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**Sustainable Rural Livelihoods,
Micro-Enterprise and Culture in the Pacific
Islands: Case Studies from Samoa**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

in

Development Studies

Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

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2006**

Abstract

This thesis is about the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture in Samoa. The 'sustainable livelihoods approach' provides a basis for analysis. The research focuses on one livelihood strategy, micro-enterprise, in order to illustrate and explain issues that are important in supporting sustainable livelihoods in Samoa. Micro-enterprise is regarded as a livelihood strategy that, if successful and sustainable, can support livelihood outcomes for rural Samoan people, and reduce poverty.

The sustainable livelihoods approach is reviewed and the thesis argues that culture is integral to sustainable livelihoods, but existing theory and frameworks do not incorporate cultural aspects in a way that provides a sound theoretical basis for this research, or any sustainable livelihoods analysis. The thesis argues that culture is interwoven into each of the components of the sustainable livelihoods framework, and in fact culture is a context in which livelihoods exist. Each of the components provides an entry point for analysis of the relationships between culture and livelihoods. This concept was used as a basis for an analysis of rural livelihoods in Samoa, where *fa'aSamoa* was found to be interwoven with almost every aspect of rural livelihoods in a complex and influential way. A revised definition of a sustainable livelihood, and a revised framework were then developed which were more appropriate for this research. A strength of sustainable livelihoods theory, and the related frameworks, is that the theory embraces flexibility, and could thus be adapted to incorporate cultural aspects in this way.

The thesis reviewed business enterprise in Samoa, and described the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and business enterprise. The research revealed both harmonies and tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and business which influenced the success and sustainability of business enterprise. Two 'types' of small and micro-enterprise were identified in Samoa (with a continuum between): *private sector* enterprises and *traditional 'sphere'* enterprises. 'Traditional sphere' enterprises, in order to be sustainable, normally operate *within* the cultural context of *fa'aSamoa*, ensuring that relationships, trust and harmony within the family and community are maintained and social and cultural assets, which provide a sense of identity and security, are sustained.

The field research described in the thesis focused on two separate groups of micro-entrepreneurs in Samoa, fine mat weavers and village-based coconut oil producers. The case studies described the outcomes the micro-entrepreneurs aspire to, the risk, adversity, and challenges they face, and the work of the non-government organisations (NGOs) that support them. The case studies illustrated and further developed concepts developed in previous chapters, and also demonstrated just how the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and sustainable livelihoods were expressed in practice. In the fine mat weaving case study there was considerable harmony between *fa'aSamoa* and the livelihood strategy. However, in the village-based coconut oil case study there were some tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and the venture that were causing vulnerability.

The thesis concluded that understanding the relationships between culture, and sustainable livelihoods is critical for ensuring that good judgements are made about development intervention and policy. The revised sustainable livelihoods framework, and the concept of using the components of the frameworks as multiple entry points for analysis, provided an appropriate and useful theoretical framework for understanding the relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise in Samoa.

Key words: Pacific Islands; Samoa; micro-enterprise; sustainable livelihood; culture; *fa'aSamoa*; private sector; enterprise; development; fine mats; coconut oil; co-operative

Acknowledgements

Firstly, many thanks to my supervisors Professor John Overton, Dr Barbara Nowak and Dr Susan Maiava for your knowledge, comments and suggestions, and especially to John for your support and help in the final stages.

To all the field research participants in Samoa, thank you. Your willingness to talk with me and answer my questions is very much appreciated. You taught me so much. Particular thanks to Mrs Adimaimalaga Tafuna'i and Dr Walter Verneulen for supporting my research with WIBDI and METI micro-entrepreneurs in Samoa. Thank you to Mrs Eseta Poleka for all your help. To all the Samoan participants - I trust that the interpretation of your comments was accurate and in the context for which it was intended. Any misinterpretation is entirely my responsibility.

Thanks also to my colleagues at Lincoln University, where I have taught off and on over the past few years. I am grateful to the Lincoln University international rural development students – your questions, discussion, experiences and insights have been important. Thank you to my friends for keeping me grounded and happy in everyday life, supporting me, and putting up with my unsociable existence in the final stages of the thesis. Special thanks to my family - Shahar, Melanie, Emma and David.

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Glossary of Samoan terms used in this thesis

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>aiga</i> | family (extended beyond nuclear family) |
| <i>alofa</i> | love, compassion |
| <i>aualuma</i> | daughters and sisters of <i>matai</i> |
| <i>'aumaga</i> | untitled sons and brothers of the <i>matai</i> |
| <i>fa'alavelave</i> | crucial lifecycle events that involve traditional exchanges of goods, for example weddings, funerals, induction of <i>matai</i> title, church dedication. |
| <i>fa'amatai</i> | chiefly system |
| <i>fa'aSamoa</i> | Samoan way of life |
| <i>fale</i> | house |
| <i>faletua ma tausii</i> | wives of the <i>matai</i> |
| <i>fono</i> | meeting of village <i>matai</i> (village council) |
| <i>'ie o le mavaega</i> | farewell funeral fine mat from son or daughter-in-law's family |
| <i>'ie o le measulu</i> | children's farewell funeral fine mat. |
| <i>'ie o le nofo</i> | name for a fine mat presented at a <i>matai</i> investiture by the host family |
| <i>'ie toga</i> | traditional name for very fine mats in samoa |
| <i>'ie samoa</i> | modern name for Samoan very fine mats |
| <i>'ie o le mal</i> | the national fine mat |
| <i>iiniini</i> | name sometimes given to a fine mat |
| <i>lalaga</i> | coarser mats that are used for functional purposes |
| <i>lau</i> | leaf (of <i>pandanus</i> plant in this thesis) |
| <i>matai</i> | person who has a chiefly title |
| <i>mea samoa</i> | Samoan things |
| <i>moe i le aufuefue</i> | name sometimes given to a fine mat |
| <i>niu</i> | less mature green drinking nut of the coconut |
| <i>palagi</i> | non Samoan person, usually westerner |
| <i>pepeve'a</i> | name sometimes given to a fine mat |
| <i>pipii i le elele</i> | name sometimes given to a fine mat |
| <i>popo</i> | mature brown nut of the coconut |
| <i>pule</i> | authority |
| <i>tamaiti</i> | youth and children |
| <i>tautua</i> | service |
| <i>va fealoa'i</i> | social respect |

Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Aid |
| BRAC | Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CVI | The Composite Vulnerability Index |
| DBS | Development Bank of Samoa |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| DME | Direct Micro Expeller |
| EU | European Union |
| GA | Gender Analysis |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| ICA | International Co-operative Alliance |
| IDS | Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (UK) |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| IRD | Inland Revenue Department |
| METI | Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporated |
| MFAT | Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| MIP | Microenterprise Innovation Project (USAID Programme) |
| MIRAB | Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy |
| MSE | Micro and Small Enterprise |
| NGO | Non-government Organisation |
| NZAID | New Zealand Agency for International Development |
| NZODA | New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Development |
| OSP | Oil Seeds Production New Zealand |
| PIP | Policy, Institution and Process |
| PNG | Papua New Guinea |
| PPA | Pacific Platform for Action |
| PRA | Participatory Rural Appraisal |

| | |
|--------|--|
| SBEC | Small Business Enterprise Centre |
| SCOPE | Samoa Coconut Oil Production Enterprise |
| SEWA | Self Employed Women's Association |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprises |
| SOE | State Owned Enterprise |
| SPBDF | South Pacific Business Development Foundation |
| SPREP | South Pacific Regional Environmental Programmes |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USP | University of the South Pacific |
| WB | World Bank |
| WCED | World Commission on Environment and Development |
| WIEGO | Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organising |
| WIBDI | Women in Business Development Incorporated |
| WOSED | Women's Social and Economic Development |

Chapter 1 Introduction

Themes and concepts

As a term, 'sustainable livelihoods' is used widely in development literature, being interpreted in a variety of ways by different people (Scoones and Wolmer, 2003: 4). However, since the late 1980s a way of thinking about livelihoods and poverty reduction has evolved known as the 'sustainable livelihoods approach'. The body of literature and discourse related to the sustainable livelihoods approach has remarkable consistency regarding the fundamentals of the approach, although the finer points and critiques of the approach have been widely debated. Frameworks which model and describe the approach have been developed, providing a clear basis for analysis, and principles to guide development practice (Carney, 1998:5, Scoones, 1998:4, DFID, 1999: 11, Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999: 2-3, Ellis, 2000: 30).

The development and evolution of the sustainable livelihoods approach has been influenced by a focus on the diverse nature of poverty and growing awareness of the importance of sustainability of the environment, and sustainability of other assets and resources that are important to livelihoods. A more localised and community based approach to development, local participation in development and a focus on the realities of the poor, have also influenced the development of this approach. The sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking that can help in understanding the complexity of livelihood systems, and can support a people-centred approach to development (Carney, 2002).

This thesis is about livelihoods in Samoa, and the research has been carried out within the conceptual framework of the sustainable livelihoods approach. In rural areas of Samoa people engage in a range of jobs, enterprises, subsistence living, farming, and other activities and strategies to achieve their goals and livelihood outcomes, and satisfy their family's, and their own needs. This research focuses on one livelihood strategy, micro-enterprise, in order to illustrate and explain issues that are important in supporting sustainable livelihoods in Samoa. In the thesis, I define micro-enterprise as 'small income earning ventures that are managed and operated by the owner, often with the help of their family'. Current debates on micro-enterprise often conclude that micro-enterprise (and particularly micro-finance), operate within a neo-liberal agenda

of policy makers, donors and micro-finance providers (Mayoux, 2001, Rozario, 2002: 67, Jurik, 2005: 43). However, in this thesis micro-enterprise is researched from the perspective of micro-entrepreneurs and their pursuit of sustainable livelihoods. Micro-enterprise is thus regarded as a livelihood strategy that if successful and sustainable can support livelihood outcomes for rural people, and reduce poverty.

It is clear that culture is interwoven and embedded in Samoan livelihoods in a powerful, influential and complex manner. Thus the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture became a central theme of the thesis. Culture is a word used in a variety of different contexts, and can include a very wide range of features including identity, cultural history, relationships, beliefs and values, art and craft, language and interaction, cultural norms and customs as well as different systems – family, political, religious and social (Dodd 1998: 43-53). Three ‘dimensions’ of culture can be distinguished (Maiava, 2002: 77). First culture provides a ‘cognitive map’ or world view of who we are and how we identify ourselves, second, a complex system of values give meaning to what to do, how to act, and what is important, and third, based on the world view and values, people express their culture in the way they live, customs, events, relationships, laws and behaviours (Maiava, 2002: 77). Culture is not static, culture evolves as people negotiate change, and ‘weigh up’ the way change will affect their lives, their identities, their relationships and their livelihoods. In this thesis culture is framed within this multi-dimensional concept, for groups of people who have shared ethnicity, and/or geographic location, and identify themselves as sharing a ‘culture’. The thesis begins by discussing culture quite broadly in terms of sustainable livelihoods (Chapter 2) but in Chapter 4, culture is discussed more specifically in terms of *fa’aSamoa* (Samoan¹ way of life). The theme of culture in terms of *fa’aSamoa* continues in the remainder of the thesis, in order that the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, culture and micro-enterprise can be fully explored in the context of the case studies, both of which were conducted in Samoa.

As a non-Samoan, I use a number of methods to explore, interpret and attempt to understand *fa’aSamoa*. First I review literature describing and explaining *fa’aSamoa*, some of which, but not all, is written by Samoans. Secondly I interpret *fa’aSamoa* from the interviews conducted and observations made during my field research, not only

¹ In this thesis ‘Samoa’ refers to the nation known as Western Samoa prior to 1997.

with the micro-entrepreneurs in the case studies, but also other Samoans with whom I stayed and interacted. Often I observed Samoan culture in terms of actions, events and interaction, and asked people to explain to me the meanings and values behind this expression of their culture. Finally I draw on my work experience in the Pacific Islands (briefly described in the following section) to compare and contrast cultural aspects of *fa'aSamoa* with cultural aspects I have experienced in other Pacific Islands countries.

Perspectives, judgements and the topic

The idea for this thesis evolved over a number of years as I worked as a pakeha (New Zealand European) development practitioner in the Pacific Islands. Much of my work in the Pacific Islands is training and capacity building in small and micro-enterprise development, agribusiness, and business management. This work often involves training workshops for trainers, who then conduct training workshops with rural people, farmers, small business owners and micro-entrepreneurs. The rural people who attend the training workshops are inevitably hungry for the chance to learn, but often the facilities can hardly cope with the numbers of people who turn up. They are quick to point out where the training is not relevant, and also tell us when the learning is useful. Business principles that are taken for granted in New Zealand are debated and discussed in terms of their relevance for Pacific Islanders, and how they could be adapted to work in specific contexts. I am thus continually searching to better understand the lives and the livelihoods of the rural people I work with in the Pacific Islands to help me to make appropriate, culturally relevant and productive judgements in my work. As Chambers (1992: 26) suggests: 'in the practical world ... criteria and ways of thinking are needed which can be used to make judgments about what to do and how to do it'.

I chose Samoa for the research for number of reasons. I have worked in Samoa and wanted to deepen my understanding of the country. Furthermore New Zealand, and many New Zealanders, have strong ties with Samoa. I was able to make contact through some of these people with Samoans who could help me with the research. Conducting research in Samoa, where I can speak only a very limited amount of the language and the culture and customs are very different to my own, was difficult, but important. It is clear that many rural Pacific Islands people (including Samoans) want to join, or further engage in the cash economy, in order to improve the lives of their families and themselves. However, inevitably their way forward is fraught with dilemmas, tensions

and contradictions. It was in order to better understand rural Samoans' livelihoods, and the issues that rural Samoan people face when engaging in the cash economy, that this research was conducted.

The thesis focuses on sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise in the *rural* sector of Samoa. There are several reasons for this. Firstly it was necessary to narrow the focus of the thesis. Secondly, the nature of poverty in rural Samoa, and other Pacific Islands, has been described as poverty of opportunity and lack of cash (Chung, 1997: 28, ADB, 2001, Struthers et al, 2002: 4, Tafuna'i, 2003: 179). In such rural areas, where livelihood strategies such as full or part time employment and casual contracting are limited, micro-enterprise may well have the potential to reduce poverty (and improve sustainable livelihoods). Thirdly, rural micro-entrepreneurs encounter increased difficulties in terms of access to markets for their goods, vulnerability, and the availability of some resources, compared with urban micro-enterprises. Finally, it is in the rural sector that I work and thus it was in the rural sector that I wanted to better understand the lives and livelihoods of Pacific Island people.

The field research described in the thesis focuses on two separate groups of micro-entrepreneurs in Samoa, fine mat weavers and village-based coconut oil producers. These case studies are of people searching for livelihoods for themselves and their families, and the strategies (particularly micro-enterprise) they use to provide those livelihoods. The case studies feature their goals, the tensions and compromises, and the relationships between culture, micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods. The two case studies describe the outcomes the micro-entrepreneurs aspire to, the risk, adversity, and challenges they face, and the dedicated work of the non-government organisations (NGOs) that support them. The case studies were important to the thesis in that not only did they provide further understanding, and illustrated aspects already highlighted in the contextual chapters, but they also demonstrated just how the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and sustainable livelihoods were expressed in practice in rural livelihoods.

Research Questions

The thesis integrates a review of relevant literature with field research, in order to answer a number of research questions. The overall research question which the thesis addresses is:

What are the relationships and links between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture in Samoa, and how can these relationships and links be incorporated into sustainable livelihoods theory and frameworks?

In order to answer this overall question, a number of lower level research questions were formulated and addressed as the research evolved.

1. What are the features of sustainable livelihoods (including micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy), and can a sustainable livelihoods framework adequately describe livelihoods in the context of this research?

And then research questions that were addressed mainly (but not only) during the case studies:

2. What is it that Samoan rural micro-enterprises want from their micro-enterprises in terms of livelihood outcomes, and what motivates them to continue with the enterprises?
3. What are the factors that have supported the rural micro-enterprises, and what factors have jeopardised the micro-enterprises?
4. How does the micro-enterprise integrate with other household livelihood strategies and the micro-entrepreneur's other everyday tasks?
5. What are the major risks, difficulties and vulnerability for the micro-entrepreneurs?
6. Do the institutions, and their policies and processes, provide an enabling environment for Samoan rural micro-entrepreneurs?
7. How is culture interwoven into the livelihoods (especially micro-enterprises) of the entrepreneurs?

The research is highly influenced by the sustainable livelihoods approach. As the research evolved, the question continually arose: *Can a conceptual model and framework of sustainable livelihoods be useful as a tool for supporting researchers in understanding the complexities of sustainable livelihoods (of which micro-enterprises*

are part)? Although not part of the original overall question, it became an integral part of the thesis as a whole, and an additional quest for the researcher.

Thesis Structure

The thesis moves from theories and literature review, to contextual information and then to the actual case studies. The whole thesis is drawn together in the last two chapters, where the case studies are compared and important issues that arose from the case studies are linked to the earlier chapters. First, in Chapter 2, ‘Sustainable Livelihoods and Micro-enterprise’, the origins and development of the sustainable livelihoods approach, and the main features of the approach are described. How the approach is, and can be used in practice is discussed, and the approach is critiqued in terms of its usefulness as a conceptual framework that can guide theoretical analysis, and development in practice. In this chapter I argue that the approach, as it is described in the literature, does not integrate cultural aspects in a way that is useful for my research. I then explore how culture and sustainable livelihoods are interwoven, and discuss ‘entry points’ in the sustainable livelihoods theory and framework for analysing the relationships between sustainable livelihoods and culture. The relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods, which are initially identified and discussed in this chapter, are then explored further (in the Samoan context) throughout the thesis.

Chapter 2 then introduces micro-enterprise, within the conceptual framework of sustainable livelihoods, firstly exploring the definitions of micro-enterprise. Since both the groups of micro-entrepreneurs in the Samoan case studies are supported directly by NGOs, and indirectly by donors that support the NGOs, I then review the literature that explains why agencies and policy makers have been keen to support micro-enterprise in the last two decades. I address issues regarding women and micro-enterprise, and describe co-operative structures, in order to provide context for the case studies. Finally, the chapter explores how success of micro-enterprises has been measured in the past, and introduces the notion of success of micro-enterprises being measured by whether or not such enterprises can support sustainable livelihoods.

Then Chapter 3, ‘Research Methodology’, describes the strategy, approach, methods and structure that I use in the research. The methodology was designed to answer the research questions and to respond to issues raised in the review of literature. Chapter 3 explains that the approach to the research is qualitative, exploring the livelihoods of the

participants and attempting to understand their experiences, reality and perspectives. Chapter 3 then describes the field research, and explains the field research methods which included informal and semi structured interviews, and observation. The sustainable livelihoods approach (and framework) has been used for structuring research questions and field work, and analysing results. The chapter also addresses ethical issues of the research, describes why each of the case studies was selected, and explains how the field research developed in each of the case studies.

After describing the methodology, Chapter 4, 'Samoa: *Fa'aSamoa* and Rural Livelihoods', explores rural livelihoods in Samoa and the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and rural livelihoods. In doing so, this chapter provides a context for the Samoan case studies. The economic macro-environment of Samoa is briefly reviewed in order to provide a picture of economic growth, migration and markets. The chapter discusses poverty in Samoa, and reviews livelihood assets and resources. I then describe and analyse rural livelihood strategies in Samoa, and institutions and processes that impact on rural livelihoods. This chapter links Chapter 2, and the sustainable livelihoods approach, with Samoa, and concludes by revising the sustainable livelihoods framework to better reflect rural livelihoods in Samoa, and to be a framework for analysis that is appropriate for this research. A revised definition of a 'sustainable livelihood' is also presented. This definition, and the revised framework, is used as a basis for the field research and analysis.

Chapter 5, 'Small and Micro Business Enterprise in Samoa', provides further context to the case studies by providing description and analysis of the small and micro business enterprise environment in Samoa. The chapter integrates literature and field research. Following a description of the private sector in Samoa, the chapter focuses on the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and business enterprise in Samoa, discussing aspects of *fa'aSamoa* that can enhance and support micro-enterprise, and tensions and conflicts that can occur between western business principles and *fa'aSamoa*. Finally the chapter describes enterprise support organisations and enterprises relevant to the field research.

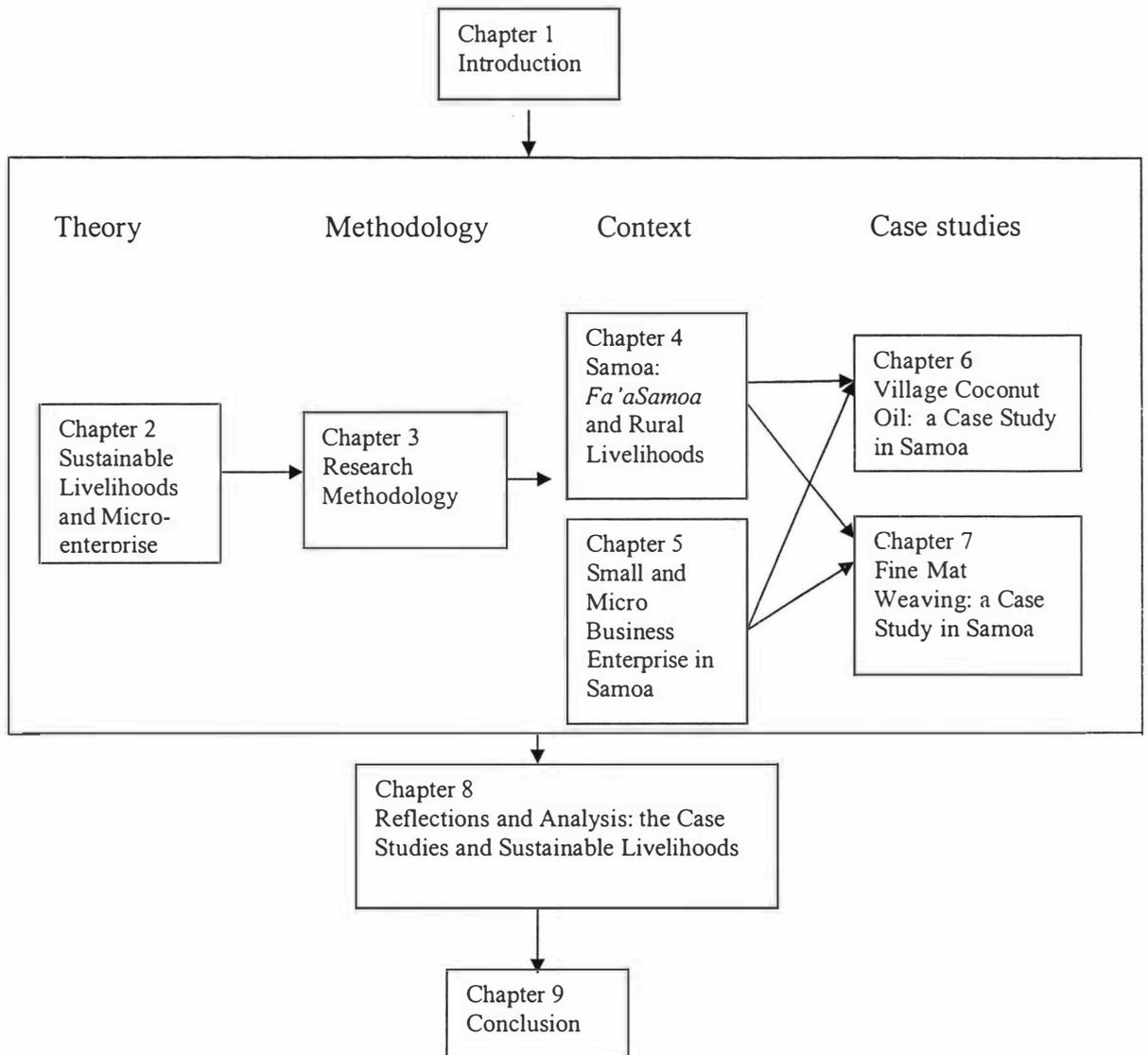
Describing the case studies, Chapter 6, 'Village Coconut Oil: a Case Study in Samoa', explores coconut oil production as a Samoan village-based micro-enterprise. The chapter describes and analyses a venture initiated by Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporated (METI), an NGO which is supporting village co-operatives to produce

coconut oil and has developed a soap factory to provide a market for the oil. The chapter also briefly describes village coconut oil production supported by Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI), where individual families, rather than co-operatives, are supported. The chapter explores the possibilities, difficulties and issues surrounding village-based production of coconut oil and soap in Samoa, and explores how *fa'aSamoa* is interwoven in the micro-entrepreneurial activity and livelihoods of the coconut oil producers. Then, in Chapter 7, 'Fine Mat Weaving: a Case Study in Samoa', the second case study explores fine mat weaving, a traditional craft in Samoa, and the income generating opportunity this activity now provides when the weavers are supported by the NGO, WIBDI. Again the case study in this chapter explores the opportunities, possibilities, tensions, difficulties and issues the fine mat weavers face, and the relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, livelihoods and the micro-enterprises.

Bringing the case studies and other chapters together, Chapter 8, 'Reflections and Analysis: the Case Studies and Sustainable Livelihoods', firstly discusses the use of the sustainable livelihoods approach in the design, implementation and analysis of the research, addressing the usefulness of the approach for this research. The chapter then compares the case studies in the context of the research questions and the review of literature. Finally in Chapter 9, 'Conclusion', the main themes and findings that emerged during the research are précised, and conclusions are drawn from the research about the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture in Samoa, and how culture can be integrated into sustainable livelihoods theory and frameworks.

Figure 1.1 (next page) summarises the relationship between the different chapters and the overall structure and flow of the thesis. Figure 1.1 shows that following the introduction, the thesis is in a number of sections. The first section (Chapter 2) reviews theory, while the second section (Chapter 3) describes the research methodology which links the theory and the field work. The third section (Chapters 4 and 5) presents the context for the field research case studies while the fourth section (Chapters 6 and 7) describes the two case studies. Finally the research is brought together and conclusions are drawn in the final two chapters (Chapters 8 and 9).

Figure 1.1 Thesis Structure



Chapter 2 Sustainable Livelihoods and Micro-enterprise

Introduction

The term, 'sustainable livelihoods' is widely used in development literature and rhetoric, but the meanings attributed to the term vary widely (Scoones and Wolmer, 2003: 4). However, since the late 1980s the 'sustainable livelihoods approach' has emerged and been refined in response to the need for more effective ways of approaching poverty reduction. Although the sustainable livelihoods approach has been modified and adapted for a wide range of purposes, the basic concepts of this approach have remained remarkably constant. This chapter explains the origins and development of the sustainable livelihoods approach, reviews definitions that are attributed to a 'sustainable livelihood', and describes the frameworks that evolved to reflect and model sustainable livelihoods systems. The purpose and usefulness of the approach is discussed and critiques of, and concerns about, the approach are highlighted. Based on the premise that culture and sustainable livelihoods in Samoa are closely interwoven, the chapter explores how culture is presently reflected in sustainable livelihoods frameworks and theory, and critically questions whether culture is adequately and appropriately represented in existing sustainable livelihoods discourse, theory and frameworks that are reviewed in this chapter.

The chapter then describes micro-enterprise, exploring how micro-enterprise is related to, and can be integrated into, sustainable livelihoods theory, thereby explicitly bringing micro-enterprise into the discourse of sustainable livelihoods, and merging theory about sustainable livelihoods into the discourse of micro-enterprise. Development of micro-enterprise is regarded by policy makers and development agencies as a way to stimulate economic growth, as well as to reduce poverty and to empower women (Mayoux, 2001: 8). Theories and discussion on micro-enterprise often dwell on 'function focused' strategies for supporting micro-enterprise, strategies that seek to remove constraints for micro-enterprise (Mckee, 1989: 995). The constraint most commonly debated, analysed and theorised is access to financial services (micro-finance), especially micro-credit. Debates and literature on micro-enterprise often frame micro-enterprise (and micro-finance) within a neo-liberal agenda for development (Mayoux, 2001, Rozario, 2002:

67, Jurik, 2005: 43). Micro-enterprise is not explicitly discussed in the existing theory of sustainable livelihoods, and sustainable livelihoods is not explicitly discussed in the theory of micro-enterprise. However, this chapter reviews micro-enterprise as a strategy for sustainable livelihoods, unequivocally drawing attention to the links between micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore the chapter introduces culture as an integral part of micro-enterprise (a livelihood strategy) and sustainable livelihoods.

The origin, influences and development of the sustainable livelihoods approach

Introduction

The concept of 'sustainable livelihoods' first came to prominence in the report of an advisory panel of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 in the Publication 'Food 2000'. In this report the concept was described as an integrating concept central to food security and environmental degradation. The report links sustainable livelihoods security to basic human needs, food security, sustainable agricultural practices and poverty. The WCED panel argued that sustainable livelihoods security is basic for three reasons. Firstly it is a precondition for a stable human population, secondly it is a prerequisite for good husbandry and sustainable management, and thirdly it is a means of reversing destabilising processes such as urban migration (WCED, 1987a: 3-4). In its definition of a livelihood the WCED panel referred to access to resources and income earning activities, including assets and reserves to offset risk, ease shocks and meet contingencies. The WCED also mentioned sustainability in terms of the 'maintenance and enhancement of resource productivity on a long-term basis', and the diversity of ways in which a household could gain sustainable livelihoods, in its definition of a livelihood (WCED, 1987a: 3). The report points to a focus on sustainable livelihoods security, and the redistribution and allocation of resources to the poor, as key factors in the challenge of food security and poverty (WCED, 1987a: 4).

Production, employment and poverty

Building on the concepts developed in the WCED Food 2000 report, Chambers and Conway (1992: 3) challenge 'conventional' ways of thinking on production, employment and poverty. In 'conventional' thinking, lack of food is seen as a function of production and producing enough food, whereas in fact lack of food security is more a function of 'entitlements' or what food people have access and rights to (Chambers

and Conway, 1992: 3). The notion that lack of food (and famine) is influenced by poor functioning of societies and economies, as well as low agricultural activity and food production, leading to lack of 'entitlements' for families and individuals, is derived from Sen (1981).

'Conventional' thinking regards a means of living as employment and the problems of the poor are seen as a lack of employment. The distinction between sustainable livelihoods and employment is blurred in the WCED report 'Our Common Future' (WCED, 1987b), and in Commitment 3 of the World Summit for Social Development declaration employment and sustainable development are 'overtly tied together' (UNDP, 1999: 4). However, the concept of sustainable livelihoods is broader than employment and income generation. In reality the poor sustain their livelihoods through a complex mix of livelihood strategies and activities that may or may not involve employment. As Helmore (1998: 9) states: 'The poor almost never have jobs, they 'do' jobs. They are self employed doing a whole range of things that allows them to survive'. The fight against rural poverty is no longer limited to stimulating employment through commercial agricultural development, rather it is recognised that people derive their livelihoods from a range of both subsistence and commercial activities that often include agriculture and fisheries (Chambers, 1995: 11, Carney, 1999a: 4-5, Ellis, 1999: 2; Nowak, 2003: 294).

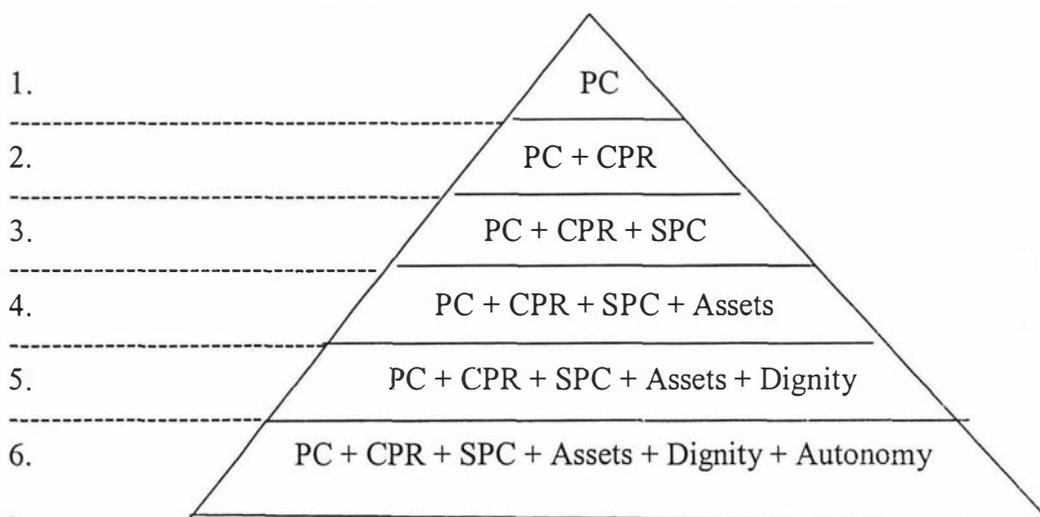
In 'conventional' thinking deprivation and poverty are considered in terms of the poverty line, an economic measurement of income and consumption, whereas in reality poverty is multidimensional (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 3). Poverty was first defined in economic terms in Rowntree's classic study of poverty in York, United Kingdom (UK) in 1899 (World Bank, 2000: 17). Rowntree's study was based on income and expenditure surveys and has similarities to studies carried out today to define absolute poverty lines, or incomes considered to be the minimum necessary to sustain life. For less developed countries this is often defined in terms of US\$1 per day (World Bank, 2000: 17). While a narrow definition, this perception of poverty is relatively easily measured and is thus commonly used for purposes of comparison and measurement (Chambers, 1995: 7, World Bank, 2000:17).

Is it now widely acknowledged that a narrow economic perception of poverty is unrealistic, and that poor people's own perception of poverty encompasses a wide

range of aspects that vary from community to community and between men and women (Chambers, 1995: 18-19, Kabeer, 1996: 13-14). Participatory poverty analyses have shown that poverty is multi-dimensional. One way of viewing poverty is as 'deprivation' (Kabeer, 1994b: 137). Lack of necessities (including food, shelter, health, and education as well as income), social inferiority, isolation, physical weaknesses, vulnerability, seasonality, powerlessness, humiliation, lack of choice and social exclusion all contribute to deprivation (Chambers, 1995, UNDP, 1999, Grant et al, 2000, World Bank, 2000). Poverty viewed as deprivation is poverty as an 'end'. Another way of viewing poverty is a 'means' perspective, when poverty is viewed as when people do not have the capabilities, entitlements, resources, or assets to acquire a decent livelihood (Kabeer, 1994b: 138-141).

Clearly, factors other than personal income are important in reducing poverty and increasing well-being. Baulch (1996: 2) has described the range of poverty concepts that are discussed in literature on poverty in a schematic form. This pyramid perceives poverty both as an end (personal consumption, dignity and autonomy) and as a means (common property rights, state provided commodities and assets).

Figure 2.1 A pyramid of poverty concepts



Key:

PC = Private consumption

CPR = Common property rights

SPC = State provided commodities

Assets = human and physical capital, stores and claims

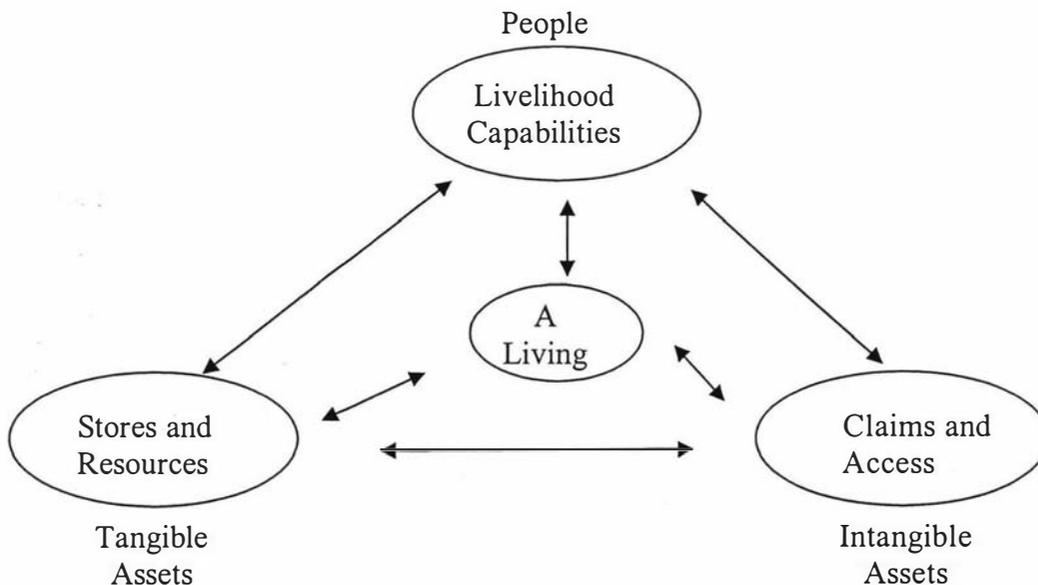
Dignity and autonomy includes freedom from subservient activities, choice of self fulfilling and rewarding lifestyles

Source: Baulch (1996: 2)

Baulch (1996: 3) explains that as one moves down the pyramid it becomes harder to distinguish the concept of income consumption poverty from vulnerability, lack of self respect and powerlessness. It also becomes more difficult to quantify poverty. Baulch (1996: 3) questions whether ‘the measures at the apex of the pyramid are a good proxy for those at its base’ (Baulch, 1996: 3). Clearly income definitions alone are not an accurate measure of poverty. Nevertheless, they continue to be used extensively despite the acknowledgement of a wider perspective of poverty.

The opposite of poverty, ill-being, and deprivation, is well-being. Chambers (1997: 9) describes well-being as ‘the experience of good quality of life’. Well-being includes social, mental, and spiritual aspects of the quality of life as well as physical aspects and income. Chambers (1997: 10) argues that livelihood security is fundamental to well-being. Capabilities, and the tangible assets (stores and resources) and intangible assets (claims and access) that people have access to, are fundamental in securing livelihoods (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 10-11, Chambers, 1995: 24). This is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Components and flows in a livelihood



Source: Chambers (1995: 24)

A widening perception of poverty and well-being has led to a broader approach to poverty reduction processes and attempts to broaden the quantification of measurement of poverty from solely economic measurements. In the early 1990s the World Bank

(WB) recommended a two pronged approach for sustainable poverty reduction which included labour intensive macroeconomic growth, coupled with social services such as health and education (Chambers, 1995: 9, Baulch, 1996: 5). However, this two pronged approach is still economically focussed. Improved social conditions are a means to economic growth rather than as an end in itself (Chambers, 1995: 9).

The 2000 World Development Report recommends a three pronged approach to poverty. The first element is to promote opportunity through economic growth, but with greater equity in growth, and with support of poor peoples' access and ownership of assets. The second element is to facilitate empowerment and the third element is to enhance security and reduce vulnerability (World Bank, 2000: 37-40).

Measurement of poverty and human development has also widened. For example the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) is a measure of development that includes life expectancy, mean years of schooling, and literacy rates as well as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, and reflects the UNDP's concept of sustainable human development as a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical choices are to lead a healthy life, to be educated, to enjoy a decent standard of living, and to freedom, self respect and the respect of others (UNDP, 1999).

Thus while income, food security and other necessities are basic livelihood outcomes, people aspire to a range other important outcomes that may be less tangible and less obvious to make their lives fulfilling and worthwhile. For example increased choices, improved status, empowerment, dignity, and reduced vulnerability are difficult to measure but equally important. Nevertheless, despite the rhetoric of multi-dimensional poverty, still the economic view dominates and drives much of the development practice (Chambers, 1995: 6-9). The sustainable livelihoods approach is designed to refocus attention to the multi-dimensional outcomes that can improve well-being and reduce poverty, and that are the reality of the poor.

Capabilities

Important in achieving a sustainable livelihood are the capabilities a person or household has. The term capabilities is derived from Sen (1984) and refers to the ability of people to realise their entitlements or potential (Ellis, 2000: 17). In terms of secure

and sustainable livelihoods, capabilities include being able to find and use livelihood opportunities, the ability to recover from and cope with stress and shocks, being adaptable, and able to explore and exploit opportunities (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 35). The meaning of ‘capabilities’ is broad and varies depending on who is defining it and in what context it is being used. Capabilities can be outcomes of livelihood strategies or enhanced access to assets (for example, consider how enhanced human capital in terms of training could increase capabilities). Capabilities can also be regarded as assets themselves, or as activities (Ellis, 2000: 7), or could be considered as the choices people have (Purdie, 1996: 57).

A livelihoods systems framework

In the late 1980’s Grown and Sebstad (1989: 941) proposed a ‘livelihoods systems framework’ that links components of analysis (including employment, income and enterprise) and describes underlying relationships within and between households and firms. They describe the concept of ‘a livelihoods system’ as ‘the mix of individual and household survival strategies, developed over a period of time, that seeks to mobilize available resources and opportunities’. They explain that resources can be physical (property), human (time and skills), social, and collective (common property or public sector entitlements). They suggest that a mix of livelihood strategies, including labour market involvement, savings and investment, social networking and others, are adjusted, according to seasonal conditions, people’s age and life cycle, educational level and time availability. These strategies are adopted for different goals, from survival to security, and finally for growth, depending on the income level of the household, the time frame involved in mobilising resources and the diversity of activities (Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 940-941).

Sustainability

Sustainability in the context of sustainable livelihoods includes environmental, economic and social sustainability. Livelihood sustainability is the ability of the livelihood to withstand shocks and stresses and provide livelihood outcomes while maintaining resources, assets and capabilities (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 12-17).

Clearly the focus on environmental issues and sustainability since the late 1980’s has been a major influence on the sustainable livelihoods approach. This first became

evident in the WCED panel's² report on food security Food 2000 where the environment and sustainable livelihoods were clearly linked (WCED, 1987a: 3). A broadening of the meaning of sustainability to include social and economic issues as well as environmental has also influenced the development of the sustainable livelihoods approach (WCED, 1987b). Sustainability in the context of sustainable livelihoods therefore, means being able to draw on assets (both tangible and intangible) in a manner that does not exhaust available resources, whether they be environmental, social or economic. (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 12-17, Helmore, 1998: 9).

Formalising the approach

Over the last decade, as the sustainable livelihoods approach has been developed and refined, a number of influences have become evident. Clearly Robert Chambers' thinking and prolific writing has been a major driver of this approach. His emphasis on the reality of the poor has been influential in the shift in thinking from macroeconomic growth and 'trickle down' to the focus on secure livelihoods of the poor. His writing about professionalism and the need for changes and reversals in ways of thinking about, and working with the poor, has also had an impact on perceptions of reality. His clear message that the reality of the poor can only be understood through participation of the poor themselves (both men and women) in the development process has led to changes in development rhetoric and practice.

None of the elements of the sustainable livelihoods approach are new. The thinking behind the approach has evolved over the last two decades. However, what is new and distinguishes the approach from other models and approaches is firstly the way in which the elements have been brought together to give a holistic view of the realities of rural life, and secondly the conceptual frameworks that reflect the approach and provide clear guidance for using the approach in practice.

In 1997, the United Kingdom (UK) Government's White Paper on International Development committed its Department for International Development (DFID) to supporting: policies and actions that support sustainable livelihoods as well as better education; health and opportunities for poor people and protection; and better management of the natural and physical environment. The overall aim was to create a supportive environment for poverty elimination (Carney, 1999b: 8, DFID, 1999: 1,

² Robert Chambers was a member of this panel.

Solesbury, 2003: 15), and reverse trends in environmental degradation (Solesbury, 2003: 15). Since 1997 'DFID has been gradually expanding upon and adopting sustainable livelihood approaches' (Carney, 1999b: 8), initially with an emphasis on rural poverty, but more recently DFID has been integrating the livelihoods approach into other development areas such as country programming sectors and sector wide approaches (Carney, 1998: 1, Carney 1999b: 8). In 1999 DFID established a Sustainable Livelihoods Support Office to co-ordinate learning processes and research issues (Carney, 1999b: 8, Solesbury, 2003: 4). This has led to a range of working papers, articles, meetings and conferences. Then in 2000 DFID commissioned and funded 'Livelihoods Connect' a website which serves as an information sharing and learning website for the sustainable livelihoods approach (Solesbury, 2003: 4).

During the 1990's a number of other organisations and agencies have adopted the sustainable livelihoods approach as part of their strategies. For example UNDP included employment and sustainable livelihoods as a part of its overall sustainable human development mandate in 1995. This mandate also includes poverty reduction, gender, protection and regeneration of the environment, and governance (Carney, 1999b:14-16). Oxfam (Great Britain) adopted a sustainable livelihoods approach in the early 1990's based on Chambers' and Conway's work. Oxfam saw the approach as able to integrate the issues of globalising markets, deteriorating economic rights, gender and social inequality, participation and environmental concerns (Carney, 1999b: 11). CARE's livelihood model and approach is based on Chambers' and Conway's definition of a sustainable livelihood but CARE's focus is at the household level. CARE's approach emphasises the need to examine relations and roles within the household, and monitoring consumption and asset levels of household members (Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999: 2).

Definition of sustainable livelihoods

While a livelihood in its simplest definition could be described as a 'means of living', the most well known definition of a sustainable livelihood is from Chambers and Conway:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims, and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes

net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in the long and short term (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 7-8).

As a basis for the sustainable livelihoods approach, a modified version of Chamber's and Conway's definition of a sustainable livelihood has been generally adopted, with a few minor differences between authors and organisations (Appendix 1).

The definition reads:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets.... 'both now and in the future' (Carney, 1998: 4) or 'while not undermining the natural base' (Scoones, 1998: 5) or including both these last statements (Farrington et al: 1999: 1).

Chambers' and Conway's requirement that the livelihood should provide opportunities for the next generation and net benefits for others (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 7-8) has been abandoned by most authors as it was considered unrealistic (Carney, 1999b: 8), although it is recognised that a sustainable livelihood should not disadvantage or compromise other livelihoods (DFID, 1999: 1). Otherwise the definition has stood the test of time and has been used as the basis of an approach that has been integrated into development rhetoric and practice over recent years.

Ellis (2000: 9-10), while being strongly influenced by Chambers and Conway's definition, has modified the definition to place more emphasis on the access to assets and activities that are influenced by social relations (for example gender, class, kin, belief systems) and institutions. He has also excluded the reference to capabilities and sustainability.

The sustainable livelihood frameworks

At the basis of the 'sustainable livelihoods approach' are the frameworks that have been developed to clearly set out the factors involved in attaining sustainable livelihoods, and the relationships between these factors. Although often the 'public' face of the approach, the frameworks cannot, and do not aspire to, include all aspects of the sustainable livelihoods approach, and, are just one of a number of analytical tools that can be used when implementing the approach (Carney, 2002: 7). The most well known, but by no means the only livelihoods framework is the DFID sustainable livelihoods framework (Carney, 1998: 5, Carney, 1999b: 9, DFID, 1999: 3) (Figure 2.6). This framework draws heavily on the University of Sussex Institute of

Development Studies (IDS) work although it has been adapted to accommodate DFID's concerns and objectives (Carney, 1998). Other frameworks are the IDS framework developed by Scoones (1998: 4), CARE (Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999: 2, Carney, 1999b: 7), Oxfam (Carney, 1999b: 11), and Ellis (2000: 30) (Figures 2.5 - 2.9). UNDP has documented the sustainable livelihoods approach but has no formal framework (Carney, 1999b: 14).

Capitals and assets

At the heart of the frameworks are the assets or resources that people have. These are also sometimes referred to as 'capitals' depending on the context in which they are being discussed. In this thesis the words resources, assets and capitals are used

interchangeably. The livelihoods approach is based on the premise that the asset status of the poor is fundamental to understanding the options open to them, the strategies they adopt to attain livelihoods, the outcomes they aspire to, and the vulnerability context under which they operate (Ellis, 2000: 31-32). Bebbington (1999: 2022) also points out that people's assets are not just means of living but also give 'meaning to a person's world'. Assets (or capitals) are both the resources people use in building livelihoods, and the assets that give people the capabilities 'to be and to act'.

Furthermore, access to resources could be considered the most important resource of all in terms of building sustainable livelihoods (Bebbington, 1999: 2022).

Bebbington (1999: 2028), using his work in the Andes as an example, notes that households with rural livelihoods that are more viable seem to be able to sustain or increase their access to resources (such as land, credit, skills and labour), increase their opportunities to use those resources to enhance livelihoods, and increase access to networks, organisations and market intermediaries. It seems that access to the networks and organisations (social capital) is very important in gaining access to the other resources and opportunities. DFID distinguishes five categories of assets – natural, social, physical, human and financial. Later in this chapter, a critique of the sustainable livelihoods approach concludes that cultural assets is a sixth form of assets.

Figure 2.3 Capital assets according to DFID**Natural capital**

The natural resource stocks from which resource flows useful for livelihoods are derived (e.g. land, water, wildlife, biodiversity, environmental resources)

Social capital

The social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust, access to wider institutions of society) upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods

Human capital

The skills, knowledge, ability to labour, and good health important to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies

Physical capital

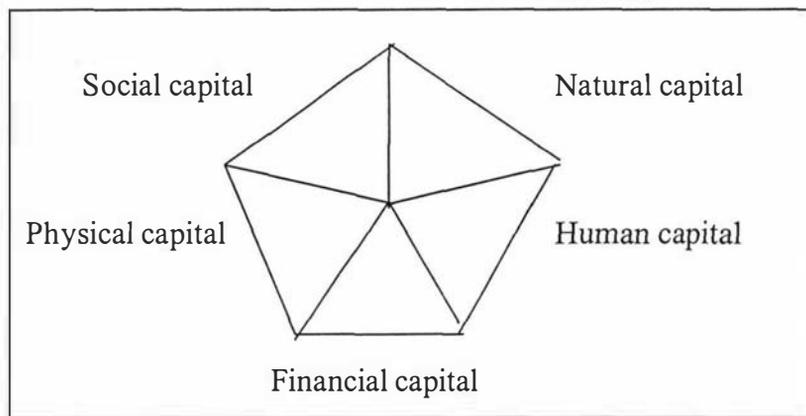
The basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy and communication) and the production equipment and means which enable people to pursue their livelihoods

Financial capital

The financial resources which are available to people (whether savings, supplies of credit or regular remittances or pensions) and provide them with different livelihood options

Source: Carney (1998: 7) (adapted from Scoones, 1998: 7-8)

The DFID framework represents the assets as a pentagon, a graph on which access to these assets could be plotted (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Livelihood assets

Source: DFID (1997: 15)

An analysis of assets is a review of what people have (and recognition of what people don't have) rather than an analysis of needs. The sustainable livelihoods approach recognises that people come into interventions with valuable and essential assets that must be acknowledged and utilised (Helmore and Singh, 2001). The assets that people 'draw upon' for their livelihoods vary between context and social groups (gender, race and even age) (Bebbington, 1999: 2022). The asset analysis also considers how access to assets has changed over time, what changes are predicted, what the causes of

changes are, and how access and control of assets differ between social groups (Carney, 1998: 8).

Policies, institutions and processes

While in the early years of the sustainable livelihoods approach attention was directed at the 'asset pentagon' in the DFID sustainable livelihoods framework (DFID 1997: 15), Scoones and Wolmer (2003: 4) suggest that this may have led to the downplaying of the important role that policies, institutions and processes play in access, control and use of assets, and the choice and interaction of different livelihood strategies that are used. Assets are highly influenced by the 'institutional and policy mediation' that impact on the community, household and individual (Scoones and Wolmer, 2003: 4). Furthermore, understanding issues of rights, power and institutions is critical in understanding and influencing policy, which has long term implications for sustainable livelihoods (Carney, 2002: 28).

The value of some assets is influenced by the policies and laws that surround them and the way in which they can be used (land and water are examples of this). The ability of one asset to be converted to another is also influenced by structures, such as institutions and markets, and processes such as legal restrictions. For example the use of money (financial capital) to pay for education or health (human capital) is influenced by the existence of health or education institutions that can supply the outcomes that are required. The ability to turn natural capital into financial capital depends on the market. Policies, institutions and processes can also influence the livelihood strategies that people choose and the way these strategies are 'played out' (Scoones and Wolmer, 2003: 4). For example in a community where there is strong support from a marketing organisation for a product, this will influence whether or not people choose to produce that product as a livelihood strategy.

In the last few years (since around 2000) there has been more emphasis on the structures of institutions and organisations (government, private, market, or community), and the processes such as laws, policies, societal norms, and incentives (Helmore and Singh, 2001, Carney, 2002, Wolmer and Scoones, 2003). Furthermore, there has been more discussion on the relationships between these issues and governance, rights and power (Carney 2002). While the part of the DFID framework that focussed on these issues was termed 'transforming structures and processes' until

around 1999 or 2000, the 'box' in the framework is now commonly referred to as 'policies, institutions and processes' (PIP) in literature on the sustainable livelihoods approach (Hobley, 2001: 7, Carney, 2002). The change was made 'to emphasis core issues and increase understanding of this aspect of the sustainable livelihoods framework' (Bingen, 2000: 1).

While, institutions and policies are clearly defined in the literature, processes refer to the myriad of activities, relationships, interactions and linkages that occur in policy and institutions and are related to the achieving of sustainable livelihoods. The PIP box covers a huge range of factors (Carney, 2002: 30) including institutions and policies, governance, rights and power structures, all of which are part of, and related to, the PIP context. Rights issues, and rights-based approaches to development are strongly linked to empowerment, and bringing together rights-based approaches and the sustainable livelihoods approach is possible, as has been demonstrated by CARE's 'relational rights-based approach' (Carney, 2002: 35).

Scoones and Wolmer (2003: 5) report that poor people in Southern Africa face a 'complex and messy institutional context' when trying to achieve livelihoods, and that 'lines of authority and control are constructed in overlapping and often contested institutional settings'. However, unless intervention is integrated into local institutional context, usually working directly with government structures, then significant positive impacts cannot occur (Toner and Franks, 2006: 91). The term 'institution' can in itself be complex, and difficult to define. Bingen (2000:3) refers to institutions as 'formal and informal norms, rules, procedures and processes that define the way individuals should inter-relate and act'. He then describes five categories of institutions, and defines the basis of relations and practices for each: familial (cultural) institutions are descent or kin-based, communal (community) institutions are based on trust and reciprocity, social institutions are based on societal interest, collective institutions have a contractual interest and finally policy/government institutions are legislative or regulatory (Bingen 2003: 4). Clearly there are overlaps and inconsistencies in these categories, some institutions are 'nested' in others (Bingen, 2000: 5) but Bingen contends that they provide a realistic basis for analysis of the role of institutions in sustainable livelihoods.

Similarly with policy, things are not simple, as power relations, bureaucratic politics, interest groups and global-local connections affect policy and interventions (Scoones

and Wolmer, 2003: 5). The term 'policy' can be used to include projects, programmes, strategies, plans and their implementation, including all public or collective decision making (Thomson, 2000: 5). Policy includes both content of policy, and the way in which the policy was generated (process). Furthermore, the way in which policy is implemented can change the content of the policy, and policy analysis and advice on public decisions can also influence the relationship between the policy and sustainable livelihoods (Thomson, 2000: 5). Households are sometime just used as a source of information and have no direct impact on policy processes, the focus on policy often being at the national government level, or local government where decentralisation has occurred. However, understanding policy in relation to sustainable livelihoods, and developing effective communication between poor households and policy makers can influence policy content and implementation (Thomson, 2000: 8).

The negative impacts that unequal power relations, and domination by groups of people or organisations, can have on the success or otherwise of interventions and efforts for poverty reduction have been highlighted (Amalric, 1998, Majid Cooke, 2004, Toner and Franks, 2006). The affect of power relations on institutions, processes and sustainable livelihoods is critical (Toner and Franks, 2006: 90). Power relations influence which people can have voice at the micro level, how 'partners', such as local institutions and donor agencies, interact, and which policies are adopted at the macro level. Participation, ownership, empowerment and partnership are all influenced by power relations in stakeholder relationships (Toner and Franks, 2006: 91). Majid Cooke (2004: 388) argues that power relations are often not adequately addressed and 'glossed over'. Furthermore, there is concern that because such issues were not explicitly addressed in the original frameworks they may be overlooked (Carney, 2002: 28). However, Carney (2002: 28) notes that it is often a matter of how the sustainable livelihoods approach, which is people centred, is put into practice, that influences whether and how aspects related to PIP, and power relations, are addressed. Furthermore, a range of checklists and methodologies have been developed to assist analysts and practitioners in addressing policy, governance and institutional issues in relation to sustainable livelihoods (Carney 2002: 38).

In summary, an analysis of the policies, institutions and processes provides understanding of the interactions between the micro (individual, household and

community) and the macro (regional, government and powerful private enterprise) (Carney, 1998: 9, Scoones, 1998: 5, DFID, 1999: 6). Understanding policies, institutions and processes, and their relationship with governance, rights and power, helps to explain why people choose certain livelihood strategies and helps to identify where strengths are and where restrictions, barriers or constraints occur (Scoones, 1998: 12). Furthermore an analysis of policies, institutions and processes helps explain social processes that could impact on livelihood sustainability (Scoones, 1998: 12), explains the environment in which livelihoods exist, and helps to identify where intervention could lead to a more enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods.

However, the nature of institutions, the way in which they interact with each other and livelihoods, and the constraints and influences imposed by policies, institutions and processes, differ between countries, and between communities within countries. For example, in some contexts relationships between institutions at the macro (government) and micro (local) levels (e.g. customary institutions) are contradictory and problematic, while in other contexts such relationships can be harmonious. It is thus difficult to generalise about the nature of institutions or the interactions of policies, institutions and processes (PIPs) and in later chapters of this thesis a model of different spheres (domains) of society that was developed specifically for the Pacific Islands (Hooper, 1993, 1998), and is described in Chapter 4, is used to frame PIPs analysis for this research.

An analysis that includes policies, institutions and processes within a sustainable livelihoods framework firmly places the focus on the *practice* of institutions rather than the *rhetoric*. However, such an analysis can be more difficult when the practice of institutional policy does not match the rhetoric. For example ‘sustainable livelihoods’ and ‘poverty reduction’ rhetoric by donor agencies and support organisations institutions is misleading when existing top down and economically driven models of development are retained, but are ‘dressed’ as, and proposed as, new and more effective models of poverty reduction (Storey et al, 2005).

Livelihood outcomes

The reason that the word ‘livelihood outcomes’ is used in the DFID sustainable livelihoods framework rather than ‘objective’, is that outcomes is considered a neutral term in that it implies the desired aims of both DFID and its clients, whereas using the

term 'objectives' could imply top-down objectives. The framework encourages the participatory development of desired outcomes (rather than objectives). This list will include outcomes to make livelihoods secure and reduce poverty, that will be context specific (Carney, 1998: 9).

The framework is intended to provide the basis for action. A focus on outcomes leads to a focus on achievements, indicators and progress. While the difference between objectives and outcomes is subtle, the understanding of livelihood outcomes is intended to provide, through a participatory enquiry, a range of outcomes that will improve well-being and reduce poverty in its broadest sense (DFID, 1999: 1).

The outcomes may include such things as more income, increased well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and/or more sustainable use of natural resources. However, the outcomes will be context specific and not only will the outcomes vary between individuals, households and communities but so will the trade-offs between outcomes. For example there will be a trade-off between immediate benefits from agriculture or fishing and long term sustainability of the natural resource base. There will be trades-offs between maximising income and reducing risk or vulnerability (DFID, 1999).

Livelihood Strategies

Depending on the assets that people have access to and control over, the policy, institution and processes that impact on them, culture and tradition, and the vulnerability context under which they operate, people choose livelihood strategies that will best provide them with the outcomes that they aspire to. 'Livelihood strategies are composed of activities that generate the means of household survival' (Ellis, 2000: 40). Livelihood strategies are not static, they will change as the external environment (over which people have little control) alters, as policies, institutions and processes shift and evolve, as access to and control over assets change, and as opportunities arise. Sometimes unsustainable and unproductive livelihood strategies continue because of tradition and habit, at other times livelihood activities are introduced as coping strategies in difficult times.

Scoones (1998: 9) identifies three types of livelihood strategies. Firstly, 'agricultural intensification/extensification' meaning using natural resources for agriculture as a

livelihood strategy either by intensifying resource use or bringing more land into use. Secondly Scoones (1998: 9) identifies livelihood diversification as a livelihood strategy, meaning that people develop a wide income portfolio (temporary or permanent) either to cope with adverse conditions or for accumulation and reinvestment. Thirdly Scoones (1998: 9) identifies migration, including migration for income generation and also to generate remittances. However, Nowak (2003: 295-297) points out that livelihood diversification occurs for a range of reasons other than as a coping strategy. She notes that Hma' Btsisi' people of Malaysia diversify their livelihoods in order to take advantage of new opportunities, due to individual initiatives, due to seasonality, for resource conservation and to allocate work amongst household members. Furthermore, 'livelihood diversification' as a category, cuts across all livelihood activities, both subsistence and commercial, and both agricultural and non agricultural. Perhaps because of this, Carney (1998: 5) lists these categories of livelihood strategies as natural resource based, non natural resource based and migration, while Ellis (2000: 30), in his framework, categorises livelihood strategies as natural resource based activities or non-natural resource based activities (including remittances and other transfers).

Understanding the diverse and dynamic livelihood strategies is important so that support can be directed appropriately. Clearly, introducing new activities and strategies is an option in rural development but where new higher income earning strategies replace traditional activities there may be a trade-off between higher short term income and long term security. For example, Perez Izadi and Cahn (2000) describe a project in rural Mexico where fruit growing was introduced as a new livelihood strategy, together with a system for storing water and irrigating. However, when local people received payment for working on the project they rejected traditional livelihood strategies, and began to lose the associated skills. Because the fruit project was risky, the irrigation system unsustainable in the long term, and traditional skills were lost, the project resulted in the recipients becoming more vulnerable than they were previously.

Vulnerability context

People's livelihoods and their access and control of resources can be affected by events largely beyond their control. Glavovic et al (2003: 290) suggest that these events are 'disturbances' which could be environmental, economic, social or ecological and vary

in 'intensity, scale, location, duration and character'. They can be external or internal and coping with these disturbances is a normal part of every day life.

Firstly the vulnerability context includes the external environment in which people exist (DFID, 1997: 13). For example: trends in population growth, national and international economics, natural resources, politics and technology; sudden shocks or events such as health problems, earthquakes, floods, droughts, conflict, agricultural problems such as pests and disease or economic shocks; and seasonal vulnerability of prices, production, employment opportunities or health can impact on livelihoods (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 14-16, DFID, 1997: 13).

Secondly, the vulnerability context is about how people cope with and adapt to stresses and shocks. Strategies include stint, hoard, protect, deplete, diversify, claim and migrate (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 15). Adapting entails a long term change in behaviour such as diversification of livelihood strategies or migration, whereas coping is short term strategies such as stinting or hoarding (UNDP, 1999: 6). However, when people are less able to 'adapt' to the disturbances (for example when people are subjected to poverty) the changing circumstances can be experienced as 'waves of adversity' (Glavovic et al, 2003: 290). Poor people's livelihoods can be very fragile and they are often unable to cope with disturbances, stresses and sudden shocks. It is important to understand the vulnerability context within each livelihood system so that interventions and new livelihood strategies make the livelihoods of poor people more secure rather than exposing them to further unreasonable risk and vulnerability as in the example in Mexico explained in the previous section (Perez Izadi and Cahn, 2000).

Resilience is the ability to deal with disturbances, stresses and shocks (Glavovic et al 2003: 290). Resilience is a 'layered' concept, layered in that the resilience of individuals, households, communities, ethnic groups and even nations, changes over time, and may be socially differentiated. When livelihood assets are depleted, or institutions are unable to adapt to change, livelihood strategies become risky, and resilience decreases leading to increased vulnerability. Glavovic et al (2002: 290-291) note that 'layers of resilience can be thickened' by 'retaining ecological resilience, building social capital and reinforcing cultural capital', while Nowak (2003: 297) suggests that livelihood resilience can be based on livelihood diversification.

Approaches and frameworks compared

The approaches of IDS, DFID, CARE, Oxfam, UNDP and Ellis are similar yet have some fundamental differences. A table comparing the six different approaches, and providing further details, is in Appendix 1. The formalised approaches are based on literature from a range of different authors, and the frameworks that model and describe the approaches are named differently (Appendix 1). All the frameworks use the word 'livelihood' in their name, and all except CARE and Ellis use the word 'sustainable'. The IDS, DFID and the Ellis framework are specific to rural livelihoods whereas the others are more general.

The definitions of a livelihood are quite similar to the DFID definitions as discussed in a previous section in this chapter. However, the CARE and Oxfam models, which take their definitions from Chambers and Conway (1992: 7-8) suggest that a sustainable livelihood should be able to provide 'opportunities for the next generation' and 'contribute net benefits to other livelihoods at local and global levels in the short and long term', whereas the UNDP definition suggests that opportunities and resources must not be used in ways that 'foreclose options for others making a living' (Singh and Gilman, 1999: 540). The origins of the approaches are also similar and all the organisations mentioned in this section, have introduced the approach during the 1990s.

The different frameworks deal with linkages in different ways. The IDS framework is linear with two way arrows to indicate the components are linked both ways, the DFID frameworks display linkages between the components and indicate the impact of outcomes on assets, the CARE linkages are vague whereas the Oxfam framework is very similar to that of DFID. Ellis's framework is linear with words describing the linkages.

Culture is dealt with in different ways in the frameworks and approaches. The IDS framework does not specifically mention culture, while the early DFID framework places culture under the vulnerability context. In the later DFID framework and in the Oxfam framework culture is under transforming structures and processes (now called policies, institutions and processes in the DFID framework). UNDP does not specifically mention culture and Ellis deals with it under rules, customs and land tenure (under institutions that can modify access to assets). None of these 'single entry' ways of representing culture in sustainable livelihoods, and in the frameworks, is appropriate.

In the CARE framework culture is listed under the ‘context’ of livelihoods, and as an ‘environment’, along with political and economic environments, within which livelihoods exist. This seems more realistic, and this notion is explored in detail later in this chapter, where the issue of culture and the sustainable livelihoods approach is addressed.

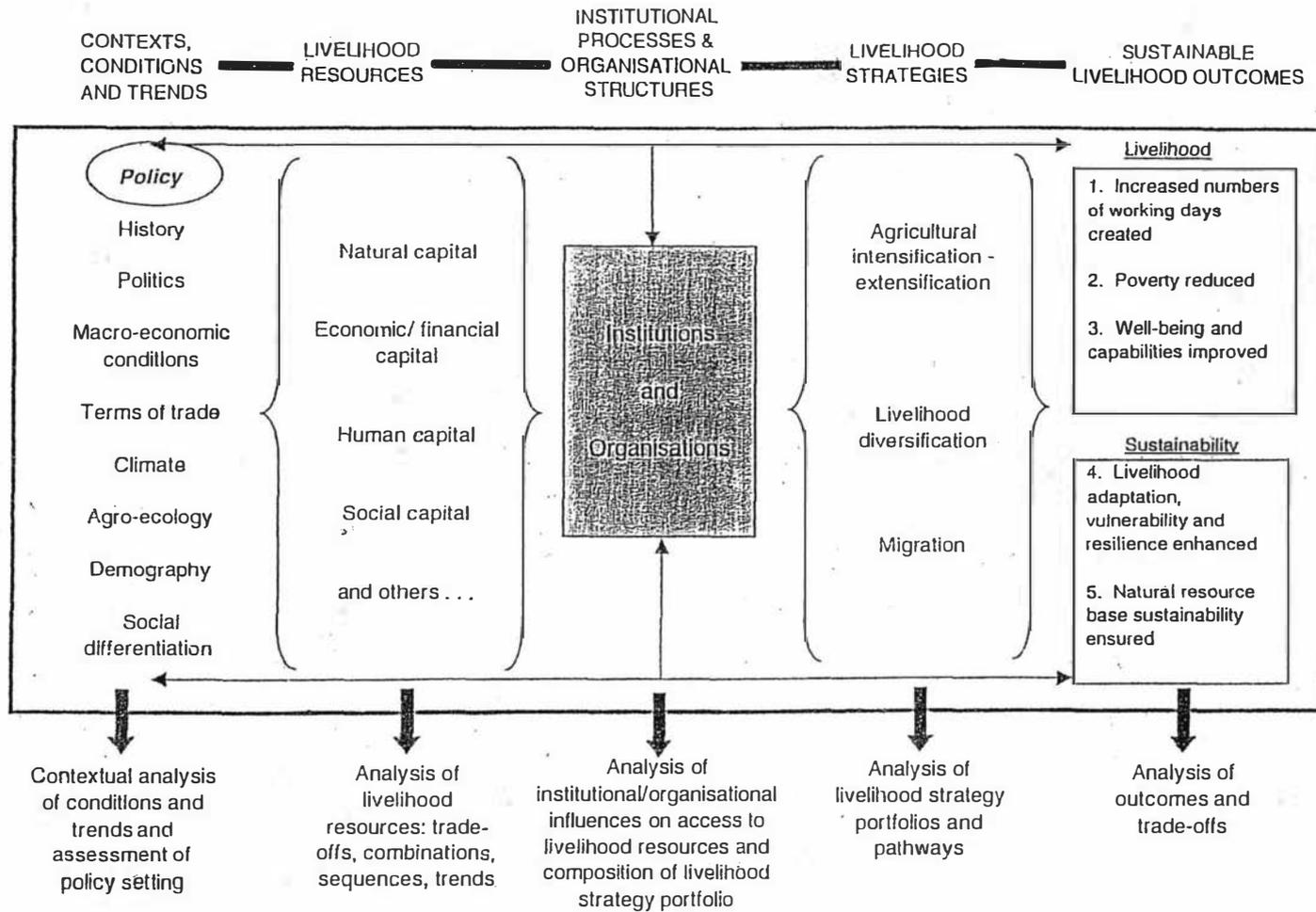
The different organisations and authors also have slightly different understandings of sustainability in terms of livelihoods. Most refer to livelihood sustainability in terms of coping with stresses and shocks, or in terms of livelihood security. Most also refer to livelihood sustainability in terms of maintaining (or enhancing) the natural resource base (or the environment). Only the Oxfam and UNDP models specifically mention social, institutional and economic sustainability in addition to the other aspects.

Finally the approaches are focussed at different levels of activity by the different authors and organisations. While the IDS, DFID and Ellis models specifically emphasise the micro-level (individual, household and village), as well as the macro-level, The CARE, Oxfam and UNDP models focus more on the micro-level while recognising the importance of macro-micro links.

The frameworks describing the approaches are displayed in Figures 2.5 – 2.9 however UNDP has no specific framework to describe their approach to sustainable livelihoods.

