slowly losing their grip on their culture due to long years of slow motion cultural genocide being done to the people by the colonial government of Indonesia.

Over the last 40 years since 1977 the people of Kasipka rebelled and fought against the Indonesian rule that resulted in the abandonment of their culture since then.

Under the Autonomy law 21 of 2001 it allows the people to practice their culture. The people are at the moment returning slowly from their places of refuge in the jungles to settle and practice their village life.

Mini arts festival is one of their yearly program that they have initiated to reactivate their dying culture.

#### The 1st ever Festival of Arts & Culture held in Oksibil Star Mountain Regency: 11th—14 September, 2017

It is of course an important event for the people of Ngalum in Oksibil Star Mountain Regency. For the first time, people have to display their culture in public and publicly organize a festival from 11th to the 14th of September, 2017.

The festival united the people together and many felt a bond of brotherhood in their own ways

that words cannot describe.

The festival will become an annual event to reactivate the dying culture of the Min Tribe according to the Urkalum Cultural Group.

Four dancing groups are involved at this festival namely Oksang, Etol, Yambir and Yimne from the four districts of the regency.



**Above:** Elders from Kasipka tribe (from left) Marsel Wayam, Kakyarmabin, ——— and Eddie Uropkulin.

**Bellow:** Cultural representatives from the four districts displaying their traditional dressing.



### Public awareness in Oksibil town



# OKSANG KASIPKA

*The beliefs behind Oksang*



## The Myth behind Oksang

**O**ksang is the local name given to the famous traditional dance from the Sibil valley Star Mountain Regency. It is traditionally designed to dance inside the house specially built for the occasion locally known as the 'Oksangabip'.

Oksang is mostly favored by the people throughout the regency because of its cultural significance. From initiation to dancing carries a lot of beliefs and mysteries in the minds of 'wanangkortena' women and children. Oksang was originated from the 'Kasipka' tribe. Clans in the Kasipka tribe holds certain ceremonial rites in the preparation and building of 'Oksang.abip'

Common beliefs that Oksang brings when organized were that; it enables the growth of ('Om-Kang' 'kaka wanang kor tena') pigs as well as human beings, it also enables good harvest and prepares the soil for the next planting season.

It also brings peace and harmony amongst the tribes and allows marriage and paying of bride price ceremonies to flourish in the communities. It's main function is basically believed to be economical but the myth of Oksang remains a mystery that cannot be publicly known. Only those people who have been initiated have the privilege of the knowledge of the myth of Oksang.

The Oksang in itself has a number of stages to go through before the actual dancing inside the Oksangabip. The obvious rules that defines and separates womanhood from manhood still remain strong during initiation, preparation and dance. The rules if broken may defile the whole dancing group and it may also affect the growth of food in the gardens as well as humans.

Certain food items and foreign objects including water is believed may cause some negative effect as well. Women who are having their monthly period is not often allowed to go to the Oksangabip to watch. Most of the rules are not well communicated to the public especially the present generation and it is slowly dying out.

People enjoy the dance and forget about the rules which puts the cultural significance of Oksang at risk of extinction.



Oksang in Action (Picture cutesy of Lifson Uropkulin Urcalum cultural group)

# VOICES FROM APLIM APOM

## ETOL DISTRICT TARUP



Etol Dancers from District Tarup: Muropmin sub-tribe of the Ngalum people of Oksibil Star Mountain Regency Papua Province

### The Myth behind Etol

**E**tol like Oksang has the same myth of growth ideology. The drum beats, songs, dressing and every move carries their own meaning in the local mythology. Generally it is believed to be economical. It enables the growth of healthy human beings, pigs and good harvest.

It is originated from the lowlands of the Star Mountain regency. The highlands version is locally known as 'Bar'. Etol and Bar both carries the same mythology but differs in dancing styles and songs.

Etol is usually organized outside and unlike Oksang dancers are both males and females often danced in partners of twos and threes. Dancers dance in lines and move around in a circle with drums locally known as 'wot'.

Women have their separate body painting patterns and dressing which carry a deeper meaning in their local myths.

Men dress differently and often have the central figures of the dance. Men sings most of the songs while women follows or sings the chorus of the songs sung during the dance. Men also beat drums and lead the women around in a circular movement in the dancing arena.

It is interesting to watch while they dance because the beat of the drums goes inline with the songs and the body movements especially the leg movements locally known as 'mel'.

## YIMNE DISTRICT ALEMSOM

### YIMNE DANCE DISTRICT ALEMSOM STAR MOUNTAIN REGENCY

The Mythology of Yimne like Oksang, Bar, etol and Yambir carries similar beliefs. All the songs, dancing patterns and movement styles points to the growth of pigs, humans and the food crops.

It also enables the exchanges of pigs for bride price, payback compensation and other social responsibilities.

Yimne dancing like Bar and Etol occur during the night. Unlike Bar and Etol, Yimne songs are sung

without the beat of Kundu drums. Both males and females participate in the dance.

Yimne originates from the 'Kupel' ethnic group. They have different language different from that of the Ngalum language. Costum design and dressing appear slightly different from that of the Ngalum Speakers.

They are located to the North – west of Oksibil sharing the border with the Yahukimo Regency.



Yimne Dance at the Mini –Ngalum Festival 11/9/2017

# YAMBIR DISTRICT SERAM

## YAMBIR DANCE DISTRICT SERAM STAR MOUNTAIN REGENCY

Yambir is popular in the Ngalum and Murop speaking people. It is often danced inside the house unlike Oksang, Yambir is danced without body paintings.

Females do sing alongside males in Yambir. Males sings most of the songs followed by whistling known as 'pot' in Ngalum. Females do involve in the whistling

but the singing part is often restricted to men. Body decoration in Yambir differs greatly from that of Oksang and Bar or even that of Etol.

Number of dancers may ranges from as low as six males and one female to as many as twelve males and four females.



Yambir Dance at the Mini –Ngalum Festival 11/9/2017

# Map of Papua Province

Papua Province is located to the North of Australia sharing the Eastern end of the Island with the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. Papua is currently a province of the Republic of Indonesia.

arts and culture that was planned to be held on yearly bases in Oksibil by the Ngalum people to reactivate their dying culture.

The Min Festival of Arts and Culture is a newly created festival of



**Part of Oksibil township including the airport.**



# Ngalum Arts & Culture Centre - Oksingsing

## Oksangabip

### (Oksang dancing house)



side view



Back view



**Bokam**  
(Men's House)



**Onkor Village-Oksingsing**

## Oksingsing

Oksingsing is located around a kilometre South-east from the Oksibil township. It holds two council wards, Arinkop and Onkor wards.

The Mini-festival centre was located at Oksingsing and is hosted by the people of Onkor village this year 2017.

Documentation of the oral literature and the development of the cultural centre is still underdeveloped.

The elders are still looking for potential donors both national and international. Continuous funding is needed for the event to occur annually.

The event has attracted many local visitors to the area. More awareness is needed by the organizing committee to attract both local and international fans to the mini-festival every year.