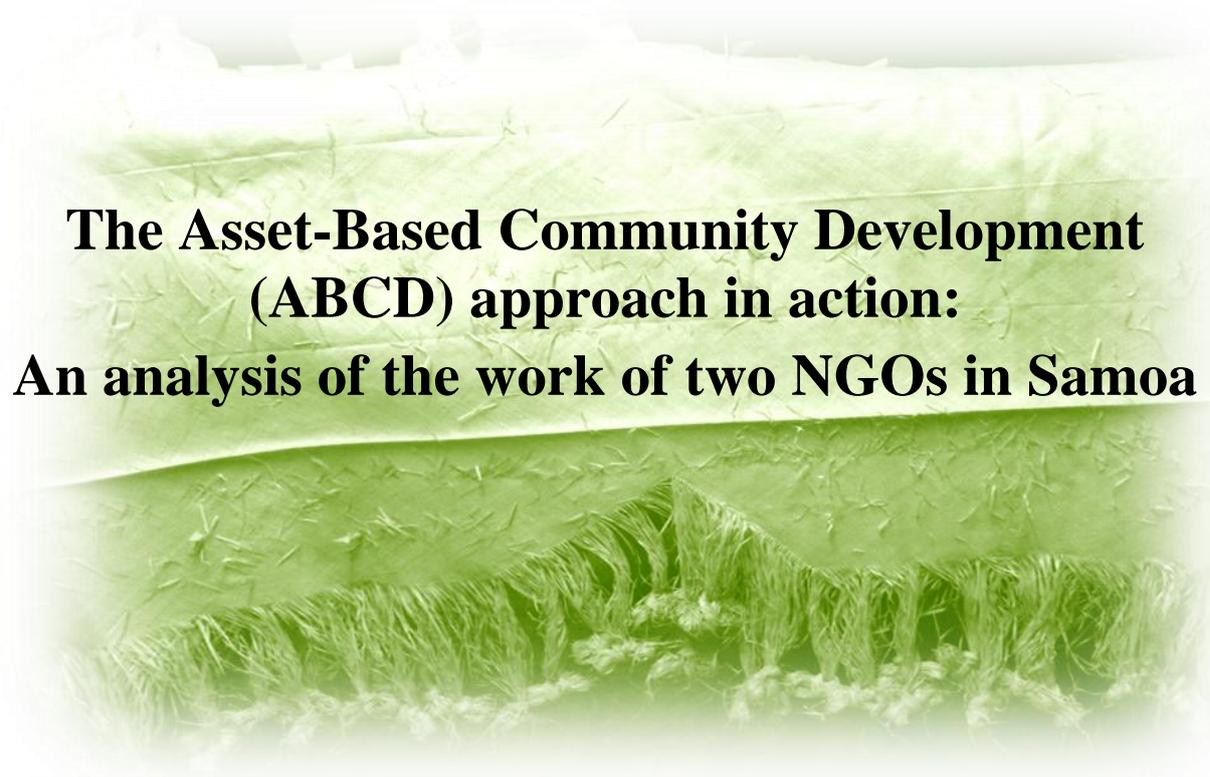


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**The Asset-Based Community Development
(ABCD) approach in action:
An analysis of the work of two NGOs in Samoa**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Philosophy in Development Studies at Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand

Ronicera Sauaga Fuimaono

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ABSTRACT

Over decades, top-down development approaches have failed to deliver real and sustainable development outcomes for the masses in developing countries, thus providing an impetus for exploring alternative development approaches. The asset-based community development (ABCD) approach is said to offer not only a ‘people-centred’ but also a ‘citizen-driven’ approach. This thesis investigates two locally-based NGOs in Samoa, Tagiilima Handicrafts Association (THA) and Women in Business Development Inc. (WIBDI) to ascertain whether they use ABCD to promote locally-driven development. Both NGOs administer village-based income generating-projects. The thesis explores in particular how local people access and control existing local assets; including traditional skills and knowledge (social and cultural assets) and natural resources (environmental assets), into useful products and commodities. Using a qualitative method, the researcher collected data through in-depth semi structured interviews with grassroots members, Heads of NGOs and other key stakeholders, and a focus group discussion with community members only.

The results show that participants have improved their livelihoods as evident in financial outcomes, along with their ability to meet cultural and religious obligations. Although most participants had not heard of the ABCD framework, in essence its principles are embedded and reflected in the practices of the organisations being studied. Overall, unlike traditional development interventions, the ABCD approach provides a model that is empowering and can create sustainable outcomes for rural people if used well. Nevertheless, concerns were raised by a minority of participants regarding the issue of the ‘middle-man role’ which can have a disempowering effect on village-based producers.

Three major conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, the use of an asset-based approach offers tremendous potential for Samoans as a strategy to enhance locally-driven community development. Second, NGOs and donor-led projects must find their place and utilise the existing traditional structures, systems and values within a village-setting if they wish to be effective. Thirdly, strengthening collaborations and networks with key development partners is critical for the success of NGOs. The absence of any official (or otherwise substantive) study on the long term effects of donor funding through the work of NGOs on grassroots rural development in Samoa makes this research and its findings timely.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABCD	Asset-Based Community Development
ACEO	Assistant-Chief Executive Officer
ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AUA	Apia Urban Area
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BNPL	Basic Needs Poverty Line
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CD	Community Development
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSSP	Samoa Civil Society Support Program
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DFID	Department for International Development
DP	Development Program
ED	Executive Director
EDD	Externally-Driven Development
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOS	Government of Samoa
GROs	Grassroots Organizations
GRSOs	Grassroots Support Organizations
ICTP	In-Country Training Program
LDD	Locally-Driven Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSFP	NGO Support Fund Program
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
NWU	North West Upolu

ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Office of Economic Cooperation Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACP	Pacific, African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries
PCD	People-Centred Development Approach
P4D	Partnership for Development
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PD	Paris Declaration
PDE	Paris Declaration Evaluation
PSSF	Private Sector Support Facility
SAME	Samoa Association of Manufacturers and Exporters
SBEC	Small Business Enterprise Centre Samoa
SDS	Strategy for Development of Samoa
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SNHDR	Samoa National Human Development Report
SROS	The Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa
SUNGO	Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organizations
THA	Tagiilima Handicrafts Association
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States of America Aid and International Development
VAGST	Value Added Goods and Services Tax
VCO	Virgin Coconut Oil
WB	World Bank
WIBDI	Women in Business Development Incorporated Society

GLOSSARY & SAMOAN SAYINGS

<i>Aia:</i>	influence or interference by an outside party
<i>Aiga:</i>	extended family, kin group, social unit
<i>Aseta:</i>	another translation of the term asset in Samoa
<i>Aia tataau:</i>	human rights
<i>Atiinae:</i>	Samoan translation of the term of development
<i>Atigi mai le sami :</i>	sea shells
<i>Atigi-popo:</i>	coconut shells/husks
<i>Faa-le-natura:</i>	natural environment
<i>Faa-le-mafaufau:</i>	state of human assets or head knowledge
<i>Faa-matai:</i>	traditional leadership system (chiefly system in Samoan)
<i>FaaSamoa:</i>	Samoan custom, Samoan way of life
<i>faa-le-aganuu:</i>	traditional Samoan skills and knowledge
<i>Fua o le laueleele ma le sami:</i>	fruits of the land and sea
<i>Fale:</i>	house, often implying structure of traditional materials
<i>Faipule district:</i>	legislative district (defined as official statistical district)
<i>Faipule:</i>	as a council of chiefs to advise the highest ranking chief
<i>Fale-lalaga:</i>	Group of weavers/weavers program within a village or community
<i>Fono:</i>	village council of matai
<i>Ie-sae:</i>	Samoan traditional finemat (finest quality mat)
<i>Lalaga:</i>	process or act of weaving
<i>Laufala:</i>	pandanus leaves used for weaving
<i>Komiti o Tina:</i>	Women's Committees within a community or village setting
<i>Meataulima:</i>	traditional Samoan handicrafts
<i>Matai:</i>	title-holder, chief (chosen by members of the aiga)
<i>Measina:</i>	refers to the traditional Samoan arts and crafts (handicrafts) including ie-sae or ie-Samoa (finemat)
<i>Oa:</i>	a deeper and a more meaningful Samoan translation and interpretation of the term asset in the Samoan context
<i>O le oa o loo i tatou laufanua:</i>	treasures are hidden in, on and buried in the land
<i>Pulega a nuu ma faipule:</i>	District heads and village leaders
<i>Samoa ole atunuu uma ona tofi:</i>	Samoa is an already defined society
<i>Siosiomaga:</i>	environment or surroundings
<i>Tomai ma agava'a:</i>	traditional skills, knowledge
<i>Tala:</i>	Samoan currency or dollars
<i>Umia ma puleaina:</i>	accessing and controlling

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

They will use what they have to secure what they have not (Mathie & Cunningham, 2008, p. vii)

This thesis explores the value of an asset-based approach to community development (ABCD), which is locally driven by and for Samoans. Specifically, the study analyses the work of two locally based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the context of the asset-based approach: (i) Tagiilima Handicrafts Association (THA) and (ii) Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI). This study seeks to explore the significant role of NGOs, with specific attention placed on the viewpoints and experiences of local people and other stakeholders, when assessing whether the ‘asset-based’ approach is being used to enhance locally-driven development.

This study is derived from the central question identified: *What ways can NGOs use ABCD to promote locally-driven development in Samoa?* In response to this question, two main elements have been identified as a basis for assessing and exploring the extent to which development is being driven by the Samoan people. These two elements are (i) the approaches of NGOs: to identify if they are based around local assets and (ii) the extent of local people’s access and control over locally existing assets. Emphasis is also placed on how these two aspects are characterised within the Samoan context, in relation to achieving local development, through the existing role of NGOs in Samoa and/or re-defining the role of NGOs to fit in with the promotion and enhancement of local development within the ABCD context.

This study is significant because it is a representation of the viewpoints and experiences of Samoan communities, NGO practitioners and donors and government officials, regarding the asset-based approach: and it explores and assesses their understanding of what a people-centred approach can do, in order to help localise the development process within Samoan communities. The principles and practices upheld by the ABCD concepts have been used in Samoa as the basis of some work, which has been carried out by NGOs and some government Ministries. However, I have not uncovered any research being undertaken in Samoa specifically within the context of the ABCD concept. Therefore, this study will contribute to further understanding of this concept — one which is relevant and potentially viable for a developing state, such as Samoa.

This chapter begins with a brief background on the context of the study, together with a discussion of the relevant theories, which are relative to development and community. This takes into account the systems of aid already being used and a transition from a needs-based model or deficit model to an asset-based model, which is the crux of this analysis. This is followed by the scope of this research and the methodology used to attain data. Finally, the organisation of the thesis is presented.

1.1 Significance and rationale of the study

A monitoring site visit to WIBDI's village-based projects based in Savai'i Island was undertaken by NZAID in 2008 and (as the project coordinator of the NZAID NGO Support Fund (NSF) programme in Samoa at that time) this was an opportunity for me to meet WIBDI's grassroots members and to see first-hand how they carry out their work: apart from assessing written narratives and financial reports. I undertook this task as an employee of SUNGO (The Samoa Umbrella for NGOs). SUNGO did not have the funds to conduct site visits, so we took advantage of this opportunity to help with our monitoring and evaluation of WIBDI's work that pertains to the goals of the NSF programme. I joined one of WIBDI field workers and we visited the virgin coconut oil producers, and micro-credit programme clients located around the island, who I recall were *Ie-sae*¹ weavers: and other clients who were owners of retail stores and small-scale village-based enterprises.

These site visits enabled me to understand how important it is to undertake monitoring visits and to engage with the grassroots people involved in these village-based projects. From this experience, I noted engagement with these rural communities as being a 'bridge' that can help align the goals of NGOs with the aspirations of the local people and it seemed to be the most appropriate and practical way to ascertain the 'reality' at ground level, in order to illuminate the uncertainties that come with written reports. There was an emerging issue in Samoa at that time concerning the legitimacy of NGO work and aid effectiveness, at grassroots level.

This engagement at grassroots level made an impact on me because I was then motivated to find some way to be able to make direct contact with these grassroots communities again, and I was strongly drawn to the idea of conducting an in-depth study on how NGO work and donor aid impacts on the quality of the lives of these local people. An overseas scholarship to undertake my Master's degree was the best option

¹ *Ie-sae* is the traditional Samoan finemat, also known as *ie-toga*: it is finest quality mat.

for me, since this would give me an opportunity to return to these rural communities, in order to undertake this study. In addition to studying WIBDI, I also added on THA, mainly because, with the acknowledged success of WIBDI (Cahn, 2008, p. 12), there appeared to be substantial potential for THA to also succeed.

To reiterate, the absence of any official (or otherwise substantive) study on the long-term effects of donor funding, through the work of NGOs in rural development in Samoa, ensures that this study is relevant. In recent years, multilateral and bilateral agencies have made poverty reduction, or alleviation, the prime focus of their programmes (Cahn, 2002; OECD, 2001). Hence, there is a strong need to conduct a study, such as this one within Samoa, to ascertain the facts about how donor funds are actually impacting on poverty at ground level, through NGO work: and there is a need to explore other approaches to development, in order to minimise dependence on donor funding. Specifically, there has not been any particular study undertaken on the use and value of the asset-based approach to local development in Samoa.

The effectiveness of aid in achieving developmental outcomes has been questioned for many decades (McGillivray, 2005). Although a study has revealed that aid contributes to growth, the same study also shows that the decline in aid in the 1990s led to an increase in poverty in the Pacific, thus indicating a dependence on aid (Addison, Mavrotas, & McGillivray, 2005, p. 14). The unpredictable flow of aid from wealthy to poor countries, in the long-run, has encouraged further investigation into other alternatives to development, particularly for a developing state such as Samoa. This revelation brings about an interesting area of research which can determine whether official aid is helping or hindering long-term development and whether another approach should be further explored as an alternative, in order to enhance local development and to counter external dependence.

1.2 Research aim, objectives and questions

The vision of the Samoa Development Strategy (SDS) for 2008-2012 is an “improved quality of life for all” (Government of Samoa, 2008, p. v) and this study envisages contributing in a small way towards achieving this goal. This study could have several important outcomes mainly through the work of NGOs, specifically to achieve the following broad objectives;

- (i) To help ensure that sustainable strategies are incorporated into national economic and development policies in Samoa.
- (ii) To provide assistance to formulate people-centred strategies that build on the existing knowledge, skills and resources of local communities.

1.2.1 Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore the value of an asset-based approach to community development (ABCD) that is locally driven by and for the people of Samoa. Therefore, the broad question for the research is as follows: *In what ways can NGOs use ABCD to promote locally-driven development in Samoa?*

In response to this central question, the following research questions and specific objectives have been set:

1. What ABCD principles and practices are utilised by WIBDI and THA in Project 1 and Project 2 to enhance locally-driven development?

Objectives:

- Investigate the concept of ABCD
- Determine a framework for investigating the ABCD concept and how it fits into the Samoan context
- Conduct primary research with the local communities (members of THA and WIBDI), NGO practitioners and donors, to determine if NGO work accords with an asset-based approach

2. To what extent do the efforts of these NGOs influence the access and control for local people over their existing assets, in order to enhance community development?

Objectives:

- Assess and determine how the ABCD framework influences access and control for local people over local assets
- Investigate the concept of community development
- Conduct primary research with community-based members of THA and WIBDI who are involved in weaving and hand-crafting projects, in addition to NGO

staff, donors and government officials, in order to investigate factors that drive and influence development locally.

In order to address the research question on the ABCD principles and practices as a social phenomenon, with all the complexity involved in its application to relatively influence local development, I selected a qualitative case study approach which, according to Stark and Torrance (2005), emphasises in-depth enquiry.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework for the two main ideas: firstly, an understanding of the discourse of development, as driven by Western ideas of modernisation and conventional neo-liberalist thinking. Secondly, the rise of NGO work, which facilitates a more people-centred approach to community development and which has emerged from a new understanding of development established by post-development thinkers. The documented significance of a people-centred approach, which stemmed from criticisms of conventional development to enhance community development, is reviewed. The failure of Western-driven development was an opportunity for alternative means to development to be explored, in an effort to help non-Western developing states. However, concern remains with regards to the ability of Third World cultural values and traits to either complement or alter the discourse of development which, of course, is mostly Western-driven. Nevertheless, NGOs appear to play a vital role, even within this neo-liberal context, through their influence in the Pacific region when facilitating local development processes. The chapter closes by addressing some criticisms and challenges faced by NGOs as development agents, and the potential for resilience that NGOs will have to face in these challenges.

Chapter 3 puts the ABCD approach into perspective by providing an analysis into the origins, understanding and significance of ABCD to enhance community development. The shift of the development discourse from a needs-based or deficit model to an asset-based perspective of development is discussed. As a people-centred approach, ABCD entails principles and practices that basically promote citizen-driven development. Although ABCD is also criticised, this chapter describes the relevance of this approach to Samoa, in order to help localise development and to minimise aid dependency.

Chapter 4 describes development in Samoa. Despite the influence of conventional development approaches, Samoa is still very much family, village and community-orientated in its development efforts. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ignore that Western dominant approaches have placed the Samoan economy into a position where it has become accustomed to financial assistance, which is a characteristic of a MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) state. However, *fa'aSamoa*, which is centred on the enhancement of the *aiga* (family) remains strong and it influences the decisions and practices adopted by Samoans, even in terms of development.

Chapter 5 presents the research methodology, including the reasons why a qualitative approach is used in this study, the methods used, research procedures and data analysis. This chapter also highlights the relevant ethical issues, and some limitations of the study.

Chapter 6 introduces the two case studies and the study sites. The background information covers a brief description of the NGOs, their character and the nature of their work. This chapter highlights and presents the first key finding of the study relating to ABCD in action. Emphasis is placed on the importance of understanding the principles underpinning the work of these NGOs and hence, the need to identify and document the approaches and activities used by THA and WIBDI to promote locally-driven development in Samoa. This chapter also highlights the significant proportion of the Samoan population who work in the informal sector (including handicraft producers), as represented by the study sample.

Chapter 7 reports on the second key finding of the study and it highlights and presents how the efforts of these NGOs influence the access and control for local people over their local assets, within the ABCD context. The purpose of this chapter is to identify and document existing local assets, which the study reveals as being most valuable to the local people and it documents ways to enhance local access and control for local people over their own assets.

Chapter 8 presents insights gained from the case studies, which are situated within the wider context of literature examined in the initial chapters. I reflect upon the key questions that form the basis of this research and I highlight the significance of other unanticipated findings. General conclusions are also developed and presented in this chapter. Finally, the chapter closes with recommendations for future policy review and further research.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENT AND THE RISE OF NGOs TO FACILITATE A MORE PEOPLE-CENTRED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

There is no greater service than to help a community to liberate itself (Gilchrist, 2009, p. 23).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an understanding of the discourse of development, through an analysis of the existing literature on the meaning, trajectory and various critiques of Western-driven development thinking. It emphasises a shift in development thinking that has stimulated interest in a more people-orientated development which can benefit local people in developing countries. This shift offers a new understanding and it has been attested strongly by post-development thinkers, thus creating space for alternative modes of development to be explored. Studies have shown that community development which shifts towards a people-centred approach has gained prominence within the broader development agenda. In this context, the rise of NGOs as potential facilitators of these alternative community development approaches, despite the various criticisms of their work, is also presented.

2.2 Conceptualising development

Perspectives on development have emerged from various contexts, such as development in terms of economic growth, participatory processes, humanity, material well-being and sustainability, thus bringing us back to the claim that development defies a singular definition (Cowen & Shenton, 1995). Irrespective of development having a multitude of meanings, Cowen and Shenton (1995) in their analysis also concluded that the idea of development has two features: development as immanent² and development as intentional³. “Of the many meanings of development, the distinction between development as immanent and unintentional processes and development as ‘intentional activity’ is particularly important” (Bebbington, 2004, p. 725).

In support of Cowen and Shenton (1995), Morse (2008) attests that immanent development refers to what is already in existence. Morse also suggests that immanent

² Immanent development: refers to “what people are doing anyway” (Morse, 2008, p. 341)

³ Intentional development: or “interventionist development represents a focussed and directed process whereby government and non-governmental organisations implement projects to help develop the under-developed” (Morse, 2008, p. 341)

development involves a “broad and constant process of change in human societies driven by factors such as advances in science, medicine, the arts, communication, governance; it may be viewed as organic and indigenous to some extent, with inevitable influences from powerful individuals and groups” (Morse, 2008, pp. 341-342). Conversely, intentional development involves systems of control which are strongly Western driven (Morse, 2008) and “international aid, government and other agencies implementing development projects and policies with specific ends” (Bebbington, 2004, p. 726). Thus, intentional development processes created a Western-driven hegemony⁴, undermining the diversity of people as supported by immanent development (Sachs, 2010, p. 5).

Ideally, intentional development is inherently based on a notion of trusteeship, which refers to one(s) who guide(s) and control(s) the development process and gains the trust of those to be developed (Nustad, 2001). However, establishing a trusting relationship between the West and the non-West economies has remained difficult, mainly due to the imposed deficit model of development, where global aid policies grew stronger and restricted the potential for a citizen-driven model of development (Black, 1991; Simon, 2008, p. 87). Hence, the failure of post-war development projects in the Third World (Kothari & Minogue, 2002), whilst strengthening the influential force of the neo-liberalist theory as being the deficit model of development, which was then translated to developing countries through foreign aid policies (Morse, 2008). Consequently, the needs of individuals, families and communities mainly in developing economies were sacrificed in the economic interests of developed economies (Ife, 2002).

With the collapse of socialism⁵ in the 1980s, the increasing debt (Walton & Ragin, 1990; Wood, 1986) and the doubtful results of structural adjustment resulted in debates about post-war development thinking and practice, which created an impasse in development during mid-1980s-1990s. This failure offered an impetus and space for a paradigm shift that suggested a relevant and people-centred development approach which would promote locally-driven development by encouraging local people to take charge of their own destiny (Binns & Nel, 1999, p. 390). This study stresses the capacity of people-

⁴Post-development argues that intentional development (as distinct from immanent development-what people are doing anyway) is a construct of Western hegemony (see also Morse, 2008, p. 341). Western-hegemony has undermined the diversity of people’s cultures, and robbed them of the opportunity to define the forms of their social lives (Sachs, 2010, p. 5).

⁵ Socialism: represents the Western-driven capitalist market model (Kaufmann, 1997).

centred development to help local people determine their own development initiatives, and the means by which to achieve their development goals.

2.2.1 *People-centred development*

People-centred approaches emerged and emphasised the empowerment⁶ and participation of locals,⁷ and such experiences showed that problems such as underdevelopment, inequality and poverty could not be solved by top-down strategies (for example, neo-liberalism) hence, the shift to alternative development approaches (Brohman, 1996, p. 345). Kaufmann (1997) also suggested that the failings of the capitalist market model were all too evident in the overdevelopment of the First World, which stimulated interest in identifying forms of development that could actually reach the masses (Kaufmann, 1997, p. 1).

Korten (1987, pp. 145-146) also supported the efforts of local people mobilising and managing their own resources as being more efficient and productive, in addition to helping reduce external dependence. Such people-centred development practices have become prevalent by the strengthening of institutional and social capacities that support greater local control, accountability, initiative and self-reliance. To reiterate, this impasse in development brought about a drastic renewal of thought and ideas about pursuing development through alternative means, and it created a space for various critiques which are also referred to as ‘post-development’ (Schuurmann, 2000, pp. 7-9).

2.2.2 *Post-development: Critiques of development discourse and recognition of alternative approaches*

This space offered an opportunity for bottom-up development (which had been unrecognised for decades) to gain some prominence (Ziai, 2007, p. 83). Post-development⁸ theorists argue that external intervention as intentional means of

⁶ Empowerment: “A continuous process whereby individuals and/or communities gain confidence, self-esteem, understanding and power necessary to articulate their concerns, ensure that action is taken to address them broadly, and gain control over their lives”. (Nikkah & Redzuan, 2009, p. 1064).

⁷ Participation: In the context of development plans and programs, participation can be defined as the process through which stakeholders influence and take part in decision making during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects (Koasa-ard et al., 1998). It is a process that empowers people and communities through the acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience that leads to greater self-reliance and self-management (see also Karl, 2000).

⁸ Post-developmentalists argued that the problem lay where the construction of development policy was in the hands of the powerful and developed world, and it was seen by some as nothing more than the ‘ideological expression of the expansion of post-World War Two capitalism’ (Escobar, 1992, p. 413). This arrogant hegemony resulted in a backlash which was referred to as the post-development movement (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997). Post-

development had shaped an unequal discourse, which undermines local people's perspectives and denying their rights to self-determined development (Escobar, 1995). The post-development critique of development discourse has been widely discussed (Blaikie, 2000; Simon, 2007), and criticised as being cynical (Morse, 2008). However, more optimistic views have acknowledged their potential for accurately identifying the shortcomings of development theory, policy and practice (Ziai, 2004, p. 1045). In other words, "development was understood to be a misconceived enterprise from the start, undermining cultural diversity and local contexts through the universalising of Western institutions" (Ziai, 2007, p. 4). Thus, the intention of post-development was to break away from a developed world hegemony that had been implemented by affluent agencies (Morse, 2008).

Post-development theorists have also been criticised in relation to their own alternative means to development remaining unclear (Nustad, 2001; Simon, 2007). Some theorists claimed that it was not their role to put forward alternatives, but only to provide an analysis of current failure (Brigg, 2002; Pieterse, 2000). To elaborate, Escobar (1997) made the point that there is no grand solution or alternative paradigm in development. Those who do try to suggest an alternative invoke ambiguous language, which tends to perpetually revolve around local articulation of the meaning of development and local control over how it is practised (Ziai, 2004). However, there are others (including NGOs) who have brought about recognition of these alternative efforts. NGO work became relevant because throughout the world, NGOs were paying more attention to the definition and refinement of people-centred development. This paradigm viewed development as being citizen-driven rather than a foreign-funded government project. Instead, NGOs tend to look to "government to enable people to develop themselves" (Korten, 1990, p. 5), by being an "integral part of civil society concerned with managing diverse issues" (Bromideh, 2011, p. 197).

Consequently, Ife (1995) made a significant argument by asserting that the "formidable achievements of modern/Western/industrialised society has clarified that the current social, economic and political initiatives have been unable to meet two of the most basic prerequisites for human civilization: (i) the need for people to live in harmony with their environment, and (ii) the need for people to live in peace with each other. The

developmentalists claimed that intentional development had patently failed to deliver (Hart, 2001; Pieterse, 1998; Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997).

dominant order's failure to meet these needs seems obvious through the crises currently facing not just Western societies, but all societies" (Ife, 1995, p. xi). Ziai (2007) reinforced this viewpoint even more fervently, by asserting that it had become clear that the modern welfare state had fallen short of delivering its promises (Ziai, 2007, p. 4). In response, people in the "Third World through their grassroots movements, have raised their voices – and in some cases arms – stressing that local people must lead dignified lives, have social and economic opportunities, live in societies with greater social and gender equity, and contribute toward the construction of a political order that is coherent, responsive and participatory, at both the domestic and the international level" (DAWN, 1995, p. 2001).

In summary, the development literature affirms the dominant influence of development efforts pioneered by the West since the post-World War II era, until they became obsolete in the late-1980s. Western-driven development did not lead to a process of catching up for the developing world and, thus, enforced a paradigm shift that explored alternative means of development which were more responsive to the masses in developing countries. This shift laid greater emphasis on the existence, significance and value of assets within local communities, in order to minimise their external dependence. The devastating consequences of mainstream development practices, had reinforced the need for local communities to reject these dominant models and to develop an alternative understanding of modes of development as supported by post-development theorists (Ife, 2002). As a result, interest in bottom-up approaches to development began to take prominence when considering the significance of community-led development projects.

2.3 The Significance of Community Development

Community development entails "collective solutions to problems by building on existing resources within the reach of the community" (Green & Goetting, 2010, p. 6). The significance of community development is that it places emphasis on grassroots movements, rural communities and the informal sector⁹ (Sachs, 2010; Ziai, 2007).