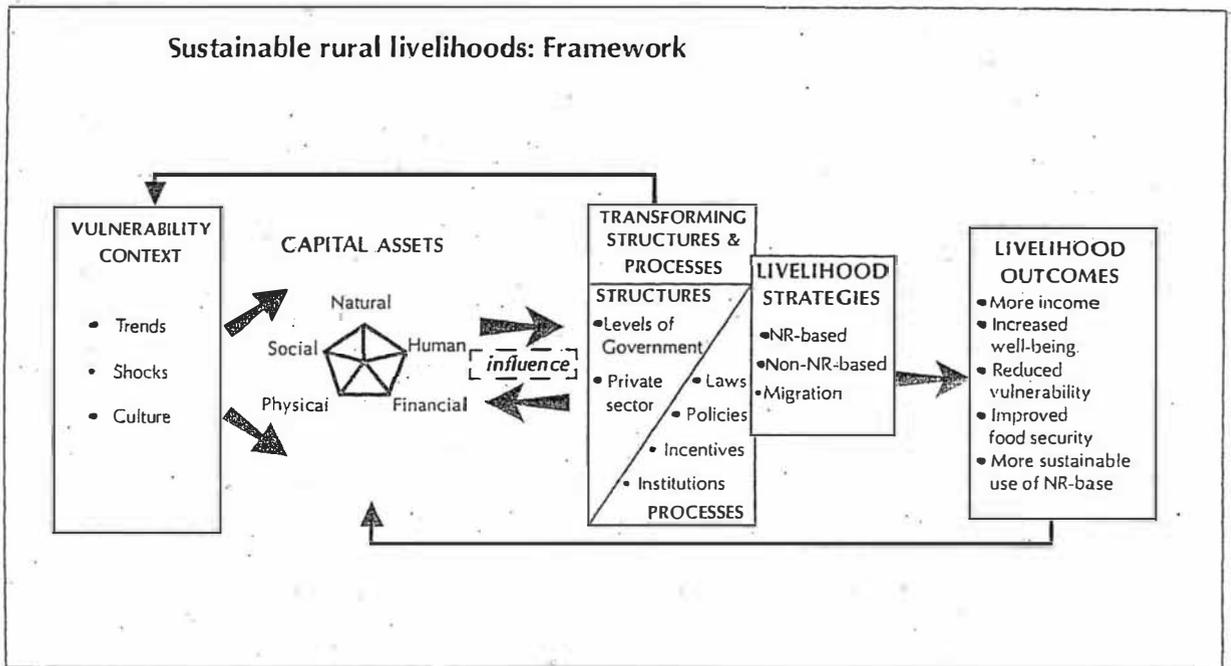
Figure 2.5 IDS sustainable rural livelihoods framework

Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis

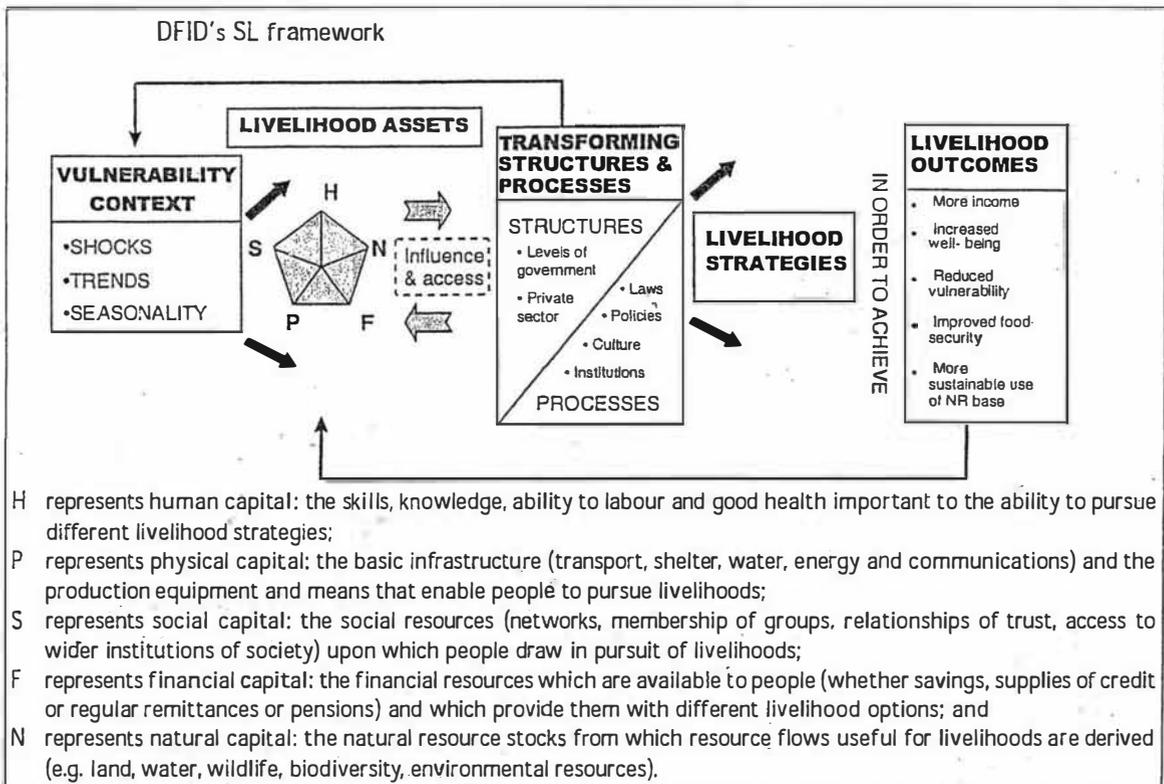


Source: Scoones (1998: 4)

Figure 2.6 DFID sustainable livelihoods frameworks

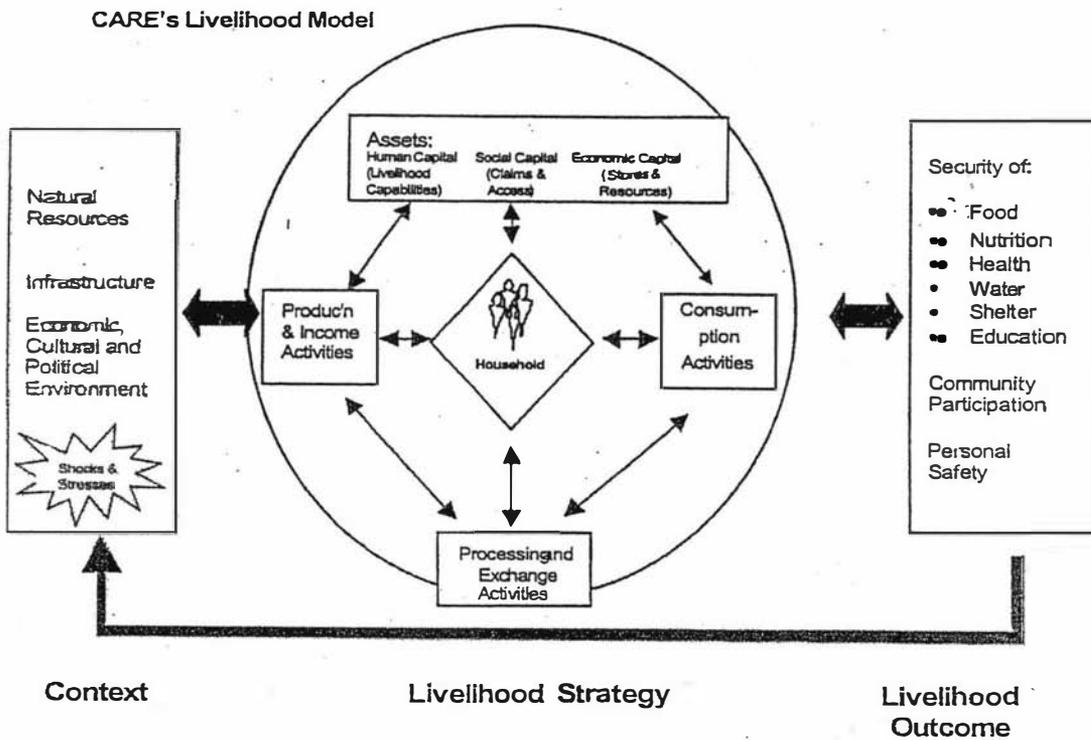


Source: Carney (1998: 5)



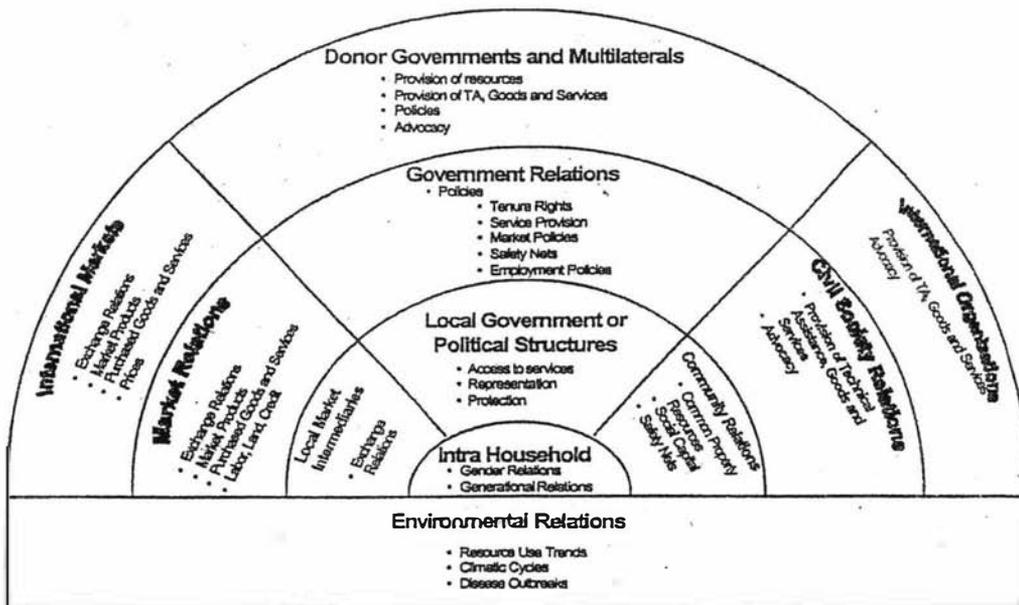
Source: DFID (1999: 11), Farrington et al (1999: 2)

Figure 2.7 Care livelihood frameworks



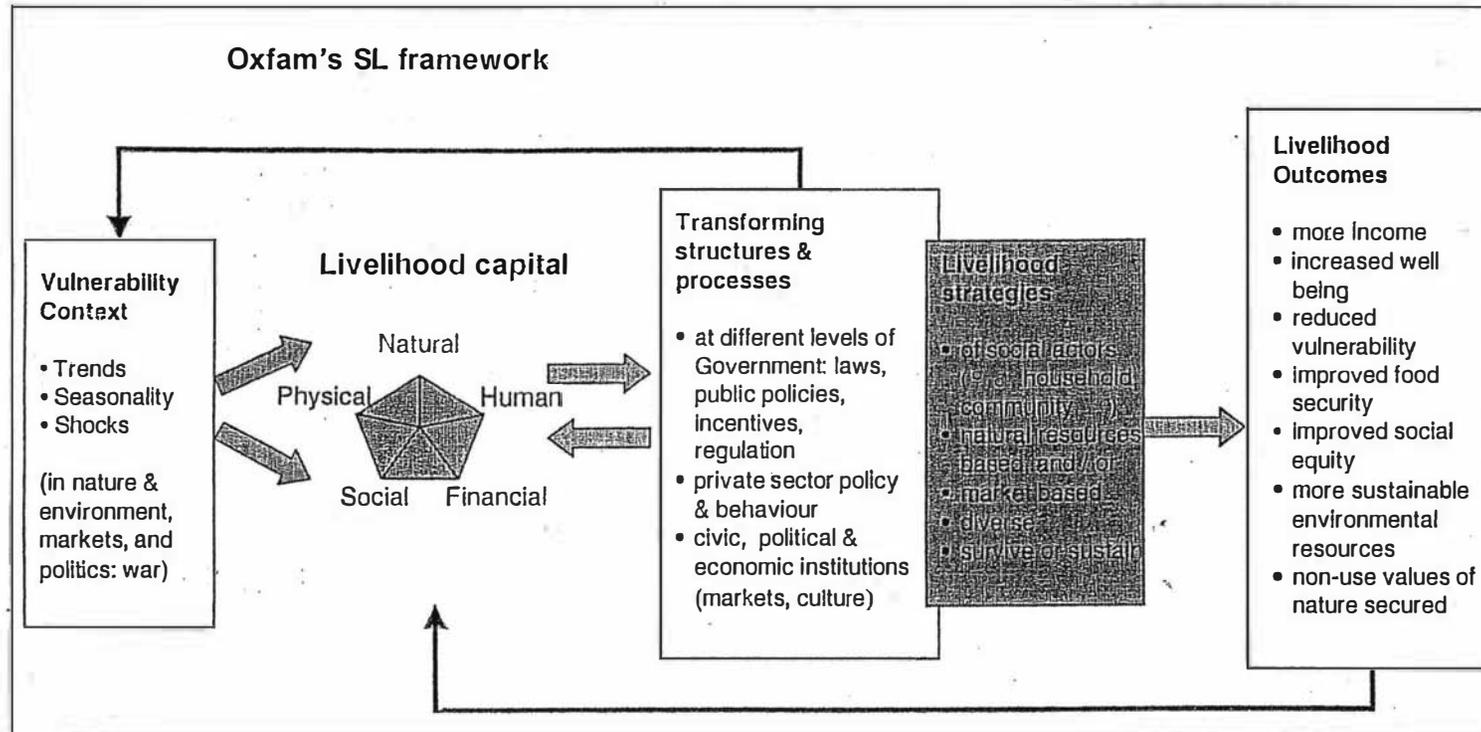
After Swift 1989, Drinkwater 1994, Drinkwater and Frankenberger, 1999, Camey 1998

Internal and External Factors That Influence Household Livelihood Security (Social, Economic, Political and Environmental Context)



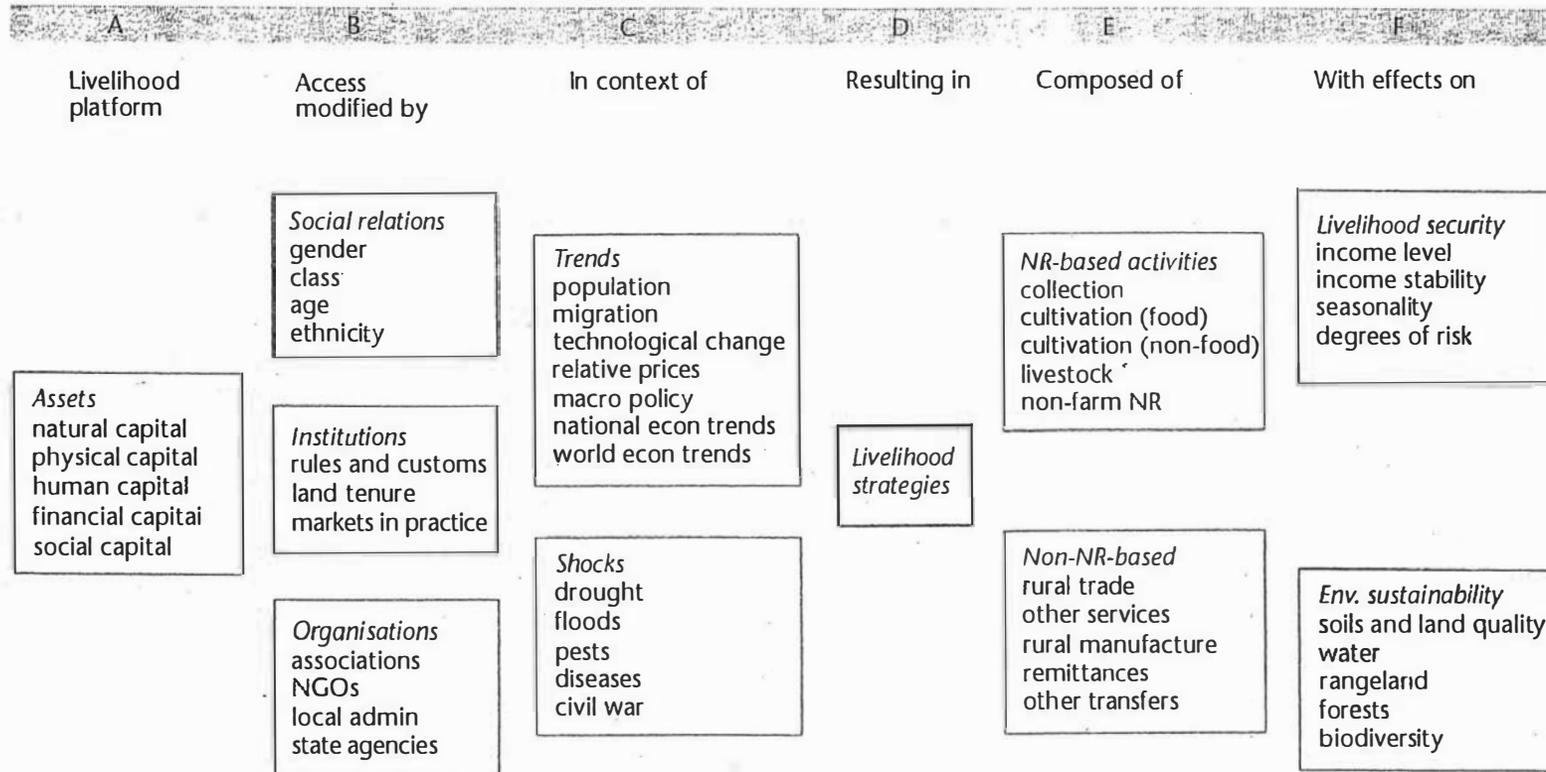
Source: Drinkwater and Rusinow (1999: 2-3)

Figure 2.8 Oxfam sustainable livelihoods framework



Source: Carney (1999b: 11)

Figure 2.9 Ellis livelihood framework



A framework for micro policy analysis of rural livelihoods

Source: adapted from Scoones (1998: 4) and D. Carney (1998: 5).

Source: Ellis (2000: 30)

Key features and strengths of the sustainable livelihoods approach

The sustainable livelihoods approach is people-centred in that it is based on the perspective of individuals, households or communities, analysing their livelihoods and how these have changed over time. The approach is 'inherently responsive to people's own interpretation of and priorities for their livelihoods' (Carney, 1998: 4). It is potentially participatory in that it can fully involve people, not only in the analysis of their situation, but in their determination of, and control over, their future strategies. As Chambers (1988 : 15) explains, 'it is by starting with the priorities of the poorer and enabling them to gain the livelihoods they want and need, that both they and sustainable development can be best served'. Purdie (1996: 69) suggests that 'the analysis of livelihoods necessarily begins with the local people: the situations they face, their needs, and the strategies they employ to contrive a livelihood and cope with adversity'.

However, the level and usefulness of participation in the sustainable livelihoods approach depends on the way in which the approach is used. As in other participatory methods and processes, participation that truly allows people to have control over and direct their own 'development' requires greater change than simply adhering to an approach or methodology. For example, Craig and Porter (1997: 229-236), point out that there have been efforts by development organisations to make development projects more participatory, by introducing participatory methods such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA), participatory processes and decentralisation. Craig and Porter (1997: 292) suggest that effective management of projects and participation are in fact contradictory, and that through their inherent dominance, projects, organisations and professionals use participatory processes as new forms of management and control that do not result in any benefits for project participants.

The sustainable livelihoods approach takes a realistic view of poverty which includes both 'ends' and 'means' perspectives. The sustainable livelihoods approach examines what poverty means to people by identifying the desired livelihoods outcomes of the poor people. These outcomes could include tangibles such as food, money, education and health but could also include intangible outcomes such as improved status, increased choices and reduced vulnerability. This is viewing poverty as an 'end'. The sustainable livelihoods approach works to support people in achieving their own

livelihood goals. The approach considers the asset status of the people with the view that support could include raising the asset status or enabling assets to be used more productively. It focuses on policy and institutional aspects that influence people and households and stresses the importance of promotion of the agenda of the poor (by poor people themselves) (DFID, 1997: 6). This is a 'means' perspective of poverty. The approach is positive in that it identifies what people have and how these assets can be used or enhanced rather than focusing on impediments or constraints in terms of what people do not have or their needs (Carney, 1998: 7, Helmore, 1998: 7, DFID, 1997: 6, Ellis, 2000: 28). The livelihoods approach allows for a much more realistic picture of rural life and rural poverty to be projected. It recognises the complexity of rural life (Singh and Gilman, 1999: 541, Carney, 1999a: 1). Recent studies reveal that most rural households rely on a range of income sources and livelihoods strategies including use of natural resources and micro-enterprises, but also migration, working in the cities and the receiving of remittances (Ellis, 1998: 4, Helmore, 1998: 9, Leones and Feldman, 1998: 789, Scoones, 1998: 9-10, Carney, 1999a: 4). The emphasis on agricultural and natural resource development to the exclusion of other livelihood support is therefore unrealistic in rural poverty reduction (Carney, 1999a: 4), and thus the consideration of other livelihood strategies (such as micro-enterprise) is important in terms of supporting rural sustainable livelihoods.

The approach is holistic in that it attempts to 'gain a realistic understanding of what shapes people's livelihoods and how the various influencing factors can be adjusted so that, taken together, they produce more beneficial livelihood outcomes' (DFID, 1999: 5). The approach emphasises social, economic and environmental aspects of rural life, organising factors that constrain or provide opportunities to the rural poor and showing how these relate to each other. It is a way of thinking about livelihoods that is manageable and holistic (DFID, 1999: 5). As well as being holistic in the integration of social, economic and environmental factors, the sustainable livelihoods approach is non-sectoral and is applicable across geographic areas and social groups (Scoones, 1998: 14, Carney, 1999a: 4, DFID, 1999: 5) although the emphasis of some factors will be context specific.

The focus is often at the micro level (an individual, a household, a village, a business or a community). However, the sustainable livelihoods approach can also highlight the

impact of macro policies (community, regional or government) on the micro level. In this respect the approach is multi-dimensional in that it can focus on the relationships between 'levels' of society and identify factors that may restrict the mobilisation and efficient use of assets. The approach therefore emphasises the importance of macro-level policy and institutions to the livelihoods of the rural poor and the importance of policy formulation being based on the reality of local people. Most development activity tends to focus on either the macro or the micro, the sustainable livelihoods approach attempts to bridge this gap (Scoones, 1998: 12-13, Carney, 1999a: 5, DFID, 1999: 6, Singh and Gilman, 1999: 541, Ellis, 2000: 28-29).

Understanding changes, external factors and trends that may be out of the control of local people (such as population trends, macroeconomic trends, climatic change or market trends), and factoring these into the livelihoods analysis is an important part of the sustainable livelihoods approach (DFID, 1997: 6). The approach recognises that people change their coping and adapting strategies, and the livelihood activities in response to changes in circumstances. The approach also emphasises livelihood assets, strategies, and outcomes as well as institutional processes. Thus multiple entry points for intervention can be identified, from supporting access to assets to providing 'enabling environments' for sustainable livelihoods by getting the institutional and organisational setting right (Scoones, 1998: 14).

Sustainability is central to people achieving secure livelihoods. Sustainability is seen in a wider context than just the preservation of the natural environment. The approach distinguishes between social, economic, environmental and institutional sustainability. Livelihoods are considered to be sustainable when they are resilient to external shocks and stresses, are not dependant on external help (unless the help is economically and institutionally sustainable), maintain or enhance the long term productivity of natural resources, capabilities, and other assets, do not undermine the livelihoods of, or compromise the livelihood options open to others (DFID, 1999: 7). Reducing vulnerability and increasing the sustainability of the livelihoods of the poor is seen as a priority (Carney, 1999a: 4-5).

Purpose and usefulness of sustainable livelihoods approach

In terms of the way in which the sustainable livelihoods approach is used in practice, the approach has evolved in three ways: first as a goal or ideal which is to be achieved, second as a framework for analysis, and thirdly as a set of principles (Toner and Franks, 2006: 82).

First, as a goal to be achieved, definitions of sustainable livelihoods discussed earlier in this chapter describe a state where livelihoods outcomes are achieved and well-being is enhanced. A 'sustainable livelihood' can be used to refer to an ideal state to be achieved through development intervention.

As a framework for analysis, the sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking, and an analytical structure that helps practitioners and theorists to understand the reality of the poor and the complexity of rural life by identifying and clarifying the factors and linkages involved in rural livelihoods (Scoones, 1998: 14-15, Farrington et al, 1999: 1, DFID, 1999: 1). As a way of thinking, and a basis for analysis, the sustainable livelihoods framework can be useful in a range of situations, both research and development practice.

The sustainable livelihoods theory and the conceptual frameworks provide institutions, agencies, development practitioners, partner organisations and researchers with common points of reference for discussion and analysis. Sustainable livelihoods concepts can encourage integration across disciplines (Turton, 2001). Using the factors and linkages in the frameworks, constraints, opportunities, ways to improve policy, institutions and process, and ways to reduce vulnerability can be identified and appropriate interventions identified. For example, the DFID approach aims to promote sustainable livelihoods through direct support to 'contribute to the robustness of and increase opportunities available to individuals/groups/communities by building up their assets' – either inclusive (for example education programmes) or focused (for example micro-finance for women) (Carney, 1998: 12). The DFID approach also promotes support for the more effective functioning of policies, institutions and processes that influence access to assets, and also addresses which livelihood strategies are open to different people. This links to 'enabling actions' which support policies and context for poverty reduction (Carney, 1998: 12).

Furthermore, because the sustainable livelihoods approach (as a framework for analysis), focuses on both the local level and the macro level, it can be useful in formulating government policies that will provide an enabling environment and encourage the development and sustaining of local livelihood initiatives. For example, the sustainable livelihoods approach was used in a study to identify options for a programme to support rural livelihoods in Cambodia. The study was used in the development of a country strategy paper. One element of the study was a focus on external structures and processes that influence livelihoods of the poor. It appeared that there was a lack of external structures and policies, and virtually no connection between ministries at central level, and rural people. There were gaps in land law and ineffective implementation of existing legislation. There were almost no public services. Donor efforts have concentrated on strengthening the legislative, policy and institutional framework (Turton, 2000: 24)

As a framework for analysis, the sustainable livelihoods approach is also useful for reviewing and evaluating projects and programmes. For example, an evaluation of butterfly farming in Kenya, using the sustainable livelihoods approach, identified improvements in income, and support for livelihood diversification, but also highlighted less security and more exposure to vulnerability because the new enterprise was more risky. This explained the poor level of participation by farmers. Project impacts were assessed according to all the elements of the sustainable livelihoods framework highlighting positive and negative impacts on assets, trade-off with other activities and links between the farmers and institutions such as the Forest Department. In contrast, an earlier review only concentrated on income from butterfly farming, compared with income from agriculture. The conclusion of this earlier review, that the impact of the butterfly farming was positive in economic terms, was narrow and missed some of the most important points (Farrington et al 1999: 4).

Similarly, an evaluation of a project to bring irrigation to a Mexican rural community in 1999 used the DFID sustainable livelihoods framework as a basis for analysis. This provided an understanding of the whole livelihood system of the community rather than narrowly focusing on the irrigation project. The evaluation showed that the project was socially and economically unsustainable. The project increased the vulnerability of the community as it concentrated on the development of fruit crops that were non

traditional and risky. The community benefited in the short term as they were paid for their work in the development project but the project work was at the expense of traditional livelihood activities where skills were being lost (Perez Izadi and Cahn, 2000: 47).

Researchers can use the approach and frameworks as a checklist for factors to study and as a map for linking important factors. The framework can be used to structure the research, as a basis for selecting methods for obtaining research data (Brock, 2000: 6-10), and as a framework for research analysis (Perez Izadi and Cahn, 2000: 26). For example, Brock (2000) undertook research in Mali the aim of which was to provide information on poverty and environmental sustainability to policy makers both in Mali and in the trans-national donor community. She used the elements of the sustainable livelihoods framework to organise her research in terms of the questions she needed to answer and the methods she would use to find the answers. 'The framework served as a checklist for data gathering, a route map for searching for possible linkages between different parts of the livelihood system, and a guide for planning each step of the research' (Brock, 2000: 6).

Finally, the features of the sustainable livelihoods approach offer principles that frame the process of development intervention. As the approach has evolved, so too has a set of principles that are deemed important for putting the sustainable livelihoods approach into practice (Toner and Franks, 2006: 82). These principles include aspects such as a focus on the poor, participation, partnership, holistic approach, policy and institutional linkages, building on strengths, flexibility, accountability and responsiveness, and sustainability (Toner and Franks, 2006: 83).

The livelihoods frameworks, despite their variations, have a common origin and a common basis and provide commonality between organisations in terms of the overall aim of poverty reduction. The approach and the frameworks can be used in rural development planning, action, monitoring and evaluation. For example, DFID-India is working in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh supporting the country's watershed development programme in an effort to eliminate poverty. Principles and concepts based on the sustainable livelihoods approach have been incorporated into the process. Turton (2001: 1) notes that 'sustainable livelihoods perspectives broadened outlook and forced design teams to think about what the study findings revealed about why the poor

struggle to secure a livelihood'. In Andhra Pradesh the government already had a clear vision of their involvement in the programme. In this case the sustainable livelihoods perspectives were used to help DFID clarify its own priorities and ensure the partners' approaches were consistent with DFID's priorities (Turton, 2001).

However, while suggesting principles on which to base intervention, the sustainable livelihoods approach does not dictate how these principles should be included, rather it is assumed existing tools will be used to support the sustainable livelihoods approach. Indeed the success of using the approach for development practice heavily depends on just how projects are implemented, as much as the sustainable livelihoods rhetoric of their planning and design.

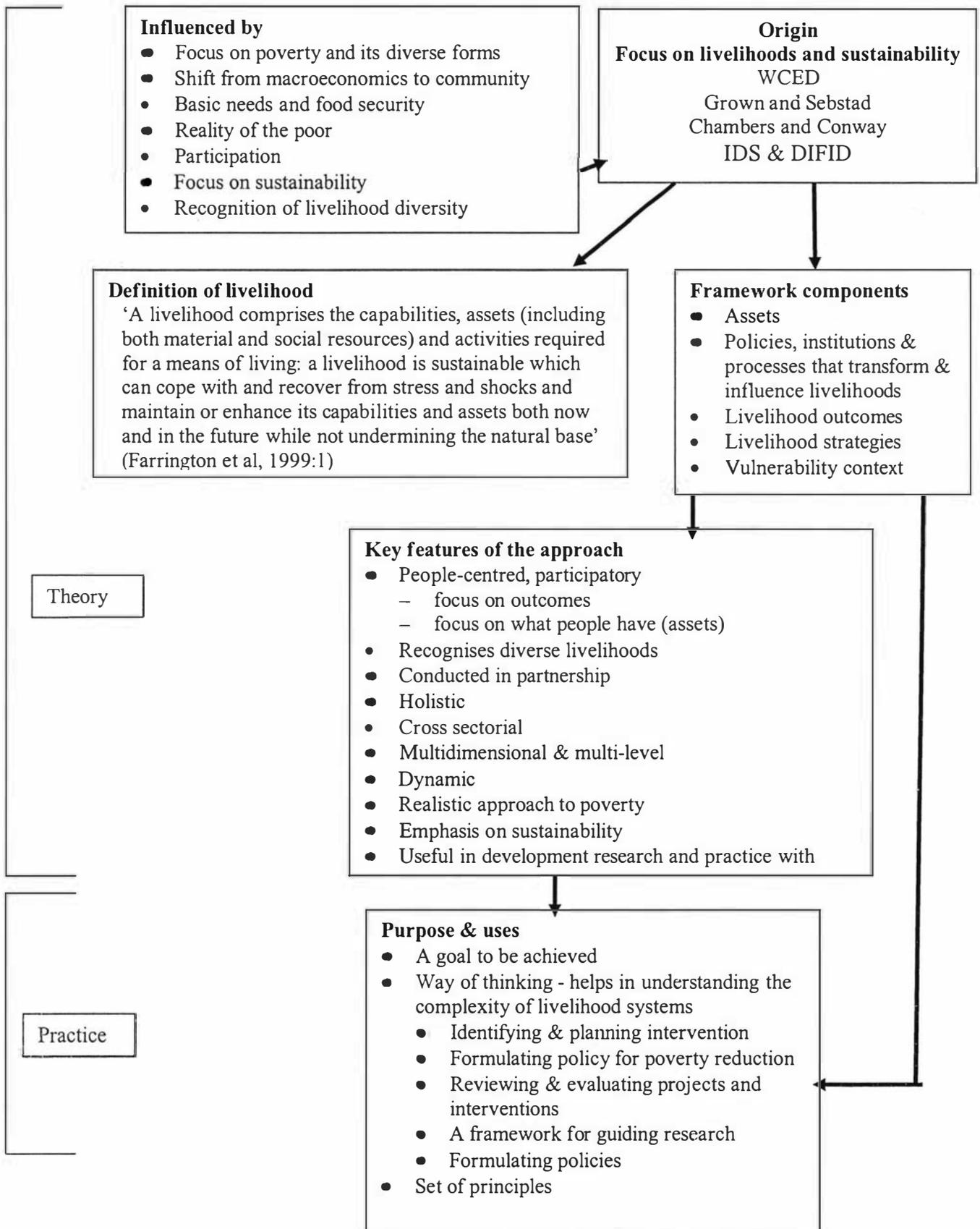
The way in which the sustainable livelihoods approach is used is varied. Researchers and development practitioners can use the sustainable livelihoods approach and frameworks to define normative goals, and as a way of thinking to understand and analyse the complex systems in which poor people struggle to attain livelihoods. The approach can provide a framework for monitoring and evaluating projects, to identify interventions, and as a guide for research. A set of principles has emerged as the theory and discourse has evolved, but the sustainable livelihoods approach does not go as far as to dictate how these principles should be implemented. While the people centred and holistic nature of the theory could encompass a participatory and empowering course of development, this depends on just how the theory and framework are used.

Summary – sustainable livelihoods approach

The theory and practice of the sustainable livelihood approach, as discussed in the previous sections, is summarised in Figure 2.10.

Figure 2.10, compiled by the author, summarises the influences, the origin and the definition of the sustainable livelihoods approach. Figure 2.10 also summarises the framework components, the key features of the theory, and the purposes and uses of the sustainable livelihoods approach.

Figure 2.10 Theory and practice of sustainable livelihoods approach



Critique and concerns – sustainable livelihoods approach

The sustainable livelihoods approach, in its diverse forms, has been accepted by a number of organisations, government, non-government and multi-lateral, as a basis for development research and practice. The similarities and level of agreement amongst the writers and organisations that have been involved with the approach is remarkable. However, while this approach already has, and is likely to have further significant impact on rural development in the future, there have been concerns raised, and there are differences of opinion over what is or is not important to include in the conceptual frameworks that have been and are being developed. Equally important and just as controversial is the way that the frameworks describe and portray the relationships between the factors. While some of these issues may seem trivial when we consider the wider picture, it is important that the frameworks accurately describe, and are appropriate for, the context in which they are used.

One of the dangers of this type of approach is that by representing the reality and complexity of a livelihood system in a simple and logical way, the relationships between the factors and the relative importance of some aspects are lost. Most of the research and use of the approach has so far been carried out in Asia and Africa, little work has been published on the Pacific. The nature of poverty in the Pacific Islands is very different to Asia and Africa, and the influence of culture and the traditional sector is very strong in the Pacific Islands. The approach is in its early days at this stage and further benefits and disadvantages will emerge over time. However, the following concerns and critiques are already evident and could limit the usefulness and impact of the approach.

One of the major concerns is that the sustainable livelihoods approach is too complex and difficult to implement. In this respect it could have the same problems as the Integrated Rural Development approach of the 1970s (Carney, 1999a: 5, DFID, 1999: 10) that attempted to establish integrated programmes in rural areas that addressed multiple issues such as agricultural support, health, education and the building of infrastructure. The sustainable livelihoods approach is similar to the Integrated Rural Development approach in that it works across sectors, and is rural and community-based. However, intervention in the sustainable livelihoods approach can be selective, and it is acknowledged that not all the constraints and possible support mechanisms

identified may be able to be addressed in the short term. The strength of the sustainable livelihoods approach is that it provides a holistic understanding of the livelihood system so that the likely impact of selective intervention on that system can be predicted. Furthermore the sustainable livelihoods approach is participatory and focused on local people's perceptions whereas Integrated Rural Development is largely donor-driven and top-down (DFID, 1997: 10, Helmore, 1998: 7, Carney, 1999a: 3, Helmore and Singh, 2001).

The holistic nature of the approach and recognition of the complexity of rural life may also encourage enormous amounts of information to be gathered in an initial analysis which, while adding to the understanding of the situation, may be costly and result in little real change (Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999: 20). The right level of detail is important, and data needs to be 'critically analysed with relevance to livelihoods' (Carney 2002: 19). Furthermore, sometimes people 'miss the point' of the approach and simply 'go through the motions' using the headings without understanding the holistic nature of the approach (Carney 2002: 20).

There is concern 'that the approach is over ambitious and offers insufficient practical guidance on the way forward' (Carney, 1999a: 5). In 1999 it was suggested that until there were clear guidelines on how to use the frameworks and more case studies describing how the approach was used, there would continue to be confusion and criticism (Carney, 1999a: 6). By 2002, numerous case studies and practical example have provided a clearer picture of the issues and areas of concern. Some users would prefer more specific methodologies and tools for each step of the approach, but others who are perhaps more familiar with the approach, feel comfortable using a wide range of existing methodologies within the overall thinking of the sustainable livelihoods approach. Some have suggested developing new methodologies for specific uses of the approach such as the preparation of poverty reduction strategies papers, market analysis or for using the approach in disaster situation (Carney, 2002: 20).

The sustainable livelihoods approach is designed to work across sectors. However, in reality, most government institutions and organisations are operated and funded on a sector basis. Thus few projects and programmes cut across sectors (Carney, 1999a: 6, Singh and Gilman, 1999: 543). It is still possible to apply the sustainable livelihoods approach within a sector by analysing the whole situation first, and then focusing on the

particular factors that apply to the sector in question. Even when the framework is not used in a formalised way, many of the elements of the framework are useful for identifying and implementing appropriate interventions. For example Arnold (1998: 155) when discussing forestry and sustainable rural livelihoods, analyses the 'contributions that outputs from forest and tree resources can make to livelihood outcomes' in terms of increased income, increased well-being, reduced vulnerability and more sustainable use of the natural resource base (Arnold, 1998: 155). NGO's such as Oxfam and CARE are holistic in their approach, often working with communities where the sustainable livelihoods approach can cut across sectors (Carney, 1999b).

There are difficulties in 'establishing the link between micro realities and macro policies' (Singh and Gilman, 1999: 543). It is sometimes difficult to persuade development agencies, NGO's and practitioners who are used to working at the 'micro' local level to consider the structures and processes that make up the wider 'macro' environment (Singh and Gilman, 1999: 543).

The sustainable livelihoods approach diverts the emphasis on rural development away from agricultural support as the main strategy. While agriculture is clearly very important in rural life, it is also clear that many livelihoods depend on non agricultural activities and these activities may also need support. Some organisations and donors such as the European Commission, United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) are concerned about the separation of rural development and agriculture. They regard agriculture as extremely important, especially as the world's population grows and more and more food is required (Carney, 1999a: 6).

The danger of basing analysis on a framework is that if there are deficiencies in the framework, or items left out to avoid complexity, then in strictly following the structure of the framework some important issues may be ignored. For example while participation is stressed explicitly in the approach it is not specified in the frameworks. There is no mention of gender in the frameworks except for Ellis (2000: 30) who lists gender, class, age, and ethnicity under 'social relations'. Culture is ignored in some of the frameworks. Neefjes (1999: 1) suggests that a weakness of the approach is that there are limited references to gender and development, political ecology, social exclusion and other theoretical work. Explicit reference to markets is missing from the

sustainable livelihoods approach (Hobley, 2001: 10). Clearly, the sustainable livelihoods frameworks cannot include everything. However, on the other hand, it is critical that the frameworks do not ignore important issues just because they add to the complexity. Furthermore, the importance of some issues differs in different contexts, and this needs to be taken into account.

There has been some concern that the sustainable livelihoods approach does not adequately address the structure and functioning of markets, despite issues surrounding markets often being raised during sustainable livelihoods analysis and livelihoods often existing in the private sector (Amalric, 1998: 37, Carney, 2002: 15). One approach to incorporating markets is to perceive markets as institutions, and a network of relationships, and consider the role that the state has in this (Amalric, 1998: 37). Existing market analysis methodologies (such as supply chain, or value-chain analysis) can be used within the framework of the sustainable livelihoods approach (Carney, 2002: 15) to better understand the relationships and power structures within the market environment.

One of the problems of using the framework as a checklist and map for analysis is that the linkages between the factors are barely considered. In fact in two of the frameworks (Figures 2.5 and 2.9) (Scoones, 1998: 4, Ellis, 2000: 30) the framework is assumed to be linear with no feed back or other relationships. This is clearly unrealistic. For example, the outcomes that occur from the livelihood strategies have a direct impact on the access to assets and resources. The change in asset status will then determine new livelihood strategies or will sustain (or improve) existing strategies. For example, improved food security will impact on human capital giving households better health and improved labour resources, increased income will provide financial capital to initiate new livelihood strategies. In short, the feedback that occurs as people consider how their livelihood strategies are achieving their desired outcomes and impacting on their assets and resources will determine future livelihood strategies.

Culture and the sustainable livelihoods approach

The sustainable livelihood frameworks, and literature associated with the approach, make scarce reference to cultural aspects, despite a number of authors noting that sustainable livelihoods analyses need to take more account of gender, age, ethnicity and

class (e.g. Bebbington, 1999, Ellis, 2000, Glavovic et al, 2003) or that aspects of cultural sustainability are important to sustainable development (e.g. Overton et al, 1999, Clark, 2002, Glavovic et al, 2003). A sustainable livelihoods framework has the potential to incorporate cultural aspects. The people-centred, holistic, participatory and flexible nature of the approach implies that where culture is influenced by, or influential to, the livelihood system then those aspects should be considered. In this section I discuss how culture has been perceived and interpreted in the sustainable livelihoods literature, and argue that while each of these perspectives is valid and useful in expanding our understanding of the relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods, none of the perspectives, on their own, adequately builds culture into the sustainable livelihoods approach. Furthermore, there are aspects of the relationship between culture and sustainable livelihoods that have not been addressed in the literature about sustainable livelihoods, and these aspects are highlighted in this section.

Culture, capitals and assets

Much of the emphasis on sustainability of livelihoods (especially in the early years of the approach) has been on environmental sustainability. The focus on environmental sustainability, and the linking of environmental issues with livelihoods (WWCED, 1987a: 3) was a major influence on the development of the sustainable livelihoods approach. Early definitions of sustainable livelihoods emphasised natural resources (Scoones, 1998: 5) and much of the early work in sustainable livelihoods was directed towards agriculture and natural resource based livelihoods. As thinking about sustainable development, and the sustainable livelihoods approach evolved, more emphasis was placed on the sustainability of a range of assets and resources, in particular financial and social (Bebbington, 1999: 2022, Overton et al, 1999: 265, Carney, 1998) although culture was generally overlooked in the literature about the range of assets and resources important for sustainable livelihoods. However, a number of authors have put forward the notion that sustaining the cultural essence of people's existence and the cultural relationships people have with natural (environmental), social and other types of resources, is a vital part of sustainable development. Overton et al (1999: 266) suggest that expanding the three perspectives on sustainable development (environmental, financial and social) to include a fourth, culture, could support sustainable development in the Pacific Islands, and (Glavovic et al, 2003) note that preserving culture should be perceived to be as important as preserving bio-diversity, or

improving financial capital. Development is a 'cultural process', and cultural and social resources can be eroded and depleted with inappropriate development interventions (Clark, 2002:123). Clark (2002: 124) notes that just as with physical environments, 'structures of meaning' can also be eroded and 'stretched to the point of collapse'. Unless human, social and cultural resources are sustained and renewed, neither economic growth nor ecological survival can occur. Economic development which excludes social and cultural consideration can reduce the capacity for people to negotiate change, individually and collectively, eroding social and cultural capital (Clark, 2002: 124).

In relation to sustainable livelihoods, culture should thus be regarded as an asset or capital which, like natural, financial or physical assets needs to be sustained and enhanced. Enhancing and sustaining cultural assets enhances capabilities, ensures the relationships of people with their environment is sustained, gives people a sense of identity, self esteem and dignity, and enhances social assets, and the relationships and trust between people (Bebbington, 1999, Overton et al, 1999).

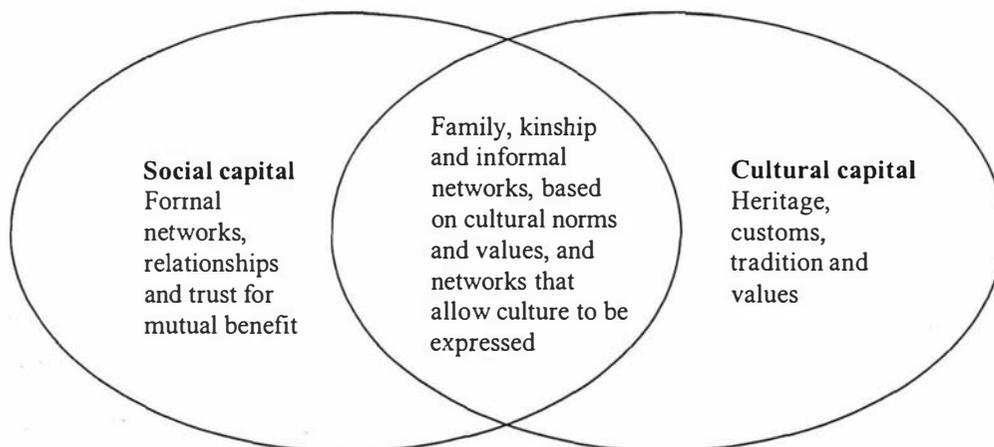
Cultural capital is not the same as social capital, although there are overlaps between social and cultural capital, and the expression of culture, and building of cultural capital, may depend on social capital to foster the socialisation that enables culture to be practiced (Bebbington, 1999: 2034). Cultural capital is defined by HSRC (2002: 1) as: 'the cultural resources (heritage, customs, traditions) upon which people can draw in pursuit of livelihoods. I would include in this definition the cultural values that people draw on. Values are the intangible meanings that underpin the expression of culture in terms of customs, events, actions and relationships. It is values, together with the expression of culture, heritage and traditions that provide people with a sense of place, identity and the self esteem. The values in cultural capital can be drawn upon to provide meaning to livelihood outcomes (e.g. status), to provide motivation for pursuing livelihood outcomes (e.g. carrying out traditional livelihood strategies), and to build social assets. Heritage, customs, and traditions can be drawn on to provide economic livelihood strategies through tourism and the sale of crafts, traditional products and artefacts.

Social capital is defined as:

‘the collection of resources an individual or group has access to through their membership of an ongoing network of mutual acquaintance. Features of this social structure, such as relationships, norms and social trust, help develop co-ordination and co-operation for common benefits’ (Robinson, 2002: 3).

For some ethnic groups traditional and cultural values give meaning to kinship and family relationships that are then a basis for all other relationships and networks (Williams and Robinson, 2002: 15). Informal and kinships relationships are a central part of the way such groups or societies operate, build trust and build institutions (such as village committees, family and tribal networks), and the way the institutions interact with government, and other institutions and networks. Here there are unclear boundaries between social and cultural capital, and in reality there is an overlap and crossover between cultural capital and social networks and relationships (social capital). Figure 2.11 illustrates this overlap between cultural and social capitals.

Figure 2.11 Overlaps between social and cultural capital



Maintaining and enhancing social capital is critical to ensure that relationships remain strong both horizontally amongst community and family networks, and vertically, between families and communities, and institutions from outside the community (e.g. NGOs, private sector or government). Maintaining and enhancing social capital ensures trust and respect between individuals and groups that is essential for strong linkages that can help communities to flourish, and support sustainable livelihoods. Social capital can

be depleted when relationships change so that the degree of trust is depleted, uncertainty is increased, opportunities to interact are withdrawn, or obligations are called upon without reciprocal obligation being accepted (Robinson, 2002: 5).

The capitals and resources that people value, and draw on, vary between different social, gender and ethnic groups (Bebbington, 1999). For example different cultural groups may value and draw on natural capital for their livelihoods, on financial resources through remittances, on cultural capital - traditions and the expression of culture for tourism and crafts, on social networks which may or may not be derived from cultural importance of family and kin. It is only when the assets that are important are defined according to cultural differences that it becomes clear what assets people already have, and which assets could be enhanced, or introduced, to support sustainable livelihoods. As culture influences the way people value their assets, culture influences the way in which assets are managed (Carney, 1998: 11).

Culture, policies, institutions and processes

Culture is regarded in the later DFID framework (DFID, 1999:11) as a process, along with laws, policies and institutions. Ellis (2000: 30) identifies 'rules, customs, and land tenure' as institutional aspects that could modify access to resources (Ellis 2000: 30). In the more recent PIP box (policies, institutions and processes) culture is included under 'familial institutions' – family and kin networks (Bingen, 2000: 9-10), and is discussed in terms of how such institutions can influence the access, mobilisation and control of capital and resources. In reference in Southern Africa, Bingen (2000, 9-10) explains norms and customs determine allocation of land and labour depending on age, gender and marital status, often disadvantaging women in terms of their access to assets, but also allowing or encouraging women to acquire special knowledge, for example about natural resources such as medicinal plants, and trees. Familial institutions may also be used for pooling resources or for providing a stake in collective institutional relationships (Bingen, 2000: 11). The notion of familial institutions being related to social and cultural capital is discussed in the previous section. However, in terms of Bingen's interpretation of the familial institution, the emphasis is on the effect this type of institution has on access to, and control over resources (see section on policies, institutions and processes earlier in this chapter), whereas when family and kinship is viewed as an asset (either social or cultural) it is in terms of the resources provided by

family and kinship relationships and networks that people can draw upon to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

Culture and livelihood outcomes

Cultural values influence the outcomes (tangible and intangible) that provide people with a sense of wellbeing. Different societies value different aspects of life, and this is rooted in the meanings and importance that different societies place on possessions, events, interactions and relationships. Cultural values thus influence the livelihood outcomes people aspire to, whether they be intangible outcomes such as trust, sharing and caring, social interconnectedness, unity, autonomy, authority, service to others, spirituality, truth, integrity (Williams and Robinson, 2002: 15-16), the ability to provide gifts and contribute to reciprocity and ceremonies, food security, other types of security or material goods and economic wealth. It is these livelihood outcomes, and the activities that provide an opportunity to express these outcomes (eg ceremonies and family activities) that motivate people to participate in livelihood activities and strategies. For example Majid Cooke (2004: 397) explains that the Bajau people in Kaligau, East Coast, Malaysia, continue to farm seaweed, despite poor economic returns in relation to the labour input, because of the social status that has come to be associated with the crop. Livelihood outcomes, and the motivation for livelihood strategies will differ according to cultural values and norms.

Culture and livelihood strategies

Culture also influences the livelihood strategies that people choose (Carney, 1998: 11). Livelihood strategies differ between cultures in terms of the status they offer, whether they are traditional or non-traditional, and whether they should be carried out by men or women, young or old, or if at all. Culture is also important in defining livelihood strategies that require indigenous knowledge that has been handed down from generation to generation, and that have, over time, become synonymous with the expression of cultural values.

People have choice over whether or not they diversify their livelihood strategies and adopt new non-traditional strategies, and this depends on how the meanings that are attached to activities are negotiated (Majid Cooke, 2004: 387). For example, cattle have been successfully introduced in Samoa, despite cattle farming being a non-traditional livelihood strategy (Maiava, 2000). Cattle are important for both traditional and modern

purposes, and have ‘illustrated, paralleled and facilitated social change in Samoa’ (Maiava, 2000: 165). In a different example, the Bajau people in Malaysia (East Coast), who traditionally fish for a living, readily adopted seaweed farming, a new livelihood strategy, because it fitted with their sea-based ways. However, previous attempts to introduce cattle farming and logging into this community had been unsuccessful, and coconut farming had been only partially successful. In the same region of Malaysia, another group of people, the Kagayan, who describe themselves as being ‘land people’ rather than fishers, had readily and successfully adopted coconuts as a cash crop (Majid Cooke, 2004: 387).

Examples of people adopting or not adopting new, non traditional livelihood strategies illustrates that people negotiate change not only according to economic factors, but also according to the cultural and social meanings and consequences that new livelihood strategies have. Many of the advantages to Samoans that cattle provide were not envisaged by project planners, and some of the advantages (e.g. providing a ‘walking bank’ so that people are less likely to save cash) do not meet ‘official approval’ (Maiava, 2001: 165). However, Samoans discovered that cattle farming provided not only economic advantages, but also fitted with, and enhanced, cultural and social dimensions of their lives. Majid Cooke (2004: 388) suggests that whether people will or will not adopt new livelihood strategies is unpredictable because people assign meanings to economic activities that are unanticipated. However, I would argue that including cultural elements into sustainable livelihoods analysis would ensure that such unpredictability could be minimised.

Culture and the vulnerability context

In the early DFID framework (Carney, 1998: 5), culture is considered as part of the vulnerability context. Culture can influence the coping and adaptive strategies that people adopt, and the way in which people guard themselves against shocks and stresses. For example, some groups of people build financial assets (savings and cash) to guard against future shocks and risk, others use reciprocity and social assets to provide safety nets and security. Maintaining and enhancing social and cultural capital is an important way to build resilience and ensure security (Glavovic et al, 291). Where people have strong family and community networks, and strong connections with their culture and identity, this can provide a ‘safety net’ in times of hardship.

Culture also influences the way people perceive risk and vulnerability and how risks are perceived, influences the choice of livelihood strategies. As Kennedy (2002: 138) notes: 'risks are culturally defined, and the perception of risks are influenced by socially embedded values and beliefs of a particular culture'.

Summary – sustainable livelihoods and culture

This section has argued that culture and sustainable livelihoods are interwoven with complex relationships and linkages. Different authors and organisations have suggested different perspectives from which to integrate culture into the sustainable livelihoods approach and frameworks. Most of the frameworks and theory on sustainable livelihoods reviewed earlier in this chapter suggest one component of the frameworks as an entry point for analysis, whether it be within the vulnerability context, as an asset, or within the policy, institution and process analysis. However, culture is in fact an integral part of all the factors and linkages in a livelihoods system and no one 'entry point' can satisfactorily describe this. For example, most importantly, culture should be regarded as an asset that must be sustained and enhanced. Maintaining and enhancing social and cultural capital ensures strong networks that can support sustainable livelihoods, and enhance resilience to vulnerability. But further to this, culture can influence the way people perceive risks and vulnerabilities, and culture can be regarded as an institution (familial) or a process, and can influence policy development. The livelihood outcomes people aspire to and the strategies they choose to achieve those outcomes are both strongly influenced by culture. But not only does culture influence sustainable livelihoods, but livelihood outcomes (such as cash), and negotiated cultural changes that are sometimes needed to carry out livelihood strategies successfully, can influence culture.

As culture relates to, influences and is influenced by every factor in the sustainable livelihoods frameworks, it would thus seem appropriate to represent culture as an 'environment' within which livelihoods exist in frameworks, diagrams and descriptions of sustainable livelihoods. Each factor in the sustainable livelihoods framework, and the linkages between factors, need to be considered in terms of cultural relationships in any meaningful sustainable livelihoods analysis. Of the theory and frameworks reviewed in this chapter, only the CARE framework mentioned culture as being part of a livelihood context and part of the economic and political 'environment', but the literature on the CARE model did not expand this notion.

In order that the sustainable livelihoods approach can be used either as a basis of analysis, or as a set of principles to guide action, it is necessary to understand the relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods. In this section I argued that there are multiple entry points in the analysis of culture and sustainable livelihoods, and thus culture could be considered as an environment in which sustainable livelihoods exist. I discussed in general terms (i.e. not in terms of any particular culture) relationships between culture and each of the factors (entry points) in the sustainable livelihoods frameworks.

However, relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods are specific for each situation and each group of people. Thus, further to the discussion in this section, in Chapter 4 I 'unpack' and discuss the entry points (each of the components of the sustainable livelihoods frameworks) specifically in relation to my interpretation of Samoan culture as described in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4 I also propose a revised definition of sustainable livelihoods that is more appropriate for this research, and present a revised sustainable livelihoods framework that addresses the critiques in this chapter of the sustainable livelihoods frameworks, and includes cultural aspects.

Sustainable livelihoods - a final word

This section reviewed the origins, influences, definitions, frameworks and key components of the sustainable livelihoods approach. Since the late 1980s, the development of the sustainable livelihoods approach has been influenced by a growing awareness of the importance of sustainability, a focus on the diverse nature of poverty, a more localised and community based approach to development, a shift towards local participation in development and a focus on the realities of the poor. The sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking that can help in understanding the diversity of livelihoods and support a people centred approach to development. This approach can be used for identifying and planning development interventions, formulating policy for poverty reduction, evaluating interventions and for guiding development research.

This section reviewed some of the major criticisms of the approach, including, among others, the danger of using the approach to oversimplify complex livelihoods, the perceived complexity of some of the frameworks that describe the approach and difficulties in implementing the approach. The livelihood frameworks reviewed in this

section do not provide clear guidance on the way in which culture can be incorporated into the livelihood system. The section on culture and sustainable livelihoods discussed the multiple entry points where the relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods can be analysed, in order that aspects of culture be built into a sustainable livelihoods analysis. This theme, integrating culture into the sustainable livelihoods approach, is interwoven throughout the remainder of the thesis.

The following sections review micro-enterprise (in developing countries) as a livelihood strategy that could support sustainable livelihoods, thereby incorporating micro-enterprise into sustainable livelihoods theory and rhetoric. In these sections I firstly define and describe micro-enterprise, and then discuss the growing donor, organisational and government support for micro-enterprise. I then explore 'success' of micro-enterprise, and addresses success in terms of livelihood outcomes. Other important issues in relation to micro-enterprise, which provide context to the remainder of the thesis, are also reviewed and discussed.

Micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods

Definition and classification of micro-enterprise

Definitions of micro-enterprise vary widely, often being proposed by donors or agencies which are influenced by their goals and involvement with micro-enterprise. Many definitions include factors such as: how the enterprise is organised; how 'formal' the enterprise is; who is involved in the enterprise; and/or the number of employees. For example the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programme 'Microenterprise Innovation Project' (MIP) defines a micro-enterprise as 'small informally organised businesses of resource poor households. For program purposes USAID has set a threshold for micro-enterprises at 10 employees' (USAID, 1995a: 1). However, Dignard and Havet (1995: 4) stress the limitations of defining small enterprises in terms of strict criteria such as specifying the number of workers. They suggest that adopting strict criteria for micro-enterprise can limit the scope of research and investigation and confuse the issues. They say:

...such a narrow quantitative perspective presents serious limitations because absolute numbers give at best only a rough suggestion the economic behaviour, power relations, organizational structures, production patterns, systems of values, etc., existing in the enterprise. A more fruitful perspective is to consider the scale of the enterprise relative to its social environment, for example relative to enterprises in the

national formal sector, in the regional formal sector, in the same type of economic activity or again to enterprises in the informal sector (Dignard and Havet, 1995: 4).

Dawson and Jeans (1997: 1) prefer to use the term ‘small producers’ in their discussion. Small producers refer ‘to all those producing on a small scale including farmers, food processors, artisans and micro and small-scale enterprises (MSEs)’. But they also incorporate a rather narrow definition suggesting that an upper limit of ten employees ‘commends itself as a common sense definition for our purposes’ to describe MSEs (Dawson and Jeans, 1997: 1).

Chen (1996: 6-7) points out that while micro-enterprises are mostly classified by size, economic activity and viability, under these types of classification, women’s micro-enterprises are often ignored. Also such classifications focus on the enterprise rather than the person or household and thus ignore the complex and diverse livelihoods system within which poor people live. Chen (1996: 7-8) suggests her two classification criteria, sector of activity and mode of work, be used as a matrix to consider each woman entrepreneur (rather than the enterprise) - where she is now and where she hopes to be in the future (Table 2.1). For example:

Table 2.1 Chen’s classification matrix for women micro-entrepreneurs

| Mode of work | Sector of activity | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------|------------|
| | Trade | Manufacturing | Service | Production |
| Employment by others: | | | | |
| • Sub-contract | | | | |
| • Casual wage | | | | |
| • Regular wage | | | | |
| Self employment: | | | | |
| • Single woman | | | | |
| • Family unit | | | | |
| • Group | | | | |

Source: Chen (1996: 7)

In a rather broader context, (Lawrence, 2000: 5) defines micro-enterprise as ‘typically labour intensive business units that are not part of larger business units. They usually operate in the local market, are financed by their owners, and, as a result, are often undercapitalised. In general, micro-enterprises are managed by their owners and employ between one and nine staff, most of whom are members of the owners’ families’ (Lawrence, 2000: 5). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines

micro-enterprise as ‘all types of economic activity and all types of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), irrespective of the form of ownership’ (ILO, 1999).

In this thesis I have also defined micro-enterprise broadly, within the context of sustainable livelihoods as described in the previous sections. The definition includes the specification that the enterprise is owned, operated and managed by the entrepreneur as this seems important in terms of who receives the benefits of the venture. Thus:

Micro-enterprises are small income earning ventures that are managed and operated by the owner, often with the help of his or her family. Micro-enterprise is a livelihood strategy that, if successful and sustainable, can achieve the livelihood outcomes of the micro-entrepreneurs and their families.

In order to describe and analyse micro-enterprises, it is useful to address a range of factors and criteria that differentiate micro-enterprises. Table 2.2 has been developed specifically for this research to classify micro-enterprises in a number of different ways. In the first column, micro-enterprises are classified according to the level of economic activity (Bennet and Goldberg, 1993: 20), ranging from subsistence through to small-scale businesses. In the second column, micro-enterprises are classified according to the level of capital and labour resources, and the level of technology (Miller and Clarke 1990: 516-517). It is suggested by Miller and Clarke (1990: 516-17) that as micro-enterprise move from being labour intensive to being capital they move away from being micro-enterprises towards being more sophisticated small businesses. In columns three and four, Chen’s (1996:8) notion of different modes of work (ranging from contractors to full self employment), and micro-enterprises working within different sectors of activity (trade, manufacturing, service, and production), are used as criteria to aid the description of micro-enterprises. Three other factors that differentiate micro-enterprises have been included in columns five, six and seven. These are the way in which the micro-enterprises are organised (i.e. as individuals, clusters or groups), the types of products that are produced, and the nature of the support that the micro-enterprise may receive.

The classification of micro-enterprises developed in Table 2.2 is used later in the thesis (Chapter 8) to compare characteristics of the two groups of micro-enterprises described in the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7.

Table 2.2 Classification of micro-enterprises

| Level of economic activity | The level of labour compared with capital and technology | Entrepreneurs' mode of work | Sector of activity | Organisation of enterprises | Type of products | Type of support system under which the micro-enterprise operates |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subsistence enterprises • new micro-enterprises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single economic activity - multi seasonal - routine reinvestment • growth orientated micro-enterprise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expansion - new products - markets • mature micro-enterprises (small-scale business) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually operated by men - titles allow secured borrowing <p>(Bennet and Goldberg, 1993: 20)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'sweat investment' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - labour intensive - owner and family members - cash requirements and overheads are minimised - enterprise can quickly adapt - decision making easy • use of some technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge, skills and tools used - little specialisation required • capital intensive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - moving away from micro-enterprise towards higher volumes and more efficiency <p>(Miller and Clarke, 1990: 516:517)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment by others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subcontract work - casual work - regular wage • Self employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single women - family unit - group <p>(Chen, 1996: 8)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade • Manufacturing • Service • Production <p>(Chen, 1996: 8)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual entrepreneurs • Clusters of micro-enterprises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all involved in the same activity, - often co-operating in marketing - e.g. artisans • Groups of entrepreneurs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working on different stages of the same product – e.g. silk production <p>(Author)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional product –e.g. craft or food • Commercialised traditional product • New industry <p>(Author)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-lateral or bi-lateral aid • Church • NGO • Government • Family • Independent • Co-operative <p>(Author)</p> |

Motivation for micro-enterprise

The number and economic importance of micro-enterprises (especially women's micro-enterprise) has increased since the onset of the economic crisis in the late 1970s and 1980s when many developing countries suffered from decreasing export commodity prices, a decline in the balance of payments, and increasing debt (Tripp, 1994: 140-143). It is unclear whether this increase is out of necessity because of harder economic times (often caused by structural adjustment policies) or because of the introduction of programmes and policies that support micro-enterprises. As Ellis notes: 'Diversification may occur both as a deliberate household strategy or as an involuntary response to a crisis' (Ellis, 2000: 5). Furthermore, Lubell (1991: 13) suggests that structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s, which removed some of the protection for monopolies, increased interest rates, and opened up the market, make it more difficult for some formal sector firms to operate, increasing opportunities for informal micro-entrepreneurs.

Clearly the macroeconomic environment influences the livelihood strategies of people at the grass roots, and changes in the economy can have fast and significant impacts on micro-enterprises. Micro-enterprises often require little capital or skills, and can thus operate at the levels of activity best suited to the entrepreneur (Epstein, 1993: 15). They are able to adapt to the rapidly changing economy because they are flexible and can expand, contract, change, and adapt as required, to cope with the changing environment (Miller and Clarke, 1990: 517). Thus, while the introduction of macro policies that provide a supportive environment for micro-enterprise will stimulate the numbers MSEs and thus provide a fast and effective tool for alleviating poverty, micro-enterprises may also appear by necessity when times are tough and unemployment is high.

Support for micro-enterprise

The micro-entrepreneurs in both the case studies described in Chapters 6 and 7 are supported directly by NGOs, and indirectly by government, and bilateral and multilateral donors, through the support and funding these organisations provide to the NGOs. This in this section support for micro-enterprise is discussed to provide context for the case studies and to explain why the support for micro-enterprises (both direct and indirect) is provided.

The first programmes of support for MSEs were specified in Columbia's national plans in the 1970s (Lubell, 1991: 95). Since then micro-enterprise has been an area of development considered by policy makers and major agencies important for social and economic development and worthy of donor money (Tendler, 1989: 1033, Miller and Clarke, 1990: 515, Creevy, 1996: 1, Dawson and Jeans, 1997: 3, Harper and Finnegan, 1998: 1-2). Interventions have included providing credit, supporting marketing, training and advice for entrepreneurs, and providing enterprise centres for co-ordinating services. A focus on credit only is often referred to as a 'minimalist approach'. There are arguments for and against such a narrow focus. Arguments for the minimalist approach are mainly that by concentrating on one constraint only, a better job can be done, and more resources concentrated on ensuring a positive impact. Training and technical assistance increase the cost of credit projects, potentially jeopardising the chances of a programme remaining self sustaining. In addition, training places an extra burden on women micro-entrepreneurs and is often not compatible with their economic role as busy entrepreneurs (Berger, 1989: 1026). Lack of credit is the most often quoted constraint (Lubell, 1991: 87, Dawson and Jeans, 1997: 9) and in addition, if the provision of micro-credit is well planned and organised, it can be cost effective. Furthermore, donors often seek to provide an 'enabling environment' rather than engage in direct intervention, and the provision of credit fits this approach.

A 1989 evaluation of USAID funded micro-enterprise projects (cited in Lubell, 1991: 87), covering 38 projects in 20 countries that were initiated in the 1970s and 1980s, concluded that the minimalist approach has a better success rate than more ambitious programmes that attempt to transform micro-enterprises into more complex businesses. However, Dawson and Jeans (1997: 5-8) contend that while the minimalist approach has overcome many of the problems faced by the more diverse support programmes, the impact of micro-credit alone has been generally disappointing in terms of poverty reduction.

There are a number of reasons why support of micro-enterprise has been seen as an effective strategy in rural development. Firstly, it is seen as an effective way of stimulating economic growth and employment (Miller and Clarke, 1990: 515), but fits with a focus on poverty alleviation and people at the grassroots rather than on macroeconomic policy (Rowbotham and Mitter, 1994: 5). In the case of micro-credit, it

could be considered participatory and 'bottom up' in that people themselves decide how to use the money rather than outsiders. Furthermore, the nature of micro-enterprise is such that the entrepreneurs are usually poor and vulnerable (and often women) and these are the very people that are the focus of poverty alleviation programmes.

Secondly, micro-enterprise development fits the current global 'neo-liberal' approach that promotes decentralisation and structural adjustment reforms and promotes private enterprise as a strategy for macroeconomic growth (Creedy, 1996: 1). The neo-liberal approach supposes that micro and small businesses will grow to medium and then large businesses leading to increased employment and accelerated economic growth.

However, Scase (2000: 5-6) suggests that entrepreneurs fall into two categories: those who seek to grow their business at the expense of personal consumption, and those who are in business primarily to generate revenue for personal consumption but never intend to grow the enterprise. The latter group, who make up a significant proportion of micro-entrepreneurs, is unlikely to have any significant impact on the macro economy and macroeconomic growth.

Thirdly, support for micro-enterprises offers the opportunity to focus on poor women, who, despite providing essential and substantial economic contribution and opportunity for further contribution (Miller and Clarke, 1990: 517, Kantor, 2001: 9), have been largely ignored by policy makers in the past. These women operate mainly within the informal sector which is difficult to define and easy to overlook (Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 940-941, Epstein, 1993: 21, Rowbotham and Mitter, 1994: 3, Chen, 1996: 1, Creedy, 1996: 2). It is widely acknowledged that women make up a larger proportion of the very poor than men, and focusing on micro-enterprise gives donors and agencies the opportunity to work to reduce women's poverty.

MacIsaac (1996: 1) in a background paper for The Canadian Council for International Cooperation policy team states that support for micro-enterprises, including that by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Canadian NGOs, USAID and the World Bank (WB) has increased since the 1980's. For example USAID support for micro-enterprise tripled between 1988 and 1993 and the WB established a \$US200 million micro-lending facility in the mid 1990s. He suggests that micro-enterprises often play a critical role in sustaining livelihoods. In addition he argues that 'a thriving micro-enterprise sector generates output, employment, and incomes, and strengthens

inter-sector linkages leading to more integrated, resilient economies and balanced growth' (MacIsaac, 1996: 2).

There is clearly great enthusiasm for support of micro-enterprise as a strategy for poverty alleviation, economic growth, employment, and empowerment. However, Kantor (2001: 2) questions the claims regarding the potential of micro-enterprise to create employment. She suggests that there are large numbers of people employed in MSEs because there are large numbers of such enterprises, rather than because they hire a large number of people. Also, many of the outcomes of the support are difficult to measure and whether the support has been successful is difficult to define. This issue is considered in detail later in the chapter.

Women and micro-enterprise

Most of the entrepreneurs in the two case studies in Chapters 6 and 7 are women. In this section I therefore discuss issues related to women micro-entrepreneurs. Much of the literature on micro-enterprise relates to women entrepreneurs, and sometimes support is targeted specifically at women micro-entrepreneurs. There are large numbers of women throughout the world who are operating MSEs in addition to, and alongside, their domestic responsibilities (Epstein, 1993: 14-15, Kantor, 2001: 3). However, the contribution of female micro-entrepreneurs to economic development has been less visible because they operate mainly within the 'informal sector' (see Chapter 5) where few formal records are kept and especially in the past, less attention has been directed (Rowbotham and Mitter, 1994: 3, Chen, 1996: 1). Nevertheless, women have an essential and important role in the economy, and their potential to contribute to economic development has been recognised, including their contribution in terms of micro-enterprises (Miller and Clarke, 1990: 517, Kantor, 2001: ix).

Women are among the poorest of the poor and yet traditionally have received less attention than men in terms of economic development (Buvinic, 1989: 1047). Women have faced more constraints to micro-enterprise development than men in terms of access to resources such as land, capital and information. Micro-enterprise policies are therefore often directed towards trying to alleviate women's poverty and/or reducing inequities between men and women (Buvinic, 1989: 1047). Furthermore, there has been an emphasis on women's micro-enterprises from a gender empowerment perspective. Expanding income and employment for women can empower women socially and

economically, and advance gender equity (Buvinic, 1989: 1053, Kantor, 2001: 3, Mayoux, 2001: 18-19).

As in the 'good mother' household model described in the next section of this chapter, increased income for women has a positive impact on the welfare and educational levels of children and the immediate family. Women become better educated themselves as incomes increase, and this often leads to a decrease in birth rate.

Increased nutritional status of children has been directly linked to increases in women's income. Donors have therefore promoted micro-enterprise with the aim of increasing women's income, not just for the women themselves, but in order to enhance welfare and the efficiency of development programmes (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988: 5, Buvinic, 1989: 1047, Bruce, 1989: 985, Germain, 1989: 5, Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 938, Jackson, 1998: 40, Kantor, 2001: 3).

These rationales for the emphasis of women in MSE development, have translated into a range of short and long term programme goals and objectives dedicated to supporting women in MSEs. Short term objectives are to increase the amount paid for women's work, increase the productivity of women's work, increase the demand for women's paid labour, and redistribute assets. Long term objectives are to improve the quality and amount paid for women's labour, remove discriminatory practices thereby increasing women's assets and access to resources, and create social support mechanisms to reduce conflicts women have as income earners and home producers (Buvinic, 1989: 1045-1046).

Mckee (1989: 995) describes three strategies that are employed to achieve these objectives for women micro-entrepreneurs. Firstly the area focused strategy which offers a comprehensive range of services to a target a group of clients within a specific geographic area. Secondly the sector focused strategy where the focus is on one or several economic sectors, industries, trade groups, or occupations. In this strategy the sector is closely analysed and a range of interventions occurs in marketing, input supply, technology, training, credit and regulatory policy. Examples of this strategy can be seen in the work of Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) (Chen, 1996). Thirdly the function focused strategy focuses on removing constraints. The rationale of this strategy is that by removing constraints, beneficiaries can 'practice their livelihoods more productively

and profitably' (Mckee, 1989: 995). Almost always the single most important constraint that is identified is access to credit. Sometimes marketing support, skills training and management assistance are also provided.

However, there is concern that the 'development' benefits to be gained from encouraging women into productive and economic work is at the expense of the women themselves. Longer and harder working hours and greater responsibility, increased risk where money is borrowed and all this in addition to the already arduous tasks of family and community responsibilities. There is concern that women are being used as 'instruments' of development while men are carrying on as before with little or no change in their roles or working hours. Furthermore, the argument that micro-enterprise will empower poor women should be treated with caution. The vulnerable position in which many poor women find themselves is due to unequal power structures, unequal access and control of resources, and unequal sharing of benefits. Supporting micro-enterprises may well alleviate the financial difficulties but as Cecile Jackson points out in her much quoted paper 'Rescuing Gender From the Poverty Trap', '... the concept of poverty cannot serve as a proxy for the subordination of women and antipoverty policies cannot be expected to necessarily improve the position of women ...' (Jackson, 1998: 39).

Micro-enterprise and the household

In developing countries, the micro-enterprise is usually just one of a range of income generating activities and livelihood strategies that occur on a day-to-day basis within the household. The micro-enterprise rarely operates in isolation, usually being woven into the livelihoods of the family and the household. There are numerous definitions of what constitutes a household, but for this thesis a household is regarded as a group of people who reside together, making decisions together over how resources (including labour) will be allocated and how income will be used (Ellis, 2000: 18). The relationship between the micro-enterprise and the household is important in terms of access and control of resources used in the micro-enterprise, the allocation of work (household labour), and who in the household benefits from the income generated by the micro-enterprise.

The dominant neo-classical model of the household, popular until the mid 1990s (Kabeer, 1998: 92), was known as 'new household economics' (Evenson, 1976). This

‘unitary’ model regards the household as a discreet unit, where decisions about household labour, purchase of goods, and even marriage and fertility are made according to laws of utility maximisation (Becker, 1976, Becker 1991). In the unitary model the household acts according to rational behaviour making choices on the basis of supply and demand, market forces and perfect competition (Becker, 1976: 161). According to this model all family members act altruistically for the benefit of the household with no self interest, and household heads (male) are benevolent dictators who ensure household resources are appropriately distributed (Becker, 1991, 277-306).

However, Folbre (1986: 247) argues that the theory of new household economics is unrealistic in the way it regards households as a unit, maximising the joint welfare of the household members through rational allocation of resources. New household economic theory fails to explain intra-household negotiation over assets and inequalities within the household, and furthermore separates gender dynamics at the micro level (the household) from what is known to be actually happening in terms of gender differentiation and asset distribution (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988: 2).

In the 1980s a number of other models explaining household economics known as ‘bargaining’ or ‘collective’ models emerged (Sen, 1990:125, Kabeer, 1998: 998-102, Ellis, 2000: 19). Sen (1990: 125) describes the household in terms of a model of ‘bargaining’ that explains the ‘extensive conflicts and pervasive co-operation in household arrangements’. Sen (1990: 131-134) suggests that household prosperity depends on both co-operation of members to add to resources available to the family (food and income), and resolution of conflict as to how the resources are distributed within the family. Co-operation and conflict resolution occurs through bargaining which focuses on individual interests within the family. However, outcomes depend on the bargaining power of the individual, which often relates to the break down position – what would happen to the individual should the family break down? The bargaining also depends on the level of the individual’s self interest compared with altruistic interests towards the entire household unit, and on the level of the contribution that the individual is making to the household resources (Sen, 1990: 131-134). Women often fare unfavourably in the bargaining situation because of subordination within the household, and the vulnerability women face should the marriage ultimately break up.

However, the bargaining position of women is strengthened when they are earning their own income as they are then in a more secure 'fall back' position (Bruce, 1989: 983).

Clearly then, the economic contribution that a person can make to the household (for example through micro-enterprise) can influence their bargaining power over use of resources, allocation of work and very importantly, rights to deciding how that income is used. Studies in Africa, Asia and South America have shown that children's nutritional levels have increased with the size of the mother's income, but not in direct proportion to parental income, indicating that women are more likely to use their income for food and family welfare than men (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988: 5). The notion that women's income is more likely to be used for family welfare and education than men's income, and therefore raising women's income is more likely to contribute to development goals than raising men's income, is known as the 'good mother' model (Hart, 1997). However, in some African societies economic responsibilities are explicit. For example the men are responsible for accommodation, education, and sometimes food and clothing, whereas the women are ultimately responsible for the children's food needs and sometimes clothing (Bruce and Dwyer, 1988: 5).

Co-operative enterprises

Individual micro-entrepreneurs often group together to form a co-operative, and this is the case in one of the case studies, the coconut oil producers (Chapter 6). Co-operatives are formed for a number of purposes. Parnell (1999: 3) explains that when the members are farmers, fishermen, craft workers or primary producers the main benefits of co-operatives will be 'quality inputs at fair prices, and continuing access to markets securing a fair price for their products'. The emphasis on fairness is important (Parnell, 1999: 13). Phelps (2001: 2) describes co-operatives as falling into two categories: resource-based or service-based. Resource-based co-operatives share assets such as land, labour, machinery, or credit, whereas as service-based co-operatives distribute members produce or sell inputs to members. Thordason (1990: 1) suggests that in developing countries co-operatives are 'often instruments for securing local ownership (as opposed to colonial ownership) of industries, and as a means of involving people in economic activity'. This was evident in the Pacific Islands where the co-operative movement was encouraged during the 1950s as a 'key to economic participation' by Pacific Islanders in countries that at that time were governed by colonial powers

(Crocombe, 2001: 344). The relationship between co-operative work and co-operatives in the Pacific Islands is discussed in Chapter 4, and co-operatives in Samoa are discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Samoan enterprise structures.

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) 1995 Statement of Identity (updated in 1998) defines a co-operative as 'an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise' (ICA, 1998). The ICA Statement of Identity has seven principles for co-operatives: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; co-operation among co-operatives; and concern for communities. The statement reflects the ICA's high ideals of personal and social conduct and suggests co-operatives should be 'based on values of self help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity ... co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others' (ICA, 1998).

Despite high ideals and principles, and legislation to protect co-operative structures, the record of successful development through co-operatives has been mixed. Literature suggests that there a number of factors which are very important in ensuring co-operatives are successful. Firstly, the co-operative must be developed for a specific purpose that is clear, appropriate and focussed, and is agreed by all co-operative members. In the past, emphasis has sometimes been on the co-operative model rather than the purpose of the co-operative. Co-operatives should not be formed to fulfil an ideology, but rather to take advantage of joint action to achieve benefits for members (Parnell, 1996: 231, Phelps, 2001: 8). Furthermore, the co-operative model should be adapted to suit the cultural and economic needs of the situation rather than be modelled on outdated co-operative principles (Parnell, 1995: 11).

A co-operative should benefit all members of the co-operative, and in addition, the co-operative itself must operate as a profitable enterprise (Parnell, 1995: 243). The planning and management systems of the co-operative should be transparent and efficient, and the co-operative must operate in an environment of mutual trust and open communication (Hoyt, 1996: 4). Co-operatives need to be flexible, innovative, and able to respond quickly when circumstances change or the purpose of the co-operatives

needs to change. Contributions to the co-operative and benefits from the co-operative must be fair and equitable (Hoyt, 1996: 4).

Membership should be voluntary, and members must have social cohesion and be able to work together. All members need to understand the principles and practices of co-operatives and some members need the skills to manage and operate the co-operative (Hoyt, 1996: 4). The co-operatives should have people who are prepared to offer leadership to guide the co-operative towards its objectives, and provide motivation to the members.

Co-operatives need to have mechanisms to deal quickly with negative aspects of the co-operative, and people who use the co-operative to meet their own needs at the expense of the co-operative. Furthermore, co-operatives need to be independent and not over-reliant on support from governments or NGOs. However, governments and NGOs can help by providing an enabling environment, appropriate laws, support in terms of training, information and advice, access to credit and market support (Parnell, 1995: 237).

Thordason (1990: 2) suggests that in large-scale and multi-purpose co-operatives in developing countries the most common 'shortcomings' are management incompetence, corruption and government interference. On the other hand, small-scale, grass-roots co-operatives have suffered from inefficient management, difficulty in reaching self-sufficiency, and dependence on outside support (Thordason, 1990: 2). It is important for supporting agencies and governments to provide support without creating dependency. Parnell (1995: 234) suggests that NGOs can successfully use co-operatives within their aid programmes, especially when the co-operatives are small and locally based. However, he warns that NGOs can become 'self-perpetuating bureaucracies' and may not wish the co-operative to be independent and no longer require the support of the NGO. Co-operatives can fall into a cycle of dependency that may start with external finance and external staff, leading to loss of member control, loss of financial responsibility, loss of the self-help ethic, poor performance, and then more external help required (Parnell, 1995: 234). This is illustrated in the Pacific where colonial governments established and subsidised almost every co-operative (Crocombe, 2001: 346).

Assessing the success of micro-enterprise and micro-enterprise support

The question of whether benefits and outcomes from programmes supporting MSEs are reasonable in terms of the costs will always be of importance, although such an analysis is fraught with difficulties. Programmes have a range of objectives, benefits are difficult to quantify, it is hard to separate the impact of the support from other influences, data is hard to obtain, it is difficult to know whether outcomes are sustainable, and difficult to decide what costs should be included (Harper and Finnegan, 1998).

Often the indicators used to measure success of a programme do not match the goals of the programme. For example in micro-credit support, goals are often to reduce poverty and improve well-being of the borrowers and their families. However, institutional indicators such as levels of repayments, number of borrowers, and sustainability of the financial service institute, are often used to measure the success of the programme. Although easily measurable, such indicators tell us little or nothing about the impact of the support on the entrepreneurs. Dawson and Jeans (1997: 5) call these measurements 'proxy' indicators. Singh et al (2001:176) state that, in the case of support for micro-enterprise, 'the most frequently used operationalizations of performance (of the micro-enterprise) include survival, growth in employees, and profitability'. Again these indicators are based on economic factors that are easy to quantify, but exclude other important factors that are more qualitative and less easily measured.