⁹ Drawing on the case of Samoa, given the limited formal employment opportunities, most young people fall back in to subsistence living for their survival. This reminds us of the significance of "subsistence living that Samoa depends on for life" (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008, pp. 29-31). The proportion of males employed in subsistence work is 52 percent, which is larger than the proportion of males working in the formal sector. The proportion of females

There has been increasing interest in community-based development which can potentially provide a more viable and sustainable basis in relation to human needs and interaction with the environment (Green & Goetting, 2010). Hence, “community development was suggested as relevant and has been practised in developing countries” (Craig, Mayo, Popple, Shaw, & Taylor, 2011, p. 3).

2.3.1 *The origins and understanding of community development*

Many scholars retrospectively trace the origins of community development to post-war era reconstruction efforts to rebuild less-developed countries (Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p. 3). Others allude to the significant influence of the 1960s American war on poverty, which dealt with neighbourhood housing and social problems (Green & Haines, 2002). Nonetheless, the initial step for acquiring a definition begins with defining the term ‘community’. There are many definitions for community, many of which are associated with “putting people first” (Matterssich & Monsey, 2004). This viewpoint aligns with that of Pawar (2010) and Chambers (1983), who support community development as a participatory and people-centred process. Contextually, community development takes on the mantle of developing stronger communities of people (Phillips & Pittman, 2009). Nikkhah and Redzuan (2009, p. 170) suggested that the goal of community development is empowering communities to improve the quality of their lives, which potentially contributes to national progress (Frances, 1990).

Thus, a working definition of community development, according to Phillips and Pittman, is:

A process of developing and enhancing the ability to act collectively, and practically as an outcome, further explained as (a) taking collective action, and (b) the result of that action for improvement in a community in any or all realms: physical, environmental, cultural, social, political, economic, etc. (Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p. 6).

Another definition suggests that community development is:

involved in the informal sector is 36 percent, which is also a very significant segment of the working population (Hennings, 2011, pp. 135-136; SNHDR, 2006, p. 51).

An academic discipline concerned with (a) enhancing the capacity of individual groups and communities; (b) examining the forces of structural change, economic integration and institutional development; and (c) the impact of these forces on community efforts to become self-determined by initiating their own development. (Chile, 2007, p. 9)

Furthermore, Chile suggests that this is an area of professional practice whereby formulated strategies should enhance social justice and economic equity between groups and communities locally, nationally and internationally (Chile, 2007). Ledwith (2005) also attests that the community development approach is based on an implicit assumption that the organisation and structures of society cause problems of powerlessness, alienation and inequality. Therefore, for effective community development, resources and power should be redistributed in order to achieve greater equality and social justice (Ledwith, 2005, p. 32).

2.3.2 Six dimensions of community development

In terms of the redistribution of resources and power and to effectively pursue development in any given local setting, it is crucial to recognise the existing dimensions of community development. Six dimensions of community development are identified as being critically important, and they are developed at differing levels in different communities. Figure 1 shows that “these dimensions include: (i) economic, (ii) social, (iii) cultural, (iv) personal/spiritual, (v) environmental, (vi) political” (Ife, 2002, p. 161). Ife argues that some of these dimensions are more fundamental than others, for example, many (particularly indigenous people) would claim that personal/spiritual development is the basis of all other types of development (Ife, 1995, p. 132; 2002). This viewpoint is shared by Lean (1995) who espoused that development is at its most creative and sustainable when it rises from people at grassroots level. Lean thus argues that “what happens inside people is key to what happens around them” (Lean, 1995, p. 4). She suggests that spiritual experiences can play a creative role in the development process, and that a village in a developing country is a good place to start a book on community development, for it is there that the world’s poorest people live (Lean, 1995).

To elaborate more on the abovementioned six dimensions: The economic dimension refers to the community finding ways to effectively participate in the mainstream economy that has become globalised, for example, by attracting new industry and

providing a good environment for investment and setting up cooperatives where people share aspects of living. The social dimension makes reference to social work, health services, youth work and education, in addition to identifying social needs and the quality of social interaction within the community. The cultural dimension involves cultural activities becoming something that is produced, packaged, bought and sold (for example, music, drama, art and crafts) and it is undertaken by a few for the consumption of many, although it is still vital for communities to preserve their unique local culture¹⁰. The environment dimension applies to both the natural and built environment, whereas spiritual and personal development is also very vital, since it is the individual within a community who develops a sense of personal worth and who is able to lead a more spiritually enriched life, with a sense of purpose which are fundamental aspects of human existence (Ife, 2002, pp. 162-196). These six dimensions are not always distinct, and they often interact with each other in complex ways (Ife, 2002) which can be challenging for successful community development.

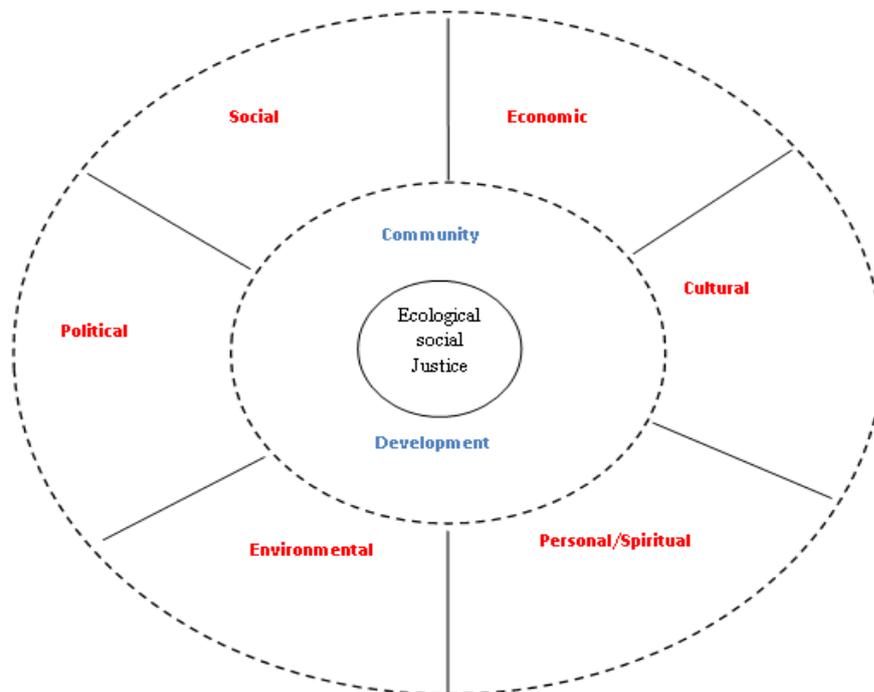


Figure 1: Integrated Community Development

Source: Ife, 1995, p. 132; 2002, p. 161

¹⁰ “The primary aim of community development is to legitimise and strengthen indigenous culture through an effective empowerment strategy which enables indigenous people to have genuine control over their own community and their own destiny, indigenous people must set the agenda for development and must have control over processes and structures”. (Ife, 2002, p. 183)

2.3.3 Challenges to community development

In speaking of challenges, it can be stated that globalisation can be a major threat to the economic base of local people and it has complicated the processes whereby communities have become integrated into a larger society and economy (Green & Goetting, 2010, p. 1; Green & Haines, 2012), Phillips and Pittman (2009) argued that rural communities and actual states can no longer afford to ignore globalisation when planning their economic future, regardless of their location (Phillips & Pittman, 2009, pp. 324-333).

Other social and economic challenges include urban migration and the increasing number of school leavers and dropouts, frustrating employment opportunities; the provoking increased crimes in urban areas; poor infrastructure limiting the access of rural settlers to public services such as proper health and education services, banking and shopping; limited social networks; and under-utilised assets or resources available locally. In addition, political changes have also presented challenges to local communities, where governments have devolved many of their responsibilities onto local community-based organisations or NGOs, thus pressuring these local organisations to find and generate resources to meet these needs (Green & Goetting, 2010). In response, communities have tended to look for external resources which have also created an additional problem of dependence which then threatens the capacity of locals to address their own needs (Desai, 1995; Green & Goetting, 2010).

In summary, community development has various definitions and it has evolved with different connotations (Green & Haines, 2002; Phillips & Pittman, 2009). These various definitions encompass the development of stronger communities working together to solve common problems, whilst empowering communities to improve their quality of life, and it is these encompassing definitions that which capture the essence of this study. Together, these conceptions encapsulate community development as being both a process and an outcome (Matterssich & Monsey, 2004; Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009; Phillips & Pittman, 2009).

In other words, community development empowers local people to act on their own behalf, to transform their communities, and to improve their own quality of life through participation in socio-economic, political and institutional developments (Chile, 2007). This understanding of community development adds value and context to this study,

which posits the viability of a people-centred model as being an alternative approach to the enhancement of community development by recognising the value of existing traditional assets within local communities, with specific reference to intervention by NGOs. The rise of NGOs as development agents, one can argue has re-established the intentional process of development, but (unlike affluent agencies), NGOs may have the potential to realise the notion of trusteeship between the developer and those to be developed. In order to maintain this trust, NGOs should recognise that local communities may still require a viable and effective institution to act on behalf of their common interests (Nustad, 2001), in order to ensure that shared interests become a stronger binding agent (Teegen, Jonathan, & Vachani, 2004).

2.4 The Rise of NGOs to Facilitate Community Development Processes

Over the past 50 years, there has been tremendous growth in NGOs and grassroots efforts in developing countries, which have provided an alternative approach to enhancing development (Green & Haines, 2002, p. 201). Although NGO activities depend largely on the cultures and environments in which they work, their work continues to expand extensively in all spheres of human activities worldwide including developing countries (Bromideh, 2011). Due to citizens increasing loss of trust in institutions to protect their interests, a need arose for NGOs as new mechanisms to foster social capital formation which would be more organized, influential, and integrated into national and global political and socio-economic systems. (Teegen et al., 2004, p. 465).

The term NGO is not very helpful when describing the organisations it defines. However, the United Nations (UN) found it convenient to call such organisations NGOs, in order to distinguish them from governments (Teegen et al., 2004). NGOs are therefore defined as “intermediary organisations engaged in funding and offering support to local communities” (Green & Haines, 2002, p. 211) with an “emphasis on self-reliance to ensure continuity” (Korten, 1987, p. 148). Furthermore, the UN (2003) defines NGO as:

“Any non-profit, voluntary citizens group which is organised on a local, national or international level, task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens’ concerns to governments, monitor policies and encourage political participation

at the community level. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements” (United Nations, 2003 as cited in Teegen et al., 2004).

Due to the complexity noted in the literature on what NGOs are, do and ought to be, this study integrates the description above by Teegen et al (2004) with Mercer’s (2002) definition of NGOs as officially established organisations, run by employed staff and volunteers that are well-supported by government (or more often by donor agencies), and which are relatively large and locally based. This description covers the NGOs selected for this study.

Governments and donor agencies have acknowledged NGOs’ ability to accomplish that which many governments have been unable to do, that is to deliver a range of essential goods and services to the poor (Saibul, 2010). Hence, the scope of NGO work has grown extensively due to it being a highly visible component of civil society. In addition, NGOs have been significant players in the areas of human rights, social development and the environment at local, national and international levels. Thus, NGOs continue to be strongly influential within communities and grassroots activities in relation to policy making, planning and implementation (Bromideh, 2011, p. 198).

Mathie and Cunningham (2003a) have also shown that NGOs offer a different type of practice which involves a shift from the “controlled development project” approach to a “relationship with the community” that is flexible: one that involves sensitivity to community interests and an identification and analysis of what takes place at the community level. “This relationship approach involves a process of community-driven development, prompting interactions with other actors and specific ways of facilitating linkages so communities are able to sustain their own development” (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b, p. 11).

Thus, within this synergistic relationship context, social capital inevitably becomes an element to consider, where “social capital refers to the quality of human relations within social organisations such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate cooperation and coordination for mutual benefit” (Krishna, 2004, p. 292). The relationship between social capital and the mediating agency (the NGO) is of particular relevance to the discussion that follows later in this thesis on the implications of local context to the role of the mediating agency. Krishna (2002, p. 170) argues that for social capital to be

activated, a mediating agency is required (such as NGOs) to help citizens make connections with government and market. Therefore, recognising and developing social capital at the communal level which is a win-win situation for both the individual and the community at large (Krishna, 2004, p. 293). In the context of this study, middle-agents are thus more likely to succeed if they are linked with what the local villages already have, but this is also dependent on the quality of leadership that exists within these communities where the leaders and NGOs are held accountable, through the use of local knowledge and an everyday understanding of what is right or wrong (Krishna, 2004). The success or failure of these connections depend extensively on how the middle-agents function, otherwise the communities have the right to foster direct access with the state and officials who make and implement these decisions (Krishna, 2004).

2.4.1 Significance of NGO roles and practices

This study places importance on the work of NGOs in Samoa, in light of NGOs supporting an alternative approach that is citizen-driven. At local level, it is believed that NGOs can serve as potential facilitators of development alternatives: since they have a potential influence on policy, politics and resource allocation (Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001). They can ensure more equitable, humane, empowering and sustainable development (Bebbington, 2004; Storey, 1998, p. 346). Although, there are critical perspectives regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the role played by NGOs in delivering services to disadvantaged communities (Nyamugasira, 1998; Miraftab, 1997), there is still a positive perception of the work of NGOs, as being praiseworthy for promoting community self-reliance, empowerment, economic development and poverty alleviation (Bebbington, 2004; Bromideh, 2011).

NGO local, regional and international networks are giving local concerns a global platform which connects small grassroots organisations with international alliances, thus bringing pressure to bear on national governments to change the status quo (Curtis, 1999). These efforts by NGOs have somewhat limited the power and influence of states and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations (U.N), and they have enhanced the importance of NGOs. Hence, supportive arguments further state that NGOs are fulfilling a vital role, by calling attention to commercial abuse or injustice, which might otherwise be ignored and that NGOs provide education, health and social services in most countries (Curtis, 1999, pp. 13-16). It is clear that NGOs do

not set development policy or pass legislation, but they can influence these interventions and operate through lobbying, consultation, collaboration and giving advice whilst undertaking the actual project themselves locally (Potter, Robert, Binns, Elliot, & Smith, 1999, p. 178).

Taylor (1997) claimed that the NGOs' facilitating role allows them to raise the awareness of local people concerning the importance of owning and controlling assets and investing in local projects, so they can generate benefits for rural communities. In addition, governments are becoming dependent on NGOs to deliver essential public services, due to their cost effectiveness and ability to engage with grassroots people (Taylor, 1997, p. 23). However, in order to sustain NGO facilitation efforts, there is a need to address the policy and institutional structures which often serve to centralise control of resources and prevent essential services from reaching the poor. This can be undertaken by establishing an institutional setting, which facilitates sustainable development and places an emphasis on the capacity building of local people to make demands on the system. Furthermore, it can create and maintain alliances with the power-holders, in order to support a system that is more responsive to the people (Korten, 1990, p. 121). Thus, NGOs are claimed to be "the best at developing relationships with local people because of some of their characteristics, including their readiness and evident ability to adapt, their relative size, and their tradition of working with the poor at grassroots level" (Potter et al., 1999, p. 180). Green and Haines (2002) reiterated that NGOs deliver aid to local communities far more effectively than governments or private sectors, within developing countries.

Moreover, NGOs remain increasingly involved as active players in providing development assistance to rural communities, by working as service deliverers for multilateral and bilateral agencies. NGOs gained increasing prominence during the 1980s and 1990s and they are still recognised by donors as being a more effective avenue for poverty alleviation in developing countries than governments (although a stronger role for the state still is required) (Edwards, 1999). Similar viewpoints have been supported by others, which demonstrated that, over the past three decades, the NGOs' role has remained increasingly significant within local and community-based development initiatives in many countries, and they are the voice of a civil society that is demanding for change (Brohman, 1996, p. 253; Bromideh, 2011; Tvedt, 2002). Nevertheless, there are also others who remain critical of the work offered by NGOs,

especially in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency in delivering services to marginalised groups (Miraftab, 1997; Nyamugasira, 1998).

2.4.2 Critiques of NGO roles and practices

To elaborate more on the critiques of NGO work, the strategy of supporting NGOs has yet to prove its effectiveness in making a major contribution towards the eradication of poverty (Schmale, 1993, p. 2). It still remains unclear whether NGOs are superior to state agencies in overcoming poverty (Arellano-Lopez & Petras, 1994, p. 555). Although the good news is that the NGO sector has become a growth industry, the bad news, however, is that this growth has “spawned a multitude of small localised organisations which are often invisible and have little influence on local or national development processes” (Nyamugasira, 1998, p. 300). It has also been noted that some NGOs have become more adept at building clientele relationships than improving the status of the very poorest (Storey, 1998, p. 349).

In terms of financial security, some NGOs have sought more government funding, in order to expand their service delivery capabilities, whilst other NGOs have come to question the nature of their conventional roles and to consider whether they should rethink their own approaches to development (Korten, 1990, p. 6). However, “NGOs continue to depend on the government for funding and to serve as conduits for foreign policy for government, thus results in NGOs stuck in a system where they are not seen as central actors in decision making process for international policies” (Seckinelgin, 2006, p. 723). As a result, instead of working together, local NGOs or grassroots organisations sometimes compete with one another for funds, and neglect to build alliances that could benefit them during power struggles with government (Arellano-Lopez & Petras, 1994, p. 557). On the other hand, Miraftab (1997) argued that NGO relationships have also been affected where their approach to government has changed from conflict to dialogue, whilst some have also moved from voluntarism (serving the poor) to consultancy (working for and with the poor). Thus, assumptions and expectations regarding the benefits of promoting development through NGOs should not be accepted without continued critical observation (Aldaba, 1992; Arellano-Lopez & Petras, 1994, p. 566).

The NGOs’ role as mediator has also been criticised, as undermining the political power and influence that local grassroots communities could hold when dealing with

government and other officials (Arellano-Lopez & Petras, 1994, pp. 555-557). It has been suggested that the relationship between NGOs and the poor could be one of dependence and control, as much as empowerment (Carroll, 1992). In terms of community training and capacity building, “NGOs often see themselves as advisors and teachers of the poor rather than as conduits or facilitators of community needs” (Carroll, 1992, p. 27) and thus, this situation reinforces dependence which maintains top-down structures in society (Schmale, 1993, p. 233). Hence, the concerns in relations to NGO legitimacy, regarding their motives, actions (Teegen et al., 2004) and legitimate representation of community interests (Saibul, 2010). At their worst, NGOs are unaccountable, and misleading in their pursuit of development goals. However, NGOs at their best represent the concerned public and they are democratic representatives of communities, acting as policy consultants on behalf of targeted communities (Curtis, 1999, p. 21). Nevertheless, even at their best, NGOs still have to face more challenges as development agencies.

2.4.3 Challenges faced by NGOs as development agents

Although the NGO role remains significant in providing aid to communities as recognition of their efforts grows amongst multilateral and bilateral aid agencies around the world, they face increasing challenges from the state and private sector and therefore, the NGO role within the developing world is not always effective (Bromideh, 2011). One of the major challenges faced by most NGOs, is that the “government makes it difficult for them to work, to access funds or to exercise control over their services and they can be taken advantage of for financial reasons” (Green & Haines, 2002, p. 215). Part of this problem is that certain factors, which influence the work and performance of NGOs, lie outside their control (e.g. government policies), in addition to the dependent nature of their work (Edwards & Hulme, 1998, p. 970). For example, a study undertaken on NGOs in Mexico has revealed that they face similar challenges as those seen in other countries, such as achieving financial autonomy, replicating local experiences on a larger scale, and improving the living conditions of the poor without becoming contracted to governments (Miraftab, 1997, p. 362).

There is also the difficulty of NGOs establishing sound, cost-effective methods which show the results of their development efforts or which demonstrate their effectiveness, in terms of their accountability and performance as development agents (Fowler, 1996).

Accountability becomes a serious issue, whereby the absence of reliable and widely accessible data makes it difficult for NGOs and civil society to hold governments accountable for their actions (Feeny & Clarket, 2008). Consequently, the increased attention and financial support received by NGOs have radically influenced their organisational character and the nature of their activities (Miraftab, 1997). Despite the challenges of a working partnership with government, donors, markets and the community, discussions on these institutional relationships continue, with an emphasis being laid on the significance of the engagement between these key players (Seckinelgin, 2006).

The financial sustainability of NGOs also remains a concern, due to the prolonged processes of NGOs, when they attempt to identify sustainable financial avenues, without official development assistance from donor agencies (Fowler, 2000). “NGOs operate on shoestring budgets compared to government and corporations, but corporations and governments are often more a part of the problem than the solution” (Curtis, 1999, p. 13; Potter et al., 1999, p. 173). As provocatively expressed by Tim Wirth (a former U.S Senator and Under-Secretary of State who headed the non-profit UN Foundation): “People, do not expect politicians to do anything, I do not expect politicians to do anything that is why more and more people are moving toward grassroots activities” (Curtis, 1999, p. 13).

However, NGOs may still struggle in relation to their size and isolation, a lack of resources, a preoccupation with localised survival strategies, or conflict amongst leaders, members and non-members (Nyamugasira, 1998, p. 300; Storey, 1998, p. 348). Although some of these problems can be resolved through “leadership and increased transparency and accountability trainings” (Theunis, 1992, p. 335), “working with and through leaders can also pose problems such as a dependency upon outside and local expertise, resources, political access and influence, mediated through local patrons” (Desai, 1995, pp. 58-62; Storey, 1998, p. 350; P. Ward & Chant, 1987). Leadership can easily “degenerate into manipulation and reinforce hegemonic relationships” (Storey, 1998, p. 350).

Whilst not without its troubles and weaknesses, the NGO milieu appears to have the potential to remain resilient. The strength of civil society lies in the innovation, flexibility and ingenuity it affords, and the sheer diversity of the viewpoints it represents

(Curtis, 1999, p. 21). NGOs, as representatives of civil society, tend to be most effective when they work on both local and global interactions (Curtis, 1999, p. 18). Although, within the global aid system, an NGO can be forced to be more accountable, in terms of resource management towards a donor-state, rather than to beneficiaries, this is because NGOs depend on donor funding and thus, can be donor-lead; and many influential NGOs are more influenced by donor-state policies, than by what it is happening locally or nationally (Mercer, 2002; Tvedt, 2002). Hence, these claims and NGO legitimacy have come under increased scrutiny in recent years, (Saibul, 2010; Storey, 1998; Miraftab, 1997).

In summary, it is evident that NGOs have expanded in their scope and areas of activities and they have gained a much greater capacity and recognition, with regards to service delivery, and as facilitators of better development by providing alternatives for reaching the poor. These factors are often used as a basis for raising funds and they are the foundation of their legitimacy (Curtis, 1999; DAWN, 1995; Korten, 1990; Potter, et.al, 1999). These factors have also influenced how NGOs define their roles and objectives, how they determine their staff and membership and their approaches to achieving and promoting community development (Miraftab, 1997, p. 362).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an understanding of the discourse of development, as being purely Western-driven. Despite its multi-disciplinary nature in terms of theory and practice, development has two main features: immanent and intentional. The distinction between the two processes is particularly important, when placing development within the context of this study-this being the failure of Western-development (namely, intentional development activities) during the 1980s and 1990s which provided an impetus for a relevant, people-centred, citizen-driven (immanent development). Studies have shown that this people-centred approach had been considered a viable approach, in order to promote and enhance community development, by allowing local people to take charge of their own development efforts. Over the past three decades, the proponents of post-development have expressed interest in identifying different development strategies, which specifically meet the needs of the masses in developing countries.

Development is also a product of collaboration and interaction between these sets of institutions: state, market, community and NGOs (civil society) and therefore, 'community-led' development takes prominence in this current study. Thus, it is suggested that an ideal development must be more receptive to local people's perspectives and it needs to consider the value of local contexts, thus encompassing the distinct dimensions that form the community development model. In other words, if development is supposed to enhance the quality of life, then development efforts should be anchored in the existence of diversity within local communities. Although the alternative theories appear accommodating, the challenge is to ensure that local communities' traditional values and traits have the capacity to either complement, or alter, the discourse of development which, of course, has now been widely institutionalised.

Therefore, the role of NGOs in developing countries is considered vital and they are known to be potential facilitators of alternative development efforts. Despite the inevitable challenges faced by NGOs, it is suggested that they should use the method that has shifted the discourse of development from one of deficits perspectives, to one where local people can further understand and value their own local assets. This method is known as the asset-based approach to community development (ABCD), which will be further discussed and presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD) IN PERSPECTIVE

Development that is controlled by communities provides a better match between the assets and the needs of the communities (Green & Haines, 2012, p. xi)

3.1 Introduction

As presented in Chapter 2, the shift in development thinking and practice has created space for an alternative understanding of development, which has been vigorously supported by post-development thinkers. For example, the development discourse has shifted from a conventional needs-based, problem-oriented and deficit focused approach, to an asset-based perspective of development. Within the community development context, this chapter presents a discussion of the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) approach that is claimed to be people-centred and citizen-driven. The discussions begin with the origins and emergence of the ABCD as a relatively new concept, entailing certain key principles as the basis of ABCD theory and practices. This will be followed by an analysis of the characteristics of ABCD, as being instrumental and relevant to the region and country of study. Despite various criticisms and challenges faced by the ABCD model, it has the potential to help NGOs (as development agents) to further promote locally-driven development. Finally, a conceptual framework demonstrates the positive results of using ABCD to pursue community development: and the different results without ABCD.

3.2 Origins, Emergence and Understanding of the ABCD Concept

The ABCD approach is a relatively new concept generated out of the West in the late 1990s (O'Leary, 2005). The pioneers of ABCD John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann established this concept as a way of “countering the predominant needs-based approach to development”, whereby the criticisms of the dominant Western development approaches, led to the recognition of an “alternative that focuses on the capacities of local people and their associations that build powerful communities” (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a, pp. 475-476). This ABCD approach evolved from community development work pioneered by Kretzmann and McKnight in the United States (U.S) (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). In terms of post-development studies, ABCD is a more flexible approach to influencing development thinking and practices, in order to bring about alternative marginalised ideas and activities to the forefront of the

development agenda (Underhill-Sem & Lewis, 2008). This paradigm involves looking beyond the traditional methods of intervention, in order to identify approaches that are cost-effective and more innovative for local communities (Eloff & Eborsohn, 2001, p. 150). In retrospect, Hipwell (2009) has traced the origins and essence of the ABCD approach back to the thinking of the nineteenth-century, when the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche provided compelling arguments relating to building upon peoples' existing assets (Hipwell, 2009, p. 291). Proponents of ABCD also refer to it as the "half-full glass" approach to intervention (McDonald, 1997, p. 115), whilst Ammerman and Parks (1998, p. 35) describe it as the "capacity focused alternative".

The ABCD approach also favours "bottom-up approaches that shift the emphasis from a services perspective to an empowerment perspective valuing collaboration, dynamic partnerships and participation, hence a relationship driven-approach" (Eloff & Eborsohn, 2001, p. 151). Thus, this approach aims to ensure that individuals and communities are no longer clients, but they are guided to becoming independent and to gain control over their lives (Hernandez, 1998, p. 274). Although "identifying problems remains an integral part of this approach, problem solving focuses more on creating and rebuilding relationships between individuals, associations and institutions" (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 7). Thus, ABCD has the potential to enable communities to recognise their strengths and focus on what they *have* rather than what is *missing* and thereby contribute to identifying and harnessing new skills, in addition to new relationships (Ennis & West, 2010).

As mentioned in Chapter 2 concerning trust, in terms of associations and partnerships, the application of ABCD invokes a process where "trust is developed, assets are acknowledged, documented and mapped, thus trust between the developer and those to be developed is an essential element of the asset-based approach" (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 406). Therefore, special attention has increasingly been offered by NGOs and other development practitioners to an approach that recognises the value of (and building on) the existing skills, knowledge and other existing assets within local communities (Binns & Nel, 1999, pp. 278-279). However, limited interventions by NGOs and donor agencies and the failure of some Western development strategies have forced communities to look inwards, in order to capitalise on their existing assets in terms of skills and resources. The exploration of the ABCD concept has become crucial, in response to this failed development:

“After forty years of development, the state of affairs is dismal. The gap between frontrunners and stragglers has not been bridged, on the contrary, it has widened to the extent that it has become unimaginable that it could ever be closed.” (Sachs, 1990 as cited in Binns & Nel, 1999, p. 391)

Accordingly, ABCD is an ideal process which has shifted the community discourse from a deficits perspective to one of assets which again has changed how people understand their own local communities (Kramer, Mohamed, Sandy & Suffla, 2011). This situation has resulted in the creation of a sense of hope and assurance, whereby local people have become inspired to take actions, and to be empowered to link grassroots-community initiatives to the broader national and international environment, which promotes a policy environment conducive to these initiatives (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 406). However, the idea is not to romanticise notions of community or collective action, but to pay more attention to failed initiatives and to ensure considerable measures are in place to strengthen collective practices, through asset-based approaches (Underhill-Sem & Lewis, 2008, p. 313). To reiterate, ABCD has presented a positive language of action, ownership and wealth, instead of the negative connotations of passivity and dependence on the state and the affluent agencies of a needs-orientated approach (Gibson-Graham, 2005). In this regard, the efforts of ABCD are based on the following principles and practices.

3.2.1 ABCD principles and practices

ABCD offers a set of principles and practices to sustain community economic development (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b). **Table 1** summarises the six key principles of ABCD, as being purely community-driven and not driven by external agencies (Chirisa, 2009; Cunningham & Mathie, 2002; World Bank, 2000). ABCD is premised on the principles of; (i) appreciating and mobilising individual and community skills, knowledge and assets (rather than focusing on problems and needs) and; (ii) community-driven development, rather than being externally driven by outside agencies. ABCD builds on mobilising and recognising existing community talents, which strengthen people’s confidence in their own abilities and inspires them to take action. ABCD also recognises social capital, which is the links that exists within communities and with outside entities: and their significance as assets. Participatory approaches to development, which are based on the principles of empowerment and ownership of the

development process, are central to ABCD, since community development models continue to place priority on collaborative efforts for economic development. Finally, ABCD involves efforts to strengthen civil society, based on recognition of the value of locating, articulating and developing their existing assets (Cunningham & Mathie, 2002, p. 1; Ennis & West, 2010). The ABCD principles and practices are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: ABCD Principles and Practices

	ABCD Principles
I	Appreciating and mobilising individual and community skills, knowledge and assets
ii	Community-driven development rather than being externally driven
iii	Recognition of social capital (stresses key role played by formal and informal associations and networks and extended families at community level)
iv	Participatory approaches to development based on the principles of empowerment and ownership of the development process
V	Community development models which place priority on collaborative efforts for economic development
vi	Efforts to strengthen civil society

Source: Adapted from Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, p. 1

In terms of validating these principles, historical evidence indicates that significant community development only takes place when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in their development efforts (Lean, 1995). Accordingly, Lean (1995) has explained why communities are never built from the top down, or from the outside in (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996), and O’Leary (2005) states that there have also been many examples of success stories recorded in the literature, especially those of ABCD influencing people’s values, attitudes and behaviour (O’Leary, 2005). This validation is also explained in the following section, through an analysis of the ABCD concept, which can potentially deliver two desirable effects that could be helpful to community development efforts: and which are relevant to the purpose of this study.

3.3 Characteristics of ABCD and its Relevance to the Study

ABCD is therefore expressed as providing (i) a transition from a needs-based and deficits-focused model to an asset-based model and (ii) a method that activates the access and control over local assets.

3.3.1 Transition from a 'needs-based model' to an 'asset-based model'

The idea of an assets-orientated model emerged during the 1990s and it emphasised a transition that puts value and significance on building community assets, instead of focusing on needs (Green & Haines, 2002, p. 9). “The transition from a ‘needs assessment model’ to an ‘asset-based model’ expounds the sustainability of building existing assets as oppose to focusing on problems only, because collective action based on assets usually necessitates a clearer vision of community goals as a whole” (Green & Goetting, 2010, pp. 3-5). Haines (2009) concurred that an “ABCD approach is a more sustainable development approach because it fosters a positive community outlook rather than dwelling on what is missing” (Haines, 2009, p. 38).

In light of local development in an economic sense, Cahill (2008) stressed the significance of empowerment processes in redistributing local resources to marginalised groups, by participating in locally-based and locally-driven interventions. He highlighted the fact that “locals should not overstate the existing lack of resources which unintentionally has created a sense of dependency on formal development interventions initiated by outside agencies” (Cahill, 2008, p. 294; Mathie & Cunningham, 2008). In terms of local leadership, Kretzmann and McKnight lament the devastating consequences of a needs-based, problem-solving approach, which results in leadership undermining community capacities and it also emphasises the severity of problems, in order to attract resources. Hence, individuals and communities see themselves as being incapable of initiating positive change and this results in feelings of hopelessness (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a, p. 476). Pervasive reliance on outside institutions can further weaken local communities, but another issue remains: that some of these institutions have a vested interest in maintaining this dependency (see also Fowler, 2000)¹¹. Therefore, Kretzmann and McKnight argue that “viewing a community as a list of problems and needs leads to a fragmentation of efforts to provide solutions,

¹¹ Fowler, A. (2000). *Civil society, NGOs and social development: Changing the rules of the game* (Occasional paper No. 1). Geneva: UNRISD. Retrieved on 25 October, 2011 from [http://www.unrisd.org/UNRISD/website/document.nsf/ab82a6805797760f80256b4f005da1ab/f553495f06f98dce80256b5e005c9ddc/\\$FILE/fowler.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/UNRISD/website/document.nsf/ab82a6805797760f80256b4f005da1ab/f553495f06f98dce80256b5e005c9ddc/$FILE/fowler.pdf)

thus denying the breadth and depth of community wisdom and the community's own problem-solving capacities" (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b, p. 2).

The significance of focusing on assets, capacities and capabilities is to encourage a proactive role for citizens, thus replacing the passive and dependent role of clients in the needs-based delivery model (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a, p. 9). The following diagram (**Figure 2**) highlights the focus on existing assets, rather than needs (as shown in **Figure 3**). These figures represent a major shift in how community development practitioners have approached their work in recent years (Green & Haines, 2002, p. 9). Some alterations have been made to some of the examples given in the diagram, in order to fit the context of Samoa, thus bringing to this discussion the significance of not just *knowing*, but also *understanding* the value of the local context.

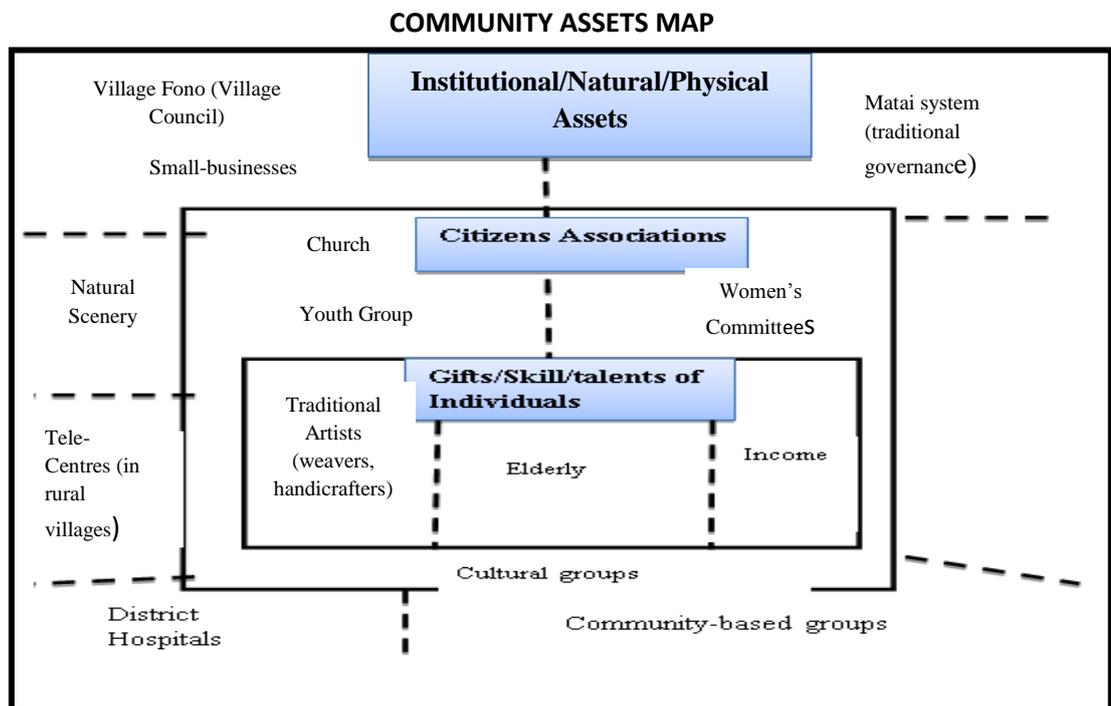


Figure 2: Typical assets available within a Samoan community
 Source: Adapted from Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996, p. 29

COMMUNITY NEEDS MAP

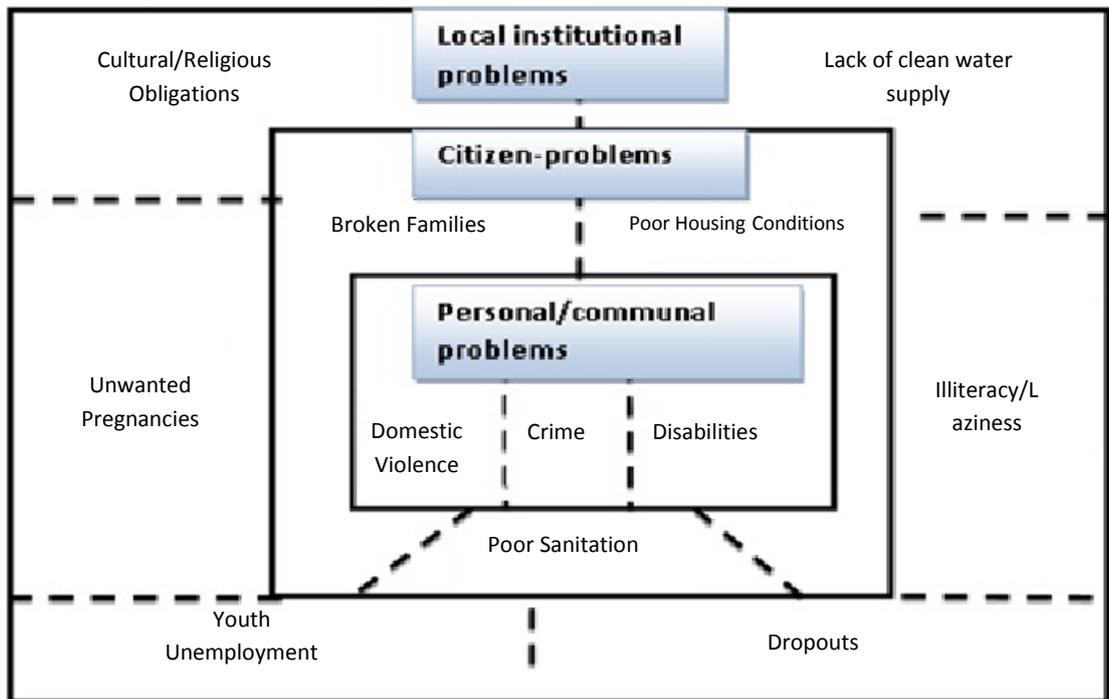


Figure 3: Typical needs within a Samoan Community

Source: Adapted from Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996, p. 28

3.3.2 A method activating access and control over local assets

“In a community whose assets are being fully recognised and mobilized, these people will be part of the action, not as clients or recipients of aid but as full contributors to the community-building process” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996, pp. 25-26). This process involves asset-mapping, which is more than merely collecting data, since it is essential to conduct the asset-mapping as a guide to building new relationships and learning and understanding more about the contributions and potential linkages between various assets (Chirisa, 2009). The assets of a community, according to Kretzmann and McKnight (1996), are its individuals, associations and institutions, whilst Chirisa’s (2009) capacity inventory includes all other capitals: and it is also premised by a sustainable livelihoods framework, such as human, natural, social, physical, financial, political and spiritual capitals (Chirisa, 2009, p. 031).

Bebbington (1999) argued that assets were more than just resources with intrinsic value for economic purposes. He asserts that assets also give people the capacity or potential to act and thus, they are a source of meaningful engagement with the world. In a related sense, assets are also the basis on which people take action, empowers them to challenge the structures that determine the way in which resources are allocated.

However, these assets cannot be activated without people having ‘access to assets’. Since an asset-based model emphasises sustained collective action, it is therefore inevitably an integral part of the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) (Cahn, 2002).

A definition of ‘livelihood’ places the emphasis on the ‘access to assets’ and activities that are influenced by social relationships and institutions (Cahn, 2002). Five categories of assets have also been identified by the Department for International Development (DFID): natural, social, human, physical and financial assets (Cahn, 2002; Green & Goetting, 2010). An analysis of assets is a review of what people have (Helmore, 1998), which takes in to account how their access to assets has changed over time; what has caused the changes; and how access and control of assets differs between social groups (Cahn, 2002). Access, control and use of assets are influenced by institutional structures and processes and thus, it is important to understand these structures or organisations, in addition to the processes, such as law, policies, societal norms and incentives, within any society. Therefore, social capital is imperatively a particularly important asset, because it provides access to other assets and it is this access that is the most critical resource of all (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b, p. 4).

3.3.2.1 ‘Asset’: Defining the term asset and understanding the context

Assets are defined as the stock of wealth in a household or unit or a person or an object and they can be recognised as being useful with an intrinsic quality (Sherraden, 1991). The term assets also include individuals, associations, local institutions and organisations, as being inherently valuable within the “asset-based framework” (Haines, 2009, p. 41). Haines concludes that ABCD is a promising and sustainable approach to achieving a better quality of life for communities, and she agrees with Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) that community revitalisation is possible, through the identification and mapping of all local assets, in order to multiply their power and effectiveness (Haines, 2009, p. 48). Assets are also found in different forms of community capital, which includes financial, social, physical, human, political, in addition to environmental and cultural (Green & Goetting, 2010, p. 6). These different forms are regarded as assets, because investments in them can generate additional resources, which are beneficial for the wider community.

Therefore, in this context of assets, community development is a process and an outcome attributed to the following main aspects: strengthening and utilising local

assets, such as social networking, natural resources and the capacity of communities to identify priorities and opportunities to foster positive change (Haines, 2009, p. 38). In addition, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) have also identified that rebuilding a community's economy involves local institutions investing in some basic methods. These methods include local purchasing; hiring locally; developing new business; developing human resources; identifying potentially productive economic space; local investment strategies; mobilising external resources; and creating alternative credit institutions (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, pp. 278-279). **Figure 4** illustrates the benefits of investing in local community economies with the support of local agencies, such as NGOs and other institutions, as a means to achieve and sustain stronger local economies. Siegel (2005) states that, according to the ABCD approach, the poor are "asset-poor," due to limited assets and the inability to exploit these assets effectively. The key is to increase and maintain local investments and to ensure that efforts to protect and manage local resources aim to produce benefits for the community as a whole (Siegel, 2005). Valuable outside assistance can still be considered for communities that are actively developing their own assets and this assistance can help to deliver sustainable results (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996, p. 25).

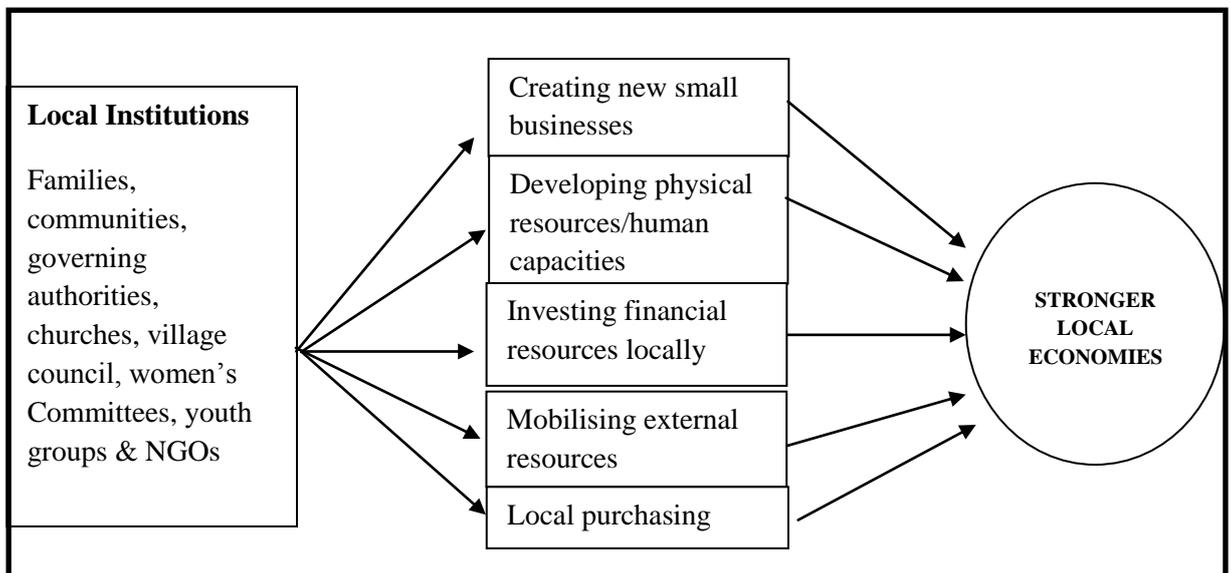


Figure 4: Investing in local community economies: the role of local NGOs and local institutions
 Source: Adapted from Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 279

Moreover, ABCD appears to offer practical means at ground level, whilst still challenging the technocratic decision-making process that critics have associated with the SLA (Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003). The validity of this claim is strongly supported

by the following four components of ABCD (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b, p. 8) shown in **Table 2**. These principles, summarised into four key components of ABCD, will be used in the assessment of Samoan NGO work, as presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

Table 2: Components of ABCD

	ABCD approaches and focus
1	ABCD approach takes as its starting point, the position that people have strengths and capacities and that uncovering these strengths is a key motivator for taking action. Focus: Recognising, identifying and developing local existing assets and local capacities
2	ABCD stresses the key role of formal and informal associations, networks and extended families at the community level and the social relationships that connect local initiatives to external windows of opportunity. Focus: Recognition of social capital as an asset
3	ABCD approach provides practical tools and methods that can be used by community members to identify and link assets Focus: Practical tools and methods for locals to use for linking various assets (e.g. asset-mapping, organisational structure, local economic analysis)
4	ABCD approach is not only people-centred (as in the sustainable livelihoods approach), but it is also a citizen-driven approach Focus: Reduce dependency through encouraging a proactive role by citizens, to replace a welfare service delivery model with an empowering model

Source: Adapted from Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b

3.4 ABCD and the Development Agency

In terms of utilising ABCD in the policies and practices of any development agency, it must realise that the ABCD approach is inclusive in nature: meaning that everyone has a defined role to play (Chirisa, 2009, p. 033). In retrospect, a community is built up through facilitation and continuous learning (Chirisa, 2009) by all partners, who supposedly are actively engaged in the process. In this study, the emphasis is on the particular role of NGOs as facilitators, with the support of government and donor agencies. Due to the prevailing effects of globalisation and, the advanced evolution of technologies and climate change on local communities, regardless of location, local communities have inevitably tapped into external resources and expertise for assistance – yet change must come predominantly from within these local communities (Ennis & West, 2010).

ABCD has the potential for national and international development practice, and it is viewed as an instrument for development agents to counter dramatic changes in the social, political and economic landscape (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a). ABCD is

instrumental in the process of democratisation of particularly the less developed countries (for example, India, South Africa, and Nepal), together with private organisations, such as World Vision and DFID (to name a few), due to the emergence of stronger and accountable forms of governance at local level and the rise of vibrant and effective civil society organisations such as NGOs (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a). The strengthening and extending of relationships between individuals, and organisations is equally important as that between different sectors and development agencies: and the harnessing and maintenance of these networks is fundamental to effective community development work (Gilchrist, 2004, p. 25).

Consequently, the fundamental aspect is that these social relationships formed internally within communities and externally with outside agencies, remain central to ABCD theory and practice and they are treated as assets (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a). The links between individuals and other agencies are the key to sharing information and resources: and mobilising for positive change (Ennis & West, 2010). Although there is criticism that social network theory and analysis is being under-utilised in ABCD literature, it is also argued that integrating a networking approach to community development (Gilchrist, 2004), within the ABCD model, can assist the ABCD practitioner to understand the impact of such interventions upon the various relationships between the elements that constitute a community—and also to help address some of the challenges that the ABCD model faces (Ennis & West, 2010).

3.5 Challenges and Critiques of the ABCD Approach

Although NGOs and development practitioners have shown an interest in an approach that is innovative and which appreciates and recognises existing local assets (Binns & Nel, 1999), it is vital to understand that ABCD is not necessarily undertaken by ABCD experts, taking into account that Kretzmann's and McKnight's work evolved from spontaneous initiatives within the U.S.A communities. Therefore, it is equally important to study and document cases that are not called ABCD, but which illustrate similar principles, practices and outcomes. Furthermore, even if the practice of ABCD is co-opted by NGOs and the delivered to communities, a concern remains in relation to the approach being discredited, as a self-serving initiative for external agencies (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a). Some critics argue that asset-based models should be fostering endogenous processes, which indicatively state the role of external agencies as

facilitators only, the challenge is to avoid a level of involvement that induces dependence (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Therefore, even with the use of a people-centred approach (such as ABCD), NGOs, governments and other external agencies must genuinely create a space, in order to fulfil social obligations that are intrinsically citizen-driven (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a).

It is clear, even within the limited literature on ABCD that the potential linkages within communities (e.g. asset-mapping, mobilising etc.) and the broader macro structures (e.g. political, economic, cultural and legal systems) remain inconsistent and hence, the lack of impact on more macro-level structures, which affects local communities, is one key criticism of ABCD (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 477). Although ABCD offers some scope of dialogue between locals and outside agencies, it tends not to address other macro issues that affect locals, such as globalisation and capitalism (Ennis & West, 2010). This is mainly because the model is premised to help communities survive within the current neo-liberal models of Western societies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Macro level issues, such as racism, gender inequality and class differences, which are often experienced at personal and community level, are left unexplored in the ABCD literature (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a). ABCD also tend to ignore issues related to power and oppression (Green & Goetting, 2010, p. 8). As a result, in practice, these issues remain as constraints to community development projects: and Green and Goetting (2010) have also revealed the challenge of mobilising communities around assets, rather than around needs.

Critical viewpoints expound even more on the “lack of evidence-based research available on ABCD which are sometimes far from conclusive, claiming that there is more research available in describing ABCD in action predominantly written by the implementing agency” (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 407). Although the asset-based model has been widely adopted, there is scarce research evaluating its effectiveness (Pawar, 2010). However, the available qualitative researches still have value, when describing ABCD efforts and they should not be under-stated. Furthermore, a proposal has been put forward for the use of social network analyses and relational measures, in order to help build on the understanding of the efficacy of ABCD (Ennis & West, 2010). Nevertheless, Mathie and Cunningham (2003a) refer to the challenges to ABCD as being hindrances that include the fostering of inclusive participation and community leadership, which still remains difficult to confront, due to power struggles and

inequalities that are ignored within some societies. The selection of enabling environments for investment is another major challenge, which considers the inevitable influence of the external environment on local communities, and thus, it is vital that ABCD is introduced with options that are responsive to local people's aspirations (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a, pp. 483-484).

Drawing from the limited available materials, ABCD literature predominantly reports on ABCD being studied and practised originally in the U.S.A, and it has been adopted in various other parts of the world including some Asian countries, such as Taiwan and The Philippines and other regions, such as Africa, Europe, South America and India. There appears to be a dearth of evidence-based ABCD research about specific states in the South Pacific, except for Australia and New Zealand, where ABCD has been relatively used in the fields of health and social work, politics and psychology. Therefore, the following section will briefly discuss the relevance of ABCD to the Pacific area, as being the region of study where Samoa (the country of study) is situated.

3.6 ABCD: Significance to the Pacific Region

This study focuses on one of the developing countries in the Pacific region. Relevant findings by Pawar (2010) have revealed the importance of the Asia-Pacific region, “with its richness in natural resources such as petroleum, minerals, forests, fish, and water, as well as in human resources although these need to be developed” (Pawar, 2010, pp. 5-6). He stresses the need to recognise and capitalise on existing resources, in order for this region to enhance its own forms of development. The Pacific region, in particular, has become reliant on donor funding, according to Bertram (1986) and it has lost sight of what its inherent resources.

The feeling of ownership of human and natural resources needs to be revived within the Pacific region and an appropriate means of accomplishing this is to encourage the local people to realise their potential to drive their own development (Pawar, 2010). Hooper (2005) attests that, despite the Asia-Pacific region being seen as *one* region, for obvious reasons the Pacific countries are different from the Asian countries, in terms of culture, scale and resources. For example, in every Pacific country there exists a large and vigorous traditional sector and 80-90 percent of land resources remain under customary tenure in many Pacific countries. Pacific countries (including Samoa) have constitutions which assert their legitimacy, in terms of their distinctive culture and

traditions and which “places culture right at the heart of national economic and political life” (Hooper, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, before considering the use of an ABCD approach, it is very important to take into account these viewpoints, whilst also examining the role of local NGOs and donor agencies, in addition to local government, in terms of their involvement in local-community development processes. Asset-based models are also invaluable within this context, particularly to counter the central economic problem for very small Pacific Island economies, based on some obvious factors. According to (Bertram, 1986, pp. 809-810) these include:

- The influence of the colonisation era on the expectations of these small economies is beyond the sustainable level of the local subsistence-economy which most of these island countries are accustomed to.
- The rapid growth of external dependence in the forms of remittances, government budgetary assistance from donor agencies and other rental incomes, is derived from metropolitan economies, such as New Zealand, Australia, the European Union and others. This limits the participation of local people to achieve a form of development that is locally-driven.
- The small and open economies of these island states are vulnerable and open to external influence. Therefore it appears unlikely that small island micro-economies will become autonomous units separate from the regional economy, or even the global economy.

These challenges exemplify the need for locally-driven development, by recognising ‘what is already there’. As espoused by the pioneers of ABCD Kretzmann and McKnight (1996), “the hard truth is that development must start from within the community” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996, p. 25). As illustrated in **Figure 5**, utilising ABCD can offer a perpetual process which has the potential to produce positive change to locally-driven development, as opposed to an externally-driven development. The diagram below shows the results of using ABCD, when recognising the value of local capacities and initiatives, by identifying and mapping available assets to local capabilities and aspirations, thus demonstrating a citizen-driven approach. This process illuminates the practical involvement of NGOs in facilitating the initial stages of any community based projects as being sustainable locally, which can then contribute to localising development processes. By encouraging and promoting these practices, communities can gain a deeper understanding of their own local contexts, with an

emphasis on the significance of the links that exist within and between various assets (e.g. individuals and organisations). Hence, these practices can activate and increase access and control for local people over local assets, with community members delivering the end product or service. Thus, communities can be empowered or inspired to continue these citizen-driven efforts. In contrast, if development efforts are not asset-based, or they are externally-driven, the perpetuate results (as shown) will differ from those of a locally-driven development.