From the perspective of the supporting agency, the indicators used in the measurement of 'success' of micro-enterprise support programmes ideally relate to the aims of the programme which depend on the rationale of the donor agency. Those agencies working under the neo-liberal agenda will be most interested in economic outcomes, increased macro-economic growth, and cost efficiencies. Micro-entrepreneurs' goals are assumed to be primarily income generation and enterprise growth, but the support for micro-entrepreneurs is intended to reach beyond the entrepreneurs themselves to the wider macroeconomic environment (Dawson and Jeans, 1997: 1, Mayoux, 2001: 9). Those working toward feminist empowerment will be interested in the changing power structures between men and women and the increased well-being of women. For example, in a study comparing the impacts of eight women's micro-enterprise projects, Creevy (1996) measured the success of enterprises in terms of the impact the

enterprises had on income and assets, quality of life, time use, and the outlooks and expectations of men and women. Those agencies working simply to alleviate poverty, will be measuring such outcomes as increased well-being and reduced poverty, as well as employment, economic indicators and cost efficiencies.

McKee (1989: 994) describes four measures of significance that can be used to determine whether or not programmes have been successful in achieving an improvement in economic situation and working conditions for women, reducing discrimination against women and improving their ability to balance income earning with their home production. Firstly she mentions meaningful, sustainable gains in income levels and stability achieved by large numbers of beneficiaries. Secondly, a positive influence on government policy and market forces that substantially shapes the livelihood policies of the poor signals success of a programme. Thirdly, contribution to aggregate employment, economic growth and diversification of the local economic base is an important indicator of success. Finally, if mobilisation and empowerment of the women, their households, and communities has occurred then the programme has been successful (McKee, 1989: 994).

Kantor (2001: 23) lists five areas of performance important when evaluating the success of MSE support programmes. They are outreach/scale, effectiveness, cost efficiency, sustainability and impact. Outreach/scale refers to the number using and benefiting from the programme or services. Effectiveness refers to how well the agency or programme meets its objectives and the needs of the clients. Cost efficiency refers to the level of impact compared with the cost of the service. Sustainability refers to both the support agencies or programmes and the MSEs. Impact is the size and duration of the effects of the services. Creevy (1996: 196) also emphasises the importance of sustainability and the potential for replication in evaluating the success of projects. In her study she questions whether projects would last and spread in order to reach large numbers of women. She stresses that cost and long term commitment by government (or agencies) are important factors in the success of micro-enterprise projects (Creevy, 1996: 196).

Harper and Finnegan (1998: vii) suggest that the indicators of 'success' are both tangible and intangible. *Tangible indicators* include: increased sales; higher profits; enhanced employment; institutional sustainability; clients repayments of credit; cost

recovery; and commercial viability of the support programme. *Intangible indicators* include quality of life: housing, food security, education and the family welfare of beneficiaries.

Clearly, appropriate evaluation methods are very important to judge the 'success' of any programme supporting micro-enterprise. However, despite the importance of intangible indicators, all too often economic indicators are used as a measure of success and what can be measured easily takes over as the evaluation criteria (Chambers, 1995: 6-10).

In regard to the success of programmes financially, MacIsaac (1996: 3) points out that few programmes have been successful in that the additional earnings of the micro-entrepreneurs exceeded the cost of the programme. He explains that most projects have failed to generate significant and sustained increases in income, succeeded in reaching the poorest of the poor, become independent of financial aid or subsidy, or stimulated increases in the size of the enterprises. Nor have programmes paid attention to policy issues that are essential to enhance the viability of micro-enterprises.

It is unlikely that a micro-enterprise support programme or agency can achieve well in all the areas of performance. Kantor (2001: 23) suggests that 'in designing programmes agencies have a wide range of choices to make'. These choices initially relate to the strategies that should be adopted in terms of area focused, sector focused or function focused. The choice of whether the approach should be 'minimalist', concentrating on just one function or more widely focused is also very important. The programme must also decide which clients to target and whether to target all entrepreneurs or women only. The programme must also consider whether the agency should provide services alone or enter into partnerships for the provision of services (McKee, 1989: 997, Kantor, 2001: 23). These choices will be made according to the rationale of the donor agencies for supporting micro-enterprise and the 'paradigm' (as described by Mayoux, 2001) within which the agency is operating. These choices will impact on which areas of performance can be achieved and ultimately the success of the programme.

From the entrepreneurs' perspective, success is also difficult to measure. The goals and indicators of well-being of entrepreneurs are varied and differ between cultures and between men and women. Entrepreneurs may work to fulfil economic outcomes such

as cash income, income security and business growth. However, the outcomes they aspire to may also include status in the community, such as the building of community facilities, and/or benefits for their social group, such as production of crafts and products that are cultural in nature (MacIsaac, 1996: 7). Men tend to be more business orientated and direct more of their disposable income towards the business while women prefer to focus on household survival and income security and a balance between business and domestic life (Singh et al, 2001: 174). Tinker (1995: 27) suggests that, while men do contribute towards the family, they are being 'drawn into the world of individual pursuit of profit and happiness', while women are left to support their families in what Tinker calls 'the human economy'. Therefore men's enterprises are more likely to expand and grow. Women's enterprises, on the other hand, usually continue to struggle on a day-to-day basis, and although the micro-enterprise may be supporting a woman alone or a family, the micro-enterprise is doing little to stimulate the macroeconomic environment.

Micro-entrepreneurs work to gain livelihood outcomes that are specific to them and their family. These livelihood outcomes may be tangible (such as financial outcomes), or intangible (such as status and respect). Achieving livelihood outcomes is what provides the micro-entrepreneurs with a sense of well-being. The success of their micro-enterprise depends on whether or not their livelihood outcomes are being achieved, and whether their livelihood is sustainable. Where micro-enterprises are supported by programmes or organisations, the success of the micro-enterprise may also depend on the success of the programme or supporting organisation. However, the concern is that programmes may be deemed unsuccessful because the indicators chosen may be 'proxy indicators' (Dawson and Jeans, 1997: 5) or may be based on outcomes that are tangible rather than intangible (Harper and Finnegan, 1998: vii). Although it is widely acknowledged that the outcomes and criteria for success of micro-enterprise vary, donors and agencies tend to base their evaluations on tangible outcomes (often economic) and this could give a false indication of the overall impact of the support.

Conclusion – micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods

This chapter reviewed and discussed theoretical perspectives and concepts of sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise, and has clearly and explicitly linked the two. In this chapter micro-enterprise was incorporated into the discourse of sustainable

livelihoods, and sustainable livelihoods into the discourse of micro-enterprise. Micro-enterprise was defined, and reviewed, as a livelihood strategy, which, if successful and sustainable, can provide livelihood outcomes.

Furthermore, with the premise of this thesis being that culture and sustainable livelihoods are closely related, the chapter critically evaluated the sustainable livelihoods approach through a 'cultural' lens and found that existing sustainable livelihoods theory does not adequately or appropriately incorporate culture. The chapter concluded that culture is an environment (or context) within which sustainable livelihoods exist. In this chapter culture was incorporated into existing sustainable livelihoods theory by using each and every component of the sustainable livelihoods framework as multiple entry points for analysis.

Despite a number of concerns and critiques about the sustainable livelihoods theory and frameworks that were identified in this chapter, the sustainable livelihoods approach has major benefits for development practice. The approach provides a way of thinking that is holistic and people-centred, and can be used to guide and structure analyses of complex livelihood systems. Such analyses can provide guidance for planning development intervention, research and evaluation. While a set of principles has evolved from the sustainable livelihoods approach that informs development practice, the approach does not dictate how to implement these principles. Some of the critiques of the approach point to gaps and components left out, or not properly integrated (as indeed does this thesis in regard to culture). However, as this chapter has demonstrated, a major strength of the approach is that it is flexible enough to be able to incorporate new foci, such as culture, and can thus be modified and adapted to draw on new knowledge and theories and to suit the context for which it is being used.

The chapter defined micro-enterprise within the context of sustainable livelihoods and developed a classification of micro-enterprise (Table 2.2) that recognises the different factors by which micro-enterprise can be distinguished. This classification is used in Chapter 8, to analyse the micro-enterprises in the case studies. A number of important themes then emerged from the section in Chapter 2 about micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods. The first theme was support for micro-enterprises, an issue discussed in light of the fact that both the groups of micro-entrepreneurs in the case studies receive direct support from NGOs and indirect support from government,

bilateral and multilateral agencies. This chapter highlighted the importance of policy, institutions, and processes in sustainable livelihoods analysis, and the section on support for micro-enterprise sets the context for such an analysis in the field work case studies. Secondly in the section on micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, issues related to women and micro-enterprise, and the household were addressed. In the Samoan case studies in this thesis nearly all the micro-entrepreneurs are women. Theories reviewed in this chapter concluded that households operate on a system of co-operation between members, and increased income generation by women can increase the bargaining power women have over how family resources are used and allocation of work. Increased income generation by women can have positive impacts on development as the money earned by women is likely to be used for household uses such as for food, education, housing and health. The reality of these concepts is examined later in the thesis, in the context of the field research case studies in Samoa, described in Chapters 6 and 7. Thirdly, in the section on micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, co-operative enterprise was defined and some of the important features of co-operatives were discussed in order to provide context for the Samoan village-based coconut oil case study (Chapter 6), where the micro-entrepreneurs have grouped together in a co-operative structure. Further discussion, in relation to co-operatives in Samoa, can be found in Chapter 5, and then in relation to the coconut oil case study in Chapter 6.

The final theme in the section on micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, clearly linking these two concepts, is 'success' of micro-enterprises and the programmes that support them. Success is about achieving intended outcomes, and for policy and programme developers the outcomes intended will depend on the rationale for the programme or policy. However, in order to achieve any programme or policy outcomes, the micro-enterprise must first provide, or at least support, a sustainable livelihood for the entrepreneur and their family by achieving livelihood outcomes (as described in this chapter). Livelihood outcomes will differ between societies and cultures, and will also depend on the circumstances of the entrepreneur. The literature reviewed in this chapter on micro-enterprise did not explicitly incorporate culture into the theory on micro-enterprise. However, as was pointed out in this chapter, in order to understand livelihood strategies such as micro-enterprise, it is necessary to understand the cultural context, and the relationships between culture and the livelihood strategy.

This is possible through an analysis of sustainable livelihoods that incorporates cultural aspects, as is described in this chapter, and is demonstrated in the analysis of the case studies in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Micro-enterprise is not just an economic entity, but within the framework of sustainable livelihoods micro-enterprise is seen as a strategy that can achieve both tangible and intangible livelihood outcomes, the intangible outcomes (e.g. status and enhancing social and cultural assets) sometimes being as important as the tangible outcomes. Measuring success of micro-enterprises, and the programmes that support them, is difficult. However, in this thesis success of micro-enterprises is defined by whether the micro-enterprises provide, or support sustainable livelihoods, and the success of the programmes that support the micro-enterprises are considered in relation to the programme goals and sustainability of the NGOs.

The theoretical concepts described in this chapter, and the issues raised during the review of relevant literature, shaped and defined the focus of the thesis, the research questions described in Chapter 1, and the research methodology that is described in the following chapter (Chapter 3). Almost all the literature reviewed in this chapter was related to countries other than Samoa, the chapter reviewing and developing overarching theories and concepts that permeate through the thesis as a whole. Following the next chapter on methodology, the thesis relates more specifically to Samoa, where the generalised concepts developed in this chapter are used as basis from which to explore the reality of livelihoods, and micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy, in rural Samoa.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that has been used in the research for this thesis, and offers explanations for the choice. The methodology was designed to answer the research questions, and to be flexible enough to respond to questions and issues raised during the review of literature, the field research, and the analysis of the field research. The chapter explains the research approach, field research strategy (case studies) and research methods. Ethical issues are discussed, and finally aspects of the methodology that worked well, and aspects that caused constraints and difficulties are reviewed.

The research is 'applied', rather than 'pure', in that it aims to further understanding of a real life situation, something that is of concern to society (Patton, 1990:150) and in doing so aims to contribute to theory and knowledge that can be used to enhance people's livelihoods. Pure research, on the other hand, is research which generates 'knowledge for knowledge's sake' (Babbie, 1999: 25). In this study the concern is to understand the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture in the Pacific Islands, and to suggest how culture can be incorporated into the sustainable livelihoods approach to enhance the usefulness of this approach as a framework for analysis and a set of principles to guide development practice. The findings from the research study will be applicable to development practice, as well as adding to rural development theory. It is within this context that the research has been designed.

In the research I firstly reviewed and analysed existing literature, then conducted field research to enhance understanding of theories and concepts, and to illustrate issues raised in the analysis of the literature. The field work enabling me to explore in depth rural livelihoods and micro-enterprise in Samoa, and the relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, livelihoods and micro-enterprise. This enabled the literature on *fa'aSamoa* to be placed in the context of sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise.

The sustainable livelihoods approach was for me a framework and way of thinking to guide this research. The term 'sustainable livelihoods' is described in the literature (Chapter 2) as a framework and theoretical concept on which inquiry and analysis can

be based, as well as a set of principles to guide development practice, and a goal. The people-centred approach on which the sustainable livelihoods approach based is congruent with the qualitative and phenomenological research approach that was used, and the theoretical framework of the sustainable livelihoods approach could guide my research questions and analysis. However, it became evident during the review of literature (Chapter 2), that the existing sustainable livelihoods frameworks and definitions were not entirely appropriate to guide this research, especially in terms of way in which culture is (or is not) addressed and integrated. Thus a detailed analysis of the relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific Islands, and a revised framework, are developed in Chapter 4. The key features of the sustainable livelihoods approach, the revised framework, and the enhanced understanding of culture and sustainable livelihoods, were used as a basis for field research, analysis and discussion. The question of how appropriate and useful the sustainable livelihoods approach is as a research tool was included in the research questions (Chapter 1). During the research process I continually questioned the use of the sustainable livelihoods approach as a guide to the research. This is addressed in Chapter 8.

Qualitative research

I used a qualitative approach to the research, rather than quantitative. Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 136-138) describe qualitative researchers as those who are concerned with the meanings people attach to their lives. Qualitative research is 'inductive', where concepts are developed from data as the research progresses. Qualitative research looks at people, groups and settings in a holistic manner. Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 9) suggest that qualitative researchers emphasise the meaningfulness of the research and the belief that something is to be learned from all settings and groups. This gives equity to the study and gives weight to the principles and practices of socially inclusive development. Qualitative research is a craft – flexibility is important and while there are guidelines, there are no fixed rules. The qualitative approach suited the topic, the research questions and the context of this research very well. Flexibility was important as the field research in Samoa was relatively unstructured. Although as many interviews as possible were arranged in advance, opportunities for interviews and even case studies (the fine mat weaving case study) were taken as they arose.

Theories, concepts and themes evolved as the research proceeded, and field data confirmed, illustrated and provided further understanding of these. Literature relevant

to micro-enterprises, sustainable livelihoods, and the Pacific Islands was reviewed and analysed prior to the field research and in that respect concepts and themes had already been conceived. Existing theories had been studied and the case studies highlighted areas where these theories fitted or did not fit the cases. Research questions were formulated after the review of literature and prior to the field work, but ideas and concepts were developed during the whole process of the research, before, during and after the case studies.

The aim of the field research was to provide rich and detailed information. While surveys would have provided quantitative data that could be statistically analysed, surveys would not provide the deep insights that were required to answer the research questions. Even open-ended questions cannot give the 'richness' and depth of qualitative research. Patton (1990: 165) explains this concept as a 'trade-off' between breadth and depth:

Qualitative methods permit the evaluation researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail; the fact that data collection is not constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth and detail of qualitative data. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, require the use of a standardized approach so that the experiences of people are limited to predetermined response categories. The advantage of quantitative methods is that it is possible to measure the reactions of many subjects to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of data. By contrast, qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases (Patton, 1990: 165).

The dilemma of breadth and depth is not just between qualitative and quantitative research, but also within qualitative research (Patton, 1990: 165-166). The question of sample size within the case study falls within this dilemma. In this research the choice was to interview only a few entrepreneurs in great depth and spend many days with each of them observing their activities, or to interview a greater range of entrepreneurs in less depth, observing their activities for one day or less. I chose the second option.

There are no set rules about how one should decide on the depth and breadth. However it seemed important in this research to collect data from as many micro-entrepreneurs as possible in the time available. In addition it was important to collect data from organisations and individuals connected to and supporting the micro-enterprises, and those with an interest, but not directly involved, in the case studies. Research participants are thus separated into groups depending on certain characteristics that

define the groups and that have important implications to the research (Patton, 1990: 166). For example in this study, for each case study, micro-entrepreneurs formed one group of research participants, while personnel from each supporting organisation such as trainers, field workers, directors or micro-finance personnel constituted another group. Research participants who have an interest in the clusters of micro-enterprises, but are not directly involved, formed a third group. Each group required different methods of data collection (e.g. interviews only, or interviews and observation) but while the groups are separate, they integrated to form the whole case study. It was important to include these three different groups of people to provide a comprehensive view of the whole livelihoods system for each case study. As Patton (1990: 168) notes, the 'key issue in selecting and making decisions about the appropriate groups is to decide what you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study' (Patton (1990: 168).

Choosing which research participants to include within the groups can be difficult. Patton (1990: 182-183) explains that sampling can take a number of forms such as choosing cases that are unusual, special, or information rich, or choosing samples that either are extremely variable or are typical. Stratified samples can also be selected giving a range of types within the study. Other sampling methods include the 'snowball method' where the first research participant suggests the second and so on, or the 'criterion' method where research participants that meet certain criteria are interviewed. Participants can be interviewed until theories are confirmed or unconfirmed, or even selected opportunistically to take advantage of situations as they occur. Participants can be selected randomly or sometimes selected to draw attention to the study or to avoid politically sensitive areas. Sometimes research participants are selected by convenience. One or a mixture of the sampling methods may be used to select the subjects of the research. There are no rules for sample size in qualitative research but what is important is that the data that is collected is meaningful and provides the insights to answer the research questions. In this research I used a number of methods for selecting a sample of the people in each group, and the selection method varied between case studies. However, the research participants needed to meet certain criteria to ensure that they were part of the micro-enterprise system being studied. They were either micro-entrepreneurs, close family of micro-entrepreneurs, professional people

supporting the micro-entrepreneurs, or other participants who had some knowledge or insights into the micro-enterprise system.

Phenomenology and hermeneutics

During the field work in Samoa I was listening, observing and recording language, events, actions and processes. The words, events, actions and processes are the phenomenon as they show themselves, but not the meanings behind the phenomenon (Freeman, 2002: 9). I was also seeking to understand and construct meaning in order to make sense of the participants' world (Freeman, 2002: 11-12), in terms of their livelihoods, and the way that culture was interwoven into their livelihoods.

Phenomenology, used as a research approach, requires the researcher to put themselves in the position of the research participants, trying to understand the meaning of words and actions from a world view of those that produced them (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 7, Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 225, Maiava, 2002: 100, Hunter, 2004: 4). Actions stem from meanings, so every situation has meaning through people's interpretations (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 14). A phenomenological approach seeks to understand lived experiences, and the way in which humans attribute meaning to their experiences.

Hermeneutics is the task of interpreting the meaning behind language, text, visual representations (Watt, 2005: 165), actions and events. My understanding of the values and meanings behind phenomenon came in several ways. Often after observing actions, or hearing about events I would ask questions of the research participants to help me understand the meanings underpinning them. For example, one day when I was sitting in the *fale* in the village with my host family, we saw a vehicle go past that was apparently carrying a deceased person to a *fa'alavelave* (funeral in this case). This prompted me to ask about the ceremony and led to a very full description and explanation of a recent funeral of a relation of the family. The cultural values that are imbedded in the whole process of the *fa'alavelave* were also explained. On another day when a relative of my host family came ask for a fine mat to use at a *matai* induction, I asked, and was told much about, the process of gifting and reciprocity (Chapter 4). I also used my understanding of *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan way of life) as described by both Samoans and non-Samoans in literature to give meaning to what I heard and saw during the field research. My experience in other Pacific Islands countries also helped to some

extent, and discussing my field research with Samoans living in New Zealand, people who lived in Samoa for long periods of time, and other Pacific Islanders helped me to interpret and understand what I had seen and heard while in Samoa.

Clearly it is impossible to engage a phenomenological approach without one's own knowledge, previous experiences and biases being there, despite the researcher continually empathising with the participants and attempting to see things from the participant's perspective. The separation between researcher and researched is really not possible (Hunter, 2006: 1, Whitehead, 2003: 513). A hermeneutics approach to interpretation takes the view that prior understanding and prejudices shape the interpretive process (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 15, Whitehead, 2003: 513). My background in working in development practice in the Pacific Islands clearly influenced preconceived ideas I had about livelihoods in the Pacific Islands and micro-enterprise development. I have worked in capacity building and training projects in Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and Fiji, and have also been involved in a number of evaluations of development projects in Samoa. I have worked with rural extension and marketing professionals, youth officers, providers of rural savings and credit facilities, NGOs, farmers, micro-entrepreneurs and small business people in these countries. I thus understood some of the issues and constraints facing micro-entrepreneurs in these countries. Furthermore I had read extensively about socio-economic issues and economic development in the Pacific Islands, and sustainable livelihoods. However, prior to the field work in Samoa my understanding was limited and was based only on conversations in relation to my work, anecdotal evidence and what others had written. My background could have influenced what I observed, and the questions that I asked, but I could not 'put aside' or ignore this experience (Smith and Deemer, 2003: 432).

Phenomenological research, putting myself in the position of the research participants, required empathy, in order to understand the feelings, motives and thoughts behind the action and words of the research participants (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 14).

Furthermore I needed to be trusted by the research participants (Maiava, 2002:100) in order that connections could be made between me and the participants, and the participants felt safe, and comfortable during the research. I developed empathy and trust with the research participants in a number of ways. I met some of the professional people that I interviewed through referrals by people who were well respected by the

research participants. This made my task easier as we had a common point of contact and they knew of my background. In terms of the micro-entrepreneurs, field workers and people living in the village there were a number of 'points of contact' that provided a basis for us to form trustworthy relationships. Firstly as fellow human beings we had many common interests. Although from vastly different backgrounds, we all basically wanted similar things in life – family, friends, and a useful, comfortable and happy life. Many of the participants were women, and some were of a similar age to me. I stayed in the homes of some of the participants or visited them at their homes, and so entered their physical space. We shared interests such as family, cooking, and New Zealand, where many of the participants had relatives, or had visited. We also found that many things that differed between Samoa and New Zealand and these things were discussed, heightening my awareness of differences between their lives and mine. Where detailed interviews were possible, the participants were happy to talk with me, and describe their lives, and that of their families. The practical and pragmatic issues that were being dealt with (for example earning money and producing goods for sale) were also a good point of contact. The people that I interviewed were all trying to improve their standards of living, and were all earning a cash income – they were adapting skills and resources to cope with modern life. They were proud of what they were doing, and keen to tell me about it.

In the first case study (village coconut oil production), I was able to closely observe, and participate in the coconut oil production, interview some of the coconut oil micro-entrepreneurs in depth, discuss the coconut oil production ventures with the field staff of both supporting NGOs (METI and WIBDI), and interview the Executive Director and Director of the NGOs. I was also able to discuss the ventures with interested people who were not directly involved. This enabled me to engage closely with all of the research participants ensuring that their voices were 'heard' through direct quotes and in-depth descriptions of their comments in the case study write-up.

However, in the second case study (fine mat weaving in Samoa) most of the fine mat weavers I engaged with were selected by the field workers of the supporting NGO, who I joined as they visited fine mat weavers over a period of three days on one island and one day on the other island. In this case study I was not able to interview these fine mat weavers in depth (although I did interview another fine mat weaver in depth who was

not involved with the WIBDI programme). Because the field workers were present, any questions I asked were translated by the field workers, and the weavers usually replied in Samoan which was then translated for me. This was a constraint to my research. I was unable to use direct quotes or the language of the weavers to bring out their voices. However, I was able to use other methods to understand the livelihoods of the fine mat weavers from their perspective. While spoken language is one source of learning about people's world, de Ishtar (2005, 363) explains that there are other senses that can be used in phenomenological research to overcome 'limitations' of cultural divergence. In her research she 'read gestures' and listened for tones in conversations, watched interactions between people, and between people and their worlds (de Ishtar, 2005: 363). I also used similar methods. I closely watched the weavers at their work, and closely observed the fine mat weavers as they interacted with the field workers. I understood a few Samoan words that were being spoken by the weavers and the field workers. I watched what was happening, and observed body language. I listened for the tones of voices and watched expressions on people's faces. I also discussed in depth each of the visits with the field workers to gain understanding of some of the events that occurred and interactions between the field workers and the weavers. I discussed the fine mat weaving with the Executive Director of WIBDI (the supporting NGO) on several occasions, and with others who had an interest in WIBDI and the fine mat weaving, but were not directly involved. Thus, although I was not able to present the voices of the fine mat weavers, I was able to present an informed impression of their reality in terms of their fine mat weaving and their livelihoods.

The case studies

A research strategy is selected according to the purpose of the study and the nature of the research questions (Marshall and Rossman, 1989: 44-50, Yin, 2003: 5). The field research strategy selected as the most appropriate to help answer the research questions posed in this research was the case study. The research strategy chosen also depends on the amount of control one has over behavioural events in the phenomenon to be studied, and whether the research is contemporary or historical (Yin, 2003: 7-8). In this research there is no control over the behavioural events (unlike a controlled experiment) and the research is contemporary, a 'snapshot in time'. The case study is an appropriate research strategy to use when examining contemporary events, and furthermore, the case study has a distinct advantage when questions are being asked

about events that the researcher has little or no control over (Yin, 2003: 9). Case studies are particularly appropriate for qualitative research (Patton, 1990: 99-100).

Hamel et al (1993: 1) describes a case study as an 'in-depth study of the case under consideration ... that strives to highlight features and attributes of social life', while Yin (2003: 13) suggests that a case study is 'an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear'. Case studies are contextually specific. Unlike an experiment, which strives to divorce the context from the enquiry, the case study includes the context as an important part of the study, despite the complexities that this brings.

In a case study, conclusions can be drawn about that particular set of circumstances. However, it is questionable as to whether one can generalise and build a theory on the basis of a single case study. Hamel et al (1993: 34) question the 'movement from local to global', and suggest that one case study is probably inadequate for generalisation. However, studying more than one case makes it possible to draw some conclusions as comparison puts the first study into perspective (Hamel et al, 1993: 35; Yin, 2003: 10-11).

Stake (2000: 437) distinguishes between three types of case studies. Firstly, *intrinsic case studies* are where the researcher studies the case because they want a better understanding of that particular case, not because the case represents other cases. Secondly, *instrumental case studies* are where the case is studied to provide insight or to redraw generalisations, and may or may not be typical of other cases. Thirdly, *collective case studies* are where the researcher studies a number of cases to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition. The collective case study is an extension of instrumental case studies and can lead to a better understanding (theorising) of a still larger collection of cases.

The case study approach is thus sometimes used to optimise understanding of a single case rather than to try to generalise from that case (as in the intrinsic case study). Here, the researcher sees the case as a bounded 'system' and is seeking to understand the complexities of that single case (Stake, 2000: 437-438). However, on the other hand, 'collective case studies' are used to develop theories and concepts. Thus, careful

selection of the cases is required to ensure that either the case studies selected can demonstrate similarities and generalities that will help to develop the theory, or where the case studies highlight differences, that the differences can be explained by theories that emerge.

In this research the case studies could be regarded as multiple case studies (Yin, 2003: 47), or collective case studies (Sake, 2000: 437). There is sometimes a trade-off between the 'intrinsic' case study where description is deep, but generalisation is rarely possible, and the 'collective' case study approach where studying more than one cases allows generalisations to be made, but in the process the deep understanding of the individual cases is sacrificed (Stake, 2000: 438-439). However, Yin (2003: 40-41) explains that case studies can be used as a way to generalise from a previously developed theory or proposition. He contrasts *statistical generalisation*, where statistical methods are used to ensure generalisations can be made from a sample to a whole population with *analytical generalisations* where case studies are used to compare empirical results with a previously developed theory (Yin, 2003: 32-33). Single case studies are used in situations where a 'critical case' is being examined in order to test a 'well formed theory', the case is unique or extreme, or the case has not been not investigated before (Yin, 2003: 40-41). In multiple case designs, however, the evidence is often considered to be more reliable and compelling. Multiple case studies are chosen which can give similar results and thus confirm theories or give contrasting results, but for predictable reasons (Yin, 2003: 47). In this research two case studies were used, and by relating these to some of the concepts and theories developed from the literature review, some generalisations were able to be made.

Clearly, in this research, to ensure that the complexities of the micro-enterprise systems were fully explored, described and understood, in relation to culture and sustainable livelihoods, it was important to limit the number of case studies. However, in order to be able to make some generalisations to add to our general understanding, more than one case study was required. Each case study was explored separately but the same (or similar) research questions were applied to each. While each case study was of interest in its own right, ideas and generalisations emerged throughout the research based on similarities and differences between the cases. The case studies that were selected are similar, in that they are micro-enterprise clusters, they are supported by NGOs and are

in similar cultural and geographic location (Samoa) but are different in a number of other respects. The exploration of the practices, problems, successes and concerns of the participants in the micro-enterprises and the organisations that support them provided insights into factors that lead to or hinder the attainment of sustainable livelihoods, and the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture.

The first case study that was conducted was the exploratory study of village-based coconut oil and soap making in Samoa. The field research began with a group of rural Samoan people who had formed a village Trust that planned village-based coconut oil extraction and soap making. However, it soon became apparent that the Trust was encountering major difficulties and that this coconut oil venture would almost certainly not proceed. Although this initial field research has not been described in detail in the thesis, it was important in giving insight into issues and difficulties encountered in developing such ventures. Two established village-based coconut oil production ventures were identified during the field research in Samoa consisting of groups of micro-entrepreneurs supported by NGOs (Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI) and Matuileoo Environment Trust Incorporated (METI)). The METI supported venture eventually formed the basis of the Samoan coconut oil case study, while the WIBDI supported venture was included in less detail, but was important to illustrate a different organisational structure.

The second case study explored the use of the traditional art of fine mat weaving in Samoa as a micro-enterprise. This case study evolved during the Samoan visit. It became apparent that one of the NGOs (WIBDI) that supported the coconut oil production also supported individual entrepreneurs (women) throughout Samoa to use their traditional skills in fine mat weaving to provide cash income. Although the fine mat weavers worked individually on their mats, and earned individual incomes, they often grouped together to enjoy the social side of their work. This case study provided a unique opportunity to explore relationships between culture (*fa'aSamoa*) and sustainable livelihoods, as well as providing an opportunity to explore a different kind of group structure for micro-enterprise.

The two case studies had a number of common elements that provided a basis for comparison. Firstly, they each involved micro-enterprises and micro-entrepreneurs.

Secondly, the micro-entrepreneurs worked as a group, either in the production or marketing of their products. Thirdly, the groups of micro-entrepreneurs were both being supported by formal organisations (both NGOs). This is not unusual in the Pacific Islands, many micro-enterprises are supported by micro-finance organisations, or receive other types of support from government and/or NGOs. The micro-enterprises in this research, received a wide range of support from the two NGOs including training, provision of equipment (in some cases), marketing support and micro-finance (in some cases). By liaising with the supporting organisations I was able to gain access to reasonable numbers of micro-entrepreneurs working with the same type of micro-enterprise, allowing me to research the two case studies. Fourthly, the micro-enterprises in both the case studies were rural Samoans, working within a similar cultural context (*fa'aSamoa*), one of the case studies (fine mat weaving) involving only women micro-entrepreneurs, and the other case study (coconut oil) involving a high proportion of women micro-entrepreneurs. Finally, some of the difficulties and constraints encountered by the micro-entrepreneurs were similar in both the case studies.

However, the case studies also had a number of differences. The case studies received different types of support from the NGOs, and the groups of micro-entrepreneurs were structured differently. One was a co-operative of micro-entrepreneurs (coconut oil) and in the other (fine mat weaving) there were independent micro-entrepreneurs who sometimes worked together for support and socialising. Finally, the two case studies differed in that in one, the product offered was a traditional art form (fine mat weaving), produced in a traditional way, whereas in the other the products offered were both traditional (coconut oil), and new (soap), but were produced in a non traditional way.

The common elements and the differences provided a basis for comparison (Chapter 8) of the factors that impacted on the success or otherwise of the micro-enterprises in providing sustainable livelihoods for the entrepreneurs and their families (including cultural aspects), and illustrated, and provided further understanding of, the relationship between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture.

Although the field research focussed on the case studies, a range of other issues associated with sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and *fa'aSamoa* arose during interviews and participant observation in Samoa. In particular, while staying in the

village in the early stages of my field research, I learnt much about *fa'aSamoa* and village life. Furthermore, interviews with research participants with an interest in the case studies, but not directly associated with them, were very important for a better understanding of information and issues.

Research methods

Literature review and research questions

In this research I conducted an extensive literature review prior to conducting the field research. The literature review then continued throughout the course of the research, as new sources came to light. The initial literature review had considerable influence on the research questions that are listed in Chapter 1, and the design of the research methodology.

It was important that research questions were clear before the field work was started. These questions influenced the design of the field research. However, although the research questions were set during initial stages of the research, they evolved as the research progressed, and the importance of culture in relation to sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise became more apparent.

In terms of case study research, Yin (1994: 71) categorises research questions into a number of levels: Level 1 Questions that will be asked of respondents (participants); Level 2 Questions that are asked of the case itself; Level 3 Questions that are asked of the findings across multiple cases; Level 4 Questions asked of the study; and Level 5 Questions about recommendations and conclusions. In this thesis, Level 1 and level 2 research questions are addressed in each of the case study chapters, while level 3 and level 4 questions are addressed in Chapter 8, which compares the two case studies. Conclusions (Level 5 questions) are addressed in the last chapter (Chapter 9).

Field research

A number of methods for collecting data were used during the field work. In this section an overview of the methods is described. Specific details of which participants were interviewed, which methods were used, and how and when the methods were used for each of the case studies is included in the case study chapters (Chapters 6 and 7).

One of the most important qualitative research methods for gathering data during field work is the in-depth semi-structured interview. I used this method extensively in the field research. Qualitative interviewing is non-directive, non-evaluative, unstructured (or semi-structured), not standardised and open ended (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 111-114). I prepared a checklist of questions for the semi-structured interviews conducted in this research, which helped me to keep within the themes of the research. Sometimes other relevant issues were raised by the participants, and these issues were then introduced as questions in subsequent interviews. The checklists of questions for this research are in Appendix 2. Probing was used, but without pressure (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 114-116), my checklist included prompts to remind me of issues I would like to explore. When I was interviewing I took on the role of a listener, and the research participant who was being interviewed could influence the direction that the interview took. In this way the data that was collected reflected issues that were important to the participant and their life. Semi-structured interviewing allows the participant to introduce ideas, and place emphasis on the issues that they see as important, unlike an interview using a structured questionnaire where the important issues are decided by the researcher.

Semi-structured interviews can be conducted with individuals or groups. The setting of the interview is at the discretion of the participants but is sometimes contrived (for example in an office or other meeting place) rather than being in the context of the phenomenon being studied (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 107). However, with most of the micro-entrepreneurs in this research, the interviews and participant observation took place simultaneously, and were thus conducted in homes and/or workplaces, and were in the context of the phenomenon being studied. In a few cases the meetings were in cafés (with participants indirectly related to the case studies), the location having been suggested by the research participant.

I rarely used a tape recorder except for some interviews with professional people. In most interviews the tape recorder could have made the research participants uncomfortable or suspicious, and jeopardised the quality and depth of the information. Furthermore, with the coconut oil producers, some the interviews were happening while we were making the oil so using a tape recorder was impossible. Sometimes the interviews were unplanned and/or informal and a tape recorder would have halted the

flow of information. Detailed notes were taken during interviews, or if this was inappropriate, information was recorded in a note book directly afterwards.

All interviews, both formal and informal, were transcribed or typed up on to the computer soon after the interviews. The transcriptions and 'type ups' were read and reread, then cut and pasted into themes to ensure that all the relevant findings were used as objectively as possible in presenting the findings.

Participant observations are where the subjects are observed in the context of their normal lives. I found this observation to be very important to enrich the data obtained from interviews. Taking notes while observing can be intrusive, so if this was the case I wrote notes up soon after the event. The participant observation of the micro-entrepreneurs occurred in both the context of the micro-enterprises and their daily tasks and socialising (when I was staying where the micro-entrepreneurs lived). Participant observation also occurred during home-stays with village people in Samoa. In the case of the fine mat weavers, they were generally working on their mats (in their homes or the homes of others) during the participant observations and discussion. The whole of the process of the coconut oil production (over 4-6 hours) was observed twice during separate visits to different coconut oil producers, and I helped in this process both times.

Unstructured and unplanned interviews also occurred during the research. In Samoa unstructured interviews occurred with the families that I stayed with in the village, on the bus, at the market, outside the local trade stores, in the street, in the backpacker hotel where I stayed in Apia and at the beach. Although not all these interviews were listed in the field research programme in Appendix 4, they were regarded as very important, were often used for cross checking information, and added richness to the research. They were recorded in a note book as soon as possible after the event, and included in the 'type up' of information.

I was prepared to use group participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods if the opportunity arose and the methods seemed appropriate. Group PRA methods can be useful for obtaining structured data from groups of people (or individuals) in a fun and non threatening way (Chambers, 1997: 102-161). Matrix ranking and ranking could have been used to rank goals in order of importance, identify issues, problems or

constraints and rank them according to a range of factors. Network diagrams or Venn diagrams could have been developed by participants to describe the networks and organisations that are important to the micro-enterprises. Seasonal calendars could describe the seasonal nature of micro-enterprises and how this impacts on the livelihoods of the subjects. However, although I was prepared to use such methods, the opportunity did not arise as the participants were generally alone (occasionally there were two or three together) and semi-structured interviews and participant observation seemed the most appropriate methods to use.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a process whereby data is confirmed and verified by using three (if possible) different sources of data, research methods or approaches, or even researchers. There are a number of ways triangulation can work. The data can be collected from three sources (for example two research participants and a written source) or three research participants (or groups of research participants) confirm the same information. Three different investigators or researchers could verify the data. Multiple methods of data collection (for example participant observation, interviews and a participatory method) could be used. Different approaches to data collection (for example quantitative and qualitative methods) could be used, or different perspectives could be used to interpret a single set of data. (Patton, 1990: 187-188, Taylor and Bogdan, 1998: 80-82).

In this research, there was only myself, and time and money limited the field research. The methods of triangulation used were multiple sources (for example written material, interviews with a number of participants), multiple methods of data collection (interviews and participant observation) and viewing the data from a number of different perspectives. In terms of multiple sources of evidence Yin (2003: 100) distinguishes between convergence and non-convergent methods. Convergent methods are where several sources are used in each case study but the findings and conclusions that emerge are a combination of the sources of evidence. Non-convergent methods are where a series of sub-studies are conducted on the different sources of evidence and the findings and conclusions are separated. This research used convergent methods as the aim was to carry out a holistic study of each case using a number of groups of research participants rather than a series of sub-studies of different groups of research participants.

In both the case studies, reports were provided to the group or supporting organisation as soon as possible after the research. These reports fulfilled a number of functions. Firstly, they informed the groups of the results of the research and were written in a manner that would provide useful information to the groups. Secondly they asked for comments in order to verify that the results were accurate and finally, they were a way of showing appreciation for the time given to the research process by the micro-entrepreneurs. In all cases the reports were well received, and anecdotal evidence suggested they were read by a number of the organisation members. The supporting organisations made written comments (by email) that enhanced the findings. I was therefore confident that the results of the research and interpretation of the results was an accurate view of the situation at the time of the research. Letters and emails included with the reports that were sent to the organisations are in Appendix 3.

Field research programme

The field research for each case study was conducted separately, although the field work for the Samoan case studies overlapped, and the field research for the coconut oil case study was conducted during three separate visits to Samoa. Two of the visits to Samoa (in August 2003 and August 2004) were also for consultancy work that was not formally part of the research.

Table 3.1 summarises the field research programme, including the dates of the field work, the research focus, and the general location of the field research. A more detailed programme of the field work is in Appendix 4.

Table 3.1 Summarised programme of field work

| DATE | RESEARCH FOCUS | LOCATION |
|--------------------|--|----------|
| March – April 2003 | Village coconut oil Fine mat weaving <i>Fa'aSamoa</i> Micro-enterprise in Samoa | Samoa |
| August 2003 | Village coconut oil | Samoa |
| August 2004 | Village coconut oil | Samoa |

Research ethics

Research ethics were considered to be very important. In line with Massey University's requirements for PhD students conducting field research, a meeting between myself and two faculty members was arranged to discuss and approve the steps that would be taken to ensure the field research was ethical. As I live away from the Massey University campus the meeting was held by telephone and followed up by email correspondence.

Consideration was given to ensuring that research participants understood their rights and had clearly consented to the interviews and participant observation. Careful planning ensured that any potential harm to research participants was minimised. This included factors such as confidentiality, making participants feel comfortable and relaxed, ensuring questions were culturally acceptable, and being sensitive to the participants and the organisations that supported the research participants. Learning about cultural and gender norms was important so that I could blend into the village environment as best as possible. Consideration was also given to minimising any harm to me (the researcher) and the University. All data collected was kept secure, and translators were asked to be discreet. Reports were returned to the organisations involved in the research to ensure accuracy of the information. The 'Code of Ethical Conduct for Teaching and Research involving Human Subjects' (Massey University revised 16/2/00) was followed. The ethics report submitted to Massey University is in Appendix 5.

What worked and research challenges

The case study strategy worked very well for a number of reasons. Firstly, the research was able to be carried at different stages throughout the course of the PhD with time for reflection and analysis between. Secondly, the case studies allowed a comparison to be made between cases with enough similar characteristics to give a basis, but different characteristics that allowed a wider perspective. Comparing the case studies helped draw conclusions on which to answer the research questions. Finally, the selection of just two in depth cases allowed the research to explore each case in depth, which added to the richness of the research.

The phenomenologist, inductive and qualitative approach worked well. The holistic research managed to capture the essence of the micro-entrepreneurs. However, in Samoa some challenges were encountered with selecting participants for the study.

There were constraints in terms of the extent to which I was able to interview fine mat weavers because I was travelling with the field workers from the NGO that supported them. These field workers were carrying out routine visits to their clients which were sometimes quite short, and sometimes dedicated to the field workers' responsibilities. I was obliged to interview and observe the weavers the field workers chose to visit. In the case of the coconut oil case study, I was able to interview coconut oil producers from two of the four existing co-operatives supported by one NGO (METI), and three of the five coconut oil producers supported by another NGO (WIBDI). However, at one of the co-operatives I was only able to interview one person as the others were not available, and two of the interviews with the WIBDI supported oil producers were shorter than I would have liked.

The flexible approach taken to the research worked very well, with a great number of unplanned opportunities arising for interviews and participant observations, especially in Samoa. The flexibility in terms of where the interviews took place was also important as the participants invariably felt relaxed and were happy to offer information. In many cases the interviews took place while having meals or drinks. This made note-taking difficult, but was important in terms of cultural acceptance.

I selected appropriate research methods - reviewing literature, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, or participant observation – to suit the situation. Research methods varied between case studies. The main challenges encountered related to language and cultural barriers. Translators were sometimes required in Samoa as I am unable to speak Samoan, and some of the micro-entrepreneurs were unable to speak fluent English or were reluctant to speak English. I stayed for several periods in a village with a family and during this time translation was provided by my home-stay host. During the field work with the fine mat weavers and the individual family coconut oil producers, translation was provided by field workers from the supporting NGO. In the case of the coconut oil co-operatives, most of the co-operative members could speak some English, and where necessary translation was provided by a member who was fluent in English. The use of translators was necessary, but less than ideal. Due to lack of finance, and the circumstances of the field work, none of the translators were professional unbiased translators. Sometimes the flow of conversation was delayed and misunderstandings may have occurred through translation. Where the field

workers from the NGO were acting as translators, the information may have been biased in that the field workers were viewing the situation from a different perspective to that of the micro-entrepreneurs who were the research participants.

Nearly all of the participants in the case study on fine mat weaving (Chapter 10) were interviewed using the field workers as translators. The presence of the field workers led to the participants preferring to speak in Samoan rather than in English, using the field workers as translators. This greatly reduced the richness of the data as the translated answers were summarised and I was not able to adequately probe answers as they were given. There is much less depth of analysis in terms of the 'voices' of the participants in the case study on fine mat weaving in Samoa compared with the other case studies. The chapter on this case study is therefore considerably shorter than the chapters on the other two case studies.

Cultural factors added to the challenges of using interviews in Samoa. Samoan people are eager to please visitors and some of the information I received may have been to provide what the participants perceived as being what I wanted to know, rather than the full truth of the situation. In addition, when questioned, it is unusual for Samoan people to say they 'don't know'. Rather it is more acceptable to offer an explanation that could answer the question.

It became apparent early in my field work that semi-structured interviews were not providing the full extent of information. For example, during initial interviews with my home-stay host in the village, I asked what sources of income the family had. I was provided with a short list, including the son's salary from work in Apia, some sale of taro and the grandmother's pension. However over the course of my stay with the family, and during participant observation, a number of other sources of income became apparent. These other sources were very important to my understanding of micro-enterprise at village level, but had not seemed important in the context of my home-stay host's answer, possibly because they were somewhat 'informal' ways of earning money. A second example came during the field work with the fine mat weavers, where I asked the field workers about the systems used to pay the weavers. The explanation covered only the situation of the previous weaver, but by observation during payment to other weavers and through further questioning I was able to ascertain other payment methods. Furthermore, two of the organisation supporting

micro-enterprises in Samoa (one of which featured in the case study), were partially funded by the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID). Being a New Zealand development practitioner with links to NZAID, this could have influenced the interviews with professional people from these NGOs. However, information about these organisations was confirmed through participant observation, interviews with other people who were well informed about the organisations, and a review of literature.

Participant observation, cross-checking of information with other participants, and a review of literature was very important to confirm and add to my interview results. Using a flexible approach and multiple methods was important, especially during the Samoan field research where the variety of methods helped in overcoming the challenges of language and culture.

Conclusion

The research methodology was based on a qualitative, phenomenological approach using two in depth case studies. This methodology was considered appropriate for the type of research that was being conducted, and the research participants that would be involved in the research. The methods used during the field work were designed to answer the research questions, overcome the challenges of language and culture, and provide the research participants with the opportunity to raise issues and exert control over the direction of the conversation. The sustainable livelihoods approach, was used to provide a framework for the research, define boundaries and ensure that important issues were covered. The research was designed to be flexible, enabling the research to evolve and develop within reasonable boundaries, while ensuring that research questions were answered.

The qualitative, phenomenological approach worked well for this research, but on reflection also had some drawbacks. On the positive side, the qualitative research provided the in-depth understanding of the livelihoods of the micro-entrepreneurs, and the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and *fa'aSamoa* that the research sought to 'unravel' and explain. The phenomenological approach was important to the understanding of livelihoods, and was congruent with the people-centred nature of the sustainable livelihoods approach that I was using as a theoretical framework. Using a qualitative, phenomenological approach I was able to draw on my

own work experience in order to better understand some of the concepts that were explained to me, and critically reflect on the findings from the field work. Being an outsider in some ways enabled me to be objective in my interpretation of issues and phenomenon. However, on reflection, both the qualitative and phenomenological approach had some drawbacks. Firstly, the results and interpretation of the field data could be biased by my previous experience in development practice and the questions that I asked. Asking the right questions in an appropriate way, interpreting answers and verifying that information I received was correctly interpreted (and was the complete 'story') was challenging as I was working in a culture other than my own. Furthermore, on reflection, some further quantitative data may have been useful to support the qualitative data, and perhaps reduce some bias in my interpretation.

In line with the research methodology described and explained in this chapter, the following chapters in the thesis firstly provide a context for the case studies (Chapters 4 and 5), then present research findings for each of the case studies (Chapters 6 and 7). Chapter 4 also critically reviews the sustainable livelihoods frameworks and definitions in terms of its appropriateness as a theoretical framework for this research, and Chapter 8 'revisits' the sustainable livelihoods approach, after the field research, to further develop the framework and theory.

Chapter 4 Samoa: *Fa'aSamoa* and Rural Livelihoods

Introduction

First this chapter reviews two theories that have been developed in relation to the Pacific Islands, but are relevant to Samoa. The MIRAB theory that describes the macro-economies of some Pacific Island countries is introduced in order to explain the existing macro-economic environment of rural livelihoods in Samoa (Bertram and Watters, 1985). Then Hau'ofa's (1993) positive view of Oceania as a 'sea of islands', is explored to provide a perspective on livelihoods in Samoa that is appropriate for this research. The chapter then analytically reviews aspects of rural livelihoods in Samoa, the latter part of the chapter drawing on the components of the sustainable livelihoods framework (Chapter 2) to structure and define the sections. Culture, as revealed in *fa'aSamoa* (Samoa way of life), is described and discussed, drawing mainly on literature, but also including some references to field research interviews. This chapter argues that *fa'aSamoa* is interwoven with almost every aspect of rural livelihoods in Samoa, in fact culture is an environment in which rural Samoans pursue their livelihoods. Thus, following the section on *fa'aSamoa*, the sections not only discuss aspects of rural livelihoods in Samoa, but also address the relationships between each of the aspects and *fa'aSamoa*, thereby linking the sustainable livelihoods approach, *fa'aSamoa* and Samoan rural livelihoods. Finally, informed by the findings of this chapter, existing frameworks and definitions of sustainable livelihoods are critically reviewed in terms of their adequacy to guide this research, and a revised framework and definition are developed.

Samoa livelihoods in the context of the Pacific Islands region

Two theories that have been developed in the wider Pacific Island context, but give meaning to, and add to the understanding of Samoa and Samoan livelihoods, are firstly the MIRAB theory that describes the macro-economic state, and development future, of some Pacific Island countries (Bertram and Watters (1985), and secondly theory about the Pacific (Oceania) region proposed by Hau'ofa (1993) which dispels notions of smallness, dependence and negativity, firmly implanting positive and optimistic views of the future of this 'sea of islands' (Oceania) united by the ocean, and a long history of migration and voyaging.

The MIRAB economies of Pacific Island countries

In the 1980's, Bertram and Watters (1985) examined the economies of some small Pacific Island countries³ and showed that the economies of these countries were dominated by migration (MI), remittances (R), aid (A), and bureaucracy (B) (MIRAB). Rather than viewing the dependency of these Pacific Island countries as negative, Bertram and Watters argued that the MIRAB model was reasonable and sensible given the limited resource base and isolation of these countries (Bertram and Watters, 1985, Fraenkel, 2006:16). Bertram and Watters noted that MIRAB countries were in a state of dependency that was likely to prove 'durable and sustainable' (Bertram and Watters, 1985: 496).

In the MIRAB model, migration (MI) is considered a rational and profitable allocation of household resources for many households and communities, rather than being viewed negatively as a loss of skills and potential to a community. In some Pacific Island countries (including Samoa) people have strategically influenced the way in which migration and remittances (R) have evolved to become an integral part of their livelihood systems. Bertram and Watters described migration as 'an emerging new institution, the trans-national corporation of kin, allowing kin groups to colonize and exploit economic opportunities across a wide range of economic environments' (Bertram and Watters, 1985: 503). While migration is not a new phenomenon in Pacific history (Hau'ofa, 1993), migration for employment, and the remittances that flow from that employment, is relatively new, beginning in the 1950s when the New Zealand labour market opened to Pacific Islanders. There were 120,000 Samoans living in New Zealand in 2005 (MFAT, 2006), compared with the Samoan population of 180,900 in 2004 (MFAT, 2006). Remittances to Samoa (that are formally recorded) constitute 20% of the Samoan GDP annually and amount annually to around \$US500 per Samoan capita (Holden et al, 2003: 22), compared with a total per capita income of \$US2000 in 2005 (Sialoa, 2005: 2). The value of remittances per capita to Samoa has more than doubled since 1998 when they amounted to \$US207 per capita (ADB 2001b: 9). As a result of migration, remittances continue to flow into Samoan households, communities and churches, and provide cash income for large numbers of households and community organisations. Remittances and migration have influenced social change in

³ The countries used in the original analysis which lead to the MIRAB theory (Bertram and Watters, 1985: 501) were Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Kiribati.

Samoa as people have integrated migration and remittances into their culture. Migration, and remittances, as a livelihood strategy in Samoa are explored later in this chapter in the section on livelihood strategies.

In the 1980s large amounts of international aid (A) flowed directly into government expenditure (and budget support), much of this being used to pay the salaries of government workers (Bertram and Watters, 1985: 499) and providing a direct link between aid and bureaucracy (B). However, from the 1990s there was a shift away from budget support to funding projects as aid was considered by donors to be an investment in the recipient country, necessary to support countries to move towards self sufficiency and economic growth. Nevertheless, many of these projects still support governments through institutional strengthening projects and sector wide programmes.

In terms of bureaucracy, governments continue to be dominant in the economies of many Pacific Island nations, including Samoa (Holden et al, 2004: 43), although Samoa has lower government expenditure as a percentage of GDP than many other Pacific Island nations. Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP in 2000 ranged from a low of around 21% for Samoa and Vanuatu to over 100% for Tuvalu and 82% for Kiribati (Holden et al, 2004: 43). State ownership of resources still prevails in Samoa, despite moves towards privatisation of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). The state provides all infrastructure services and has some ownership in a range of business including an agricultural store and an internet provider (Holden et al, 2004: 99-102). In Samoa, in the 2001 census, 32% of formal workers were employed by government (Sialaoa, 2003: 8), their wages providing remittances and sustenance for large numbers of people (Bertram and Watters, 1985: 500).

High levels of aid have flowed into Pacific Island nations, but this has not generally been reflected by strong economic growth (Schoeffel, 1996: 1, Cole and Tambunlertchai, 1993: 1, Holden et al, 2004, ADB, 2004a: 2), this phenomenon being termed 'the Pacific paradox' (Vunibobo, 1997). According to Hughes (2003; 1), aid has 'failed the Pacific' with an 'inverse relationship' between aid and growth (Hughes, 2003: 25). In complete contrast, Poirine (1995: 52) argues that 'social welfare' has risen in the Pacific Islands despite low GDP growth due to emigration, remittances, international aid and the persistence of the strong 'traditional sector' and thus aid has resulted in 'development' albeit not economic development. The reality lies somewhere

between the extremes of Hughes and Poirine's perspectives. Hughes assessment is based only on economic indicators, and is over generalised and exaggerated. Samoa has experienced economic growth in recent years. However, Hughes is right in drawing attention to the wastefulness and ineffectiveness of much of the international aid that has been provided for the Pacific Islands. While, as Poirine (1995) points out, social welfare is important, without growth in the economy, governments will have little to spend on infrastructure, health and education, and employment will remain an impossible dream for most Pacific Islanders.

The MIRAB model highlights the unique features of macro-economies of some Pacific Island countries (such as Samoa) (Bertram, 2006: 7), and also influences development policy in some respects (Bertram and Watters, 1985: 497, McKinnon and Morrison, 1995: 10). For example, the Samoan government places great importance on building sound relationships with countries such as New Zealand and Australia to ensure continued international aid and emigration. At the local level, many Samoans are aware that their future economic security can best be gained by ensuring that at least one of their children migrates overseas to provide for the family (Maiava, 2001: 32). However, there are contradictions between the MIRAB reality that prevails, and neoliberal economic policy 'imposed' by both multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid agencies, that endeavour to 'reform' economies in order to increase exports and economic growth. Bertram (2006: 2) describes this as a 'radical disconnection of policy discourse from economic reality'.

Many years after the MIRAB model was developed, Bertram (1999, 2006) argues that the model is still useful to describe the economies of Pacific Island nations such as Samoa. In 2006, Bertram also proposes that the MIRAB 'pattern' is still likely to continue for some time (Bertram, 2006: 12). However, with Pacific Islanders' material well-being now reliant on imports, countries such as Samoa do need strategies for overseas earnings. Bertram notes that there is clearly transferability between factors of the model, and other elements can be substituted for remittances or aid (for example tourism) (Bertram, 1999). While exporting and overseas investments are the strategies that should ideally be developed to improve overseas earnings, and are the focus of much of the aid endeavours towards economic development, realistically remittances and aid will continue to be extremely important to most Pacific Island countries

(including Samoa) in the foreseeable future (Bertram, 1999: 118-125, Bertram, 2006:12). While international aid to Samoa has decreased in recent years (from \$US 45 million in 1995 to \$US 25 million in 2002) it still accounted for 26% of government budget resources in 2002 (Holden et al, 2003) and 10% of GDP in 2005 (Sialaoa, 2005:8).

The value of the MIRAB model for this research is that it highlights four dominating factors of the macro-economic environment that strongly influence the livelihoods of Samoan people. In the following sections of this chapter, the MIRAB factors will reappear in terms of *fa'aSamoa* and Samoan rural livelihoods. For example, with large numbers of people benefiting from government employment at relatively high wage rates, with opportunities for work overseas, and with remittances, people are normally unwilling to accept small amounts of cash for long hours of hard work, this influencing the livelihood strategies that people choose. Migration and the sending home of remittances has become an important livelihood strategy for rural Samoans as they have adapted their society and their culture to respond to the growing need for cash. Government and bureaucracy play a role in the policies and institutions that influence livelihood systems, and employment for Samoan people. Remittances are used as financial resources for a range of livelihood strategies, and for financing the life event ceremonies (*fa'alavelave*) that provide the opportunity for expression of cultural beliefs, values and family (*aiga*) unity.

A 'sea of islands'

The MIRAB model is a macro-economic theory that proposes that the dependency of some Pacific Island nations on aid and remittances is a sensible and realistic situation. On the other hand Hau'ofa's (1993) theory describes opportunities for livelihoods and well-being at a local level. Hau'ofa's theory is in many ways congruent with the MIRAB theory, the MIRAB model providing a context for the processes described by Hau'ofa (1993). Nevertheless Hau'ofa regards the notion of 'dependency' as being untenable and negative for Pacific Island people (Hau'ofa, 1993: 4-5). Hau'ofa (1993) argues that the notion of dependency, and other negative features that are prominent in the discourse and rhetoric of Pacific Island development such as smallness of nations, lack of resources, and isolation, are 'belittling' to Pacific Island people and promulgate feelings of 'hopelessness' (Hau'ofa, 1993: 5). In reference to this negativity Hau'ofa

goes as far as to say: 'Is this not what neo-colonialism is about? To make people feel they have no choice but to depend?' (Hau'ofa, 1993: 5).

In his perspective of Oceania (as Hau'ofa refers to the Pacific Islands region) Hau'ofa counteracts notions of smallness and fragmentation, with the notion of a greater Oceanic outlook, where people and cultures have moved back and forth between islands for thousands of years. He introduces a different perspective of Oceania as a 'sea of islands' within an ocean that has only recently in history been fragmented into national and economic boundaries (Hau'ofa, 1993: 7). The geographic extent of Oceania in Hau'ofa's discourse stretches from New Zealand and Australia in the southwest, to USA and Canada in the northeast (Hau'ofa, 1993: 12), the most prominent common feature of all Pacific Island countries being that they share the same ocean (Hau'ofa, 1993). Within this view of the Oceania there is no lack of resources and no smallness or isolation (Hau'ofa, 1993: 11).

Hau'ofa (1993: 12) points out that in general, the living standards of Oceania, are higher than most third world countries. He contends that this is not only due to 'dependency' on aid and remittances (as the MIRAB theory implies). He states: 'Ordinary Pacific people depend for their daily existence much, much more on themselves and their kinfolk wherever they might be ...' (Hau'ofa, 1993: 12). Hau'ofa points out that movement of people within Oceania, as a phenomenon that has existed for thousands of years, has naturally evolved into the modern form of migration such as the overseas movement of Samoans over the past 50-60 years for work opportunities. Hau'ofa strongly disputes that migration and remittances are in fact 'dependency' on the rich nations. He contends that 'the funds and goods homes-abroad people send their homeland relatives belong to no-one but themselves. They earn every cent through hard physical toil in their new locations that need and pay for their labour' (Hau'ofa, 1993: 12). He disputes the notion of Pacific Islanders in their home countries being 'parasites' on their relatives who live overseas, pointing out that cultural aspects of reciprocity and kinship are central to the practice of remittances, and that those providing remittances gain much from the practice. He refers to remittances as 'interdependence' rather than 'dependence' (Hau'ofa, 1993: 12-13). This concept is discussed later in this chapter.

While there is much merit in Hau'ofa's (1993) theory, some of the themes in Hau'ofa's discourse are somewhat contradictory and do not offer any concrete suggestions for the

way forward. For example, while strongly criticising the notions of dependency, and pointing out the interdependency of remittances and migration, Hau'ofa (1993) does not offer any solutions, or a positive view for Pacific Island countries' dependence on international aid, nor a definitive way in which the combined resources of Oceania can be harnessed to reduce such aid dependency. Furthermore as is pointed out later in this thesis (Chapter 5) smallness, and small scale production (e.g. at village level as in the case studies in this thesis), can actually be advantages for niche markets, and a small country has the ability to change policies much more quickly in response to changing global environment. So there is actually the possibility to think positively about some of the negative rhetoric that Hau'ofa identifies, rather than counteracting it with a new theory.

However, central to Hau'ofa's (1993) discourse is positivism and optimism and this view is totally congruent with the sustainable livelihoods approach which is used as a theoretical framework in this thesis. As with the sustainable livelihoods approach Hau'ofa's 'islands in the sea' discourse strongly contends that both development rhetoric and practice should focus on positive aspects of livelihoods, communities and environments that can be harnessed and built on to provide sustainable livelihoods. This thesis does not ignore tensions and constraints that influence rural livelihoods in Samoa, and furthermore the thesis recognises that what happens at the both micro-level (family and community) and macro-level strongly influence the initiatives of rural village people. However, the thesis builds on Hau'ofa's positive and optimistic discourse through the sustainable livelihoods approach, and strongly argues that sustainable livelihoods can best be achieved when the assets that people have, and the way in which people live (i.e. within the context of *fa'aSamoa* in this research) are recognised as central to people's livelihoods, and livelihood strategies and development build on these ensuring harmony and congruency.

Moving from theories that have been developed in the context of the Pacific Islands, the chapter now focuses on Samoa. In the next sections I introduce aspects of Samoa that are of relevance to rural livelihoods and the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7, and discuss the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and rural livelihoods.

The macro-economy of Samoa

In recent years, the economy of Samoa has been one of the strongest in the Pacific region. According to Hughes (2003: 4), Samoa's real Gross National Product (GNP) per capita growth was only 0.8% for the period 1970-2000. However, Samoa's GDP has made considerable improvements since 1995, and Samoa's economy is now one of the fastest growing in the Pacific Islands (Holden et al, 2003: 6, MFAT, 2006), with GDP growth in 2005 at 6.5% (Sialaoa, 2005: 3). The average real rate of growth was 4.7% over the period 1995-2001 and per capita GDP increased from around \$US1,000 per capita in 1995 to around \$US2,000 in 2005 (Sialaoa, 2005: 3). Improving per capita GDP is a result of low population growth (due to high out-migration) and strong economic performance (ADB 2001b: 2-3). Population growth is less than 1% per annum, with population increasing from 161,298 in 1991 (Sialaoa, 2005: 2) to 180,900 in 2004 (MFAT, 2006). Migration to other countries is very high, with 100,000 Samoans officially living in NZ in 1999 (ADB 2001b: 7), this number increasing to 120,000 in 2005 (MFAT, 2006).

The Samoan economy relies on agriculture, tourism, small-scale manufacturing and fisheries. Traditionally, agriculture and fisheries accounted for the largest share of GDP much of this due to subsistence farming, and in recent years to commercial fishing (ADB, 2001b: 7, Sialaoa, 2003: 7). However, the importance of subsistence farming has declined in terms of real GDP from 25% of GDP in the early 1980s to only 15% in 2000. In 2005, the commerce sector overtook agriculture and fisheries and accounted for 20% of GDP, while fishing and agriculture accounted for 13% and manufacturing 12% (Sialaoa, 2005: 3-4). Remittances accounted for around 20% of GDP (Holden et al, 2003: 25, MFAT, 2006).

Tourism growth in Samoa has been strong with 6.5% growth in tourist arrivals from 2000 to 2001 (when there were over 88, 000 visitors) (Scheyvens, 2002) and an 8% growth between 2001 and 2002 (STA, 2003). Samoa is now the fourth most popular Pacific Island destination for tourists (Scheyvens, 2003: 230). The tourism sector has accounted for around 10-15% of GDP in recent years (Sialaoa, 2003: 7).

Overall exports from Samoa grew between 2001 and 2003, much of this due to fish exports. However, there was also a sharp increase in imports during this time (as a result of tariff reductions) and a slight decline in tourism earnings. The balance of

payments was negative for 2001, 2002 and 2003, but a surplus has been achieved in recent years (Sialaoa, 2005: 8). Private investment inflows are negligible but private and official transfers (remittances and aid), and tourist receipts make up for Samoa's small export earnings.

There are a number of factors that could account for Samoa's relative economic success compared with other Pacific Island countries. Firstly, Samoa has undertaken economic reforms since 1996 (Tuilaepa and Nartea, 2003: 195) that have 'opened up' the economy and improved the efficiency of the public sector (Sialaoa, 2005: 1). The reforms have included tariff reductions, taxation restructuring, financial sector liberalisation and public sector reform (including reduced staffing levels). Reform of state owned enterprises (SOEs) is continuing, some of these SOEs performing poorly and using considerable government funds. The average percentage of GDP provided as subsidies to SOEs between 1998/99 and 2000/01 was 10.4%, equivalent to 60% of the health budget (Sialaoa, 2003: 11). Secondly, Samoa has a well development system for co-ordinating the external funds from donors (Delay, 2005). The Samoan government takes a clear leadership role in the aid process, clearly indicating which activities fits best with its priorities (Delay, 2005: 434), and taking ownership of aid funded activities.

Poverty and hardship in Samoa

The UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that includes economic standard of living (GDP per capita), health (longevity – life expectancy at birth), and education (adult literacy and gross enrolment ratio). In the 2005 UNDP Human Development Report (2003 figures) Samoa was ranked 74th out of 177 countries and was in the medium range group of countries (UNDP, 2005) having increased from 96th in 2002 (Sialaoa, 2005: 1). Samoa was ranked ahead of Fiji (ranked 92nd), Solomon Islands (128th), and Papua New Guinea (137th) in 2003 (Chan, 2006: 8). Samoa has a higher HDI ranking than its GDP ranking of 88th (UNDP, 2005).

Widespread hunger, which is normally associated with chronic poverty, is absent in the Samoa due to most Samoans having access to subsistence agricultural produce through traditional land systems and kinship relationships. However, participatory workshops conducted by the ADB in the Pacific Islands (including Samoa) revealed that considerable poverty is experienced, which Pacific Islanders described as 'hardship',

rather than 'poverty' (Prokop, 2003: 7, Chan, 2006: 6). The use of the word 'poverty' is contentious for Pacific Islanders, and there is a reluctance to admit that customary and traditional systems cannot always provide for families (Schoeffel, 1996: 26). While some would argue that the word 'hardship' masks the real situation of poverty in the Pacific Islands, the word has been readily accepted (especially by policy makers) as a representation of poverty in most circumstances.

The participatory assessment of hardship in Samoa, initiated by the Government of Samoa in 2002 and funded by ADB, showed that despite improved macro-economic indicators, people perceive hardship to have increased in recent years (Prokop, 2003: 38, Lumbao, 2003: 5). During the assessment most individuals and families described hardship as lack of cash income for household needs and customary obligations, lack of access to services and lack of jobs and opportunities to establish business (Lumbao, 2003: 4 and 7). Joblessness, increased school fees and dropout rates, increased social problems, land disputes, decreasing markets for agricultural products, lack of able-bodied men to cultivate agricultural land, and poor access to basic services were cited as trends over the last five years associated with hardship (Lumbao, 2003: 4, Prokop, 2003: 38). Downsizing of the public sector in the early 1990s reduced employment opportunities, while the value added goods and services tax introduced in 1994, and the user pay system for basic services, have increased the cost of living (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000a: 105), contributing to financial hardship.

Despite strong economic growth for Samoa as a whole, there is an increasing gap between the levels of economic activity, and standards of living, in different regions within Samoa. Most of the GDP (70%) is generated around the capital of Apia, yet 60%-80% of Samoans live in rural areas (Hooper, 1998: 30, ADB, 2001b: 2, Holden et al, 2003: 43, Sialaoa, 2005: 2). There is a low level of investment in subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture, despite this being a key activity for the majority of the rural population (Sialaoa, 2005: 11). Rural Samoans are enjoying fewer benefits of economic growth than urban Samoans (ADB 2001b: 1, Sialaoa, 2003: 4), with people living on the island of Savai'i especially disadvantaged, and Savai'i receiving a smaller share of economic benefits than Upolu (Prokop, 2003: 38).

Not only is there income disparity between town and country, but disparity within regions has also increased. A trend towards resources being shared between individual

households, rather than amongst larger kinship groups, has resulted in some households becoming more vulnerable, and a widening gulf between the better off and less well off in rural areas. There are pockets of extreme hardship, often associated with households or individuals with no income earning capacity, disabled people, single mothers, homeless people and landless families. Despite the customary and traditional systems providing security for the majority of rural Samoans, the social systems of kinship support do not provide adequate protection against poverty for all (ADB 2001a: 15-16). Government plans to address income distribution and equity issues through targeted hardship reduction strategies have yet to be implemented (Sialaoa, 2005: 4). While some sectors of the Samoan population are enjoying the benefits of economic reforms and economic development, in 2002, 20% of households nationally had incomes below the basic needs poverty line and were experiencing financial hardship on a daily or weekly basis (Sialaoa, 2003; 11, Delay, 2005: 433).

Lack of cash, and cash earning opportunities, especially in rural areas, has been referred to in recent literature as 'poverty of opportunity' (ADBa, 2001: 9, Tafuna'i, 2003: 179) and 'poverty of economic opportunity' (Struthers et al, 2002: 42). Subsistence living and secure access to food is part of the traditional way of life, but increasingly cash is becoming important for material goods, fuel, food, agricultural inputs and school fees (Chung, 1997: 28, Tuilaepa Suavi, 1998; Struthers et al, 2003: 42). Cash is also needed for gifts, obligations and redistribution within the traditional system (Crocombe, 1972b: 29). In reference to the rural economy, Tafuna'i (2003: 179) says 'they are waking up to the fact that they now live in this cash economy and they need to change their subsistence mindset'. People are 'trapped' in subsistence living with little opportunity for change.

Poverty in the Pacific Islands is also sometimes referred to as 'poverty of vulnerability'. Samoa is vulnerable to environmental, economic, and social factors and events. ADB (2001a: 12) refers to a 'temporal affect', where certain events cause short term but severe poverty amongst families, communities and even whole countries. Issues of vulnerability are discussed later in this chapter.

Culture, *fa'aSamoa* and rural livelihoods in Samoa

While culture is a word used in a variety of different contexts, in this thesis 'culture' is used to distinguish the characteristics of different groups of people based on geographic

location, ethnicity or identity. For Samoan people culture is defined as *fa'aSamoa*, their way of life, or way of knowing (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 9). While there is no complete agreement on *fa'aSamoa*, it is a 'tool' for understanding the world, and the relationships Samoan people have with each other, the church, outsiders and the environment (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 9).

So what then constitutes, and determines a culture such as *fa'aSamoa*? Firstly, culture comprises a wide range of spiritual, intellectual and emotional features that are characteristic for a society or societal group (Kavaliku, 2000: 23). Culture includes cultural history, social identity, roles and relationships (including aspects of age, friendship and gender roles), art, language and interaction, cultural beliefs and values, and norms for recognition and reward (Dodd, 1998: 43-53). It is useful to separate out different aspects of culture from this extensive list. Crocombe (1972a: 2, and 1980: 65) uses the word 'broad' to define culture as a 'total way of life', including ways of thinking, and the way people behave and relate to each other. He uses the word 'narrow' to describe culture as the way in which people express themselves including creative expression in terms of dress, lifestyle, song, performing, visual art and language. Maiava (2002: 77) describes three 'dimensions' of culture. First cognitive dimensions are the beliefs people have that define who we are and how we differ from other groups of people. From a sense of understanding (or world view) of who we are, comes an understanding of personal identity, who I am (Dodd, 1991: 45). Second, the normative dimension of culture (judging and morals), are the values that form the basis of a society. Third, the connotative dimension of culture includes the customs and ways of acting which constitute the process of expressing and demonstrating the other dimensions.

Tradition is the continuation of cultural aspects, or the history of cultural aspects, and refers to the way that culture has operated over long periods of time. Tradition may or may not be maintained at present (Latukefu, 1976:19) but influences social and cultural practice (Vunibobo, 1997: 5). Culture is not static and evolves over time (Crocombe, 1972a: 1, Latukefu, 1976). *Fa'aSamoa* has evolved as people have negotiated elements of the culture in order to make it relevant to the livelihoods of Samoan people today (O'Meara, 1993, Maiava, 2001, Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004). *Fa'aSamoa* has evolved to adapt to socio-economic and macro-economic change, to use new ideas and

innovations, to manage conflict and to cope with environmental changes (Dodd, 1998: 58-60, Maiava, 2002: 78). Globalisation, technology and communication hasten the process of change. Some cultures are more stable than others and these cultures are more resistant to change (Dodd, 1998: 50). In these cultures the customs and way the culture is expressed may change, but the cognitive and normative dimensions remain. There is strong resistance by Samoan people to fundamental changes to *fa'aSamoa* (Toma, 2000: 130). Because Samoa is small and is not divided into cultural subgroups, Samoans can influence the way *fa'aSamoa* evolves or is retained more so than many other societies and nations (Crocombe, 1972a: 2). While the significance of some aspects of *fa'aSamoa* have diminished in response to pressures of modern day living, they do not disappear all together, rather a Samoan version which suits the present day evolves (Toma, 2000: 130).

Samoans feel emotional about *fa'aSamoa*, their culture and their identity (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 168) and are highly protective of their culture and traditions, despite not all Samoans agreeing with the practice, or the extent of some aspects. Samoans will grumble, but go along with the customs fearing that they will be labelled 'unSamoan' should they not participate (Toma, 2000: 130-131). There are differences in the way individual Samoans understand and express *fa'aSamoa*. However, there are certain common and prevalent elements that permeate through Samoan society, and are the basis of *fa'aSamoa*. Of these elements, it is those that are most directly related to sustainable livelihoods, that are identified and discussed in this section.

Iati (2000: 71) describes *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan way of life) as 'a traditional governance system, serving social, economic and political functions' and a 'framework for action based upon social structure' (Iati, 2000:71). *Fa'aSamoa* includes a whole range of connected and related elements including the *aiga* (kinship group), *matai*, and *fa'amatai* (chiefly system), land, *fa'alavelave* (ceremonies) and the values of *alofa* (love and compassion), *tautua* (service) and *va'fealoa'i* (social respect) (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 10, 172). *Fa'aSamoa* is a lived experience, it is part of everyday life, and not only defines Samoans' identity, values and behaviours (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 10, 172), but, is an integral part of Samoan rural livelihoods. While *fa'aSamoa* is a way of living, a livelihood is a means of living. That the two are intricately interwoven with complex relationships and tensions is thus not surprising.

In Samoa, the social unit is the *aiga* (wider, extended family, or kinship group) (Maiava, 2001: 80). Understanding *fa'aSamoa* is centred on understanding that it is the *aiga* (family) that motivates the behaviours, events and actions that are *fa'aSamoa* (Maiava, 2001: 79) and that improving and enhancing the *aiga* culturally, socially and economically is the aim of *fa'aSamoa* (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 172). The *aiga's* status is dependant on the behaviour, actions and interactions of *aiga* members and their *matai* (chief). Samoans derive a sense of identity and self worth from family and kinship (James, 2000: 135, Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30). A Samoan's self esteem is related to their place in the *aiga*, and being part of a well respected *aiga* is a 'universal goal' (Maiava, 2001: 78-79). Status, and well-being derived from status, begins at the *aiga*, then moves outward to the village and wider community.

The *aiga* is central to *fa'aSamoa* in terms of social organisation, and kinship determines access to land, a home and other resources. Membership of the *aiga* transcends geographic boundaries, members of the *aiga* being linked by love, respect and service that are central to *fa'aSamoa* (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004). For non-resident Samoans, love, respect and service are demonstrated by actively participating in the socio-economic activities of the *aiga* by attending *fa'alavelave* and providing remittances. Those who contribute to the *aiga* are rewarded by considerable respect, and membership of the *aiga*, which gives individuals rights to succession of *matai* titles, to occupy family village land, physical, moral, and financial support, and the status of belonging to a specific group (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000).