3.7 Conceptual Framework

Locally Driven Community Development (with ABCD)

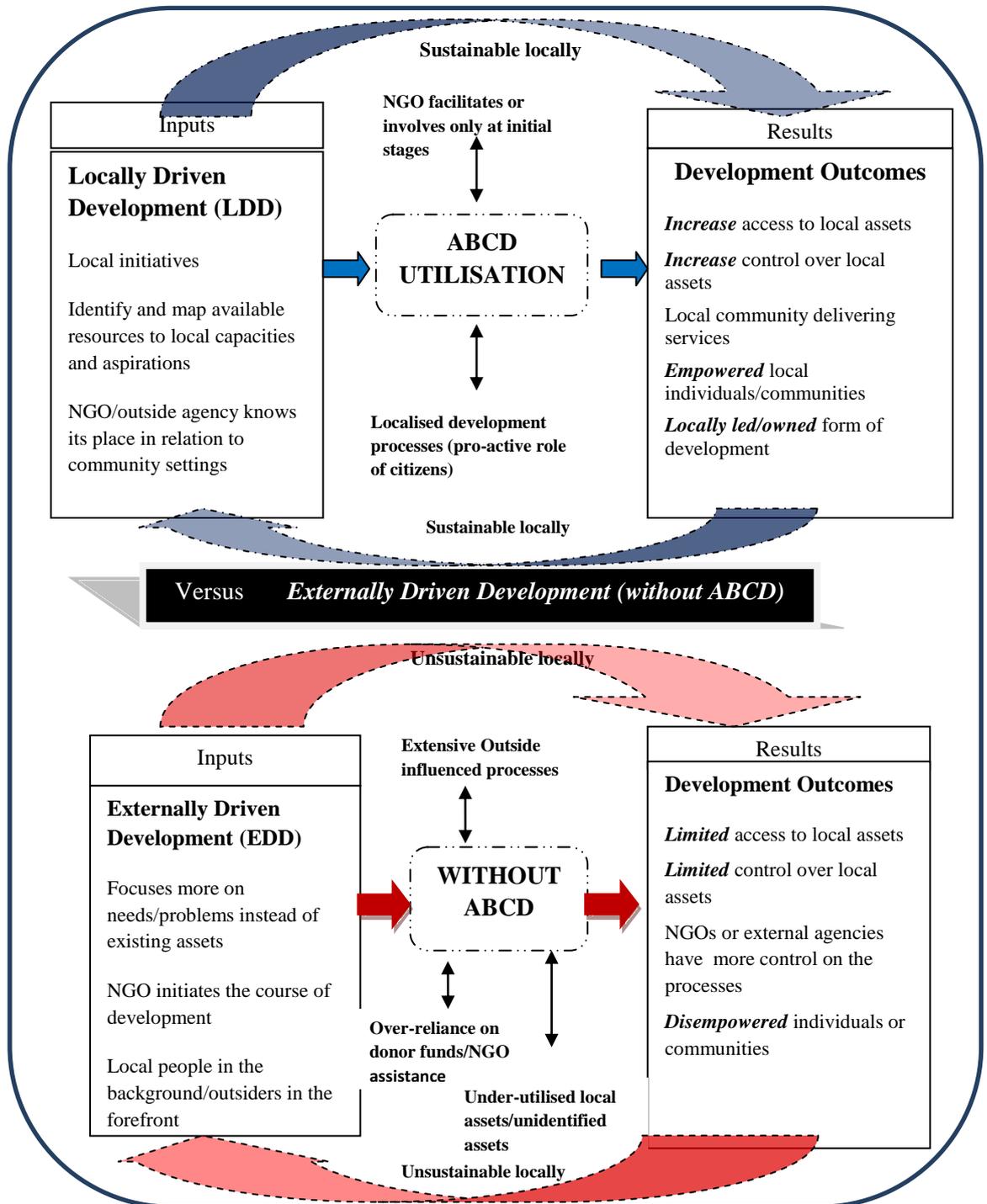


Figure 5: Conceptual Framework: Locally Driven Development vs. Externally Driven Development

Source: Author

3.8 Conclusion

In the course of recognising an alternative means to pursuing community development, this chapter has provided an analysis of the origins, understanding and significance of the ABCD, as an approach to achieve this end. ABCD is predominantly a people-centred approach, which has been established to counter the needs-based model. It is an integral part of the SLA and a relationship-driven approach that exemplifies the value of bottom-up approaches to development. ABCD found its place in the post-development ideas of using a more flexible, cost-effective and innovative approach towards local communities, thus contributing to the element of trust between the developer and those to be developed, in order to sustain collective action. Pioneered by the work of Kretzmann and McKnight in the U.S.A in the late 1990s, it has been widely adopted in other parts of the world. In retrospect, it has also been found that the essence of ABCD can be traced back to thinking in the nineteenth century, with Friedrich's argument relating to building upon local peoples assets.

Emphasising assets, rather than needs, represents a transformation in the way community development practitioners have approached their work, over the past two decades. The history of community development is predicated on the idea that it is possible to build communities by acting collectively, in order to address local needs. Local assets are often overlooked and ignored by local people, as they attempt to improve the quality of their lives and therefore asset-based development involves the process of identifying and mobilising these assets (e.g. asset-mapping), in order to avoid neglect and under-utilisation but also to achieve effective actions. However, it is important not to romanticise the notions of community and collective action, instead pay more attention to failed initiatives and find solutions to counter these failures. This can be undertaken by recognising the inclusive nature of ABCD approaches, thus ensuring that all players undertake their roles accordingly and thereby take advantage of the positive effects delivered by ABCD—that is, a transition from the negative connotations of passivity and dependence of a needs-based model, to the positive language of an asset-based model, as a means to activate and increase access and control of local people over local assets.

Although the asset-based model has been widely adopted and premised by a viable set of principles, there is very scarce research evaluating its effectiveness. Other

criticisms and debatable challenges to ABCD include ignoring of power relationships within communities; it is less conflict-orientated; it fosters an endogenous process and an enabling environment; in addition to lacking influence on macro-level structures which affect local communities. Therefore, the inconsistent results of connecting local initiatives to macro structures (e.g. political, economic, cultural structures) remains a challenge, mainly because ABCD is premised to help local communities survive the current neo-liberal models of Western societies.

Although many communities look to external resources for assistance, it is fundamental that the external agency creates a space for social obligations to be fulfilled. It is argued that technical assistance from outside professionals creates dependency and this works against the idea of building the capacity of local communities. However, ABCD, with its emphasis on social capital, expounds to any development agent the value of inclusive processes and that relationships must be built and strengthened, since they are central to asset-based models. Furthermore, positive change must predominantly be derived from within. In this context, ABCD becomes invaluable, not only for other regions of the world, but also for the Pacific region, since it offers alternatives for developing states in the Pacific region (such as Samoa) to counter the inevitable challenges it faces towards achieving sustainable economic development within local communities.

CHAPTER 4: SAMOA and DEVELOPMENT

O Samoa o le atunu'u ua uma ona tofi (Samoa is an already defined society) (Lay, Murrow, & Meleisea, 2000, p. 15)

4.1 Introduction

Following the discussions in Chapters 2 and 3 in an effort to amalgamate the main themes based on the literature, which have been the failure of the predominant needs-based model, thus giving an impetus for an asset-based approach to community development (ABCD), in order to promote citizen-driven development (especially for developing states). Chapter 4 now presents the local context and development of the country of study, namely Samoa, in light of the ABCD concept and its relevance when assisting local Samoan NGOs, in their efforts to enhance community development that is locally-driven. The following discussions cover the geographical location and demographics of Samoa, *fa'aSamoa* (representing the Samoan way of life), the workforce, the economy and the invaluable natural assets of Samoa.

A general discussion is also provided on the existing work of the local NGOs that are administering Projects 1 and 2, as the selected case studies: Tagiilima Handicrafts Association (THA) and Women In Business Development Inc. (WIBDI), with an explanation of the significance of their involvement in this study.

4.2 Samoa's Geographical Location and Demographics

Samoa is a small island state located in the South Pacific: the first Pacific Island country (PIC) to gain independence in January 1962. Formerly known as Western Samoa, it became the Independent State of Samoa in 1962 and currently it has a population of 180,741 (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008, p. 2). Samoa's population is unequally divided between the two main islands of Upolu (76%) and Savai'i (24%). Upolu Island is the main island, where the nation's capital Apia is located. It has an estimated population of over 130,000, with the estimated population in Savai'i being 40,000 (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

There has been a 35% population increase in the area known as North West Upolu (NWU), which is attributed largely to rural-urban migration. This rural population

flow stems from Savai'i, which is characterised by its more traditional, subsistence-based rural economy. In Upolu, 52% of the population live in the Apia Urban Area (AUA) and NWU, which is the most populated region in Samoa (Thornton, Kerslake, & Binns, 2010, p. 4). The 2006 Census shows that the AUA constituted one quarter of Samoa's population whilst three quarters was comprised of the rural populations (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

4.3 The Local Context

In contemporary Samoa, the people speak one language and they have a cultural tradition, which is relatively consistent across the entire country (Ward & Ashcroft, 1998). Despite previous Western governance, the land, resources and political power still remain at village level in the hands of the *fono* (the village council), the *matai* (head of the extended family) and the *aiga* (the extended family or kin group). Traditionally, each family is headed by a *matai*, each village is governed by the village *fono*, and each district is governed by a district council (Stewart-Withers & O'Brien, 2006; Ye, 2010, p. 830). Samoan culture and tradition continue to exist at a local and national level and it has even transcended geographical boundaries, such as when Samoans migrate overseas (Franco, 1990, p. 171). Hence, social networks still exist and it has a special place in the *fa'aSamoa* (Stewart-Withers & O'Brien, 2006, p. 212). The cultural and social institutions associated with *fa'aSamoa* offer prospects for an approach, such as ABCD, to be further explored and practiced in Samoa.

Even in these current times of modernisation and globalisations, Hennings (2011, p. 8), in his latest study on 'Development Research of Samoa and other Pacific Islands' claims Samoa to be a "society explicitly resistant to acculturation and has potential to develop an economy and a social order very close to nature, a fact which makes the country of prime interest for empirical research analysing development and the transformation of the economy and society from tradition to modernity". As argued by Campbell (2005), local people prefer their own ways through recognition of their own perceptions, feelings and social organisations (Campbell, 2005, p. 68).

However Samoa's vulnerability to natural disasters and other external factors remains a challenge (Government of Samoa, 2010b, p. 15). Nevertheless, the country is internationally touted as one of the most stable economic and well-governed island states in the Pacific Region as it continues to demonstrate a remarkable resilience

against economic shocks and through maintaining a strong hold on its cultural heritage: *fa'aSamoa* as the “invisible resin that thus far is keeping Samoan society intact and its governing systems functional, a fact that has also set it apart from its contemporary Pacific Island neighbours” (SNHDR, 2006, p. 11).

4.3.1 *Fa'aSamoa*

It is important to explain the significance of *fa'aSamoa*, because it has an apparent impact on the relevance and value of the ABCD approach to Samoan society. It is vital to understand the meaning of *fa'aSamoa*, which is centred on enhancing the *aiga* (family), either culturally, socially and/or economically (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004). *Fa'aSamoa* heavily influences the basis of principles, values and beliefs which impact on the behaviour and attitudes of Samoans—and which ultimately influence the decisions made on practices adopted by Samoans (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000), this can be also argued to apply to development. *Fa'aSamoa* is a tool for understanding the world, the relationships between Samoan people, the church, outsiders and the environment (Cahn, 2008, p. 4). Whether it be economic, social, cultural or spiritual, Samoa functions according to *fa'aSamoa*, which is the “manner of the Samoans; according to Samoan custom and tradition” (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996, p. 185). *Fa'aSamoa* means that people understand what is expected of them, as mentioned, *o Samoa o le atunu'u ua uma ona tofi* (Samoa is an already defined society), meaning everyone knows his/her place, and the expectations placed on them and their duties (Stewart-Withers, 2011, p. 173). In alignment with the immanent development process, as discussed in Chapter 2, Samoans are driving their own form of development (Hennings, 2011) and that resistance by Samoan people to fundamental changes to *fa'aSamoa*, remains strong (Cahn, 2008).

Samoa culture and traditions, represented by family, communal ties and the church, play a vital role in facilitating development efforts, since social trust encourages bottom-up development approaches and it can capitalise on the existing organisational strengths, resources, energy and skills of Samoan communities. However, Samoa is certainly not immune to urban and rural development challenges, including increasing urbanisation and unemployment, hence the need to establish stronger rural community realisation of their potential to initiate their own development (Thornton et al., 2010, pp. 14-15). In order to counter these challenges, rural communities in Samoa have a strong traditional governance system as underpinned by cultural values (that is

fa'aSamoa), as the entity of authority that is influential in guiding, regulating and monitoring the control and usage of existing resources within local communities (Cahn, 2002). Cahn (2006) emphasised the importance of understanding the relationship between culture and sustainable livelihoods in Samoa, to ensure that sound judgements are made in relation to development interventions (Cahn, 2006).

4.3.2 The workforce and economy

Samoa's size, remoteness from major global markets and vulnerability to natural disasters, in relation to the impact of climate change, are major constraints to its development. Its small economy is dependent on tourism, agriculture, fisheries, remittances and external development assistance (Government of Samoa, 2010b). Economic growth is driven by commerce, transport, communication and construction sectors (often in association with tourism), with major exports being fresh fish, coconut oil, coconut cream and nonu juice. The main imports are food items, petroleum and manufactured goods (Government of Samoa, 2010b).

In terms of employment despite good economic performances in recent years the employment sector remains weak, with most people working in the informal sector that is comprised of agriculture and fisheries (Government of Samoa, 2010b). Fifty one per cent of the economically active population were in paid employment, according to the 2006 Census (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Thirty two percent of public employment was found in the formal sector, with twenty-two percent working in government jobs, and the other ten percent working in the state-owned enterprise sector. The unemployment rate dropped from five percent in 2001 to one percent in 2006 (male rate slightly higher than female), and those not economically active were 49 percent (SNHDR, 2006, pp. 35-36).

In order to maintain macro-economic stability and economic growth, Samoa has to move forward with its current reforms in the health and education (including vocation training) sectors and it needs to create an environment conducive to private sector investment whilst, at a micro-level, the specific needs of individual village communities must be addressed (Government of Samoa, 2010b, p. 21). These include the creation of an investment-friendly environment; the development of village income-generating activities; and the promotion of small-scale hardship alleviation projects to improve water supplies, health services, transport and communication

(Hennings, 2011; SNDHR, 2006; pp.37; 204). Hence, the development of village income-generating activities for local grassroots communities is where this study can be of significant relevance in terms of contributing to a form of development that is locally-driven.

4.3.3 Poverty in Samoa

In terms of poverty within the Samoan context, Tuilaepa (2006) stated that it can be associated with a lack of household assets and a lack of ability to meet a range of obligations including village, social, cultural, family and church, due to a lack of income earning ability and savings. These poverty issues are again reflected in the findings of this current study, where poverty of opportunity was identified as another contributing factor. This poverty of opportunity is associated with a lack of opportunity for rural people to directly access markets or supportive organisations, or to effectively exercise their rights to access and control their own local assets, with minimal influence from outside agencies such as government or other national or international organisations (AusAID, 2008, p. 7). Poverty of opportunity is also assessed as people being denied access to basic but essential services, including education, health, employment, access to markets and social freedoms (Muagututi'a, 2006, p. 63 as cited in Stewart-Withers, 2011).

Household issues are also corroborated in the 2010 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Progress Report, which states the need to seriously consider the prominent characteristics of these household problems that are emerging in Samoa. A participatory assessment on poverty (carried out in 2002) suggested that hardship, as measured by the Basic Needs Poverty Line (BNPL) (i.e. not being able to meet the basic costs of an acceptable minimum standard of living), is becoming an integral part of daily life at household level. This includes a low level of income generating opportunities, relative to rapid increases in price of goods and services needed by households in Samoa (Government of Samoa, 2010b, p. 15). This could mean that these marginalised groups in Samoa lack the opportunity to advance economically, due to a lack of access to potentially helpful organisations and the inequitable political power relationships that have caused an unequal distribution of economic power, in addition to social and economic benefits, which are usually in the hands of politicians and local elites (Tuilaepa & Nartea, 2002).

4.3.4 Land and sea: Samoa's natural assets

Land is the most valuable natural and physical asset existing within Samoa and it is therefore a significant aspect of *fa'aSamoa* that must be acknowledged and documented. Land tenure is a major factor shaping the form and distribution of settlement and land use in Samoa (Ward & Ashcroft, p. 61). All land vested in Samoa is either customary land¹², public land¹³ or free-hold land¹⁴ (Constitution: Art. 101 as cited in Hennings, 2011, p. 34). Samoa is divided into 11 districts comprised of tracts of land running from the mountains to the sea, with 330 villages each comprised of several extended families (Ye, 2010, p. 830).

Ye (2010) documents the total land area as being 284,898 hectares, with approximately 81 percent being customary land, whilst the area of freehold and public land varies from different sources, ranging from freehold land at four percent and public land at 15 percent, to freehold land at 12 percent and public land at seven percent (Ye, 2010, p. 831). Thus, four fifths of cultivable land in Samoa is excluded from systematic and effective market-economy utilisation (Hennings, 2011, p. 35). The sea is another major natural and environmental asset, which is valuable for the Samoan people. Fishing has made a significant contribution to the subsistence economy of Samoan coastal villages (Ward and Ashcroft, 1998). Samoans, however, are not only engaged in fishing, they have also made use of other resources from the sea to assist them with other forms of primary small-scale economic activities within their own homes and local communities (e.g. using these resources for the making of traditional handicrafts).

4.4 Aid and Prominent Development Approaches in Samoa

Although economically disadvantaged by its small size and its remoteness from the world's industrial and commercial centres, Samoa has many advantages over other developing nations (SNHDR, 2006). Foreign aid is plentiful and the modest size of the country itself makes problems more manageable, thus offering room for Samoa to develop its resources (Government of Samoa, 2010a). In addition, most villages have extensive land to cultivate, there are still fish in the shallow lagoons and deep offshore

¹² "Lands held in accordance with Samoan customs and usage and with the law relating to Samoan customs and usage" (Ye, 2010, p. 831)

¹³ "Public lands are land vested in Samoa that is free from customary title and from any estate in fee simple" (Ye, 2010, p. 831)

¹⁴ "Free-hold land previously called European land are held from the Crown as as an estate in fee simple" (Ye, 2010, p. 831)

waters and above all the Samoan people are highly literate and healthy (Ward & Ashcroft, 1998). However, the local economy suffers from the selling abroad of cheap agricultural commodities and the importing of expensive processed and manufactured goods (Government of Samoa, 1997). There is scarce industry to create new jobs and the pay scale is so low that the departure of qualified people has increased (ESCAP, 2007, p. 9). Furthermore, observers in the past have claimed that Samoa has a reputation for extreme cultural conservatism and (since colonial days) people have blamed its customs for the country's underdevelopment (O'Meara, 1990, p. 7).

Nevertheless, since independence in 1962, Samoa has followed a path of rapid modernisation, funded almost entirely by foreign aid a characteristic of a MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) state (Bertram, 1999, p. 114). As a result, Samoa has found it difficult to sustain its own internally generated development (O'Meara, 1990). According to a recent 2012 evaluation of the Paris Declaration (PD) on Aid Effectiveness, approximately 99 percent of Samoa's Official Development Assistance (ODA) is funded by bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors who are signatories to the Paris Declaration (PD) on Aid Effectiveness (Government of Samoa, 2010a). This evaluation is part of a worldwide evaluation being carried out through the Development Aid Committee of the Office of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD). This evaluation shows that there has been significant changes in the way aid has been delivered in Samoa over the past decade, and that this change has been somewhat strengthened by the Paris Declaration (Government of Samoa, 2010a, p. 3). This report also shows an increased focus on alignment and stronger coordination and harmonisation of donor resources with Samoa's own priorities, through the development of effective processes and mechanisms for managing results. Nevertheless, it will take some time before Samoa can confidently claim that development funds are being utilised effectively for the benefit of all Samoans (Government of Samoa, 2010a).

Official aid has become an essential component in Samoan development: and it is seen in terms of achieving some global development outcomes, for example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Addison et al., 2005, p. 5). However, in spite of this external influence, development at a local level has been hindered. This study focuses on soliciting information about what works best for Samoan

communities, through an exploration of development approaches which focus more on local assets.

Samoa maintains a constructive and positive relationship with its donors. Historically, Australia and New Zealand have been Samoa’s major donors together with Japan, China and the European Union (EU), which have become major donors in the past decade. The country also has a long-standing relationship with several United Nations (UN) agencies. Other donors with significant involvement are multilateral financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and to a lesser extent the European Investment Bank (EIB). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been involved (since the 1980s) with balance of payments and technical assistance for rationalisation of Samoa’s revenue base (Government of Samoa, 2010a, pp. 28-29).

Table 3 presents a summary of the perceived interests and funding contributions of the three donor agencies, NZAID, AusAID and EU, which participated in this current study. For example, AusAID is the largest grant donor, with a more devolved model of decision-making that has been stipulated by the ‘Partnership for Development’ process, whilst NZAID is the only donor offering core funding support to NGOs in Samoa. The EU offers assistance through sector budget support, thus recognising the Samoan government’s capacity to manage public finance. The perceived interests and funding contributions of these international donors in Samoa are summarised in below;

Table 3: The donor agencies involved in the study and their influences on Samoa

Perceived order of influence	Donor	Reasons why they are considered influential	Donor commitments by Sector
1	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of funding, politics, historical relationship. Largest grant donor, strong social ties. On a regular basis they provide the highest level of funding – the relationship has been highly facilitative with few conditions. Support alignment to the Strategy for Development of Samoa (SDS). Australia (similar to NZ) was the initial Programme aid delivery donors. Australia’s influence (similar to NZ) is that it sets conditions/expectations for the Samoa government, as to how the 	Justice, Public Administration, Health, Trade, Community Development, Agriculture, Education, Finance, Sports Development, Multi-sectors <i>(AUD 27.5 million)</i>

		<p>programme aid from Australia and NZ will be delivered: and then the Samoan government can seek assistance for programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AusAID has a more devolved model in relation to its decision making capacity. The Partnership for Development (P4D) process has shifted ground in relation to Government and Development Programme (DP) relationships. 	
2	New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical relationship, strong social ties. • They view the issues and then respond to the ones with which they wish to be associated. • Special relationship and historical ties - systems and policy shifts not adding value to aid relationship. • NGO Support & Core Funding. • More decisions are made at field office level, since representatives are involved in existing Steering groups for PSSF and the tsunami fund for beach bungalow (<i>fale</i>) operators. Decisions on items not included under current guidelines are usually referred back to headquarters for consideration. • The bulk of NZ decision-making still occurs in Wellington. NZ has been a very strong advocate for sector level programming and coordination, with a focus on results. • Political historical relationship - Treaty of Friendship - people and institutional links - level of funding. 	<p>Justice, Public Administration, Health, Trade, Community Development, Education, Private Sector-Tourism, Finance, Sports Development, Multi-sectors</p> <p>(NZ\$20.3 million)</p>
3	EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU sets the agendas and directions, in line with guidelines set down for the larger ACP and then allow Samoa in which area it will assist. • Assistance delivered through sector budget support – EU recognizes the Samoan government’s capacity to handle public finance management • Capacity building • No direct involvement except that it is a known factor, through ongoing Pacific African Caribbean & Pacific Countries (PACP) and the Economic Partnership Agreement (of the European Union) (EPA) negotiations/experience, that once the EU approves funding the responsibility is then placed on the recipient country for utilization. • Politics • Commitment to budget support, volume 	<p>Water, Community Development</p> <p>(€35.4 million)</p>

		of assistance.	
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Source: Government of Samoa, 2010, pp. 32-34 (Aid & Debt Management Division, MOF)

4.5 NGOs: A Bridge for Local Development

The purpose of examining support for rural-based income-generating projects is to help bring into focus the reality that, although some Samoans do not have paid jobs, they are still earning some household income (Cahn, 2008). For example, THA and WIBDI attempt to empower local people within household settings to pursue development for economic benefits, through programmes such as the *Meataulima* (Project 1) and the *Ie-sae* (Project 2). Since the government has a poor physical and capital infrastructure which has further marginalised local people in remote areas, the role of an NGO as a bridge across these gaps, is therefore pronounced (SNHDR, 2006). Additionally, NGOs have also helped in addressing issues, such as village governance and community development in social policies: and they have been incorporated into Samoa's national strategies plan as one of the priority areas (Government of Samoa, 2008, pp. 30-33).

Tuilaepa and Nartea (2002) have attested that the GOS has been blindly following the neo-liberalist path of developed countries, which has resulted in negative consequences for Samoa. This viewpoint exemplifies the need for an asset-based approach to be recognised in Samoa, since it differs markedly from the poverty solutions that have been utilised in developed countries. This type of solution has failed to produce favourable results for people in developing countries, such as Samoa. This is the precise point where current NGO efforts can make the strongest impact, and thus, it is crucial that this study be understood within the context of these particular challenges faced by Samoa, both in the past and today. Consequently, this study specifically examines the role of Samoan NGOs, by using the cases of THA and WIBDI to explore their role, as assistance to the GOS and other stakeholders, during facilitation of Projects 1 and 2.

4.5.1 Significance of the case studies

One significant factor being drawn out of this study involves the males and females, who are involved in Projects 1 and 2: Making Samoan handicrafts/household manufacturing. The males represent a segment of the 52 percent working in the informal sector, as stated in a recent Samoan study by Hennings (2011)–more than the number of males employed within the formal sector. The women involved in making handicrafts represent a segment of the 36 percent of females employed in the informal sector, which is also a significant portion (Hennings, 2011; SNHDR, 2006). These latest statistics serve to highlight the value of exploring an alternative approach, which places more attention on existing local assets.

The latest 2006 Census reflects that overall, close to 50 percent worked for paid work, 23 percent worked to earn their own income and 29 percent were involved in unpaid work, such as assisting in a family plantation, farming, fishing, crafting, weaving, carpentry, or even assisting with a family business without any form of regular pay (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008, p. 32). In comparison to the 2001 Census, a very significant change has been noted in the status of employment, as shown in **Table 4**. Although the proportion of employees has decreased by two percent, the self-employed category has substantially increased by 19 percent, leading to an 18 percent fall in unpaid work in 2006 (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008, p. 32).

Table 4: Employment status in Census 2001 and 2006 (in percentage)

	2001	2006
Employer	1%	1%
Employee	49%	47%
Self-employed	4%	23%
Unpaid work	47%	29%

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2008, p. 32

Thus, this trend shows that Samoan people eventually diverted their efforts from unpaid activities into money-making activities. This trend can be confirmed by the increasing number of people selling their farm produce in town and in rural areas, in addition to fish catches and handicrafts. The 2006 Census figures show that, where

employment by industry is concerned, females dominate informal or home-made manufacturing (27%), and wholesale and trade (10%), whilst males dominate the agricultural sector (43%). These figures again generally reflect that a larger proportion of Samoa's population is working within the informal sector, inclusive of the handicrafts industry.

4.6 Conclusion

Samoa is a small island state in the South Pacific region: the first developing island state to gain independence from colonial rule in 1962. Its population of 180,741 is unequally divided between the two main islands of Upolu (76%) and Savaii (24%). The capital, Apia, is located in Upolu Island. In Upolu, 52% of the population live in the Apia Urban Area (AUA) and North West Upolu (NWU), which is the most populated region in Samoa and where the study site for Project 1 (C4) is situated. The rural population stems from Savai'i, with its more traditional, subsistence-based rural economy and where the study sites for Project 2 (C1, C2 and C3) are situated (see Figure 6). This chapter has also highlighted the trend of Samoans to divert their efforts from unpaid activities into money-making activities, which generally reflects that a larger proportion of Samoans are making a living within household settings, inclusive of the handicrafts industry.

Historically, the Samoan Government has adopted models of economic development that have inevitably permeated into Samoan society, as a consequence of colonisation. Unfortunately the strength of these dominant approaches has placed the Samoan economy into a position where it has become accustomed to financial assistance. Nevertheless, NGOs can assist in the empowerment of local people to pursue development for economic benefits: and there is potential value in the local context of Samoa, since it is predominantly based on *fa'aSamoa*. *Fa'aSamoa* is the invisible resin that keeps the Samoan society intact and its governing systems functional and thus, it has had a major influence on the principles, values and beliefs which impact on the behaviour and attitudes of Samoans — even within development decisions and practices. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that *fa'aSamoa* has an impact on the relevance and value of the ABCD approach, in relation to the Samoan people.