Each *aiga* is headed by a *matai* who is appointed by the adult members of the *aiga*. While the *matai* title is not strictly hereditary, family social standings play an important role in the selection. Samoans can choose to live within their mother's or father's *aiga*, the choice usually depending on the land and resources available and the leadership of the *matai* (Maiava, 2001: 80). Traditionally the *matai* controlled all the resources of the *aiga*, and in return was responsible for the welfare of each member of the *aiga*. In years gone by, all produce from the land (and more recently any cash earned from the land) was returned to the *matai*,

who distributed the goods and cash to members of the *aiga*, retaining any surplus (Schmidt, 1994: 171, Holden et al 2003). *Matai* now have much less production or economic control over the *aiga* (extended family) (Macpherson, 1999: 85, Maiava, 2001: 85).

Splitting of *matai* titles for political reasons has led to a proliferation of titles with one *matai* title for every 11 or 12 people. Following Samoa's independence in 1962 only *matai* could vote - by creating extra *matai* titles, a community could increase their votes and their political influence. Thus in the 1970s and 1980s, the numbers of *matai* increased dramatically until concern about the decreasing integrity of chieftainship led to universal suffrage in 1990. With the proliferation of *matai* titles, almost every household now has their own *matai* (usually men, although there are also some women *matai*). Increasingly then, it is the household, rather than the *aiga* that is the unit of production, and with reduced authority over production by the extended family, the *matai*'s economic and production role is now almost obsolete (Maiava, 2001: 85). This has resulted in more individual land tenure arrangements, and households and nuclear families now commonly retaining income and remittances, rather than directing these to the wider *aiga*. The emphasis on the nuclear family rather than the extended family has contributed to a redefinition and strengthening of parent-child relationships. Children are regarded as an investment in the economic prosperity of the household, and security for parents in their old age (Maiava, 2001: 87). Parents now want to ensure that their resources (such as land and housing) are directly inherited by their children to use in the future (O'Meara, 1993). There is increased motivation to educate children for future job opportunities (either in Samoa or overseas), and to prepare children for the workforce (and possibly migration).

While the control *matai* have over the *aiga* in terms of economic and subsistence production has lessened, *matai* fulfil very important social and political roles in contemporary *fa'aSamoa*. *Matai* represent their families on the *fono* (village council/meeting of chiefs), and in this respect, at the village level *pule* (authority) over *aiga* and all village people rests with the *matai* (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 32). This customary political system is known as *fa'amatai*. The village *fono* makes critical decisions for the whole village and instructs the implementation of these decisions (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 105). The village *fono* also has the authority to

maintain discipline and settle disputes (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 2), punishing anyone who contravenes the law, normally by imposing fines for misdemeanours. In extreme cases people may be banished from the village, or even be subjected to physical violence.

Within the village there are five groups of people, each group having clearly defined roles in day to day life. Firstly, there are the *matai*, secondly the *auluma* (daughters and sisters of *matai*), third, *faletua ma tausī* (wives of the *matai*), fourth, 'aumaga (untitled sons and brothers of the *matai*), and finally *tamaiti* (youth and children). Another group are the clergy and pastors who are from outside the village. The daughters and sisters of the *matai* are from the village and are traditionally the producers of wealth such as fine mats and *tapa*, and are peacemakers and mediators within the *aiga* and the village. The wives of the *matai* are normally from outside the village, and thus traditionally play a lesser role in village affairs. However, they support and advise their husbands. The untitled men are the 'strength of the village' and are basically the labour force (Iati, 2000: 72, Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 102-3).

One of the features of *fa'aSamoa* is the emphasis on distributing and gifting goods. Gift giving has economic as well as social functions (Hooper and James, 1994: 4, Ward and Kingdon, 1995: 45, Schoeffel, 1996: 122). In terms of the social and cultural importance, gifting is an expression of, and reinforces, *alofa* (love and compassion), one of the primary values embodied in *fa'aSamoa*. Gifting also provides status for the family and *matai*. For *matai*, the greater their status, the greater their *pule* (authority) (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 3). Gifting acts as affirmation of leadership, solidarity, membership, and status through the size of the gifts. In terms of economic functions, the expectation is that anyone who accepts a gift takes on a responsibility to reciprocate that gift at some time in the future. However, neither the amount to be reciprocated nor the timing of the repayment is specific. Furthermore, the reciprocation can be transferred amongst family members and the recipient of the reciprocation could be a different family member than the person providing the gift in the first place (Macpherson and Macpherson (2000:31). Gifting provides economic security for a household. It can be a form of savings whereby distribution of food avoids problems of surplus, and establishes the expectation of reciprocal gifts in the future, perhaps when times are bad. People can ask for money or goods at any time. This was illustrated

while I was staying in the village during my field work. Some relatives came specifically to request a fine mat to give away at a ceremony where the relative was to be inducted as a *matai*. After a short discussion with her mother, my hostess decided to give one of her mats (which would have taken at least six months to make) to the relative. After this event, my homestay hostess explained to me that she had done the right thing. She told me that the relative had promised to give her something back should there be anything 'left over' after the exchange of gifts at the ceremony. She also told me that generosity is always rewarded at some time in the future. She said 'If you give what you've got you will get it back in other ways'. However she said to me several times 'I keep thinking, this is the third time they have asked for a mat'. I asked whether she could ask for help from this relative in the future if she needed it. She said she could, but explained that some families ask for things all the time (rural women, interviews April 2003).

Fundamental to *fa'aSamoa* are the values of *tautua* (service) and *va fealoa'i* (social respect). Samoan people serve, and respect their *matai*, grandparents and parents, and the *aiga* (Macpherson, 1999: 74, Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30, Maiava, 2001: 85). Respect for elders is particularly important, those who do not serve and respect their elders being considered 'incapable of mature thought' (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30). Children are taught from an early age to listen to, obey and respect elders, being punished should they not do so (Iati, 2000: 74). Brothers have special respect for sisters. There is a well known Samoan saying that 'service is the road to power' (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30), or 'the path to power is through service' (Iati, 2000: 72). Traditionally young men would eventually receive a *matai* title through service and respect for their *matai*. Thus they would work hard on plantations motivated by the knowledge that they would one day be rewarded with a *matai* title of their own and respect and service that went with it. In contemporary *fa'aSamoa*, *tautua* (service) is met by contributing a range of resources to the *aiga*, including labour, wages, salaries and financial resources, intelligence and knowledge, and strength (Shadrake and van Diernen, 1998: 3, Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30-31). *Tautua* includes the services of women as sisters and wives to the men of the *aiga* (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 187). Actively participating in *fa'alavelave* (ceremonies) is considered an important aspect of *tautua*. People can contribute through money, goods, their time, and talent (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004).

Fa'avelave is a traditional occasion or ceremony marking an important life event such as a funeral, wedding, installation of *matai* title, traditional welcome or church dedication (O'Meara, 1993: 146, Maiava, 2001: 92). *Fa'avelave* have considerable cultural and social importance for Samoan people, as they reflect, demonstrate and reinforce the fundamental beliefs and values of *fa'aSamoa*. *Fa'avelave* not only fulfil the function of a ceremony, but provide an opportunity for reciprocity, the giving and receiving of gifts (Maiava, 2001: 92) and reflect love, service and respect (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 214). A *fa'avelave* is a family reunion serving to maintain and enhance family ties and thereby provide identity, a sense of well-being and security (O'Meara, 1993: 147-154). Political allegiances are re-established, ties are deepened and relationships are renewed (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 214). Those who have moved away from the village into jobs in Apia or overseas will provide cash, which gives them standing in the eyes of the community, and acts as a demonstration of service to the family. Maiava describes the *fa'avelave* (in this case a funeral) as follows:

In essence there are two groups, the host group (such as the immediate family of the deceased), and a continuing procession of visitor groups who come to pay their respects (in the case of a funeral). The visitor group presents gifts of fine mats and money and in return receive a variety of gifts, including fine mats, money, fresh beef, cooked pigs, cartons of tinned fish, and cooked foods to take away' (Maiava, 2001: 92).

Hooper provides the following synopsis of a *fa'avelave*:

Both men and women are involved, with the exchange goods being gendered into two categories of *toga* (mainly fine mats, but also cloth and oils) and *'oloa* (nowadays pigs, taro, kava, cash, and purchased items such as salt beef, canned herrings, and biscuits). The exchange goods of each side are gathered together from *aiga* and household sources according to set levies, with all contributions recorded. The two sides meet, orators vying with one another over matters of precedence, the gifts and counter-gifts are presented (again with everything being recorded by both sides) and redistributions finally made by each side amongst its *aiga* and households. Although stylised and formal, such ceremonies are not stodgy. They are crowded performances at operatic scale, full of movement, dancing, competition and humour (Hooper, 1998: 27).

During my field work, my homestay hostess (interview, April 2003) described the recent funeral of her uncle. She explained that the body of her deceased uncle was brought from the morgue the day before the funeral. Women came dressed in black and sat with the body through the night, singing hymns. The pastor came in the morning

and prayers were said and the body was buried in the compound. The family provided cups of tea and food, then they distributed the pork, beef and other food and fine mats, the pastor also receiving fine mats. In terms of the cash and goods for *fa'alavelave* the family didn't keep a record (despite this being common), but from memory my homestay hostess told me that her *aiga* (the family of the deceased) received money and gifts from relatives, bought food, and then distributed the gifts and food to guests during the *fa'alavelave*. The following account illustrates the extent of the money and gifts, and the goods that were purchased, for her *aiga* to distribute during the *fa'alavelave*.

\$ST 10,000 came from five overseas family members in Australia and USA. Another \$ST 2,600 came from a New Zealand family member. The household (where I was staying) gave five cartons of herrings, five cartons of chicken legs, one big fine mat (30 feet). The ex-husband of my hostess (a New Zealander) gave five cartons of herrings and five 10lb packs of biscuits. An aunt killed two big pigs. Other family members gave 100 fine mats, 3 cartons of herrings, and \$ST200. 50 of the fine mats were offered back to these family members but they didn't take them so they were given 3 cartons of herrings. The total cash provided was \$ST 12, 800.

On Thursday and Friday my hostess and another family member went shopping. The total for the shopping was \$ST 12,821.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 70 cartons canned fish | \$ST 6,642 |
| 30 cartons chicken legs @\$ST65 | \$ST 1,950 |
| 20 cartons turkey tails @\$ST54 | \$ST 1,080 |
| 50 10lb cartons of biscuits @\$ST17 | \$ST 850 |
| 1 box butter | \$ST 50 |
| 5 boxes of milk | \$ST 125 |
| 1 box corned beef | \$ST 140 |
| Bags of potatoes and onions | \$ST 40 |
| 200 loaves of bread | \$ST 200 |
| 20 cartons of soft drink cans | \$ST 1000 |
| 10 cartons of salted beef @ \$40 | \$ST 400 |
| Mayonnaise | \$ST 58 |
| Fresh fish for the Catholics (Friday) | \$ST 142 |
| 3 tanks of gas for the oven @\$48 | \$ST 144 |

There was also the cost of the bus, rental of the coffin and rental of a video recorder. This was paid for by an Australian friend.

Although the productive base of the *aiga* has diminished, in *fa'alavelave* the strong social basis of the *aiga* and the authority of the *matai* is demonstrated (O'Meara, 1993, Maiava, 2001: 86-87). *Fa'alavelave* can provide considerable status and prestige for both *matai* and *aiga* from public gift giving, a well organised event and family

solidarity. *Matai* have considerable responsibility in *fa'alavelave* pooling resources from *aiga* (both immediate family and extended family) and then redistributing the gifts (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 321).

There are negative aspects of *fa'alavelave* that are occasionally openly expressed. Sometimes people grumble about the excessive financial obligations of *fa'alavelave*, the expense of *fa'alavelave* is sometimes referred to as a 'burden' for Samoan people (Shadrake and van Diermen, 98: 12). As Lilomaiva-Doktor (2004: 214) notes, material resources for *fa'alavelave* 'come at a great cost'. Hard earned cash, which some would say should be used for 'more productive' purposes, is quickly spent on material goods for *fa'alavelave*. In addition, absenteeism as a result of *fa'alavelave* disrupts businesses, and both commercial and subsistence farming, and seriously affects the workplace. However, the *fa'alavelave* is an example where Samoan culture has adapted to suit present needs (O'Meara, 1993: 154). Cash (much of it from working or overseas relatives) is used for imported and bought goods, or reciprocated for subsistence goods, and everyone receives goods or money from the exchanges that occur. In addition, Samoans are proud to demonstrate their family connections and solidarity, and will put aside their own needs to contribute to the *fa'alavelave*. Arranging a *fa'alavelave* is regarded as an honour, and any sacrifice that a person makes means that the person is 'blessed, honoured and held in high esteem by the *aiga*' (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 182-183). It is likely that *fa'alavelave* will continue to be a central part of *fa'aSamoa* in the foreseeable future. The benefits to the rural *aiga* and the wider communities appear, at the present time at least, to outweigh the negative elements of the *fa'alavelave*.

The cultural meanings and practices of *fa'aSamoa* are constantly 'renegotiated and contested by groups' (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 151) as people struggle to reconcile the beliefs, values and fundamental meanings of *fa'aSamoa* with the changing world in which their livelihoods exist. As Hooper notes (in reference to Pacific Island cultures):

The problem, as in other places, has been to resolve the contradiction between them (culture and development) so as to achieve the greater good – access to material goods, welfare and the amenities of 'modern life' without the sacrifice of 'traditional' values and institutions that provide material security and sustain diverse social identities' Hooper (2000: 1).

There are contradictions and tensions between socio-economic progress and *fa'aSamoa*. While, according to Lilomaiva-Doktor (2004: 346) *fa'aSamoa* is not

opposed to economic development, Samoans want economic progress to proceed in a way that is congruent with *fa'aSamoa*. As Lilomaiava-Doktor states:

Fa'a-Samoa is constantly being negotiated as Samoans seek to achieve a balance between capitalist and western culture on the one hand, and its own cultural imperatives on the other. Samoans believe their culture has served them well even for the last 200 years since contact with Europeans. They uphold their culture with pride and honour (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 346).

The practice of *fa'aSamoa* has evolved around the fundamental values and meanings of the culture. For most Samoans, *fa'aSamoa* first and foremost maintains and enhances social relationships (social and cultural assets) in the *aiga*, and the wider community, ensuring physical, social, cultural and financial security. Secondly, *fa'aSamoa* provides a sense of identity and knowing 'ones place' in the world. Most Samoan people view themselves as part of a kinship group, the *aiga*, and their identity is connected to the 'collective welfare' and 'enhanced status' of that *aiga* (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 4). Anything that would shame or offend the *aiga* reflects on the individual, and their place in that *aiga*.

According to Huffer and So'o (2005: 313), Samoan culture has a 'divine' connection, originating from the god Tagaloa. Culture is therefore accepted as being inherently good, and it is difficult for Samoans to analyse and question the fundamental beliefs, values and practices of *fa'aSamoa*. Life in Samoa (and beyond) is very public (Huffer and So'o, 2005: 322), and individual behaviour is monitored and scrutinized by the *aiga*, and the wider community. For Samoans then, it is unusual to deliberately or knowingly act in a manner that contravenes *fa'aSamoa*. To do so, would be to be considered 'unSamoan' and would jeopardise ones place in the *aiga* and the physical and emotional security that comes with that. The place one holds as part of the *aiga*, and the wider community, provides for participation and reciprocity, rights to land and titles as well as both group and individual identity, pride, and a sense of purpose. As Huffer and So'o state:

A sense of purpose comes from the fact that Samoan society gives importance to all the roles played by people within the groups they belong so that everyone knows they will be respected ... because they all have a function to play in the organisation of society (Huffer and So'o, 2005: 321).

Hooper (1998: 30) notes that there are those who choose to live outside the influences of *fa'aSamoa* for some periods of their life, but, he suggests, these individuals eventually return to *fa'aSamoa*. He says:

There are in Apia a number of loosely connected networks of younger Samoans in salaried jobs, who live largely outside the influences of the *matai* system, contributing only very reluctantly, if at all, to *aiga* occasions, and avoiding the church. These are the 'yuppies', recognised as such by older educated Samoans who have been through the same stage themselves before they too took titles and joined the system (Hooper, 1998: 30).

Samoan people have ways to distance themselves from some of the obligations of *fa'aSamoa* without outwardly confronting authority, and without disrupting social harmony. Maiava (2001: 83) notes that 'instructions may be complied with to a minimal extent' and deception is common. Samoan people find ways of saving their money without family members knowing, or in savings accounts that other family members cannot access. O'Meara describes a situation where young men who were supposedly working on their family plantations worked instead for cash on a neighbour's plantation, without telling their families, and keeping the money for themselves (O'Meara, 1990: 168).

People who are economically dependent, could, in a physical and material sense, live without *fa'aSamoa*, but rarely do Samoans completely disconnect themselves from *fa'aSamoa*. Even wealthy Samoans take *matai* titles, and the responsibility associated with such a commitment. As Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004: 322) notes, from an interview with a Samoan woman whose children were working in Apia, intelligence, wealth and strength seem insignificant without a title, and the respect and connections to *fa'aSamoa* that this brings.

Societal structures, institutions and processes

Within Samoa, the relationships between institutions is complex, with western governance systems and customary political systems of *fa'aSamoa* (*fa'amatai*) existing side by side, in an overall system of governance that is at times contradictory, and fraught with tensions and conflicts (Hooper, 1998: 40-41, Huffer and So'o, 2005). This section describes the institutions of Samoa, and some of the processes associated with these institutions, that most influence rural livelihoods in Samoa.

Hooper (1993) describes a model of Pacific Island societies that includes three inter-linked 'spheres' within which institutions, policies and processes exist. This concept is used as a framework in this section. The three spheres, or domains, described by Hooper are traditional, government (or public), and private sector. The spheres are not distinct or separate, but rather interrelate, interact, and are linked. In each country the spheres have a different content and interrelate and interact in different ways, giving each country its distinct socio-economic profile (Hooper, 1998: 12).

In Samoa, one of the ways in which the spheres are related is through non-government organisations (NGOs) that interact with the public sphere, have links with the private sector and work in the traditional sphere. NGOs have an important role in livelihoods in rural Samoa, and are discussed in Chapter 5, and in the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7. The private sector sphere, and business enterprises are discussed in Chapter 5. This section addresses the traditional sphere and the public (government) sphere in Samoa, and the interrelationships and tensions within and between these spheres, and the relationship of these spheres to rural livelihoods.

The traditional sphere

The traditional sphere includes the customary political system (*fa'amatai*), customary land tenure systems, customs and culture, churches, village based economic and social systems, organisations and groups. All of these are intricately related to the livelihoods that exist in the traditional sphere. The traditional sphere is often regarded as the 'subsistence economy', but according to Hooper and James (1994: 4) this obscures the complex reciprocal exchanges and redistribution that integrate communities in 'webs of mutual obligation and concern', and the increasing use of cash. In the traditional sphere money is used in addition to subsistence goods to enhance and elaborate the traditional relationships.

In Samoa, the political institution which exercises most power in the traditional sphere is the village *fono*, the council of *matai*. The village *fono* controls and regulates all aspects of village life, attributing considerable power and authority (Hooper, 1998: 23). This power and authority permeates into all aspects of village life, impacting on the resources (especially land and labour) that people can access and control and are thus able to use in pursuit of their livelihoods. For example, the village *fono* can request labour (human resources) and financial resources for village and community activities,

and the decisions that the village *fono* make have considerable influence on social and cultural capital. The *fono* is responsible for ensuring that village rules are obeyed and has the power to punish those who do not conform to their standards. The Village *Fono* Act of 1990, which formalised the power and authority of *fa'amatai*, was a move to 'reinforce and strengthen rural self-reliance' (Meleisea, 2000: 85). However, the rules of the village are generally unwritten, and village policy can be somewhat fluid concept. Rules (and events) can sometimes be reinterpreted to reinforce the power and authority of *fa'amatai* or to benefit some, at the expense of others (Meleisea, 2000). While *matai* are expected to balance 'wisdom and fairness with authority' (Lilomaivava-Doktor, 2004: 105), the lack of 'checks and balances' on the abuse of power, leaves *fa'amatai* open to allowing leaders to use their power and authority to suppress change, competition or dissent (Meleisea, 2000: 85).

Also having considerable influence at the village level are the women's committees which include both *aualuma* (unmarried women, usually from the village) and those who have married into the village (*faletua ma tausi*). Women's committees originated in the 1920s and 1930s, along with a government driven rural community development system where villages would provide and maintain a school or health facility, while the government would provide the staff to run the facility. Part of this programme was a women's health committee in every village ensuring all families, even in remote areas, had access to health, nutrition and hygiene programmes (Schoeffel, 1996: 28, Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000a: 99). These women's health committees later developed to become the present day women's committees, and their role widened to include such functions as fundraising, income generation and training programmes (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000a: 103-104). Over time the village women's committee has come to be an important village institution. Women's committees are run by their own councils with women having a ranked position usually according to the rank of her husband. Women's committees now play a much smaller part in health in the village, but are responsible for cleaning and caring for the churches, organising social activities, organising mat weaving, and sometimes initiating income earning ventures. Women's committees may still raise funds for church and community projects such as school building and clinics (Hooper, 1998: 50). Most women in the village belong to the women's committee, and obligations to the committee use a considerable amount of women's time, sometimes impacting negatively on income earning strategies for their households. While the

village *fono* has unchallenged authority in the village, women's committees are active, important and powerful in village affairs. Women rarely take up *matai* titles (less than 10% of *matai* are women), many women believing it is simply not their place to be 'concerned with local governance'. However, women have considerable informal power in family decisions, through their brothers and their husbands, this influence then impacting, albeit indirectly, on village *fono* decisions (Hooper, 1998: 50),

Almost all Samoans (99.5%) reported that they are of a Christian denomination in the 2001 census (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2005: 32). The church is an integral part of the traditional sphere, and is interrelated and connected to *fa'amatai*. As Hooper explains:

Villages become congregations through a 'covenant' dividing local governance between the secular realm controlled by *matai* councils and the religious realm, controlled by resident pastors. The arrangement persists in every village to this day and is regarded as being wholly traditional. Pastors are highly honoured and respected but the formal relationship sets pastors apart from other leaders (Hooper, 1998: 23).

Pastors do not take *matai* titles and should not have extended family members in the village where they serve. The village congregation provides everything for the pastor, the money coming from donations made to the church in the name of *matai* (Hooper, 1998: 24). In some churches donations are publicly announced, so that strong competition between households ensues, the standing of *aiga* being enhanced or diminished depending on their donations to the church (Hooper, 1998: 24). In addition to regular offerings for the pastor's general use (*alofa*), labour for the pastor's household, land, a house, food, payment of utility and fuel bills and occasional 'gifts' for providing religious services are provided. Additional periodic gifts include an annual collection for a specific item or improvement (e.g. a vehicle or furniture), and offerings for the work of the national church. Occasionally there is also other special expenditure (which village people pay for) such as improvements to church buildings. Congregations may also pay for pastors long term service leave, sabbaticals, medical treatment and other family costs (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2005). Church loyalties are strong, and the status of the village, is related to the strength and prosperity of the church. Elaborate and expensive churches are built, the labour being provided by the local community, an expression of the *fa'aSamoa* concept of *tautua* (service). The huge financial and labour resources that are provided for the church could be viewed as

excessive, but Samoans willingly commit their time and money, regarding the church as tangible evidence of their loyalty and devotion, and a source of pride for the village. However, Macpherson and Macpherson (2005: 35) point out that very large amounts of money (and labour) are effectively lost from the village economy as pastors, who are not members of the village, use their income for investing in land outside of the village, education for their children, homes, travel and occasionally for businesses. Macpherson and Macpherson very conservatively estimate the amount of money provided to the churches by congregations in Samoa (excluding special expenditure, but including the cost of labour) as \$ST 29,843,280, which, to put into perspective, is 3.54% of GDP and 13.82% of government revenue, and 46.5% of export revenue (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2005: 35).

Government and public sphere

The government and political (public) sphere includes the structure of the government, policies and laws, and the public service (Hooper, 1998). The informal links between the government (public) sphere and the traditional sphere are strong. Macpherson and Macpherson note that there is 'no clear separation between work and non-work spheres', and between bureaucracy and the rest of social life (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 29). Money earned in the government sector is usually gifted and distributed at the village level, providing a financial resource and a livelihood strategy for those relatives in the village. The connections village people have with government through their relatives are very useful for cutting through bureaucracy, providing information about laws, regulations and technical matters in agriculture, fisheries, tourism and small business, and finding out about credit and loans. Being a member of the public service provides prestige, as well as money, but individuals who hold positions within government are still grounded in the obligations and relationships of the traditional sphere (Hooper and James, 1994: 5), and *fa'aSamoa*. Salaried work is part of the *tautua* (service) and obligations of *fa'aSamoa*, and the work itself may become subservient to the social obligations of that way of life.

Samoa has a Westminster system of government with a Head of State, a Prime Minister, and a cabinet chosen from sitting members of parliament. For members of parliament, the divisions between government responsibilities and *fa'aSamoa* are even more nebulous and blurred. Only Samoans with *matai* titles can become members of parliament (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 32), extending the village authority to

government. In order to gain support, a candidate must behave in accordance to the expectation of *matai* embodied in *fa'aSamoa*, with plentiful donations and gifts of food and money (Hooper, 1998: 36). Then, once a member of parliament, their responsibility is to the nation, their *aiga*, and to the village. The ill-defined distinction between government responsibilities and responsibilities of *fa'aSamoa* is at odds with goals of good governance that require 'rational and transparent means of delivering goals that are consistent over time' (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 29). It is this dilemma, that is blamed for corruption, lack of transparency and an inability to be accountable that is widely regarded as impediments to development and effective use of international aid. As Meleisea notes 'I suggest that the problems are linked to the fact that we are living in two worlds, a situation which is breeding a kind of moral confusion ...' (Meleisea, 2000: 80).

Formal ties between the government (public) sphere and the traditional sphere exist but have limited success in integrating two distinct political systems. The *pulenu'u* is a group of 240 *matai* who are elected by the village *fono* as village mayors, and who meet with the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development up to three times per month to learn about new government initiatives and policies, and to raise with the Ministry village issues. The members of the *pulenu'u* are paid an allowance by the government and while the *pulenu'u* is supposedly the formal link between the government and the village, there are some concerns about its function. The village *pulenu'u* are not in a powerful position, and may be caught in the middle of demands from the government, and the village. Because *pulenu'u* members are paid by government, they are not regarded as 'representatives' of village leaders, but rather as government employees, and being a *pulenu'u* does appear to enhance ones status in the village social hierarchy (Iati, 2000: 167). When government directives are counter to the village views the *pulenu'u* is in an impossible position.

Tensions and conflicts between the public and traditional spheres

The political system of the Samoan government addresses policy, development and the private sector through legislation and institutional reform, the western model being based on principles of liberal democracy, which encourages free thinking and democratic action, and is focussed on the rights of the individual. However, in the traditional sphere the political systems (*fa'amatai*) and governance are based on the principles of *fa'aSamoa*, *pule* (authority) and *tautua* (service). This form of governance

discourages questioning or challenging the authority of the system (Huffer and So'o, 2005), and works for the good of the community, through the *aiga*, based on social respect and harmonious relationships between the five groups within the village - *matai*, wives of *matai*, sisters and daughters of *matai*, untitled men and youth.

There are considerable tensions and conflicts between the customary and national systems of governance. The individualism of the national governance system is at odds with emphasis on relationships in *fa'amatai*. This leads to a number of contradictions. For example, the traditional political system of *fa'amatai* provides Samoans with considerable physical and property security which, according to Huffer and So'o (2005: 322), is jeopardised by the government's western notion of security as somewhat negative – the right of the individual to be protected from the state and other individuals. The public nature of governance in the customary system is at odds with the way that government makes decisions behind closed doors and sometimes with little public consultation or consensus (Huffer and So'o, 2005). The lack of clear definition between the two systems also causes considerable tensions as both members of parliament and other government employees attempt to balance and reconcile responsibilities to *fa'aSamoa* with responsibilities to the nation. Such tensions and conflicts also have serious implications for policy development and reform that impact on rural livelihoods. An example is the forthcoming review of land which will have major impacts on rural livelihoods. Customary land is an emotive and contentious issue and it is highly likely that the differences and divergences in *fa'amatai* and the government, and the ability of the two systems to reconcile these differences, will be tested.

Samoa - rural livelihood assets and resources

Natural assets

In Samoa, the land and the sea are arguably the two most important natural resources that can be drawn on to provide livelihoods for rural people. In the two case studies in this thesis land is the basis for the plants (*pandanus* and coconuts) that are used in the livelihood strategies, fine mat weaving and coconut oil production. Thus this section dwells on land, rather than sea. More than just a livelihood resource, Pacific Island people have a strong connections and affinity with the land which has physical, social and cultural significance (Purdie, 1999, Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000: 65) and is regarded as

a 'pivotal component of the society and its well-being' (Ward and Kingdon, 1995: 46). Most of the land in Samoa (81%) is held in customary land tenure, and is traditionally part of a cultural and social system of the *aiga* (extended family), and the *matai* (chief) (Schmidt, 1994: 169, Toma, 2000: 129, Holden et al, 2003: 97). Some land in Samoa is also held by the government (11%) and 8% of land is private freehold land (ADB, 2005: 2).

Before European and commercial influence in Samoa, land tenure systems were flexible, and supported a subsistence way of life. Most of the villages were established on the coast, with land stretching from the sea to the interior, providing fresh water, marine life, arable land and forest (Ward and Kingdon, 1995: 39-40). Subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture are still pivotal to Samoan rural livelihoods (see section on livelihood strategies). Furthermore, the land provides materials for building, crafts, fuel, food for animals and a multitude of other everyday needs. Land is also an integral part of the indigenous tourism industry, especially for eco-tourism and beach *fales*. The customary land system provides sites for Samoan people to build their houses, and sites for their shops and commercial ventures. In allocating land amongst family members, land may be classified as the residential site, land behind the residential site and bush land (Schmidt, 1994: 170).

Customary land is held and administered in accordance with Samoan customs and usage, and customary law. Although customary land can be registered and titled, most is not (Holden, 2003: 102). Boundaries of customary land are not legally defined (Holden, 2003: 96). To register customary land, surveys would be required and the legal process is extremely costly. Customary land cannot be sold (except to the Samoan government), but can be leased for a term of up to 30 years under strict conditions. Obtaining a lease requires application to the Minister of Lands and can take up to 12 months (Holden et al, 2003). The Lands and Titles Court has jurisdiction over customary land, and is able to challenge the authority of *matai* (Schmidt, 1994: 173, Holden et al, 2003: 99). However, this court is not considered to be very effective (Holden, 2003: 99) as the laws governing customary land are unwritten. There are variations of customs and traditions between islands, districts and villages, but the court does not make allowances for particular practices of individual families (Schmidt,

1994: 173). Understandably, with the complexity of the cases to be heard, there are enormous backlogs of cases.

Traditionally, the *matai* system of *pule* (authority) over customary land vests paramount authority with the principal *matai* of an *aiga* (extended family) (Schmidt, 1994: 169). However, contemporary customary land arrangements differ from 'traditional' systems due to influences of commercialisation and modernisation, and the increase in the number of *matai*. Most Samoans, titled and untitled, now want some element of control over their land, and want to be able to pass on their land to their descendants without dispute. Different land use practices and more permanent plantations (farms) are replacing shorter term subsistence areas. The advent of modern, permanent houses (often with deceased family members buried in elaborate permanent concrete graves outside the house), and the increasing emphasis on the nuclear family, rather than the extended family, have hastened changes. Permanent houses are usually built with remittances received from children who are living and working overseas. People want to increase the security of their nuclear family's investment by claiming these residential sites as their own (O'Meara, 1993: 141).

Increasingly, new principles of individual authority over land have evolved, and now anyone (titled or untitled) who clears, cultivates or uses land will have control of that plot of land, and is able to pass on that land to descendants (O'Meara, 1993: 139). Maiava, (2001: 152) notes that both *matais* and untitled people owned and farmed cattle in Samoa, and had a similar level of *pule* (authority) over their land. However, despite the apparent authority that untitled people have over their land, such individual tenure is without legal sanction (O'Meara, 1993: 139) and the Lands and Titles Court still vests the authority of land in the *matai*. Schmidt notes that 'although the *matai* does not use or occupy an untitled man's newly cleared land, when *pule* is challenged, the *matai* steps in' (Schmidt, 1994: 179). Samoans have negotiated and changed the customary systems of land usage to adapt to their changing livelihood systems. While still operating within the boundaries of *fa'aSamoa*, land ownership and tenure has become more individualised and less communal, and the power and authority of the *matai* over how land is allocated, used and inherited has diminished.

Despite an evolution towards more individualised systems of land tenure in Samoa, there are considerable tensions between customary land ownership and commercial and

economic development. First, customary land cannot be used as collateral for credit, thus for Samoans, raising larger amounts of money for investment in commercial enterprises is extremely difficult. Second, the uncertainty, lack of clarity and disputes over land can cause disruption to commercial ventures and new entrepreneurial initiatives. Third, leasing customary land is difficult due to difficult and cumbersome processes, and disputes being difficult to resolve. Further, leases are not recognised as security for collateral (Holden, 2003: 100).

However, while customary land tenure is at odds with commercial development, the customary land system ensures that rural Samoans have access to semi-subsistence living. As Toma (2000) points out:

(the) ... major criticism (of the customary land system) ... is that it is a constraint on economic production and growth. That is true enough. On the other hand it has served to ensure and can continue to ensure that Samoa will never have what is known so well in some countries as 'the poor landless masses' (Toma, 2000: 129).

The challenge is to integrate the customary land tenure system into the economic environment in a way which can retain the customary aspects of land tenure, while still allowing for economic development. The way that the ADB would like to see this done is by ensuring that land ownership can be clearly identified, land can be used in the private sector, and land disputes can be efficiently and fairly resolved (Holden, 2004: 87-97). In 2002 a Law Reform Commission was set up in Samoa to examine laws pertaining to land, and the Government of Samoa requested the ADB to support reforms. An ADB technical support report, December 2005, suggests that the main challenge to improve the use of customary land for commercial purposes, is to improve and streamline the current laws for establishing leasehold on customary land, making it easier to establish a formal lease and improve confidence that all parties will adhere to the lease agreements. To implement this project, improved registration, mapping, and information on customary land titles and boundaries will be required. Meanwhile a World Bank project focuses on freehold and public land administration (ADB, 2005). However, due to the strong social and cultural significance of the land to Samoan people, any changes to current practices are likely to be contentious.

Physical assets

The island of Upolu now has a sealed road over most of the island, and has become a commuter area for Apia. The road is important for encouraging tourists into the rural

areas. The island of Savai'i has a sealed road around the most of the island, but infrastructure is not as well developed as in Upolu (Sialaoa, 2003: 4). Few village people own vehicles, but buses travel around both islands, and services are reasonably reliable and inexpensive.

In 2002 88% of Samoans had access to tapped water, and everyone had access to 'improved sanitation'. Most households are able to connect to electricity, but power supply is unreliable. Only 73 people out of 1,000 have access to a landline telephone (UNDP, 2005). In fact very few rural people have telephones, some telephones are only able to be used for incoming calls, and some connections have been cut off, usually due to unpaid bills. Sometimes sons or daughters living overseas or in Apia provide a phone to keep in touch with their parents. However, the problem of having a phone is that everyone asks to use it and the bills mount up. Some people with phones charge for their use but as one rural woman said 'it's not good to have a phone and charge people for using the phone because you spend all the money they give you and then what happens when the bill comes?' (rural woman, interview April 2003). Mobile phone coverage in 2005 was limited to urban and peri-urban areas.

Housing in rural areas is mostly traditional open sided *fales*, usually with concrete floors, thatched roofs and blinds (made of natural materials) that can be lowered in bad weather. Some *fales* have pebble floors. Cooking houses are separate, and a separate toilet/shower may be used by a number of households. *Palagi* (non-Samoan – European) style houses are, however, becoming more common.

Financial assets

Cash savings are not common for individual households, although community groups carry out saving for particular events or needs such as community buildings or church activities, and there are some savings schemes and funds in operation. For example, a young man working in Apia was paying life insurance for two of his younger brothers. The premiums were deducted from his wages before he received them. The policy would mature and pay a lump sum to the mother when the brothers reached around 18 years. This form of savings is not able to be gifted on request (during the savings period) as it cannot be drawn upon until maturity. The young man's mother said '... its good because it has to be paid and my son has it deducted from his bank account so he doesn't get it in his hand ...' (rural woman, interview April 2003).

There are informal avenues for obtaining small amounts of finance, such as informal loans either between relatives, or with the private sector, and as described elsewhere in this chapter, remittances are a common source of finance for houses, vehicles, *fa'avelave* and investment in micro-enterprises. *Fa'aSamoa* has an important role in providing financial capital for rural Samoan households through remittances and gifts. Woods notes that for start-up capital, smaller beach *fale* businesses use remittances and other informal channels, such as obtaining finance from a tour operator, who subsequently deducts repayments when guests book through him, and pays him, for accommodation (Woods, 2004: 70). Sometimes donors provide small amounts of capital for commercial ventures.

Financial capital is often cited as a constraint for commercial livelihood strategies in rural areas of Samoa. Borrowing larger amounts of money through traditional financial institutions is difficult for most Samoans due to customary land tenure, high commercial interest rates, and complex administrative requirements. There is little sharing between banks of credit information about borrowers, and this together with lack of collateral makes lending risky for banks, with arrears very high (Cahn, 2003a, Holden et al, 2004: 58). Woods notes that there are constraints for larger beach *fale* businesses (that require larger amounts of money) obtaining finance from formal financing institutions. He argues that not only is lack of collateral a problem, but incomplete, inaccurate and 'non-transparent' accounting systems do not give banks sufficient financial evidence on which to provide loans, or, the interest rates charged are very high to offset the bank's risk (Woods: 2006: 134).

There are a number of micro-finance credit schemes operating in Samoa, some are components of agricultural and fisheries projects or small business development schemes. However, there can be lack of understanding of the conditions of the loan, loans may be confused with gifts, the cost of lending may not be taken into account or the conditions of the loan not fully understood, making the schemes vulnerable and sometimes unsustainable (O'Meara, 1990: 200, Cahn, 2003a). Sometimes small loans are granted for enterprises without due consideration of the marketing issues (for example competitive prices for goods) or the viability of the business (Schoeffel, 1996: 116). While these schemes provide small amounts suitable for micro-enterprises, they

do not provide sufficient for larger commercial enterprises. Financial capital for business enterprise is considered further in the next chapter.

Social and cultural assets

In rural Samoa, social assets (capital) and cultural assets are linked, as elements of each cross over, and integrate with *fa'aSamoa*. Cultural assets in Samoa include heritage, customs and tradition such as dress, artefacts, dance, customary land systems, ceremonies and other expressions of the culture. In the tourist industry, the sale of crafts, and displays of traditional performing arts are lucrative livelihood strategies using cultural (if somewhat modified) assets to provide cash income. Fine mat weaving (described in the case study in Chapter 7) is an example where cultural assets are being used as a business enterprise. But just as importantly cultural assets are used to provide intangible outcomes such as pride, identity and sense of place. Further, cultural assets include cultural values, worldview and the framework of *fa'aSamoa*. These are essential to provide the motivation for livelihoods and a framework for living.

Social assets are the resources people have through their membership of organisations and networks, and the features that result from this such as relationships, norms and trust. The formal networks that Samoan rural people engage with include the work place, the market, farmer organisations, NGOs, formal institutions involved with education, health and extension.

With *fa'aSamoa* interwoven with almost every aspect of rural livelihoods, the crossover between social and cultural assets includes the networks in the traditional sphere such as the church, women's groups, the village *fono* and the *aiga*. The relationships between the five groups in the village, the *matai*, the wives of the *matai*, the sisters and daughters of the *matai*, the untitled men, and the youth, also falls in this cross over between cultural and social assets. Huffer and So'o, (citing Fana'afi) describe this relationship as follows:

The sociometric wheel consists of various groups that make up the *fa'amatai* social organisation. Here the *matai* group is the 'hub' and the other groups consist of circles that 'exist side by side and operate and inter-relate in concentric connections of blood ties and marital reciprocity ... The circles, which are both self-containing and connected, reemphasize the idea of unity, collaboration, and wholeness within the *fa'amatai*. Each group fits harmoniously with the others and all depend on the other to function smoothly (Fana'afi, 1992: 118-124, cited in Huffer and So'o, 2005: 319).

The relationships between these groups, the importance of harmony, and the tensions and the norms of *fa'aSamoa*, have been discussed throughout the chapter highlighting the complex relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and rural livelihoods. Also in this chapter emerges the theme of compliance, where despite the negotiations and changes within *fa'aSamoa*, and the emergence of different and new ways of expressing *fa'aSamoa*, Samoan people will comply with the basic values of *fa'aSamoa* and accepted cultural norms of contemporary *fa'aSamoa*, and abide by the rules, in order to maintain harmony, and build trust and sound relationships within and between *aiga*, providing security and safety nets.

Human assets

Human assets, people's own labour, knowledge, health and efforts in the livelihood system, are important to sustaining livelihoods. Efficient labour is dependant on healthy, well-skilled people. Universal primary education has been achieved and there is no gender disparity in literacy rates in Samoa. Within the customary laws of *fa'aSamoa*, brothers respect their sisters. The 'flow-on' effect of this is that women in Samoa have considerable status, and girls have equal opportunities to boys for education, their opportunities being reliant on ability (Schoeffel, 1996: 34). Almost 99% of Samoan adults are literate. Public spending in education increased from 3.2% of GDP in 1990 to 4.8% of GDP in 2000-2002 (UNDP, 2005). Of public spending on education 2000-2002, 43% was for primary education, 25.2% for secondary, and 23.8% for tertiary (UNDP, 2005). The percentage of GDP spent on primary education has fallen from 49% in 1994 (Schoeffel, 1996: 27).

Samoans are well-skilled in the necessities for subsistence living, but technical skills and skills for self employment are relatively weak (McMaster, 1993; 278, Schoeffel, 1996: 26, Chung, 1997:19). Many of the best educated Samoans have emigrated to work in New Zealand, Australia, and USA. While this 'brain drain' seriously reduces the level of skills in civil society, private sector and government, as has been noted elsewhere, these people return remittances that support the domestic economy of Samoa (ADB, 2004: 6), and migration extends the customs and values of *fa'aSamoa*, and the *aiga*, beyond the boundaries of Samoa. Returning migrants are likely to bring capital for private sector investment, and skills, which will benefit Samoa in the future (Schoeffel, 1996: 23).

Malnutrition and health problems are encountered in Samoa that are sometimes related to increasing dependence on imported food and lack of access to medical care, especially in rural areas. Despite the abundance of fresh food, imported food has higher status, is often preferred, and is easier to prepare. Some imported food is very high in fat and carbohydrates and contributes to obesity, and diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease which have become significant health issues (ADBb, 2001: 8-9). Nevertheless, life expectancy has increased in Samoa from 56.1 years in 1975 to 70 years in 2005.

The success of women's committees in delivering health to rural villages in the past was partly a function of the way in which the committees integrated well with *fa'aSamoa*, becoming a central part of village life. However, this also caused some tensions. As Fairbairn-Dunlop notes:

The committees' strong footing in the customary ways was a major factor in their 'success'. However, this also introduced some tensions into the health partnership. For example, equitable access to good quality health could be compromised should committees give undue priority to status raising potential of their programmes (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000a: 1104).

The health system delivered through the women's committees concentrated on preventative health care, including the prevention of disease through disease vector eradication, immunisation and maternal health care (Schoeffel, 1996: 28). However, responsibility for rural health has shifted from the village to the government and urban based NGOs in recent years. As health issues have become more complex and health has become the responsibility of government, women's committees no longer maintain the strong partnership status with government that they once had. Government and donor programmes now tend to be directed towards newer urban based NGOs rather than women's committees (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000a: 111), weakening the links between health services and rural people.

According to 2003 UNDP statistics infant mortality rates in Samoa have fallen from 106 per 1,000 live births in 1970, to 19 per 1,000 live births. Maternal deaths are just over 1 in 1,000 live births, and UNDP reports that every birth is attended by a 'skilled physician' (UNDP, 2005). However, Fairbairn-Dunlop cites a World Health Organisation report which points out that there is 'significant degree of under-reporting of maternal mortality' and that accurate data for how many women are seen by a health

worker during their pregnancy is 'not available for rural areas' (WHO, 1997: 52, cited in Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000a: 110). Now that better off village people can more easily access medical facilities elsewhere, the motivation to provide health facilities in the village has lessened, disadvantaging less well off members of communities, and health facilities for some rural people may be less accessible than before.

Livelihood strategies in Samoa

Between 60 and 80% of Samoans live in rural areas (Hooper, 1998: 30, ADB, 2001b: 2, Holden et al, 2003: 43, Sialaoa, 2005: 2), the exact figure being difficult to determine as people constantly move between town and village, and rural villages merge with urban areas. Rural households and individuals gain their means of living from a range of livelihood strategies, including, food production (farming, fishing, or gardening) for cash, food or gifts, forestry, waged work (full or part time, seasonal or permanent), micro-enterprises, small business, or remittances received from relatives who have migrated to the city or overseas (Chung, 1997:7-9). While small businesses and micro-enterprise are the focus of Chapter 5, this section focuses on agriculture, fishing, forestry, employment, and remittances, and the relationships between these livelihoods strategies and *fa'aSamoa*.

Around 50% of the economically active workforce, is engaged in the agriculture, fisheries or forestry sectors (Sialaoa, 2005: 10), and 80% of families are engaged in agriculture (Holden et al, 2003: 43). The division between subsistence and commercial agriculture is unclear. However, the Samoa Census of Agriculture (1999) (cited in Enoka, 2002: 34) reports that 42% of Samoan agricultural holdings produced only for home consumption. A further 51% of agricultural holdings produced mainly for home consumption, although produce excess to the household requirements from these holdings may be sold for cash. A further, 7% of holdings were regarded as commercial producers (Enoka, 2002: 34). Low labour input and productivity have frequently been cited as constraints to development initiatives in the primary sectors (Schoeffel, 1996: 68). While obligations to *fa'aSamoa* and *aiga* have considerable influence on the time available for commercial and productive work, Schoeffel (1996: 69) suggests that the key factor affecting agricultural productivity is actually the relatively low prices for agricultural products and the high costs of imported goods. She argues that people are unwilling to engage in long hours of work for returns which will buy very little.

Consequently, rural Samoans turn their attention to subsistence and semi subsistence crops and livestock, to provide supplies for *fa'avelave* and reciprocity, ensure food security, and provide cash for necessities. Cash crops are sold when cash is needed, for example for school fees, or to raise money for a community project (Chung, 1997: 33), or for financial obligations to the church, or for *fa'avelave*. Export prices for agricultural produce offer little motivation for small-holder farmers to commercialise. While Samoan farmers likely would respond to high agricultural prices, often high prices do not last long when markets are oversupplied (Schoeffel, 1997: 24).

Taro, coconuts, bananas, kava, vegetables, beef and pork are important agricultural products for both subsistence and for commercial sale, *nonu* (fruit) is produced for export (Holden et al, 2003: 43). Small-holder farms (plantations) are often some distance from the residential site. Few women work on the plantations, but may tend gardens closer to their homes. Schoeffel (1996: 33) notes that in Samoa, there are cultural objections to women doing outside work seen as 'heavy' or 'dirty'. Agriculture has traditionally been an integral part of *fa'aSamoa*, and although the power and authority of *matai* over allocation of resources for agricultural production has lessened, agriculture remains the mainstay of Samoan rural life and an integral part of *fa'aSamoa*. The semi-subsistence production system works well within the customary land tenure system, (Schoeffel, 1996: 4) and *fa'aSamoa*. Considerable *pule* (authority) is attributed to anyone who clears and uses land, whether or not they are *matai*, and to their family. Work on the plantations is regarded as *tautua* (service), and the food that is produced, and animals that are raised are an important part of *fa'avelave*. The mixed cash and subsistence nature of agriculture offers rural Samoans an opportunity for cash, at the same time providing food security. The customary value of food within *fa'aSamoa* is significant. Food, as the basis of gifting and reciprocity reinforces the concept of *alofa* (love), provides security for future, and is fundamental to the practice of rural Samoans exchanging subsistence goods for remittances from their overseas and urban based relatives.

Forests provide a subsistence source of timber and other products, food and handicraft materials, and have ecological benefits and medicinal, recreational, and spiritual significance. Not all forest trees in Samoa are indigenous. Schoeffel (1996: 85) notes that poumuli (an introduced species) is planted for house posts, and paper mulberry has

been planted for the bark for *tapa* cloth. Poumuli is one of the most widely planted species in farmer woodlots (King, 2004: 12). Some commercial logging provides revenue for villages and sustains a small timber industry (King, 2004: 6). Community forestry is generally small scale, and may involve community management of water catchment areas, sustainable logging of mainly indigenous forests on communal land, plantation forestry on communal land, or farmer woodlots established on individual holdings (King, 2004: 18).

Commercial fishing outside the reefs of Samoa provides employment and significant export revenue. The Central Bank of Samoa estimate that tuna fishing and processing, which is based in Apia, provided 4,000 jobs or 18% of employment (ADB, 2001b: 6). Subsistence and inshore fishing are important in providing food (an important source of protein), and cash for rural people. Around 60% of rural households fish, on average, three times a week. Many of these households fish purely for subsistence (around two thirds) while others sell some of the fish, and use some for subsistence. Around 20% of fishing families are likely to sell 50% or more of their fish (AUSAID, 1995: 40-41). While men are more likely to fish further from the shore, women are more likely glean small fish and shell fish from the shores. However, destructive fishing practices and over fishing of inshore areas was causing a decline in fish stocks prior to a fisheries management project being introduced in the mid 1990s. Since then, improved fisheries management has become the responsibility of village communities supported by a Community Fisheries Extension and Training project, implemented through the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) (formerly MAFFM) (AUSAID, 1995). While this project initially encouraged the formation of special Fisheries Management Committees with representative from all community groups (*matai*, women and untitled men), in two villages that I visited in 2003, it seemed that the members of the village *fono* had taken on the fisheries management role, protecting conservation areas to improve fish stocks and exercising their authority to punish anyone who did not comply with rules set up by the Fisheries Management Committee.

Self employment in micro-enterprise and small businesses provides livelihoods for some in rural areas. The ADB (2004) suggest that private sector growth, that would enable the poor to secure decent jobs and to have access to markets for goods and

services, is the key to generating cash income. However, Tafuna'i (2003: 179) points out that there is limited enterprise opportunities for rural Samoans who do not have a village economy, are isolated from markets, are not prepared for the cash economy, and are unable to cope with a global economy. Making and selling crafts is a common form of micro-enterprise with wooden carvings being men's domain while such items as fine mats, fans, coconut brooms, coconut oil, and *kave* strainers are made and sold locally usually by women (Schoeffel, 1996: 110). Some crafts for tourists are also produced (e.g. baskets, mats, *tapa*, ornaments, 'jewellery'), many of which are sold in the flea market or produce market in Apia. Rural business enterprise is further discussed in Chapter 5.

The need for cash in rural Samoa ('poverty of economic opportunity') highlights the economic dilemma of Samoan people in the rural areas. There is insufficient full-time paid employment for the growing numbers of educated youth in Samoa (many of whom migrate), and virtually no employment in rural areas. The 2001 census for Samoa reported that about two-thirds of those in the 15-24 age group were unemployed (around 5%) or not economically active (about 60%). This is a slight increase from 1991. For the whole labour force a higher proportion of women were 'unemployed' than men (Sialaoa, 2003: 9). Despite recent economic growth in Samoa, formal employment is limited, especially in rural areas (Sialaoa, 2005: 12). Understandably, a much greater proportion of urban village families had a family member working in Apia than rural families (78% as compared with 33%). Rural Samoans are largely unskilled and this combined with distance from the job market makes it difficult for them to find employment (ADB, 2001b: 6). In 2001, of those in formal employment, public sector employment accounted for 32%, with 10 % in state owned enterprises (SOEs), and 22% in government departments. Private sector accounted for nearly 27% of jobs (Sialaoa, 2005: 9). Tourism generated over 2,500 jobs in 1997 (Twining –Ward & Twining –Ward, 1998: 262, cited in Scheyvens, 2003: 230). The Yazaki EDS factory in Apia, that manufactures automotive wiring for export, is the largest single employer in Samoa, recently employing 2,000-2,500 people (Sialaoa, 2005: 9). Around 27,000 people out of a total population of around 176,800 were in formal or paid employment in the 2001 census (around 51% of the economically active labour force). A further 23,433 were employed in unpaid family work (Sialaoa, 2005: 9). It is not surprising then, that large numbers of Samoans migrate for better job prospects overseas.

Migration, and remittances from family members abroad, are significant factors in the livelihoods of rural Samoan people materially, and are embodied in the contemporary practice of *fa'aSamoa*. As Iati notes, remittances are part of 'the larger form of kinship obligations', but could also be considered as 'a contemporary form of welfare' (Iati, 2000: 73). *Fa'aSamoa* strongly influences mobility, migration being a conscious strategy to improve the welfare of the family (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 351).

Remittances are provided by family members living overseas for *fa'alavelave* (eg funerals, weddings and other ceremonies), for 'one off' financial obligations (such as cash required for starting a business, a vehicle, or an appliance), for community and church financial obligations and occasionally to support dependent relatives who are unable to emigrate (e.g. children or elderly parents). Remittances are also sent home to Samoa on special occasions such as Easter, birthdays, Mothers Day or Christmas. Household goods, appliances and clothes are also frequently sent, or taken home, to Samoa. Lilomaiva-Doktor, in her study of the remittances received by three separate households in Salelologa (Savai'i), found that when the remittances for the three households were combined over several years, half of the total remittances was used for *fa'alavelave*. A further 16% was used to purchase vehicles, and 33% was used for other purposes. Large amounts were also used to purchase agricultural equipment, to invest in a taxi, and the renovation of a house. The amounts of remittances received by each of the households varied year by year according to their needs, in 2002 the remittances for the three households totalled \$ US 790, \$ US 4,553 and \$US 6,900 (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004).

Despite speculation that the level of remittances may decline because of the changing lifestyle of expatriate Samoans in fact, both the level and growth in remittances have steadily increased (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 247). There is criticism of the level of dependence on remittances. Tafuna'i (2003: 180) suggests that while remittances are good, they 'should not be seen by the recipient as the main cash source, especially where there are opportunities available for people to earn their own cash'. She goes on to say that if people in the Pacific Islands earn their own money, this gives those living overseas opportunities to better their own lives, enabling them to help out when there is a real need (Tafuna'i, 2003: 180). There is also the notion that remittances reduce the need for agricultural production, cash can buy imported food, and furthermore there is

less motivation to earn cash from agriculture when remittances provide large sums of money with little physical energy. However, remittances can provide a source investment for commercial agriculture and business enterprise, and could thus be considered to be an incentive to economic development in rural areas. Furthermore, as Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004: 31) points out, the need for subsistence food production is linked to migration and remittances. In Samoa gifts of food are provided for travellers leaving and travellers returning, and subsistence agriculture provides for *fa'alavelave*. The gifts brought by travellers (cash and material goods) are reciprocated with traditional goods such as food and mats (Maiava, 2001: 31, Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 31).

In Samoa migration is now a key livelihood strategy that has evolved as society has responded to, and negotiated *fa'aSamoa* to meet the growing need for cash incomes, and financial security. Migration and remittances have contributed to the increasing focus on the individual household, rather than the extended family, Samoans now being more likely to request financial help from immediate relatives who are working overseas, rather than the extended family in Samoa (Maiava, 2001: 31). People often visit their relatives overseas, exposing them to Western thinking and behaviour – this influences and hastens social change (Maiava, 2001: 31).

Livelihoods strategies in rural Samoa that are most common have evolved to work harmoniously with, and compliment *fa'aSamoa*. Waged employment can enhance the economic status of the *aiga*, and contributions to church and community obligation are regarded as *tautua* (service) to the *aiga*. Jobs are keenly sought after, and migration is a strategy to ensure employment outside Samoa. Subsistence and semi-subsistence farming, fishing and forestry are integral to Samoan rural life. The work expended on these activities is *tautua*, and subsistence goods are a crucial part of reciprocity and gifting.

Risk and vulnerability

Rural livelihoods in Samoa are vulnerable to environmental, economic, cultural and social trends, factors and events. In terms of environmental events, Samoa is particularly vulnerable to cyclones which can devastate buildings, infrastructure, crops, forests and livelihoods. It is estimated that in Samoa, severe cyclone force winds can be expected on average every 16 years, and moderate cyclone winds every seven years

(Iosua, 1996, cited in King, 2004: 24). In 1990 and 1991 two cyclones (first Ofa and then Val) struck Samoa causing havoc to livelihoods and catastrophe to the economy. It was estimated that 40% of forests were 'written off' after Ofa, and then 51% of what was remaining was damaged by cyclone Val (Iosua, 1996, cited in King, 2004: 24). In January, 2004 cyclone Heta struck, again causing considerable damage. Rural livelihoods in Samoa are also vulnerable to other unexpected environmental events. For example, an infestation of taro leaf blight in 1993 decimated the taro industry in Samoa badly affecting local consumption of this staple food, and export revenue, and seriously affecting the subsistence and economic livelihoods of rural Samoans. It was some years before taro varieties resistant to the blight were introduced and fully established.

Samoa is economically vulnerable in terms of its remoteness (and high transport costs), narrow agricultural export base, and reliance on remittances to fund imports (ADB, 2001b: 7). Dependence on export crops that are influenced by world prices, such as copra, has proved risky when global economic trends cause prices to fall. A narrow range of products for export exposes the country to greater income volatility than more diversified economies. Tourism is the largest industry in Samoa (Holden et al, 2003), and accounts for much of Samoa's export earnings. Samoa is thus highly vulnerable to any factors or trends that might cause a global down-turn in tourism.

Uncertainty and risk in markets for agricultural produce (for example when processing outlets are only marginally viability, or export markets are vulnerable to oversupply or quarantine issues), tourism or fishing can also cause vulnerability for rural households that depend on these activities to support their income.

The Composite Vulnerability Index (CVI) was developed jointly by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank to identify vulnerable states.

Vulnerability in this index is considered to be the consequence of 'the incidence and intensity of risk and threat, and the resilience in recovering from adversity' and is a measure of economic exposure, remoteness and insularity, and proneness to natural disasters (ADB, 2001a: 33). The CVI indicates that most Pacific Island countries are highly vulnerable, Samoa (7.37) featuring amongst the most vulnerable small states (ADB, 2001a: 34).

Environmental shocks and trends, macro-economic trends, and micro-economic events such as changes in user pays systems for utilities, education and health, or changes in

point of sale tax systems (value-added goods and services tax), can expose rural Samoans to considerable risk and vulnerability. Furthermore, shocks and misfortunes at the household level such as ill-health, death, loss of employment or marriage breakdown, can also jeopardise the livelihoods of rural Samoans.

Fa'aSamoa provides economic and social security, as well as a home, access to land, and protection from crime in the village. The *aiga*, in addition to being the focus of *fa'aSamoa*, and a source of pride and identity, provides a safety net in times of hardship. Gifting, and the reciprocity that comes with gifting, also provides security. Nevertheless, obligations of *fa'aSamoa* can impose risk and vulnerability for Samoan people. For example the financial obligations and time associated with *fa'alavelave* and other community obligations can disrupt livelihood activities and cause financial hardship. Intense rivalry, and resulting jealousy between *aiga*, can jeopardise livelihoods strategies and increase vulnerability.

The way in which rural Samoans perceive risk is also related to *fa'aSamoa*. With the *aiga* as the focal point of *fa'aSamoa*, anything that might harm or bring shame on the *aiga* is regarded as a threat. New livelihood activities, or initiatives, that challenge existing systems, impose risk for Samoan rural people. Engaging in any livelihood strategy can be risky when failure can bring shame to the family.

Livelihood outcomes

Achieving livelihood outcomes reduces poverty and hardship, and provides well-being, while maintaining and enhancing assets and resources within the livelihood system.

Fa'aSamoa, and the context in which the livelihoods of rural Samoans exist, are both critical to the livelihood outcomes to which many rural Samoans aspire. Although financial, non financial and food security outcomes can be arbitrarily separated, all of these are related, and interwoven with elements of *fa'aSamoa*. Cash is important to rural Samoans. People enjoy having cash which can be spent on imported food items, entertainment, and people need cash for necessities such as electricity, water, bus fares, school and medical costs, and some basic food items. However, cash is also fundamental to enhancing the status of the *aiga* and providing *tautua*. Cash is important for *fa'alavelave* and for higher education of children who will one day support the *aiga* with their *tautua* and love. Cash is also used for church contributions that are not only

tautua to the church and *fa'amatai*, but enhance the status of the village, and can enhance the standing of the *aiga* in the eyes of other members of the village.

Non-financial outcomes are equally important. Building social assets and cultural capital through strong relationships and trust within the *aiga* and between *aiga* is crucial to supporting *fa'aSamoa* and the considerable benefits this way of life brings. In addition to, or as an alternative to financial contributions, *tautua* in the form of attendance at *fa'alavelave*, labour, and subsistence goods, are all important in maintaining and enhancing social and cultural capital. Conforming with cultural norms is also important in maintaining harmony and good relations, and demonstrating respect for elders and those in authority.

Food security is an important livelihood outcome, and with the high cost of imported goods, most rural Samoans engage in subsistence agriculture for food security. However, a surplus of food is produced to ensure that produce can be gifted and exchanged, and that there is sufficient subsistence produce for *fa'alavelave*. Food security comes not only from households engaging in their own production, but from engaging in the complex web of reciprocity that is fundamental to *fa'aSamoa*.

A revised sustainable livelihoods approach

In general, culture has not been emphasised as an issue for analysis, in same way as environment, population, energy, or participation (Kavaliku, 2000: 25), and this is reflected in the sustainable livelihoods frameworks in Chapter 2. This chapter has argued that culture (*fa'aSamoa*) is related to, and interwoven, with nearly every aspect of livelihoods in the Samoan context. The chapter has attempted to 'unravel' the nature of these relationships. This is reflected in a revised sustainable livelihoods framework and definition presented in this section.

The definitions of a livelihood presented in Chapter 2 need modification to better reflect sustainable rural livelihoods in the context of this research. The definitions are very long-winded and complex. Furthermore, the emphasis on sustainability is with the environment, whereas it is important that all assets and resources are maintained. This chapter has argued that maintaining and enhancing social and cultural assets is critical as they are the basis of identity, well-being and dignity, and provide financial, social and physical security for Samoan people. The revised definition of a livelihood

developed in this chapter, draws on elements of Chambers and Conway's (1992: 7) definition. However, in the definition presented below, culture is specifically mentioned, and sustainability does not refer exclusively to natural resources (Cahn, 2003b: 287). Rather, it is assumed that all resources and assets (social, cultural, economic and natural) must be maintained or enhanced during livelihood activities:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities that provide a means of living: a *sustainable* livelihood works in harmony with the cultural context adapting to and coping with vulnerability, while maintaining and enhancing assets and resources.

Including culture prominently in a sustainable livelihoods framework ensures that a livelihoods analysis would consider how culture relates to livelihoods in terms of livelihood outcomes, assets and resources, institutions and processes, risk and vulnerability, and livelihood strategies. Including culture in a sustainable livelihoods framework would encourage analysis of how culture influence people's attitudes to income generation, and how income generation impacts on the relationships between household members and within the community. The revised sustainable livelihoods framework in this chapter, with culture prominent and impacting on all aspects of the livelihood system, would help structure livelihoods analyses that truly reflect the realities of Samoan rural life.

A revised sustainable livelihoods framework that is appropriate for a livelihoods analysis in Samoa is set out in this section of the chapter (Figure 4.2, Page 144) (Cahn, 2003b: 287).

The framework works within the three spheres (domains) of public, private sector and traditional sphere. These spheres, gender, the cultural context and the vulnerability context, surround the livelihoods system as these factors interact with all aspects of the livelihood assets, strategies and outcomes. Cultural assets are included as an additional and separate asset, to reflect the importance of cultural assets (and the crossover between cultural and social assets) in the Samoan context. The revised framework also seeks to overcome some of the criticisms of previous sustainable livelihoods frameworks such as the lack of clarity in the way the factors are linked (Chapter 2). The linkages and flows between factors are clearly stated in the framework in Figure 4.2. For example, the arrows in the livelihood process show that outcomes impact on the strategies, and both outcomes and strategies impact on the assets.

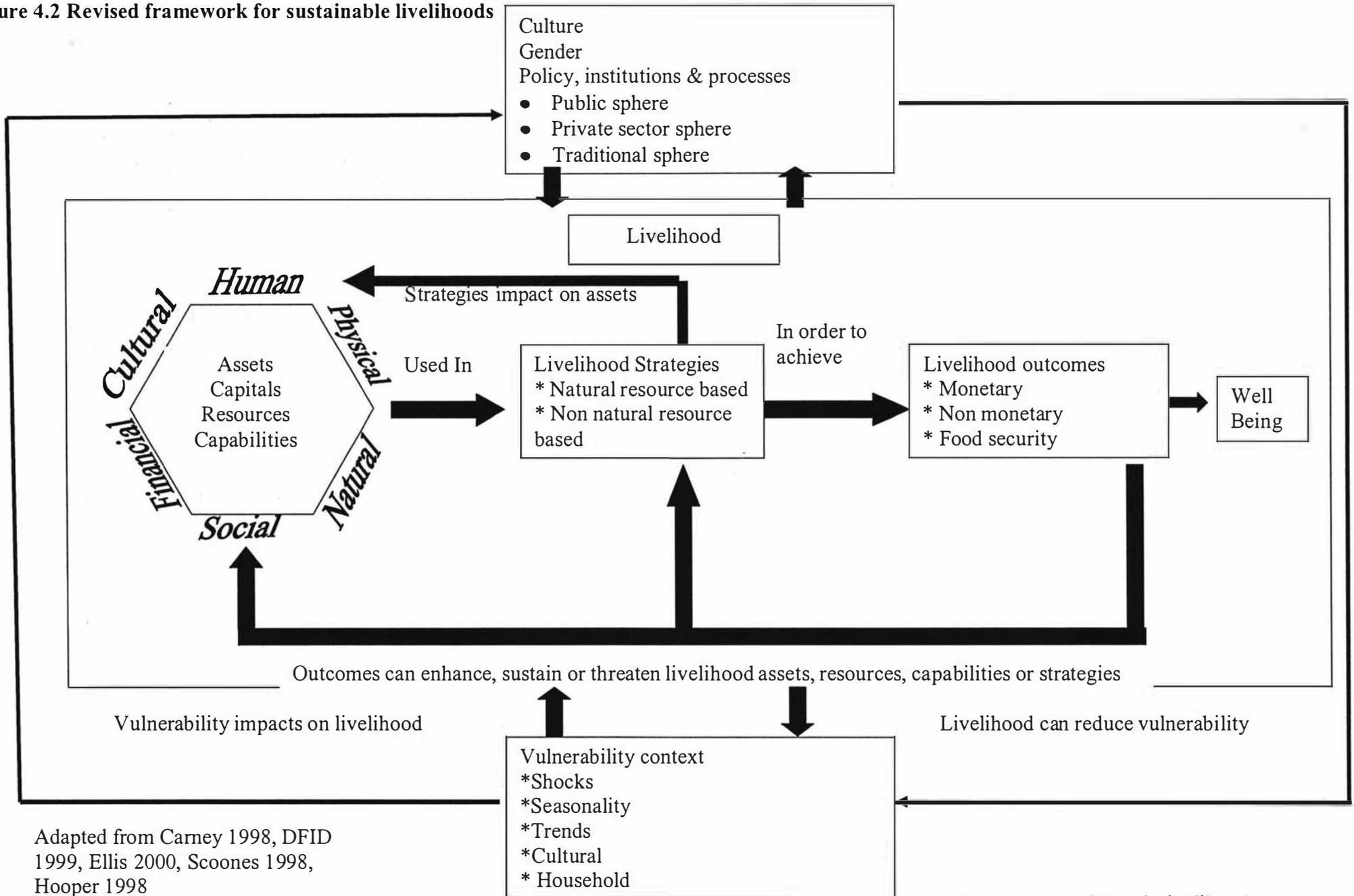
Finally the outcome of the whole livelihood system is stated as improved well-being. In the sustainable livelihood frameworks in Chapter 2, improved well-being is usually included as one of a number of outcomes. In the framework in Figure 4.2, this improved well-being is assumed to be attained through a range of different livelihood strategies which are carried out for monetary (cash), non monetary (e.g. the interactions of *fa'aSamoa*) and food security. Figure 4.2, the revised framework for sustainable livelihoods, is displayed on the following page.

The main differences in the revised definition and framework for sustainable livelihoods and previous definitions and frameworks of sustainable livelihoods are summarised in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Differences: sustainable livelihoods approach for the Pacific Islands

| The Pacific Livelihoods Definition and Framework |
|--|
| <p>Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasises that the livelihood must work in harmony with the culture. • Includes sustainability as maintaining or enhancing all assets. • Simplifies the wording. |
| <p>Framework (Figure 4.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture is placed outside the framework to indicate an environment in which the livelihood exists. • Gender is placed outside the framework – gender interacts with each component of the framework. • Institutions and processes – includes the three spheres, traditional, public, private sector. • Vulnerability context includes cultural and household aspects. • Institutions and processes, and vulnerability context are placed outside the livelihood. • The linkages and flows between factors are clearly stated. For example, the arrows in the livelihood process show that outcomes impact on the strategies, and both outcomes and strategies impact on the assets. • Cultural assets are included as a separate asset. • Well-being is included as the final goal and resulting from the various outcomes rather than as a separate outcome. |

Figure 4.2 Revised framework for sustainable livelihoods



Adapted from Carney 1998, DFID 1999, Ellis 2000, Scoones 1998, Hooper 1998

Conclusion

This chapter described *fa'aSamoa*, the Samoan way of life (and culture), and rural livelihoods in Samoa. This chapter drew attention to the way in which *fa'aSamoa* is intricately interwoven with rural livelihoods in Samoa. The macro-economic environment in Samoa was explained and the chapter provided insights into the nature of poverty in Samoa. Then, after describing aspects of *fa'aSamoa* that seemed important to this research, the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and each aspect of rural livelihoods in Samoa were discussed in an attempt to 'unravel' and clarify these complex interactions. Assets and resources that can provide for rural livelihoods in Samoa were described, and the way in which *fa'aSamoa* is related to the access to and control over the assets was addressed. The chapter described livelihood strategies currently used to gain a means of living for the majority of Samoans, and the way in which these interact with *fa'aSamoa*. Institutions and processes of Samoa were addressed, and the dichotomy of political systems, traditional and government (public), was discussed. The chapter examined the risk and vulnerability context, and highlighted the role of *fa'aSamoa* in risk and vulnerability. Lastly, informed by the analysis of *fa'aSamoa* and livelihoods, the chapter suggested livelihoods outcomes that are likely to be of importance to most rural Samoans.

Three major themes emerged in relation to *fa'aSamoa* and rural livelihoods that are of particular importance for the rest of the thesis. Firstly, the way in which the *aiga* influences all aspects of rural livelihoods, was evident throughout the chapter. Secondly the power and authority of *fa'amatai*, and the rules of the village which are enforced by the village *fono*, have considerable influence over almost every aspect of rural life. Thirdly, the extent to which rural people in Samoa conform to the values and norms of *fa'aSamoa*, is considerable, this being crucial to building of social and cultural assets that provide security, and a strong a sense of identity.

Finally in this chapter, the review and analysis of literature was used to assess the usefulness of previous definitions and frameworks of sustainable livelihoods (Chapter 2) for this research. The chapter developed a revised definition and framework that more appropriately reflects rural livelihoods in Samoa. The revised framework was developed prior to the field work and was then used as a basis for structuring field

research and analysing case study results. The success of the use of the framework is discussed towards the end of the thesis (Chapter 8 Livelihoods Compared).

The chapter provides a framework and context for the rest of the thesis, where relationships and interactions between *fa'aSamoa* and rural livelihoods are illustrated and extended in relation to micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods. The next chapter (Chapter 5) addresses small and micro business enterprise in Samoa as a livelihood strategy for rural Samoan people. Chapter 5 draws strongly on concepts developed in this chapter in order to integrate cultural aspects, and rural Samoan livelihoods, into the discourse of small and micro-enterprise. Then, in Chapters 6 and 7, the case studies illustrate and extend the concepts developed in both this chapter and the following chapter.

Chapter 5 Small and Micro Business Enterprise in Samoa

Introduction

This chapter addresses small and micro (very small) business enterprise, as a strategy for achieving livelihood outcomes in rural Samoa. Some agencies favour the development of privately owned business enterprises, sometimes referred to as the 'private sector', as a way to achieve macro-economic growth, and through economic growth to improve employment and reduce poverty (Holden et al, 2003). However, in this chapter, as in the whole of this thesis, small and micro business enterprise development is approached from the perspective of the sustainable livelihoods, and from the perspective of rural Samoan people. In this perspective, business enterprise is a livelihood strategy which, if successful and sustainable, can provide the livelihood outcomes to which rural Samoan people aspire. In this chapter I describe small and micro business enterprise in Samoa, and discuss the relationships between rural business (virtually all of which is small or micro) and *fa'aSamoa*. The chapter not only provides a context to the Samoan case studies, but introduces ideas on which the conclusions of the thesis can draw. The field research in Samoa included interviews with a number of participants involved in business enterprise in general, as well as participants specifically involved in the case studies. Thus the chapter includes both a review of literature and field research findings that relate to business enterprise in general in Samoa. The field research included semi structured interviews and informal interviews as described in Chapter 3.

Business enterprise in Samoa

Introduction to business enterprise in Samoa

As described in Chapter 4, the need for cash in rural Samoa ('poverty of economic opportunity') highlights the economic dilemma of Samoan people in the rural areas. Around 50% of the Samoan workforce is engaged in semi-subsistence agriculture, forestry and fisheries, 'reflecting the importance of subsistence activity and the present lack of opportunities in other sectors' (Sialaoa, 2005: 9-10) and there is very little other formal employment in rural areas of Samoa. Many rural Samoans are unskilled and this, combined with distance from the job market, makes it difficult for them to find

employment (ADB, 2001b: 6). An alternative to employment that can provide rural Samoans with cash is village-based self employment in micro and small enterprises.

Commercial money making enterprises have been operating in Samoa for more than a hundred years, since Europeans took up residence in Samoa and set themselves up as planters and traders (Hooper, 1998: 43). Business (other than commercial agriculture) in the village has been established in a small way since the beginning of the 20th century in the form of small trading stores (Hooper, 1998: 28). Hooper suggests that Samoans with mixed European and Samoan heritage contributed to a small middle class in Samoa by the mid 1930s, and 'laid the foundation of the present-day private sector in Samoa' (Hooper, 1998: 43). However, in recent years, Samoans, *palagi* (non-Samoans of European heritage) and Samoan –Chinese families have joined the business sector, much of the business activity driven by tourism, and aid projects (Hooper, 1998: 43-44).

Samoa's business sector (even including both rural and urban) is still very small and underdeveloped (Struthers et al, 2002: 42, Holden et al, 2003: 6). However, despite being small, the business sector has grown over the last decade. The Samoan Chamber of Commerce has over 150 members according to their website in 2006 (although not all of these are private business operators). This has increased significantly since the 1990s when Hooper (1998: 45) reported 100 members. Furthermore there was an increase in the number of businesses registered in Samoa every year between 1994 and 2001 (Table 5.1 on the following page). The figures in Table 5.1 are based on the net increase in the number of sole traders registered with the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) during the period 1994 to 2001.

The highest numbers of small businesses are in retail and tourism. Almost 10% (9.1%) of the economic growth in Samoa in 2001 was attributed to growth in commerce (Struthers et al, 2002: 34), and in 2005 the commerce sector overtook agriculture and fisheries and accounted for 20% of GDP. However, although there are a number of beach *fale* and other tourism ventures that have developed in the rural areas, much of the growth in the business sector has been in Apia.

Table 5.1 Net increase in sole traders registered

| YEAR | NEW SOLE TRADERS REGISTERED |
|------|-----------------------------|
| 1994 | 283 |
| 1995 | 345 |
| 1996 | 387 |
| 1997 | 402 |
| 1998 | 465 |
| 1999 | 575 |
| 2000 | 590 |
| 2001 | 630 |

Source: Struthers et al (2002: 33) (from Samoan IRD information)

In line with the ADB's emphasis on the private sector as a basis of economic growth (Holden et al, 2004), the Samoan government's economic strategy includes reforms that aim, among other things, to develop the small private sector in Samoa (Sialaoa, 2003: 9, Holden et al 2003). Furthermore, the Samoan government's commitment to the development of the private sector has been supported by a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) of \$US3.5 million for small business development. The loan will be drawn down until 2006 and has a 35 year repayment period. The rationale for the loan is that 80% of Samoan businesses are small, having five or fewer employees, and most of these businesses do not have adequate skills to increase the size of their businesses. Furthermore, these enterprises lack finance, and have had limited access to credit as customary land cannot be used as collateral. It is expected that the loan will create 1,400 direct income or employment opportunities through small business, benefiting at least 5,000 people (ADB, 2001c; Struthers et al, 2002: 62).