The following chapter details the practical methods used in the fieldwork, in order to assess the work of the selected NGOs in Samoa, in the context of ABCD and its value for the local people.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This study explores an asset-based approach to community development in Samoa. The investigation considers the viewpoints of stakeholders, in terms of NGO support for community development. ABCD is an approach based on the principles of (i) appreciating and mobilising individual and community skills, knowledge and assets (rather than focusing on problems and needs) and, (ii) community-driven development, rather than externally driven development by outside agencies. Recognition of an alternative means of development by the Samoan government in recent years, as per the Samoa Development Strategies Plan (SDS) is an indicator of the significance of further exploration into an alternative way to achieve a form of development that is more culturally appropriate and self-determined.

This chapter discusses the qualitative methodology used in this research. It begins with the research inquiry, and then subsequently details the ontology and epistemological position of the research methodology. Furthermore, it presents the story of the process that was involved in conducting the fieldwork. Finally, the process of data analysis is clarified.

5.2 Research Inquiry

Despite the fact that Samoa has received increased donor support and funding for NGOs to serve communities and civil societies for years, there has been no overall study undertaken on the long-term effects of this aid. This study intends to focus on soliciting information about what works best for Samoan communities, through an exploration of the value of an alternative approach to achieving community development, which is focused on the assets available within these communities. Two locally based NGOs provide the key case studies for this research.

The purpose of this study is to investigate what way(s) NGOs can effectively promote local development using ABCD, with an emphasis on exploring (i) the principles and practices of ABCD that are being used by WIBDI and THA in facilitating the *Meataulima* (handicrafts) Project 1 and *Ie-sae* (finemat) Project 2, and (ii) the extent to which development is being locally driven, in terms of access and control for local

5.2.1 Personal position

I have been working in the NGO sector for five years and I have been involved in NGOs and community development work in Samoa as an employee of SUNGO (The Samoa Umbrella for NGOs) in Samoa, which supports the work of NGOs primarily to enhance development work at local and community levels. I am, therefore, concerned about the form of development that is applied at the grassroots community level, and how NGOs can effectively promote development that is locally driven and owned by the Samoan people.

5.2.2 Ontological perspective

Ontology relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics. In qualitative research the idea of multiple realities is embraced and, hence researchers seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). Therefore, my research thus takes a social constructive (Mertens, 1998) and advocacy position (Creswell, 2007), where the researcher addresses the ‘processes’ of interaction amongst individuals, focusing on the environment in which people live and work, in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. The basic tenet of this worldview is that research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants and the institutions in which they live and work. The issues facing these marginalised groups are of a paramount importance in terms of any study: issues such as oppression, domination, suppression, alienation and hegemony (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). I have also adopted a humanistic approach for this study, as advocated by Plummer (2001), who attests that social science should take humanistic commitment more seriously, since that researchers study the social world from perspective of the interacting individual (Plummer, 2001, p. 1).

The idea of advocacy is a challenge in terms of empowering participants, as argued by Hewitt and Stevens (2005), whereby post-colonial research aims to improve on colonial research by fostering self-determination and cultural affirmation simply through cultural sensitivity and respecting the legitimacy of the knowledge of others (e.g. traditional knowledge and skills) (Hewitt & Stevens, 2005, p. 33). From this philosophical stance, researchers should make clear the reasons for the specific methods selected for a study (Evans & Gruba, 2002, p. 90).

5.2.3 Epistemological position

How a researcher knows what he or she knows is termed epistemology, and because of the inevitable existence of multiple realities, the individuals through researching, seek an understanding of any context within which they live and work (Creswell, 2007, pp. 17-18). The case study approach is 'qualitative', if it is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretive: that is, it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted (Mason, 2002, p. 3). This relates well to the constructive stance, because this study intends to gain some understanding of an alternative approach to development within a complex world of real life experiences, from the viewpoints of those who live it. Thus, the work of THA and WIBDI, in this study, were investigated and based on the interpretations, viewpoints and experiences of the local people and other stakeholders involved in Projects 1 and 2 (within the context of ABCD), primarily to identify ways to effectively promote locally-driven development.

The interpretive approach involves the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through direct detailed observations of people in natural settings, in order to arrive at an understanding and interpretation of how people create and maintain their social world (Neuman, 1997, p. 68). Knowledge is partial and there is no single truth about the world, but instead there are multiple realities which are socially constructed by groups and individuals, therefore, meaning is situational and historically specific. In order to make sense of meaning, context is important (Mason, 2002). True meaning is rarely obvious on the surface, unless a detailed study of the data is undertaken, thus seeking to reach a complete understanding.

This aspect was important, for example, when I was in the field. The initial plan was for me to join WIBDI field workers on their fortnightly site visits to their members (weavers) located in Savai'i. However, instead, I went on my own to meet the women residing in very remote villages in the larger island (Savai'i). This was a more effective method of informally interacting with them without the presence of the NGO staff. This gave me an opportunity to directly observe their natural settings and to relate their surroundings, their viewpoints and their personalities (their humour) to the theme of the study.

Another example is that, during the interviews, I purposely did not explain to the participants (community participants, NGO practitioners and donors) what I meant by “ABCD as an alternative”. I referred to it as another approach to development that is asset-driven with a focus on local resources, such as natural, human, cultural and social. This was deliberate, because I wanted to grasp how the participants would interpret the meaning of an ‘alternative approach’ in relation to themselves. Whilst analysing the data collected, it was interesting to note from the conversations, that the responses varied according to their level of involvement, such as community (village), NGO, and donor levels.

5.3 Qualitative Case Study

As a strategy, case studies are used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individuals, groups, organisations and social, political and related phenomena. Case studies have been a common research strategy used in psychology, sociology, political science, social work and community planning (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2002; Yin, 2003, p. 1). The case study is preferred when investigating contemporary events, because it involves direct observation of the events being studied and interviews with persons involved in these events: thus, its unique strength lies in its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence-based documents, interviews, and observations (Yin, 2003, p. 8). It was appropriate for this particular study to employ a case study strategy, since the study intended to explore and investigate the impact of a non-conventional approach to achieving development in Samoa.

A case study can be a group, an institution, an individual or a large-scale community (Gillham, 2000), whereas this study is investigating two case studies on NGOs. Case study findings can have implications, both for theory development and theory testing (George & Benett, 2005, p. 109). Case studies investigate specific research questions and they seek a range of different evidence, which is available within a case setting. This evidence has to be abstracted and collated, in order to gather the best possible answers to the research questions. No one type or source of evidence is likely to be sufficient on its own. The use of multiple sources of evidence, each with its own strengths and weaknesses, is crucial within case study research. This emphasises the value of gathering and obtaining sufficient data, in order to understand the context and then it is necessary to formulate which theories or explanations are the most viable (Gillham, 2000, p. 2).

One concern with the use of case studies is the lack of rigor within case study research, in that some researchers claim it provides little basis for scientific generalisation. In fact, scientific facts are rarely based on a single experiment: they are usually based on a multiple set of experiments that have replicated the same phenomenon under different conditions (Yin, 2003, p. 10).

Case studies, similar to experiments, are generally linked to theoretical propositions and not to populations or countries. In this sense, the goal is that of ‘generalizing’ and not a ‘particularising’ analysis (Yin, 2003, pp. 10-11). Therefore, a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003, p. 13). With reference to this study, I used the case study method to cover the contextual situation of Samoa that might be pertinent to the use of the ABCD phenomenon as the focus of this research.

The study assesses the implications of the ABCD principles and practices and their impact on local development, particularly through the work of locally-based NGOs (THA and WIBDI). This investigation also places emphasis on the role of these NGOs and the manner in which they operate at community level, with special attention given to local people accessing and controlling local assets. Hence, case study research, as a strategy, is appropriate to use in many situations, in order to contribute to our knowledge of individuals, groups, organisations and social, political, and related phenomena, and it arises out of the need to understand complex social phenomena. It allows a researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Therefore, a qualitative case study design was chosen for this study, thus emphasising that the intention was to conduct an in-depth investigation.

Hence, one of the epistemological issues concerning case study methodology is where to draw the boundaries: that is, what to include and what to exclude; how to define the knowledge that is being pursued; and the composition of the case being studied (Stark & Torrance, 2005, p. 34). In this specific study, the boundaries have been defined as follows: (a) it is conducted on the two main islands of Upolu and Savaii with THA (Project 1) situated in Upolu and WIBDI (Project 2) situated in Savaii; (b) it mainly involves NGOs (THA and WIBDI) and their members, who are involved in weaving/hand crafting; (c) community participation is limited to the women and men

(members of THA and WIBDI) who are involved in Projects 1 and 2; (d) donor participation is limited to NZAID, AusAID and EU; and (e) local development is limited to the factors of NGO work that reflect the principles and practices of the ABCD approach— and the influence of these NGO efforts on local people having access and control over local assets. The setting of these boundaries helps this study to produce a particularly descriptive, inductive and ultimately heuristic set of data, which will illuminate an understanding of the specific issues being investigated (Merriam, 1998, p. 29).

5.4 Methods Used

Conversations with a purpose (Mason, 2002, p. 62).

Qualitative research can include a variety of techniques including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, oral histories and group discussions (Brokington & Sullivan, 2003). This study used two main methods of data collection (i) semi-structured interviews and, (ii) focus groups discussions. The supplementary method was the secondary data collection. Qualitative methods are used to explore the meanings of people's worlds; collect data in natural settings, rather than artificial and constructed contexts; and to generate theories instead of only testing theories (Brokington & Sullivan, 2003).

The main techniques used in case study methodology are observation (both participant and non-participant, depending on the case), semi-structured interviews and document analysis (Burns, 1994, p. 313). This study applies two of these methods: in depth individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGD); and document analysis as a supplementary technique.

5.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The main methods used for data collection were in-depth semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview method was selected because it allows space for interviewer and interviewee to explore other themes, as they arise. Individual interviews were undertaken with the main stakeholders, including the project participants (weavers and handicraft makers), NGO staff and management, selected donor agencies and the Government of Samoa (GOS) representative from the Ministry of Finance, who was later included during the fieldwork.

In-depth interviewing is relevant to this study, because it allows for interactions within the exchanges of dialogue, through one-to-one interactions or in groups (Mason, 2002, p. 62). Mason captures this interaction quite well, as a “conversation with a purpose” (Mason, 2002). This type of interview is relatively informal, in addition to being a thematic and topic-centred approach, where the researcher has a number of themes or issues to cover, or a set of starting points for discussion. Qualitative interviews have a flexible structure, to allow researcher and interviewee(s) to cover any unexpected themes (Mason, 2002, p. 62).

The semi-structured interviews in this study were guided by a set of themes. The two overarching themes were access and control of locals over local assets and the significant role of NGOs in promoting locally-driven development. These themes were then sub-divided into specific areas including (i) local understanding of the ABCD approach, and the value of ABCD to local community development; (ii) the extent of access and control for local people over local assets; (iii) to what extent is development being locally driven (or externally influenced) and (iv) the crucial role of NGOs as facilitators of community development processes. These themes guided the interviews with individuals at project, organisation, donor and government levels. However, it was challenging to draw conclusions from data concerning the role of NGOs to genuinely represent the interests of grassroots people. Most individual interviews with community members were conducted in their homes at their convenience. NGO practitioner interviews were conducted at their offices, and the donors and the government representative were at their offices in town. The interviewees included 17 people as shown in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: Number of Interviewees by Organisation

Interviewees	Code	Organisation/Area	Number of interviewees
THA members (Project 1)	201-205CT	Vaiusu	5
WIBDI members (Project 2)	101-106CW	Sataua, Tufutafaoe, Falealupo	6
NGO practitioner	NGO 2	Apia	1
NGO practitioner	NGO 3	Vaitele-Uta	1
Donors	101-103D	NZAID, EU, AusAID	3
GOS	101	Ministry of Finance: Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP)	1
TOTAL			17

Source: Author

5.4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Conducting a study such as this one, which predominately collects qualitative data, can produce conflicting opinions. Using focus groups was helpful, because it allowed for differing opinions to be further discussed amongst the participants: and it produced a better understanding of what the differences were. This understanding considers the fact that during an individual interview there may be no conflicts of opinion, whilst in a FGD setting, individuals could answer in a certain way, as they listen to each others' responses, for example, some people may want to qualify or modify their viewpoints, or they may want to agree or disagree with something they had not thought of prior to hearing the views of others.

Conflicting opinions, for example, were highlighted during the data collection, where some individuals benefited more than others. For example, one finemat weaver said "Yes, the project is great, beneficial and sustainable even though it is not easy, I am still making some money, I will continue and it is good for the community as a whole". Another weaver said "I was in this programme for many years, and barely broke even, and this is why I am no longer in this programme". In this way, I came to realise the value of the FGD tool for research investigation. The FGD approach was used in this study as an opportunity for participants to probe each other's reasons for holding a certain viewpoint (Bryman, 2001; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). Using focus groups can help resolve the dilemma of summarising and reconciling conflicting opinions. A FGD places the emphasis on a specific, tightly defined topic/s and the focus is upon interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning (Bryman, 2001, p. 337).

According to Kitzinger and Barbour, focus groups are ideal for exploring people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns. This method is particularly useful for allowing participants to generate their own priorities, in their own terms and in their own vocabulary (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p. 5). In general, questionnaires are more suitable for obtaining quantitative information and showing how many people hold a certain (predefined) opinion. Focus groups are better able to explore how viewpoints are constructed and expressed and they are suited to study attitudes and experiences around specific topics, in addition to examining knowledge, ideas, story-

telling, self-presentation and logistic exchanges, within a given cultural context (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999).

In this study, the FGD focused on three main topics that appeared to be significant and important, during the process of collecting the data. Bryman (2001) agrees that FDG brings to the fore issues and topics that are important and which significantly pertain to the specific study. I identified three main topics which needed further discussion, as a result of the individual interviews: (i) ways to enhance ‘access and control’ for local people over their local assets; (ii) translating the ABCD approach into Samoan terms and using methods that would enhance this concept and (iii) ways for NGOs to effectively promote local development using an asset-based approach. I found this discussion very useful, since the participants were able to express the concept of ABCD in a Samoan way (this will be presented in Chapter 7).

I managed to involve FGD participants from the selected communities in Projects 1 and 2. It was a challenge for me to mobilise all of them, because Project 1 participants reside on the main island (Upolu), whilst Project 2 participants reside on Savai’i Island. The FGD intended to have members from THA and WIBDI present, so Project 2 members from Savai’i agreed to join the FDG on Upolu Island. These members were not available for the entire day, because they needed to be at the market selling their products. However, we decided to undertake a whole group discussion (as shown in **Figure 7**, more photos in **Appendix 11**) lasting three hours, but we were mindful that one of the participants (a finemat weaver) was an elderly woman of 73 years. This discussion was very crucial, because it brought up some issues that the researcher had considered important, such as a comparison between the organisational structure of the two NGOs, whereby the WIBDI members commented that THA’s structure appeared to work well in terms of empowering rural communities, compared to WIBDI’s means of operating, which some people felt was not working well for them, at the grassroots level.



Figure 7: THA and WIBDI members participating in the FGD held at THA display Centre (Vaiusu village)

Source: Author

However, it is noted that the potential understanding of the impact of FGD could have been diminished if I (as a researcher), had not been aware of the power relationship issues involved. That is the reason why I altered the initial plan of including NGO staff and donors together with this group of community participants, in the FGD. I had arranged a FGD for the community group only, in order to ascertain their views, especially on the key topics identified and then, I made a point of bringing up these issues when conducting the individual interviews with NGO practitioners and donor agencies. Overall, the focus group session was very helpful and the community participants spoke freely. There were three males and three females present at the meeting, which provided a gender balance.

5.4.3 Document analysis

Document analysis is particularly relevant in this study, in relation to the Strategies for Development Policy of Samoa, evaluation of the Paris Declaration agreement, which highlights how Samoa has met its requirements, in terms of donor support, accountability and ownership of development processes, within the current strategic plans of the NGOs involved. Official documents available and gathered online include: Ministry of Finance documents regarding bi-lateral and multi-aid policies and strategies; Samoa Bureau of Statistics information from the 2006 Census; donor reports and Human Development Reports on Samoa (SNHDR, 2006); and documents

from the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCD) regarding the Village Development Plan project. Unofficial documents were also collected from the NGOs involved.

5.5 Research Procedures

5.5.1 Getting into the field

Whilst in Samoa during Christmas holiday (in 2010), I made initial contact with some of the key potential informants for this study, by building on my past contacts from when I worked with SUNGO. I was able to gain an insight into the specific work of NGOs on ways to improve development at grassroots level, in order to identify some 'best practices', which could be replicated, in order to help promote locally-driven development in some of the grassroots communities—especially the ones affiliated with NGOs such as WIBDI and THA. Prior to my fieldwork this year, I had continued my contact with SUNGO, THA and WIBDI generally via email while I was in New Zealand.

I chose to study one project on Upolu Island and another project on the larger island of Savai'i. This was not my original intention, but I had to change my plans when I realised that all the weavers from the *Ie-sae* project resided in Savai'i, which was ultimately of relevance to the study, in order to ascertain perspectives from participants from the Upolu setting versus the remote village settings of Savai'i.

I had all the relevant documents (information sheets, informed consent, and interview guide) translated into Samoan. I then met with the NGO practitioners to confirm their participants for the interviews, and to obtain print outs of the relevant documents. This was considered the correct channel for me to take, since the participants are members of THA and WIBDI. I also met with the SUNGO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to confirm an interview date/time and here she then advised me to interview the Assistant CEO of the Ministry of Finance as the Government representative. Unfortunately, the ACEO was off-island at the time, so I was unable to meet with her.



Figure 8: Weavers group (*fale lalaga*) in Sataua on Savai'i Island

Source: Author

The *Ie-sae* project involves women residing in very remote communities in Sataua, Tufutafoe and Falelupo (as shown in **Figure 8**, more photos in **Appendix 11**). The *Meataulima* project involves mostly members from the community of Vaiusu, which is located in the urban area of Apia—and yet, they do not have paid jobs and they are doing exactly the same type of activity as the WIBDI, in order to earn a living. The factors that significantly differentiate these two NGOs, in terms of case studies, are the scope of work and the services each one offers; the level of establishment; the number of members; the number of projects initiated and administered; and most importantly, the issue of how each NGO operates and functions. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, THA is more citizen-driven, whilst WIBDI is more influenced by affluent (see Table 17 in Chapter 8). These factors carry significant weight in determining the influence of these NGOs on the access and control of local people over their local assets.

5.5.2 Research assistant

A research assistant (Ms *Faapito Opetaia*) was hired particularly to assist me during the individual interviews with the community members of Projects 1 and 2. The reason is that, since the interviews were conducted in Samoan (and I have a tendency to take notes both in Samoan and English), the research assistant could focus more on taking notes of the interviews only in Samoan. I needed these Samoan notes especially

when I transcribed the interviews in detail, to ensure that the contexts of the viewpoints expressed in Samoan remained unaffected. In fulfilling this task, I needed someone I felt I could trust to help and support me for the purpose of my study, and it needed to be a person who valued the confidentiality and other ethical matters concerning the participants, which was of great importance. The interviews with the community members occurred over three days in Savai'i and two days in Upolu. Another role for this research assistant was to assist me in facilitating the FGD.

My assistant was a person I used to work with within the NGO sector, who has a background in grassroots community development work in Samoa. She has experience in surveying, in addition to conducting rural-based training for villagers around Upolu and Savai'i. Therefore, since that training for her was not required, I was able to concentrate my efforts on arranging interviews with other stakeholders. We held three meetings to discuss her role and our schedule of activities, since she was also working full-time at the time.

5.5.3 The respondents

This study is an investigation into the work of NGOs and the extent to which they influence the access and control of local people over their assets—within the ABCD context. NGO practitioners and their grassroots members involved in the two projects selected were the main respondents. The views, experiences and understanding of the members, in relation to the work of NGOs and the value of an asset-based approach to local development, were the main components of the research. Other stakeholders relevant to the NGO role and the asset-based approach were also interviewed, in order to explore different perspectives and thus verify the data: these included the selected donor agencies and a government representative. Furthermore, key informants were interviewed, in order to clarify the data collected, such as the heads of the NGOs studied, the CEO of SUNGO, and a government representative, in order to enrich the data gathered from the main respondents.

Thus, there were four main participant stakeholder groups: Projects 1 and 2 participants, NGO staff and management and donor agencies (NZAID, AusAID and EU). In Project 1, five members were interviewed. These were board members and regular members of THA, including an advisor to the board. In Project 2, six members were interviewed, in addition to the Executive Director (ED) of WIBDI. The FGD

was only conducted with the community members from Projects 1 and 2, since as it was impossible at that time to conduct one at the organisational level or with donors, due to difficulties in coordinating the timetables of these very busy staff members.

Since the study's aim is to generate in-depth analysis, representation is less important in qualitative research than in quantitative research (Bryman, 2001). In-depth interviews are time-consuming, so it is important to identify a small number of key representatives. The overwhelming strength of a face-to-face interview is the 'richness of the communication'. During the process of interviewing, the researcher has to establish credibility and earn people's trust and this is a challenge in qualitative studies (Gillham, 2000, pp. 61-63). Initially, the NGOs provided a list of members they wished me to interview, but I requested an entire list of project participants so I had a broader range of people from which to select. I purposely wanted women and men to be interviewed, and most of the women selected had their husbands helping them with the project. Selection was also based on how long they had been involved in the project.

In order to respect and secure the rights of respondents, ethical issues were taken into account when conducting this study. The following section highlights the various steps taken and the issues that were considered, in order to protect the rights of all parties involved.

5.5.4 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the fieldwork, I followed an internal department process whereby several ethical issues requiring special attention in the research were raised and clarified. For example, I needed to carefully consider how I could avoid a conflict of interest due to my previous role as an NGO worker and my current role as a student researching NGOs in Samoa. In line with the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct, my research was classified as low risk and the level of potential harm to participants was deemed insignificant. However, I continued to maintain an awareness of all ethical issues that might have arisen during the fieldwork.

My initial approach, whilst in the field, was to provide the participants with information sheets and semi-structured interview guides, before the in-depth interview was conducted. The grassroots participants were provided with information sheets,

semi-structured interview guides, together with consent forms. The participants acknowledged the value of providing them with copies of all these documents in Samoan, prior to the interviews taking place.

I emphasised to the respondents that their participation was voluntary, and confidentiality issues were also explained to each interviewee prior to the interview. It was also explained that only if they approved, would the interviews would be recorded, and photos taken. All community members interviewed agreed to the recording and to the use of their photos for the purpose of this study.

The procedure for conducting the interviews and FGD was carefully explained. I introduced my research assistant and explained her role before the interviews with the grassroots members and during the FGD. I also had to clarify that my research did not relate to my former position as an NGO practitioner, but rather this was my own individual research required for the fulfilment of my Masters thesis requirements: and that I hoped this study can assist in the development of local communities (particularly in Samoa) in the future.

5.5.5 Challenges and values of home-based research

I arrived home at the time for a family funeral, so I was unable to start my fieldwork immediately and therefore, my initial activity plan had to be delayed. I therefore requested for an extension of my fieldwork for another two weeks. The situation is one of the realities of undertaking home-based research, since it is inevitable for us (Samoan researchers) to be caught up with family, and cultural obligations, depending also on the type of *faalavelave* (ceremonial or family obligations), such as the loss of a loved one. It was very difficult for me to readjust back to study mode in such circumstances, which made me realise how much I needed the support of people who I am close to, such as family and trusted friends, who encouraged me to remain strong and focus on my fieldwork.

Thus, being a local researcher has been a major challenge, due to reasons such as being a Samoan researching other Samoans — and being young can also be a hindrance at times, in my own country.

I found that people at ground level were more receptive, compared to some people at the top level of organisations. However, I considered that some top level officials

worked with policy measures that obliged them to concern themselves with researchers, but there was also the issue of availability. Therefore, these were some other challenges that I had to overcome, which I know can be different for foreign researchers when they undertake research in Samoa, since I used to work with some of them in my previous work with SUNGO. These attitudes that emanated from different levels towards my research were somewhat varied. In dealing with this situation, I had to find a way to ensure that I handled people in a correct manner, in order to ensure that my study was well received — and also to be able to obtain the information I needed.

Nevertheless, I felt and experienced the value of conducting a development research in my home-country. One of the key respondents I interviewed stated the need for young Samoan people to further pursue this field of development and to gather sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to work in this area, since she still sees it as being crucial for Samoa — now and the future.

Initially, due to time constraints, my focus was only on the rural communities, NGOs and donor levels. However, whilst in the process of collecting data, I realised the need to also include government level. If I had more time, I would have involved a few more government officials, in order that I could gather various viewpoints from this higher government level, thus offering a ‘big picture’ perception: and how this study could fit into this big picture. In addition, the Strategies for Development of Samoa (SDS) was due to be reviewed at the same time, so it would have been interesting to identify the priorities of the Samoan Government over the next few years and to see how much value is being placed on people-centred or asset-based community development, or even to see if there is an awareness of what comprises asset-based development at this level.

It was extremely difficult for me, as a Samoan, to interview some of these women participants and see the conditions of their homes. These conditions affected me during the process of interacting with these community members, which have been life-changing for me. I found that it was more empowering to ensure that the participation and contribution of these people at grassroots level was valued and recognised, during the process of data collection; and also during policy development. Whatever their level of knowledge, the viewpoint of these people needs to be more valued and

acknowledged. I was told by most of the community members that they wanted to be informed of the findings at the end of the study, which means they are being included throughout the process — and not just as ‘information givers’. I have made plans to fulfil their request upon completion of this thesis.

5.6 Data Analysis

According to Neuman (1997), data analysis in qualitative research is a search for patterns in the data. Once a pattern is identified, it is interpreted in terms of social theory, in relation to the setting in which the data was collected. The qualitative researcher uses these patterns to move from the description of a historical event or social setting to a more general interpretation of its meaning. Data analysis involves examining, sorting, categorising, evaluating, comparing, synthesising and contemplating the coded data.

The process of data analysis in this study began during the field study, since I needed to make transcriptions of each interview, while most of the main issues/information was still fresh in my mind. Transcribing was time-consuming because all the community members’ interviews also had to be translated from Samoan into English. In the case of the FGD, I utilised my research assistant to help me facilitate the discussions, whilst I made notes, because I knew it would be quite difficult to capture all the viewpoints and discussions within the group only via a voice recording.

I spent two months in Apia and returned to New Zealand to continue with the analysis and writing process, which involved transcribing the remaining interviews, reviewing content and highlighting some substantive and significant viewpoints.

The majority of my participants were grassroots members and hence, my interviews were conducted in Samoan, which made the transcriptions more time-consuming. Data reduction involved focusing, simplifying and transforming raw data into a more manageable form. Qualitative data needs to be reduced and transformed, in order to make it more readily accessible and understandable and to draw out the main themes and patterns (Berg, 2007). This was accomplished by summarising the most important and significant aspects of the data and then categorising it into several themes, each in accordance with the theoretical framework and research questions.

At this stage, coding was utilised and based on the themes. I coded the transcribed data into: ABCD principles and practices: the importance of formal and informal associations/networks/extended families; and NGO-capacity building. The second theme on the value of ABCD was identified through local understanding of an asset-based approach; an empowering model; and access and control for local people over local assets

The next step was to classify the main issues that emerged from these specific themes, for data presentation. This involved displaying the results or findings in an informative way, in the form of charts, tables, and diagrams, or carefully thought through arguments (Evans & Gruba, 2002). I presented the data from this study in two main themes with sub-themes under each heading. This classification of information helped me to gauge the main principles and practices of ABCD, simply by reflecting through the works and approaches used by THA and WIBDI, when administering the *Ie-sae* and *Meataulima* projects, in addition to the extent to which the efforts of NGOs influence the access and control for local people over their local assets. Tables and diagrams were used to display a summary assessment of the ABCD principles and practices used by these NGOs: and how access and control for local people is being influenced.

The conclusion and verification were the final stage of analysis, following the data being collected, reduced and displayed informatively. Conclusions drawn from the patterns in the data must be verified, which involves ensuring that all the procedures used have been clearly articulated. For this study, after completing the findings, I identified the various patterns for my discussion. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn and based on the patterns and my analyses of these patterns. To ensure the quality of my conclusions, I consistently verified them with the findings, the patterns and my analyses, together with the methodology used.

In reporting my findings, I have chosen to display my data in its original format (see Chapters 6 and 7), through the use of extensive quotes, in order that readers can grasp the reality it conveys. I have consequently provided some figures, in order to corroborate some of the viewpoints that have been collated.

5.7 Conclusion

This study treats the concept of ABCD as a contemporary phenomenon created by evolved thinking and criticisms of conventional and mainstream development approaches. A case study method was chosen as a means of accessing a deeper understanding of this concept: and it was implemented by investigating the work of two NGOs in promoting locally-driven development in Samoa. A complete understanding of a particular case and its context was preferred, rather than a wider coverage of the overall population. Guided by interpretive and constructive approaches, this study explores the value of an ABCD approach to local development, from the viewpoints, experiences and interpretations of the communities involved in Projects 1 and 2.

This study mainly employed in-depth interviews and a FGD. The individual interviews and the FGD provided rich descriptions of the reality. Document analysis supports the study with secondary data pertaining to the themes of the study. In qualitative research, triangulation can improve the reliability and validity of findings and hence, this research used multiple data sources and a verification of the techniques used, in order to ensure the quality of information collected. The challenges of a home-based research have also been discovered in the field, particularly the inevitable expectations of committing to family and the cultural obligations faced by a local researcher. There are also the challenges of obtaining the support needed from different levels of society, in order that ones' study will prevail. Nevertheless, I have learnt a great deal from the experiences I have had interacting with the participants in this study — and these experiences have been life-changing for me.

Finally, data analysis is completed by seeking patterns in the data and collating them into thematic findings. This process includes data reduction to simplify, focus and transform the data into manageable forms by a coding process. Data is then displayed in an informative way by organising it in the most understandable way. The findings of this study are summarised in table forms as presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 6: ABCD IN ACTION: *IE-SAE* & *MEATAULIMA* PROJECTS

6.1 Introduction

Chapters 2 and 3 have concentrated on developing a conceptual context for the research topic by reviewing the literature on the ABCD concept, and the role of the NGOs concerning community development. This chapter will now firstly, narrow the scope of study from this wider perspective to the more operational context of the specific case studies and the local communities where the study took place. Project 1, refers to the *Meataulima*¹⁵ group, based in Vaiusu village and is run by the THA organisation, whilst Project 2-the *Ie-sae*¹⁶ group is based on Savaii Island, where the weavers reside in the villages of Sataua, Tufutafoe and Falealupo and is run by WIBDI. These projects were deliberately chosen to cover one village-based NGO project on Samoa's main island, Upolu, and one on Samoa's largest island, Savai'i.

Secondly, the chapter presents (in section 6.6) the findings in response to research question 1 which is; "What ABCD principles and practices are utilised by THA and WIBDI in Projects 1 and 2 to enhance local development?"

6.2 Selected NGOs: THA and WIBDI

THA was chosen because of its unique position, in that during my time in Samoa working with the NGO community, it was the only national NGO that was village-based. It was exceptional that NZAID, through the NGO Support Fund Program (NSFP), agreed to fund an NGO that was village-based at the time. THA is one of those associations that emerged from the ground up, a fact confirmed from the findings where one of THA's interviewees was one of the founding members. He described how he and some other villagers of Vaiusu came up with the idea, discussed it among themselves, and were able to 'organise and mobilise' themselves within a village-setting – one of ABCD's primary principles (Cunningham & Mathie, 2002; Hadidy, 2008; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b).

¹⁵ *Fai-meataulima* refers to the group of handicraft producers who are the THA members.

¹⁶ *Ie-sae* is also known as *ie-toga* or *ie-Samoa*, known in English as fine-mat. WIBDI members are involved in the *Ie-sae* Project.

Selecting WIBDI as a second organisation for inclusion in the study enhances the significance of both because these two NGOs, although very similar in terms of the nature of their work, are quite different in their size, ways of operation, scope and scale of the services/projects they undertake and administer. Additionally, WIBDI is better established with more human capital and substantial influence at national, regional and international levels compared to THA. While in the field, I discovered that THA members I interviewed were both regular members as well as board members; they represented both the membership and the organisation as a whole, whereas with WIBDI members I interviewed, all except for one was a board member. This indicated a significant difference of THA's and WIBDI's membership arrangement and structure.

The location of Project 1 (*Meataulima*) in Vaiusu village (C4) is shown in **Figure 9**, whilst Project 2 (*Ie-Sae*) is shown in **Figure 10** represent the villages of Tufutafoe (C1), Falealupo (C2) and Sataua (C3).

6.2.1 Location of the research sites

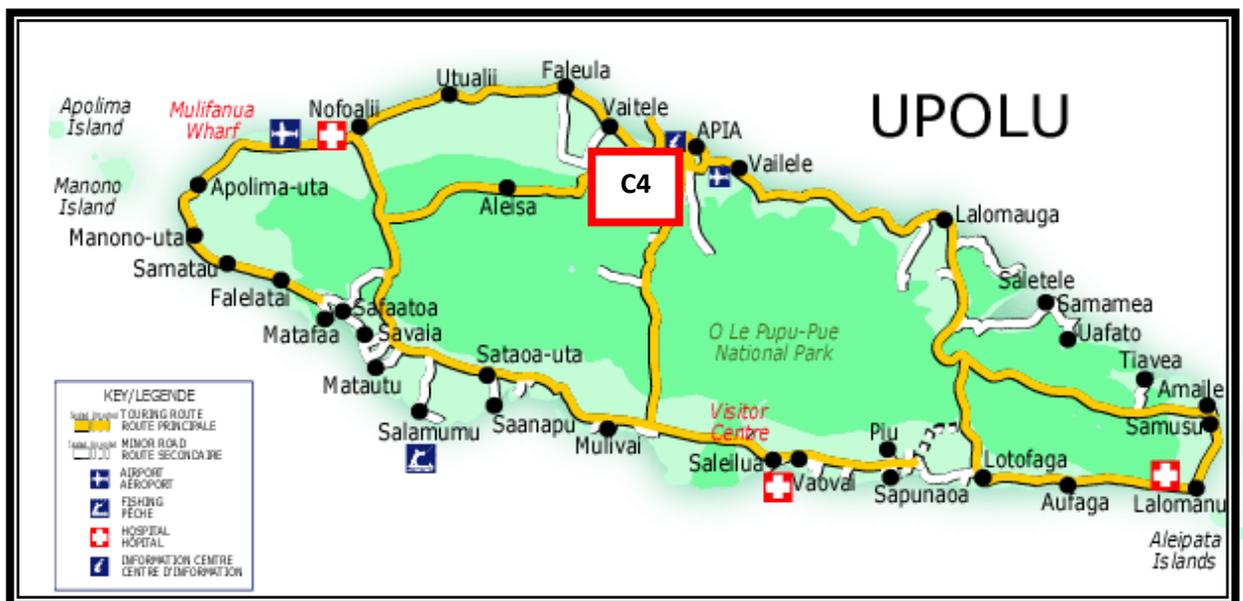


Figure 9: Site 1: THA's Meataulima Project (situated in Vaiusu village on Upolu Island)

Source: <http://www.medicalmissions-samoa.com/worldmap.htm>

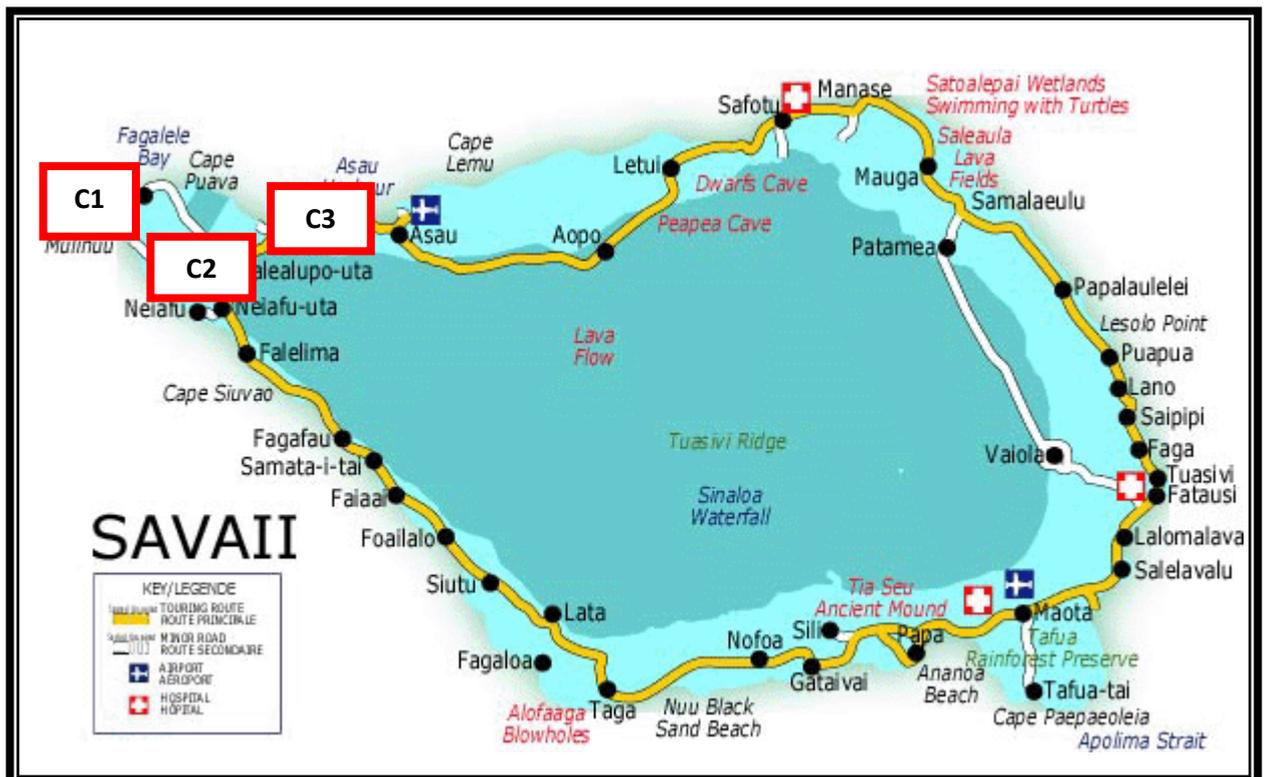


Figure 10: Site 2: The WIBDI *Ie-sae* Project (members from the villages of Sataua, Tufutafoe & Falealupo on Savai'i Island)

Source: <http://www.medicalmissions-samoa.com/worldmap.htm>

6.3 Description of the NGOs

6.3.1 Case 1: *Tagiilima Handicrafts Association (THA)*

Tagiilima is a Samoan expression which in English basically means “to labour with the work of one’s own hands” (THA Strategic Plan, 2009, 2009-2015). THA believes that through their works they are able to contribute toward alleviating poverty within Samoa, initially from within their own homes and villages¹⁷. *Tagiilima Handicrafts Association* was founded in 1995 as an association for local handicraft producers. Its intention was to assist families as an income-generating activity. THA started off with a membership of 25 households and it has gradually grown to an estimated 62 members who are involved in THA’s activities. THA’s Executive Board¹⁸ currently has five members including the President, with three permanent employed staff members whom are based in their main office in Apia. Small units employ any number of members of the same household or from the village, the average size being

¹⁷ Information from THA’s website www.tagiilimahandicrafts.ws

¹⁸ THA’s organisational structure comprised of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, committee members and staff. The President and the board members are voted in on an annual basis during Annual General Meeting.

2-3 people working full time to produce and sell handicrafts (THA Strategic Plan 2009-2015, 2009).

6.3.1.1 THA's Organisational Structure

The association's structure is based on the conventional model for NGOs illustrated in **Figure 11**.

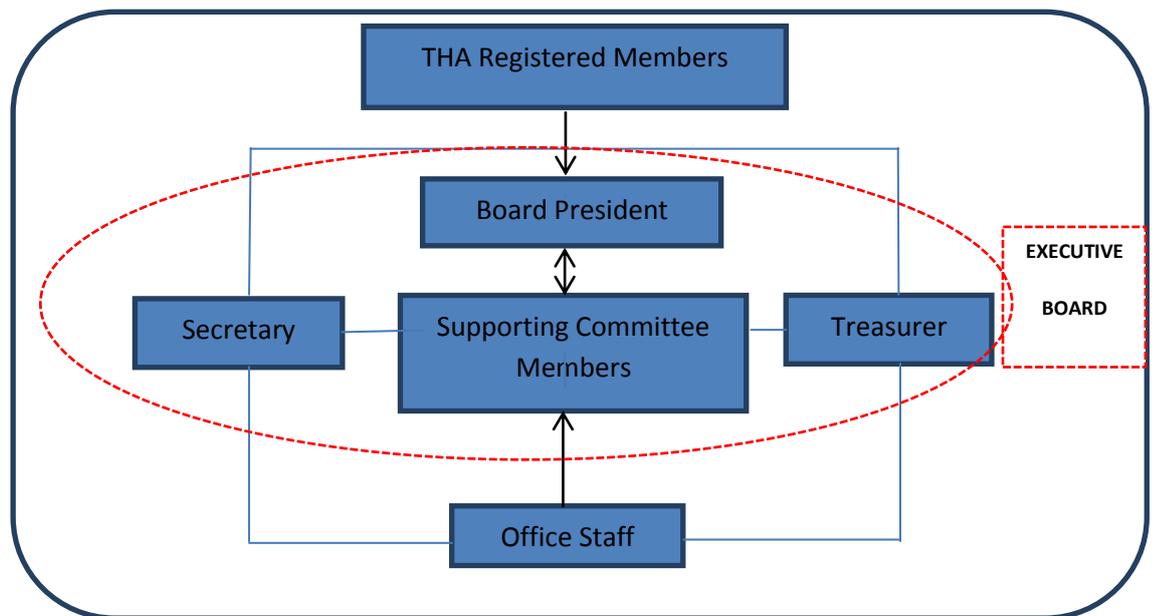


Figure 11: THA Organisational Structure

Source: Author

THA's vision is to become Samoa's leading association for producing and maintaining high quality handicrafts to reduce poverty. Their aim is to promote and sustain the production of top quality goods, whilst enhancing recognition of their products overseas through proper marketing (THA Strategic Plan 2009-2015, 2009, p. 5). THA since its inception has focused more generally on building its membership. Most of its members are local handicraft producers mainly in Vaiusu village which is on the outskirts of Apia. This study examines the approaches used by THA in the execution of this handcrafting project, and the extent to which THA's efforts influence the access and control of its members on existing resources. This assessment takes into account first, the identification of ABCD principles and practices used by THA in pursuing development; and second, the extent to which THA's efforts influence locals' access and control over local assets identified despite the inevitable external influences.

Over the years, THA has managed to build its national network and gain recognition by other national organisations such as the Samoa Association of Manufacturers & Exporters (SAME), the Samoa Umbrella for NGOs (SUNGO) and donors. THA also eventually became recognised at both regional and international level through invitations to attend trade fairs and exhibitions overseas. THA acknowledges that there is a need to seek and access more overseas markets, as the local market is flooded with similar crafts. Hence, domestically, most products are sold at very low prices leaving members with little return on their handicraft investments (THA Strategic Plan 2009-2015, 2009 p. 7). THA depends on the limited resources it can access in the areas of human resources, capital and finances, and natural and cultural assets, to produce their products and to facilitate their operation.



Figure 12: THA's handicrafts produced by their members

Source: <http://www.tagiilimahandicrafts.ws/Market/tabid/5473/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

6.3.2 Case 2: Women in Business Development Inc. (WIBDI)

WIBDI is a well-known and a more established NGO in Samoa. It has been in existence for almost 21 years and is known for becoming successful and demonstrating continuous growth over time, in terms of project initiation and administration. WIBDI was established in 1991 and was the first NGO of its kind in Samoa. The context of Samoan culture and tradition has shaped the development of WIBDI programmes. It is because of the strong family culture in Samoa that WIBDI focuses its programmes on families and not whole village communities or individuals alone. Extended families in Samoa can comprise a community in and of themselves, with anything from a few

members to 100 or more people. WIBDI currently receives funding support through NZAID, Oxfam NZ, the Tindall Foundation and the GOS, and is working toward financial sustainability through developing an export arm (WIBDI Strategic Plan 2011-2015, 2010, p. 4).

WIBDI's vision is for vulnerable families in Samoa to be able to contribute fully to their own development and the development of their community and country through income generation, job creation and participation in the village economy (WIBDI Strategic Plan 2011-2015, 2010 p.12). From small beginnings, WIBDI now serves a client base of well over 1,000 rural Samoan families in 187 villages. WIBDI's projects have been successful to the extent that rural families are now able to add value to their produce through organic and fair trade certification to international standards, and exports of these products are now represented in government statistics (WIBDI Strategic Plan 2011-2015, 2011, pp. 3-4). WIBDI is currently undertaking approximately 10 local projects which include a fine-mat weaving and sponsorship program, a micro-finance scheme and small business training, skills training on handicrafts/printing, organic certification of farms to international standards, virgin coconut oil (VCO) production, fair trade labelling and facilitating exports to international markets.¹⁹

This study examined the works of WIBDI and explored their approaches to executing their projects by focusing on one of their community-based projects, the *Ie-sae* project within the remote villages of Tufutafoe, Sataua and Falealupo located on Savaii Island. These three village communities were identified because women involved in weaving the *Ie-sae* reside within these rural communities. Similar to THA, WIBDI also focuses on poverty alleviation and sustainable development in rural communities. WIBDI was formerly funded under the NZAID Support Fund (NSFP) program while I was working in the NGO sector, and it continues to grow in terms of services and programs. Its activities encourage income-generating opportunities for rural communities, assisting the local people through various community-based projects with the hope of empowering them to achieve development within their rural settings, rather than becoming dependant on external assistance.

¹⁹ See WIBDI's website www.womeninbusiness.ws for more information

6.3.2.1 WIBDI's Organisational Structure

WIBDI's organisational structure²⁰ is similar to most other NGOs, including THA, but it is also more established and has managed to continuously expand its work more than any other local NGO on island. WIBDI has a significantly higher number of staff and members, and local and international affiliations.

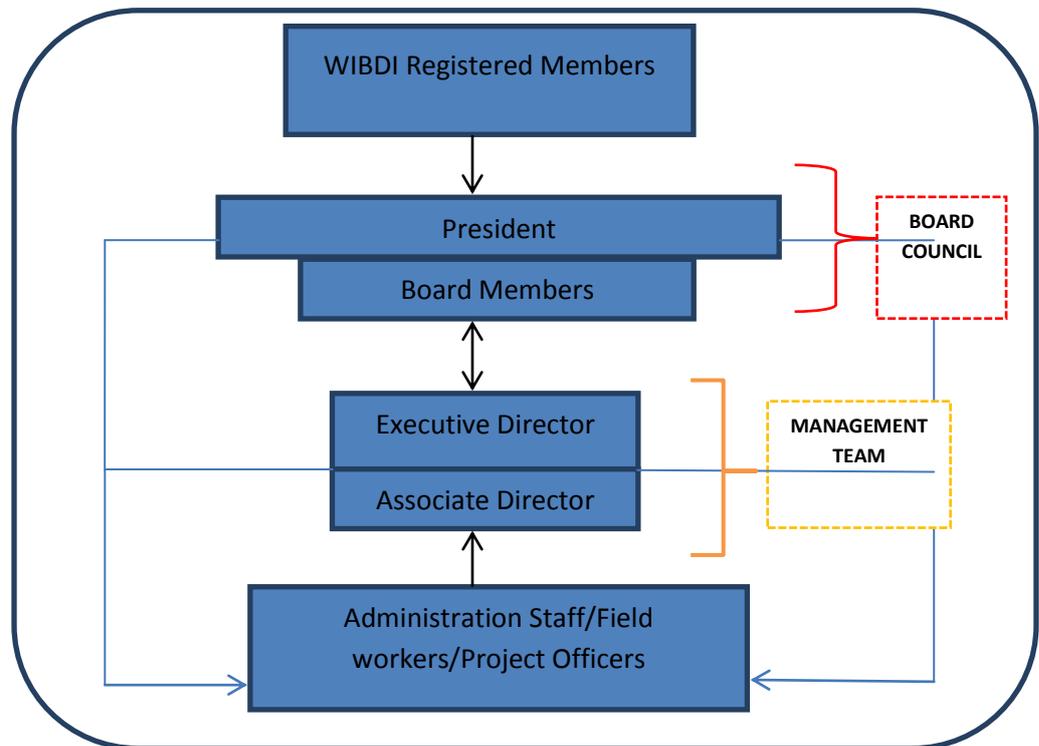


Figure 13: WIBDI Organisational Structure
Source: Author

6.3.3 Comparison of THA and WIBDI as NGOs

Although the nature of their work is similar, these NGOs can still be viewed as the opposite of one another in terms of service delivery, scale/scope of work available to the local communities as well as their operations nationally, regionally and internationally, as summarised in **Table 6**.

²⁰ The organisation itself is made up of the Board of Executive Council, and an Executive Director and Associate Director (as the Management Team) along with staff members (including fieldworkers, project officers, and finance and administration staff).

Table 6: Characteristics of THA and WIBDI compared

Aspects	THA	WIBDI
Membership	62 members (majority in Vaiusu village and other villages of Moamoa, Sinamoga, Samata and Saleaula).	1000 rural based families (in 187 villages).
Board	Mainly community members	More affluent people usually not rural community dwellers.
Scope of coverage	Still building local membership/national network. THA runs a display centre in Vaiusu, and market outlets in Apia and has other local business affiliates.	187 villages (nationally), with regional and international networks/affiliations.
Scale of service/products	Samoan <i>meataulima</i> /carvings/ <i>elei</i> printing	10 local projects in total (including <i>Ie-sae</i> project) e.g. weaving, virgin cococut oil (VCO), organics, micro-finance, disaster management etc.
Management	Office Manager	Executive Director, Associate Director
Staff	3 Employed staff (including; Marketing officer, Administration officer, Cleaner).	About 10 Employed staff members (including; Office administration/finance Officers, Fieldworkers, overseas volunteers, Project officers).
Main office	A newly established small office in Apia since 2009.	Well established office space in Apia and it continues to expand
Influence/Recognition (locally, nationally, internationally)	Local and national influence.	Facilitates local trade, recognised locally, nationally, regionally and exports internationally.
Network	Newly established network nationally.	Larger network which continues to grow.

Source: Author

6.4 Description of the Village-Based Projects

6.4.1 *Meataulima Project 1 (THA)*

THA, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, is the only national NGO in Samoa that operates within a village setting and now has a small office operating in Apia. THA is situated within Vaiusu village which is within the largest district in Samoa, known as Faleata West, with a population of 16,587. It lies within a geographic region that contains 21% of the Apia Urban Area (AUA) as mentioned in Chapter 4, and makes up one-quarter of the Samoa population (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008, p. 22). Its situation is considered urban since it is near Apia, but the community members involved with THA are without paid jobs in the formal sector. Thus, by studying inhabitants of Vaiusu, this research taps into a considerable proportion of Samoa's

population who live in an area considered urban and are making a living from household employment in the informal sector.

According to THA, the “works of one’s hands” include the following handicraft products;

Table 7: THA's list of handicrafts (meataulima) and local raw materials used

Handicraft(s)	Raw material(s) used
Earrings	Coconut and seashells
Bracelets	Coconut and seashells
Hairpins	Seashells, with weaving designs using pandanus leaves (<i>laufala</i>) and coconut sinnet (<i>afa</i>)
Candle holders	Coconut shells (<i>paua</i> shells and <i>afa</i>)
<i>Tuiga</i> for <i>taupou</i> (traditional hairdress/crown worn by Samoan lady)	Coconuts and seashells
Jewellery box	Coconut shells
Handbags	Coconut shells
Ulanifo/necklace	Seashells, coconuts
Buttons, magnets, keyrings, vases, drinking cups	Coconut shells
Picture frames, <i>elei</i> design and other handicrafts	Coconut husks, native wood, tapa designs

Source: Adapted from <http://www.tagiilimahandicrafts.ws/Market/tabid/5473/language/-US>.

THA operates quite differently from WIBDI in that its members identify and access markets directly on their own. The market outlets with which they affiliate include the main market²¹ in Apia, the main market in Savai’i, and other prominent local handicraft businesses and hotels, as well as their overseas market which is the Polynesian Festival in Auckland, New Zealand.

6.4.2 The *Ie-sae* Project 2 (WIBDI)

The *Ie-sae* project is one of WIBDI’s major rural-based projects and involves one of the most valuable traditional handicrafts (*measina*) that identifies Samoa. This project started off in 1995 as an initiative by WIBDI to help the rural women earn some income (Cahn, 2008). WIBDI’s efforts have revived the unique traditional knowledge and skills of weaving *ie-sae*²² or *ie-Samoa* (finemat). The project involves working with village women within the rural communities, and the process of commercialising their work as a product apart from being a ‘*measina a Samoa*’ with its own traditional worth. According to the Executive Director of WIBDI, the *Ie-sae* project has been

²¹ (<http://www.tagiilimahandicrafts.ws/Market/tabid/5473/language/en-US/Default.aspx>)

²² The term *ie-sae* refers to the preparation process of the pandanus material or the finished product also known as *ie-Samoa/ie-toga* or finemats (Kramer, 1994, p, 84).

taken on board by government in collaboration with WIBDI, and the strategies involved e-marketing and contracting with rural women to produce finemats for an urban and migrant market attributing economic value to women's products.

These women weavers dwell in the very remote village communities on Savai'i Island, namely Sataua, Falealupo and Tufutafoe. Savai'i has only 43,000 residents. There is no city on the island, and the closest town is the growing trade centre of Salelologa (O'Meara, 1990, p. 16; Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The village of Sataua is close to the coast in the north-western corner of the island (refer to Figure 10), where most of the female weavers live with their families, and all three villages are relatively close to one another. This *Ie-sae* project involves female weavers who do not have paid jobs have thus taken up household jobs of weaving this traditional Samoan finemat. The women are being paid by WIBDI, and they represent a segment of the 36 percent of females working in the informal sector of Samoa (Hennings, 2011; SNHDR, 2006). If a growing proportion of females in Samoa are taking up household work, again studying an approach that places attention on these local traditional and cultural assets is very relevant to Samoa.



Figure 14: Ie-sae tosi tasi: finest Samoan mat in the process of being woven by one of the *Ie-sae* weavers (from Falealupo village)

Source: Author

Weaving is the most widely practised art form in Samoa, hence many *ie-toga* and other classes of mat are made for export overseas to help families abroad meet their *fa'aSamoa* commitments. WIBDI in the 1990s started this program providing opportunities for Samoan rural-based women who saw that the art of weaving fine, well processed *ie-sae* could be economically beneficial. This was part of WIBDI's aim to empower women in village society and introduce them to the cash economy where they could earn an income. The hope is for this weaving programme to retain the skills of weaving and consequently to promote its value (Kramer, 1994, p. 84), aligning with the principles and practices of ABCD.

6.5 Value of the Case Studies

Fowler (2000) argued that communities have become further weakened by a reliance on outside institutions to solve their problems, and perversely those institutions develop a vested interest in maintaining this dependency. Hence, the call for an approach such as ABCD that integrates much innovative practice and takes its starting point from the existing resources and strengths of the community (Cunningham & Mathie, 2002; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003b, p. 3). The fact that the social and economic services within remote areas (such as health facilities, schools and employment opportunities provided by the government) are inefficient makes village-based projects even more pertinent. This research can contribute to finding better ways to help these rural communities support themselves.