The ADB loan is being used to finance the Small Business Development Project which aims to expand the small loans guarantee scheme⁴, support a pilot microfinance scheme, enhance business advisory and training, and improve the policy and legislative environment to facilitate small business development. Government business regulations, as in other Pacific Island countries, are complicated and expensive (Holden et al, 2004:5-8). However, there is a commitment by the government to reform debt and recovery procedures, the Personal Property and Securities Act and the Companies Act (Sialaoa, 2005: 15). Ways to provide collateral for loans through chattels (assets other

⁴ Further details of the loans guarantee scheme and micro-finance components of the ADB loan are provided later in this chapter in the sections on the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) and Women in Business Foundation (WIBDI).

than land) is being explored through the ADB Small Business Development project, while ways in which to use customary land more effectively for private sector growth is being looked into by the Law Reform Commission that was set up in 2002 (Chapter 4).

Samoa – smallness, the village economy and business enterprise

There is no doubt that being a small and remote country has some disadvantages for business enterprise. Transport costs for export are increased and economies of scale are reduced. Furthermore a small domestic market limits the extent to which businesses can expand domestically, and the number of businesses of the same type that can be supported by that small domestic market (Holden et al, 2003: 33). However, on the other hand small countries are able to adapt more quickly to changing global circumstances, especially if the environment that the government provides for small business is flexible (Holden et al, 2003). Smallness means that countries can switch policies quickly, and because small countries are commercially ‘non-threatening’, and have very small volumes of product, they can often achieve preferential market access on the export market should opportunities arise for small and micro businesses to enter into export production (Baldacchino, 1999: 80).

However, in the rural areas, where most people exist on a semi-subsistence basis, there is a limited village economy which limits opportunities for business (Tafuna’i, 2003: 179). As discussed in Chapter 4, the considerable amounts of money that village people provide to the church, and which then is used outside the village, also contributes to the lack of any significant village economy (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2006). It is virtually impossible for rurally based Samoans to successfully individually link with overseas markets, and for some (especially in Savai’i) even linking with Apia markets is difficult. Lack of telephones, faxes and internet, and limited transport (other than buses) makes efficient marketing very difficult. It is the linkages between the traditional sphere, the private sector sphere and government that Hooper describes as a factor in the unique way that each Pacific Island country operates (Hooper and James, 1994: 5). One way that village-based businesses can develop in Samoa is for them to be (initially at least) linked to, and supported by, urban based NGO’s, government organisations, or larger private sector enterprises in order that the market can be expanded to include tourists, urban consumers who have cash, and overseas customers. One professional person interviewed during the field research, who was involved with development projects in Samoa, felt strongly that product marketing should be carried out by rural

people to ensure empowerment, and more returns for them (research participant, interview March 2003). However, as one rural village women explained ‘we may get less money if an NGO sold our product but we would have more time for making the product’ (rural woman, interview April 2003).

Business skills

Few Samoan village people and communities have training in business skills, in topics such as marketing and competition, ideas for business, business planning and development, or business management. Education about how to get access to credit and how to use credit is lacking amongst those rural people who have not been specifically targeted by organisations supplying credit. Where there is no family history of business, these skills are not learnt from older relatives. This is clearly a constraint to business enterprise development, both for those who contemplate going into business and for community members (especially those in positions of power) who could support rural business. Chung (1997: 33) suggests that in the Pacific lack of community understanding of business is a problem that is broader than an individual lack of business skills. This view is supported by ADB (2001a: 27) consultants who suggest that in many Pacific Island countries ‘few people have more than a superficial understanding of business’ because they are not widely exposed to the market economy and live in an ‘environment’ where they can acquire much of what they need from their land (ADB, 2001a: 27), or through traditional exchange systems.

Rural village people were described by staff of one of the Samoan NGO as seldom saving or using their money to reinvest in business. According to this NGO, village people needed to be supervised closely and regularly in their business enterprises and helped along every step of the way. The staff member said ‘they have no idea about budgeting. They never save and then when they need the money they don’t have it ...’ (NGO staff member, interview April 2003). However, there is an ability to budget and calculate income and expenditure in Samoa, and an understanding of the importance of covering costs, in certain circumstances. This is demonstrated in the elaborate and efficient *fa’alavelave* (funerals, weddings and ceremonies for other life events) that are organised (O’Meara, 1993, Maiava, 2001). Tremendous organisational ability is displayed in the preparation for such ceremonies in budgeting the expenses (cash and goods) and ensuring cash and goods are requested from relatives to cover these costs, and redistributing the goods and cash. During my field research one village-based

participant described the arrangements for a recent funeral of her uncle and I was astounded at the accuracy with which she accounted the costs of items and her memory of where the cash to cover the costs had been attained (rural woman, interview March 2003). There are cultural reasons for lack of savings, reinvestment, and lack of business initiatives which may well not be able to be changed by education alone.

Business Structures for rural micro-enterprise in rural Samoa

Women's committees

Women's committees in Samoa are involved in income generating business enterprises, usually supported by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA). The money raised is used for community and individual income generation, the women's committees and village have protocols in place to make decisions, and decide how the money is used. For example, the women's committee in one of the villages I visited during my field work had a phone. Anyone could use the phone – local calls cost \$ST 5 (or \$ST 2 if you were a member of the committee). Proceeds from the phone went to the women's committee for their expenses. One woman stayed at the committee house each day and night to look after the phone. People respect that the calls must be paid for and the systems of accountability ensure a profit is made and well as providing the community with a service.

The Fagamolo village women's group in Samoa is well known for their baskets and other handicrafts that are sold from their committee house which is situated on the main road around the island of Savai'i. A group member stays at the committee house each day. Much of the work is done at home and some is done during the Wednesday meetings. The women's group take a commission and the rest of the money goes to the crafts person (Women's committee member, interview April 2003).

However, while some women's committee businesses operate well, anecdotal evidence suggested that sometimes women's committees are prone to problems of mismanagement. As one woman said 'people steal and use money for other things because money is short. The village committee had chickens. Eggs were sold in the village and chickens too ... but somebody used the money' (rural woman, interview April 2003).

Family based enterprises

Most productive work in Samoa is individually, family or household based (O'Meara, 1990: 61). In Samoa, people often organise themselves co-operatively for specific production goals or community projects, to help each other out, to avoid long hours of work, or for social reasons (O'Meara, 1990: 60-61, Chung, 1997: 33). However, communal work in Samoa is normally for specific purposes or projects and usually for a temporary community cause (such as a new building) (Maiava, 2001: 89). As Maiava notes, 'it is the family, not the village that is the unit of production for income in Samoa' (Maiava, 2001: 142). With regard to Samoan planters, O'Meara (1990: 61-62) reports that communally based projects for income generation generally resulted in the most industrious and the least industrious of the planters dropping out of communal projects early on. The more industrious knew that their efforts would be better rewarded if they worked on their own (O'Meara, 1990: 61-62). A research participant from a Samoan NGO also agreed that the family was the production unit in Samoa. The research participant explained:

The family is one economic unit. Talking about one operator implies one family. Community have a different work ethic to family – one person works one and a half hours in a week and another works five hours. The first person thinks 'why should I bother?' How is the income shared? It's silly to put a co-operative based mandate into a village and expect it to work (research participant interview April 2003).

There is a great deal of jealousy and rivalry between families and yet within families there is co-operation, obedience and loyalty. According to the Executive Director of WIBDI, WIBDI used to work with communities before but it 'never worked'. WIBDI now only works with families (Executive Director of WIBDI, interview April 2003).

Co-operative work (and co-operatives)

The importance of community identity and sharing in the Pacific Islands has wrongly led people to the conclusion that Pacific Islands societies are 'naturally adapted' to co-operative structures for business enterprises (Crocombe, 1990: 60-61). As Chung notes, it should not be assumed that because communal work has supported village living in the Pacific, this will successfully extend to co-operative enterprises where cash is involved (Chung, 1997: 33). Co-operative enterprises are unlikely to work in the same way as community projects. Firstly, co-operatives are based on equality of members (as explained in Chapter 2) but Samoan structures are based on a hierarchy where priority is given to, and authority is held by, *matai*, males and elders (Crocombe, 1978, 2001).

Secondly, Crocombe (1978: 48) suggests that strong obligations to family members will conflict with the 'necessity' that officers of a co-operative would treat everyone equally, sometimes leading to rivalry and corruption. Sometimes the benefits of the co-operative have benefited the more powerful and already well off members. Thirdly, as Brooks points out (in relation to Papua New Guinea, but with relevance to Samoa), community co-operation, differs from the type of co-operative 'spirit' required for a co-operative enterprise to work. She explains that a successful co-operative enterprise could be viewed as 'linear', with a consistent level of work going on into the future. However, co-operation in a Papua New Guinea community is 'cyclical' with high levels of co-operation for one event, then alliances and co-operation breaking down while smaller units carry on every day living (Brooks, 1996: 5).

After the 1950s, formal co-operative enterprises were developed in Samoa, as they were elsewhere in the developing world. As in other countries, co-operatives in Samoa generally fall into two types: resource based co-operatives where sharing of assets such as land, labour or machinery is the basis; and market or service based co-operatives which operate by selling members produce or providing members with goods and services (see Chapter 2). During the 1960s co-operatives reached a peak in popularity and since then have declined. Co-operatives in Samoa, and the rest of the Pacific Islands, have had a 'chequered career', but they had an important role in providing valuable management and commercial skills to people, some of whom later went on to become leaders (Crocombe, 2001: 345).

Because outsiders often assume that Samoan village production is communal (O'Meara, 1990: 61) they believe that by setting up co-operatives they are conforming with Samoan culture. Furthermore, development agencies want to spread the benefits of limited funds as far as possible, and see communal 'economic development' as one way of doing this (O'Meara, 1990: 61). However, as Chung notes, 'it is necessary to understand how to incorporate traditional obligations within a particular community, and the right process by which the community can evolve their own model' (Chung, 1997: 33-34).

Tensions, tradeoffs and harmony – rural business and *fa'aSamoa*

Economic development and culture

The ADB identifies the 'private sector', and growth of business by private operators, as the 'engine of growth' for the Pacific Islands (Holden et al, 2004). While culture is sometimes regarded as something that is unrelated to the 'economic processes of the society' (Dove, 1988: 1), it is recognised that there are relationships between culture and economic development in the Pacific Islands. It is understood that development projects can fail in the Pacific Islands when they do not recognise the realities of village life (James, 2000: 141), and Fairbairn-Dunlop (2000: 67) notes that 'the family' is regarded by some as a 'hindrance' to economic development in the Pacific in development literature. The ADB has identified policy, institutional issues (including trust, informal rules and social norms), and socio-cultural issues as the main causes of project failure, and constraints to economic growth and poverty reduction in the Pacific Islands (Schoeffel, 1996:61, ADB, 2004a: 4). Poirine (1995: 48) suggests that in the Pacific Islands economic progress is often incompatible with a traditional way of life and this causes people to be opposed to development projects. Furthermore, cultural and traditional aspects (customs) have been cited as constraints to economic development in the Pacific Islands due to 'underemployment', meaning time being used for 'social and customary obligations' rather than for productive work (Fairbairn, 1995: 204), and Crocombe (1980: 68) notes that the principles of trade and commerce, on which economic development is based, are 'in conflict with the principles of many Pacific Island cultures'. Shadrake and van Diermen (1998: 10-20) discuss ways in which *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan way of life) is incompatible with small business.

However, while it is recognised that there are strong relationships between culture and economic development, those relationships are rarely specifically addressed in most economic development initiatives. As Scheyvens (1999: 63) points out:

Models of development employed in the Pacific Islands, almost exclusively borrowed from the West, have largely ignored these social dimensions of change, however, focussing instead on economic strategies for increasing production and national wealth (Scheyvens, 1999: 63).

As Dove suggests, culture is 'intimately bound up with, and directly supports, the basic social, economic and ecological processes of society' (Dove, 1988: 1). So then, the dilemma for developing business enterprise in rural Samoa is that many of those factors cited as impeding and constraining economic growth and business development are, if

fact, the very factors that are the basis of *fa'aSamoa* and provide identity, a sense of belonging, independence, dignity and security for Samoan people. As Hooper and James (1994) point out:

.. many of the features taken to be impediments to (economic) growth and business are regarded by Pacific people as being fundamental to sustaining local economic control against outside encroachment: they are also familiar, known features of the social and moral landscape that embody basic values ...and that stand as emblems of a distinctive national culture and identity (Hooper and James 1994: 1).

while Schoeffel (1996) writes:

... communal land tenure, kin-based systems of social organisation and leadership, systems of reciprocity and distribution – provide basic economic security to the great majority of Pacific populations as well as a sense of identity and self worth. Yet they contain aspects which are problematic given the high and rising economic expectations of Pacific people (Schoeffel, 1996: 1).

Culture and business enterprise in Samoa

The premise of this thesis is that there are strong relationships between rural business enterprise and *fa'aSamoa* that influence the success and sustainability of rural business as a livelihood strategy. In this section I breakdown and discuss the relationships between small and micro business and *fa'aSamoa*. I identify and attempt to explain tensions, trade-offs and harmonies between what constitutes good business practice (as in the expectations of 'western business practice'), and the values, norms and practice of *fa'aSamoa*. In this way I attempt to provide a better understanding of the tensions that can jeopardise the development of small and micro rural business, and aspects of business that are in harmony with *fa'aSamoa*. Where there are tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and business, rural people will often choose to trade-off potential business success in order to maintain their social and cultural capital, ensuring their family's status, their place in the family, and their security is maintained.

In rural areas of Samoa the most common income generating strategies (other than waged employment) tend to be those that blend best with *fa'aSamoa* – agriculture, fishing, small scale craft, tourism, trading, small scale food and sewing. However, the 'market and business mentality' is relatively weak in rural areas, even though cash is clearly needed and is integral to the contemporary norms and practices of *fa'aSamoa*. Many commercial and business enterprises based in rural areas struggle to be successful

and sustainable. This chapter has already pointed out constraints to rural business such as the lack of village economies, lack of business acumen, difficulty in marketing from rural areas and so on. However, the tensions and trade-offs in the relationships between business and *fa'aSamoa*, also strongly influence success and sustainability of rural businesses.

Relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and business enterprise exist for all Samoans, but are much stronger and have greater impact in rural areas, the power of *fa'amatai* being much stronger in rural Samoa, and obligations to *fa'aSamoa* being central to rural life. A study on culture, gender and small business in Samoa by Shadrake and van Diermen found that urban business women had 'considerably more freedom to choose their work-role and make decisions' than rural women (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 15). One research participant suggested that people working in small rural micro-enterprises are less likely to be able to 'juggle' their cultural obligations than those in urban small business (research participant, interview April 2003). The power of the village *fono* has been noted as strongly influencing all aspects of village life (Chapter 4) including business enterprise. There are reports that village *fono* can jeopardise the success of rural businesses, sometimes because of jealousy, or perhaps to advantage more powerful members of the *fono* (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998, Meleisea, 2000). People returning from overseas with new ideas are particularly susceptible to being perceived as threatening the power and authority of the *fono* and thereby raising jealousy and resentment (Schoeffel, 1998: 143, Meleisea, 2000: 82).

It is sometimes suggested that while western business is considered successful if it has continuity and reliability, Pacific Island business goals are sometimes short term and 'opportunistic', with a single goal being pursued, and once achieved, the business ceasing. Brooks reports that in Papua New Guinea 'people talk about *doing* business rather than *having* a business' (Brooks, 1996: 6). Chung (in reference to Pacific Island businesses) notes 'rural people generally work for cash at times of particular need ... and are less inclined to maintain a business on a long term regular footing ...' (Chung, 1997: 33). However, while business in Samoa is sometimes 'opportunistic' rather than a long term strategy, increasingly the need for continuing cash incomes means that rural people do want their businesses to continue and be sustainable. However, the tensions between

western principles of business and some aspects of *fa'aSamoa* may cause trade-offs to occur that jeopardise the sustainability and success of their business.

Tensions and trade-offs

Business innovation

Choosing a good business idea is one of the first important factors in developing a sustainable and successful business. However, this presents some tensions in rural Samoa. Dunlop (1999: 104) reports that the biggest problem identified by the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) was the 'copy cat' mentality of entrepreneurs where people 'set themselves up in the same business, selling an identical product, and often in the same locality'. For example, a young woman in the family that I stayed with in the village explained to me that on the next Saturday she would bake 70 cakes which would sell for \$ST1 each at bingo. She had done this a number of times before. After the weekend when I asked how her sale had gone I was told that she had not sold her cakes that week. However, her mother said 'it was just as well she didn't sell her cakes because there were too many people selling the same cakes – they all copied her!' I asked why people copy each other and I was told 'they see someone making heaps of money and they think 'I could do that too ... I'll do the same'' (rural women, interviews April 2003). Shadrake and van Diermen note that rural women tend to stick to traditional roles in their businesses, and that agencies supporting women's business also encourage traditional roles (crafts, sewing, cooking, gardening) (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 18).

With a weak village economy, the opportunities for business are limited to some extent, however the 'copy cat' phenomenon occurs for several reasons other than just lack of opportunities. Firstly, lack of innovation is often the result of little exposure to other market economies. Secondly 'copy cat' enterprises also occur when the market is flooded after workshops that teach people a new craft or skill. I was told that after Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) workshops on making home dyed *tapa* materials everyone started making the material and the shops that were purchasing the materials started rejecting them (rural woman, interview April 2003).

Thirdly, entrepreneurs perceive that by copying a successful money making venture they are minimising the risk of setting up a new enterprise. They believe that their venture will also make money. The risk of failure is very high in Samoa, an enterprise

that fails not only incurs financial loss but also incurs 'loss of face' and embarrassment to the entrepreneur, their immediate family and *aiga*. With the goal of raising the status of the family and *aiga* a central part of *fa'aSamoa*, being innovative is very risky.

The final factor that contributes to lack of business innovation and different types of business is that there are elements of *fa'aSamoa* which cause innovation and change to be discouraged. The respect and lines of authority (*pule*) that are part of *fa'aSamoa* prevent people (especially young people, women and untitled men) from putting themselves forward and being innovative and different. Being different and innovative, especially if one is successful, can cause jealousy and feelings of resentment, usually stemming from intense rivalry between *aiga* for status. People may be reluctant to actively market their business for fear of being seen as disrespectful or 'flaunting' themselves (not an accepted way to behave). People are thus likely to stick with traditional enterprises, and use the skills that people have learned as part of their upbringing. Shadrake's and van Diermen's study on women entrepreneurs in Samoa showed that while 18% of women said they preferred traditional businesses because they made more money, 14% said they chose traditional businesses because they were part of Samoan culture and 36% because they had the resources or skills for traditional businesses (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 18).

Cash flow and obligations of fa'aSamoa

Sound western business principles advocate sound cash flow planning, ensuring savings to cover expenses during times of low income, accumulation of profits and reinvestment in the business, to ensure long term business success and stability. This is in contrast to the values and principles of *fa'aSamoa* where enhanced status for individuals and families is gained through gifting and distribution, and fulfilling obligations to immediate family, *aiga*, church and community through *tautua* (service), and respect. Shadrake and van Diermen (1998: 3) note that *tautua* is increasingly being fulfilled by supplying cash from a job or small business. In rural Samoa this contradiction between business principles, and practices of *fa'aSamoa*, causes considerable trade-offs, often in favour of *fa'aSamoa* and to the detriment of business. The need to contribute financially to *fa'alavelave* and provide donations to the church is noted by Shadrake and van Diermen as a considerable financial 'drain' for business owners in Samoa, for *matai* the pressure to give generously (in all aspects of life) is particularly strong, as this is

expected because of their status (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 12-14). Store owners are likely to donate store goods for *fa'avelave*. Gifting more money (or goods) than the business can afford can cause serious cash flow problems and inability to pay for business expenses.

Furthermore, the *fa'aSamoa* way of gifting and reciprocity, means that people are often allowed to 'book up' credit against businesses, and friends and family members expect items from the business without paying, although one research participant I interviewed suggested that culture is slowly changing and entrepreneurs in small businesses are becoming more aware. She described two shops she knew of, one where no credit was given at all, and another where credit was only given to people on a salary (Samoan based consultant, interview April 2003). Nevertheless, the conflict for a Samoan entrepreneur between whether to sell, or share goods and/or services, is a conflict between short term goals (immediate gratification through income) and long term goals (future obligations of the recipients of goods) (Schoeffel, 1996: 122). Dunlop reports that a woman who was trading informally in Samoa did not always receive the stated price for her sewing. Nevertheless she often received other goods in return at a later time (Dunlop, 1999: 74-94). Furthermore, a research participant who has had extensive experience of women's enterprises in the Pacific Islands, gave examples of sewing being done in exchange for food, or cash payment being exchanged for the promise of a calf when it is born in the future (Samoan based consultant, interview April 2003). While reinforcing the values and practices of *fa'aSamoa*, informal payment arrangements threaten cash flow and thus business viability, especially in businesses where business expenses are ongoing.

Obligations of *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan way of life) and generosity result in a lack of savings and thus reinvestment in the enterprises. With lack of capital reinvestment, enterprises do not grow and generate more income. A field research participant said 'capital is seen to be profit to spend ... they don't reinvest the money into their businesses ... they treat the money as money to spend, it doesn't go back to the enterprise, it's just consumed' (Samoan based consultant, interview April 2003). Lack of cash savings can cause some problems for entrepreneurs should they encounter cash flow problems, however, a visible pool of cash is able to be requested by other family members and rarely remains in the control of the original recipient. In terms of saving,

the importance of having a fall back position for times of hardship is clearly understood although not in the same respect as the western concept of 'saving'. Samoan village people save fine mats, taro, crops in the ground and cartons of tinned fish under the bed. They also set up future obligations by gifting or providing a service so that cash or goods are given or can be requested when needed in the future.

Brooks (1996: 6-8) suggests that in Papua New Guinea (and the same happens in Samoa), demands on entrepreneurs from the community and family are based on how well the individual is perceived to be doing financially from a business. This is often based on tangible signs of success such as fixed assets rather than profitability. Pressure to distribute benefits may conflict with pressure to meet business obligations. Problems occur when entrepreneurs share cash proceeds before the business is secure and established, causing cash flow problems and business failure (Brooks, 1996: 8). As Chung (1997: 33) writes, 'people who start business face unrealistic pressure to distribute benefits before they are well established ... community demands are often not based on any real success (such as profitability) but on the belief that business automatically brings wealth'.

Fa'avelave, time and customer service

Not only do Samoans involved in business fulfil their obligation and *tautua* through financial means, but attendance at *fa'avelave*, and giving up time for family, church, and community obligations when requested is also an important part of *fa'aSamoa* (see Chapter 4). The western concept of successful and sustainable business practice emphasises customer service and commitment to the priorities of the business. However, for rural Samoan people the priorities are in fulfilling the norms and obligations of *fa'aSamoa*. This reduces work output and customer service, and can be harmful to some businesses. On many occasions during my field work (and subsequent work visits to Samoa), businesses were not operating, or business owners were away fulfilling the obligations of *fa'aSamoa*, business success being traded-off in favour of fulfilling the norms and obligations of *fa'aSamoa*.

Entrepreneurship and status

Dana (1995: 95) identifies the value placed on entrepreneurship by the society as an important factor in determining whether that society will nurture entrepreneurs. He states that: 'social value may cause the entrepreneurs to be looked up, or down upon,

depending on the beliefs of a people and their predominant moral code of behaviour' (Dana, 1995: 95). In rural Samoa, people will receive status and prestige from entrepreneurial activities, but only if it is financially successful, enhances the status of the family (central aim of *fa'aSamoa*), and if they generously distribute the proceeds of the business to family, community and church obligations. During my field work I asked a rural woman if people are thought of highly if they start an enterprise. She said 'Some people think highly of you if you start a business. But they look at how your business goes. If you go bankrupt they laugh at you' (rural woman, interview March 2003). An unsuccessful business brings ridicule and embarrassment, and if the proceeds are not shared jealousy and bad feelings will accrue towards the entrepreneur. Jealousy can seriously jeopardise a business, and seems to be quite unpredictable, not just related to distribution of proceeds. For example, Shadrake and van Diermen report that a successful beach *fale* owner, despite giving generously to church and *fa'alavelave* in the village, found that the village *fono* and some of her relatives attempted to deter tourists from staying at her business, due, in her view, to jealousy (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 12).

While rural business enterprise can bring status and respect, there is a dilemma when business is motivated by a need to escape poverty and hardship. There is sometimes shame associated with 'having to sell', seen as an admission that the family is in poverty. Thus for some, business is seen as inappropriate for Samoans, and may actually lower the status of the family (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 17-18).

Motivation

Remittances provide rural Samoans with money for most cash needs. Large capital items such as vehicles, buildings, fridges and other appliances (both for enterprises and normal household use) are usually paid for by relatives working overseas or in Apia. Some would suggest that remittances reduce the motivation to start and continue a business, and changes peoples' attitude to cash. Tafuna'i (2003: 180) notes that people 'place a different value on cash that has been earned by someone else' and furthermore people living overseas, who send remittances, have expenses of their own (Tafuna'i, 2003: 180). She goes on to suggest that remittances should not be regarded as a main source of cash for village people (Tafuna'i, 2003: 180). One field research participant, from an NGO, said 'cash comes from remittances so they are not 'hungry' for the

money. There is excitement at the start (of an incoming generating venture) but two weeks later it has gone' (research participant, interview April 2003).

If the amount that can be earned through an enterprise is not sufficient reward for the work and the risk, then motivation will be lost. Another field research participant explained that village people tend to undervalue their labour and price wrongly. She said 'the ethic of knowing how much to charge for their labour and how to price is not always there and it is a problem. Either they don't know or they are desperate to get what they can get or are offered ... they don't price in labour' (Samoa based consultant, interview April 2003).

Loss of motivation through impatience for quick results is also a problem. Once an idea has been mentioned then people lose interest if the venture does not start immediately. As one field research participant explained 'Samoa people want to talk about business tonight and get one tomorrow' (research participant, interview April 2003).

Business and *fa'aSamoa* – harmony and support

Despite the considerable tensions and trade-offs between *fa'aSamoa* and sound business practice, there are a number of aspects of *fa'aSamoa* that harmonise with and support rural business enterprise. However, these are rarely emphasised in the literature on economic and business development in Samoa. *Fa'aSamoa* can provide considerable motivation to develop business enterprises. *Tautua* (service) can be offered by donating cash from business, and generous distribution of financial proceeds from business can bring status to *matai*, family and community (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 3). While distribution, gifting and *tautua* can put considerable financial pressure on the business, if it is able to be carried out without jeopardising the business, it can provide both financial and non-financial outcomes for individuals and families. Businesses can use donations and generosity, and the advertising and good-will that ensue, to their advantage.

In some cases the *fa'amatai*, and the village *fono*, can be supportive of business. In a village I visited during my field work, anyone who did not repay their credit at the village store within two weeks was punished by the village *fono*. However, with village laws very flexible, it appears to depend on who the business owner is, and their

relationship with the powerful *matai* in the village as to whether or not they gain support.

Fa'aSamoa, family networks and cultural identity can in fact be strengths in terms of access to human assets and resources (labour). The strong relationship between *fa'aSamoa*, families, remittances and financial gifts (Chapter 4), is important in providing finance for starting a business, and ongoing expenses. Business entrepreneurs (especially *matai* and older people) can call on the services of their family members to help out in their business, and motivation to raise the status of the family helps out the business. Extended family can also be called on to work in businesses. Rarely do workers other than household members or extended family work in rural businesses due to strong family loyalties, and the intense rivalry (and mistrust) between families.

In Samoa, unlike many other parts of the world, women are more likely to be supported in their work by other members of the family (including men) should they be in business. *Fa'aSamoa*, as a framework for living, includes the respect of brothers for sisters, brothers being responsible for the wellbeing of their sisters, while women are seen to have a supportive role. Women are not expected to carry out hard labour, and men will help out when needed. Woods reports that beach *fale* businesses he studied in Samoa depend on the entire family. The women are generally responsible for the guest interaction and hospitality, and clean and cook in addition to other family responsibilities, while the men are responsible for building and maintaining the *fale*, some cooking, and for the plantations and fishing. Younger men may clean the yard, while grandparents help out by watching children. The whole family helps out and sometimes 'gender barriers dissolve' (Woods, 2006: 66). Management of businesses is often shared by a husband and wife, although Woods reports that in fifteen of eighteen interviews with beach *fale* owners, it was stated that women were the managers (Woods, 2006: 67). Control of the proceeds of business appears to vary between households often according to the amount of control by *matai* (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 16, Woods, 2006: 68).

The changes in *fa'aSamoa*, and the move towards more individual systems of production (i.e. away from production systems involving the *aiga* towards individual families and households) as discussed in Chapter 4, have supported business enterprise, with *matai* having less control over the financial and labour resources, and families thus

being able to have more influence on what enterprises they engage in. Furthermore, for women, it is now more likely that her *matai* will be a husband, brother or father, which makes it easier for her to obtain approval to do business (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 7).

Access to natural and financial resources for business through kinship systems and *fa'aSamoa* is also an advantage. Access to land is available through customary land systems and financial resources can be obtained through remittances and gifts (Chapter 4). Cultural assets are important for business, for example, crafts and other expressions of culture such as song and dance being important for tourism business enterprises. The status accorded to certain traditional activities (e.g. hospitality, or fine mat weaving as described in Chapter 6,) can also be of great advantage to rural Samoan business enterprises.

The 'informal sector' and Samoa

The term 'informal sector' was first coined by Keith Hart in a study of employment, unemployment and economic activities in Ghana in the early 1970s (Hart, 1973). Hart (1973: 69) presented a typology of income generating activities which differentiated between formal (public and private sector wages, pensions and benefits), legitimate informal, and illegitimate informal income opportunities. Legitimate informal income opportunities included activities such as farming, building contracting, tailoring, transport, renting, commodity speculation, petty trading, hawking, selling food and drink, music, cutting hair and providing middleman services (Hart, 1973: 69). The studies by Hart (1973), and by ILO (1972), first drew attention to the importance of the informal sector in terms of social and economic policy. However, many regarded the informal sector as a passing phenomenon which would disappear as societies became more developed and labour shifted from agriculture to 'modern' industry (Lubell, 1991: 111, Mitter, 1994: 15-16). It was not until the 1990s that it became clear that the informal sector was not a passing phenomenon.

The informal sector is most commonly described by the characteristics of the enterprises that operate within it. Lubell (1991: 11) suggests that in describing the informal sector, very small (micro) size of the enterprise and the lack of official regulations and taxes placed on the enterprise are important factors. The formal sector, on the other hand, refers to 'that set of activities in private or publicly owned enterprises or in the civil

service which conform generally to tax and labour laws and other state regulations' (Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 940). The informal sector is easily overlooked or ignored as much of the work occurs in informal spaces (such as the home) and is carried out between and around other activities. The distinction between the formal and informal sectors is often blurred. Defining the formal and informal sectors in Samoa is particularly difficult. Firstly the extensive use of remittances for business, means that formal credit is often bypassed, allowing businesses that would not be regarded as 'micro' or very small to operate in an informal way. Secondly, as primary producers do not pay tax in Samoa (Holden et al, 2003: 47), large numbers of otherwise formal commercial agricultural businesses operate somewhat informally. Furthermore businesses earning less than \$ST 10,000 are exempt from income tax thereby excluding many small businesses from formal tax regulations.

In the Pacific Islands there has been little appreciation for the informal sector prior to Chung's (1997) report that called for promotion of the informal sector in the Pacific and Fairbairn-Dunlop's (1997: 142) paper that highlighted the importance of women's work in the informal sector. The Pacific rural informal sector has been viewed as traditional, non-entrepreneurial, and static, and has attracted little status in the past. People who work outside paid employment were considered to be 'just staying at home' or having 'no job' (Chung, 1997: 27). Policy makers and donors are beginning to see the informal sector as a sector worthy of support and intervention in order to secure sustainable livelihoods for the poor, both rural and urban. Fairbairn-Dunlop (1997: 142) points out that informal sector activities can be the training ground for successful Pacific business women, reinforcing the 'economic logic' of establishing 'an appropriate infrastructure and policy environment that will foster the transition from small-scale informal trading to fully fledged development ventures' Fairbairn-Dunlop (1997: 142).

Enterprise in the three spheres – government private sector and traditional

A useful and possibly more appropriate way (rather than the formal – informal classification) to understand and describe the way that business enterprise exist in rural Samoa, is to consider business enterprise in each of the three 'spheres' or 'domains' identified by Hooper (1998) (see Chapter 4): the public sector sphere, the private sector sphere and the traditional sphere. Given the very strong relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and business, especially in the traditional sphere, this way of classifying businesses gives more weight to the importance of culture in business in Samoa.

Public sector sphere

Some business enterprises and entrepreneurs are explicitly supported by ‘public sector’ organisations (for example fisheries and agriculture are supported by MAF and tourism is supported by the Samoan Tourism Authority) and all business enterprises are directly or indirectly affected by government policies. Some business enterprises are state owned (SOEs) and as such work within the public sector. The Samoan government has substantial ownership in Samoan enterprises, and in 2003, as well as holding shares in a number of enterprises, fully owned seven companies and twelve companies established under specific legislation (Holden et al, 2003: 94). Examples of SOEs in Samoa include Samoa Tel (telecommunications), Water Authority, Electric Power, Airport Authority, Polynesian Airlines and Development Bank of Samoa. Many of the SOEs have performed inefficiently, with low rates of return, financial losses and poor service (ABB, 2001d: 1).

Private sector sphere

Some businesses are clearly part of the ‘private sector’. These businesses are usually small to medium sized businesses, rather than micro, and include retail, services, tourism, and commercial agriculture and fisheries. ‘Private sector’ businesses are run largely according to Western principles of business. My observation was that many (but not all) of these businesses are owned and run by people who have salaried jobs, Samoans who have lived for periods outside Samoa, expatriates (some of whom have Samoan spouses), spouses of expatriates and Samoans of mixed race. Although these businesses respect and incorporate elements of Samoan culture, they operate in the formal sector *alongside* rather than *within* the ‘traditional sphere’ as described by Hooper (1998). For example Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)⁵ train their clients to ‘blend business with culture’ (Struthers, 2002: 19). These entrepreneurs are encouraged to split income three ways: savings, business, and family and *fa’alavelave*, in order to fulfil both business and cultural obligations. However, the clients were also encouraged not to give credit to customers (Struthers et al, 2002: 19), which is contrary to *fa’aSamoa*. Clients of the SBEC report that they often receive disapproval from the community over some ‘*palagi*’ business practices such as lack of provision of credit or refusal to give more money than they could afford. However, if they are firm, and explain the reasons, people eventually accept their decisions, although they are talked

⁵ Further details about SBEC are included later in this chapter.

about behind their backs (Struthers, 2002: 19). Fairbairn-Dunlop (2003: 12), in a study of seventeen women entrepreneurs, described the relationship these women had with suppliers as incorporating 'a mix of social and economic ties', while at the same time, 'developing more business focussed networks' as the businesses integrate into a global economy. Four retailers had entered into agreements with agencies outside the family. These women did not purchase the majority of their supplies 'from family members as they had in the past, but from market sellers and others with whom they could set the quantity and quality standards'. However, highlighting the difficulty of private sector businesses moving outside the traditional sphere, Fairbairn-Dunlop (2003: 12) suggests that this move away from family support systems may be risky for the women in terms of vulnerability to 'outside shocks'.

Traditional sphere

On the other hand, village-based rural enterprises (usually micro-enterprises) owned and operated by rural Samoans tend to work within the 'traditional sphere', and within *fa'aSamoa*. Examples of enterprises that work within the 'traditional sphere' include firstly semi-subsistence agriculture and fisheries, and products made from these activities. For example, fish, coconuts, fruit, vegetables and root crops provide not only food for consumption and exchange, but can earn cash. Production systems are simple and labour intensive. Secondly, rural people are involved in craft, small retail outlets, transport and building, and these enterprises also work within the 'traditional sphere'. Food and snack sales, bingo, providing music for dance, cutting hair, and sale of tobacco from the backyard, are other examples of micro-enterprises that provide cash in the village and work within the 'traditional sphere'. Dunlop (1999: 69-73) reports that 71 Samoan village women involved in informal trading were involved in a total of 139 'economic' activities. Agricultural activities were mentioned most frequently, followed by handicraft, fishing, livestock, small store, cooking and sewing. Many of these enterprises are invisible to the outsider. Some (but not all) of the enterprises are temporary and developed to provide immediate cash for a specific purpose (Dunlop, 1999: 69-73), or opportunist, taking advantage of an opportunity that arises. Sometimes several 'micro-enterprises' are carried out simultaneously by an individual or family. The businesses seldom advertise in a formal way and customers are attained by word of mouth. These businesses operate in the traditional sphere and sometimes these activities are hardly considered 'enterprises' worth mentioning by the entrepreneurs themselves.

This was illustrated when I asked a rural Samoan woman about the sources of cash income for her family. At first she only mentioned her son in Apia as being the provider of cash for the whole extended family, together with income from the sale of her brother's taro when cash was required for some major food items (for example sugar), and her mother's old age pension (\$ST99 per month). With further prompting and observation over a two week period it became evident that family members were also involved in selling cakes at 'bingo' on Saturday mornings, selling tobacco from plants in the backyard, and producing and selling perfumed coconut oil for massage (rural woman, interviews and participant observation April 2003).

Based on my observation of village-based enterprises in Samoa, the factors that are important to ensure 'traditional sphere' micro-enterprises work well in Samoa relate to three broad areas: economic, cultural, and finally, business structures. In terms of economic aspects, it is important that micro-enterprises in the 'traditional sphere' of Samoa earn sufficient income to motivate the entrepreneurs. The micro-enterprise needs to give reasonable rewards for the amount and difficulty of the work involved. The rewards, which normally (but not always) go to the head of the family, need to be fairly distributed to other family members, to ensure everyone has the motivation to carry out the work. In order to ensure sufficient and consistent income from the micro-enterprise, the market for the goods and/or service needs to be consistent and preferably extend outside the immediate village. In terms of reducing economic risk to 'traditional sphere' micro-enterprises, it is important that produce from the micro-enterprise can be stored to be sold in times when cash is needed, or used for the family if a market is not found. It is also beneficial if produce from the micro-enterprise can be used as a gift (for example for *fa'alavelave*), thereby setting up future income or gifts, and acting as an alternative or addition to cash income. In addition, rural Samoans have limited access to financial resources, and cash savings are not usually available, therefore micro-enterprise in the 'traditional sphere' work best when there are few 'start up costs' and running costs are low.

In terms of cultural aspects, the micro-enterprise works best when it is within cultural norms and provides status to the family. Micro-enterprises in the Samoan 'traditional sphere' work well when they are based on, commercialise, or extend an existing activity. The work involved in the enterprise needs to fit within and around any gender

specific roles of the family members, or, the micro-enterprise needs to provide sufficient cash and status so that other family members will take over some of the usual tasks of the entrepreneur and the workers. If the work for the micro-enterprise can be done while interacting and during social time (for example fine mat weaving, craft or making string), it works well. In addition, it is important that the enterprise can be stopped and started from day-to-day, to cater for *fa'avelave* and community and family commitments, and left and re-entered easily (after months or years) as the need for cash and levels of motivation change.

Finally, in terms of business structures, micro-enterprises in the Samoan 'traditional sphere' work best when the enterprise is family based or based on an existing village group or committee. It is difficult to impose new structures in Samoan society where very strong and established networks and structures (*fa'amatai*) are already in place. Furthermore, the idea and motivation for the micro-enterprise must be 'owned' by the micro-entrepreneurs. Ideas unrealistically imposed on the village people, without due regard for some of the factors mentioned here, and without real ownership by the entrepreneurs and their families, are seldom sustainable.

Differences between 'private sector' and 'traditional sphere' enterprises

There is a continuum between 'private sector' enterprises and 'traditional sphere' enterprises rather than a distinct division. For example beach *fales*, a growing village-based tourism industry in Samoa, operate within the traditional sphere, using family labour and customary land, and respecting *fa'aSamoa* in the running of the enterprise. However, beach *fale* operations also display elements of 'private sector' enterprises in that they are advertised and regulated through the Samoan Visitors Bureau and are not expected to give credit to overseas tourists. Village stores are another example of micro-enterprises that fall somewhere between the 'private sector sphere' and the 'traditional sphere' depending on the entrepreneurs and their attitude to business. Figure 5.1 (on the next page) has been developed to illustrate the differences between 'private sector' enterprises and 'traditional sphere' enterprises. On the left are the characteristics of 'private sector' enterprises, while on the right are the characteristics of 'traditional sphere' enterprises. The dots between the characteristics on the left and on the right indicate that many enterprises display characteristics between the extremes, and somewhere in the continuum between 'private sector' enterprises and 'traditional sphere' enterprises.

Figure 5.1 Differences between ‘private sector’ and ‘traditional sphere’ enterprises

| ‘Private sector’ enterprise..... | ‘Traditional sphere’ enterprise |
|--|---|
| Urban based..... | Village-based |
| Higher risk..... | Low risk |
| Requires higher ‘start up’ costs | Low ‘start up’ costs |
| Start up costs financed by borrowed capital | Start up costs paid for by friends and family |
| Financial success is expected | Financial success balanced with gifting |
| Cash accumulation creates status..... | Gifting of the cash profits creates status and obligation |
| Long term..... | Short term or intermittent |
| Aim for immediate cash returns..... | Aim for long term returns through gifting |
| No credit given ⁶ | Credit for friends and family |
| Advertise..... | Business through ‘word of mouth’ |
| Disciplined work ethic..... | Work fits around other obligations |
| Main daily activity | Work fits around other obligations |
| Employ non family members | Only family members work in the enterprise |
| Non traditional gender division of labour | Traditional gender division of labour |
| Range of resources used for production | Natural resources used for production |
| Information responsibility of entrepreneur..... | Relies on agencies for information and support |
| Enterprise not associated with village | Enterprise ‘approved’ by village community |
| Source products from cheapest and best quality | Source products from family and friends |
| Works alongside <i>fa’aSamoa</i> | Works within <i>fa’aSamoa</i> |
| Works within the ‘formal’ sector economy | Works within the ‘informal’ sector economy |

The ideas for Figure 5.1 came from observation and interviews during field research, and from Fairbairn-Dunlop (1997, 2003), O’Meara (1993), Maiava (2001), and Hooper (1993, 1998).

⁶ Examples where credit is not given are: to tourists at beach *fales*, to village people at village stores where a ‘no credit’ sign is displayed, to customers at urban businesses

There have been attempts to develop 'traditional sphere' micro-enterprises in Samoa to become more like 'private sector' businesses that better provide families with the cash that they need, and provide employment. In fact this is one of the goals of the ADB loan for Small Business Development Project mentioned earlier in this chapter (ADB, 2001c). However, one of the problems identified by a research participant from one of the micro-credit organisations in Samoa was that the micro-enterprises they support don't develop but rather stay 'micro'. He said '... the biggest thing is that they don't grow the businesses to small or medium enterprises' (research participant, interview April 2003).

It is likely that 'traditional sphere' enterprises will grow in importance in Samoa in the coming years as the demand for cash increases and rural employment continues to be limited. As UNDP (1994: 17) states: 'The reality ... is that even with substantial improvement in economic growth, the burden of absorbing the majority of the labour force in most Pacific countries will fall on the subsistence and informal sectors of the economy' (UNDP, 1994: 17).

Vulnerability, risks, and difficulties for 'traditional sphere' micro-enterprises

There are number of difficulties that need to be overcome if the development of 'traditional sphere' micro-enterprises is to be successful. Many of these difficulties relate to the vulnerability and risk under which micro-enterprises operate. Some difficulties and constraints are related to the macroeconomic, political, social or physical environment and thus largely beyond the control of the entrepreneur, while other constraints and barriers may be community or household related, or related to the enterprise or entrepreneur (adapted from Chen, 1996). 'Traditional sphere' enterprises struggle with the same sorts of difficulties and constraints that informal sector businesses struggle with in other countries, but there are other constraints that are specific to Samoa. At the micro-economic, or enterprise level, constraints include restricted access to and control over resources, lack of business skills and understanding of the market, reduced access to credit, lack of confidence and credibility. At the macro economic level, government policies and the legal environment, lack of markets, poor infrastructure, competition from cheap imports, and vulnerability in terms of political instability can be constraints. Table 5.2 summarises the impediments, constraints and barriers that a number of authors have identified.

Table 5.2 Barriers to enterprise in the informal sector (and

traditional sphere in Samoa)

| | Barriers at the household level | Barriers at the micro level | Barriers at the macro level |
|--|--|--|--|
| Generic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of distinction between business and private money • Common women's constraints multiple responsibilities high work loads limited by gender specific roles • Conflict between short term use of cash and longer term investment • Conflict over control of resources (eg. cash, land) between household members • Conflict over empowerment and decision making between household members • Conflict over work responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to resources Land/natural Financial - credit Social (networks) Human – training Physical – buildings etc Technology • Lack of business and technical skills • Insecurity of location • Lack of information • Lack of understanding of market • Common women's constraints reduced access to credit less education lack of confidence lack of credibility • Alienation from policy makers – cultural, class • Under capitalised | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legal environment • Saturated markets • Bureaucracy and changes in government policies • Poor infrastructure, power, roads, water, storage areas • Low status and little official support • Seasonality • Cheaper imports – competition • Import substitution of local goods • Tourism – vulnerability to terrorist activities, wars and disease outbreaks |
| More pronounced in the Samoa (and Pacific Islands) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth initiative restricted • Non traditional activities restricted • Tensions between cultural aspects and business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of entrepreneurs in non traditional activities • Few role models • Lack of community understanding of and confidence in business • 'Copy cat' mentality, shortage of innovation • Conflict between community/individual enterprises • Migration of skilled people • Low education levels • Subsistence (limits market size) • Tensions between cultural aspects and community • Incentives and motivation not strong • Remittances and gifts expected to overcome cash shortages • Inappropriate business structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak private sector • Small and fragmented domestic markets • Far from export markets • Transport to markets • Competition from government enterprises • Land tenure problems • Remoteness of some rural areas • Vulnerability to disasters because of size – e.g. environmental, commodity prices, conflict |

Source: Boswell and Brown (1990), Cole (1991), Epstein (1993), Gray (1993), Boswell et al (1994), Schoeffel (1996), Chen (1996), Chung (1997), Dawson and Jeans (1997), Vunibobo, 1997, Tavanavanua (1997), Baldacchino (1999), Lawrence (2000).

Enterprise support organisations

Some of the organisations that support micro-enterprise in Samoa are profiled in this section. Although these organisations have different philosophies and goals, are structured differently, and have different funding mechanisms (indeed one is a private sector business) they all support rural micro-enterprises working in the traditional sphere to overcome one or more of the barriers described in Table 5.2 on the previous page. Furthermore, these organisations can provide support and opportunities for rural people and can set in place important links between ‘traditional sphere’ micro-enterprise, the ‘private sector’ sphere in terms of markets and customers, and the ‘public sector’ sphere in terms of support with finance and legal matters. The philosophies and functions of these organisations are described to provide context for the case studies described in Chapters 6 and Chapter 7.

Green Turtle Tours⁷

Green Turtle Tours is a private enterprise set up by the operator when he saw the need for sustainable ways for rural Samoan people to make their livelihoods. The operator had previously been working in environmental management and conservation. According to him, hundreds of thousands of dollars of aid money has been put into developing ecotourism and conservation in rural Samoa and although much of this money has had little impact, a number of ecotourism projects have been successful in conservation areas and these now form part of the itinerary of Green Turtle Tours. Green Turtle Tours promotes and provides a number of services for tourists in Samoa. The business runs organised tours to selected destinations in both Upolu and Savai'i on demand, and operates a ‘yellow bus’ which travels around Upolu daily picking up and dropping tourists at numerous destinations. The company will also organise individual tours by pre-booking beach *fales* (beach houses) for tourists. Around 1,000 people per year per island take Green Turtle Tours.

Green Turtle Tours provides opportunities for rural Samoan entrepreneurs, both individual families and community groups (such as village committees and women’s groups) to operate walkways, accommodation (beach *fales*), and other tourist attractions. It also provides ready customers for handicrafts and food. The company

⁷ The information for this section of the chapter was from an interview with the tour operator of Green Turtle Tours in March 2003.

supports beach *fale* enterprises by pre-booking and charging international tourists. Green Turtle Tours selects destinations through word of mouth and approaches by individuals and groups. The operator accepts that tourism entrepreneurs in rural Samoa move in and out of business and works around this uncertainty. He said ‘Green Turtle Tours moves in and on. As soon as an operator isn’t committed any more we move onto another. We’ll do anything to encourage rural income’ (tourism operator, interview April 2003).

As the Green Turtle Tours guide travels around the villages she provides an informal support service for the entrepreneurs. She checks on book keeping, checks accreditation (for beach *fales* in particular), supports the business, and works with the entrepreneurs to encourage more tourists.

Green Turtle Tours, as a private sector business, provides a vital link between the village and the tourism market. By promoting their tours locally and internationally they provide a much needed marketing service for the rural entrepreneurs. Their transport systems bring the customers to the entrepreneurs. By dealing with international inquiries and payment they link the entrepreneurs to the international market. Their business experience and advice is vital to the rural entrepreneurs.

Women in Business Development Incorporated

Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI) is a non-government organisation that was established in 1990 and registered in 1991 by a small group of women entrepreneurs who were struggling to get loans and business assistance for their businesses (Dunlop, 1999:107, WIBDI web page, 2003). Later the group started to support women in rural villages. WIBDI is a non profit organisation and is highly dependant on donor funding for its survival. NZAID originally provided a high proportion of this funding but as WIBDI has expanded and diversified, funding has been sourced from other donors. NZAID provided \$NZ70,000 in funding in the 2003 – 2004 financial year (NZAID, 2003).

The vision of WIBDI is that ‘women, youth and people with disabilities in Samoa are able to contribute fully to development of themselves, their families and their country through income generation, job creation, and participation in the village economy’ (WIBDI web page, 2003). According to the WIBDI executive director, the aim of

WIBDI is to provide income generating opportunities in rural Samoan villages through training and education, credit, support, links with other organisations, and establishment of markets for products produced in the villages. She explained that WIBDI works with 'pre-business' in the villages. People earn the money but WIBDI organise the overseas marketing (WIBDI Executive Director, interview April 2003). Schischka notes in a study on WIBDI, that 'most people reported that the initial impetus for their involvement (in WIBDI) was to find a source of income for the family' Schischka (2005: 98). One research participant (an international consultant) who had worked with WIBDI described WIBDI as a community development group. She said 'Women in Business' is really the wrong name. They are really a community development group. It's all about empowering people, especially women ...' (international consultant, interview April 2003). WIBF programmes have allowed WIBDI clients to become involved in a wide range of activities, and by being able to earn their own income, the well being of WIBDI clients and their families have improved (Schischka, 2005: 96).

WIBDI works in selected villages with a number of sectors including fine mats, coconut oil, certified organic produce, honey and handicrafts. WIBDI takes the view that 'because rural village people seldom have opportunities for income generation on a regular basis they don't take the responsibility for cash they receive that someone earning a regular income would' (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004). Thus their training focuses on household budgeting first, then about business. The approach taken to encourage village people to join the WIBDI enterprises varies between the types of enterprises and has changed over time. For example, for fine mat weaving, WIBDI originally began by approaching a key woman in a selected village (for example a pastor's wife or women's committee representative). The woman was informed of the activities of the WIBDI and asked to help WIBDI to organise a workshop in the village. However, women, or a village representative, now approach WIBDI to organise training (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004). From the training workshop women may choose to become weavers with WIBDI, or may weave fine mats for themselves (see Chapter 7).

For coconut oil production the approach has been different. The start-up costs for this type of enterprise are relatively high and not all village people can afford these costs.

At first the start-up costs were covered by donor funding. Thus families were selected to produce coconut oil based on their financial need, and, in order to ensure availability of coconuts, on the size of their coconut plantations, and the ownership status of their plantation (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence Oct 2004). Potential oil producers were approached individually and trained by the WIBDI field workers. Originally three family members of WIBDI staff were assisted to set up production operations. This was an incentive for staff who had no job security due to funding constraints (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004). Furthermore having a close relationship with producers ensured field workers could closely monitor the process to ensure product quality and production consistency. However, now that the oil production is well underway, potential producers approach WIBDI. Further details of the coconut oil production are in Chapter 6.

Clients who participate in the WIBDI schemes are visited regularly by WIBDI field workers. There are two teams of field workers that visit participating villages on the two main islands, Upolu and Savai'i. Some clients are visited individually at their home, others group together at one house for the visit. During my participant observation of these field visits I noticed that some clients were not available (several times because of attendance at *fa'alavelave*), while others were eagerly awaiting the support and payments that the WIBDI field workers brought.

WIBDI run a savings scheme to encourage cash savings, and provides credit to village people for their small enterprises and also for non-business purposes (Dunlop, 1999: 109). The original credit scheme, funded by NZODA, has a revolving fund of \$ST10 – 20,000. WIBDI lend very small amounts (usually between \$ST50 and \$ST500) from this scheme. Savings are used as collateral. Since 2003, clients that have shown evidence that they can pay back loans can borrow larger amounts (between \$ST500 and \$ST5,000) through the ADB Small Business Development Project micro-finance fund (referred to earlier in this chapter). The ADB micro-finance fund is administered by the Development Bank of Samoa (DBS). WIBDI, as an accredited participating organisation, provides advice to clients and monitors the loans. The loans are approved by DBS. Borrowers are not required to provide collateral for these ADB micro-finance loans but must have two guarantors.

Market links are provided by WIBDI in a number of different ways depending on the products. In the case of fine mat weaving 'sponsors' or buyers are found by word of mouth and advertising on the internet. This is described further in Chapter 7. In terms of coconut oil, the oil is sold to an associated company, the Pure Coconut Oil Company. This is described further in Chapter 6.

The WIBDI organic produce project certifies coconut growers for the organic production of oil for the Pure Coconut Oil Company. However, at the present time some certified organic producers do not sell any of their produce (even coconuts) as certified organic. I had a range of reasons given to me as to why these producers were certified but did not sell certified produce. For example research participants mentioned that they will sell their coconuts to oil producers in the future, that it is good for health and the environment, that they are in transition to becoming certified organic, and that they will produce organic produce for export in the future. Field workers told me that the president of the Organic Growers Association in Samoa is presently exporting organic bananas and hopes to expand this to other crops in the future. Organic nonu juice is likely to be an important export commodity in the future.

At the time of the field research in April 2003, the future of the WIBDI honey project was uncertain. Originally the expertise for this project came from New Zealand consultants who trained WIBDI staff and the beekeepers. The equipment was provided by WIBDI (Dunlop, 1999: 110, Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004). Training workshops were organised in the villages and selected families had the opportunity to use the WIBDI bee hives and were supplied with queen bees. WIBDI field workers monitored the hives on a weekly basis and bought the honey from the producers. According to Dunlop (1999: 110) export markets were being sought by WIBDI. However, anecdotal evidence suggested that the WIBDI honey project met with a number of difficulties including problems with hive maintenance, the level of work for WIBDI, the expertise of WIBDI staff and lack of funding. The beekeeping project has now been successfully transferred to the Lagomeli Society and the hives are regularly monitored by the beekeepers in this society. The Lagomeli Society also purchase the honey regularly from the WIBDI beekeepers and package it for sale with their own honey on the local market (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004).

Small Business Enterprise Centre

The Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) was established through an NZODA (now NZAID) programme in 1994, following a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Samoa and New Zealand. The majority of SBEC's funding has been from NZAID (average of 80% between 1988 and 2001) although this has reduced from a peak of \$NZ405,434 in 1999 to \$NZ25,000 in the 2003 – 2004 financial year (NZAID, 2003; Struthers et al, 2002: 17). SBEC has some other sources of income including client fees and interest from loans, and recently a guarantee of \$ST150,000 per annum from the Samoan government for the next 5 years. It is likely that NZAID's funding will reduce further in the future. However, it is unlikely that SBEC will ever become completely financially self sustainable. Thus SBEC will need to source other funding and in particular 'develop commercially orientated services to business that can afford to pay' (Struthers et al, 2002: 47). SBEC offices are in Upolu and, more recently, in Savai'i where demand is increasing.

The purpose of SBEC is to encourage the development of small business in Samoa (Dunlop, 1999: 104). The present mission statement is 'to encourage sustainable private sector small business development and growth throughout Samoa' (Struthers et al, 2002: 12). SBEC provides the following core services: small business management training; advisory and consultancy; facilitating access to financial and management resources (for example loans); and facilitating new initiatives to stimulate business. One unique strategic target is the 'Samoanisation of training and advisory services' (Struthers et al, 2002: 12).

While WIBDI and SBEC perform some similar services, the focus is different and according to the Director of SBEC, compliment each other. WIBDI is 'grass roots' orientated but SBEC tends to work with individuals, families or groups who are more 'business' focussed. While both organisations work in rural areas, SBEC also deals with urban clients. SBEC covers all types of business (predominantly tourism, retail, food production and transport (taxis)) while WIBDI focuses on selected projects and sectors, and the enterprises can usually be performed at home. The WIBDI on-going support is more regular and intense than that of SBEC. Unlike WIBDI, SBEC does not facilitate the marketing of client's products and services.

Prior to July 2003 a small business loan guarantee scheme that SBEC facilitated was funded by NZAID. Commercial bank loans taken by approved SBEC clients were guaranteed by a loans guarantee fund (Dunlop, 1999: 104). Since July 2003 this loan guarantees scheme has been expanded, and the loan size increased, due to funds from the ADB Small Business Development Project. Under the ADB Small Business Development Project loans to small businesses are provided by commercial banks and the DBS but are guaranteed by the ADB guarantee fund which is administered by SBEC (Table 5.3). Loans are approved by SBEC and can be for up to \$ST50,000. SBEC usually guarantees 80% of the loans (under the ADB loans guarantee fund) and the other 20% is guaranteed by a private sponsor. Thus if the bank encounters non repayments of loans, 80% of the loan is repaid to the bank from the ADB guarantee fund, SBEC 'takes over' the loan and then tries to recover the money from the clients to repay the fund. SBEC is therefore very careful about the clients to whom they approve loans. However, while the loans are approved for business development, anecdotal evidence suggests that sometimes the loans are used for other purposes. There are no 'checks' on this. Nevertheless, a unique feature of this service is that the loans are supported by intensive business advice and a follow up service. Struthers et al (2002: 10) suggests that this is a model for replication elsewhere in the Pacific. Table 5.3 sets out the loan guarantees provided by SBEC as at March 2002.

Table 5.3 SBEC Loan Guarantees as at March 2002 (\$NZ)

| BANK | ANZ | WESTPAC | NBS | DBS | TOTAL |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Loans granted | 266,190 | 57,700 | 115,437 | 235,550 | 674,877 |
| % Guaranteed by SBEC | 100% | 100% | 80% | 39% | 75% |
| Total clients | 27 | 8 | 16 | 11 | 62 |
| Average loan per client | 9,858 | 7,162 | 7,214 | 21,413 | 10,885 |
| Loan balances | 145,114 | 37,565 | 70,126 | 206,908 | 459,714 |

Adapted from Struthers et al (2002: 22)

Business training programmes are usually a prerequisite for a loan. Business training (and loan monitoring) is funded through the ADB Small Business Development Project. Clients usually approach SBEC and they are placed in a training programme. The programmes follow the ILO 'Start your own business' programme which is adapted for the Pacific and translated into Samoan. This type of business training is unique in Samoa. Clients are 'screened' during the training programme. Some clients

can be 'fast tracked' through this process if they are well known to SBEC and have a good business 'track record'. The courses are normally for five days. SBEC encourages entrepreneurs to 'juggle' their business with their cultural obligations and training programmes address cultural issues and how to cope with them (Dunlop, 1999: 105). Struthers et al (2002: 19) report that one of the key success factors of the SBEC is that it 'trains clients to blend business with culture'.

SBEC targets relatively disadvantaged people in Samoa including youth and women in rural and isolated areas. In 2002 of the 65 people on the books of SBEC (through the loans guarantee scheme) 48 (74%) were from rural areas. SBEC runs courses for youth leaving school and 50% of clients must be women. Advisory services provided are evenly split between rural and urban, and around 40 % of individual clients are women (Struthers et al, 2002: 21).

Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporated

Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporated (METI) is a non-government organisation set up as an independent trust in June 2000 (METI profile, 2004: 1). It was started by a group of people who were members of Ole Siasamonga (Environment) Society but had become disillusioned by the direction of that group (trustee, interview April 2004). The organisation has a Board of Trustees, and a Director who, with his wife (METI's information and liaison officer), deal with the 'hands on' and day-to-day running of METI.

According to one of the trustees of METI, the aim of METI is to create environmental awareness and sustainable livelihoods (trustee, interview April 2003). The stated relevant objectives for which the Trust was formed are: to undertake, promote and carry out environmental works; to undertake and promote a holistic approach to environmental management in Samoa with integrated projects that collectively achieve the objectives of the Trust; and to provide training to achieve sustainable living in Samoa through self reliance, particularly at grass roots (METI profile, 2004: 1). METI encourages income generation at grass roots. This is in line with the philosophy that environmental management cannot be done in isolation and that environmental management has to be linked to things that are important in the lives of the village people (Director of METI, interview August 2004). Both the Director of METI and a

field worker stressed that METI works with communities, not individual people or families (interviews August 2003 and August 2004).

Projects that METI is currently involved with in Samoa include a project to develop integrated farming approaches for sustainable crop production in environmentally constrained areas, a project to support coral reef restoration, a conservation project to restore coastal wetlands, a second chance education project, education advocacy, the coconut oil and by-products project (the subject of a case study in this thesis), and a sleep clinic (METI profile, 2004: 2-5). For example, METI is involved with supporting vegetable growing (especially cabbages) in the village of Samalaga, which is a low income village. METI is helping to prevent the problems this village has with soil erosion and leaching. METI gained the trust of the village people, set up a co-operative within the village, and has provided training about co-operatives and money management (METI field worker, interview April 2003).

However, there was some confusion in the wider community about the role of METI. The NGO had gained a high profile at the time of research (April, 2003) due to the well publicised opening of its Sleep Centre clinic in Apia that addresses sleep problems within the community. One research participant felt that a sleep centre in Apia was inappropriate for the nature of the NGO. She said 'METI – what are they? They came about from an environmental group but now they are doing anything that can make money – what has a sleep centre to do with the environment?' (research participant, interview April 2004). However, when questioned about this issue, a METI field worker explained that in order to take care of the environment you need to take care of the people first (METI field worker, interview April 2004).

While there was variation in the understanding of METI's direction and success amongst research participants, a number of research participants were highly impressed by METI, and one donor representative mentioned that her organisation would be happy to fund METI for appropriate projects (research participant, interview March 2003).

South Pacific Business Development Foundation⁸

South Pacific Business Development Foundation (SPBDF) was founded in 2000. It is a non-government, non-profit micro-credit organisation based in Apia and operating in villages throughout Samoa. The goal of SPBDF is to reduce poverty through the provision of micro-credit products and services targeted specifically at low income families. A simple one page survey is used to determine the social status of clients and decide whether they are eligible for a loan.

Loans are given for business development of a large range of business types. Loans for food processing are popular. Approved clients can also take loans for personal use. The SPBDF staff member suggested that these personal loans were for school fees and housing but two other research participants suggested that many of the loans were for *fa'avelave* (research participants, interviews March 2003).

The SPBDF staff member described the SPBDF as very successful. This was based on the number of loans that they administered (2,100 clients) rather than any evidence of the organisation achieving the goal of poverty reduction. Several other research participants were sceptical about the number of loans provided by SPBDF and speculated that few of the loans were used for business purposes (research participants, interviews March 2003).

The organisation is entirely funded by private money and operates on commercial principles. The organisation aims to break even but has had problems with bad debt in the past. At one time 50% of loans were in arrears. However, drastic action has reduced that to 3%. SPBDF originally targeted both men and women but at the time of the research (March 2003) 96% of their clients were women. This is not because of philosophical reasons but rather because women are more reliable in terms of repayments. Potential clients receive business training for two weeks and are screened during this training. They need to score at least 80% in a test and have shown commitment through regular attendance. SPBDF uses the Grameen Bank model of social collateral to assist in client screening and regular loan repayments. Clients form groups and group members act as guarantors for other group members. Group members must approve any loan applications and are advised not to approve if they don't

⁸ Most of the information for this section of the chapter is from an interview with the General Manager of SBDF in March 2003.

understand the application. SPBDF staff meet with clients in the villages every week. There were 63 villages involved in total at the time of the interview. Meeting regularly with clients enables informal business advice to be given.

Summary of enterprise support organisations

Table 5.4 summarises some of the key characteristics of the enterprise support organisations profiled in this chapter.

Table 5.4 Enterprise support organisations in Samoa (as at 2004)

| | VILLAGE ENTERPRISES SUPPORTED | MARKETING LINKS | SAVINGS SCHEME | FORMAL CREDIT | FORMAL TRAINING | SUPPORT/ADVICE |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------|---|--|----------------|
| Green Turtle Tours | Tourism | Yes | No | No | No | Informal |
| WIBDI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine mat weaving; • Coconut oil; • Craft; • Organic farms. | Yes | Yes | Mostly \$ST200 - \$ST500 Larger ADB micro-finance loans. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment and household budgeting; • Production Skills; • Low level business (pre-business). | Weekly visits |
| SBEC | All | No | No | Guarantee scheme for loans up to \$ST50,000 from banks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business | Monthly visits |
| METI | Agriculture, oil | Yes | No | Not yet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production skills; • Co-operative management; • Business. | As required |
| SPBDF | All | No | Planned | Grameen Bank style –core function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business | Informal |

Conclusion

This chapter developed some concepts that will inform the remainder of the thesis and also highlighted and discussed a number of issues that are explored in the case studies in the following chapters. Business enterprise in Samoa was discussed in this chapter, and some of the more common structures under which small rural business enterprises in Samoa exist (women's committees, family-based, and co-operatives) were

described. The chapter reviewed literature and comments from the field work that suggested that family based enterprises were more appropriate than co-operative based enterprises in Samoa. With one of the ventures in the case studies (village-based coconut oil) being structured as a co-operative of micro-entrepreneurs, the reality of this discourse, and implications of the discourse in practice can be explored. Furthermore, two major issues that were highlighted early in this chapter, the limitations of the village economy and the lack of business skills, also reappear in the case studies in terms of the way in which NGOs are be used to market goods outside the village and provide education and training.

The chapter focussed on the relationships between rural business enterprise and *fa'aSamoa*, in terms of the tensions and trade-offs that occur, and the way that *fa'aSamoa* can harmonise and support business. The premise of the chapter is that there are considerable contradictions between recognised principles of western business, that aim to provide profit and long term economic success, and *fa'aSamoa*, where the goal is to improve the economic and social status and standing of the family, and the village, through gifting, distribution, *tautua* (service) and *fa'alavelave* (ceremonies). Where there are tensions and conflicts between *fa'aSamoa* and business, rural people will often choose to trade-off potential business success in order to stay within the accepted norms and practices of *fa'aSamoa*, thereby maintaining social and cultural capital, which provides their cultural and social identity and sense of place, and their security. Just how the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and business are negotiated in practice is explored in the two case studies in Chapters 6 and 7, and in the analysis of the case studies in Chapter 8. Some of the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and micro-enterprise (both tensions and harmonies) that were described and discussed in this chapter emerge in the case studies as the livelihoods of the micro-entrepreneurs, and their obligations to family and community are described.

One of the concepts developed in this chapter was the distinction between 'private sector sphere' enterprise and 'traditional sphere' enterprises, and the description of factors that might (from the literature and initial field work) be important in ensuring that 'traditional sphere' micro-enterprises flourish in rural villages in Samoa. The chapter concludes that successful and sustainable 'traditional sphere' enterprises tend to operate within *fa'aSamoa*. On the other hand, 'private sector sphere' enterprises are

better able to ‘juggle’ the obligations of *fa’aSamoa* with business, and are more likely to ‘blend’ business with *fa’aSamoa*, and while still operating within the context of *fa’aSamoa*, operate alongside rather than within. This concept was important in informing the analysis of the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7, and then in the discussion and conclusions in Chapters 8 and 9. The case studies in this research are ‘traditional sphere’ businesses, operating in rural areas of Samoa where *fa’aSamoa* and *fa’amatai* are interwoven with rural livelihoods, and where rural people are likely to conform to the cultural norms of *fa’aSamoa* (i.e. working within the culture). The case studies in Chapters 6 and 7 were designed to show in what respect this did or did not occur, and how the micro-entrepreneurs were or were not able to work in harmony with *fa’aSamoa*, or negotiate tensions between *fa’aSamoa* and their micro-entrepreneurial activity.

Finally in this chapter some of the organisations that support micro and small business in Samoa were profiled, in order to provide an overview of the business enterprise environment in which the Samoan case studies exist, and describe the organisations that support the micro-entrepreneurs in the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7. The profiles highlight the role that such organisations have in providing links between the traditional, private sector and government spheres, and the way in which some of the constraints that micro-enterprises may encounter (Table 5.2) can be minimised or overcome. Being informed by the enormous range of difficulties and constraints that micro-entrepreneurs might face (Table 5.2) the case studies in the following chapters (fine mat weaving and village- based coconut oil production) explore which constraints and difficulties affect the micro-enterprises most in terms of achieving sustainable livelihoods, how the NGOs can help to overcome these difficulties, and how just how the NGOs provide links between the traditional sphere and other spheres.

The case studies are presented in the following two chapters (Chapters 6 and 7), which are informed by the sustainable livelihoods approach (Chapter 2), and concepts from this chapter (Chapter 5) and the previous chapter (Chapter 4). The case studies are further analysed and compared in Chapter 8 to answer the lower level research questions, drawing on discourse from previous chapters to explain and strengthen concepts and conclusions.

Chapter 6 Village Coconut Oil: a Case Study in Samoa

Introduction

This chapter describes village-based coconut oil production in Samoa. This micro-enterprise is a livelihood strategy which, if successful and sustainable, could support sustainable livelihoods for rural people in Samoa. The sustainable livelihoods approach (Chapter 2) is used as a framework for analysis in this case study, and relationships between village-based coconut oil and *fa'aSamoa* are explored within that framework. The research findings include answers to questions that were asked of the research participants and of their activities, and questions relating to the case itself.

At the time of the research (various times from April 2003 - August 2004), village coconut oil production in Samoa was supported by two NGOs, Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporated (METI) and Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI) (see Chapter 5 for background on these NGOs). The chapter describes the support they provide to village-based micro-entrepreneurs and how the NGOs link the villages to markets outside the village, and funding agencies. Following this introduction the chapter is in four parts: the first part is about coconuts in the Samoan context; the second part, which takes up most of the chapter, describes the co-operative based village oil production supported by METI; the third part describes the family-based coconut oil production that is being supported by WIBDI and finally the fourth part draws conclusions about the whole case study.

A review of literature provided the information for the section on coconuts in the Samoan context. The field research for this case study (see Appendix 4 Field research programme) began in March 2003 when I interviewed a New Zealand University researcher and his associates (in New Zealand). Then, in March-April 2003 I interviewed Samoan members of a village-based Trust (associated with the researcher) that planned to be linked with the METI coconut oil production. While at least one of these Trust members is now part of a METI co-operative in the village, neither the Trust itself, nor the New Zealand researcher are involved with METI (the reason for this is briefly explained later). As the METI co-operatives had not yet started in March-April 2003 during the first field research visit to Samoa, the research on the METI supported village oil making was initiated later, in August 2003 when, during a visit to Samoa for other business, I had a short phone

interview with the Director of METI. I was then able to interview two of the METI field workers and the newly appointed soap maker. On my return trip in August 2004 I interviewed the Director of METI, the METI education officer, and visited two of the village co-operatives, Co-operative One and Co-operative Two, both of which are located on the island of Upolu. I interviewed co-operative members, and carried out detailed participant observation of the oil making process with Co-operative One. I also visited the soap factory that uses the oil and again interviewed the soap maker. In August 2004 the METI supported co-operatives had been operating for approximately one year.

In April 2003 I visited two WIBDI supported coconut oil producers located on the island of Upolu (see Appendix 4 Field research programme). I travelled with the WIBDI field workers who explained the oil making process to me and translated my questions to the producers. I observed the coconut oil production. I also interviewed the Executive Director of WIBDI about the coconut oil venture and the use of the oil. I revisited one of these coconut oil producers in August 2004 with a translator and again interviewed the oil producer. In August 2004 I visited the factory that uses the coconut oil from the WIBDI supported producers and re-interviewed WIBDI staff.

Interviews with village-based people in Samoa were not recorded on tape, but detailed notes were taken during the interviews and the interviews were typed up as soon as possible after the event. Interviews with most professional people in Samoa were recorded on tape and transcribed soon after the interviews. In order to retain confidentiality, real names of people and villages have not been used.

Coconuts and Samoa

Introduction

Coconuts are a crop of great significance in Samoa, being used as a subsistence crop for family needs, for gifts and exchange, and for income generation. Coconuts are important to the economy of Samoa and to the livelihoods of the Samoan people (Tevaga, 1995: 1). The coconut tree is important to sustain life ('a tree of life') and as 'money in the bank' to be used when needed (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001: 65).

In terms of the origin of the coconut, all the Samoans that I questioned were familiar with the legend of Sina and the spirit eel. The legend tells of a young girl named Sina who, as a child, caught a small eel and kept it as a pet. The eel began to follow her wherever she

went. She became uneasy and fearful of the eel and tried to escape from it by travelling from her village in Upolu, to Savai'i. However, she was unable to escape from the eel and eventually realised it was a spirit. The eel followed her back to her village in Upolu where the villagers clubbed it to death and planted its head. The eel's head grew into a coconut tree. The face of the eel can be seen on the coconut (three small indents in the base of the nut) and the trunk of the tree is the same shape as the eel (Faatonu and Wallwork, 1994: 76-79).

The mature (brown) nut of the coconut is called *popo* and the less mature (green) nut, which is used for drinking, is called *niu*. The nut is surrounded by a hard shell and a fibrous husk. Inside the shell is a layer of white 'meat' which hardens as the nut matures. Inside the nut is a liquid which is much sweeter and flavoursome in the *niu* than in the *popo* – hence the *niu* being more popular as a drinking nut. The mature *popo* falls from the coconut tree and is harvested from the ground. The *niu* is harvested by climbing the tree, or sometimes knocking the nuts down with a long pole. There is a seed inside the nut which forms a shoot as the nut matures (after the *popo* has fallen to the ground).

Hart (1984: 59) states that traditionally, the coconut is used in more ways than any other plant in the Pacific. Hart (1984: 59-67) lists 181 ways in which coconuts are used in Samoa including the uses of the stem (wood), the leaf, the midrib of the leaf, the husk, the kernel (coconut 'meat'), the shell, the milk, and other parts such as the heart (seed), the root and the flowers. Uses include food (animal and human), building, ceremonial uses, toys and games, fishing and farming uses, medicinal uses, mats and blinds, fuel (wood, kindling and charcoal), as well as a number of other uses.

Most of the production of coconuts in Samoa is at small-holder level with holdings of 0.4-8 hectares. It is estimated that 90% of the area in coconuts is owned by small-holders (MAFFM, 2004: 7). The 2002 census shows that nearly 14,000 households are growing coconuts, with around 10,000 of these (73% of households in Upolu and 65% of households in Savai'i) growing coconuts purely for subsistence living. Only three households in Samoa reported growing coconuts only for commercial use (MAFFM, 2002: 7). Generally no chemicals or artificial fertilisers are used in small-holder grown coconuts providing potential for easy conversion to certified organic production (MAFFM, 2004: 14).

Usually family labour is used for growing coconuts in Samoa. The main variety used is the 'Samoan tall variety', with a few more recent plantings of a hybrid variety. Many plantings are 20-30 years old and limited replanting is taking place. Growers operate a mixed farming regime with a number of other crops (MAAFFM, 2004: 13).

Coconut oil production

Coconut oil is produced in Samoa in a number of different ways. Coconut oil is made, mainly by women, in a traditional way (without machinery), in small quantities and for family use and sale in Samoa. The 'meat' is scraped from the *popo* and usually mixed with flowers to provide a scent. The mixture is kneaded and then left in the sun to dry. Eventually (after several days) the oil separates and is drained off and put in bottles for sale for massage, moisturiser and medicinal uses. Traditionally coconut oil is not used for cooking as the flavour is not favoured by Samoan people (interviews and participant observation, March-April 2003).

The method of coconut oil production considered in the field research in this case study is village-based and is the Direct Micro Expeller (DME) method. From this method pure cold pressed virgin oil is produced. Coconuts (*popo*) are cracked open, the juice drained off, and the 'meat' grated from inside the coconut shells normally using electric graters. Grating a batch of 25 *popo* takes around half an hour. The grated coconut 'meat' is dried either in the sun, or on a drier which is heated by wood or charcoal, or a combination of both, in batches of around 25 *popo* at a time. The dried and grated coconut is stuffed into the pressing machine in smaller batches. Oil is squeezed (pressed) from the freshly grated and dried coconut 'meat' and collected in a bucket. The dried and pressed grated coconut is normally used as animal feed. The liquid that flows from the press can contain up to 10% water and can be left to stand to separate the oil from the water if necessary. It takes up to four to five people around eight hours to make around 20 litres of oil from around 200-300 *popo* (depending on size) (participant observation, April 2003 and August 2004).

Coconut oil is also produced commercially in Samoa from copra processed at a mill. Copra is the dried 'meat' of the coconut which is produced in villages or plantations and sold to the mill for processing into oil. Copra making involves planting trees, picking and transporting nuts, cracking nuts open, scooping out the meat, and then drying the pieces of meat in the sun or on wood fuelled driers (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001: 75).