The implication of exploring these projects using the ABCD approach is that a unique perspective can be provided, one that is especially able to take into account the contexts of Samoan culture and traditions that helped shape the development of THA and WIBDI programs. This study will attempt to identify whether WIBDI and THA have been using the principles and practices represented by the ABCD concept.

6.6 ABCD in Action: ABCD Principles and Practices Reflected in the Work of THA and WIBDI

This section presents the first key research findings which will reflect ABCD in action in response to research question one which is; (i) ***“What ABCD principles and practices are utilised by THA and WIBDI in Projects 1 and 2 to enhance local development?”***

The value of the ABCD approach to community development in Samoa was the main subject for investigation in the initial phase of this study. Prior to my fieldwork and whilst in the process of reviewing the existing literature, my curiosity about this unique approach grew. I was determined to find out what Samoan people would think of this concept. Investigation of the ABCD principles and practices reflected in the work of WIBDI and THA have been divided into three main areas considered to be reflecting the ABCD principles and practices for the purpose of this research, namely:

- a. Recognising, identifying and developing local assets and their potential (i.e., human, natural, cultural, spiritual, social, and financial assets)
- b. Connecting local initiatives to external windows of opportunity through formal and informal associations
- c. Building local capacity through NGOs

6.6.1 *Recognizing, identifying and developing existing local assets*

Table 8 presents a summary of the six types of assets and how they are drawn upon in the work of THA and WIBDI. These ideas will be discussed further below.

Table 8: The main existing local assets identified and cultivated through the work of THA and WIBDI

Asset Type	Assets	Asset value and explanation
Natural	Land and sea resources	Natural assets such as those from the land (e.g. plants) and shells from the sea are readily available and free. However, land regulations, according to Samoa's constitution, state that customary land is to be used "according to Samoan custom and usage" (Constitution: Art, p. 101). Customary land is the common property of Samoan families (approximately 81% of land in Samoa is customary land).
Cultural	Traditional skills such as handcrafting, weaving and printing	Upholds Samoan traditional talents, knowledge and skills, and strengthens culture. Use of God-given gifts.
	Traditional leadership system (e.g., <i>matai</i> system/village council)	These systems sustain the traditional governance system and strengthen cultural leadership institutions. This is a traditional and cultural asset to local communities which must be aligned with state and NGO development programmes.
Human	Knowledge	This human asset must be used and developed even further through the transferring of skills and trainings.
	Skills, talents, gifts	These have been found to be of value by the market economy, and are further cultivated by sharing with others.

Financial	Net earnings from proceeds and sponsorship	The main motivation for people to join these income-generating projects was to gain economic benefits (to earn some income).
	Savings	This concept barely exists in Samoa, but local participants have acknowledged they are starting to learn the value of setting some money aside as savings, as promoted by WIBDI.
Social/Institutional	Women's Weavers' Group (<i>Fale-lalaga</i>)	This has proved to be a social asset to the local communities where women weavers work and support one another. They meet once or twice a week at their usual place to weave and to assist one another to meet their orders.
	Village women's group (<i>Komiti a Tina</i>)	Strengthened relations and networks have been realised within the village women's groups. A social asset which gives the opportunity to women to work towards fulfilling and improving on their household duties as well as communal obligations (e.g. gardening, social commitments).
	Village council (<i>Pulega a nu'u ma faipule</i>)	A traditional institution that oversees the affairs of the village. In terms of governance role, this is an institutional asset (also cultural) to the Samoan traditional setting which plays an authoritative role at the village and district levels. Thus integrating into the works of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.
Spiritual	Youth groups	A social as well as a Spiritual asset to be developed and nurtured, as these young people are the future of Samoan communities. Youth groups are usually part of the church institutions in local villages and it is useful to have them engaged in development initiatives. For example, a youth group in Vaiusu received some training from THA on <i>elei</i> printing.
	Church groups	These represent the church institution as well, as an entire congregation within a village community. For example, - THA emerged as an idea from members of the Catholic Congregational Church in Vaiusu village in the 1990s, and is now a national NGO. - Some of the women weavers represent the Catholic church members in the village of Sataua

Source: Author

6.6.1.1 Recognising and identifying local assets: Meataulima Project 1 (THA)

Natural assets

THA members who were interviewed included men and women, who acknowledged that they rely heavily on raw materials from the land and sea to produce their handicrafts (*meataulima*). They reported how they felt the need to utilise the resources from their own natural environment:

We use what we have in our own surroundings, such as the coconut shells (*atigi popo*²³), seashells (*atigi mai le sami*²⁴), and pandanus leaves (*laufala*) for weaving, and our traditional gifts and skills (*tomai ma agava'a faa-le-aganu'u*). The locals refer to these fruits from the land and sea (*fua o le laueleele ma le sami*). (FGD, Group 2, 17 June 2011).

THA is also looking at other new projects that can contribute to protecting our environment, which is one of the assets that is valuable to us. For example, we are planning to collect all used car tyres and use them for gardening around our village. (Interview, 202CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

Social, Cultural and Human assets

As an organisation which operates from within the village setting, THA finds it easy to mobilise its members, with the majority residing within the community of Vaiusu. THA members have regular meetings at their centre in Vaiusu village where they look at issues such as marketing their products, improving the quality of their handicrafts by comparing each other's work and products, and organising themselves in a creative way by sharing skills, knowledge and experiences.

According to one of the craftsmen interviewed, THA is a good example of an organisation that was grown from the ground up:

A group of us gathered and discussed that we needed to establish an organisation that is village-based and focuses on making traditional Samoan handicrafts (*meataulima Samoa*) to further develop professional crafts in Samoa and with the intent of generating income for ourselves. THA's handicrafts include traditional Samoan jewellery like earrings (*tautaliga*), bracelets (*taulima*), necklaces (*ula* or *asoa*), and hand-carvings (*vage*). (Interview, 201CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

From the establishment of THA, I came to recognise how this community of Vaiusu was able to see and identify for themselves the value of the resources that already existed. Over the years, THA has managed to become one of the national NGOs in Samoa. This makes it a significant case to study alongside WIBDI. THA's evolution

²³ *Atigi popo* are coconuts shells.

²⁴ *Atigi mai le sami* are referred to as seashells.

over the years confirms the view of one of the participants that if local people's capacities and capabilities are recognised, they can eventually produce results, with minimum external assistance or influence. This approach can be encouraging and empowering for local people and is supported by many THA community participants whose statements are recorded below:

Of course our people have the skills and capacity to promote community development on their own. They just have to realise this themselves. Money is not even required to start, you only need the skills and raw materials from the land, and some support from your family. People need to be empowered, they have the capacity. (Interview, 201CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

THA has assets, and it is our mission to make use of these assets and continue on in the future. (Interview, 204CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

Our people have the skills and knowledge and our village community support our handicrafts business, because the name of our village – Vaiusu – is made known through our work. Some people of our village are making handicrafts and *elei* printing on their own, without being members of THA, which is fine. (Interview, 204CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

6.6.1.2 *Recognising and identifying local assets: Ie-sae Project 2 (WIBDI)*

Natural and Human assets

The WIBDI members interviewed were women involved in the *Ie-sae* project residing in Sataua, Tufutafoe and Falealupo villages. They agreed also that they rely heavily on raw materials from their natural environment and this was one of the main reasons why they joined this income-generating project in the first place. The support by WIBDI has enabled them to see that there was no need for funding to start weaving, appreciating what they have already, such as the raw materials from the land and sea. The words of these WIBDI clients represent a common view of why one might join this *Ie-sae* Project:

We found out about this project through WIBDI. We learnt that we did not need money to start it off and we only had to depend on our environment for raw materials, and me, my husband and my kids contribute to making the *ie-sae*. (Interview, 101CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

I chose this project because I saw its value and importance, and especially because of the use of our raw materials from our own land and natural environment which means no money needed. So the key requirements were resources from our natural environment and our traditional skills and knowledge as we are still using till now. (Interview, 103CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

These comments suggest that WIBDI programmes have assisted these women to identify natural assets such as local plants (pandanus leaves – *laufala*) from their own backyards, as well as the potential they already possess in the form of traditional gifts, talents and skills (e.g. weaving or *lalaga*) for producing the traditional Samoan *measina*²⁵, which these women refer to as *ie-sae* or *ie-Samoa*.

This view is also shared by a government representative from the Ministry of Finance who was interviewed on behalf of the Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) project stating that:

When we make the call for proposals, these represent the needs and wants of the communities, so they identify the priorities for us to fund, if successful. So if it's applicable, we fund, but if not, it is going to be a problem. So this encourages them to depend on their own resources and not funds. (Interview, 101G, 28 June 2011)

Traditional and Cultural assets

WIBDI was the first organisation to initiate the revival of the traditional weaving skills in Samoa, which has made a very significant contribution to preserving the value and quality of the *ie-sae*:

WIBDI has contributed much in motivating me to be part of this programme and to recognise my skills and the *ie-sae* as assets, and the raw materials that I use to make this *ie*. So we have been sharing this knowledge and these skills with other women in our village, hence developing the capacity and motivating one another. (Interview, 106CW, 15 June 2011, Project 2)

²⁵ *Measina* refers to the traditional Samoan arts and crafts (handicrafts) including the *ie-sae* or *ie-Samoa* or fine-mat, as it is called in English.

For example, according to WIBDI's Executive Director (ED), WIBDI identified the market value of the *ie-sae* when the required quality was achieved. This factor triggered the instigation of this project from the ground up, targeted at reviving the traditional knowledge and skill of weaving or *lalaga*. To spearhead the project strategically, WIBDI staff had to take the weaving workshop themselves first. They brought in an elderly woman from Manono (a remote community) who was very skilled in making the *ie-sae*. After learning the skill themselves, WIBDI staff took her around the villages to introduce the project and show other members how to make the *ie-sae*. In Samoa, *ie-sae* weaving is a traditional skill acquired by only a few and it was in decline prior to initiation of the *Ie-sae* project. This significant cultural contribution was made by WIBDI starting when this project was first initiated in the 1990s, and the programme is still operating today. Some of the women interviewed for this research verified WIBDI's efforts when they said:

The role played by WIBDI is significant in assisting the weavers in this project because it helps us access and utilize the available resources. (Interview, 101 CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

WIBDI contributes much through offering advice and guidance for us, encouraging us to use what we have on our lands, for example the pandanus leaves for weaving finemat, as well as how to plant and cultivate them. (Interview, 102CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

I agree simply because this has been my constant advice to my children, [to use that] "treasure in, on, and buried in our land" ("*o le oa o loo i tatou laufanua*") within our own environment. Dependence on overseas help will end someday, but to realise the value and the worth of what we have already within reach will last a lifetime, meaning more sustainable than depending on outside assistance. (Interview, 104CW, 11 June 2011, Project 2)

This traditional skill identified and used in weaving the *ie-sae* has been passed on to me by my mother, and I have passed it on to my children as well, so this project has revived the value of the *ie-sae*. (Interview, 104CW, 10 June 2011, Project 2)

One of the weavers even shared a profound expression (in Samoan) of the significance of her work and involvement in this project through WIBDI's assistance, by stating that:

O le lalagaina o le ie-Samoa, o se pine faamau o le faaaogaina ai o la'u fanau.

Being able to weave this real quality work of art (the Samoan *ie-sae*) and being part of this project from then until this day, is historic for me for it enabled me to put my children through school. (Interview, 106CW, 15 June 2011, Project 2)

Financial assets

WIBDI has also assisted these women in identifying the market value for their product (*ie-sae*) and this was one of the main reasons for joining this income-generating project, according to their comments:

Even though I did not know how to weave the *ie-sae* at the time, I was keen to learn because it was good money to help us with the development of our family. (Interview, 105CW, 11 June 2011, Project 2)

Because of the market value for this product that we learnt from WIBDI, and also because we did not need money to start it off, when we got into initial contact with WIBDI's staff and field workers we learnt that it was a quick way to make money and I felt motivated to join this project. (Interview, 102CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

I joined this project since 1998, started off with the *ie-malo* (*lesser-quality finemat*), and WIBDI introduced us to the *ie-sae* (*finemat of finest quality*) which I chose because of its market value and I could earn more money from it than the *ie-malo*. (Interview, 105CW, 11 June 2011, Project 2)

Cultural/Institutional assets

Furthermore, one of the donor agencies responded with a stronger emphasis on "change that is derived, owned and led locally", not undermining the role of NGOs but highlighting some of the existing institutional assets within Samoan village settings that NGOs should recognise in the course of their work:

Women in Business have a strong community/family development model going. Samoa has a very intact traditional civil society, traditional political structure that the villages have at family level. These are development agents as well but they depend very much on the quality of leadership. It is an intact functioning model and in some ways it has got more legitimacy than NGOs do in its own sphere, because it is owned by the people. I think NGOs have to work out their position of how they relate to traditional structures in the village, because those are one of the assets of the village itself, and they are legitimate and they are a power structure that is owned by the people and that serves the people. So that is an important dynamic that NGOs have to work on, but I think Women in Business do that. Thus, I think that a transformational change depends very much on the role of the *fono*²⁶, more so than on NGOs. NGOs can be agents for change but that change has to be owned and led locally, coming from the village. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

Based on this data, the overall working strategies of both WIBDI and THA were therefore determined to be primarily asset-driven. The key finding here is that the overall work and approaches used by THA and WIBDI reflect one of the prominent principles of the ABCD concept, namely recognising, identifying and building on existing local assets, mobilising and motivating local people to take action. THA and WIBDI have assisted their members and local communities by looking for and focusing on that which exists within the local environment, traditional skills that can be acquired and the potential for local development. These assets are summarised in Table 8 above, with brief explanations of why they are important based on the findings.

6.6.2 Connecting local initiatives to external windows of opportunity through formal and informal associations

Table 9 below show an inventory of the existing local associations in Project 1, whilst **Table 10** presents an inventory of existing local associations in Project 2 drawn from the findings. The formal and informal associations (including local, national, regional/international) are discussed further throughout this section.

²⁶ *Fono*: refers to the village council which is characterised as the traditional governance system existing within traditional village setting in Samoan communities.

Table 9: Existing local associations within the community setting- Project 1

Groups/associations in Vaiusu village	Activities	Nature of association/organisation
Tagiilima Handicrafts Association (THA) in Vaiusu. Project 1 in this study	Community-based organisation now a formally established national NGO in Samoa, with a main office situated in Apia, and a display outlet situated in Vaiusu village. It focuses on making professional Samoan crafts with the intent to reap some form of economic benefit from the sale of these traditional handicrafts.	Community-based and a national NGO in Samoa with a membership based on production of traditional Samoan handicrafts
Family (<i>aiga</i>) or household	Most THA members have their families involved in making handicrafts	Cultural/Social
Church	Most or all of THA members attend the Catholic church in Vaiusu	Spiritual/Institutional
Catholic Youth Group	The Youth Groups are involved with the main church in Vaiusu village which is a Catholic congregation. They engage themselves with some of the trainings offered by THA on <i>elei</i> printing. Sometimes they seek these opportunities to learn new skills for fun, and other times to make some money.	Religious/Social/Spiritual/Economic
<i>Komiti-o-Tina</i> (Women's Committee)	Most of the women members of THA are also engaged with Women's Committee activities such as church activities, fundraising activities for their church or to meet communal obligations as mothers of the community.	Cultural/Social
Village <i>fono</i> (village council)	Some of the men interviewed are <i>matai</i> title holders, and play a significant part in the governance level affairs of the village community and within their households.	Cultural/Institutional

Source: Author

Table 10: Existing local associations within the community setting-Project 2

Groups/associations in the selected communities	Activities	Nature of association
<i>Ie-sae</i> weaving group (<i>Fale-lalaga</i>) Project 2 in this study	An organization for village women who are members of WIBDI's finemat or <i>Ie-sae</i> project, organised and coordinated by the women within the villages of Sataua, Falealupo or Tufutafoe.	Social/Economic/Cultural
<i>Komiti-o-Tina</i> (Village Women's Committee)	Members organise village activities such as regular home inspections, carried out to check that each household has decent home appliances and furnishings (such as cooking utensils, sleeping mats, finemats) and clean homes.	Cultural/Social
<i>Aiga-potopoto</i> (extended family)	Some members of the extended family are involved in the process of making the <i>ie-sae</i> (e.g., the husbands of these women and their children would help out with planting the <i>laufala</i> (pandanus), and processing the <i>laufala</i> for use in weaving the fine-mat.	Cultural/Social
Church Institution	The church is a prevalent institution in Samoan communities.	Spiritual/Institutional Denominational
Village <i>Fono</i> (village council)	An entity of authority providing leadership role in village and communal settings in Samoa.	Cultural/Institutional governance system

Source: Author

6.6.2.1 *Local and National affiliations*

THA members reported the importance of local and national affiliations as important factors giving them the opportunity not only to learn new skills and knowledge, but also to improve on existing skills by learning from one another as an association. In the comments of some of these THA handicraft producers, emphasis can be found on affiliations with other key stakeholders such as SUNGO. For example, one participant commented:

This project helped in improving my designing and creativity skills to improve the quality of my handicrafts. At the same time, as a member of THA I have gotten the opportunity to access training opportunities through the in-country training programme (ICTP) run by the national umbrella of NGOs. Here we learnt more on other areas such as financial management, NGO governance and other courses. (Interview, 205CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

At the national level, WIBDI also plays a significant part, not only in advising, guiding and marketing for their members, but also in advocating for rural-based clients as well. As the Executive Director explained:

WIBDI sits as a representative of their members at national Steering Committees, including the *ie-toga* Steering Committee, and the Organic Farming Steering Committee along with some government ministries. (Interview, 101W, 22 June 2011, ED: NGO 2)

6.6.2.2 *NGO Intermediary role with other stakeholders*

The NGOs also play an important mediating role, allowing citizens (Samoans) to access and make necessary connections with government, donors and market organisations. This is critical in bridging the gaps that exist between communities and the GOS, and communities and donors. NGOs represent the connection between these entities and across the gaps.

However, in the views of some of the women interviewed, it seems the interests of rural communities are not being explicitly represented. This perspective is heard in the comments expressed by the following participants as they discussed the role Samoan NGOs ought to play:

Our interests are not prioritised, especially when it comes to financial benefits. Things become vague when it comes to finance. WIBDI keeps our bank books and we do not earn any interest, nor can we borrow and sometimes we do not know exactly why, but they keep all our money in WIBDI's account. (Interview, 105CW, 11 June 2011, Project 2)

It seems that the interests of rural communities, in my own view, are not being explicitly represented by these NGOs. Some of these women and I voice our concerns at times – especially me because I feel for these women. The WIBDI staff come and they cannot do what we do (weaving this *ie-sae*). I want to weave and sell my own *ie-sae* but not through WIBDI, and this is why I am no longer a member of WIBDI. (Interview, 104CW, 10 June 2011, Project 2)

Another NGO practitioner representing the umbrella body for NGOs in Samoa concurred with these concerns of the community whilst expressing her own opinions on the way the NGO operates. At times, she questioned the genuineness of the motives those working for NGOs:

If our agenda is to make money, that is not fair trading. We have to be genuinely not-for-profit making and offer more assistance that is empowering for local communities. (Interview, 101S, 22 June 2011, NGO 3)

Nevertheless, the majority of the participants still commended the work done by WIBDI, as expressed in these more positive views:

This *Ie-sae* project has provided opportunities for me to learn how to weave and to improve my skills. WIBDI also helps in marketing our skills through our products that are sold to sponsors, especially outside of Samoa. So their role motivates us to continue working. (Interview, 101CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

We share with WIBDI some of our wants and needs, such as increasing the money we get from these *ie'saes*. So WIBDI continues to seek sponsors for us which I find is important and I need this help. (Interview, 103CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

In addition, the NGOs also have a crucial role as the voice of the communities, connecting them with national consultations, as revealed in this comment by an NGO practitioner:

We are their voice; for example, our farmers who are referred to as private sector members do not sit in the meetings of the private sector at national level, so WIBDI sits in as their voice, and keeps them updated on issues and progress. (Interview, 101W, 22 June 2011, ED: NGO2).

Moreover, a community member acknowledged that the assistance offered by outside entities (such as other NGO partners, government or donor(s)) is an advantage in the establishment and maintenance of important relationships:

So yes, my feeling is that the assistance or influence (*aia*²⁷) from outside organizations is important this can also secure or solidify our working relationship with these partners to ensure continuity of support. (Interview, 205CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

Figure 15 offers an overall picture based on the views expressed by participants concerning the intermediary role generally played by these NGOs in Samoa. Thus, it illustrates the channel of the mediation process that is generally undertaken between stakeholders. The diagram shows NGOs bridging the gaps between these actors including community and across the levels of government, donor and the market.

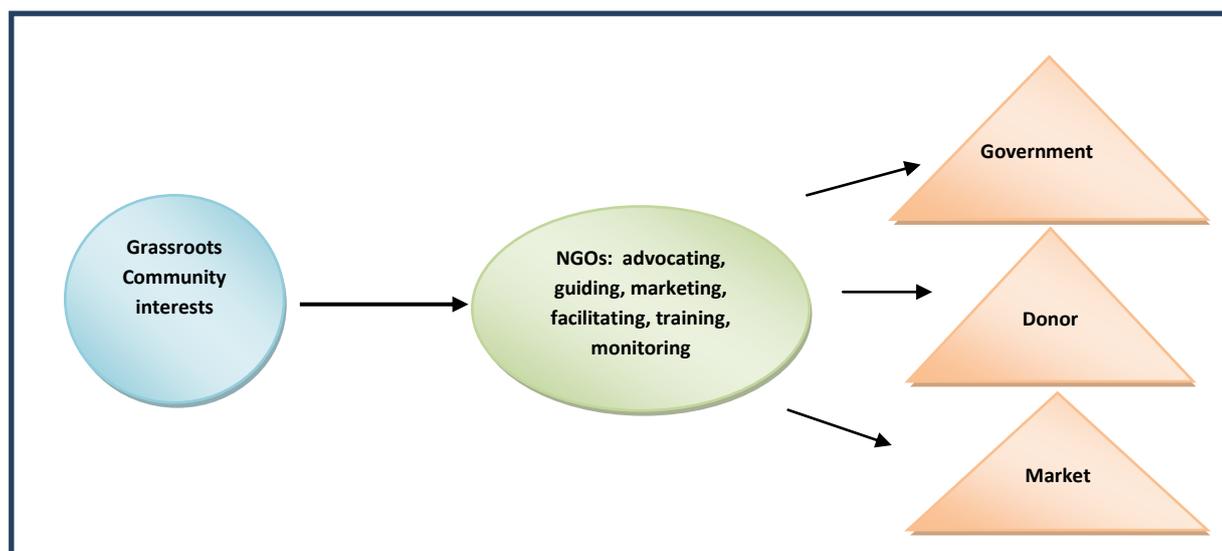


Figure 15: The NGO bridging role across the key levels
Source: Author

²⁷ Influence or interference by an outside party.

Relationship with Government

Furthermore, some of these participants highlighted that working with the NGOs has also led to the opportunity for them to work with government ministries. This opportunity is an asset which they must also value:

Gives us the opportunity to work together with government through the Ministry of Women and Community Development (MWCD). (Interview, 202CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

This assistance offered to us by WIBDI has given us the chance to work with our government. (Interview, 106CW, 15 June 2011, Project 2).

We have actually worked together with the government as well through WIBDI, because our efforts and products are now recognised by the government and so they sponsor some of our *ie'saes* as well. We feel like we are working for WIBDI and earning our pay weekly like what the government does. (Interview, 106CW, 15 June 2011, Project 2)

Therefore, the role of WIBDI as a voice for people remains prevalent. This was clearly the case during the early phase of the *ie-toga* project. An NGO practitioner discussed how recognition of their work by the GOS was an opportunity for growth in their efforts:

This *ie-toga* project started in 1995, and then in 2002 WIBDI wrote letters to the Samoa Government through the Ministry of Women (MWCD/Youth/Culture Division) and finally we got interest from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and we kept on pushing for recognition. We kept advocating until finally we copied a letter to the Prime Minister including all other Ministers of Cabinet. Interestingly, this was followed by a speech by the Prime Minister whereby our letter was entirely mentioned in his speech which was to us an achievement, to finally receive such recognition and support from the PM himself. (Interview, 101W, 22 June 2011, NGO 2)

Recognition of Village leadership

To establish effective connections between those in the community and outside, there is a need for quality leadership. This makes the role of the NGOs even more crucial, especially if there is no one from within the community with the capacity and

competence to take up this position. However, from a donor's perspective, there is value in cultivating leadership from within the village setting. This was expressed by one of the donor agencies who is actively engaged with NGO work in Samoa:

In the village of Poutasi, we have someone like Ioane Samoa²⁸ who brings in lots of ideas to help develop rural communities. He is not an NGO member, but he is an individual and is part of the village with suitable qualities and he is playing that kind of 'change agent' role. And that leadership role is quite important, where it comes from is not so important as the quality of it. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

Family (aiga) and communal relations strengthened

Other respondents stated how being part of the *Ie-sae* project has strengthened family and community ties:

Being involved in this project has strengthened family ties with everyone playing a role in producing this *measina* or *ie-sae*. (Interview, 106CW, 15 June 2011, Project 2)

We have our women's *fale lalaga* every week on Wednesday here in my home where we can all weave together. (Interview, 106CW, 09 June 2011, project 2)

My husband whom I used to work together with on making our handicrafts has passed away, so now my eldest son is assisting me a lot on this project and I prefer this rather than working for someone else. (Interview, 206CT, 16 June 2011, Project 1)

Family-oriented and Community-led NGO strategies

The GOS has taken up the *Ie-sae* project in collaboration with WIBDI in facilitating this programme for rural women nationwide. Assisting these rural women to make money through the use of their traditional skills and the gift for making valuable works of art offers significant economic opportunities for women, their families and the wider community. Because Samoans have been used to living on a subsistence basis for decades, assistance to move beyond subsistence to income earning is important. Hence, WIBDI helps transform communities in line with national development goals,

²⁸ For confidentially purposes the real name is not used in this quote

by generating income which brings foreign exchange to the country. The significance of family-oriented NGO strategy is clearly conveyed by this NGO practitioner:

For us to find what works best for the communities in Samoa, and we have a different aim which is more income generation-driven. Hence, it is difficult to generate income at the community level. So we have to look into the existing assets, and make sure they use these assets and we learn a lot as we go along by primarily focusing on families first. (Interview, 101W, ED, 22 June 2011, NGO 2)

Another NGO practitioner by contrast, supports the important role of the NGO, but also emphasised the significance of initiatives that are ‘community-driven’:

The role of NGOs is important, and at a different level. They should only come at the initial stage in terms of organizing the groups in terms of market and market earning, but the grassroots people should run the programs themselves - at the community level. (Interview, 101S, 22 June 2011, NGO 3)

6.6.2.3 Regional/international connections

WIBDI on the other hand has extended its works beyond national boundaries as a means of cultivating regional and international connections. WIBDI works not only with local people at the community level, but also with neighbouring island states within the Pacific region. For example, according to WIBDI’s Executive Director, they have a regional programme which supports and trains locally based NGOs in other Pacific Island states:

WIBDI has a regional programme, a big programme carried out in Tonga, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Vanuatu. It assists by sharing experience and skills in order to achieve development at the national level within these islands. We share with them what we learned in Samoa. This programme is funded by the Oxfam and Canada funds, and FAO also assists financially to carry out this programme in the Cook Islands. This is done to ensure that no one is reinventing the wheel. (Interview, Executive Director, 22 June 2011, NGO 2).