Commercial production of copra began in the 1860s encouraged by German colonialists (Tevaga, 1995: 4). Around this time varieties of coconuts were introduced which have since been used by Samoan people for both subsistence and cropping (Tevaga, 1995: 4). In the 1970s the Samoan Government established the Copra Oil Mill (Tevaga, 1995: 5, MAFFM, 2004: 17) as part of a vision of ‘Samoa as the Pacific hub of the coconut industry’ (MAFFM, 2004: 2). This mill, which opened in 1977, has been a major buyer of copra but closed for almost three years in the early 1990s. It reopened in 1993 under the management of a private local company but closed again in 1998 due to financial difficulties. It reopened in 1999, managed by Oil Seeds Production NZ (OSP) but in March 2000 the Samoan Government withdrew its arrangement with OSP and offered the privatisation of the mill for tender (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001: 66). The tender was won by Copra Oil Production Samoa Ltd in 2000 but since this time the mill has been only been open intermittently. It was closed for extended periods during 2001 and 2002 and closed for the 2003 year on December 1st (MAFFM, 2004: 17-18). Only about 18% of coconut growers are supplying the mill. Collection of copra by the mill is irregular and there have been some problems with payment to the farmers (MAFFM, 2004: 17). The mill is producing an average of 40 tonnes of oil per week compared with a capacity of 240 tonnes per week (MAFFM, 2004: 18).

The majority of commercial copra in Samoa (around 70%) is produced by smallholder family farms, where ‘women and girls have always been part of the production process’, the remainder being produced by private plantations and the government’s WESTEC plantation (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001: 66).

Other commercial uses of coconuts

Other commercial users of coconut products are a coconut cream factory, agencies exporting copra, exporters of whole nuts and local drinking nuts (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001:65-67).

Coconut cream is made by squeezing the juice from the coconut ‘meat’. A coconut cream factory was opened in the 1970s (MAFFM, 2004: 2). In 2004 there was just one commercial producer of coconut cream (Samoa Tropical Products) which was a pioneer in the industry in the 1970s. The technology has changed little and is very labour intensive. The factory processes around 20,000 nuts per day with exports mainly to New Zealand and Australia. The company collects mature coconuts (*popo*) from around Upolu for making

the cream, with the price depending on the price being paid for copra (currently around ST\$0.14 per *popo*).

One desiccated coconut factory (Desico) has been operating in Samoa. The government holds 80% of the shares. In 2004 the company had temporarily stopped operating and was shifting premises. Desico buys de-husked coconuts from the farmers around Samoa and pays at the point of sale. The company has issued poles for harvesting nuts from the trees (MAFFM, 2004: 19).

Coconuts and the Samoan economy

There has been a decline in all areas of commercial coconut products. The decline is due to the fall in world prices for coconut products, inefficient operation of government owned commercial enterprises, the inefficient monopolistic marketing board, and crop damage caused by cyclones and pest damage (MAFFM, 2004: 2). Cyclones Ofa and Val in the early 1990s destroyed 20% of the coconuts in Samoa (MAFFM, 2004: 7).

Coconut oil, meal, copra and coconut cream accounted for 66% of Samoa's total exports in 1996 and 53% in 1997, but accounted for less than half that amount in 1998. In 2001 coconut products accounted for only 7% of total exports and in 2003 24% (MAFFM, 2004: 2). Copra production plummeted from 8,500 tonnes in 1997 to less than 200 tonnes in 2002 and then recovered slightly to around 1,700 tonnes in 2003 (MAFFM, 2004: 8).

METI supported village coconut oil

In this section of the chapter the structure of the oil making co-operatives, and the role that METI plays in the co-operatives and the soap making are explained, the co-operatives, and the livelihoods of the co-operative members are described and analysed, and the soap making process is described.

Background

The METI supported coconut oil venture is related to the overall mission of METI, environmentally sustainable development. There is little opportunity for cash generation in rural Samoa and the biggest agricultural crop is coconuts. In the case of the coconut oil production, environmental management is therefore linked to income generation. METI's motivation for the coconut oil venture was that much of the coconut crop in Samoa is wasted, and furthermore almost all the soap in Samoa is imported. The Director of METI said:

Basically it goes back to the mission of METI. You can't just do environmental management in isolation. You won't get much attention from village groups. Talking about not cutting trees – its got to be linked to something that's important in their life things like health, income generation and education.

In terms of income generation you don't have much choice for income generation in Samoa. The biggest agricultural crop is coconuts. But at the same time you have people in agriculture who are pulling their hair out what to do with the coconuts. They are not prepared to make copra any more because the price of copra is so low. Our estimate is that 50% of the coconuts in Samoa rot. Looking around and finding that 99.5% of soap is imported. The immediate feeling was that we can make soap from the coconut oil (Director of METI, interview August 2004).

METI first became involved in the village-based coconut oil production in 1999 when the Director of METI met a New Zealand university researcher who was based at the University of South Pacific (USP), and had designed what the researcher describes as 'a simple, inexpensive and efficient method' for extracting coconut oil (researcher, interview March 2003). The researcher had designed a press using a car jack as a basis, and proposed a low cost system of oil extraction using sun drying and a system of grinding the coconut 'meat' using an adapted meat grinder. However, although METI initially intended to use the researcher's method of extracting the oil, METI found that the sun drying was not practical because of the number of rainy days in Samoa. METI therefore developed a charcoal fuelled burner to dry the grated coconut 'meat'. The driers have stainless steel tops and steel frames with a synthetic hard board outer shell. They are table height and around 3 metres long. The charcoal is made from coconut shells (waste from the oil making process) and any smoke is expelled through chimneys so there is little smoke to taint the coconut being used for the oil.

The Samoa Polytechnic tried to develop the meat grinder that the New Zealand researcher had suggested but they could not get it working satisfactorily. Furthermore, the Director of METI explained that Samoan people traditionally grate the coconut from the shell rather than grind it, and as the Samoan Polytechnic were at that time developing an electric coconut grater for a poultry project they decided to use that grater instead. METI then further developed the oil press through the Samoan Polytechnic.

METI has recently been accredited as a participating organisation of the ADB Small Business Development Project (as described in Chapter 5) which means that METI will be

able to act on behalf of their clients to access the microfinance fund through the Development Bank of Samoa (DBS), and also use the ADB 'Small Business Development Fund' for training and advice to METI clients.

Structure of the METI-supported coconut oil venture

METI has facilitated the establishment of four village-based co-operatives, with plans to initiate at least ten. Members are trained by METI in co-operative management, business skills and coconut oil making. They also receive advice from METI on the oil making process and on business matters. The co-operatives purchase *popo* (mature coconuts) from their members and make the coconut oil working co-operatively and using the equipment supplied by METI. The returns from the oil go directly to the co-operative account. When ten co-operatives have been established METI plans to form a federation of co-operatives (to be named The Incorporated Farmers and Producers Co-operatives of Samoa). At least ten co-operatives are required by law to establish this organisation.

The oil that is produced by the co-operatives is sold to a soap factory which has been set up using funding from AusAID with the shortfall in costs being covered temporarily by METI. METI is waiting for more funding to cover this shortfall. The factory is managed by the soap maker (appointed August 2003) who developed the soap products over a period of one year, and sold the first batch to an Apia supermarket in August 2004.

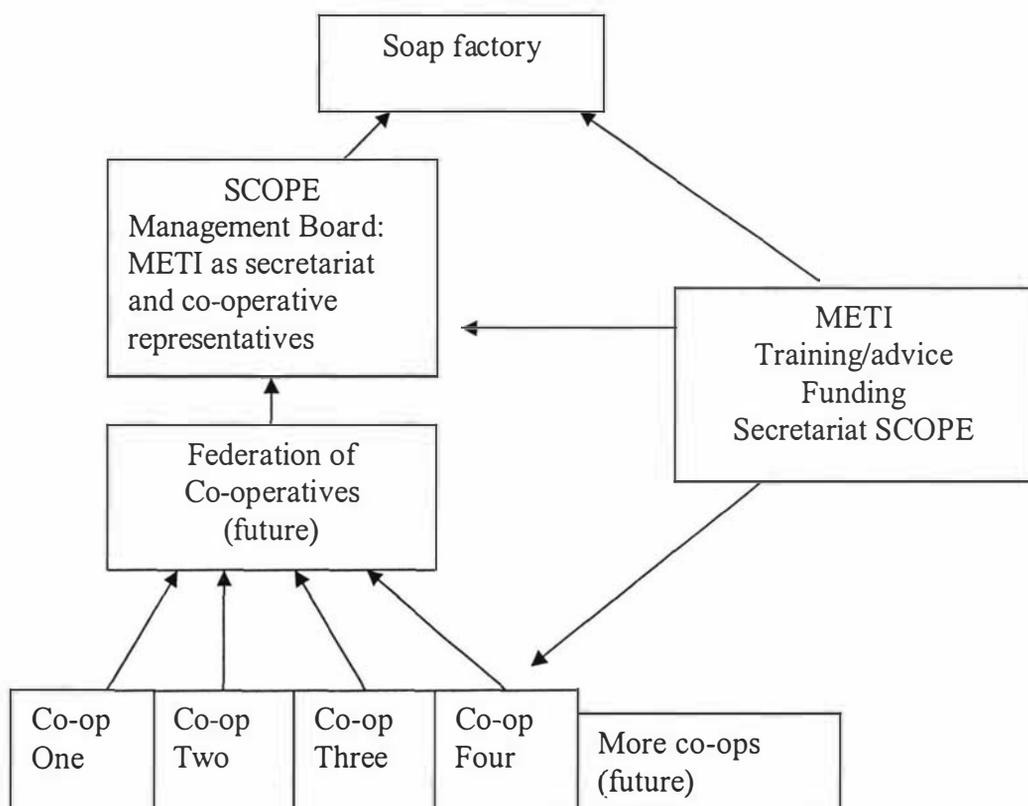
The purchase of the oil from the co-operatives and the soap making activities are managed by a centralised manufacturing unit named Samoan Coconut Oil Production Enterprise (SCOPE). SCOPE is managed by a board. The four existing co-operatives each have a representative on the SCOPE management board although when the number of co-operatives increases a limited number of representatives of the co-operatives will be elected. METI is represented on the SCOPE board as the 'secretariat'. The Director of METI explained:

SCOPE – because we only have four co-operatives right now ... each co-operative has one representative but of course if we are going to have 10 co-operatives we can't increase the size of SCOPE so eventually we will have an AGM and elect board members. We will have set up a constitution for that. The principle is that they are in charge. We hope that very shortly when we have 10 co-ops, we already have a draft constitution which the four co-operatives have already approved, and we will have a federation of co-ops. In their draft constitution it says there will be centralised production. Whichever co-ops are involved in that type of production will be the owners of that centralised production unit. So

SCOPE is owned by the producer co-operatives. The profits will be divided amongst the co-ops. And they will have their own board (Director of METI, interview August 2004).

The soap making venture is expected to make a reasonable profit with cost-benefit analysis estimating mark ups of 40% and perhaps even more for future export markets. The profits from the future soap making activities will be distributed to the co-operatives (70%) and METI, as secretariat, (30%). The organisational structure of the village oil production supported by METI is shown in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Organisational structure of METI supported coconut oil production



The METI supported co-operatives, and the co-operative members

Background

METI aims to support whole communities and endeavours to involve as many people in the communities as possible through the establishment of village-based co-operatives. The Director of METI said:

In theory a large number of people will be involved and equity is an important point. It will only work if there is a support organisation like METI to nurture. But it will work (Director of METI, interview August 2004).

In August 2003 METI had supported the establishment of a co-operative for village oil production in one village, another co-operative was to start the following month, and co-operatives for coconut oil were planned in two more villages. In August 2004 all of these co-operatives were underway, and several others were in process of training ready for establishment in the future. Three of these co-operatives (referred to as Co-operatives One, Two and Four) are in Upolu and one (referred to as Co-operative Three) is in Savai'i. The two co-operatives that were visited during the field research were both in villages in Upolu. They were both within 30-40 minutes drive from Apia. Co-operative One had five active members (one man and 4 women), one inactive member and one prospective member who is the daughter of one of the existing members. Co-operative Two had six active members, all women. Although I did not interview anyone from Co-operative Four I was told that they had 23 members, both men and women. Co-operative Three was described as the 'maverick' co-operative by the Director of METI because they are not presently selling any of their oil to the METI supported soap factory. In August 2003, I was told that 15 women had started Co-operative Three with each member working twice a week.

The co-operatives receive ST\$3.00 per kg (0.963litres) from the METI supported soap factory for the oil they produce. Co-operative One was selling all its oil to the soap factory, but Co-operative Two sold a small quantity of its oil as 'Samoan massage oil' on the side of the road for ST\$2.00 for a 0.25 litre bottle. According to the member interviewed around three or four bottles per week are sold in this way by Co-operative Two. The Savai'i based co-operative (Co-operative Three) was selling all of its oil locally at the time of the research in August 2004. Although Co-operative Three could not be contacted directly, members of Co-operative One told me that Co-operative Three sells whole buckets of oil to someone who then sells it on in the local market place in recycled bottles. One person said that Co-operative One gets ST\$80 for a bucket of oil (a little over ST\$4.00 per litre) compared with ST\$54.00 from the soap factory. Another person told me that Co-operative Three receives the equivalent of ST\$3.00 for each bottle of oil (around 750ml) and it then retails for ST\$5.00. Transport is apparently difficult for Co-operative Three. In

order to supply the METI supported soap factory they need to bring the oil by a vehicle to the ferry, a 40 minute drive, then across in the ferry, then another 40 minute drive.

SCOPE records supplied to me by Co-operative One showed the following production of oil for four months earlier in the year (Table 6.1). Most of the production is from Co-operative One (63%), with 13% from Co-operative Two and 23% from Co-operative Four.

Table 6.1 SCOPE records of oil supplies and payments (February to June 2004)

| CO-OPERATIVE NAME | DATE (2004) | KG OIL SUPPLIED | ST\$ | DATE MONEY DEPOSITED IN CO-OP ACCOUNT (2004) |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|--|
| One | 8/2 | 52.00 | 156.00 | 10/3 |
| Four | 13/2 | 52.00 | 156.00 | 10/3 |
| One | 7/3 | 34.50 | 103.50 | 10/3 |
| Two | 19/3 | 16.00 | 48.00 | 31/3 |
| Four | 23/3 | 35.00 | 105.00 | 31/3 |
| One | 2/4 | 53.40 | 160.50 | 8/4 |
| Four | 5/5 | 36.50 | 109.50 | 7/5 |
| Two | 5/5 | 35.50 | 106.50 | 7/5 |
| One | 11/5 | 73.00 | 219.00 | 13/5 |
| One | 20/5 | 35.50 | 106.50 | 28/5 |
| One | 25/5 | 35.25 | 105.75 | 28/5 |
| One | 3/6 | 33.50 | 100.50 | 11/6 |
| One | 7/6 | 35.00 | 105.00 | 17/6 |
| One | 14/6 | 35.50 | 106.50 | 18/6 |
| Two | 17/6 | 36.50 | 109.50 | 18/6 |
| One | 16/6 | 33.50 | 100.50 | 18/6 |
| Four | 21/6 | 33.50 | 100.50 | 23/6 |
| TOTAL | | 666.25 | 1998.75 | |

Establishment of the co-operatives

There are a number of ways in which the co-operatives are being established and members recruited. In August 2003 I was told by a METI field worker (no longer employed by METI) that the villages where the co-operatives were being formed were approached through the Women's Committee and the Village Council. The Village Council then invited families to apply for membership of the co-operative. Membership was being offered to all families but not all choose to join. However, interviews with existing co-operative members and the Director of METI indicated that the present co-operatives were

formed on a more ad hoc basis with each village co-operative having been initiated and members recruited in a different way.

For example, Co-operative One has family connections in METI. The brother-in-law of the Director of METI is a member in Co-operative One and an inactive member of Co-operative One is the mother of METI's Education Advocacy Officer. Having the brother-in-law of the METI Director as a key member of the co-operative is seen as an advantage in terms of motivation by one of the Co-operative One's members. She said:

Tina and Henri say we should do one bucket of oil per working day (200 *popo*). Probably having that goal keeps us going. They feel obliged to ... (Director of METI) (Susi, interview August 2004).

One of the co-operatives was set up when the Director of METI was approached by someone at the USP whose brother was running his large coconut plantation. Then the brother came to METI and the co-operative was set up. The Director of METI said:

Its word of mouth and it varies from village to village. For example at USP we have been talking with people and telling them what we have been doing and the business manager said 'I have a big coconut plantation .. my brother actually runs it. The next thing the brother came and he got a bunch of guys together and they set up a co-op (Director of METI, interview August 2004).

Co-operative Three is in the village of a former METI field worker. The co-operative started by selling the oil in coco-cola bottles at the local market (two dozen bottles each week) before the METI soap factory started buying the oil. In August 2004, according to the Director of METI, the ex METI field worker appeared to be making individual decisions for the whole co-operative. The machinery and building for the equipment is based on the ex METI field worker's land, and the coconuts are being sourced from his land. The oil being produced by this co-operative was all being sold at local markets rather than being supplied to the METI supported soap factory.

Co-operative Four is in the village where a Trust (set up by the New Zealand researcher) was planning to be involved in the soap making venture. Although the Trust is not now involved in the METI venture, one of the Trust members established, and is the president of, the METI supported co-operative in the village.

Co-operative management

The co-operatives are responsible for their own management. They elect a president, secretary and treasurer, and a representative to the SCOPE board. Susi was elected to represent Co-operative One on the SCOPE Board. She explained:

I was nominated to represent our co-operative. But it's only for one year and then it's passed on to another person. I'm also the secretary but it doesn't have to be the secretary it can be the president or the treasurer. It's a lot of work behind the scenes being the secretary and the representative. I've done a lot of work looking at other soap that's on the market and that sort of thing ... (Susi, interview August 2004).

Co-operative members pay a membership fee to the co-operative (equivalent to one share in the co-operative) that is repaid should the members leave. One member of Co-operative One is inactive but has left her membership fee in the co-operative. The level of the membership fee is set by the co-operative and was ST\$20 for Co-operative One and ST\$30.00 for Co-operative Two. The profits of the co-operative will theoretically be distributed according to the number of 'shares' members own.

The co-operatives use different systems for payment for the coconuts (*popo*) to make the oil. However, the price that is paid for the *popo* is consistent between the co-operatives at ST\$0.20. The *popo* are supplied in rotation by different co-operative members except when the members cannot supply enough *popo*. In this case other co-operative members 'top up' the amount required and are paid for their contribution of *popo*. In the case of Co-operative Two, *popo* are sometimes purchased from people outside the co-operative (for example a *matai*). Hanna (Co-operative Two) said:

I use the *popo* from my brother's plantation. Some people do not have enough *popo* in their plantation. Some people have plantations but not enough coconut trees. Sometimes we buy from the *matai* we give him 20sene (ST\$0.20) for the *popo*. Sometimes we don't have enough *popo* from the six people (members) so we buy *popo* (Hanna, interview August 2004).

The co-operative members are all supposed to contribute equally to the work of producing the oil. Co-operative Two makes a note of the amount of time they work at the co-operative, but not the individual members' contribution to that work.

Co-operatives One and Two both normally came to the co-operative building to 'work' on three days of the week. However, for Co-operative Two one of these

days was used for a meeting to discuss issues such as where they could get their *popo* and whether the work was being shared equally. Co-operative One held meetings on Sundays, in addition to the work days.

There are a number of reasons why the oil making does not always happen on the designated work days. The most common reason is *fa'avelave*. For example on the day I visited Co-operative Two there was a *fa'avelave* in a neighbouring village and most of the co-operative members were attending. Hanna (Co-operative Two) said that one of the biggest problem of the co-operative was *fa'avelave*. She said (of the co-operative members) 'they often have *fa'avelave*'. Also, if the grater heads are being repaired the oil making is postponed.

Goals of the co-operatives, and the members

Making oil

The main goal of the co-operatives is to make oil to sell to the soap factory in order to provide a profit for the co-operative that can be distributed to the members of the co-operative to reward them for the work they have done making the oil. However, the profits made by the co-operatives (and theoretically distributed to the members) are very limited. For example, at the time of the research Co-operative Two had not distributed any of the profits to the co-operative members.

A market for the popo

Another goal is to use the coconuts in a sustainable and profitable way by providing a market for members to sell their *popo* at a reasonable price. The entrepreneurs that were interviewed saw their major personal goal as income generation in terms of the *popo* they sell to the co-operative. They receive ST\$0.20 for each *popo* they sell and in cases where there are only six co-operative members they have their turn to sell around once a fortnight or three weeks. In Co-operative One they supplied 200 *popo* each time and received ST\$40.00 and for Co-operative Two they supplied 300 *popo* and received ST\$60.00. In Co-operative One the money was taken from the bank account for payment for the *popo* at the beginning of each week (the signatures of secretary, president and treasurer being needed). After making the oil the provider of the *popo* is paid. Co-operative One kept detailed records of payments using a form that detailed the date, the name of the person(s) supplying the *popo*, any money deducted from the payment for the supplier's membership fees, the number of *popo* supplied, the amount

of money paid by the co-operative to the supplier of the *popo*, and signatures of the supplier of the *popo* and the treasurer of the co-operative.

The co-operative is regarded as a very good market for the *popo*. Susi said ‘... and you get ST\$40 for the *popo* – that fills up the tank of my vehicle’ (Susi, interview August 2004). Hanna’s brother used to sell the family’s *popo* for ST0.10 before she joined the co-operative. Sometimes people also bought coconuts to sell in the market. She said:

When its my turn I bring 300-600 *popo* for the week – I use a truck but it costs me ST15. The other people live closer so they bring the *popo* in a wheelbarrow. I get S\$120 and pay ST15 so I get ST 105. I have plenty of *popo* – its my parents land that’s why I joined the co-op (Hanna, interview August 2004).

Apparently, several companies have bought mature coconuts from the villages in Samoa in recent times. It is likely that these companies are the coconut cream company (Samoa Tropical Products), the desiccated coconut company (Desico) and/or the coconut oil mill (Copra Oil Production Samoa Ltd) although this could not be verified. The companies have trucks that move around the rural areas collecting the coconuts and paying for them at the point of sale. Apparently, one company pays ST\$0.14 and another ST\$0.16. However the coconuts have to be large sized and for ST\$0.16 the *popo* must not have the shoot beginning to sprout. Not only is the price paid for these *popo* lower than the co-operative pays, but it is not certain when the trucks will come. Sometimes the coconuts can be collected and ready for sale and then the trucks do not come and the coconuts rot. Members of Co-operative One said:

The trucks are supposed to come every day - you can get 14 sene or 16 sene for your *popo* – there are two different companies - but they have to be big ones and for the 16 sene they can’t have started to shoot from the seed. But for the oil we can use big/small ones and ones with a shoot. For the oil if they are small ones we just supply two small ones for one big one (Henri, interview August 2004).

Yes we like doing this because we can sell our coconuts – we have many coconuts. We can sell both the big and small ones. 2 small ones equals one big one. Before, sometimes we would pick them for the truck but then the truck didn’t come and they would rot. Now we get 20 sene from the co-op. This can help us improve our lives – schooling and things like that (Tina, interview August 2004).

Although the returns for the *popo* from the co-operatives are good compared with other markets for *popo*, the price to be paid for this market is very hard work in a hot smoky environment making oil.

Friendship and company

The company and friendship of the co-operative is also important to the co-operative members. Susi (Co-operative One) said ‘and I enjoy the company and its only three times a week ...’ and Hanna (Co-operative Two) said ‘we know each other well and we are happy and have fun we enjoy being together’ (interviews August 2004).

Status and pride

There is mixed feelings about the status received by co-operative members. On the one hand people may be jealous of the income received, especially for the *popo*, but they are not envious of the work that the co-operative members do. When asked if people thought well of her for making the oil Susi (Co-operative One) replied:

No – they don’t think it’s a good thing to do – I don’t know if that’s because they want to join or because they think we are mad to do all the work ... My cousin teases me about it – he ‘rubs it in’ ... My brother has warned me away from the co-op. He remarked on my garden because it was so overgrown because I spend all my time on the co-op (Susi, interview August 2004).

However, on the other hand Susi was proud of the amount of oil her co-operative produced and of the soap that was about to be sold. She said:

Did you see that list of much oil our co-operative is producing compared to the other co-ops? I’m really proud of that ... everyone in the co-ops will feel really proud once the soap gets to the supermarkets (Susi, interview August 2004).

Hanna (Co-operative Two) was also proud of the soap that was being produced. She said ‘... I pinned up the box from the soap. I tell people about the soap and say the quality is very good’ (Hanna, interview August 2004). She was also proud of the work she was doing for the co-operative and that she was able to earn money for her family while still being able to be at home for her children. She said:

I like it because it’s the first in the village. I talked to the *matai* about it and he was surprised ... I am proud to work. This is the future if I work hard. I was a teacher before and then a cashier. Now I can stay at home and look after the kids and also work. There’s time for the family and the kids. I am happy if I stay at home. I earn some money for 3 days. I take the small boy to the co-op. Sometimes the children help – they might become co-op members in the future (Hanna, interview August 2004).

Income opportunities for whole communities

The Director of METI saw one goal of the co-operatives as providing income opportunities to a large number of people in each community. However, this has not eventuated in the

two co-operatives that were involved with the field research. Co-operatives One and Two have remained small. The Director of METI is very concerned that this has happened. He said:

At present the co-ops are very small. For example Co-operative One has only 5-6 people. A small club. METI wants them to grow. Co-operative law says that anyone who pays the membership fee can join but that's not happening We are considering working through the village council to get around this issue of 'clubs' forming. If we tell the village council them maybe ... I don't know. We have one case (a prospective co-operative) they have the whole village of course the whole village is just ten families. There we went through another project. Our project manager went to the village mayor and he came and now we are ... It might be the answer to go through the high chief. The one thing we have been insisting on is that we should try to have members who have coconuts. It's no use if people are going to buy them and then sell them to the co-op. They just won't have enough profit (Director of METI, interview August 2004).

The Director of METI suggested that the lack of co-operation between people and small numbers of co-operative members was because of Western influences, and Samoan people becoming more individualistic. He felt that proper training (such as life skills training that is being introduced to Samoa very soon) could help to make people work more cooperatively. He said:

The constraint is really based on the people not having experience with co-ops. I think through Western influences many Samoans are becoming individuals. Making them aware that if they are talking about culture they should go back to the good old days of ... there was a certain element of communistic ... helping each other ... they need training ... the training has to be not teaching but participatory learning (Director of METI, interview August 2004).

In Co-operative One they originally had ten members (the minimum required to register the co-operative) but now they have only six members. Co-operative Two had eight members and now have only six. Members of Co-operatives One and Two explained the difficulties of getting members into the co-operatives. The first problem is that people need to have access to *popo* in order to join the co-operative. As there is little profit from the co-operative, if people don't have *popo* to sell there is no financial reward.

Susi explained to me that people have to have the mentality of selling the *popo* for ST\$0.20 but also having to do the work for the co-operative making the oil. She said that people don't like to do work for eight hours and not get paid and a lot of people had left the

co-operative because they are not getting money for the work. Co-operative One members have asked a lot of people to join the co-operative but since Susi joined (November 2003) no-one else has joined. Susi said that the co-operative members have thought about paying people to work but that the Director of METI was not keen for them to do that. The co-operatives could not afford to pay people to make the oil even if the idea was approved.

Some people leave because they feel they are doing more work than others. Samoan people respect those older than themselves and traditionally young people do more work than older people. Young people are unlikely to confront older people for whom they have respect about such issues. Furthermore co-operative members feel that if they confront members they may leave. Hanna said ‘the treasurer, president and secretary we do more work but if we force the others they will leave ... you have to be very soft and patient or they will leave the co-op’ (Hanna, interview August 2004).

The issue of how to insure that members work equally was unclear. The Director of METI suggested a points system should be used to allocate points for work or numbers of *popo* supplied. Although apparently records were being kept about the hours of work in the co-operative, this was not being used for allocating points. In Co-operative One if a member could not work they sent a substitute, for example a husband or daughter. Some people cook food or provide transport if they don’t have time to work all day. Hanna described the biggest problems of the co-operative:

They don’t work together. Some people work harder than others. Three of the people ... they find it hard to work so they cook the food and stir on the oven (drier) (Hanna, interview August 2004).

According to Hanna (Co-operative Two) some people have also left the co-operatives because they have no-one to look after the children while they are working. She usually takes her youngest child to the co-operative with her but this is sometimes difficult. She also suggested that the ST\$30 membership fee for Co-operative Two could be a deterrent to some people to join. She said ‘we need more people – we ask people to join and they say ‘maybe next year or maybe later’’ (Hanna, interview August 2004).

Other livelihood strategies of the co-operative members

All the co-operative members and their families that I interviewed had other livelihood strategies in addition to the co-operatives. All had access to plantations and used the food produced on the plantations for subsistence. In Co-operative One, Susi received

some income from her husband who was overseas, and from her brothers from time to time, Tina and Henri received financial support from their children who were working in Apia. Tina also makes fine mats which she was willing to sell. Fetu's family has a small income from selling taro and bananas and other crops from their farm, while Meri's family were also supported by fishing and farming. The inactive member of Co-operative One was a teacher at a local pre-school. In Co-operative Two, Hanna's family (her mother, brother and her immediate family) in addition to the income from the co-operative, had income from her husband, who was a carpenter in Apia, and her brother who worked in the plantation and sold some taro.

A number of co-operative members (all women) said that it was difficult to fit the work of the co-operative around their normal daily responsibilities. Tina, who makes fine mats said that she had to do her fine mat in the 'dawn and dusk' on the days when she worked in the co-operative. Susi explained that she has to fit the work at the co-operative around taking her children to school in Apia, feeding animals, and working in her garden as well as other household duties. She could not always spend the whole day at the co-operative but compensated for this by providing transport and sometimes food. Hanna explained that she had to work very long hours on the days when she worked in the co-operative. She said:

I have five kids at school. Two boys are in high school and the rest in primary. I sleep at 12 or one in the morning and I wake up at five in the morning to iron and make the kids breakfast before I go to the co-op. I come back at three or four in the afternoon and I do the washing, cook dinner and clean up the dishes and I look after my Mum she is 81 years old. I find it hard to work all day. On Saturday I worked alone. I saw that the *popo* would break if I didn't use them up. The president helped a bit – we used 100 *popo* – we just had cups of tea, no food (Susi, interview August 2004).

Assets of the co-operatives and the co-operative members

Social and cultural assets

In terms of social assets, co-operative members from both Co-operative One and Co-operative Two said that people in the co-operative are not generally related and that they heard about the co-operative in a number of ways including through people at the church they went to. Susi (Co-operative One) said:

We did not really know the other co-operative members well before just to say 'hi' to when we saw them. The president of the co-operative

approached me one day after church ... they pulled me in by saying I would get 20 sene for ripe *popos* ... (Susi, interview August 2004)

And Hanna (Co-operative Two) said:

We didn't know each other before. The president came and talked to me – we were at the same church. The president's husband had met METI before. We signed an agreement with METI – two people signed the letters (Hanna, interview August 2004).

The co-operative members enjoyed working with each other and it was clear that the sharing of food and social interaction was important to the members during the work making the oil. When members of Co-operative One were asked why their co-operative was succeeding they replied that the co-operative is small and they trust each other, they all do equal work, and they feel responsibility to METI because Henri is related to the Director of METI. Both Co-operative One and Two make decisions by sitting down and talking things through. But the members admitted it was hard sometimes because people think differently. Susi said:

We all sit down and talk but sometimes it's hard and we all think differently. Its getting better but sometimes there's bad feeling. It was a bit scary at one time ... sometimes you say something and someone gets upset or they take it the wrong way ... (Susi, interview August 2004).

Social networks were important for all the co-operatives in terms of hearing about the coconut oil enterprise and the formation of the co-operatives. Furthermore, the social networks within the village, for example the church, are important to the individual members in terms of being invited to join the co-operative.

The cultural norms of support, service and respect within the family, which is an integral part of *fa'aSamoa*, are also extremely important. The members need support from the family in terms of using the plantations and collecting the *popo* from the family's land. The members also need the family to provide them with a substitute should they be unable to work in the co-operative making oil. For example when I was participating and observing at Co-operative One, one member's husband was working for her as she was sick. The members also need the family's support in terms of the time they spend away from their usual tasks and responsibilities and, in some cases, for childcare.

Knowledge of growing and producing coconuts, which has been passed through families for generations, is critical to coconut oil production, and is an important

cultural asset in this livelihood strategy. The customary land system which has supported the family based village production of coconuts is also important.

Human assets

METI provides training in co-operative law and working in committees. The training manual that is used is in Samoan and has been translated from a manual called 'The work of co-operatives and committees' by Peter Yeo. According to the METI Education Advocacy Officer the training takes two days. Topics in the manual include financial matters, management by office bearers and loans management. The co-operative members are also trained in business management. The course is from the Samoan Polytechnic and the material is also in Samoan. The co-operative members are also shown how to make the coconut oil. According to Co-operative One members two people came to their co-operative and did one batch of oil.

Few of the co-operative members have skills in business management. However, Susi (secretary of Co-operative One) has lived overseas and has a good idea of business.. She helps the other co-operative members and double checks everything she is told at the board meetings. She said:

We are living in the country. We don't know a lot about business. Tina and Henri do understand but the others don't. I try to make sure about everything we are told. They gave us ST3/kg and they said that was ten *popos* worth of oil. We tested that to see. They told us that oil is heavier than water so .963 litre - .1kg. We just checked instead of taking it at face value. They said you should work on 400 *popo* per day. I said – this is not the only job we do. Six to eight hours is enough. They said but we need the oil. But we said we have only four or six people. They said we should get more people but the price of a bucket of oil is too low (Susi, interview August 2004).

Some of the co-operative members are better educated than others. In co-operative One and Two none of the members worked in Apia. However, the president of Co-operative Four has a job in Apia.

Physical assets

All the equipment for the first four co-operatives was purchased with Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) funding and also a small grant from UN specifically for making the equipment locally. According to the Director of METI the co-

operatives were the beneficiaries of the project and therefore own the initial machinery. However, future co-operatives will be required to purchase the machinery.

METI has pledged to maintain the machines as long as the co-operatives are supplying the oil to the METI related organisations. There have been few problems with the machinery except that the grater heads, which are made of soft steel, blunt easily, sometimes after only two weeks of use. There is also concern that there may be debris from the grater going into the oil. Therefore a new grater head has been designed that can work twice as fast. It is made of stainless steel which is much tougher and is a different design. It is designed to avoid people grating their fingers as the cutting edges are only at the top of the head. It is difficult to ask people to wear gloves because they get too hot. The new graters should last five - six years before they need to be replaced but cost ST\$200-300.

A building is also required to house the drier and the other machines. The building for Co-operative One is located beside the home of the president (Tina) and her husband Henri. The building was paid for and built by individual members of the co-operative (not the co-operative as a whole). The president (Tina) paid for the concrete floor and nails (total ST260.00) by taking a loan with the microfinance organisation South Pacific Business development (SPBD), and other building materials were provided by co-operative members or obtained second hand. The building was constructed by co-operative members, in a communal effort that reflects the practices of *fa'aSamoa* when a building is constructed for a community purpose. According to Co-operative Two's secretary (Hanna), the building for Co-operative Two was paid for by METI. This building is located near the village plantations and near the homes of the president and some of the other members. However, the secretary of Co-operative Two lives some distance from the co-operative building. She sometimes walks for over an hour to the co-operative.

Financial assets

If the co-operatives supply the oil to the METI supported soap factory, the profits the co-operatives make are very small. When I participated in and observed the coconut oil production, Co-operative One produced around 20kg of oil from 225 *popo* in around eight hours. The *popo* would have cost the co-operative ST\$45.00 and they would receive approximately ST\$60.00 for the oil (ST\$3.00 per kg). From the profit of ST\$15.00 the co-operative should pay for capital costs of setting up the co-operative, electricity, transport for the oil to METI or the factory, and some minor equipment like the straining cloth,

cocoa wire to put the charcoal on, and gloves to protect their hands from the hot drier. At present transport is provided by co-operative members at their own expense and the electricity for Co-operative Two is being paid for by one member. Even with costs being paid for by individual members, when the profit is divided amongst six co-operative members it is less than ST\$3.00 per person for the days work.

The amount that the co-operatives are receiving for their oil from the METI supported soap factory is not perceived to be enough by the co-operative members. This is evident in that some of the co-operatives are selling oil else where. Hanna (Co-operative Two) said ‘we make enough money from the oil because sometimes we sell it as Samoan massage oil in front of the house’. Susi (Co-operative One) said:

I tried to raise the price of oil at the SCOPE meeting but no-one supported it. I don’t know why. Maybe because they are not producing much ... or maybe they didn’t want to disagree with the METI Director ... He said that if we raise the price of the oil the soap will not make a profit. When I took that to the meeting and I bombed out I felt really sad ... you need 15 buckets of oil to make one batch of soap. We are not getting enough for the oil. Maybe we could set a limit of maybe 15-20 buckets and then they could raise the price after that or give us a bonus for reaching a target. That would be an incentive for the co-ops ... We really don’t get paid for making the oil, just for the *popo* (Susi, interview August 2004).

In time, when the soap factory starts to make a profit, the co-operative will also have some returns from their share of the profit from the soap making enterprise. However they will only receive a maximum of 7% of the soap factory’s profit when the 70% return to the Federation of Co-operatives is shared between ten co-operatives. The co-operatives agreed to METI receiving 30% of the profits from the soap because co-operative members recognise that METI is very important to them in terms of the funding that METI secures for the venture, the support that is provided and the future developments that are planned. However, none the co-operative members interviewed seemed sure about receiving profits from the soap in the future.

In the future the co-operatives will be required to pay for their own buildings and equipment. The finance for these capital items will most likely be from small loans. At the present time South Pacific Business Development Fund (SPBD) is perceived to be an organisation that can provide those loans. Susi said:

SPBD is working in the village – they have a centre. It’s good to get a loan so you can establish a good credit record. Lots of people in the

village have loans – some people take loans for plants and equipment – spades, wheelbarrows for the plantations (Susi, interview August 2004).

In the future METI can facilitate micro-finance loans through the ADB Micro-finance fund. METI has recently been accredited by the project as a participating organisation. The ADB micro-finance loans are between ST\$500 and ST\$5,000. The Director of METI said that the equipment will cost the co-operatives less than ST\$5,000. However, paying back the loan from co-operative funds is likely to put severe financial strain on future co-operatives.

Natural assets and resources

The land and the coconuts are natural resources that are most important to the co-operative. The coconuts are not only used for the oil, but the shells are used to make charcoal to fuel the drier and the husks are used for fuel for cooking fires. Co-operative One also made use of the climate (the sun) to partially dry their grated coconut before drying it on the charcoal drier. The waste grated coconut, after the oil is extracted, is fed to the pigs.

People need to have access to supplies of coconuts to be members of the co-operative. All members of an *aiga* theoretically has access to land (plantations), under the customary land tenure, and under the direction of the *matai* (although in contemporary *fa'aSamoa* the authority may be with an untitled person). However, individuals may not have unlimited access to and control over plantations. Men are likely to have cleared the land, and thus men are more likely to have authority over the land than women. Some individual households may not have authority over land at all. Therefore not everyone has sufficient access to coconuts to become members. Susi (Co-operative One) explained:

The problem is that some people don't have land that is clearly theirs with coconuts. Sometimes if these people pick today or they pick too much there's friction between the families (within the extended family). The co-op needs members who have land that is clearly theirs and coconuts. I have quite a bit of land and a lot of coconuts. I use some of the coconuts for oil and some for the pigs. Some members have to share their coconuts. One member just left because she said that if she picks this week there's no coconuts left for the next week when it's her turn to supply the co-op. Either there's no land or the family that has the land just takes the green coconuts so there's no *popo* (Susi, interview August 2004).

Risks and difficulties for the co-operatives

Social and financial sustainability are the biggest risks for the co-operatives. Recruiting and maintaining members appeared to be difficult. The president of Co-operative One (Tina) was reluctant to approach new members as she felt that they may feel pressured to join and then leave again. She said ‘we need more members so we can have shifts. But we can’t ask them to join or they might leave again. They have to ask us to join – they have to write a letter to us’ (Tina, interview August 2004). There is a risk that members may leave because they perceive the work making the oil to be too much and too hard for the amount of profit the co-operative (and eventually the co-operative members) receive. Members may also leave the co-operatives if they perceive that the work is not shared equally amongst the co-operative members.

The co-operatives are vulnerable to financial difficulties due to low income from the oil and costs that are currently being paid for by funding agencies (in the case of start up costs) or individual members (electricity and transport).

The co-operatives seem to have a good supply of *popo* from the members but they are vulnerable to a shortage (and a loss of members) if a better market for the *popo* becomes available. Any other ventures or companies that pay more to the coconut producers than the co-operatives are presently paying, or even the pay same amount and no further work is required after harvest, are a threat to the sustainability of the co-operative. For example, bio- diesel and or gasification of coconuts has been suggested as an alternative to electrical energy (MAFFM, 2004: 30) in the future. This would mean a new market for coconuts. It is unrealistic to raise the price that the co-operatives pay for *popo* to compete with a new buyer of coconuts because it would impact on the price required to be paid to the co-operatives for the oil and ultimately the cost of producing the soap at the factory. If the factory is uneconomic this would jeopardise the oil market for the co-operatives. The soap maker said:

As of now we (meaning the co-operatives) are buying coconuts at a certain price. If the government declares that they will buy the coconuts for more then we will have to raise the price of the coconuts and then it takes up the soap price and it will be uneconomic ...(soap maker, interview August 2004).

Finally cyclones and other natural disasters can threaten the number of coconuts available for oil production. A shortage could also push up the price being paid for *popo* and again make the soap making uneconomic. The soap maker said:

And suppose if there is a crop failure and there is a short supply for example if there is a cyclone and the coconuts fall down then there is another... even the cyclone last December there was the same problem – we lost a lot of coconuts (soap maker, interview August 2004).

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a danger of co-operatives becoming over-dependant on outside support (Thordason, 1990:2, Parnell, 1995: 234). In this case study over-dependence would make the co-operatives vulnerable. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

The soap factory

The soap factory is located approximately 15 minutes by road East of Apia (at Vailele) in a small building adjacent to the old WESTECH soap factory. The land where the soap factory is located is owned by the Samoan Land Corporation and is presently leased for ten years by a trustee of METI. The transfer of the lease to the Federation of Co-operatives is under negotiation.

The coconut oil, which is the basic ingredient for the soap, is purchased from the co-operatives. Sometimes a member of the co-operative brings it to the factory or sometimes it is dropped off at the METI office which is in Apia. It is usually brought in covered plastic buckets that hold approximately 18 – 20 kg of oil. The oil is weighed and the co-operatives are paid ST\$3.00 per kilogramme (around ST\$54.00 for a bucket).

To make the soap in the factory a measured quantity of oil is heated in a large soap boiling pan that was designed and made in Samoa, and then mixed with a lye mixture of 45% caustic lime and 55% water. For each batch of soap 200kg of oil is required (approximately ten buckets). The oil is heated by a fire underneath the pan but when the exogenous reaction with the lye begins heat is not needed. The fire uses charcoal made from waste coconut shells. Other ingredients are also added to ensure moisture is retained and to whiten the soap. For some products food-grade colouring pigments and aromatic compounds are also added. All the ingredients other than the oil are imported from India although it hoped that essential oils can be produced at the factory in the future to replace the aromatic compounds. A volunteer from Australia has been requested to help with this process. The machine for extracting essential oils is already at the factory. The essential

the aromatic compounds. A volunteer from Australia has been requested to help with this process. The machine for extracting essential oils is already at the factory. The essential oils would make use of Samoan flowers which have aromas that Samoan people can relate to.

After one and a half hours the reaction has finished and the batch is homogenous and completely mixed. The soap is then transferred to large soap moulds which have plastic covered detachable sides. The soap is stirred to remove bubbles and then left overnight to cool and solidify. The large block of soap is then placed on a cutting table and cut to small soap sized blocks with replaceable cutting frames. The moulds and cutting frames were also designed and built in Samoa. The smaller blocks are left for a week on shelves to reduce the moisture level from 16-17% to 12%. The soap is then 'stamped' into shape by a stamping machine that has been imported from India. The machine is foot operated, each soap being stamped individually.

There were several different products being produced at the time of the research – scented and unscented soap (pink, green and natural colour) and laundry soap. It is hoped that in the future the product range will be expanded to include dishwashing liquid, guest (hand) soap, body lotion, liquid soap shampoo and cooking oil. For the cooking oil a refinery is planned as although the quality of the oil from the village is satisfactory for soap making, it is not high enough quality for pure cooking oil. A loan from the European Union (EU) micro-projects programme has been attained to develop new products and set up the refinery. It is also planned to set up quality control facilities at the factory. At present only the moisture level is checked by weighing before and after drying.

The soaps are packed in mono-carton boxes that were designed in Samoa and produced in India. The mono-cartons are then packed into master cartons (imported from Fiji) that hold 160 soaps. There are different coloured mono-cartons for the different coloured soaps. As is normal in Samoa, the laundry soaps are without packaging. There are plans to have packaging of natural products such as *tapa* and baskets for the tourist market.

Goals of the soap factory

The goals of the soap factory are to provide a market for the coconut oil from the village-based co-operatives, and to provide some income for both the co-operatives and METI. In order to do this the soap factory needs to buy the oil at a reasonable price and keep down

the costs of the factory and the production so that the price of the soap can be kept at a level that can compete with other soap on the market. It is hoped that Samoans will buy the soap as it is Samoan made and marketed as such.

Assets and resources of the soap factory

The soap factory has a number of assets and resources that have helped in its establishment. The skill of the soap maker, who has previously worked in commercial soap making in India has been important. The financial and advisory support of METI to the soap factory has also been important. The soap maker said:

The support from METI – playing the role of the support organisation has been helpful. They have been supportive. My role here as a consultant has been very successful. Even though it has taken a bit longer than we expected we are getting the results (soap maker, interview August 2004).

The funding that has been attained through METI has also been very important. The skills of the Director of METI in fund raising has been integral to the establishment of the soap factory and the co-operatives. The simple but effective design of the machines, and the imported stamping machine, has had a positive impact on the successful development of the soap products.

Risks and vulnerability of the soap factory

Supply of coconut oil

The biggest risk to the success of the soap factory is the supply of coconut oil from the co-operatives. So far the supply has been sporadic and in the case of the ‘maverick’ co-operative there has been no supply at all. The factory has to wait until there is 200kg of oil before a batch can be made. The soap maker said:

At the moment we have to wait until we get the oil. We just need 2 more buckets to make another batch. We are expecting some oil tomorrow – we can make the soap on Monday. We have been waiting for 1 week for the oil (soap maker, interview August 2004).

The factory could buy in oil but that would defeat one of the goals of the venture which is to provide a market for the co-operatives. Furthermore the cost of doing this could be higher than purchasing from the co-operatives. In order to overcome this problem it is intended that the factory starts producing oil using the same methods as the village co-operatives. The soap maker explained:

As of now the bottle neck on this project is the oil. We can buy it but that is not the basic objective of the project so we are trying to work with the co-ops to overcome problems ... we need more coconut oil for commercial soap making. We can import oil to make soap but that was not the main objective. The co-ops have to start making oil. But that's the reason we have to have our own coconut oil expelling here to make soap (soap maker, interview August 2004).

Although the plan to produce some coconut oil at the factory will help reduce the vulnerability of the factory to low oil supplies, the success of the co-operatives and the subsequent continuous production of the coconut oil is critical to the soap factory. Any risks and difficulties that the co-operatives experience impact on the success of the soap factory. To keep the co-operatives going people in the villages have to work very hard and according to the soap maker, that requires people in the village who will 'take the lead' and motivate the others.

Competition

Competition is a risk for the soap making operation. Although they feel they have priced the soap competitively, they are still waiting to see the consumers' reaction. There is a risk in assuming that Samoan consumers will prefer Samoan produced soap and coconut based soap. The soap maker said:

We have just started – we have taken it for granted that our soap will be absorbed in the market ... there is an emotional effect ... people will buy the soap because it is from Samoa (soap maker, interview August 2004).

The import duty on imported machines and raw materials (16%) causes extra costs for the soap making, pushing up the price they need to receive for the soap. The soap maker suggested that the import duty was not appropriate for donor funded projects such as the soap making enterprise. The soap making venture is also vulnerable to exchange rate fluctuation that could make imported soap cheaper (although this would also reduce imported ingredients to the advantage of the factory). There is little competition from locally made Samoan soaps at present although there is some talk of the WIBDI oil being used for soap in the near future. Willex, which was the biggest Samoan soap manufacturer closed recently after a factory fire.

Safety issues

There are also some risks in terms of safety issues at the factory. There are two staff but this could increase to five when the factory is fully operational. The chemicals used in the soap making can be dangerous and the staff members are encouraged to wear goggles, gloves, and aprons for handling the chemicals. The stamp making machine is also very dangerous. There are plans to have a hand rest attached to the machine so workers must put their hands on the rest, out of the way of the machine, when they operate the foot pedal to do the stamping. The soap maker said:

The soap makers have been trained – people get the ideas quite quickly - we should train them up properly and give them proper work instructions. They need training for safety. As of now we think it is OK. They have goggles and gloves and the apron for handling the caustic soda – it is a very corrosive ... the stamping machine is quite dangerous I have seen people lose a finger. We are going to put a handle on it so they must rest their hands on the handle while the machine does the stamping (soap maker, interview August 2004).

WIBDI supported coconut oil producers

The second organisation that supports cold pressed pure virgin coconut oil production using the DME method is WIBDI. The NGO began coconut oil production several years ago before the METI co-operatives were established and although the oil producers use similar machinery and methods, WIBDI works with family-based producers, not co-operatives. There were approximately five or six individual family-based coconut oil producers being supported by WIBDI at the time of the research in April 2003. WIBDI has found working with families to be the most successful way to work with village-based enterprises in Samoa. WIBDI gives initial training to the producers. The WIBDI field workers visit the producers regularly (approximately every two weeks) and give advice and check the quality of the oil.

The coconut oil is sold to the Pure Coconut Oil Company, a private sector company which was founded, and originally owned and operated by the WIBDI Executive Director and her family. The company was set up specifically to support the marketing of village-based coconut oil production through the WIBDI and has fulfilled this function. Recently a New Zealand investor has bought into the company which is now owned 50% by the New Zealand investor, 10% by WIBDI and 40% by the Executive Director of WIBDI's family.

Without the Pure Coconut Oil Company the village-based producers would struggle to sell their product and receive the support they need. The Pure Coconut Oil Company sells pure virgin coconut oil suitable for cooking, coconut oil based insect repellent and coconut oil moisturiser, both locally and overseas. Soap products are also being developed to use the oil.

The products are certified organic through the Australian certification scheme NAASA. WIBDI provides an inspection service to village-based coconut producers (there are currently around 23 organically certified farms) to ensure the coconuts used for the oil are organically certified. This service is paid for by WIBDI through a bulk fee to NAASA (presently funded by AusAID).

The presses and electric graters used by WIBDI supported coconut oil producers are owned and maintained by the Pure Coconut Oil Company and provided to the producers free of charge as long as they continue to produce the oil for the Pure Coconut Oil Company. The presses are imported from Australia. They are readily available and a royalty is paid to the designers (Kokonut Pacific) on the amount of oil produced from the presses.

The first five driers were funded by donor funding from the Canadian Government, but now producers normally fund their own driers. A few driers have been funded by WIBDI staff members and the Pure Coconut Oil Company (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004). The design of the drier also belongs to Kokonut Pacific. The driers are constructed of metal drums, surrounded by a concrete frame with a steel top. The driers that I observed in April 2003 generated heat in the metal drums by a wood fire, but when I returned in 2004 this same producer was using charcoal made from coconut shells.

Coconut oil producers also need a simple building to house the equipment and protect the production process from rain. In some cases the roofing for the building (and the driers) were funded by loans from the Pure Coconut Oil Company that are being repaid with a very small repayments which will take some time to complete (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004).

Fa'aSamoa and village DME coconut oil production

Sale of coconuts and coconut products, and coconut oil production has been part of village life in Samoa for many years and as such is readily accepted and respected as a subsistence activity, and a way of earning cash in rural areas, in harmony with *fa'aSamoa*. Although production of coconut oil using traditional methods is normally regarded as women's work, I have seen a man (the husband of a fine mat weaver described in Chapter 7) making coconut oil in the traditional way, demonstrating the crossover of gender roles and activities described in Chapter 5.

With DME production of coconut oil, which uses non traditional machinery and drying methods, there does not appear to be any gender division of labour, except that women prepare the food for the co-operative members. Even heavy work such as lifting the portable charcoal burners in and out of the drier (to light and extinguish the fire), and operating the press is done by women. Hanna (Co-operative Two) said:

... there are six women, no men ... we need men to carry the burners but women are strong and we make fun and talk. The men are busy planting bananas and taro in the plantation. Like my brother he has just come back from the plantation (Hanna, interview August 2004).

The aim of METI was to involve large numbers of people (whole communities) in the coconut oil venture in order to spread the benefits widely. As discussed in Chapter 5 this has often been the reason that co-operatives have been set up in Samoa in the past (O'Meara 1990: 61). However, co-operative and collective entrepreneurial work is rare in Samoan culture outside of families. Most collective or communal work in Samoa is for a single community purpose such as a road to the village, or church or other community building. The building for Co-operative One was built in this way by co-operative members. However, working co-operatively in an on-going entrepreneurial venture is different. Norms and practices of *fa'aSamoa* demand that younger members respect older members, and provide *tautua* (service) to those in authority. Production within the *aiga*, or the household, is based on these principles. This is completely opposed to co-operative values that dictate equal work for all members. Co-operative members in this case study were thus torn between two ideologies, the *aiga* and the co-operative, resulting in friction between members when the work was not shared equally. Members of the co-operatives in this case study had unequal power as, in line with *fa'aSamoa*, status and age strongly influenced decision making, who was listened to most, and the amount of work members are expected to do.

The co-operatives seem to depend on leaders who motivate the others. It was mentioned by members a number of times that it would be easier in a family where decisions were easier to make as one person has clear authority over others. For example Susi said ‘maybe it would be better with just a family so they don’t get upset with each other’ (Susi, interview August 2004).

The importance of *fa’alavelave* and social commitments in Samoan culture has both positive and negative impacts on the co-operatives. Such events can disrupt the production of oil by the co-operative, because even if one or two members are occupied with *fa’alavelave*, the others are unlikely to work. On the other hand the need for cash for *fa’alavelave* is one of the most important things that motivates Samoan people to earn cash. Sometimes money is borrowed either formally or informally for *fa’alavelave* and this needs to be repaid.

The customary land system in Samoa (see Chapter 4) provides subsistence living for rural Samoans, and can also provide access to land for commercial enterprise. However, this case study demonstrated that the customary land system, while providing access to resources (in this case *popo*) for some, did not guarantee that potential coconut oil producers could have control over how the coconuts on their family’s land were used. Only those people who had unlimited and unrestricted access to *popo* were able to join the co-operatives, thereby excluding some members of the community.

Conclusions: village coconut oil (DME) in Samoa

NGO support

The chapter explained that there are two NGOs supporting coconut oil production in Samoa, both using very different approaches, WIBDI focussing on individual families, and METI focussing on communities through co-operatives. However, both have provided support by providing start up equipment, training and markets. WIBDI has provided micro-finance and METI will provide micro-finance in the future. The METI supported co-operatives will need to pay for their own buildings and equipment in the future and the WIBDI producers pay for their own building and driers. The major difference between these NGOs is that WIBDI works with individual families while METI has established co-operatives. The chapter highlighted some of the relationships between *fa’aSamoa* and co-operatives that threatened the success and sustainability of the METI supported co-

operatives, illustrating and supporting literature reviewed in Chapter 5 which suggested that operating successful co-operatives in the Pacific Islands was problematic (Crocombe, 1990: 60-61; Brooks, 1996: 4-6).

Village oil production and soap making in Samoa

The chapter highlighted that it is important that rural people receive sufficient reward, either financial, food, housing and care, and/or less tangible rewards such as status and respect that enhance the *aiga* and support the values of *fa'aSamoa*, to ensure the oil production and soap making are worthwhile activities for them, and they continue to use these activities as livelihood strategies. While it appeared that coconut oil production *could* bring financial benefits to village people reducing 'cash' hardship and enhancing the status of the *aiga*, the extent of the financial benefits were not always sufficient to sustain the motivation of the producers. In several cases the WIBDI producers had given up producing oil, even after investing in the driers. In terms of the METI supported co-operatives the financial rewards were mainly from the sale of *popo* by individual members or in the case of some co-operatives, sale of oil in markets other than the soap factory. Even so, a significant number of members had left the co-operatives. In both cases, the supply of village produced oil was a major constraint to the factories that were providing a market for the oil.

One benefit of this type of micro-enterprise is that cash earned is likely to come from outside the village, and perhaps from outside the country. This helps the village economy. However, to achieve this type of marketing, strategic market planning and implementation is very important in coconut oil production, production of coconut oil based products, and soap making. In general, village people lack the training, experience, contacts, communications and resources to carry out such marketing processes, and the partner organisations that support them are very important.

Past experience shows that enterprises succeed best in this environment if they can blend and integrate with village life and *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan way of life). While some aspects of Samoan culture and tradition suit this type of venture very well, others are not entirely compatible to such a venture. The aspects of *fa'aSamoa* which blended well with this venture were the traditional product (coconuts) being used, the non-gendered aspects of the work involved in producing DME coconut oil, and the motivation for cash that was provided by *fa'alavelave*. However, there were tensions and tradeoffs between *fa'aSamoa*

and the venture which jeopardised the success and sustainability of the micro-enterprises. These included attendance at *fa'alavelave*, the equal sharing of work which was against the values and practice of *fa'aSamoa* in terms of *tautua* (service), respect and *pule* (authority), and due to customary land systems not necessarily guaranteeing access to *popo* for some community members.

The chapter explained that many of the assets and resources that are needed for coconut oil production and soap making (for example natural resources, human assets, and social/cultural assets) are available in rural Samoa and this makes the enterprise attractive as a livelihood strategy. However, the chapter also highlighted that there are other assets and resources that are lacking such as skill, machinery and buildings and financial resources. Training needs to be an ongoing priority and is beyond the financial resources of village people. Furthermore, a substantial lump sum is necessary for start up costs. Ideally start up costs could be covered by a grant from an aid organisation. However, it is difficult for a village to apply for funds without the support of a legal entity, such as a local NGO or other organisation. It is possible that families or groups in the village could obtain some or all of the 'start up' costs in the venture by loaning money from one of micro-credit funds available in Samoa (for example through METI (in the future), DBS, SBEC, WIBDI, or SPBD). However, repaying a loan adds considerable costs and is likely to make the venture barely profitable for the first years. Ongoing costs must be paid for from the income of the venture. If this is not possible, then the venture is not sustainable. In addition to covering costs the venture must return reasonable cash profit to all the rural village people involved in the venture, not just those involved in managing or 'caretaking' the venture.

The chapter identified a large number of risks that are involved in the setting up of ventures for coconut oil production and soap making. These risks make it difficult for village people to have total control over a venture, and usually require them to form partnerships with urban organisations (eg NGOs) to support the village micro-entrepreneurs, finance the training and provide ongoing technical and business support that would be necessary. Both the NGOs WIBDI and METI were promoting village-based coconut oil production, but were processing the oil in the Apia using separate business structures that were associated with the NGOs so that part of the profits of the processing is returned to the NGOs. The coconut oil production and processing of the oil thus brings (or could bring) financial reward to NGOs, even if indirectly. It was evident that a few of the

village-based coconut oil producers were friends and family of NGO staff. Both of these factors, while perhaps seeming to be somewhat dubious in terms of the aims of NGOs, are important in terms of ensuring the financial sustainability of the NGOs, and the ventures they are supporting.

While partnerships between village micro-entrepreneurs and NGOs can be beneficial, and indeed are essential for many micro-enterprise ventures, such partnerships can make village people reliant on the partner organisation, and vulnerable in terms of its integrity, financial sustainability and competence. It is therefore important that the NGOs are well funded and the staff well trained, and that the aims and operations of the NGOs or individuals are entirely transparent, and compatible with the outcomes expected by the village people.

This chapter described a case study about village-based coconut oil production in Samoa, a micro-enterprise that has the potential to support sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. The next chapter, Chapter 7 Fine Mat Weaving: a Case Study in Samoa, describes a further case study about micro-entrepreneurs in rural Samoa. The analyses of these case studies, which use the sustainable livelihoods approach as a basis, explore micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy in rural Samoa, and the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and the case study micro-enterprises.

Chapter 7 Fine Mat Weaving: a Case Study in Samoa

Introduction

This chapter explores fine mat weaving in Samoa and the way in which the NGO, Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI), is developing this craft as a village livelihood strategy (see Chapter 5 for information about WIBDI). Once again I have used the sustainable livelihoods approach as a framework for analysis, and have highlighted the relationships between fine mat weaving as a livelihood strategy, and *fa'aSamoa*. This case study was not originally planned as part of the research. However, while conducting the field research on village coconut oil and soap making with WIBDI, the opportunity to explore fine mat weaving was presented to me. It was clear that a study of this village-based livelihood strategy could greatly enhance the depth of the research as a whole.

Following this introduction, the chapter is in five parts. Firstly, a background to fine mats in the context of *fa'aSamoa* is provided. Secondly, the process of making fine mats is described. Thirdly, the support provided by WIBDI for fine mat weaving is described and discussed. Fourthly, fine mat weaving is discussed as a livelihood strategy, and finally conclusions are drawn about the case study. The chapter addresses research findings relating to the participants, both fine mat weavers and those supporting fine mat weaving as a micro-enterprise, and to the case study as a whole.

The findings in this chapter are derived from a number of sources. A review of literature, supported by informal interviews, provided much of the information on the cultural and technical aspects of fine mats. The information in the section on WIBDI and fine mats was mainly a result of field work (see Appendix 4 Field research programme), observation and interviews.

During my field work I firstly interviewed a number of research participants (including field workers and the Executive Director of WIBDI), then travelled with WIBDI field staff for four days and three nights on the Island of Savai'i and one day on the Island of Upolu (see map of Samoa in Appendix 8). During this travel, we visited all the fine mat weavers currently 'contracted' by WIBDI on Savai'i (that were available on that day), and some in Upolu. We also visited some potential weavers, and some women who

were weaving mats for themselves but were not contracted to WIBDI at that time. At nights we stayed at the homes of WIBDI staff or their family. The home of one of the WIBDI staff was also the WIBDI base for Savai'i at the time of the research. Being together with three field workers for several days gave me the opportunity to talk at length about the WIBDI and fine mat weaving. I also asked about other aspects of WIBDI.

The field work consisted of semi-structured interviews with the Executive Director of WIBDI, an informal interview with an international consultant who was running a training course for WIBDI staff, informal interviews with other participants who had knowledge of WIBDI, semi-structured and informal interviews with five of the WIBDI staff (some of whom were field workers), and occasional short interviews with the weavers (translated by the field workers). It was not possible to conduct in-depth interviews with the weavers because the field workers needed to make the visits short and had their own business to conduct. However, I was able to ask the field workers about each client as we travelled. I was also able to closely observe the weavers as they worked and as they interacted with the WIBDI field workers, and members of the weavers families who were present during the visits. This was carefully noted at the time and transcribed later. It was possible that the results of the case study were biased due to translation and explanations being provided by the WIBDI field workers. This issue has been addressed in Chapter 3.

The case study on fine mat weaving in Samoa in this chapter is somewhat shorter than the case studies in the previous chapter. This is firstly due to less in-depth data being collected from the participants due to the use of translators, and the circumstances of the field research. This was explained in detail in Chapter 3. Secondly, unlike the previous case study, the micro-entrepreneurs in this case study worked independently, rather than in a co-operative, so the findings relate only to the micro-entrepreneurs and their supporting organisation (WBDI). A large section the previous chapter described the structure and operation of the co-operative that the micro-entrepreneurs worked within.

***Fa'aSamoa* and fine mats**

The making and gifting of fine mats is a very important part of Samoan culture, both traditionally, and in contemporary *fa'aSamoa*. The practices and the meanings related

to fine mats have evolved, but as Schoeffel notes ‘of all the treasured goods of the Samoans, fine mats alone have occupied a central part in their rites to the present day’ (Schoeffel, 1999: 118). The mythical origin of fine mats was from goddesses. Schoeffel (1999: 118) describes one oral history that traces the *pandanus* plant used for the fibres in the fine mat being first planted by the goddess Nafanua, in the village of Falealupo (west Savai’i). The first fine mat (according to this oral history) was produced in Puluotu and was carried ‘to the world’ by Nafanua’s father’s ship. The fine mat was passed through successive generations of women being given different names over time. The fine mat was eventually called ‘Tasi ae afe’ (one in a thousand), because when this fine mat was presented by the great granddaughter at her wedding to the supreme god Tagaloaalagi, it surpassed the thousands of fine mats of her husband’s kin because of its history and origins. Eventually the fine mat was passed through the family to Salamasina, who was the female ancestor of many of Samoa’s most highly ranked *matai* titles (Schoeffel, 1999: 118).

Fine mats are given titles, one of the historical names for the most prestigious of fine mats being *ie malo*, a title that can be given to any particularly good fine mat (Schoeffel, 1999: 119). Mats are given names according to who has presented them and the occasion on which they are presented. As fine mats are presented as gifts they are announced by their names (this still happens in contemporary *fa’a Samoa*) (Schoeffel, 1999: 119). A fine mat presented at a *matai* investiture by the family hosting the ceremony is called ‘*ie o le nofo*. Lilomaiava-Doktor explains the naming of fine mats at a funeral where the exchange of special fine mats is “compulsory”:

The ‘*ie o le mavaega* (farewell mat from son or daughter-in-law’s family) and ‘*ie o le measulu* (children’s farewell mat). If it is the husband who has died, at his funeral, the wife’s family presents to this family the ‘*ie o le mavaega* and the ‘*ie o le measulu* and the husband’s family does the same if it is the wife who has died. ‘*Ie o le measulu* is only presented if there are children from the family... In all the different ritual occasions special fine mats ... marked by particular names are always exchanged’ (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 206-207).

Other names for the fine mats include *ie sae*, *moe i le aufuefue*, *pepeve’a* or *pipii i le eleele*.

Schoeffel (1999) suggests that before Christianity in Samoa, and in the early Christian period, fine mats were passed around Samoan ‘nobility’ affirming peoples rights to

nobility and ‘divine ancestry’ (Schoeffel, 1999: 122). In this period, fine mats were objects associated only with the marriage of a ‘noble’ bride to a *matai*, and as such had special value attached to them (Schoeffel, 1999: 128). The fine mats had red feather borders (the feathers were rare and brought by Fijian and Tongan traders), red being the colour of nobility in Samoa and throughout Polynesia (Schoeffel, 1999: 126). In contemporary *fa’aSamoa*, as well as being ‘compulsory’ as gifts at funerals, fine mats are gifted and exchanged during ceremonies marking other major life events such as births, weddings, and title taking (Oceanside Museum of Art, 2003), reinforcing the values and practices of *fa’aSamoa*. As one rural woman explained:

Fine mats are used for weddings and when children are born. When my daughter and her husband brought their son here for the first time her mother-in-law brought a very big fine mat. It was a present for my grandson’s first visit. They spent a week here and when they went back they took ten small sleeping mats and a big fine mat ... At a wedding, the girl’s family provide the fine mats and the boy’s family provides the money. Sometimes it’s not even. The girl’s family have to provide the food as well (rural woman, interview April 2003).

Schoeffel suggests that fine mats have become increasing ‘synonymous with *mea Samoa* (Samoa things)’ and are now ‘a new iconic status as indicators of Samoan identity’ (Schoeffel, 1999: 133). Emigration, and remittances, has allowed all Samoans (not just those of noble birth) to host major life events (Schoeffel, 1999: 136). Inter family rivalry for status and prestige has contributed to the increasing number, and scale of *fa’alavelave* where fine mats are gifted and exchanged. The increased number of *matai* titles in Samoa (see Chapter 4) has increased the number of *matai* investitures. Fine mats are the traditional form of wealth for a Samoan family and each fine mat carries with it a social history, including who made the mat, who owned it, who wore it and where it had been presented in the past. Thus the older, the more historically significant, the finer, and the better quality the mat, the more value it has. A New Zealand-based Samoan who had returned to Samoa for her grandmother’s funeral explained:

Relatives brought fine mats and money – the fine mats are not used for anything, just currency. They had them stored at home. The older and finer, the more they are worth. If you don’t have them you have to buy them ... (New Zealand based Samoan, interview April 2003).

The making of fine mats is controlled by women. The making and gifting of fine mats reinforces gender roles and social position as well as Samoan culture, tradition and art (Oceanside Museum of Art, 2003). Many different types of mats are made by Samoan women for use as bedding, room dividers, floor mats and for *fa'alavelave*. Although described as mats, because they use the same 'plaiting' technique used in making mats, traditionally the fine mat was more like silky material, so fine was the weave (Schoeffel, 1999: 118). These fine mats that are used only for ceremonial purposes have traditionally been called *ie toga*. Recently, at a symposium on *Le Ie o le Mal* (the national fine mat) there was a move to modify the commonly used name for Samoan fine mats from '*ie toga*' to '*ie Samoa*' to reinforce the fact that the fine mats are Samoan, not Tongan. Publications, radio and television were urged to use the term '*ie Samoa*' (Tavita, 2003: 1). I have thus used the term '*ie Samoa*' in this thesis.

The '*ie Samoa*' is regarded as far superior to other types of mat and has no functional purpose other than as an extremely valuable item for gifting and ceremonial use. '*Ie Samoa*' are sometimes worn, or draped over the coffin at funerals, especially if the deceased person was of high rank. The fine mat has been described as 'currency' in that it serves as an item that bestows enormous pride and prestige on the giver. However, Schoeffel, in her paper in 1999, suggested that the 'fine mat of today bears little resemblance to the ancestral object of the same name' (Schoeffel, 1999: 137). Schoeffel notes that value in contemporary *fa'aSamoa* is commonly associated with size rather than fineness and colour (which was traditionally very pale), those fine mats of two by four meters or larger being the most prestigious (Schoeffel, 1999: 137). As I explain later in the Chapter, WIBDI has, through training and support, re-established the techniques of producing fine mats of the type that were being made earlier in Samoa's history. Schischka (2005: 100) describes how a Mrs Vi Vipae, from the small island community of Manono, who had making fine mats since she was a young girl, helped WIBDI revive the traditional skills of fine mat weaving, not only in her community, but throughout Samoa. The revival of a traditional skill that was once practised by grandparents in earlier times, is much appreciated by WIBDI clients (Schischka, 2005: 100).

The coarser mats that are used for functional purposes are called *lalaga*. Increasingly Samoan families have been giving *lalaga*, rather than *ie Samoa*, in large quantities (in

bundles of five or ten) at weddings, funerals, title ceremonies, church dedications and other ceremonies. The *lalaga* uses much coarser strands of the *pandanus* plant and thus takes only a few days to produce whereas the *ie Samoa* not only uses different variety of *pandanus* but the strands are much finer and thus the mat takes months to produce. At the Le Ie o le Mal symposium, the Samoan Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, urged Samoans to return to the traditional protocol of giving one *ie Samoa* mat rather than ‘numerous mats, in rolls of ten’. The prime minister went on to say ‘... as recent as 1985 I’ve seen families exchange this one fine mat, I don’t know where they’ve gotten this idea of parading thousands of *lalaga* ...’ (Tavita, 2003: 1).

Making fine mats (*ie Samoa*)

Making the fine mats (*ie Samoa*) requires skill and patience. The mats are woven strand by strand, with the weavers seated on the floor. Depending on the type and fineness of the mat, the mat being woven is on a low table, or the weavers sit on the mat itself which is covered with a cloth or a woven floor mat. While the actual weaving of the mats is carried out by women, my observation was that older members of the family (both men and women) help with preparing the leaves of the *pandanus* plant for the weavers.

The *pandanus* plants are specially grown for the mat making. According to Buck (1971: 211) there are three varieties of *pandanus* used in mat making *paogo*, *fala* and *'ie*, the leaves of which are known as *lau paogo*, *lau fala* and *lau 'ie*. The *'ie* variety is used for *ie Samoa* and during the Le Ie o le Mal symposium villagers were encouraged to plant more of this ‘tree’ (Tavita, 1996). The *lau 'ie* (leaves of the *'ie* variety) are cut, the serrated edges are removed, and the leaves are trimmed along the midrib to remove sharp spines thus making the leaves softer. The under-layer of the *lau 'ie* is then peeled off at the base of the leaf to leave a section of the thin upper surface. The leaves are exposed briefly to the sun and ‘baked’ to further soften them. Then the rest of the under-layer is peeled off and is bleached in the sea, and dried in the sun (Buck, 1971: 275, Schoeffel, 1999: 118). The prepared leaves are rolled up into ‘reels’ which I observed stored in the living *fales* under beds, piled by an inside wall and in plastic bags. The leaves are deftly cut into strips by the weavers as they make the mats. *'ie Samoa* have an average of 12 *pandanus* strips per inch (2.5cm), but can have

considerably more (Oceanside Museum of Art, 2003: 1). As one rural woman explained:

We cut the *pandanus* on a fine day. We plant it especially, one variety for the fine mats and one variety for bigger weave mats we use on the floor. We dry the *pandanus* in the sun for 3-4 days and then Mum rolls the leaves up in a big roll. I do the weaving of the fine mats because I'm good at it. My sister isn't so good at it but she does make some of the floor mats (rural woman, interview March 2003).

The fine mats range in size, the bigger, softer and paler in colour the mats are, the more valuable. The fine mats (*ie Samoa*) are traditionally measured by 'hands', an outstretched hand from thumb to little finger. Coarser mats are measured by 'feet' (a real foot not 12 inches). It takes around four to five months to make an eight hands by ten hands *ie Samoa* mat working every day for up to five hours. This time varies according to how fine the strands of *pandanus* are and how fast the weaver is.

WIBDI and fine mats (*ie Samoa*)

About ten years ago, WIBDI first became aware of the potential for fine mat weaving to be developed as an income earning strategy for village women. At that time the art of weaving very fine (*ie Samoa*) mats was almost lost. WIBDI staff learnt how to make the mats and then passed the skill on to others at workshops. According to WIBDI field workers:

When WIBDI first started the fine mat weaving there were only a few women left in Samoa who could weave the very fine mats. The WIBDI staff learnt how to do it and then they had workshops ... (WIBDI field workers, interviews April 2003).

Women used to weave mats with very fine strands. Then they started to use bigger strands, it was much quicker. But WIBDI encourages them to make the very fine mats, it takes longer and they can make more money (WIBDI field workers, interviews April 2003).

The goals of the fine mat weaving venture for the WIBDI are firstly that the vision and objectives of WIBDI are being achieved through providing rural village women with opportunities for participation in a village economy. Secondly the venture provides income for WIBDI through a small amount of the payment of the sponsors (commission), and, importantly, funding from donor agencies. Thirdly WIBDI aims to revive the cultural significance of the fine mat. WIBDI did not deliberately seek recognition, but the venture has provided WIBDI with status and recognition from the public (government) sphere, the private sector sphere and the traditional sphere.

Originally, in the early stages of the project, support to the village people started when WIBDI staff approached a prominent women in a village and she helped WIBDI to arrange a workshop for the village. The village was selected for a number of reasons. Field workers explained that the village may have requested support, or a village may have been regarded as having a 'poor economy' and as requiring support. The village may be remote and have few opportunities for economic activity and therefore be selected in order to provide opportunities (field workers, interviews April 2003). Sometimes villages were selected because the field workers knew someone in the village who were keen to join the programme. However, now WIBDI is constantly being approached by village representatives (both men and women) (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004).

During the workshops the village people are taught about household budgeting, empowerment, time management, saving and loans. For example they are trained to use the money they earn for school fees and uniforms, food for the children and health expenses. Because *fa'avelave* is part of the way of life, village people are encouraged to 'plan for *fa'avelave* rather than use whatever cash they have' (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004). Both men and women attend the training and men are told about supporting the women when they are weaving by taking on cooking and other daily tasks usually performed by the women. The women are taught the skills for production of *ie Samoa* mats.

WIBDI seeks 'sponsors' (or buyers) for the *ie Samoa* mats. These are usually Apia based or overseas Samoans who want the mats for cultural reasons, or customers of other nationalities who are buying the mat for aesthetic or altruistic reasons. The sponsors are generally found by word of mouth but a web site is being developed to publicise the venture. The sponsors specify the type and size of mat that they want and pay WIBDI. WIBDI then arrange for a village woman to make the mat to order. WIBDI calculate the amount of time that the mat should take, and the number of 'hands' that should be completed each week by the weaver. The weavers are paid on a weekly basis. The amount paid to the weavers is \$ST100 per week. However, the quotas are strictly adhered to. WIBDI field workers visit each week to measure the mats, check the quality, pay 'wages', accept savings and take loan repayments. If the

quota has not been reached the weaver does not receive any money. As one WIBDI field worker explained :

The mats have to be finished by a certain time for the sponsors. Basically the cost is divided over that time, and paid to the weavers as 'wages', usually \$ST100 per week. WIBDI have to be very strict about a quota or the mat won't get finished (WIBDI field worker, interview April 2003).

The women weavers would prefer to receive all the money for the mat immediately – they become impatient receiving it little by little. A WIBDI field worker explained that the women often ask about this at the training. She said:

The women ask 'Why don't the sponsors give us the money straight away? Why do we have to wait?' The WIBDI people answer that they are concerned with the quality, size of the strips and so on. That's why they have to give the money bit by bit (WIBDI field worker, interview August 2003).

However, the main reason for paying the weavers weekly is so that the weaver can experience working for a regular income, where she is paid for work done (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004).

The village-based women weavers have been trained to work three hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. The women generally work in their own homes but sometimes groups of women meet and work together. There are between 25 and 30 weavers working around Samoa with WIBDI. There are more weavers on the island of Savai'i than Upolu, possibly because there are fewer other opportunities for income generation on Savai'i. One research participant said that 'Savai'i women work harder'. The number of weavers varies at any one time. Sometimes the WIBDI commission mats even if there is no immediate sponsor for them. The sponsor is subsequently found. At the present time there are more sponsors than weavers.

WIBDI must continually find sponsors to purchase the fine mats. While this does not seem to be a problem, it requires ongoing energy, time and commitment by a NGO with limited resources. Much of the sponsorship is gained by word of mouth, especially through the Executive Director of WIBDI who travels overseas a great deal and has a wide range of contacts. This marketing strategy is vulnerable to staff changes. The proposed web site is one way that the marketing strategy can be widened to reduce this vulnerability.

WIBDI is vulnerable in that it has been difficult to engage and retain weavers. However, recent publicity and government support has stimulated interest in fine mat weaving. Furthermore, some weavers do not reach their quotas on a weekly basis. This makes it difficult for WIBDI to provide good customer service to the sponsors. The reasons for this lack of weavers and lack of motivation vary. Not all women have the patience and skill to do the weaving. Some women have other commitments (such as child minding and housework) that other family members are unwilling to take responsibility for. Sometimes social commitments such as *fa'alavelave* or church obligations take priority. In one village, of the ten weavers who had first started working with WIBDI only three remained.

In June 2004 the Executive Director of WIBDI explained to me that a group of fine mat weavers in Savai'i, who were previously working with WIBDI, had decided to sell their fine mats without the support of WIBDI (Executive Director of WIBDI, interview June 2004). While this could be viewed as a positive step in terms of the village women gaining the confidence to be independent and self motivated, it poses a threat to WIBDI. The quality of the mats was no longer being monitored and furthermore, the move threatens the numbers of fine mat weavers associated with the organisation.

Sometimes women prefer to keep their fine mats rather than be paid by WIBDI for making them. There is a trade-off between the need for cash, and the need for mats for gifting at important social events and ceremonies. For example a rural village woman spent much of her day making fine mats. When asked why she did not seek to join with WIBDI and be paid for making fine mats she answered 'well, I need the money, but I need the fine mats more ... you see my uncle is getting old ... if I had to buy one, well it would cost me thousands ...' (rural woman, interview April 2003).

WIBDI rely heavily on the integrity, skills and competence of the field staff who monitor and support the weavers, run workshops and handle the record keeping and finances in the villages. WIBDI are fortunate to have some experienced, hard working and competent field staff at the time of the research. However, WIBDI are vulnerable to funding cuts which could reduce money available for staff wages, and staff changes.

While the aim of WIBDI is to give opportunities to village women to generate cash which will lead to development, they have no actual control over the way the cash is

spent. There is a danger that weavers lose control of the cash and it is used for purposes that do not fulfil the objectives of WIBDI.

Fine mats – a livelihood strategy

Goals and outcomes of the weavers

The weavers who are involved with WIBDI expect a cash return for their weaving. The ability of women to contribute cash to their family because of involvement with WIBDI programmes was a source of pride to them. WIBDI encourage women to use the money that they earn for ‘development’ purposes – school fees, uniforms, food for the children, housing and health expenses. However, being able to contribute is also important for contributions to church and the community. Schischka (2005: 100) notes that a key theme of the focus groups of WIBDI clients he ran during his research was ‘the ability that participation in the programmes of WIBDI gave to contribute more resources to the local church’. WIBDI have no control over how the money is spent. The money is first handed to the weaver but traditionally the money is then passed to the head of the family (usually a male), who then distributes and uses the money for the family. Women usually do the ‘budgeting’ for the family and can ask for money, but the head of the family has ultimate control of the money. However, monitoring and evaluation of WIBDI projects indicates that women are taking a more active role in management of money with their husbands (Executive Director of WIBDI, email correspondence October 2004). Savings are kept in the name of the woman weaver, but this money is vulnerable to requests from relatives. It was mentioned by a WIBDI field worker that some women keep their savings with WIBDI secret to avoid requests for cash (WIBDI field worker, interview April 2003).

In some cases the cash from the weaving is the only cash income the family receives. Some villages had no other significant sources of income generation. There were examples where cash from weaving had had a significant impact on the families. A WIBDI field worker explained:

In this village, for one of the weavers, that’s their main source of income. They were living in a very simple *fale*. They saved up and now they have a concrete house and have established a water tank. Before that they had to spend a lot of time getting water ... now they spend less time. The husband does most of the chores now so she can do the weaving (WIBDI field worker, interview April 2003).

Not only had this family increased their standard of living, but the importance given to the weaving had meant that some household chores of the fine mat weaver had been taken over by her husband.

Another young woman had taken a WIBDI loan to pay for the timber for a *fale* for her family. Her weaving, the only source of earned income for this family, was repaying the loan. According to a WIBDI field worker, this woman was also saving to pay for her school fees for her brother and a tin roof for the *fale* (WIBDI field worker, interview April 2003). The income earned from fine mat weaving is also important for contributions to church and the community.

The weavers receive significant status for the weaving of fine mats (*ie Samoa*). In most cases it is the training WIBDI has provided that has allowed women to revive a traditional skill. The status comes from the cultural and social standing of skilled weavers, and, since the WIBDI venture, for their capacity to earn cash. This status is empowering for women. A field worker said:

Doing the weaving, especially if its good quality and they stick at it gives them status. People borrow money from weavers. The money is usually paid back ... The quickness and quality of the weaving are important. Good weavers gain status from these things (WIBDI field worker, interview April 2003).

Other members of the clients' family became involved with the micro-enterprises. Older people help with preparing the *pandanus* and younger members develop talents which would help them in the future. This increased status, increased income earning and empowerment has implications on the whole household (as discussed in Chapter 2). Some men were demonstrating their support by helping out with household tasks normally performed by women. While I was visiting one weaver, her husband was preparing a meal and caring for a child. This notion of empowerment, workloads and household dynamics is addressed (in relation to this case study) in Chapter 8.

Weavers' risks and vulnerability

There are few risks to the weavers and vulnerability is low. The work is a continuation of work which is traditional and well accepted. For the weavers the benefits of learning how to weave the traditional form of the *ie Samoa* are cultural as well as financial.

Even if the weavers never finish the mats for WIBDI they can keep them and use them to increase their family's status and wealth.

There are few start up costs, and few expenses. The weavers are not vulnerable to business cash flow problems. However, WIBDI clients are able to take loans from WIBDI that are not related to income generation. If the weavers take out a loan with WIBDI they are vulnerable (for details about loans administered by WIBDI see Chapter 5). If they fail to complete the WIBDI quotas for their fine mat or if they choose to keep the fine mat for themselves they have to find other ways of repaying the loan. One WIBDI weaver that we visited had decided to keep the fine mat for herself. She had taken a WIBDI loan but had no cash to repay the loan. WIBDI asked for some sleeping mats from the family and sold them to repay the loan.

There is a risk to the weavers that they will not be able to reach their quota because of other commitments or lack of motivation. If this happens they receive no payment. A WIBDI weaver that we visited had been working for ten weeks on her fine mat. She should have completed five 'hands' but she had only completed three and a half 'hands'. Therefore she received no payment that week. At another village the WIBDI weaver was not at home and was apparently attending a *fa'alavelave*. She also received no payment for the week. Another weaver we visited, who had previously completed two fine mats for WIBDI, was currently making a mat for herself. When she had finished that mat she would rejoin the WIBDI scheme.

The women weavers are reliant on the regular visits and the payment of the field workers. Because communication is difficult they are not always sure exactly when the field workers will arrive. They are also reliant on the accurate measurements of the field workers. The work itself was reported by some weavers to be difficult and mentally tiring as long periods of concentration are required. However, another view is that although concentration is required at the beginning of the mat, the rest of the fine mat weaving can be relaxing and a pleasant social experience. Anecdotal evidence suggested that some women were concerned about their eyesight being harmed.

Assets and resources

One of the reasons that the risk is low for women is that most of the assets and resources required to start and operate a fine mat weaving micro-enterprise supported by WIBDI are readily available at little or no financial cost.

Natural assets and resources

The *pandanus* plant and the climate (rain for bleaching and sun for drying) are the two most important natural resources required for the fine mat weaving enterprise. Both are readily available at virtually no cost.

Human assets and resources

The human resources and capabilities of the fine mat weavers have been enhanced and developed by the WIBDI fine mat weaving programme. The fine mat weaving had provided new opportunities for the women, both in terms of acquiring traditional skills and knowledge, and in terms of increased cash income.

Physical assets

Few physical assets are required. The weavers work in the living *fales* and require a few simple implements for stripping *pandanus* leaves and cutting the strips. A low wooden table is also sometimes used. Transport is not required as WIBDI collect the mats and take them to the sponsors.

Financial assets

Few financial resources are required to start fine mat weaving or maintain the enterprise. Most of the small utensils needed are likely to be already owned by the family for other mat weaving.

Social and cultural assets

The social networks of both family and community are important to the weavers. Women's committees can support and encourage weavers, and are often the catalyst for arranging workshops with WIBDI in the village. Often women's committees arrange for days when weavers work together at their committee house. Some women prefer to weave with others to get this mutual support.

The training workshops run by WIBDI are crucial to the success of the programme. In terms of human assets, the skills of the weavers, both in weaving and managing the cash earned, are provided by the training workshops. Unfortunately, due to the limited

resources of WIBDI the workshops are only once a month and only in villages that are working with WIBDI. Some women take advantage of the training although they never become part of the WIBDI venture. A field worker explained:

One village in Savai'i used to weave the very soft ones (mats). When WIBDI came they said 'we are used to weaving, we don't need WIBDI to give us advice. We've been doing it our whole lives, we don't need checking'. But we answered 'we don't force you to join WIBDI only those that want to can join' (WIBDI field worker, interview April 2003).

One of the reasons that some women do not join or stay with the programme is that they have other commitments both work and social.

The contemporary value and meanings attributed to fine mat weaving, as an integral part of the gifting and exchange in *fa'aSamoa*, is the impetus for the craft of fine mat weaving. In this respect, the tradition of fine mat weaving, as well as the contemporary meanings that have evolved from those traditions, must be considered cultural assets of great value. This cultural asset provides motivation for the activity, skills and well-being from the status that is achieved by participating in the activity and ensures large numbers of sponsors (buyers) for the fine mats (often overseas Samoans). There is a ready market for high quality mats at good prices due to the cultural significance and importance of the mats.

The family and aiga, and the relationships of the family, is an important asset in the fine mat weaving. The cultural value of fine mats gives status to the weaver, and her family, providing considerable motivation for the activity. The skills and knowledge of mat weaving are revered as special and as deserving status in the family and community. The family supports the fine mat weaver in her work. The WIBDI training programme encourages other family members, especially men, to take over some of the responsibilities of the weavers. This was evident in one family we visited where the man was doing some of the chores normally done by women. Grandparents also help out.

Links and markets

This chapter has shown that WIBDI is providing the link between the public, private sector and traditional spheres. Linking the weavers (micro-entrepreneurs) with the private sector markets is essential for the success of the venture. The weavers could not, on their own, find the urban and overseas buyers.

WIBDI is also linking the weavers in the traditional sphere with the public (government) sphere. In April 2003 a national symposium was organised by WIBDI on *Le Ie o le Malo* (The National Fine Mat). The symposium was attended by village mayors and weavers from throughout Samoa (Tavita, 2003). The Prime Minister gave a keynote address at the seminar which was broadcast live. In his address he supported the venture and encouraged Samoan people to return to the tradition of weaving fine mats (*ie Samoa*). He also supported the Executive Director of WIBDI who has been advocating the gifting of one '*ie Samoa* mat at *fa'alavelave* rather than ten poor quality mats. Sialaoa notes that the government, as one initiative in 'hardship reduction' is 'advocating a return to the making of traditional fine mats' (Sialaoa, 2005: 4).

The Executive Director of WIBDI explained that this 'seminar' was the result of six years of work and was a major step forward. The seminar was very successful in raising awareness and increasing the status of both WIBDI and the weavers, thus increasing the sustainability of the fine mat weaving venture. There was a lot of interest from both men and women in the villages following the symposium and the resulting publicity.

Conclusion

The chapter explained the way in which fine mat weaving is embedded in both traditional and contemporary *fa'aSamoa*, and how traditional fine mat weaving has been revived, developed, and supported as a micro-enterprise, by WIBDI. The chapter argued that fine mat weaving is a low risk micro-enterprise for weavers. Assets and resources required for fine mat weaving are readily available, and the micro-enterprise is likely to be successful in that fine mat weaving can provide livelihood outcomes for the weavers (including cash), and provide status for the weaver and her family. Even should the fine mats not be sold, they are valuable to the family as a cultural asset.

The chapter explained that few physical assets are required for fine mat weaving, leading to very little finance being needed for start up costs. Natural resources are readily available for little or no financial cost, and the training for the skills required is being provided by WIBDI. Social and cultural assets, such as family networks and social networks (for example women's groups) support the fine mat weavers. Human resources have been developed by WIBDI.

Mat weaving has always been acknowledged as an important use of women's time. This is an integral part of *fa'aSamoa* and fits well with semi-subsistence Samoan life. The case study showed that livelihood outcomes were being achieved, and fine mat weaving, as a livelihood strategy, worked in harmony with the resources available, and the norms of *fa'aSamoa*. The *pandanus* plants used in the mat weaving are traditionally grown as part of the Samoan village life. Fine mat weaving can be stopped for other commitments (although this reduces payment and could jeopardise the commitment to WIBDI), it is in line with normal gender roles, it is rewarded by status and admiration, other family members can help with the enterprise, and it is approved of by other village members.

However the case study identified risks for WIBDI. Supporting the fine mat weaving comes at substantial cost in terms of money and the commitment and work required of the WIBDI staff. The low numbers of 'contract' weavers must be of concern. It is difficult to get the commitment and motivation of the weavers that WIBDI would like, and often the training and skills that are learnt are used for weavers own ends, rather than weaving for WIBDI. However, even though this is frustrating for WIBDI, it still has positive benefits as clearly the weavers are gaining livelihood outcomes even though in some cases these outcomes are intangible, rather than tangible outcomes such as cash.

This chapter described fine mat weaving in Samoa, attempting to understand the perceptions of individual participants in the case study, and the relationships between fine mat weaving, sustainable livelihoods and *fa'aSamoa*. This case study is important in providing empirical data with which to illustrate and explain theories and concepts, and draw conclusions about fine mat weaving as a strategy for sustainable livelihoods in Samoa. In the next chapter, the fine mat weaving case study is compared with the previous case study (village coconut oil in Samoa) in order to compare and contrast findings across cases, relate the findings to both the literature reviewed and theories developed in this thesis, and address the lower level research questions.

Chapter 8 Reflections and Analysis: the Case Studies and Sustainable Livelihoods

Introduction

This chapter draws together, and compares, the case study micro-enterprises (village-based coconut oil fine and mat weaving) explored in the field research. In doing so, the chapter analyses the findings of the case studies in relation to sustainable livelihoods, culture, and issues and concepts developed in the review of literature and the contextual chapters. The chapter addresses the lower level research questions introduced in Chapter 1. Firstly in this chapter the use of the sustainable livelihoods approach as a guide to the research is 'revisited' and reviewed. A simplified sustainable livelihoods framework (based on that developed in Chapter 4) is presented and discussed. This framework is then used as a structure for the remainder of the chapter. Next, the livelihood strategy (the micro-enterprises), and the communities and enterprise structures in which they operate, are discussed, and factors that have supported and/or jeopardised the success and sustainability of the micro-enterprises are highlighted. Finally in this chapter a somewhat generalised model is introduced which highlights aspects that have emerged during the research which are critical for successful and sustainable rural micro-enterprises in Samoa.

The sustainable livelihoods approach revisited

The sustainable livelihoods approach, described in Chapter 2, has been used as a basis for designing the research, developing the research questions (Chapter 1), describing rural livelihoods in Chapter 4, developing the semi-structured interview questions used in the field work, and as a basis for analysis in the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7. In Chapter 1 the question: *can a conceptual model and framework of sustainable livelihoods be useful as a tool for supporting researchers in understanding the complexities of sustainable livelihoods of which micro-enterprises are part?* was introduced. During the research, the usefulness of the sustainable livelihoods approach for understanding and presenting the research was continually being questioned. This section addresses that question.

The first lower level research question asked whether a sustainable livelihoods framework could incorporate culture, and adequately describe livelihoods in the context of this research in Samoa. In Chapter 2 features of a sustainable livelihood were

described, and it was found that existing sustainable livelihoods literature and frameworks did not adequately describe a sustainable livelihood for this research. In Chapter 4 a revised definition of a sustainable livelihood was developed:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities that provide a means of living: a *sustainable* livelihood works in harmony with the cultural context adapting to and coping with vulnerability, while maintaining and enhancing assets and resources.

A revised framework was also developed in Chapter 4 (Cahn, 2003b: 287) and was then used as a basis of analysis for the field research. It was extremely useful to have a structure to work with that ensured the research was focussed on the research questions that had been set, provided a 'check list' so that all the necessary components were covered, and also helped to define the boundaries of the research. I was able to use the components of the framework as a guide and kept the relationships between the components in mind as the research progressed. Analysis and writing was greatly assisted by having a structure to work with.

However, it was sometimes difficult to manage this defined structure as some issues fell outside the structure, and some of the components of the framework were not important to some of the areas of inquiry. Further, while the framework worked well for the analysis of the present situation, which was what I was researching, I was aware that none of the components in the framework specifically encouraged me to address opportunities in the future. However, it was clear that using the revised sustainable livelihoods framework could lead to the identification of opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in terms of enterprise opportunities, opportunities to manage vulnerability and improve systems, opportunities for new markets, opportunities for support and better use of resources and ways to work successfully within the cultural context.

I also noticed that the revised sustainable livelihoods framework developed in Chapter 4, while certainly being of use to me in guiding my research, was complex and restrictive. As the research proceeded I began to better understand the relationships between the components. It became evident that a less complicated framework would provide a more useful guide for discussion and analysis. I have therefore readdressed the framework on the basis of the following reasoning.

In Chapter 2 micro-entrepreneurial success, in relation to this research, was defined in terms of micro-entrepreneurs achieving livelihood outcomes for themselves and their families. The micro-enterprise is often just one strategy for achieving outcomes in the sustainable livelihood system. It became clear that the livelihood system as described in Chapter 2 (Grown and Sebstad, 1989: 941) was a separate component within a 'sustainable livelihoods system'. A livelihood system can exist which may, in the very short term, fulfil livelihood outcomes and improve well-being. However, according to the revised definition of a livelihood (Cahn, 2003b: 287), the sustainability of the livelihoods depends on the livelihood working in harmony with the cultural context, adapting to and coping with vulnerability and maintaining and enhancing assets. Further, it became clear during the research that for a livelihood to be sustainable in Samoa there needs to be an enabling environment, and robust links with organisations outside the immediate community (for example between traditional, private sector and public spheres, to markets for sale of produce, and within communities). An unsustainable livelihood system will not only fail to provide livelihood outcomes, but could also worsen the asset base for future livelihood strategies, and jeopardise social and cultural assets that are important for security, safety nets and welfare.

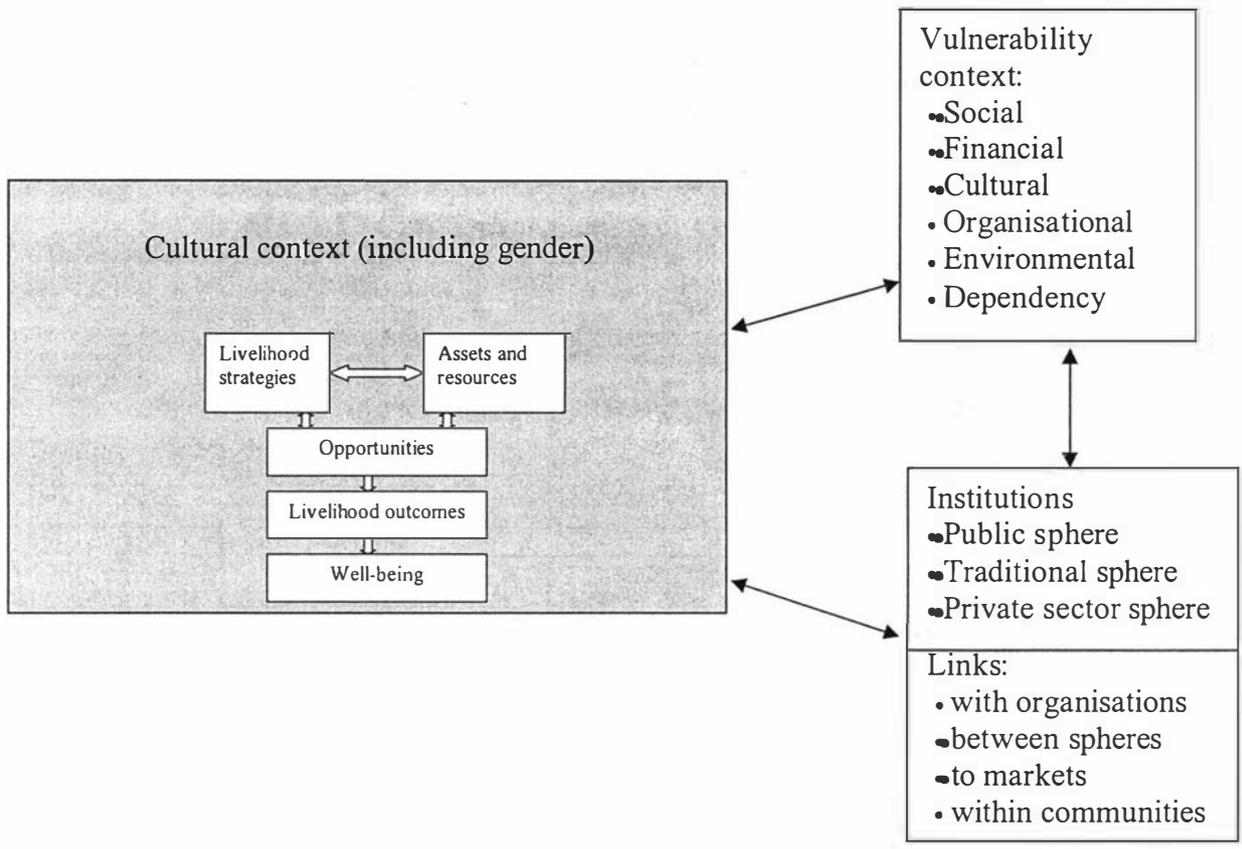
The livelihood system component consists of the livelihood strategies, and the assets and resources that provide opportunities for these strategies. The livelihood strategies provide livelihood outcomes that can lead to well-being. The 'livelihood system' is described in the following diagram (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Livelihood system



This livelihood system is then a component of the sustainable livelihoods framework that addresses the issue of sustainability by including the cultural context within which the livelihood system exists, the vulnerability context, the ‘institutions’ in the three spheres (Chapter 4), and the links between the livelihood system and the outside. This framework is displayed in the following diagram (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2 Revised framework for sustainable livelihoods



This framework (Figure 8.2), and the diagram describing the livelihoods system (Figure 8.1) are used as a basis of analysis for the remainder of this chapter. Firstly the ‘livelihood systems’ of the two case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs are compared and discussed. Next the chapter addresses the issue of whether each of the case study micro-enterprises, and thus the livelihood systems are sustainable.

The livelihood systems

Livelihood systems consist of all the strategies, assets and resources used to provide opportunities to achieve livelihood outcomes and well-being for individuals and their families. This analysis focuses on the micro-enterprise, as one of a number of livelihood strategies, and the livelihood system in relation to this strategy.

Livelihood strategy – the micro-enterprises

In Chapter 2, a classification of micro-enterprise was developed (Table 2.2). Table 2.2 highlights that micro-enterprises are highly variable and when describing a micro-enterprise it is useful to describe it in a range of different ways. For example micro-enterprises can be described and classified according to the sector of activity, type of products, organisation, the mode of work (self employment or contract), the support system under which they operate, level of economic activity, and the mix of resources (capital and labour) in the micro-enterprise. In this section, the micro-enterprises in the case studies described in Chapters 6 and 7 are discussed in relation to that review of literature on micro-enterprise as a strategy for sustainable livelihoods in Chapter 2.

Sector of activity

In terms of the sector of activity, the micro-entrepreneurs worked to produce goods for sale, although fine mat weaving could also be considered as providing a ‘cultural service’. The fine mat weavers were involved in a creative product which involved using local products to create an item which was then sold to a customer, or retained by the weaver, for its intrinsic value. However, the coconut oil producers were involved in growing, harvesting and using coconuts to produce a product (oil) which was then further refined by others for a number of different markets. In both of the case studies, value was being added to raw natural products. However, unlike the fine mat weavers, with the coconut oil producing co-operatives, most of the returns to the micro-entrepreneurs were from the raw product (the *popo*), rather from the value added.

Type of product (traditional or non traditional)

The type of product that was being produced was important in both of the case studies. The fine mat weaving, which has huge customary significance, clearly provided much more status in the community than the coconut oil production as was demonstrated by the considerable support for the fine mats from the government, and the local community. Fine mat weavers were seen to be supporting *fa'aSamoa* and preserving and enhancing important traditional skills. For the coconut oil producers, the use of coconuts for commercial purposes was traditional and was thus well accepted. However, coconut oil production using the DME method seemed to be viewed with mixed feelings by the wider community as it is not traditional and the work involved is viewed as being hard without much reward.

Organisation of the enterprises

The METI coconut oil co-operatives consisted of groups of micro-entrepreneurs linked primarily for production purposes, to share equipment, provide a market for their *popo*, and share labour resources. These coconut oil co-operatives also passively participated in the further processing of the oil through representation on a management committee for the soap making and sharing of the profits from the soap. The fine mat weavers operated individually, and were only linked in that they were carrying out the same activity, sometimes met together to carry out the activity and support each other, and were supported by WIBDI. Although the groups were structured in different ways, the 'grouping' supported the establishment and continuation of the micro-entrepreneurs to varying degrees.

The METI coconut oil producers were organised as a cooperative to reach as many members of a community as possible. However, in the Pacific Islands the success rate of co-operatives has not been good as discussed in Chapter 4 (Crocombe, 2001: 345). The METI supported coconut oil co-operatives were initiated by METI and include groups of people who have unequal status, educational levels and power. The people in the co-operatives are unrelated and are expected to act as a 'community' in terms of decision making and sharing of work. The literature review on co-operatives in Chapter 2 stressed that co-operatives enterprises are based on members working co-operatively and sharing equally not only the financial returns of the co-operative, but also work and responsibility (Hoyt, 1996: 4). However, the review of literature on co-operatives in Samoa (see Chapter 5) revealed that although communities are likely to work co-operatively for a community project (O'Meara, 1990: 60-61, Chung, 1997: 33), working co-operatively between families in an enterprise is not a traditional way of working (Maiava, 2001: 142), and has encountered difficulties in Pacific Island countries (Crocombe, 1990: 60-61, Brooks, 1996: 4-6). The problems of working co-operatively with people from different families were evident from the field research (Chapter 6). In Samoa, older people and those of higher standing in the community can be excused from work because they command respect (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30) (see Chapter 4). While this is accepted as the norm in a Samoan family, it is not sustainable in a co-operative, where unequal work leads to resentment and reduced motivation.

Furthermore, most members of the co-operatives have little business acumen. Lack of business skills is a difficulty often encountered in the Pacific Islands (Chung, 1997: 33) and has been discussed in Chapter 5. The consequence is that a few co-operative members (those that have some business acumen) take an unequal share of responsibility. The initiation process of the co-operatives, and resulting dependence on METI, is also an issue as co-operatives are unable to bargain successfully with METI when they realise they are reliant on the organisation for financial, technical and marketing support. The WIBDI supported coconut oil producers are family based rather than co-operative based. While these enterprises appeared more sustainable in that the families were better able to distribute work and income, they reached fewer people and in some cases the machinery was underutilised because the family had less people available to produce the oil than the co-operative. Furthermore, the WIBF family-based units sold their oil to the Pure Coconut Oil Company but did not receive any of the value added to the coconut oil when it was processed into cosmetics and other products.

The fine mat weaving was family based, but the training and initial invitation to participate was community based. This model of entrepreneurship appeared to work successfully. The literature review in Chapter 5 suggested that enterprises in Samoa may fail when the business showed signs of wealth (in terms of capital assets or stock that could be distributed) and entrepreneurs felt obligated to distribute and share such goods to the detriment of the enterprise (Brooks, 1996: 6-8). Anecdotal evidence suggested that demands were made of the fine mat weavers to distribute earnings, but because the earnings were small and regular, and because WIBDI encouraged saving (this could be done secretly) the impact of the pressure to distribute earnings was minimised. Furthermore because the fine mat weaving was in harmony with *fa'aSamoa*, as described in Chapter 5, it was accepted by the community and jealousy was minimised. The literature review also suggested that business acumen was lacking in Samoa (Chung, 1997: 33), but the model of enterprise for the fine mat weaving was such that little business acumen was required and micro-entrepreneurs were nurtured and trained to the extent that when they felt confident they could venture out on their own (see Chapter 7).

Mode of work

In the METI supported coconut oil case study the co-operatives were autonomous although they were linked to the supporting organisation. In the future there may be less autonomy for the co-operatives if they are required to guarantee supply of their oil to METI. The oil producing co-operatives' members could be regarded as individual micro-entrepreneurs as they sell *popo* to the co-operative, as well as grouping together to sell the coconut oil. The WIBDI fine mat weavers *could* be regarded as 'out workers' or 'contractors' in that they were contracted to produce the mats that were sold by WIBDI. They were paid periodically depending on the extent of their work. They had little autonomy, and in order to gain autonomy, they were forced to separate from WIBDI. However, in this thesis they are regarded as micro-entrepreneurs because they were not on a regular 'wage', and chose themselves the level and extent of their work.

Support

The amount and nature of the support required by micro-entrepreneurs appeared to be dependant on the level of assets and resources, such as finance and capabilities that the micro-entrepreneurs have, and need, especially at the start up phase of the venture. The amount of support required was also dependant on the level of confidence, self motivation, business acumen, access to market and ability to take advantage of opportunities offered. In each of the case studies the groups of entrepreneurs were supported in different ways.

The opportunity to use the traditional skill of fine mat weaving as a money making venture came from the initiative and motivation of WIBDI. WIBDI has supported the fine mat weavers using donor finance to train them and find markets for their mats. Continuing support for the fine mat weavers by WIBDI includes regular visits, regular payment on the basis of work progress, encouragement and motivation, support for savings, family development through small loans, and further training. This support has enabled the mat weavers to develop skills and attain cash income with little need for business skills.

METI initially supported the oil producing co-operatives with the supply of equipment through donor funds. METI also provided the opportunity for gaining good prices from the sale of *popo* and cash from the oil producing co-operatives. METI has provided a market for the coconut oil by using donor funding to establish the soap factory. METI

has set up the organisational structures for management of the oil producing and soap making venture. METI has also provided training, technology, advice, motivation and guidance to the co-operatives.

In order for the Samoan micro-enterprises to successfully support sustainable livelihoods, the supporting organisations, and the co-operatives that the micro-enterprises work within, also need to be successful, achieve their goals and outcomes, and be sustainable. A review of literature on micro-enterprises (Chapter 5) revealed that agencies have a range of tangible and intangible measures of success in terms of programmes that support micro-enterprise (Harper and Finnegan, 1998: vii). Tangible measures include sustainable improvement in income levels by large numbers of people, positive influence on government policies, contribution to increased employment and economic growth, meeting the objectives of programmes and needs of clients, cost efficiency for programmes and reasonable impact. Intangible measures include improved quality of life for the micro-entrepreneurs, empowerment (especially of women) and improved status (McKee, 1989: 994; Harper and Finnegan, 1998: vii, Kantor, 2001: 23).

In both the fine mat weaving and the coconut oil case studies the extent of the outreach would need to be considered against the cost of the programmes in terms of defining success. While the WIBDI fine mat venture is clearly achieving the aim of WIBDI of bringing income generating opportunities to the villages of Samoa, the high cost of supporting the programme, in relation to the relatively small numbers of families benefiting from it could jeopardise the sustainability of the programme in terms of donor funding. This was also true for the METI coconut oil venture. However, the fact that the fine mats venture has captured the attention and support of the Government of Samoa, which was one of the success factors mentioned by McKee (1989: 994) in Chapter 2, increases the likelihood that funding for the fine mat venture can continue.

In terms of the strategy that was employed by the two Samoan NGOs, both the organisations worked on a sector focused strategy (McKee, 1999: 995), as described in Chapter 2, coconut oil and fine mat weaving being two of a number of sectors that the NGOs were involved in. This allowed the NGOs to use their limited resources efficiently. However, the NGOs also addressed the constraints that micro-entrepreneurs

faced and thus worked to a certain extent under the function focused strategy (Mckee, 1999: 995), providing advice, training and access to funding.

Economic activity

The economic outcomes appeared to be important in both the Samoan case studies. This is possibly because opportunities for rural income generation are limited in Samoa, and the financial position of the Samoan participants was not very secure or stable. The individual micro-enterprises were not growth orientated, and did not wish to employ anyone outside the family. The micro-enterprises increased employment by providing income for the individual entrepreneurs and their families but further employment opportunities in nearly all of the micro-enterprises was unlikely. This finding supports the comments by Kantor (2001: 2) (Chapter 2) and by other research participants (Chapter 5) that in relation to micro-enterprises, employment is more likely to arise from large numbers of micro-enterprises, rather than from micro-enterprises growing and hiring lots of people.

Resource mix

Miller and Clarke (1990: 516-517) point out that micro-enterprises normally have low technical and capital input and high labour input, and this is often what sets them apart from larger businesses (Chapter 2). Although there was low capital input for the fine mat weaving, and growing the coconuts, the coconut oil co-operative needed to purchase a building and technical equipment. In the coconut oil production, the co-operative structure enabled costs to be shared between members. Shared costs, and access to funds from donor organisations reduced the individual cost to members. In the case of the METI coconut oil venture, the start up equipment for both the soap factory and the co-operatives was currently being paid for by external donors although in the future co-operatives will need to provide their own start up capital. All the micro-enterprises in the research required considerable labour input which was usually provided by the micro-entrepreneurs and, in some cases their families. The returns were considered quite small in relation to the hours of work expended in both the case studies.

This section of the chapter has established that the micro-enterprise strategies in the two case study groups varied considerably. While there have been many attempts to define micro-enterprises, and their needs, this is often difficult given this extreme

variation. The different characteristics, described in this section, impact on the livelihood system within which the micro-enterprises exist and the links between the components of the livelihood system.

Livelihoods outcomes and well-being

The second lower level research question asks about the desired livelihood outcomes of the Samoan micro-entrepreneurs and their motivation. Chapter 2 discussed success of micro-enterprises in terms of achieving livelihood outcomes of the micro-entrepreneurs, and the goals of the supporting agencies. Furthermore the review of literature in Chapter 2 discussed success in terms of both tangible livelihood outcomes (such as cash) and intangible livelihood outcomes (for example increased status, choices and empowerment) (Harper and Finnegan, 1998: vii). In this section the success of the micro-enterprises is discussed in terms of the achievement of livelihood outcomes by the micro-entrepreneurs, the co-operatives and the supporting organisations. The revised sustainable livelihoods framework (Chapters 4 and earlier in this chapter) suggests that achieving livelihood outcomes leads to a sense of well-being which in the sustainable livelihoods approach, is linked to poverty reduction (see Chapter 2).

The livelihoods outcomes that were important to the members of the METI supported coconut oil co-operatives were mainly tangible and economic, although some also benefited from the intangible outcomes such as the company and comradeship that the co-operative brought, and in some instances, empowerment achieved by contributing to the family income, and receiving respect in the community. All the oil producing co-operative members that participated in the field research had income from other sources in addition to the coconut oil. Participants of the research invariably mentioned that the need for cash was for school fees, every day necessities such as electricity, basic food items and family development. From observation and other conversations it was clear that provision of gifts and cash for *fa'alavelave*, commitments to the church and repayment of loans both formal and informal were also considerable motivation for earning cash. The coconut oil producers had mixed feelings about the income they were receiving as a result of their micro-enterprises. On the one hand they were grateful for the opportunity to earn cash at all, but on the other hand some resented that the supporting organisations received some of the rewards of their work. The co-

operative members were receiving satisfactory monetary reward from the sale of their *popo*, and this clearly gave them a sense of well-being, but it was questionable whether this income was sufficient to also cover the work involved in making the oil and adding value to the raw material. The coconut oil venture supported by METI had been operating for little more than one year. METI, had clear goals of providing income generating opportunities for as many people as possible in communities. Furthermore METI's goals included generating income for the organisation itself in order to fulfil its overall mission of environmentally sustainable development. The two goals appear to be in conflict. The amount that the METI supported soap factory pays to the co-operatives for the oil is small. In the future, when the soap factory begins to make a profit, there may be more money forthcoming for the co-operatives, but with METI as secretariat taking 30% of the profit, the rewards for each of the co-operatives is likely to be small. The co-operatives are therefore seeking alternative markets for their oil, which in turn threatens the sustainability of the soap factory which aims to use the oil from the co-operatives in its soap. Recruiting and retaining members is difficult. As the real financial rewards for the co-operative members are in the selling of *popo* to the co-operative, only members of the community who have access to and control over coconuts are joining the co-operative. Furthermore the nature and extent of the co-operative work, compared with the financial returns, is not attractive. Thus only a small proportion of the community are participating in the co-operatives and METI's goal of providing employment and income for whole communities is not, at present, being achieved.

The desired livelihood outcomes of the WIBDI fine mat weavers in Samoa were both tangible and intangible. The income from the fine mats was very important, sometimes it was the only cash income for the family. The making of the traditional fine mats also brought considerable status for the fine mat maker and her family. As was explained in Chapter 4, improving the status (financially and socially) is a primary aim in the customs and practices of *fa'aSamoa*. Thus the achieving of these tangible and intangible outcomes provided the female fine mat makers with considerable well-being and empowerment, and additional 'bargaining power' within the household (Bruce, 1989: 983, Sen, 1990: 125). In some cases this led to some of the household duties normally performed by the fine mat weaver being taken over by her husband, and other family members. The aim of the organisation supporting the fine mats venture, WIBDI,

is to provide income earning opportunities in rural Samoan villages. The fine mat making venture certainly fulfils this aim of providing cash income. WIBDI also benefits to a small extent from the commission that it receives from each fine mat sold. However, some of the fine mat weavers resented that WIBDI received some of the rewards of their work and had broken away from WIBDI and were marketing their own mats. The number of fine mat makers is small compared with the extent of the involvement of WIBDI. Although the reason for the small number was not fully explored in the research, anecdotal evidence suggested that some Samoan women preferred to make the fine mats for their own cultural use rather than for tangible financial returns, and some women had not been approached by WIBDI (perhaps due to WIBDI's limited staff resources). For some women the financial returns were not regarded as sufficient to motivate them to take up the work and others did not have the skill or motivation to complete the work.

Most of the individual entrepreneurs within the two groups of micro-entrepreneurs sought livelihood outcomes that included intangible outcomes related to *fa'aSamoa* in addition to profit. For some the intangible outcomes were as important, if not more important, than the tangible outcomes (ie cash), whereas for others the cash was the primary reason for their micro-enterprise, but other outcomes were also significant. The multiple goals and objectives included cash income, social security, friendship and community, creativity, status (especially enhanced family status), a feeling of pride at being able to provide for their families and contribute to *fa'alavelave* and other community obligations. The multiple outcomes that most micro-entrepreneurs sought and achieved through their micro-enterprises were important in terms of their achieving overall well-being.

Assets and resources

The third lower level research question asks what factors have supported the rural micro-enterprises and what factors have jeopardised the micro-enterprises? The analysis of the assets and resources needed and available for the micro-enterprises, and whether these assets and resources are being maintained and enhanced, provides an insight into some of the factors that have supported or jeopardised the success of the case study micro-enterprises in terms of achieving outcomes and sustainability.

Financial assets and resources

It has already been established in this chapter that the case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs and their supporting agencies either did not require start up capital (fine mat weavers) or mostly had access to start up capital, either through government agencies, family, aid donors or formal borrowing. Clearly access to financial resources (capital) for enterprise start up was extremely important for the coconut oil co-operative, and the provision of this capital had enabled these groups of micro-enterprises to be established. At least one of the coconut oil co-operatives had needed to borrow to pay for the building they required. Credit was obtained from a local micro-credit organisation. Future coconut oil co-operatives will be required to borrow to pay for start up equipment, and while there are a number of avenues in Samoa where such finance could be borrowed, loan repayments would erode the meagre income co-operatives receive for oil making.

Natural assets and resources

Natural assets were important for, and available, to both groups of micro-entrepreneurs as raw materials. The Samoan natural environment provided raw materials for the fine mat weavers (*pandanus*) and the *popo* for the coconut oil. Natural resources were being used in a sustainable way. The Samoan customary land system described in Chapter 4, had implications for the coconut oil co-operatives. Control over traditional land is traditionally by *matais* for the extended family (*aiga*), but where smaller family groups worked a plantation and therefore had rights to that plantation, more senior members of the family and those of higher status (especially male) could dictate whether or not other family members had access to *popo*. Some families (especially women headed households) may not have authority over plantation land. Realistically, unless community members had control over the land and unlimited access to *popo* they would not become co-operative members. While the co-operatives were envisaged by METI to include all community members, the membership was restricted by family rights to land and by the status of individual family members.

Human assets and capability

It has already been established that in both of the groups of case study micro-entrepreneurs there is a high labour input. Therefore human resources and capability are extremely important. In order to enhance capability there has been appropriate training for the groups of micro-entrepreneurs, including both technical training and to

a greater or lesser extent, pre-business, business, co-operative and management training. Clearly more training, especially in business and management, would be desirable in many instances.

The coconut oil producers were struggling to find adequate ways in which to manage their co-operatives, with some members taking extra responsibility where they had some business acumen and skills. Some co-operative members appeared to be marginalised due to lack of understanding and knowledge of business and this led to unequal power structures within the co-operatives. Furthermore decision making and conflict resolution processes seemed inadequate to resolve the issues already facing the co-operatives. The co-operative training conflicted with *fa'aSamoa* in terms of the edict of equality in co-operative training, versus *fa'aSamoa* values and practices of *tautua* (service) and respect. Training in safety issues was of concern for the coconut oil makers (and the soap making factory using the oil). As the co-operatives were not competing against each other, sharing of advice and problems between the co-operatives could be beneficial. Workshops, advice and education for all co-operative members could help to address imbalance of power due to lack of business skills, resolve the work balance issues and address technical issues.

The fine mat weavers needed fewer business skills because of the contract nature of their work. Training in the technicalities of traditional mat weaving and some basic money management training was provided. The individual visits by the WIBDI field workers provided opportunities for advice, motivation and training in money management and saving.

Physical assets

All the co-operatives had adequate physical resources, provided as a result of financial start up capital, donor funding and other formal and informal financing. Access to the coconut oil making equipment was the basis of the coconut oil co-operative. The equipment was too expensive for one family to purchase. The way the equipment was shared differed between the METI supported coconut oil venture and the WIBDI coconut oil venture. In the METI venture the co-operatives owned the machinery and it was shared between members who represented a number of families. In the WIBDI venture the ownership of the machinery was retained by the supporting organisation (WIBDI) and the machinery was lent to individual families for as long as they supplied reasonable amounts of oil to the processing company to which WIBDI had business

affiliations. WIBDI retained more control over the supply of oil to the processing company and the family-based system did not encounter the problems of sharing work and income fairly that were encountered by the METI co-operatives. However, in this family-based system the benefits were distributed to communities through gifting, community obligations (e.g. church and *fa'avelave*) and down stream village economy benefits rather than through income earning opportunities. Furthermore the machines could be considered underutilised in terms of the output compared with the cost to the funding donors of the machines. On the other hand, while the METI system of co-operative ownership of the machines meant further distribution of financial rewards and more utilisation of the machines, the sharing between families caused some problems. Furthermore it is questionable whether METI has the right to insist on the oil being sold to the soap factory considering that the machinery belongs to the co-operative and this in itself makes the whole venture vulnerable.

Maintenance of the coconut oil producing machines was an issue for the METI supported co-operatives. It was not clear who was responsible for maintaining the machines. In the early stages of the co-operatives METI had provided maintenance free of charge to the co-operatives. However, as the machines were owned (and would be paid for in the future) by the co-operatives, there was some suggestion that the co-operatives would be responsible for the costs of repair. This would put further financial strain on the co-operatives. WIBDI, as owners of the machines in their coconut oil venture, were clearly responsible for the maintenance of the machines used by the oil producers.

Social and cultural assets

In both case studies social and cultural assets were regarded as extremely important and were developed, maintained, and enhanced by the case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs wherever possible. The family networks that were described in Chapter 4 (James, 2000: 135, Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30, ADB, 2004a: 5), supported the micro-entrepreneurs in their enterprises. The fine mat weavers were helped by family members both in the preparation of the raw materials and by family members taking over some of their usual household duties. The social interaction between family and community members (for example groups of women weaving together) was also important in terms of turning an activity that could be monotonous into a relaxing and enjoyable task. The status accorded to the weavers (and their families) was

considerable, and motivating for the weavers. Women's groups and church groups were important for initiating training, and supporting the weavers. As suggested by Bebbington (1999: 2034) in Chapter 2, social interactions and social assets enabled cultural and traditional assets to be used and enhanced.

The family networks were also important for the coconut oil producers in terms of forming and joining the co-operatives, work support, access to *popo* and access to finance. Church seemed to play an important role in co-operative members meeting each other and thus expanding membership of the co-operatives. The interaction amongst the co-operative members was important in terms of sharing the workload when making the oil and managing the co-operative. However, the tensions caused by unequal work sharing placed extreme pressure on social networks.

Cultural assets were important for all the three case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs. For the coconut oil producers the most important cultural asset was the long tradition of coconuts as a commercial and subsistence crops and the customary land to which they had access through their family connections. Furthermore the traditional use of coconut oil as a product in Samoa assisted the co-operative members to sell some of their oil on the roadside or the market for a higher price.

On the other hand, for the fine mat weavers, fine mat weaving has considerable traditional and cultural significance. The fine mat weavers received considerable status from making fine mats which are important part of the *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan way of life) in terms of *fa'alavelave* (ceremonies) (O'Meara, 1993: 146, Maiava, 2001: 92) and practice of reciprocity (Hooper and James, 1994: 4, Schoeffel, 1996: 122) (described in Chapter 4). The traditional and cultural significance of the product was extremely important in providing them with not only cash income, but also more intangible well-being through the building of social and cultural assets.

Both the groups of micro-entrepreneurs have drawn on aspects of culture and tradition in their micro-enterprises to use as an asset and resource in their micro-enterprises. The fact that the micro-entrepreneurs seek multiple livelihood outcomes is also a reflection of the culture and traditional assets on which they draw. The desire for multiple livelihood outcomes has significant impact on the sustainability of livelihoods, which is discussed later in the chapter.

Other livelihoods strategies / everyday tasks and the micro-enterprise

The fifth lower level question asks: how does the micro-enterprise integrate with other household livelihood strategies and the micro-entrepreneur's other everyday tasks? The micro-enterprise was just one of a number of livelihood strategies for most of the micro-entrepreneurs. For the coconut oil producers many mentioned other livelihood strategies that supplemented their income, including subsistence living, fine mat weaving, remittances, employment by other family members and sale of agricultural produce and fish. While the other livelihood strategies were able to be integrated with the coconut oil production, co-operative members mentioned that this caused them to work excessively long hours, for example having to do the fine mat weaving very early in the morning or after the co-operative work. Furthermore, several of the co-operative members (all women) mentioned difficulties fitting the work around childcare and other household tasks, again often having to start extremely early in the morning. If some members of the co-operative were unable to work due to community commitments (such as *fa'avelave*) then the co-operative was sometimes unable to operate. The difficulties in integrating the micro-enterprise with livelihood strategies, other commitments and household tasks threatened the sustainability of the co-operative.

For some of the fine mat weavers, this micro-enterprise provided the only cash income for the family, although subsistence living provided food and other materials. For others, other family members were observed carrying out livelihood strategies such as rope making, and traditional coconut oil production. Some of the mat weavers' families received remittances from overseas. The status and income the women fine mat weavers received allowed them to forgo other household duties in a number of cases, these chores being taken over by male members of the family. This satisfactory integration of the micro-enterprise with other livelihood strategies and everyday tasks enhanced the success and the sustainability of the fine mat weaving.

Livelihood sustainability

Clearly, a micro-enterprise can only support a sustainable livelihood if it is successful and sustainable. This section addresses the sustainability of the livelihood system, in terms of the sustainability of the micro-enterprises. Sustainability is discussed with reference to the cultural context, institutions and links in the livelihood system, and the vulnerability context. This section answers the fifth lower level research question: what

are the major risks, difficulties and vulnerability for the micro-entrepreneurs? and the sixth lower level question: do the institutions provide an enabling environment for micro-entrepreneurs in this research? This section also addresses the last lower level research question: how is culture interwoven into the livelihoods (especially the micro-enterprise) of the micro-entrepreneurs?

The cultural context – *fa'aSamoa* and the case studies

The cultural context of the Samoan case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs was hugely influential to the success of the ventures they were involved in. The values and practices of contemporary *fa'aSamoa* were interwoven into many of the aspects discussed in the previous sections. The fine mat weaving harmonised well with *fa'aSamoa* enhancing the sustainability of the micro-enterprises. Fine mat weaving was the domain of women. Women could therefore be empowered and respected for their micro-enterprises, without raising jealousy or resentment from other family members, or the community, and in some cases, without significantly increasing their workload, which often occurs when female income generating enterprises are introduced. Not only did the weaving bring status and cash but the skills the weavers learned would mean that any fine mats made in the future for family use would enhance their future well-being. Gifting valuable fine mats would enhance standing in the community for the family, and furthermore set up future obligations which would provide both social and financial security to support the weavers and their families. In line with the hierarchical system of authority in the *aiga*, the women weavers would usually provide their head of household (usually their husband or father) with their earnings. However, the savings and loan scheme operated by WIBDI allowed women to save for, or borrow for, items that they felt important without going against the cultural expectation of handing over the cash to the head of household. The cash (or the mats should they decide to keep them) is important as *tautua* (service) to the family. Women were able to stop and start their weaving to attend *fa'alavelave* without seriously jeopardising the mat weaving. Furthermore the women could work at home, or with other women, and this meant that they could care for other family members (children and elderly people) with less difficulty than had they been working outside the home. The motivation for work was increased status and adding to the cultural wealth of the family and community, as well the cash they received. Motivation, other than for cash, is important as weaving fine mats is sometimes arduous and monotonous and the weavers

were not receiving large amounts of cash for the work. Again, for the fine mat weaver, *fa'aSamoa* lead to both tangible and intangible outcomes being sought from the micro-enterprises. While economic rewards were not always as high as the weavers might have liked, the fact that other livelihood outcomes, such as status, cultural wealth and pride, were being achieved contributed significantly to the success and sustainability of the fine mat weaving programme.

The coconut oil production did not harmonise as well with *fa'aSamoa* as the fine mat weaving and this has impacted on the potential sustainability of the co-operatives. Because the non-traditional DME method was being used for extracting the oil, there were few gender norms, but the enterprise itself seemed to be viewed with suspicion and mixed feelings by other community members. The motivation was purely economic, there was no cultural motivation and little motivation for status, except for the money which could provide status through family and community obligations and *tautua*. This impacted severely on the co-operative members' attitude to work when the co-operative received low returns for their oil. Furthermore this impacted on the sustainability of the soap making venture as the quantity of oil being supplied by the co-operatives was less than ideal. Most of the co-operative members appeared to be women, who now worked many hours more than before joining the co-operatives. Although there were no set gender roles in the DME system of producing coconut oil, it appeared that it was women who more readily took on the responsibility of becoming a co-operative member.

Furthermore the METI co-operatives did not fit the Samoan culturally accepted family-based system of enterprise. In a family-based system *tautua* and respect is important (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30-31) with *matai*, older members of the family (and male members) having the most authority and younger members often carrying out more of the physical work as *tautua*. In the co-operatives this line of authority was confused and impacted negatively on the work sharing in one of the co-operatives participating in the research. In one of the co-operatives older members and members of higher status did not carry out as much physical work as younger members. One younger member felt unable to challenge older members on this matter, but felt resentful about her perceived unfair work load. The family-based WIBDI oil producers would not, in theory anyway, face the problem of inequitable work distribution

although younger family members may simply not work for their families if they felt the work burden to be too great for any rewards they may receive.

On the other hand the sale of coconut products has long been accepted as an important cash earning activity, and as long as the collection and sale of *popo* was acceptable to the member of the family in authority over the land, then this part of the coconut oil venture fitted well within the cultural context. It was interesting to note that in one co-operative one *matai* in the village who was not a member of the co-operative had received the same returns for his *popo* as the co-operative members without contributing to the oil production at all. Clearly his authority meant that he could demand such favours but again this places extra burden for little return on the co-operative members.

Enabling environment – Policy, institutions and processes in the public and traditional spheres

As discussed in Chapter 2, an understanding of policies, institutions and processes provides an analysis of interactions between and within the micro (households and community) and the macro (government, NGOs and sometimes private enterprise) (Carney, 1998: 9, Scoones, 1998: 5, DFID, 1999:6), and explains the environment in which livelihood strategies exist. In Chapter 4 the concept of institutions existing within the three spheres (government (public), traditional and private sector (Hooper, 1993) was explained, and the very different, and sometimes contradictory, institutions in the public and traditional spheres in Samoa were described. In Chapter 5 the private sector sphere was described. The government of Samoa has been striving to provide an enabling environment for small and micro-enterprise through the ADB Small Business Development project, land reforms, and other government economic reforms. However, in the traditional sector, village-based institutions have varying influences on the environment for micro-enterprise and business. Women's committees can be supportive of income generation both as a committee initiative, and in terms of supporting individuals where they meet together to work, or where an individual's products (e.g. handicrafts) are sold from the committee house. The village *fono*, and the wider village community, can either be supportive, or unsupportive, depending on the way they view the business. The tensions and harmonies between *fa'aSamoa* and business (Chapter 5) strongly influence this 'view'. As was explained in Chapter 5, jealousy, and intense

rivalry between families can negatively affect businesses. Furthermore, cultural norms can stifle innovation and 'being different' (especially amongst youth) and lead to a proliferation of businesses that are regarded as 'traditional'. Financial obligations to the community and church can jeopardise the investment and cash flow of a business. In short, the enabling environment and support required for successful and innovative micro-enterprise in communities in rural areas is sometimes lacking, due to institutions, processes and 'policies' (albeit that they are often unwritten and 'fluid') being unsupportive.

Links between micro-enterprises, supporting organisations, spheres and markets

The links between the micro-entrepreneurial groups, and government, community organisations, private enterprise and markets were important for both case study groups in order to enhance sustainability of the livelihood system. For both the Samoan case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs the links had been initiated by the supporting NGOs (METI and WIBDI). The links were directly between the micro-enterprises (or the co-operative in the case of the coconut oil producers) and the supporting organisations, and indirectly, through the supporting organisations, to community organisations, markets, the private sector sphere, funding agencies and the government sphere.

Clearly the case studies demonstrated that links between the traditional sphere, within which the micro-enterprises operate, and the private sector sphere, are very important to provide marketing links. In both the case studies the private sector sphere was closely linked with the non-government supporting organisations. Marketing links and links to the private sector are especially important to provide opportunities for rural Samoans to sell goods outside the local village economy. Furthermore, links with the public (government) sphere are also important to provide financial and profile support for NGOs and most importantly provide an enabling environment for business.

Both of the case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs were operating in the informal sector and can be regarded as 'traditional sphere' enterprises as described in Chapter 5. The recognition by the Samoan government of the importance of both the ventures, as indicated by the government's interest in the fine mats and Samoa MAFFM's (now MAF) interest in village-based coconut oil (MAFFM, 2004) has helped to give status

and profile to micro-enterprises operating in the traditional sphere of rural villages in Samoa. This recognition by the government is very important in terms of strengthening links between the traditional, private sector, and public spheres in Samoa in order to improve well-being and reduce poverty through the development of small and micro-enterprises.

The vulnerability context

The fine mat weavers had little capital and financial inputs in their micro-enterprises and were well supported by WIBDI in marketing their product and receiving regular payments. This greatly reduced their vulnerability. The value of the mat as an item to gift and use in the cultural context of *fa'aSamoa* would be extremely valuable for them and their families even should they decide not receive payment for their mat. However, vulnerability increased for some women who had taken loans. In most cases this was managed by the loans being from WIBDI and being secured by savings with WIBDI, but in one instance the fine mat weaver had a considerable ADB microfinance loan (administered through WIBDI) for a new *fale* and in this case the women was vulnerable to any events which would prevent her from receiving cash for her weaving. Regular contact with, and support from WIBDI, did however, help to manage this vulnerability. Where the weaving was the only source of income for the family, families were also vulnerable. However, the Samoan social system and *fa'aSamoa* provided some safety nets for such families.

The METI coconut oil co-operatives were vulnerable to social, financial and environmental factors. There were no systems evident to cope with this vulnerability and this suggested that future sustainability may be an issue. Socially and culturally the co-operatives were struggling to come to terms with the co-operate model of enterprise. Financially the cash that the co-operatives were earning was hardly enough to motivate the members and only those members who were making substantial amounts from their *popo* felt sufficiently rewarded for the amount of work they were doing making the oil. Environmentally the co-operatives, and the micro-entrepreneurs were vulnerable to climatic events (for example cyclones) that could dramatically reduce the *popo* available for oil making. The co-operatives were also dependent on the soap making factory as a market for the bulk of their oil and this market depended on the success of the soap making venture which is vulnerable to the market, technical issues, government policies and the intermittent supply of oil from the co-operatives.

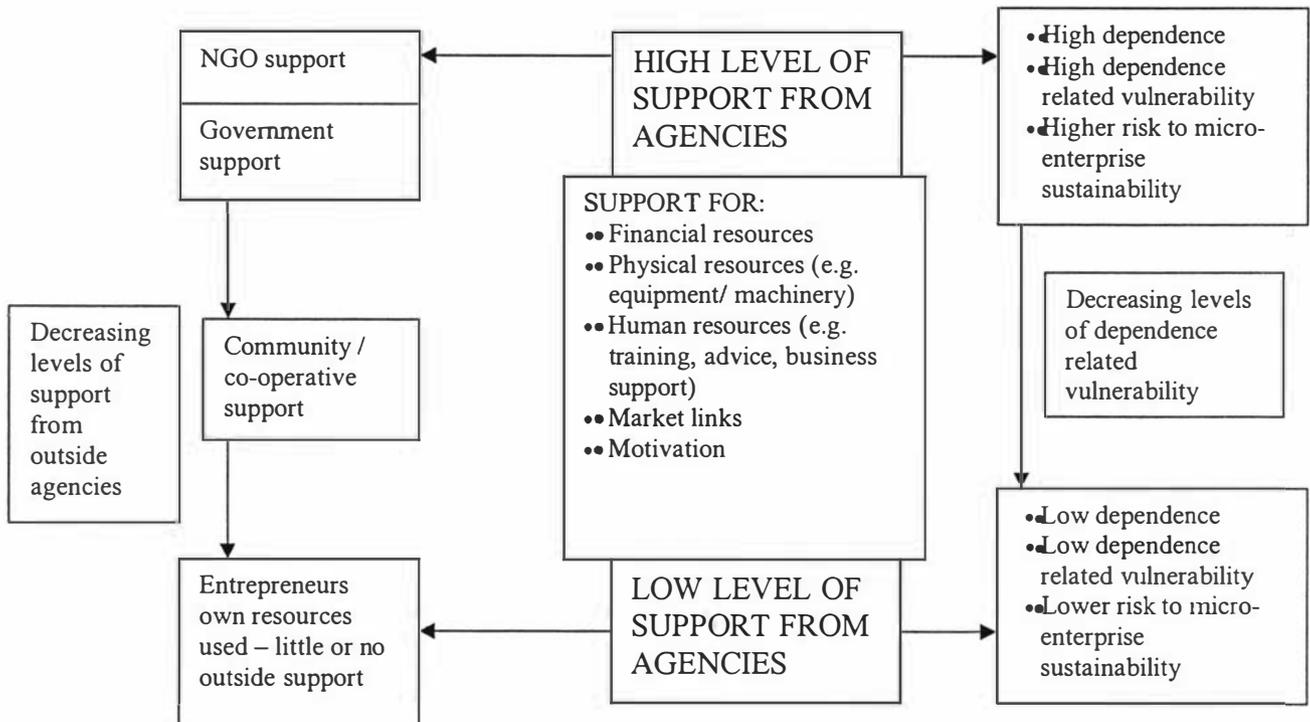
While support is necessary, especially when assets are lacking, and market links outside the local community are required, support can lead to dependency which in turn makes micro-entrepreneurs vulnerable to the sustainability of the supporting organisation. Guidance, advice and market support from supporting organisations can lead to a level of dependency where motivation, a feeling of ownership and control over the ventures by the micro-entrepreneurs is lost or diminished, threatening the sustainability of the micro-enterprise. This issue was raised in the review of literature in Chapter 2 with regard to co-operatives (Thordason, 1990: 2, Parnell, 1995: 234). Furthermore, an extreme level of dependency on supporting organisations makes the micro-enterprises vulnerable to the integrity, capacity, motivation, principles, financial success and overall sustainability of the supporting organisation.

Some fine mat weavers had become heavily dependent on WIBDI to find markets for their mats and pay them for the work they do. WIBDI is a non-government organisation of long standing but is highly vulnerable to funding cuts and the whim of donor agencies and the Samoan government. The Samoan government and donor funding for WIBDI depends to a certain extent on the success and outreach of the fine mat weaving venture. The organisation also relies on the small commission from the fine mat making to finance the field operation and is vulnerable to the weavers breaking away from the organisation to market their own mats. Furthermore WIBDI is dependent on its dynamic and highly competent executive director to ensure the sustainability of the organisation and would be extremely vulnerable should she decide for any reason to leave the organisation.

Dependency is also a feature of the METI supported coconut oil producers, especially those co-operatives that sell solely to the METI supported soap factory and those co-operatives who may, in the future, agree to solely supply the factory. The whole coconut oil making venture depends heavily on METI for advice, training, motivation, leadership and financial support. The success of METI, to a large extent, depends on the strong leadership of the director, and his wife who is METI's information and liaison officer. METI depends on both the soap making venture and thus the co-operatives for financial support, and evidence of success with which to convince donors that funding METI is worthwhile. This cycle of dependency makes METI, the soap making factory and the co-operatives (and thus the micro-entrepreneurs) vulnerable.

The support of outside agencies such as NGOs is a 'two edged sword'. On the one hand, the NGOs improve sustainability of the micro-enterprises by providing entrepreneurial opportunities. The NGOs forge robust links with private sector, markets and government that provide much needed financial, physical and human resources. However, on the other hand, the more dependent micro-enterprises are on outside agencies, the more vulnerable the micro-enterprises become to the agencies ceasing to support them for any reason ('dependence related vulnerability'), reducing the sustainability of the micro-enterprises. The diagram on the following page (Figure 8.3) illustrates this dilemma.

The ideal situation would be for micro-enterprises to be able to reduce their dependency on the supporting organisations as they develop, and this has actually happened with some of the fine mat weavers and one of the coconut oil co-operatives who are now marketing product by themselves. However, where this situation threatens the viability and financial sustainability of the supporting organisation this could jeopardise not only the organisation but also the support for other micro-entrepreneurs. Some of the WIBDI fine mat weavers have gone out on their own, and do not perceive WIBDI as now being required or beneficial for their own business development. While this is commendable for the fine mat weavers involved, feelings within WIBDI are mixed. While these women have benefited from the support of WIBDI, they are now not supporting WIBDI with any commission, which erodes the financial sustainability of WIBDI. However, the women have broken away from the dependency on an outside organisation and this is part of the 'nurturing' role of WIBDI. Furthermore, by going it alone these women have increased their income which furthers the achievement of their economic goals and outcomes.

Figure 8.3 Dependence related vulnerability of micro-enterprises

Micro-enterprise as a strategy to support sustainable livelihoods

Clearly access to, control over, and sustainability of assets is important for micro-enterprise. However, a number of other factors have emerged (from both literature and the case studies) that are critical to the success and sustainability of rural micro-enterprise in the context of this thesis. The following section presents and discusses these factors.

Motivation

While it has been mentioned that all the livelihood outcomes to which the case study micro-entrepreneurs aspired were multi-dimensional, including both tangible and intangible outcomes, these outcomes were highly status-driven, focussed on raising the standing of the micro-entrepreneur, and their family, in the community. In some instances in Samoa, where families have few or no other sources of income, or high cultural status is attained from the rural micro-enterprise, self motivation may be high. In other cases the supporting agencies played an important role in motivating the micro-entrepreneurs. With the coconut oil producers it was evident that micro-enterprises need to earn what is perceived as sufficient cash for the level of work expended in order for the micro-entrepreneurs to remain motivated and the micro-

enterprise to continue. This perception of a fair ‘wage’ is sometimes considered in comparison with cash received through remittances (Tafuna’i, 2003: 179), with virtually no effort at all, from relatives working either in the city or overseas. If the financial returns are not great, the micro-enterprise needs to offer other livelihood outcomes to the rural micro-entrepreneurs and their families such as increased status in the family and community, an item of cultural value (as with the fine mats), gender empowerment or basic needs that cannot be attained in other ways, in order that the micro-enterprise be sustainable. This research clearly showed that one of the factors necessary for rural micro-enterprises to successfully support sustainable livelihoods is sufficient motivation to start and maintain the micro-enterprise.

Education and business acumen

This research supports literature that identifies lack of business skills and education as one of the constraints to Pacific Island business (Chung, 1997: 33, ADB, 2003a: 27). Training was very important for the fine mat weavers for technical, household budgeting and ‘pre-business’ skills. Training had helped the coconut oil producers, but the research identified that further workshops would help to address the variance in business skills between the co-operative members, technical skills and how to resolve conflicts and address anomalies between the co-operative values of equality, and *fa’aSamoa* values of respect, authority and service. Furthermore, the lack of an enabling village environment for rural micro-enterprise indicated that community education in small business, and workshops to address the tensions between *fa’aSamoa* and business would be very useful.

The cultural context

‘Traditional sphere’ micro-enterprises in rural Samoa work best when they are in harmony with *fa’aSamoa*. The most successful rural micro-enterprises deal with products and services that are culturally acceptable; work within gender norms; work within the customary land system; provide status for the family and community; work around commitments of *fa’aSamoa*; and provide sufficient cash income for the family to share, and to fulfil cultural obligations. By working in harmony with *fa’aSamoa*, social and cultural assets (which are so important for safety nets and security) are maintained.

The Samoan case studies varied to the extent to which they were in harmony with *fa'aSamoa*. While the fine mat weaving fitted well within the cultural context of *fa'aSamoa*, the coconut oil production was facing a number of cultural difficulties as they strove to become established and sustainable, especially over the co-operative structure and attendance at *fa'alavelave*. Clearly, as identified in Chapter 4 and 5, and supported in the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7, *fa'aSamoa* is interwoven into nearly every aspect of sustainable livelihoods in Samoa, and strongly influences the success and sustainability of rural micro-enterprises. Thus one of the most important factors in the success and sustainability of rural micro-enterprises is how well the micro-enterprise works within the cultural context of *fa'aSamoa*.

Safety nets

The rural micro-entrepreneurs in the case studies relied on safety nets provided by community and family networks, often through being able to request gifts when in need, family support, and people honouring past obligations of gifts and favours (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30, James, 2000: 135). It was therefore extremely important that the micro-entrepreneurs remain within the social and cultural norms expected of them so that social and cultural assets were maintained, and social and economic safety nets were not affected by the operation of the micro-enterprise.

Integration of micro-enterprise with other livelihood strategies and commitments

Scoones (1998: 9) notes that households develop a wide range of income generating activities which may be either temporary or permanent (Chapter 2). In Samoa, rural micro-enterprise is just one of a number of livelihood strategies that families engage in to provide livelihoods outcomes for their families in terms of food, health, cash, status and overall well-being. Furthermore, people have other tasks and commitments in their lives in addition to their livelihood strategies. For example, as was explained in Chapter 4, Samoan people have social, family and community obligations such service to their families in the form of work (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998:3, Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30-31), and attendance at *fa'alavelave* and community gatherings (O'Meara, 1993: 146, Maiava, 2001: 92).

It was evident in the case studies, that where the micro-enterprise integrated well with other livelihood strategies and tasks, the micro-enterprise was more likely to be sustainable. The fine mat weavers usually integrated other livelihood strategies and

everyday tasks successfully with the fine mat weaving. This was in part due to the income and status generated by the fine mat weaving allowing the fine mat weavers to forgo some other everyday tasks such as housework and child minding, these being taken over by other family members (sometimes males). Furthermore the weaving could usually be stopped and started in order to attend to community commitments without severely jeopardising the enterprise. However, the coconut oil producers in Samoa had some difficulties integrating their co-operative work with other livelihood strategies and everyday tasks and commitments (especially *fa'alavelave*), and this jeopardised the sustainability of the co-operative and the micro-enterprises. Thus, in order to support sustainable livelihoods it is very important that the micro-enterprise integrates well with family and community commitments, and other livelihood strategies.

The business environment

The Samoan government supported the Samoan micro-entrepreneurs indirectly through their supporting organisations. The support and regard of the government was important (for example the government support for the fine mat weavers that was described in Chapter 7). The Samoan government is working towards providing a more enabling environment for small and micro-enterprises through the ADB Small Business Development project and economic and policy reforms. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the village environment is sometimes not conducive for small business.

Markets

The Samoan rural micro-entrepreneurs were vulnerable to lack of access to stable markets. As Tafuna'i (2003: 179) notes, rural villages are isolated and there is little opportunity for rural people to access markets. Rural micro-enterprises use the local community and nearby towns for marketing goods and services. However, this local market is usually limited. The use of internet and other communication technology was not available to the Samoan rural micro-entrepreneurs. If available, support organisations, and private sector exporters, operators and traders can be used, vastly expanding marketing opportunities. Links need to be maintained between the micro-entrepreneurs and the local village community for local sales, and with supporting organisations and the private sector for selling outside the local environment. Stable and accessible markets are extremely important for successful micro-enterprises that can support sustainable livelihoods.

Autonomy and supporting organisations

The research showed that support organisations are extremely important for Samoan groups of micro-entrepreneurs for motivation, being able to put opportunities into practice, for advice, and to enhance human resources through training. Furthermore support organisations provide access to financial resources and savings schemes, and very importantly, such organisations establish and maintain links with private sector, the public 'sphere' and markets. However, dependence on supporting organisations increased the vulnerability of the micro-enterprises and decreased their sustainability. Increased dependence led to lack of self motivation and self mobilisation and increased the micro-enterprise's vulnerability to the sustainability, integrity, efficiency and success of the supporting organisation.

To enable opportunities to be transformed into working micro-enterprises that can support rural sustainable livelihoods, efficient and consistent support from outside organisations and the private sector is beneficial. It is important, however, that supporting organisations are financially stable so that they are not overly dependent on financial rewards from the micro-enterprises they support. Micro-enterprises need to be able leave the supporting organisation behind as they mature, develop and find their own markets, without harming the financial sustainability of the supporting organisation.

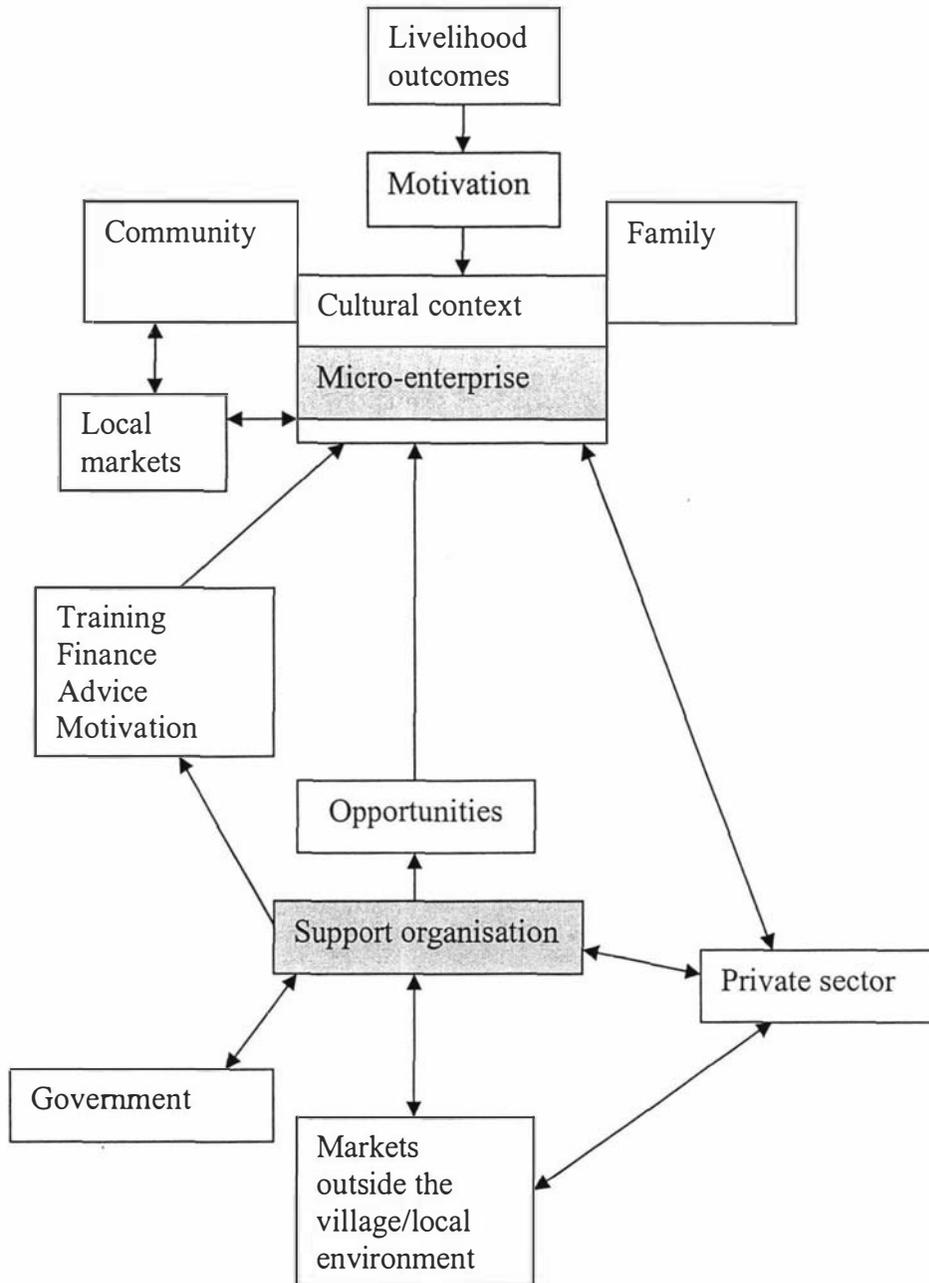
Summary

There are opportunities for micro-enterprise in Samoa. A number of micro-enterprises supporting sustainable livelihoods already exist in the traditional sphere of rural Samoa. However, often opportunities for micro-enterprise are not capitalised on because of lack of business acumen, lack of confidence, lack of finance, lack of technical skills, lack of ideas for enterprises, lack of knowledge of market needs, a non-conducive environment for business, inability to form links with the markets and private sector, lack of communication and lack of motivation. Where the micro-enterprise is not in harmony with *fa'aSamoa* it is unlikely to develop.

The research has shown that it is important to understand the relationships between social, environmental, economic and cultural contexts within which rural micro-enterprises operate, in order to understand the factors that are important to the success of such enterprises. The factors which are crucial to micro-enterprises operating

successfully as a strategy sustainable livelihoods, that emerged during this research, are summarised in Figure 8.4 (next page). The top part (centre) of Figure 8.4 shows the micro-enterprise working in harmony within the cultural context. The family (shown on the top right of Figure 8.4 and linked to the micro-enterprise) is very important to the micro-entrepreneur in terms of providing labour resource, motivation for the micro-enterprise, and support. It is also important that the micro-enterprise strategy fits with the family's other livelihood strategies and everyday tasks. The village community (shown on the top left of Figure 8.4 and linked to the micro-enterprise) is also important to the rural micro-entrepreneur in terms of social and cultural aspects, and enabling environment and as a local market. Furthermore the micro-enterprise needs to fit with community obligations. Motivation to sustain the micro-enterprise is provided by the desire to achieve livelihood outcomes (shown at the top of Figure 8.4). The lower section of Figure 8.4 describes support for micro-enterprises from outside support organisations. Micro-enterprises can benefit from training, finance, advice and motivation from supporting organisations. Support organisations can also identify and support new opportunities and link micro-enterprises to private sector, markets and government.

Figure 8.4 The Pacific Islands rural micro-enterprise environment



Conclusion

This chapter firstly reviewed the success of using the sustainable livelihoods approach, and the framework developed in Chapter 4, to guide and structure the research. Further insights into using the sustainable livelihoods approach for this research were described. Most importantly, this chapter clarified the difference between a *livelihood system* (that may or may not be sustainable) and a *sustainable livelihood*. The livelihood system includes the strategies, assets/resources and opportunities that provide livelihood outcomes and well being (Figure 8.1). Achieving a livelihood in

rural Samoa depends on using strategies (such as micro-enterprise) and assets to achieve the livelihood outcomes that will improve the well-being of the micro-entrepreneurs, and also achieving the outcomes and goals of supporting organisations or enterprise groups (such as a co-operative). Achieving a *sustainable* livelihood (Figure 8.2) depends on the livelihood (and thus the micro-enterprises) working within the values and practices of the culture, the micro-entrepreneurs being able to manage and cope with vulnerability, and maintain and enhance assets and resources. An enabling business environment, and developing robust links (organisational, between spheres, within the community and with markets) is also important for sustainability.

The chapter described the micro-enterprises in each of the case studies using the classification of micro-enterprises developed in Chapter 2 (Table 2.2). The characteristics of the micro-enterprises in the two case studies varied considerably. However, in both cases the micro-enterprises were to a varying degree providing a livelihood for the micro-entrepreneurs and their families and contributed to satisfying outcomes that the micro-entrepreneurs perceived as important. In both the case studies, the livelihood outcomes that the micro-entrepreneurs sought and were achieving were both tangible and intangible. The multiple livelihood goals and objectives were in most cases highly influenced by *fa'aSamoa*. Economic outcomes from the micro-enterprises were being achieved in some cases, however, a wide range of other outcomes were also being sought and achieved. Where financial returns were marginal, achieving intangible outcomes was important to the sustainability of the micro-enterprise.

Micro-enterprise is a livelihood strategy that can, along with other livelihood strategies, support sustainable livelihoods. For most of the micro-entrepreneurs, micro-enterprise was one of a number of livelihood strategies for them and their families. It was important that the micro-enterprise integrated not only with other livelihood strategies, but also other everyday tasks and community commitments. The micro-enterprise needed to be successful and sustainable in order to support sustainable livelihoods. Success of the micro-enterprise was regarded in this research as achieving the livelihood outcomes that the micro-entrepreneurs sought from the micro-enterprise (tangible and intangible). Sustainability was regarded as the micro-enterprise working in harmony with the cultural context, adapting to and coping with vulnerability, while maintaining and enhancing assets and resources. Assets and resources that should be maintained and enhanced included those livelihood assets defined in the sustainable

livelihoods approach (natural, financial, social, human and physical) plus cultural assets as suggested in this thesis.

The level of sustainability of the livelihood systems varied between the two case studies. The links between the case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs and the supporting organisations were robust and there was linkage between private sector sphere, public sphere and traditional spheres (Hooper, 1998: 11) in both the case study groups of micro-entrepreneurs. This enhanced the sustainability of the two groups of micro-entrepreneurs. However, both the groups of micro-entrepreneurs were heavily dependent on the supporting organisations (WIBDI and METI) which in turn were dependent on donor funding, and key staff members who were instrumental in the success of the organisation. This made the groups of micro-enterprises vulnerable. While the fine mat weavers' livelihoods worked well within the Samoan gender and cultural context, the METI supported coconut oil co-operatives were struggling to integrate with cultural norms. The coconut oil co-operatives were also struggling with financial sustainability. These factors eroded the potential sustainability of the coconut oil co-operatives.

This chapter analysed and compared the two field work case studies in order to explore sustainable livelihoods in the context of actual micro-enterprises, and answer the lower level research questions. The chapter argued that some factors have emerged throughout the research (literature review and case studies) that are critical to the success and sustainability of rural micro-enterprises in Samoa. These are summarised in the chapter. The analysis in this chapter, together with concepts and theories developed in previous chapters are brought together in the following chapter, where an overview of the research is presented, key conclusions and new concepts are reviewed, and the overall research question is answered, based on the research reported in this thesis. In the following chapter (Chapter 9) insights that arose from the case studies are used to support, illustrate and add further meaning to the relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise that were identified and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Furthermore, the way in which the sustainable livelihoods approach and modified framework was used to explore the relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise, in both the contextual chapters and the case studies, and the depth of understanding that this provided, are discussed.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

Introduction

In this, the final chapter of the thesis, concepts that emerged as the research proceeded, existing literature and theories, and empirical data provided by the case studies are brought together to conclude the research. The first part of the central (higher level) research question of the thesis asks *what are the relationships and links between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture in Samoa?* Throughout the thesis I have argued that *fa'aSamoa* is intricately interwoven into almost every aspect of rural livelihoods in Samoa, and the tensions, trade-offs and harmonies between *fa'aSamoa* and rural micro-enterprise greatly influence the success and sustainability of micro-enterprise as a rural livelihood strategy, and thus the sustainability of livelihoods. Culture has been defined, in the context of this research, as *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan way of life) (Chapter 4). This chapter provides an overview of the research leading to, and supporting this argument, and the chapter summarises the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and *fa'aSamoa* that emerged during the research. The chapter then draws on the findings of this research to extend the theory of sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise to a broader context. In doing so, the chapter addresses the second part of the higher level research question, *how can these relationships and links be incorporated into the sustainable livelihoods theory and framework?*

Sustainable livelihoods

The sustainable livelihoods approach

First, in Chapter 2, the thesis examined the theories from which the term 'sustainable livelihood' emerged, and described and critiqued the frameworks that have been developed to model sustainable livelihoods. The sustainable livelihoods approach originated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the work of Sen (1984), Grown and Sebstad (1989), Chambers and Conway (1992), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) (Sussex University) and the Department for International Development (DFID) all having significant influence on the development of the approach. Since then a number of different sustainable livelihoods frameworks and definitions have emerged (for example Scoones, 1998, Carney, 1998, Farrington et al, 1999, Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999, Singh and Gilman, 1999, Ellis, 2000). The sustainable livelihoods

approach has been influenced by a multi-dimensional approach to poverty, a focus on localised development, recognition of the realities of the poor and the diversity of livelihoods, and a focus on participation and sustainability. The sustainable livelihoods approach is based on the premise that a range of assets and resources (Carney, 1998, Bebbington, 1999) are used in livelihood strategies (Ellis, 2000) which can lead to livelihood outcomes. Livelihood outcomes that rural people aspire to are monetary, non monetary and food security based, and livelihood strategies consist of any activities that provide these outcomes. Thus, where people engage in micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy, micro-enterprise is an important component of a sustainable livelihood system.

In recent years the influence of policies, institutions and processes, at both micro and macro-level, has become prominent in the discourse of sustainable livelihoods. The vulnerability context is also highly influential (Chambers and Conway, 1992, 14-16, DFID, 1997: 13, Glavovic et al, 2003) and according to the definitions of a 'sustainable livelihood' reviewed in Chapter 2, a sustainable livelihood is achieved when it can cope with vulnerability while not undermining assets and resources. The sustainable livelihoods approach is a 'way of thinking' which is positive and holistic, and responsive to people's own perception of their priorities (Carney, 1998: 4). In development rhetoric and practice a 'sustainable livelihood' is regarded as a goal to be achieved, but the approach can be used in practice as a framework for analysis (as in this research) or as a guide for development intervention.

A number of concerns about the sustainable livelihoods approach have been raised (Chapter 2). Carney (1999a: 5), notes that it has been suggested that the approach is complex and difficult to implement, while Singh and Gilman (1999: 543) suggest that it is difficult to make the approach work across sectors. There is also some concern that the importance of agriculture might be lost in rural development when using the sustainable livelihoods approach, as other livelihood strategies are highlighted and perhaps become the focus (as in this research) (Carney, 1999a: 6). The absence of any specific reference to gender, and absence of markets as a specific factor in frameworks, have also been raised as concerns. In Chapter 2 I noted that when a diagrammatic framework is used to describe an approach, some important components and relationships may be left out in order to avoid complexity. However, while for some it

seems there is an expectation that the approach should provide definitive and all inclusive guidance on development practice, it was clear from the review in Chapter 2 that the approach and diagrammatic frameworks are designed to frame thinking and analysis, and guide decisions on development interventions, rather than to explicitly dictate action. The myriad of ways in which the sustainable livelihoods approach has been described and modelled in diagrammatic frameworks, reveals the flexibility of the approach, and the way in which the approach can be adapted to the context in which it is being used.

In this research, the cultural aspect of livelihoods is central and integral. However, the review of the sustainable livelihoods approach in Chapter 2 noted that existing theory and frameworks do not include culture in a way that is useful for an analysis of the relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods. In an early DFID framework culture is included as part of the vulnerability context (Carney, 1998: 5), while in a later DFID framework culture is included as a process along with laws, policies and institutions (DFID, 1999:11). Further, both Bebbington (1999: 2034), and Clark (2002: 124) have argued that culture is an asset, which, according to Clark (2002: 124), can be eroded and 'stretched to the point of collapse'. Overton et al (1999: 266) suggest that there 'is a case' for extending perspectives on sustainable development (that normally include environmental, economic and social aspects) to include a fourth aspect, culture. Others have also noted the strong relationship between culture and sustainable development in the Pacific Islands (for example Schoeffel, 1998, Overton et al, 1999, Hooper, 2000, James, 2000). In fact, Chapter 2 of this thesis argues that culture is intricately interwoven into almost every aspect of the sustainable livelihood system, culture being an environment in which livelihoods exist. The relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods are specific and unique for each culture, and in order to understand these in the context of sustainable livelihoods, each component of the sustainable livelihoods framework can be used as an 'entry point' where the relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods are explored. In this way, relationships between culture and sustainable livelihoods become part of sustainable livelihoods rhetoric, theory and frameworks.

In light of experience gained during the research, Chapter 8 'revisited' the approach to question whether this research had added to the perception of a 'sustainable livelihood'.

Chapter 8 argued that the field work had clarified the notion that a ‘livelihood system’ can exist which may or may not be sustainable. Sustainability in the context of this thesis is not considered to be inter-generational or even extremely long term. Rather, a livelihood system in Samoa is considered to be sustainable if it can withstand vulnerability and risk, works in harmony with the cultural context, and all assets and resources (not just natural resources) are maintained or enhanced. The field work also highlighted that strong links between traditional, government (public) and private sector spheres (and the institutions within them) greatly enhance sustainability. Vulnerability can relate to a wide range of shocks and risks and ‘disturbances’ including environmental, economic, social or ecological events (Glavovic, 2003: 209). However, in addition to these types of vulnerability, a somewhat different concept of vulnerability (which was explained in detail in Chapter 8, Figure 8.3) emerged - the concept of ‘dependency related vulnerability’. Chapter 8 concluded that although both of the Samoan groups of micro-entrepreneurs were very well supported by the NGOs, which in many ways enhanced their sustainability, they were also dependant on the continued success of the NGOs and this increased their ‘dependency related vulnerability’.

Rural livelihoods in Samoa and *fa’aSamoa*

To understand the relationships that exist between sustainable livelihoods and *fa’aSamoa*, it is necessary to first understand *fa’aSamoa*. In Chapter 4 I attempted to explain and interpret some elements of *fa’aSamoa* that were particularly relevant to rural livelihoods in Samoa, and explored the relationships between *fa’aSamoa* and aspects of rural livelihoods that were important to this research, using each component of the sustainable livelihoods framework as an entry point for analysis. Iati describes *fa’aSamoa* as ‘a traditional governance system, serving social, economic and political functions’ and a ‘framework for action based upon social structure’ (Iati, 2000:71). *Fa’aSamoa* includes a whole range of connected and related elements including the *aiga* (kinship group), *fa’amatai* (chiefly system), land, *fa’alavelave* (ceremonies) and the values of *alofa* (love and compassion), reciprocity, *tautua* (service) and *va fealoa’i* (social respect) (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 10, 172). *Fa’aSamoa* is a lived experience, it is part of everyday life, defining Samoans’ identity, values and behaviours (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 10, 172). While *fa’aSamoa* is a way of living, a livelihood

is a means of living. That the two are intricately interwoven with complex relationships and tensions is thus not surprising.

The social unit in Samoa is the *aiga* (wider, extended family, or kinship group) (Maiava, 2001: 80). Understanding the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and livelihoods, is centred on understanding that it is the *aiga* (family) that motivates behaviours, events and actions (Maiava, 2001: 79) and that improving and enhancing the *aiga* culturally, socially and economically is the aim of *fa'aSamoa* (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004: 172). The *aiga's* status is dependant on the behaviour, actions and interactions of *aiga* members and their *matai* (chief). Samoans derive a sense of identity and self worth from family and kinship (James, 2000: 135, Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000: 30). A Samoan's self esteem is related to their place in the *aiga*, and being part of a well respected *aiga* is a 'universal goal' (Maiava, 2001: 78-79). Status, and well-being derived from status, begins at the *aiga*, then moves outward to the village and wider community.

In Chapter 4 it became more and more evident that *fa'aSamoa* is strongly related to, and interwoven into, almost every aspect of rural livelihoods and development in Samoa. In fact in Chapter 4 it was established that rural livelihoods in Samoa exist in the context of *fa'aSamoa*. There were a number of key themes that emerged during this analysis which became central to understanding the case studies and the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and micro-enterprise that were addressed later in the thesis. Firstly, the way in which the *aiga* influences all aspects of rural livelihoods, was evident throughout the analysis. Secondly the power and authority of *fa'amatai*, and the rules of the village which are enforced by the village *fono*, have considerable influence over almost every aspect of rural life. Thirdly, the extent to which rural people in Samoa conform to the values and norms of *fa'aSamoa*, is considerable, this being crucial to building of social and cultural assets that provide security, and a strong a sense of identity. Hooper (1998: 11) describes three spheres (or domains): government or public, private sector, and traditional, that are distinct 'ways of life' in the Pacific Islands, each having a separate but interrelated set of norms, values and culture. Based on this model as a framework for analysis, in Chapter 4 the dichotomy of political systems that exist in Samoa (traditional (*fa'amatai*) and government) was discussed in terms of the tensions and divergences that can impact on rural livelihoods when two

distinct and very different political systems are expected to exist and operate side by side.

As was noted earlier, existing sustainable livelihoods theory and frameworks do not satisfactorily address relationships between culture and livelihoods such as those discussed and analysed in Chapter 4. Thus a modified definition of sustainable livelihoods was introduced which emphasises that a livelihood must work in harmony with the cultural context and that all assets (not just natural resources, but especially including social and cultural assets) must be maintained or enhanced:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities that provide a means of living: a *sustainable* livelihood working in harmony with the cultural context adapting to and coping with vulnerability, while maintaining and enhancing assets and resources.

Furthermore, a new framework was designed (Figure 4.2) that was then used to guide the field research and further analysis.

Sustainable livelihoods and *fa'aSamoa*

The review of literature (Chapter 4) and the field research highlighted the influence of the family on rural livelihoods in Samoa. Furthermore, the research showed that *fa'amatai* (chiefly system), and the values of *fa'aSamoa* such as *alofa* (love), reciprocity, *va fealoa'i* (respect), *tautua* (service) and *pule* (authority) were intricately interwoven through each element of rural livelihoods. Relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, rural livelihoods, and micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy, that this research has highlighted, are précised in the following sections.

Livelihood outcomes

In terms of livelihoods outcomes, *fa'aSamoa* provides motivation to earn money for gifting, and obligations of *fa'aSamoa* (e.g. *fa'alavelave*, church, community), all of which will enhance the standing of the family, thereby providing considerable well-being for rural people. Respect and *tautua* (service) are outcomes that are sought, and these can be fulfilled through labour, gifts (e.g. food, fine mats), attendance at *fa'alavelave*, or cash. Education of children is an important livelihood outcome as the future earning capacity of children will allow children to provide *tautua* to the family and community (especially through the provision of material gifts and remittances) thereby enhancing family status, and provide security for parents in their old age. Food

security and subsistence production is important, not only for sustenance, but also for gifting and exchange, and for *fa'alavelave*.

Policies, institutions and processes (PIP)

In terms of policies, institutions and processes, the thesis based this analysis on the three spheres, traditional, public (government) and private sector (Hooper, 1993, 1998). Overall, the question was whether the policies, institutions and processes in these spheres, and the linkages between the spheres, provide an enabling environment for rural livelihoods. The research explained that in the traditional sphere, where *fa'aSamoa* has the most influence, *fa'amatai* (chiefly system) ensured that each family is represented by *matai* on the village council (*fono*). The *fono* has considerable *pule* (authority) over village policy and activities and can influence almost every aspect of rural livelihoods (both positively and negatively). The village economy is highly influenced by *fa'aSamoa* in terms of community and church donations. Women are rarely *matai* (chiefs), their role in *fa'aSamoa* normally being regarded as supporting their brothers and husbands, however, women have considerable informal power in family decisions. Women's committees play major role in village.

In the public (government sphere), employees can find it difficult to differentiate between and separate obligations to their job, and obligations to *fa'aSamoa*. This is particularly difficult for members of parliament (all of whom are *matai*), sometimes jeopardising what might be considered 'good governance'. There are tensions between public sphere and traditional sphere due to tensions between elements of *fa'aSamoa* (and *fa'amatai*) and western models of democracy. Furthermore, the formal link between these spheres through the village mayors (*pulenu'u*) is not strong.

In the private sector sphere, the government of Samoa is reforming policies and enhancing services for private sector businesses. However, while there are aspects of business that are in harmony with *fa'aSamoa*, there are also considerable tensions between business and *fa'aSamoa* (see section on micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy later in this chapter). Strong links between the spheres are provided by NGOs, some government services (e.g. extension), and some private sector businesses.

Risk and vulnerability

The family and community networks and relationships of *fa'aSamoa* provide security, safety nets and risk management. However, considerable risk and vulnerability is encountered due to obligations to *fa'aSamoa*, both in terms of the time and effort, and the financial obligations, all of which enhance the status of the family and are *tautua* to family and community, but may jeopardise other aspects of an individual's life.

Vulnerability is also caused by jealousy and rivalry between families as a result of *fa'aSamoa*. Attitudes to risk are also highly influenced by *fa'aSamoa*. Enhancing family's standing and status in the community is a prime objective, thus anything that jeopardises that is very risky. People are therefore very likely to conform to *fa'aSamoa* so as not to risk any shame to the family, and so as to maintain social and cultural assets that are so important to their place in the family and the security (socially and materially) that brings.

Assets

Access to, and control over, assets and resources (natural, physical, financial, human, social and cultural) used in providing livelihoods for people in rural Samoa are strongly influenced by *fa'aSamoa*. In terms of natural assets, Samoan people have a strong cultural affinity to the land, which has traditionally been the basis of their livelihoods. There has been a gradual change over the last decades towards more individual authority over land (although still within the framework of customary land tenure and *fa'aSamoa*), and a lessening in the authority of *fa'amatai* over land. However, customary law vests the ultimate authority over land in the *matai* should there be any dispute, and customary land tenure still strongly influences access to and control over land and forests. Inshore fishing and conservation is controlled by village fisheries management committees in many villages. However, the strong influence of *fa'amatai* means that effectively the *fono* takes responsibility for fisheries conservation.

In terms of physical assets, such as equipment for micro-enterprise (e.g. coconut oil co-operatives), and even infrastructure such as telephones, the way these can be best owned and shared is strongly influenced by *fa'aSamoa*, the focus on the family, and relationships within the community and village.

Saving cash (to build financial assets) is not common in rural Samoa as values of *fa'aSamoa* such as gifting and reciprocity, and *tautua* (service) to family, church and

community strongly influence the way in which cash is gifted, spent and used. However, on the other hand, *fa'aSamoa* is important in providing financial assets through gifts, informal loans and remittances. Customary land is not able to be used as collateral for borrowing, and this influences access to finance for investment, especially for larger loans. Smaller amounts of finance are available through gifts, informal loans, remittances, and for micro and small business through microfinance or 'loan guarantee' programmes.

There are strong relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and human resources in terms of the education and health of the rural population. Literacy rates in Samoa are high (99%) in part due to motivation to educate children to contribute financially to *fa'aSamoa*. There is no difference between male and female opportunities for education, and this has been attributed to the importance of respect that is embedded in *fa'aSamoa*. Brothers bestow respect on their sisters, and this means that women have considerable status.

Furthermore, tasks are shared within the family, and gender roles can be flexible, with family members often helping out where a high work load is perceived as being of value to the family. The strong family and kinship loyalty, the importance of enhancing the standing of the family, and *tautua* (service), are all important in terms of a labour force for livelihood strategies. The production unit for livelihood strategies is normally the family, and labour from outside the *aiga* (extended family) is rarely used due to family rivalry and mistrust. Emigration, which is an important part of contemporary *fa'aSamoa*, causes human resources to be lost from the Samoan workforce. However, the bonds of kinship, and values and practices of *fa'aSamoa* reach beyond the boundaries of Samoa, and emigration (and the resulting remittances) is an important livelihood strategy for most rural Samoans. Womens committees were a focal point of the health system, and still play a role in maintaining the health of rural Samoan people.

Social and cultural assets are critical to rural livelihoods in Samoa, and are strongly related to *fa'aSamoa*. Firstly, the values, belief systems and expressions of *fa'aSamoa* provide rural Samoans with a world view, and a sense of dignity, identity and place. Being a member of an *aiga* provides social security, a safety net, a home, access to land and a sense of belonging. Secondly, cultural assets of *fa'aSamoa*, such as traditional arts, crafts, the way of living, dance and song are not only important for tourism, and provide livelihood strategies, but also contribute to *fa'aSamoa* in terms of goods for

distributions and exchange (e.g. fine mats). Social networks in the traditional sphere such as the church, women's groups, the village *fono* and the *aiga* strongly influence the livelihood systems. The relationships between the five groups in the village as per *fa'aSamoa*: the *matai*, the wives of the *matai*, the sisters and daughters of the *matai*, the untitled men, and the youth, are essential to the livelihoods of rural people. Maintaining social and cultural assets is paramount as these not only provide identity, sense of place (in family and community) and dignity, but also provide security for rural people.

Livelihood strategies

The choice of livelihood strategy used to provide livelihood outcomes not only depends on the assets available, and the economic viability of the strategy, but is also strongly influenced by *fa'aSamoa*. Strategies in rural Samoa are usually selected that operate in harmony with *fa'aSamoa* while using the resources and skills available. Common rural livelihood strategies are, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, small village stores, beach *fale* businesses, transport, crafts, sewing and cooking. People tend to stay within the norms of *fa'aSamoa* when selecting livelihood strategies in rural Samoa – this maintains social and cultural capital and reduces risk of failure which could bring shame to the family. Migration and remittances are an important part of contemporary *fa'aSamoa*, extending the family beyond the village and beyond the shores of Samoa, and migration is an important livelihood strategy. Subsistence food and goods (e.g. fine mats and *tapa*) are produced for gifts and exchange at *fa'alavelave*, while goods surplus to requirements are often sold for cash.

The relationships between rural livelihoods in Samoa and *fa'aSamoa* that have been discussed in the previous sections are summarised in Table 9.1 on the next pages.

Table 9.1 Summary of relationships between sustainable rural livelihoods and *fa'aSamoa*

| Culture | |
|---|--|
| <p>In this thesis 'culture' has been interpreted as <i>fa'aSamoa</i> (the Samoan way of life). <i>Fa'aSamoa</i> is centred on the <i>aiga</i> (family) (Maiava, 2001: 79). Improving and enhancing the <i>aiga</i> culturally, socially and economically is the aim of <i>fa'aSamoa</i> (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 172). <i>Fa'aSamoa</i> includes a whole range of connected and related elements including the <i>aiga</i> (kinship group), <i>matai</i>, and <i>fa'amatai</i> (chiefly system), land, <i>fa'alavelave</i> (ceremonies) and the values of <i>alofa</i> (love and compassion), <i>tautua</i> (service) and <i>va fealoa'i</i> (social respect) (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004: 10, 172). <i>Fa'aSamoa</i> is 'a traditional governance system, serving social, economic and political functions' and a 'framework for action based upon social structure' (Iati, 2000:71). Culture is an environment in which the livelihoods exist and is interwoven into every aspect of sustainable livelihoods (below).</p> | |
| Entry point – sustainable livelihoods framework component | Relationship to and links with culture (<i>fa'aSamoa</i>) – examples from the research |
| Livelihood outcomes | <p><i>Fa'aSamoa</i> provides motivation to earn money for gifting, and obligations of <i>fa'aSamoa</i> (e.g. <i>fa'alavelave</i>, church, community) to enhance the family.</p> <p>Respect and <i>tautua</i> (service) are integral to <i>fa'aSamoa</i> and influence livelihood outcomes - can be fulfilled through labour, gifts (e.g. food, fine mats), attendance at <i>fa'alavelave</i>, or cash.</p> <p>Education of children important as their future earning capacity will enhance family status and provide security for parents in their old age.</p> <p>Subsistence food and goods (e.g. fine mats and <i>tapa</i>) are produced for gifts and exchange at <i>fa'alavelave</i></p> |
| Policies, institutions and processes (PIP) | <p>Traditional, public (government) and private sector spheres (Hooper, 1993)</p> <p><i>Traditional sphere</i> operates under <i>fa'amatai</i> – each family represented by <i>matai</i> on village <i>fono</i>. <i>Fono</i> has considerable <i>pule</i> (authority) over village policy and activities which can positively or negatively influence rural livelihoods. Jealousies and rivalries between families can affect rural livelihoods. Village economy influenced by <i>fa'aSamoa</i> in terms of community and church donations. Women's committees play major role in village. Women are rarely <i>matai</i> (their role in <i>fa'aSamoa</i> is normally to support their brothers and husbands), however, women have considerable informal power in family decisions.</p> <p><i>Public (government sphere)</i> – difficult to differentiate work and obligations to <i>fa'aSamoa</i>. Tensions between public sphere and traditional sphere.</p> <p><i>Private sector sphere</i> – government of Samoa reforming policies and enhancing services for the private sector sphere, tensions and tradeoffs and harmonies between business and <i>fa'aSamoa</i> (see section on livelihood strategy below).</p> <p>Links between the spheres – NGOs, <i>pulenu'u</i>, some government services (e.g. extension), private sector businesses..</p> |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Risk and vulnerability | <p>Security and risk management provided by <i>fa'aSamoa</i> (family and community networks). Risk and vulnerability caused by obligations to <i>fa'aSamoa</i>. Vulnerability caused by jealousy and rivalry between families as a result of <i>fa'aSamoa</i> Attitudes to risk related to <i>fa'aSamoa</i> (e.g. enhancing family's status is as prime objective, anything that jeopardises this is very risky, conforming to <i>fa'aSamoa</i> so as not to shame family)</p> |
| Assets | <p><i>Natural assets</i> – customary land system affects access and control over land and forests. Use of land for collateral restricted under customary land system. Inshore fishing and conservation controlled by village fisheries management committees in many villages (effectively the <i>fono</i> in some villages).</p> <p><i>Physical assets</i> – example - the way equipment successfully shared in a micro-enterprise (e.g. coconut oil co-operatives) influenced by <i>fa'aSamoa</i>, and focus on the family.</p> <p><i>Financial assets</i> – Cash savings not common – cash gifted, spent and used for community and church obligations (gifting, distribution and exchange part of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>). <i>Fa'aSamoa</i> and service to family important in providing financial assets through gifts and remittances.</p> <p><i>Human assets</i> – Literacy rates high (99%) in part due to motivation to educate children to contribute financially to <i>fa'aSamoa</i>. No difference between male and female opportunities for education in part due to respect of brothers for sisters gives women considerable status. Emigration, part of contemporary <i>fa'aSamoa</i> causes 'brain drain'. Womens committees were focal point of the health system, and still play a role. Family provides a labour force for livelihood strategies due to loyalty, the aim of improving the status of the family and <i>tautua</i>. Labour from outside the family is rarely used due to family loyalty, and rivalry and mistrust between families.</p> <p><i>Social and cultural assets</i> – cultural assets of <i>fa'aSamoa</i> important to provide sense of identity and worldview. Cultural assets used in tourism, and in providing goods for gifting and exchange (e.g. fine mats, subsistence food). Networks in the traditional sphere such as the church, women's groups, the village <i>fono</i> and the <i>aiga</i> influence the livelihood systems. The relationships between the five groups in the village as per <i>fa'aSamoa</i>: the <i>matai</i>, the wives of the <i>matai</i>, the sisters and daughters of the <i>matai</i>, the untitled men, and the youth, are essential to the livelihoods of rural people. Maintaining social and cultural assets is paramount as these not only provide identity, sense of place (in family and community) and dignity, but also provide security for rural people.</p> |
| Livelihood strategies | <p>Choice of strategy influenced by <i>fa'aSamoa</i>. Strategies in rural Samoa usually operate in harmony with <i>fa'aSamoa</i> and use the resources and skills available – e.g. employment in the town or overseas, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, small village stores, beach <i>fale</i> businesses, crafts, transport, sewing and cooking. People tend to stay within the norms of <i>fa'aSamoa</i> when selecting livelihood strategies in rural Samoa – this maintains social and cultural capital and reduces risk of failure which could bring shame to the family. Migration and remittances are an important part of contemporary <i>fa'aSamoa</i>, extending the family beyond the village and beyond the shores of Samoa, and are an important livelihood strategy.</p> |

Micro-enterprise as a strategy for sustainable livelihoods

Micro-enterprise, as a livelihood strategy, was reviewed first in Chapter 2, and then throughout the thesis as relationships between micro-enterprise, sustainable livelihoods and *fa'aSamoa* were explored. During the review of literature on micro-enterprise in developing countries (Chapter 2) a number of themes and concepts emerged. For example, in defining the term micro-enterprise it emerged that micro-enterprises could be described and defined according to a wide range of features. A classification of micro-enterprises, developed in Table 2.2, highlighted the different features which distinguish micro-enterprises. This 'classification' (Table 2.2) was useful in comparing and contrasting the features of the case study micro-enterprises in Chapter 8.

The literature on micro-enterprise that was reviewed in this thesis did not explicitly link micro-enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, and the literature on sustainable livelihoods did not explicitly address micro-enterprise. Chapter 2 linked sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise by discussing micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy within the sustainable livelihoods framework. The chapter addressed the notion of 'success' of micro-enterprises and questioned how such 'success' can be measured in view of the literature on sustainable livelihoods. It was established in Chapter 2 that micro-entrepreneurs (and their supporting organisation) seek both tangible and intangible outcomes (Harper and Finnegan (1998: vii). Chapter 2 argued that a micro-enterprise is successful when it provides or supports a sustainable livelihood, when the livelihood outcomes to which the micro-entrepreneur aspires are achieved, and the livelihood system is sustainable.

Small and micro business enterprise in Samoa

Business enterprise in Samoa was discussed and analysed in Chapter 5 to provide a context for the entrepreneurial issues discussed in the case studies. Poverty in rural Samoa, and other Pacific Islands, has been described as poverty of opportunity and lack of cash (Chung, 1997: 28, ADB, 2001, Struthers et al, 2002: 4, Tafuna'i, 2003: 179). In rural areas of Samoa, where livelihood strategies such as full or part time employment and casual contracting are limited, micro-enterprise and small business has the potential to support sustainable livelihoods and reduce poverty.

In recent years, the Samoan government has implemented a number of initiatives to provide an enabling environment for small business in Samoa and these were described in Chapter 5. Furthermore, there are a number of organisations and enterprises that provide important links between the three spheres of government (public) traditional and private sector (Hooper, 1993, 1998), that were described in that chapter.

The thesis argued that relationships between rural micro-enterprise (as a livelihood strategy) and *fa'aSamoa* strongly influence the development, success and sustainability of micro-enterprises, and thus sustainable livelihoods. While there are clearly tensions and tradeoffs between small business and micro-enterprise and *fa'aSamoa*, the thesis also highlighted aspects of *fa'aSamoa* that were in harmony with, and therefore supported and enhanced rural micro-enterprise (Chapter 5).

In terms of harmony between micro-enterprise and *fa'aSamoa*, the need for cash to contribute to contemporary *fa'aSamoa* is a hugely important motivator. Cash is needed for gifting, *fa'alavelave*, church and community obligations. Cash will improve family status through generosity, material wellbeing, and education of children, who will later contribute to the family. Furthermore, generosity (e.g. gifting, generosity towards community and church obligations, and providing credit and informal loans), an important element of *fa'aSamoa*, can provide goodwill and promotion for business and micro-enterprise. People who consider an entrepreneur to be generous are more likely to support their business. Family and kinship loyalty, service and respect, values embedded in *fa'aSamoa*, are important to ensure human resources and a labour force for micro-enterprise. Family unity, respect and relationships, result in roles and tasks being shared amongst family members. Values and practices of contemporary *fa'aSamoa* are also important for ensuring financial resources (e.g. remittances) for start-up capital for micro-enterprise and sometimes for other one-off expenses. In some circumstances *fa'amatai* can provide an enabling environment for business, and support for micro-entrepreneurs, although this can depend on who the entrepreneur is, and how they are viewed by senior *matai*. Customary land tenure can provide access to land and resources for micro-enterprise, and cultural assets (such as dance, art, craft, and the Samoan way of living) can enhance tourism. Hospitality, an important aspect of *fa'aSamoa*, is important in the tourism industry.

However, tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and sound business principles force rural micro-entrepreneurs to make 'trade-offs' between entrepreneurial success, and respecting and complying with cultural norms which will maintain social and cultural assets. For example there are tensions between initiating new and non-traditional business ideas, and retaining cultural acceptance within lines of respect and authority. This is sometimes a dilemma for youth, untitled men and women. Furthermore there are tensions between entrepreneurial work and good customer service, and fulfilling family, community and church obligations (for example attendance at *fa'alavelave*, family or community work). Choices must be made between reinvestment in the business (good business practice), and gaining status and security by fulfilling the obligations of *fa'aSamoa*, and avoiding jealousy and criticism by distributing business income. Sometimes businesses fail when entrepreneurs share and distribute the proceeds of their business too early (Chung, 1997: 33, Brooks, 1996: 8) causing cash flow problems, and social and cultural obligations can jeopardise the business (Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998: 10-20). Difficult choices arise when entrepreneurs are asked for credit (i.e. customers pay for goods and services later, or pay with other goods) which is expected by many Samoans within the cultural norm of reciprocity. Motivation to start a business can be lessened if remittances (part of *fa'aSamoa*) are able to be obtained to fulfil basic needs and cultural obligations. Tensions may also arise between relative independence through a successful business, and retaining coherence of the family. In some cases there are tensions between the village environment (and *fa'amatai*), and business initiatives. For example this has been reported when Samoans who have been living overseas return to a rural village to start a business, and have been subjected to barriers and difficulties caused by jealousy and resentment. The practice of donating and giving generously to the church as part of *fa'aSamoa*, provides considerable well-being for rural Samoan people. However, much of the money provided to the church and pastor is lost from the village economy, meaning that village business and micro-enterprise is severely restrained.

There are tensions between co-operatives and *fa'aSamoa*. While Samoan people work co-operatively for specific production goals or a community project (O'Meara, 1990: 60-61, Chung, 1997: 33) co-operative structures for business enterprise are problematic (Crocombe, 1990: 60-61, Brooks, 1996: 4-6). In fact, enterprises and production are normally family based in Samoa (Maiava, 2001: 142) and family based enterprise is

more likely to be successful than community based enterprise (Executive Director of WIBDI, interview April 2003). The village-based coconut oil case study in Chapter 6 highlighted the difficulties that the co-operatives were having recruiting and maintaining members, and sustaining efficient operation of the co-operatives. In particular the case study highlighted the tensions between the 'co-operative' value of equal sharing of work, and *fa'aSamoa* values of respect and authority for older people and those of higher status.

Based on Hooper's (1993, 1998) concept of the three spheres, I argued that there are two 'types' of small and micro-enterprise in Samoa (with a continuum between), *private sector* enterprises and *traditional sphere* enterprises, as well as businesses that operate in the public sphere (state owned enterprises). I contend that this 'typology' is more useful for understanding business enterprise in the Pacific Island context than the commonly used 'typology' of informal and formal businesses. Private sector businesses are small or medium sized (rather than micro), operate in the private sector, are more likely to be urban (or linked to urban business), and are likely to have the potential to generate larger profits. Traditional sphere businesses operate within the traditional sector, are likely to be very small or micro, and conform to the type of income earning activities commonly found in rural areas (Chapter 5). Where profits from an enterprise are considerable (for example in some 'private sector sphere' businesses), and motivation for cash is very high, entrepreneurs tend to 'blend' and 'juggle' cultural norms and cultural obligations so that the enterprise exists *alongside* the cultural context. However, in Chapter 5 it was established that 'traditional sphere' enterprises, in order to be sustainable, normally operate *within* the cultural context of *fa'aSamoa*, ensuring that relationships, trust and harmony within the family and community are maintained, cultural norms are adhered to, and cultural and social assets are not eroded. Where 'traditional sphere' businesses are not in harmony with *fa'aSamoa*, a large number of tensions arise between business practice and cultural norms, and when micro-entrepreneurs choose to retain their social and cultural assets and trade off sound business practice, the micro-enterprises become vulnerable and unsustainable.

The harmonies and tensions, and relationships between micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy and *fa'aSamoa* that have been described in this section are summarised in Table 9.2 on the following page.

Table 9.2 Relationships between micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy and *fa'aSamoa*

| | |
|---|--|
| Rural MICRO-ENTERPRISE as a livelihood strategy | <p><i>Harmonies between business and fa'aSamoa (provides support for micro-enterprise)</i></p> <p>Motivation for cash and micro-enterprise comes from the need for cash to improve family status through gifting, church and community obligations, and generosity.</p> <p>Goodwill and promotion for the business can occur through generosity as part of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>.</p> <p>Family unity (<i>fa'aSamoa</i>) provides human resources.</p> <p>Family unity, respect and relationships means roles and tasks are shared amongst family members.</p> <p>Family unity (<i>fa'aSamoa</i>) provides financial resources (e.g. remittances).</p> <p>Enabling environment for business, and village environment under <i>fa'amatai</i> (in some circumstances).</p> <p>Customary land tenure can provide access to resources.</p> <p>Cultural assets can enhance tourism.</p> <p><i>Tensions and trade-offs between business and fa'aSamoa:</i></p> <p>Co-operatives in general, and family based production systems common in <i>fa'aSamoa</i>.</p> <p>Innovative businesses, and <i>pule</i> (authority) and respect of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>, and staying within norms of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>. Customer service and high productivity, and attendance at <i>fa'alavelave</i> and fulfilling community obligations.</p> <p>Saving, and gifting, financial obligations, distribution, and generosity (e.g. providing credit) of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>.</p> <p>Maintaining cash flow, and gifting, financial obligations, distribution, and generosity of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>.</p> <p>Investment in the business, and gifting, financial obligations, distribution, and generosity of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>.</p> <p>High status from business, and fear of failure and shame to the family.</p> <p>Motivation for cash, and cash provided by remittances as part of <i>fa'aSamoa</i>.</p> <p>Enabling environment for business, and village environment under <i>fa'amatai</i> (in some circumstances). Village business environment may not be conducive to business.</p> <p>Jealousies and rivalries between families can negatively influence business.</p> <p>Obtaining finance, and customary land tenure.</p> <p>Equal co-operative work, and <i>pule</i> (authority), <i>tautua</i> (service) and respect in <i>fa'aSamoa</i>.</p> <p><i>Traditional sphere businesses and private sector sphere businesses</i></p> <p>'Traditional sphere' businesses (especially in rural areas) tend to work best when in harmony with <i>fa'aSamoa</i>, ensuring cultural and social assets are maintained and enhanced. 'Private sector' businesses, that usually earn larger amounts and more regular income, and are often in urban areas, tend to work alongside <i>fa'aSamoa</i>, blending and juggling business with cultural obligations.</p> |
|---|--|

The case studies

The relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and *fa'aSamoa* were explored in two case studies in Chapters 6 and 7, and then further analysed in Chapter 8. These case studies of micro-enterprises in Samoa provided further understanding, and illustrated aspects already highlighted in the context chapters (Chapters 4 and 5), as well as highlighting just how the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and sustainable livelihoods were expressed in practice. The case studies described the way that the micro-enterprises in Samoa use the resources and assets they have, and those they can acquire, to develop and operate micro-enterprises that can improve their livelihoods. Risks and challenges the micro-entrepreneurs faced were identified, and the relationships between the micro-enterprises and *fa'aSamoa* were discussed. The relationships between the micro-entrepreneurs and the non-government organisations (NGOs) that support the micro-enterprises were also addressed and analysed.

The rural micro-enterprises in the two case studies in this research operated in the traditional sphere, and were operating in an environment of *fa'aSamoa* where respect, resource use, commitment to family, community and church obligations, reciprocity, sharing and gifting were important (O'Meara, 1993, Shadrake and van Diermen, 1998, Maiava, 2001, Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000). By respecting cultural norms, the micro-entrepreneurs were able to maintain social and cultural assets which gave them with a feeling of 'place', identity, and well-being within the community, robust family and social networks, financial, social, food, and physical security, and safety nets in times of hardship.

In the analysis of the case studies I argued that while the fine mat weavers were working in harmony with almost all aspects of *fa'aSamoa*, which enhanced the sustainability of the fine mat weaving programme, some of the coconut oil producers were struggling to balance aspects of *fa'aSamoa* with the operation of their co-operatives. There were instances where trade-offs, in terms of entrepreneurial success, had occurred in order that the micro-entrepreneurs remain within cultural norms and thus retain social and cultural assets. For example, the coconut oil producers had reduced the frequency of oil production and potential income generation by attending *fa'alavelave*, and had not insisted on equal work for all members in order to retain the

cultural norms of authority, respect and service. For the coconut oil producers, where the livelihood strategy did not harmonise with *fa'aSamoa*, the financial returns at this early stage of the venture did not appear to be great enough to entirely overcome the tensions that were being encountered. Intangible outcomes did not appear to compensate for low financial returns. Recruiting new members to the co-operatives was difficult, and some members had left.

***Fa'aSamoa* – an evolving way of life**

In the previous sections I explained those relationships that emerged in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and the case studies between *fa'aSamoa* sustainable livelihoods and rural micro-enterprise (as a livelihood strategy). As with any culture, *fa'aSamoa* has changed and evolved as Samoan people have negotiated the changing social, economic and environmental context in which they pursue their livelihoods. While the basic values and beliefs of *fa'aSamoa* remain the same, the meanings of cultural practices (e.g. fine mat gifting), cultural norms, and activities that express the values of *fa'aSamoa* have evolved. A number of examples emerged during the research where *fa'aSamoa* has adapted to fulfil contemporary needs (Chapter 4). For example, the nature of *fa'alavelave* (ceremonies marking life events) has changed, cash (mostly from remittances) and store bought goods now being exchanged for subsistence goods, providing village people with goods from the cash economy (O'Meara, 1990, Hooper, 1998, Maiava, 2001). The meaning of *tautua* (service) has adapted and can nowadays be fulfilled with cash and remittances (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004), as well as labour. The meaning and practices of gifting fine mats have changed as the 'modern' fine mat has evolved, and the fine mat has evolved from being a symbol of 'nobility' presented only at the wedding of *matai*, to an expression of gifting at *fa'alavelave* representing a range of life events and for all Samoan people (Schoeffel, 1999). Maiava (2001) describes the introduction of cattle into rural livelihoods systems and *fa'alavelave*, while (O'Meara, 1990) explains the more individual authority over land and property that has evolved as a response to a the increased number of *matai*, more focus on the nuclear family, and a desire for parents to pass on property to their children. Despite these changes in the meanings and practice of some aspects of *fa'aSamoa*, basic values of kinship, love, respect, service, reciprocity and authority have remained. *Fa'amatai* (chiefly system) retains strong social authority over the *aiga* (extended family), and political authority over rural villages through the *fono* (village council).

The premise of this thesis is that, at the present time, the considerable tensions and trade-offs between *fa'aSamoa* and business (in the western sense) are influencing the development, success and sustainability of rural small business and micro-enterprise. The question must be asked, however, whether in the future, *fa'aSamoa* can evolve and be negotiated to ease these tensions. As Samoans return in greater numbers from overseas bringing new business ideas, as urban business practices permeate to the rural areas, as rural communities become better educated and more savvy in business, as more and more cash is needed in rural areas, and as the Samoan government further improves the environment for private sector business, there may be changes and negotiation in the way people regard the dilemmas, tensions, trade-offs and choices faced by entrepreneurs. Transparency, and open discussion about the tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and business, could hasten negotiation. However, in the mean time, careful analysis of the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, culture and business enterprise, using the multiple entry points into the sustainable livelihoods framework as described in Chapter 2, can serve to provide a better understanding of those tensions that could jeopardise success and sustainability of rural livelihood strategies, and factors that could support rural livelihood strategies, so that tensions can be minimised and positive factors can be built upon.

Lessons for the future – sustainable livelihoods, culture and micro-enterprise

Incorporating culture into sustainable livelihoods theory and frameworks

The research showed that culture is central to development, and is interwoven into livelihoods in complex ways. Clearly, the way in which culture and sustainable livelihoods are related will differ according to the context and no two cultures will be the same. Incorporating culture into a sustainable livelihoods analysis first requires a thorough understanding of the culture and way of life of the community, and whether, and how the culture has evolved and been negotiated in recent times to better provide for contemporary needs. Then, in order to understand the relationships between the culture and livelihoods it is useful to have a framework on which to base analysis and ways of understanding. While previous sustainable livelihoods theory and frameworks do not incorporate culture in a way that can support researchers and practitioners who are seeking to understand livelihood systems from a perspective that includes culture, this research has clearly shown that the theory and frameworks of sustainable

livelihoods are flexible enough to be used as a basis for such analysis. Different authors and organisations have suggested single perspectives from which to integrate culture into the sustainable livelihoods approach and frameworks, but this research has unequivocally shown that no one single perspective or 'entry point' is sufficient or satisfactory. The research indicated that each and every component in the sustainable livelihoods framework should be used as an entry point for analysis because culture is related to, and interwoven into, every component of sustainable livelihoods.

For example, culture should be regarded as a separate asset that must be sustained and enhanced. Maintaining and enhancing social and cultural capital ensures strong networks that can support sustainable livelihoods, and enhance resilience to vulnerability. But further to this, culture can influence the way people perceive risks and vulnerabilities, and culture can be regarded as an institution (familial) or a process, and can influence policy development. The livelihood outcomes people aspire to and the strategies they choose to achieve those outcomes are both strongly influenced by culture. But not only does culture influence sustainable livelihoods, but livelihood outcomes (such as cash), and negotiated cultural changes that are sometimes needed to carry out livelihood strategies successfully, can influence culture. As culture relates to, influences and is influenced by every factor in the sustainable livelihoods frameworks, it would thus seem appropriate to represent culture as an 'environment' within which livelihoods exist in frameworks, diagrams and descriptions of sustainable livelihoods. Each factor in the sustainable livelihoods framework, and the linkages between factors, need to be considered in terms of cultural relationships in any meaningful sustainable livelihoods analysis. By incorporating culture into the sustainable livelihoods approach, the approach can then be more effectively used as a basis of analysis, and as a set of principles to guide development practice and intervention. The following table summarises the multiple entry points of the sustainable livelihoods that can be used to incorporate culture into a sustainable livelihoods analysis, and some of the questions that might be asked in such an analysis.

Table 9.3 Incorporating culture in the sustainable livelihoods framework

| Component of the Sustainable livelihoods framework | Questions to ask about the relationship between culture and this component |
|--|--|
| Livelihoods outcomes | <p>How does culture influence the livelihood outcomes people aspire to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monetary • Non monetary (intangible, especially status) • Food security (including food and subsistence goods for exchange and customary practices) <p>How does achieving livelihoods outcomes influence culture (e.g. the way cash influences culture)?</p> <p>Does achieving livelihood outcomes enhance cultural assets (e.g. intangible outcomes)?</p> |
| Policies, institutions and processes | <p>In what way are the institutions interrelated in the context of the analysis? Is there a traditional (customary) sector?</p> <p>How do the institutions in the customary sector relate to other institutions?</p> <p>Are there tensions between customary and other institutions, and how do these affect livelihoods?</p> <p>What are the relationships between customary institutions and livelihoods?</p> <p>What are the relationships between processes and policies and culture?</p> <p>Do customary norms and processes influence access, control and mobilisation of assets?</p> |
| Risk and vulnerability | <p>How does culture influence the attitudes to risk of the people?</p> <p>What are the relationships between risk management and culture?</p> <p>How do social and cultural networks provide safety nets?</p> <p>Do cultural obligations or norms cause financial or other vulnerability?</p> |
| Assets | <p>How can 'cultural' assets be described for this community?</p> <p>How do people draw on cultural assets?</p> <p>Do social and cultural assets overlap and if so how?</p> <p>How do culturally defined relationships in this community influence livelihoods?</p> <p>How important is the sustaining and enhancing of social capital, and cultural capital in this community?</p> <p>Are there tensions between economic development and maintaining and building cultural and social assets?</p> <p>What assets do people have that are culturally valued?</p> <p>How does culture influence access to, and control over, and the building of assets – natural, physical, human, financial, social and cultural?!</p> |
| Livelihood strategies | <p>What livelihood strategies are culturally and traditionally accepted in this community?</p> <p>How do these livelihood strategies harmonise with the culture?</p> <p>Are there tensions between the livelihood strategy and culture?</p> <p>What are the tensions between the livelihood strategies and culture?</p> <p>Can these tensions be reduced?</p> <p>Is the cash earned enough to ease cultural tensions and allow for compromise?</p> <p>Do the livelihood strategies provide intangible outcomes?</p> |

Culture and micro-enterprise

In this research micro-enterprise was considered within the theoretical framework of the sustainable livelihoods approach, as a livelihood strategy, which, is sustainable and successful can provide livelihood outcomes for rural people. The micro-enterprise ventures in each of the two case studies were analysed through the lens of the sustainable livelihoods framework (incorporating culture) and this analysis provided insights into factors that influence the success and sustainability of micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy. Firstly, the analysis highlighted the strong relationships between culture and sustainability of the micro-enterprises. While this has frequently been alluded to in development literature, discourse on micro-enterprise has rarely highlighted culture as a factor of analysis. The field work in this research explicitly drew attention to the strong influence of culture on the success and sustainability of micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy, and thus on sustainable livelihoods as a goal and state to which people aspire. In rural areas where people live within customary norms and expectations, the reason for one micro-entrepreneurial venture being successful and sustainable, while another is not may well depend on how well the venture does or does not harmonise with the culture.

Further the case studies on the two different micro-entrepreneurial ventures highlighted the importance of intangible livelihood outcomes. In a society such as Samoa, where kinship networks and remittances provide an important source of cash income, and where customary ways and semi- subsistence farming provide food security and cash when needed, people are not usually prepared to work long and hard for a very small income. However, where intangible livelihood outcomes such as building cultural and social capital, enhancing status or providing a social or creative outlet are achieved the micro-enterprise is more likely to be sustainable even should cash income from the venture be small (perhaps because the venture needs time to build revenue).

Sustainable livelihoods approach as a framework for analysis

Throughout the research process I was questioning whether the conceptual model and framework of the sustainable livelihoods approach was useful as a tool for analysis, helping me, as a researcher, in understanding the complexities of rural livelihoods and micro-enterprise in Samoa. Overall the sustainable livelihoods approach was found to

be an effective theoretical and analytical framework to focus the research, providing a 'checklist' to ensure inclusion of necessary components, and defining research boundaries. The flexibility of the approach was evident in that despite existing theory and frameworks not incorporating culture in a way that was useful for analysis in this research, the frameworks could be adapted to suit the research, and this research was able to incorporate the cultural element into existing sustainable livelihoods theory.

Finally

Attaining sustainable livelihoods reduces poverty and improves well-being by satisfying livelihood outcomes and reducing vulnerability. Poverty in the Pacific Islands is often referred to as 'poverty of opportunity' (Chung, 1997: 28, ADB, 2001, Struthers et al, 2002: 4, Tafuna'i, 2003: 179). The field work in this research showed that there are opportunities for micro-enterprise as a strategy for sustainable livelihoods in rural Samoa, and there are markets for local produce outside the somewhat weak village economy. However, it is very difficult for most rural Samoans to take advantage of such opportunities. Forming links to markets outside the village environment (and outside Samoa) can be difficult for non-traditional goods, and micro-entrepreneurs face a range of other issues. This research has shown that the relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise as a livelihood strategy, strongly influence the success and sustainability of micro-enterprises in rural areas of Samoa. Where micro-enterprise works in harmony with *fa'aSamoa* success and sustainability is enhanced. On the other hand, where there are tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and sound business management principles (in the western sense), trade-offs between business efficiency and maintenance of cultural and social assets occur. These trade-offs frequently result in the business (micro-enterprise) suffering, while the social and cultural assets are maintained and enhanced.

The introductory chapter of this thesis stated that the research sought to develop ways of thinking that can be used to make judgements about 'what to do and how to do it' (Chambers, 1992: 26). As I explained in Chapter 1, the research sought to analyse and further develop ways of thinking about the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture, with specific reference to Samoa. This research concluded that cultural aspects can be incorporated in sustainable livelihoods theory and frameworks by using the components of the framework as multiple entry

points for analysis. A modified version of the sustainable livelihoods framework was used as a basis for analysis to explore relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and *fa'aSamoa*. Themes have emerged, and been developed throughout the thesis, that could influence the judgements development practitioners make about interventions and policy development. Good judgements and appropriate intervention in micro-enterprise development will certainly contribute to reduced poverty and hardship, and improved well-being through sustainable rural livelihoods.

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Appendix 1 Livelihoods Approaches and Frameworks Compared

| | IDS | DFID (early version) | DFID | CARE | Oxfam | UNDP | Ellis |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Based on literature from... | Scoones, 1998 | Carney, 1998 | Farrington et al, 1999 DIFID, 1999 | Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999 | Carney, 1999b, Chambers and Conway, 1992 | Carney, 1999b Singh and Gilman, 1999 | Ellis, 2000 |
| Name of framework | Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis | Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework | The DFID sustainable livelihoods framework | CARE's livelihood model | Oxfam's sustainable livelihood framework | No specific livelihood framework | A framework for micropolicy analysis of rural livelihoods |
| Definition of livelihood | A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the resource base. | A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the resource base. | A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the resource base. | A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and provide sustainable livelihood options for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in the long and short term. (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 7-8). | A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in the long and short term (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 7-8). | Livelihood systems consist of a complex set of economic, social, and physical strategies. These are realised through the activities, assets and entitlements by which individuals make a living. Sustainable livelihoods are derived from peoples capacities to exercise choice, access opportunities and resources, and use them in ways that do not foreclose options for others making a (continued) living . either now, or in the future. (Singh and Gilman, 1999) | A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household. |

| | IDS | DFID (early version) | DFID | CARE | Oxfam | UNDP | Ellis |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Origins and influences | Chambers, WCED (Our Common Future) and others | Chambers and Conway, Chambers, 1997 UK Governments White Paper on International Development | Chambers and Conway, Chambers, 1997 UK Governments White Paper on International Development | Chambers and Conway, CARE long range strategic plan | Chambers and Conway, DFID, strategic planning, recognition of need to link environment with poverty issues | Chambers and Conway, WCED (Our Common Future), 1992 United Nations (UN) conference on Environment and Development – Agenda 21 | Various authors (including Scoones, Grown and Sebstad and Carney), Ellis' work on livelihood diversification |
| When introduced in Practice | N/A | N/A | 1998 | 1994 | 1993 | 1995 | N/A |
| Main elements (factors) in the framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Contexts, conditions and trends *Livelihood resources *Insitutional processes and organisational structures *Livelihood strategies *Sustainable livelihood outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Vulnerability context *Capital assets *Transforming structures and processes *Livelihood strategies *Livelihood outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Vulnerability context *Livelihood assets *Transforming structures and processes *Livelihood strategies *Livelihood outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Context (includes shocks and stresses) *Strategy: Assets and activities *Livelihood outcomes: *Security, participation and personal safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Vulnerability context *Livelihood capital *Transforming structures and processes *Livelihood strategies *Livelihood outcomes | No specific framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Livelihood platform: assets *Access modified by: social relations, institutions and organisations *In context of: trends and shocks *Resulting in: livelihood strategies *Composed of: Natural resource and non-natural resource based activities *With effects on livelihood security and environmental sustainability |

| | IDS | DFID (early version) | DFID | CARE | Oxfam | UNDP | Ellis |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Way in which linkages between elements (factors) are described | Linear, two way arrows indicate that all elements are linked both ways. | Linkages between elements. Evidence of impact of outcomes on assets. | Linkages between elements. Evidence of impact of outcomes on assets. | Linkages vague. No linkage between outcomes and assets. | Linkages between elements. Evidence of impact of outcomes on assets. | No framework | Linear model Linkages described by words. |
| Inclusion of culture | Not mentioned specifically. Could be included under contexts, conditions and trends (history or social differentiation). | Under vulnerability context. | Under transforming processes (culture – societal norms and beliefs). | Under context ie the cultural environment - impacts on the 'livelihood strategy' (including assets and activities). | Under transforming structures and process. Civic, political and economic institutions (markets and culture). | Not mentioned. | Rules and customs, and land tenure listed under Institutions that can modify access to assets. Social relations also listed in this section. |
| Understanding of sustainability | Resilience of livelihoods and natural resource base Coping with shocks and stresses | Sustainability of livelihoods – coping with stresses and shocks Sustainability of the environment | Social, economic, environmental, institutional Livelihoods can cope with shocks and stresses, are not dependent on external support, maintain long-term productivity of natural resources, do not compromise livelihood options of others | Focus on livelihood security | Economic Social Institutional Ecological | Able to cope with stresses and shocks Economically efficient, ecologically sound, socially equitable | Livelihood security Environmental sustainability |

| | IDS | DFID (early version) | DFID | CARE | Oxfam | UNDP | Ellis |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| Levels of analysis | Individual. Household, village, regional or national. Recognises the influence of institutions and organisations. | Local. Recognises the influence of government and private sector structures and processes. | Emphasises the importance of macro level policy and institutions to livelihood options of communities and individuals. | Household . Recognises internal and external factors that influence household livelihood security. | Local. Recognises importance of micro-macro links and government, private sector, civic, political and economic institutions processes and structures. | Largely employed in agriculture and natural resources work. Focus on 'adaptive strategies' of local people rather than assets. Analysis at community and household level. | Micro policy analysis. Contains provision for consideration of macro policy impact at local level. |

(Carney, 1999b: 18-19, Carney, 1998, Chambers, 1995, Chambers and Conway, 1992, DFIF, 1999, Farrington et al, 1999, Ellis, 2000, Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999, Singh and Gilman, 1999, WCED, 1987b)

Appendix 2 Checklists of Research Questions

Samoa interview questions

Individual checklists of questions were prepared each professional person interviewed depending on their interest and involvement in the research

Questions for village people and micro-entrepreneurs

These questions form the basis of the interviews. Additional and more specific questions were added in different circumstances, during participant observations and as conversations developed.

1. Tell me about yourself and your family.
2. Explain to me the Samoan way of life in this village. (or in other words: What do you think are the most important things about the Samoan way of life in this village?)
3. How does your family get the things you need for living – food, your house, goods for the house, cash to pay for school fees and other things. Who decides how the money is used in your family?
4. What are the benefits to you and your family of this coconut oil making/ fine mat weaving business?
Probe:
 How could this coconut oil making/fine mat weaving help with:
 - a. *Fa'alavelave*
 - b. Family status
 - c. Village status
 - d. Service to the church
 - e. Other important traditional issues
5. Who else in your family is involved in the coconut oil making/fine mat weaving?
6. What are the benefits to your village of this coconut oil making/fine mat weaving?
7. What are the things that have helped with coconut oil making/fine mat weaving?
Probe:
 Financial assets
 Natural assets
 Physical assets
 Human resources
 Social assets
 Cultural assets

8. What are other things that would help your coconut oil making/fine mat weaving that you don't have at present?
9. What are the difficulties and risks with making coconut oil/fine mat weaving?
 - For you and your family?
 - For the village
10. How do you overcome/manage/control these difficulties and risks?
11. How does METI/WIBDI help you with coconut oil production/fine mat weaving?

Additional questions for the coconut oil co-operative members

How does the co-operate manage its money and the work you do?

How many members are there?

How did the co-operative get started?

Why did you join the co-operative?

Who told you about the co-operative?

Has it helped you family/village?

What work do you do? How many days/hours do you do it?

How much do you earn? Are you happy with the amount?

What are the good things about being part of the co-operative?

What things don't you like about the co-operative?

Do you have plenty of coconuts to contribute?

Appendix 3 Letters Included with Research Reports

Village Trust – Samoa (email)

From: "Miranda Cahn" <Cahn.sha@xtra.co.nz>
To: "-----"
Sent: Monday, 9 June 2003 9:45 a.m.
Subject: Research report

Hi -----

Hope you and the family are all well. I have finished writing my research report on the Trust and the soap making.

Because of the circumstances surrounding the whole situation the report isn't quite the way we planned it in the start (ie. a feasibility study). Rather what I have done is write up the events over the last year or so as I saw them happening so that all the trust members can understand what happened and why. I have tried to be 'impartial' and not blame any parties. I have also analysed some of the issues to see what lessons could be learnt. I sensed that some Trust members were not clear of exactly what had happened. I have then done a feasibility study for soap making in Samoa in general (rather than for the Trust) and finally tried to suggest some future strategies for the Trust. I am hoping that this will be a little useful.

I will send some copies of the report with ----- when he comes to Samoa later this month. I could also email it to you if that would be useful. Unfortunately I do not have the resources to translate this report to Samoan. It would be good if all the Trustees could see it. Maybe you, or ----- could translate the executive summary for the non English speakers?? or maybe the trustees could meet to discuss the report.

I am trying to get hold of ----- to discuss the report before I send it but apparently he not at the University at present. I will discuss it with him when he returns to the University.

Best Regards
Miranda

METI (email)

Dear Miranda,

Congratulations for your hard work! I have gone through your report and have made a few corrections and comments that are attached.

I have also received the parcel with the gloves, which are being distributed to the 2 Coops. Please feel free to use 'METI's name in your presentations. Your analysis is very helpful to us as it confirmed our own observations on the bottlenecks and weaknesses of the process. For more, read our comments in the attached file.

Kind regards,

...

----- Original Message -----

From: Miranda Cahn

To:

Sent: Sunday, October 31, 2004 12:34 PM

Subject: Research findings - coconut oil

Dear ...

As promised here (attached) is a draft of the write up of my findings from the interviews I held with you and others involved with the METI coconut oil production and soap making in August this year. It is a little disjointed as I have included all the relevant bits from the thesis, the bits coming from different chapters. It is likely that I may not put all of this in the thesis but I thought it important for you to see all of it in case there are errors or omissions.

I would also like to ask permission to use the METI coconut oil production and soap making venture as an example of village-based enterprise in a short paper I am giving on December 3rd 2004 at the New Zealand Development Studies network conference in Auckland 'Small and micro-enterprises: opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific Islands?' I would also like to use some of the photos that I have sent to you (I hope they have arrived by now!) If you agree, can I use the organisation (METI)'s name in the paper or should I just call it 'an NGO'.

Regards

Miranda Cahn

KoruNZ Consulting

19 Karen Lane, Christchurch 8002

New Zealand

Phone: 64 3 3324478 Fax 64 3 3324278

WIBDI (email)

Hi ...

Hope all is well with you and everyone at WIBDI.

I have attached the 'bits' I have written about WIBDI in my PhD (thank you for your help with my research). I would like to give you the opportunity to see it and make any comments you feel necessary before I publish it in the PhD. I am afraid it is a bit disjointed because I have just cut bits out of different places and put them together!

I would also like to ask whether you would mind me mentioning the WIBDI fine mat weaving as an example of micro-enterprises at the DevNet conference (Auckland) in December when I give my paper that is called 'Small and micro-enterprises: opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific Islands?'

Regards

Miranda Cahn

KoruNZ Consulting
19 Karen Lane, Christchurch 8002
New Zealand
Phone: 64 3 3324478 Fax 64 3 3324278

Appendix 4 Field Research Programme

Samoa case studies

Aus AID= Australian Agency for International Aid

FMW= Fine mat weaving

METI= Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporated

NZAID= New Zealand Agency for International Aid

SBEC= Small Business Enterprise Centre (Samoa)

SPBD= South Pacific Business Development micro-credit organisation

SPREP= South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme

VCO= Village coconut oil

WIBDI= Women in Business Development Incorporated

| Date | Research method | Research participant | Research interest | Location (Samoa unless stated otherwise) |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 5/2/03 | Interview | Coconut oil press designer | VCO | Lincoln, New Zealand |
| 21/2/03 | Interview | Soap expert | VCO | Lincoln, New Zealand |
| Date | Research method | Research participant | Research interest | Location (Samoa unless stated otherwise) |
| 24/2/03 | Interview | Engineer | VCO | Lincoln, New Zealand |
| 7/3/02 | Interview | Coconut oil press designer | VCO | Lincoln, New Zealand |
| 10/3/03 | Interview | NZAID | VCO FMW WIBDI SBEC | Wellington, New Zealand |
| First visit to Samoa March – April 2003 | | | | |
| 24/3/03 | Interview | Executive Director WIBDI | VCO FMW WIBDI | Apia (WIBDI office) |
| 25/3/03 | Interview | Village trustee and home-stay | VCO FMW WIBDI SBEC | Apia (café) |
| 25/3/03 | Interview | Director of SBEC | SBEC | Apia (café) |
| 25/3/03 | Interview | Trustee of METI and tour operator | Tourism enterprises METI | Apia (workplace) |
| 26/3/03 | Discussion during bus trip to village | Village trustee and home-stay | Samoa life Samoa culture Micro- | To Samusu |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| | | | enterprise VCO FMW | |
| 26/3/03- 29/3/03 | Participant observation Informal interviews | Village trustee and home-stay Home-stay family | Samoan life Samoan culture Micro- enterprise VCO FMW | Samusu (home) |
| 27/3/03 | Informal interview | New Zealand based Samoan | Samoan culture | Ameili |
| 27/3/03 | Interview | Village trustee and SBEC employee | VCO SBEC Samoan life | Samusu (home) |
| 31/3/03 | Interview | AusAID | VCO | Apia (Australian High Commission) |
| 31/3/03 | Interview | General manager SPBD | Micro-credit | Apia (SPBD office) |
| Date | Research method | Research participant | Research interest | Location (Samoa unless stated otherwise) |
| 31/3/03 | Interview | NZAID | NZAID funding for NGOs NGOs Micro- enterprise VCO | Apia (New Zealand High Commission) |
| 1/4/03 | Interview | Executive Director WIBDI | VCO | Apia (WIBDI office) |
| 1/4/03 | Informal interview | WIBDI staff member | VCO FMW WIBDI | In vehicle travelling to the ferry |
| 1/4/03 | Informal interview | WIBDI field worker | FMW | Waiting for the ferry to Savaii |
| 1/4/03 | Informal interview Participant observation | Village home-stay family | Samoan life Samoan culture | Gatavai (home) |
| On 2/4/03 visits were made with the WIBDI field workers to clients and prospective clients (as listed below) around Savai'i Island. During each visit research consisted of participant observation and very short interviews with the clients. An explanation of the visit was provided by WIBDI field worker following the visit. | | | | |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weaver | FMW | Gatavai (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Organic farmer | Organic farming VCO | ? |
| 2/4/03 | As above | United Nations volunteer | Organic farming | Marist Centre for Special Learning, |

| | | | | |
|--------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | Savai'i |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Organic farmer | Organic farming VCO | Lano (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weavers (3) | FMW | ? (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Pastor's wife | FMW training | Samalaiulu (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Organic farming | Organic farming | Saleaula (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weaver | FMW | Satoalepai (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weavers (3) | FMW | Fagamalo (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Women's committee | Micro-enterprise | Fagamalo |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Chip maker | Micro-enterprise | Samauga (home) |
| 2/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weavers (3) | FMW | Tufutafoe (home) |
| 2/4/03 | Informal interview Participant observation | Village home-stay family | Samoan life Samoan culture | Tufutafoe (home) |

On 3/4/03 visits were made with the WIBDI field workers to clients and prospective clients (as listed below) around Savai'i Island. During each visit research consisted of participant observation and very short interviews with the clients. An explanation of the visit was provided by WIBDI field worker following the visit.

| Date | Research method | Research participant | Research interest | Location (Samoa unless stated otherwise) |
|--------------------|---|--|---|---|
| 3/4/03 | As above | Women's committee leader | FMW training | Vaipa (home) |
| 3/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weaver | FMW | Salailua (home) |
| 3/4/03 | As above | Coconut oil producer | VCO | Taga (home) |
| 3/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weaver | FMW | Vaipolu (home) |
| 3/4/03 | As above | | | Vaiula (home) |
| 3/4/03 | Informal interview Participant observation | Village home-stay family | Samoan life Samoan culture | Gatavai (home) |
| 7/4/03- 10/4/03 | Informal interview Participant observation | Village trustee Village home-stay family | Samoan life Samoan culture VCO FMW Micro-enterprise | Samusu |
| 8/4/03 | Informal interview Participant observation | Beach fale owner | Micro-enterprise Small business Samoa culture | Namua Island |
| 9/4/03 | Interview | Village trustee | VCO | Samusu |
| 9/4/03 | Interview | Village trustee | VCO | Samusu |

On 10/4/03 visits were made with the WIBDI field workers to clients and prospective clients (as listed below) around Upolu Island. During most visits research consisted of participant observation and interviews with the clients. For one the coconut oil producer we stayed for the entire oil making process. An explanation of the visit was also provided by WIBDI field worker following the visit.

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 10/4/03 | As above | Coconut oil producer | VCO | Siumu |
| 10/4/03 | As above | Women's group meeting (and breakfast) | FMW Women's groups | Siumu |
| 10/4/03 | As above | Fine mat weaver | FMW | Salesateli |
| 10/4/03 | As above (longer stay) | Coconut oil producer and family | VCO | Vavau |
| 11/4/03 | Interview | International consultant working with WIBDI | FMW VCO WIBDI | Apia (hotel) |
| 14/3/03 | Interview | Samoan Tourist Authority | Small and micro-enterprise Tourism | Apia (office) |
| Date | Research method | Research participant | Research interest | Location (Samoa unless stated otherwise) |
| 16/3/03 | Interview | Consultant (agriculture) | WIBDI honey VCO Commercial coconuts | Apia (café) |
| 18/3/04 | Interview | WIBDI staff member | FMW VCO WIBDI | |
| 19/3/04 | Informal interview Participant observation | Village home-stay family | Samoan life Samoan culture VCO FMW Micro-enterprise | Sauleofata |
| 21/4/03 | Interview | SPREP | Conservation Micro-enterprise | Vailima (SPREP office) |
| 22/4/03 | Interview | Tourism development and planning | Tourism micro-enterprise Samoan culture | Apia (office) |
| 22/4/03 | Interview | Village trustee | VCO | Apia (workplace) |
| 22/4/03 | Interview | Executive Director WIBDI | VCO FMW WIBDI | Apia (WIBDI office) |
| 22/4/03 | Interview | Samoan based consultant | Research findings Samoa life and culture Micro-enterprise and business WIBDI, NGOs | Apia (restaurant) |

| Second visit to Samoa August 2003 | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 18/8/03 | Phone interview | Director of METI | VCO METI | Phone (Apia) |
| 18/8/03 | Interview | METI field worker | VCO METI | Apia (METI office) |
| 18/8/03 | Interview | METI soap maker | VCO, soap | Apia (METI office) |
| Third visit to Samoa August 2004 | | | | |
| 20/8/04 | Interview | Director of METI | VCO METI | Apia (METI office) |
| 21/8/04 | Interview | Director of METI | VCO METI | Apia (METI office) |
| 23/8/04 | Interview | WIBDI Volunteer | WIBDI VCO FMW | Apia (café) |
| Date | Research method | Research participant | Research interest | Location (Samoa unless stated otherwise) |
| On 24/8/04 I spent the entire day at the village co-operative participating in the coconut oil making, the social interaction and food, and interviewing the co-operative members. | | | | |
| 24/8/04 | Interviews | Co-operative secretary | METI VCO | In vehicle travelling to and from village co-operative (Lefaga) |
| 24/8/04 | Interview Participant observation | Co-operative members (five) | METI VCO | Lefaga (co-operative building) |
| On 25/8/03 I spent time at the soap factory, interviewing the soap maker and watching the soap making process. | | | | |
| 25/8/04 | Interview Participant observation | Soap maker | VCO Soap Marketing | Vaialele |
| 26/8/03 | Interview | Adult education staff member (METI) | Training | Apia (METI office) |
| On 26/8/04 I visited a second village co-operative and spoke with the co-operative secretary | | | | |
| 26/8/03 | Interview | Co-operative secretary | METI VCO | Levi (home) |
| 26/8/04 | Interview | Ministry of Agriculture (policy) | METI Commercial coconuts VCO | Apia (office) |
| 26/3/04 | Interview and visit | Pure Coconut Oil Company factory (associated with WIBDI) | VCO Oil processing Marketing | Processing factory (Apia) |

Appendix 5 Ethics Report

Ethics Report

Miranda Cahn

1. In order to ensure that the participants understand their rights and have consented to the interviews a statement will be read to each participant which:
 - Introduces the researcher,
 - Explains that participation is voluntary,
 - Explains that the participant can withdraw at any time,
 - Ensures anonymity and confidentiality,
 - Requests the participant's verbal consent.

2. The potential harm to the participants will be minimised by:
 - Ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality unless they have clearly stated that they wish to be identified,
 - Interviewing the participants in a setting which is comfortable for them (e.g. their home) and at a convenient time,
 - Living in the village for a few days before the formal interviews start so people are used to my presence and feel relaxed with me,
 - Ensuring the questions are culturally acceptable (the questions for Samoa have been checked by a Samoan student and two others who are very familiar with Samoan culture),
 - Using a translator who will be familiar with the questions,
 - Being sensitive to discomfort or confusion on the part of the participants,
 - Being aware as far as possible of the background of the potential enterprise I am researching and the conflicts and tensions that have already occurred so as to avoid embarrassment or further tension,
 - Only using a tape recorder if the participants are happy to be recorded.

3. The potential harm to the researcher will be minimised by:
 - Taking all normal precautions for travelling to a foreign country,
 - Talking widely with people familiar with Samoa and who will be able to help me with my research,
 - Set up informal meetings with people in Apia who can help with my research,
 - Arrangements having been made for me to stay with a reliable and well respected family in the village,
 - Making it clear to participants that I have no 'vested interest' in the potential enterprise,
 - Making my role clear.

4. I will minimise potential harm to the University by keeping information confidential and secure (as described below), by clarifying my role, and by conducting my research in a professional manner. If it is deemed necessary by

my supervisors I will put a disclaimer note on the reports of the findings that I will prepare for the organisations (see #5).

5. The information will be primarily for the PhD thesis but a report on the findings will be prepared for the participating organisations to verify results, and for their information. The information primarily belongs to them, and it is hoped that it will be useful to them in the development of their organisations. At a later stage a paper may be prepared from the findings (with the permission of the people who were involved in the research).
6. The information received during the interviews will be recorded in a note book which I will keep either with me or locked in my luggage. A tape recorder may be used, and the tapes will also be kept secure (locked) until transcribed and then they will be erased. In Samoa, the computer onto which the tapes will be transcribed will not be taken to the village and will be kept in a locked suitcase in a locked room. In NZ the computer files will be secured with a password and backup diskettes kept in a locked filing cabinet. The transcriptions of the interviews will only be printed in NZ. Real names will not be used in the transcriptions and the printed transcriptions will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.
7. Data obtained during the research will not be made available to anyone. I will be very careful to maintain confidentiality during the interviews by not revealing to participants what other participants have said.
8. Most of the Samoan people speak some English, but some people in the village have limited English. A number of people will translate for me, none of whom are professional translators. While this is not ideal, it is necessary for practical reasons. Where appropriate translators will be instructed:
 - to maintain confidentiality
 - to interpret the answers exactly as they are given
 - not to tell the participants what to say
 - to ask me to repeat the question if the she or the participants don't understand the question
9. I do not expect to have group interviews (other than informal 'chats' while socialising in the village).
10. I will try to be culturally aware and gender sensitive by following the Samoan way of life as best I can while I am in the village in terms of respect, dress, gifts and payments, religion and any other aspects that my host family teach me. I will be sensitive to gender concerns by ensuring that both men and women are included in my analysis and respect is given to the tasks and responsibilities of both men and women. I will try to make sure that my interviewing and participant observation blends with their tasks and responsibilities rather than disrupting them.