6.6.3 The NGOs and local capacity building

6.6.3.1 NGO help and transfer of local capacities

A few participants agreed that there is capacity within local communities when it comes to driving development independently and without NGO assistance. Most participants commented that although the local people possess the requisite traditional skills, it is unlikely they would have seen these as marketable without NGO assistance. Examples of this dynamic include THA's establishment from the ground up, starting with a group of villagers in Vaiusu. As expressed by some of the community members from Projects 1 and 2:

As one of the founders of THA, I can recall the initial intention was to establish an organisation that would make our village known – Vaiusu. Sort of like a marketing strategy that will make Vaiusu known nationally as good in making traditional Samoan handicrafts. (Interview, 201CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

This role by the NGO has improved access to other opportunities for us members in terms of capacity building through taking part in the in-country training programme we take part in as SUNGO members, and small business trainings by the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC). So from here we are learning new skills and knowledge in other areas such as proposal writing, financial management and others. (Interview, 202CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

Another example is WIBDI's workshops on weaving the *ie-sae*, allowing some of the women to train others and paying them as trainers. The awareness work of WIBDI in introducing their clients to their income-generating *Ie-sae* project has been seen as valuable and marketable, as demonstrated by the words of this local weaver who is also a trainer from Project 2:

WIBDI has helped me in so many ways. Through their assistance, I have learnt how to weave the *ie-sae* through their workshop when I first entered. Then it gave me the chance to train other women in my village and other neighbouring villages, and I get paid from it. So now I am the leading weaver for our weavers group (*fale lalaga*) which is organised once every week. Our weaving group at Falealupo is made up of nine women weavers, and we are all working

together with WIBDI. WIBDI pays me weekly for weaving. (Interview, 106CW, 15 June 2011, Project 2)

Significant changes have taken place through this project from WIBDI's assistance. By weaving the *ie-sae* I have managed to make some money which I could not make before; I can now afford home furniture, and contribute to church and village obligations. But especially, I can pay for my children's school fees. (Interview, 106CW, 15 June 2011, Project 2).

THA members shared similar views:

We help our village members in terms of trainings and workshops by sharing our traditional skills in *elei* printing and making handicrafts. These trainings are also open to anyone else from outside of the community. (Interview, 202CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

The NGO's role is very important. Here in Vaiusu we offer trainings to our church youth group and Sunday School group, and for the pastors' wives. We did *elei* (local printing) workshops for them, and so now they are making money from printing *eleis* for other people. (Interview, 201CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

6.6.3.2 Citizen capacity utilized (THA: a citizen-driven idea)

THA offers similar help and support to their members. It started as an idea derived from the village people of Vaiusu, a citizen-driven idea that over time eventually evolved into an organisation. At the time of THA's inception, the villagers considered themselves to be less fortunate because they did not have jobs that paid well; as a result, they resorted to this vocation. According to their own accounts, they were able to recognise their gifts, talents and skills in the making traditional crafts and this gave them the idea of organising and mobilising themselves as an association, initially from among their Catholic community in Vaiusu, with a specific focus on professional Samoan crafting. Their initial membership of 25 has grown to an estimated current membership of 62. As expressed strongly by one THA member:

Of course our people have the skills and capacity to promote community development on their own. (Interview, 201CT, Project 1, 15 June 2011)

Our people have the capacity. Like in this village Vaiusu, we offer workshops on *elei* (Samoan printing designs) printing for example, to other members of the community even if they are not a member of THA. We value sharing our skills with others. (Interview, 203CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

Local capacity under-utilized

Conversely, responses from other community members were more pessimistic about the potential for local capacity:

There is capacity, but some people do not realise the value of these as assets to them, and so they get sloppy at times. (Interview, 103CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

This specialised skill was not in existence in our community (Sataua) until WIBDI’s programme came along and trained us to weave the *ie-sae*. Then we were able to share with the other village women, but some women gave up because it was too hard. (Interview, 101CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

The findings discussed in detail throughout this section are now summarised in Table 12 and Table 13 below.

6.7 Assessment of the NGOs Approaches in Relation to the ABCD Principles and Practices

The basis of the analysis is adapted from the four main components of ABCD listed as **1, 2, 3, 4** shown in **Table 11**. **Tables 12** and **13** contain a summary analysis of the main approaches employed by THA and WIBDI (as detailed above) to assess the extent to which these approaches are asset-based. The focus is on the first research question, which assesses the extent to which the NGO approaches are asset-driven.

Table 11: Components of ABCD

	ABCD Approaches and Focus
1	The ABCD approach takes as its starting point the position that people have strengths and capacities, and uncovering these is a key motivator for taking action proactively. Focus: Recognizing, identifying and developing local existing assets and local capacities for taking action proactively
2	ABCD stresses the key role played by formal and informal associations, networks, and extended families at the community level, and by the social relationships that connect local initiatives to external windows of opportunity. Focus: Recognition of social capital as an asset

3	The ABCD approach provides practical tools and methods that can be used by community members to identify and link assets. Focus: Practical tools and methods locals use for putting value on local assets and linking assets (e.g., asset-mapping, organizational structure, analysis of the local economy)
4	The ABCD approach is not only people-centered (as in the sustainable livelihoods approach), but a citizen-driven approach. Focus: Reduced dependency and citizens are encouraged to take a proactive role, replacing passivity; a shift from a welfare service delivery model to an empowering model

Source: Adapted from Mathie & Cunningham, 2003

6.7.1 Summary analysis in response to Research Question 1

Table 12: Analysis of THA's work reflecting ABCD Principles and Practices

THA activities/strategies/roles	Principles	Practices
Advisory role/guidance		
Asset-based activities according to THA board members who encourage members to continue using their traditional skills and raw materials	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes
Fully aware of the strategic direction of THA and understand the level of every other member, for regular members are represented at the board level as well	4, 1, 2	Yes
THA identifies existing resources or assets such as traditional skills in weaving, carving, designing of handicrafts (<i>meataulima</i>)	1	Yes
THA uses these skills to earn income	4, 1	Yes
Monitoring		
THA monitors their own work and assesses the quality of <i>meataulima</i> against other members or with other local handicraft producers on the island	2, 1, 3	Yes
Mobilise their own community people to work	2, 4	Yes
Encourage/assist in planting raw materials and their proper use from their own environment	1, 3	Yes
Advocacy		
THA represents their community by affiliating with SUNGO as the National Umbrella body	2	Yes
Sometimes deliberate with government and donor as a representative of community	2	Yes
Capacity Building/Training		
Transfer of skills to families, other members of the communities, younger generation with workshop held at their community-based Centre at Vaiusu	2, 1, 3	Yes
Family members are involved in the production process of these <i>meataulima</i> (e.g., husband/wife and children)	2, 3, 4	Yes (family-driven)
Marketing role		
THA seeks to access markets (locally and internationally) on its own with minimum help from another agent	3, 4	Yes
Takes part in overseas cultural expo as an avenue to access overseas market (so they have gained recognition; but this needs to be further developed)	3, 2	Yes
Other		
Localised organisational structure (e.g., more community people on the board)	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes
Exercised traditional form of authority to strengthen existing local institutions and system within village community - this as an avenue to enhance access and the control of local people over local assets	1, 2, 3	Yes
Localised processes of production, and decision making	1, 3, 4	Yes

Source: Author

Table 13: Analysis of WIBDI’s work reflecting ABCD Principles and Practices

WIBDI activities/strategies/roles	Principles	Practices
Advisory role/guidance		
Asset-based strategies as strategic direction for WIBDI	1	Yes
Help identify existing resources or assets such as traditional skills in weaving, carving, designing of handicrafts (<i>meataulima</i>), e.g., the <i>Ie-sae</i> Project	1, 4, 2	Yes
Help utilise these skills to earn income	1, 3, 4	Yes
Monitoring		
Regular site visits to monitor weaver’s performance and quality of <i>ie-sae</i>	1, 2	Yes
Assist in mobilising village women from 3 communities to utilise their traditional skills (e.g., <i>fale lalaga</i> once a week)	3, 2, 1	Yes
Encourage/assist members with planting raw materials and their proper use to make products	3, 1, 4	Yes
Advocacy		
Community representative on National Steering Committees (i.e., the <i>Ie-toga Project</i> Steering Committee with the GOS)	2, 3	Yes
Deliberate with government and donors as a representative of community	2, 3	Partially
Point of contact outside of the community, regionally and internationally	3	Partially
Capacity Building/Training		
Transfer of skills to families, other members of the communities, younger generation	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes
Family members are involved in the production process of these <i>meataulima</i> (e.g., husband/wife and children)	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes
Marketing role		
Assist weavers to access markets (locally and internationally) - Market worth versus traditional value	3, 2	Partially
Assist weavers to find sponsors for their <i>ie-saes</i>	3, 2	Partially
Other		
Organisational structure (e.g., fewer community people on the board)	3	Partially
WIBDI to continue positioning themselves in relation to the village councils and existing traditional institutions within the village settings in which they work	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes
Localised processes for production and decision making	1, 2, 3	Yes

Source: Author

In summary, the analysis as presented in Tables 12 and Table 13 shows the main activities and approaches carried out by THA and WIBDI. These activities and approaches explicitly represent the principles of ABCD as indicated by the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 shown in Table 8. The implication of presenting the results in this form is to document and demonstrate that the activities and approaches that have three to four of the ABCD principles assigned (e.g., 3, 1, 4 or 1, 2, 3, 4) strongly suggests that that these approaches as asset-based driven but still equally important with the rest of the activities and approaches identified. Additionally, the tables have also shown a significant difference in the work of THA and WIBDI in relation to ABCD practices concerning some approaches and activities that are partially asset-based driven particularly by WIBDI. For example, based on the data although there is some scope of influence by the community members, the marketing role, advocacy role,

organisational structure are driven more by the affluent members of WIBDI. Prominently, the approaches reflecting most ABCD principles must be promoted and applied continuously to the policies, strategies and approaches used by NGOs to encourage development that is locally-driven.

Nevertheless, the main finding from this section is that the overall approaches used by THA and WIBDI reflect the principles and practices of the ABCD concept. The reality is that the NGOs have been practicing the principles of ABCD through their various approaches even while they were explicitly unaware of this ABCD concept, applied in international development circles.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter presents both contextual materials from secondary sources and fieldwork findings. According to the data, the NGOs claim they are the only ones doing this work identified as the main findings in this section, that is recognising, identifying and developing local assets, including activating and strengthening the formal and informal associations connecting local initiatives to external windows of opportunity and building local capacities.

Notably, the notion of capacity building was found to be specific to the areas of knowledge and skills being transferred from NGOs to the local people and communities, as well as from the local people among themselves within their own village and communal settings. These comprised mainly the traditional skills, knowledge and talents passed on to members by WIBDI and THA through their efforts toward achieving economic and social benefits.

Furthermore, the potential of the NGOs for empowering those at the community level as an ABCD principle is significant. According to the findings, NGOs should be involved at the initial stages of planning, and then shift to a more facilitating role whilst communities drive and deliver their products. This view also takes into the account the fact that the role of an NGO should not be overstated, since the reality is that in Samoa, the villages have a set way of operating that involves their community traditions and organisations. This does not ignore the reality that these traditional ways may change over time in response to external pressures such as changes in climate, economic conditions, and the social environment. And since the local

communities may not be adequately equipped with the necessary tools to respond to these new emerging issues effectively, the presence of an NGO to play a facilitative role remains pertinent.

The discussions on; *(i)* the importance of understanding the ABCD concept and its principles that underpin the work of NGOs, and *(ii)* local people's access to and control over their own assets as an empowering mechanism and a form of security for sustaining themselves, are particularly valuable and could have future policy implications. Specifically, they may help to develop national policies and sustainable strategies for Samoa that recognises the large proportion of inhabitants who cannot find jobs in the formal sector, and instead have taken up household work by capitalising on existing local assets to earn an income.

Next chapter will detail the findings of local understanding of ABCD, and the NGOs' work influencing the access and control of local people over local assets.

CHAPTER 7: VALUE OF ABCD AND HOW NGOs FACILITATE LOCAL PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER LOCAL ASSETS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the second key research findings in response to research question 2; *“To what extent do the efforts of these NGOs influence the access and control of local people over their existing assets to enhance local development?”*

The study assesses the extent of access and control that local people have over their assets, if their work is further strengthened by utilising readily available assets. So an empirical study of their situation is very much relevant and applicable to help them make informed decisions and contribute to policy and national strategy development in Samoa. Most participants had not heard of the term “ABCD” prior to this study. Therefore, it became clear that the local understanding of the value of ABCD was worth exploring, will be presented and described in this chapter.

7.2 The value of ABCD and how the work of THA and WIBDI Influences Local People's Access to and Control of over Their Local Assets

In response to the second research question, this section presents data under three main headings, namely:

- a. Local understanding of the ABCD notion
- b. ABCD - an empowering model
- c. The perceived relations and/or partnerships between key stakeholders

This chapter discusses significant findings concerning local understanding of the ABCD concept. The following account focuses on the perspectives of community members (THA and WIBDI clients) who were available for the focus group discussion, as well as interviews with donors. The following sections are then devoted to further discussion of the three main areas identified in order to capture the extent to which development is locally driven in terms of access and control. For the purpose of this study, key stakeholders include local community members, NGOs, and donor agencies mainly NZAID, EU and AusAID and the GOS.

7.2.1 Local understanding of the value of an ABCD approach to local development

7.2.1.1 “Asset” – in the Samoan context

There was a considerable amount of discussion, especially during the FGD, regarding the use of the term “asset”. The participants agreed that some usages of the term were contradictory to what Samoans may interpret as the meaning of the word. Some of the participants argued that the term asset (referring to the English interpretation) carries a limited connotation associated with monetary or building assets, and does not fully capture their own aspirations as to what they perceive assets to be. Indeed, their perceptions are also not encapsulated in the interpretation of the term asset which I am using in my study, when placed in the Samoan context. The participants meant that interpreting the English word asset in Samoan - commonly translated as “asetā” - would result in a loss of the true meaning and essence of the word. Therefore, during the FGD, participants were given the chance to discuss and share among themselves how to translate “ABCD” into a proper Samoan phrase or expression that would correlate well with their local interpretation and aspirations. There were prolonged discussions on this, but eventually a consensus was reached to go with the following Samoan expression;

“O le aia tatau a tagata Samoa e umia ma puleaina ai ia oa faale-siosiomaga, faale-natura, faale-mafaufau, ma measina a Samoa”.

“Samoan people's right to own, develop and sustain access and control over their God given wealth such as natural resources, human talents and capabilities, traditional and cultural values as assets”

The expression itself has encompassed the key elements of people's rights (*aia tatau*) to access and control (*umia ma puleaina*), environmental or natural assets (*siosiomaga/faale-natura*) and human assets (*faale-mafaufau*) as well as the traditional assets (arts and crafts) of Samoa (*measina a Samoa*). The most significant aspect in this expression is that “asset” is translated into Samoan as ‘*oa*’ instead of ‘*asetā*’. ‘*Oa*’ is a deeper and more meaningful Samoan translation and interpretation of the word asset, which is a better fit with the Samoan context according to the views of the community participants. They strongly agreed that ‘*oa*’ is the most appropriate

translation and it sufficiently captures the essence of “asset” in the Samoan context, as it represents the richness of God given gifts to Samoa in terms of nature, traditions, culture and human capabilities.

7.2.1.2 *Limited awareness of ABCD*

This study has also identified that there is limited knowledge and understanding of the ABCD concept at the community level. Hence, there appears to be a need for the concept of ABCD and its principles to be made more prominent locally. A lack of awareness is demonstrated by the views expressed by community members of THA and WIBDI, but also an affinity with the principles embedded in the ABCD approach:

No, this is the first time I have heard of this term, ABCD, but the principles that you are telling me are exactly what we are doing here. (Interview, 101CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

This is the first time I have heard of this term, but it sounds like what we have been doing, how we depend on our own natural environment to carry out this project. (Interview, 102CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

The term is new to my ears, I have never heard of ABCD before. (Interview, 103CW, 09 June 2011, Project 2)

First time to hear about this term, ABCD. (Interview, 201CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

New to my ears, never heard of it. (Interview, 204CT, 16 June 2011, Project 1)

My first time to hear about ABCD. (Interview, 205CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

Interestingly the donors who were interviewed were also not familiar with the term ABCD, but they were aware and had an understanding of the principles:

I personally do not have an understanding of what ABCD is. By the sound of it, it should be a priority for AusAID to actually look into prioritising local skills and recognizing the efforts of Samoans as locals. In so many ways under the Samoan—Australian partnership we support community development in so many different forms. (Interview, 102D, 23 June 2011, Donor 2)

In addition, two comments from members of donor agencies highlight that while they had not heard of ‘ABCD’, they were in fact adopting similar approaches which were helping to reduce dependency:

In development you need to be mindful of the role and part that you play, and for all organisations bringing in resources – just the very fact of bringing in resources, it emanates a tendency to create level of dependency. So yes, an approach that draws attention to people’s assets and the institutions that they have and they can use is one of the tools that should be brought to their attention. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

We support communities through education and health programs, working collaboratively with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. The aim is to utilise the skills of local people that are working for these ministries. This ensures that local people are engaged more widely with local communities instead of bringing in overseas experts or consultants. (Interview, 102D, 23 June 2011, Donor 2)

Other significant comments by a donor member also suggested that ABCD resembles the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA):

I am not familiar with ABCD, but I can see that it is somewhat similar to the sustainable livelihood approach that I am familiar with. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

7.2.1.3 *Fa’aSamoa securing access and control of locals over local assets*

At the community level, most participants interviewed in the villages claimed that engaging in cultural and traditional practices, such as being a “*matai* title holder” (chief title), activates their access to and control over resources such as land and the right to participate in decision making. Because such practices are of customary value in the *fa’aSamoa* (the Samoan way of life), carrying them out brings about a form of security for village members and their families as they gain access to and control over their local assets. Some of the men and women interviewed claimed that being a *matai* gave them the privilege of gaining the respect of families and communities. The view

of many THA members, particularly the men who are *matai* title holders, is reflected in the statement by one male respondent who commented:

We have access and control over our land that we live on and we are proud of our accomplishments so far by being part of this development project as members of Tagiilima. (Interview, 201CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

THA's membership is made up of craftsmen and craftswomen who work mostly from their homes and only go to town to sell their products and to access markets. THA as an organisation represents the interests of the community due to the fact that the regular members can have the privilege of serving as board members as well. During their interviews, THA members who are also board members acknowledged access to and collective control over their assets. Again, similar to WIBDI, they reiterated that NGOs assist with adding value to what the members can produce. In some of the views expressed by an NGO practitioner and community respondents, emphasis is placed on the value of these local associations' and customary practices activating their access to local assets:

With all the people we work with, the local assets are all theirs. They have access and control but we only come in to "add value" to what they can produce. (Interview, 101W, 22 June 2011, NGO 2)

The same sentiment was acknowledged by one of the donors, with emphasis on existing traditional Samoan governance institutions which can be strengthened through an ABCD approach:

This traditional governance framework that has already been and has always been part of the Samoan community system has an important part to play in securing the rights of local people to access and control their own resources or assets. In Samoa, there is already an intact traditional civil society with traditional political structure that the village have at family level. It is an intact functioning model which must be strengthened through this asset-based approach, and it is owned by the people. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

7.2.1.4 ABCD - is it a complementary approach, an alternative approach, or something more?

During my field work, I did not explain what I meant by ‘ABCD as an alternative’. I interviewed local people from various entities and in various roles, asking this question specifically with the intention of ascertaining their own perception of what ABCD can be to them. There were diverse responses as noted below.

The role of NGOs regarding support of ABCD is important according to most respondents. Interviewees for example acknowledged the advisory role and guidance WIBDI provided in order to create awareness of what was available and useful for economic development. Two of the NGO practitioners interviewed suggested that for them, asset-based is not merely an alternative to traditional development approaches but in fact, it is the way they work. While their work is all asset-based, they do not call it ABCD per se, even though that is what they have been doing over the years. Significant comment which encapsulated the general views of most respondents highlighted the reality of applying the principles of ABCD in the Samoan context:

An alternative approach would mean the NGOs’ role shifts from ‘service deliverers’ to mainly ‘facilitators’. (Interview, 102S, 22 June 2011, NGO 3)

This view again elicits that local NGOs should be involved predominantly at the initial stages of any community-based project. It also expresses that NGOs should find their place, repositioning themselves in relation to the *fono* (village) and the existing traditional systems which are seen and understood as cultural assets.

In addition, one NGO practitioner proposed that they only get involved at the initial stages of organizing groups in terms of training and marketing, leaving the communities to then run the projects themselves. According to one of the key respondents:

NGOs are doing this as an alternative approach by getting involved at the initial stage. It was there; an informal sort of approach, not a theoretic approach, but it was already there. (Interview, 102S, 22 June 2011, NGO 3)

According to the renowned pioneers of the ABCD concept, Kretzmann and McKnight (1996), ABCD is an alternative path to community development as opposed to the

traditional development model of externally driven development. From the findings, one group referred to this approach as an alternative, meaning it did not involve working with and through the government. Thus, while they acknowledged the significance of the government role –they also recognised the role of those who work directly with the communities. However, in this study, it was discovered that most of the respondents did not see an asset-based approach as merely an alternative. An NGO practitioner responded to the question, “Do you see NGOs playing an important role in promoting asset-based approach as an alternative?” by emphasising her organisation’s commitment to asset-based development:

Asset-based is not alternative in my view, it is how we work. Other NGOs are also doing this. But it is just that we do not have a term for it or refer to it as ABCD, but our work is all asset-based and it’s what we have been doing and are still doing to achieve development locally. Thus, the role of NGOs is crucial to promoting this avenue towards development. (Interview, 101W, 22 June 2011, NGO 2)

Respondents from donor and governmental entities, however, viewed ABCD as rather more of a complementary approach, not as an alternative. As expressed by one of the donors interviewed:

It is a complementary approach, not necessarily an alternative, whereas maybe previously when I was working in the NGO world, working with a lot of activist sort of NGO types, we would have seen the ounces of real development – real development which is working with communities. Governments are considered hopeless to deliver to the communities, but actually governments have responsibilities and people have rights. There is work at the community level to demand those rights and create a positive space for that and government have to try and deliver. Sometimes it is just really hard for governments to deliver that well, so I do not see it as an alternative, but I do see it as essential. It is more than an alternative, it is an essential part. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

7.2.2 ABCD an empowering approach for locals

Some donors also seem to characterise ABCD as an empowering approach, as illustrated by one of the respondents who said:

ABCD seems to be a social empowerment kind of model, a relevant concept that magnifies the idea of what people already have within their communities. So, if they organise themselves well, they can start to resolve problems through a self-help methodology, but also from an advocacy approach to present demands for services from the government, or appropriate responses from the government. So, ABCD seems to be an approach that looks beyond the financial, beyond the process and look more at the importance of asset or capital, and from there they can have an approach that focuses more on what is there instead of what is missing. This is particularly relevant in the Pacific, because the Pacific is not just a group of problems; they are small islands but are rich in culture and biodiversity and natural wealth, and resources. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

This is supported by another comment by a volunteer advisor to the board of one of the NGOs:

Yes, NGOs play an essential role in promoting an approach that is empowering. By working together on a project, this will allow NGO members to share ideas to achieve project goals. (205CT, 26 June 2011, NGO1)

A comparable thought on empowerment was shared by this key respondent, highlighting the significance of this approach:

It is an approach that promotes talents and skills that are neither external nor foreign, thus must be explored further. (Interview, 101S, 22 June 2011, NGO 3)

One of the donor agency representatives again remarked that ABCD is somewhat different from the traditional development model he is familiar with. Comparatively, ABCD sounded more of an empowering model as to him:

The model that had traditionally worked out earlier in my development life was more of a process-focused one. ABCD seems very much a kind of social empowerment kind of model, although they carry the basic concepts. This

takes into account the idea that people within the local communities have the ability to develop themselves; they also can benefit from growing consciousness around what the causes of poverty are. Hence, ABCD looks more at the importance of asset/capital, as an approach that starts from identifying the gap, what is missing, and trying to solve the problem starting from what the people have. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

ABCD seems to involve assessing what is the state of that capital, and certainly addressing issues of access and control around those resources, and partly looking at where the problems lie, such as a shortage of institutional capital. Is it access and control to natural capital or the kind of educational capital needed? It is looking at these aspects to see how you can influence the system, so it seems a little bit different from a sustainable livelihood approach. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1).

He continued on, inferring the relevance of the ABCD concept to Pacific societies as a means of achieving local enhancement while at the same time empowering the people:

If we can start from exploring the positive, we can often end up in a more positive place, rather than being on the negative side. So, yes this sounds also like the ‘appreciative enquiry approach’ which does not look to what’s not working, but to what is working well and why it is working well, and can we strengthen and build on those things. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

7.2.2.1 *Develop existing assets*

So, it seems that the asset-based approach used, as described by these NGO practitioners, is empowering for the local people not just to build on existing assets but to create some new ones as stated by one of the project participants:

Yes, this project has helped build other assets for us such as physical assets (machinery) used to quicken production and to improve on the quality. This also means that our knowledge/skills have been enhanced with the help of technology. So, we acknowledge that another significant change for us is that we’re able to afford tools (costs \$240 tala²⁹) to enhance our production and

²⁹ Tala: means Samoan currency or dollar(s)

quality. Previously, without this project, we could never have afforded. (Interview, 201CT, 15 June 2011, Project 1)

7.2.2.2 *Disempowering approaches*

In introducing an empowering approach to local development, it is crucial to identify some of the challenges, especially those related to the role of NGOs, as they are more engaged with rural communities. In this study, some of WIBDI's members shared their concerns about the NGO as mediator for most of their clients. The information collected indicates that even though WIBDI is a well-established NGO that seems to be growing and expanding in terms of service and project administration, there is a somewhat subtle difference between the expectations based on the organisation's needs, and those based on the clients' needs. Some participants agreed on the significance of WIBDI's contributions in offering guidance and advice, and serving as a 'middleman' agent connecting the communities to the outside world locally, regionally and internationally. However, some reservations were also expressed by those who felt that dealing with a middleman agent limits their access to and control over their own assets. As expressed by one of the village-based clients:

It has been eight years and still there has not been an increase for my *ie-saes* that I sell through WIBDI. That is why I am no longer a member. I have shared this grievance with them before but still there has not been any change. (Interview, 104CW, 10 June 2011, Project 2)

There is thus a perception of unequal distribution of the benefits among the local members within communities. WIBDI has done enormous work in initiating these projects from the ground up, offering opportunities to rural-based communities to make money from these income-generating programs. This history was evidently daunting enough that most of the women weavers said very little regarding issues of unfair benefit distribution. Interestingly, a WIBDI representative also commented that since her organisation had played such an important part in establishing this project, the women members could not say much in way of complaint.

7.2.3 The perceived relations and/or partnerships between key stakeholders

7.2.3.1 Positive Views

The findings from this study suggest that relationships between key actors comprise one factor that can determine local people's access to and control over their local assets. For the purpose of this study, key stakeholders include local communities, NGOs, the GOS and donor agencies mainly NZAID, EU and AusAID. Since ABCD is also known to be a relationship-driven approach, it was therefore important to get the views of participants on relationships between the key stakeholders. Some respondents stated that the NGOs are well equipped, and are encouraged to work with government ministries.

One of the NGO practitioners was asked "Who do you think has more control over local assets?" and responded with a quite radical perspective:

I really think the government now has control, and now these NGOs have control, the village *matais* and leaders have control. The common people have limited access and control because of the cash economy we now have as opposed to the olden days where there was 100% control. (Interview, 102S, 22 June 2011, NGO3)

At national policy level, one of the donors expressed another view, stating that Samoa has adopted a national development strategy and still holds control:

There is the National Development Strategy (Strategies for the Development of Samoa) which is produced by Samoa, and donors get to comment on it at some point but it is a domestically driven document. It is undergoing its third alteration and each time is getting stronger, and each time they are putting more into understanding the baseline and monitoring results, and getting more focused on what they want to achieve. Line Ministries in Samoa refer to it, they look to it, they define what is important by what is in the national strategies, and so they develop their strategies and their influences accordingly. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

The same donor reiterated the reality that Samoa still has a say in the national development agenda, yet donors would appreciate more policy dialogue in future:

So at the government level there is quite a conservative effort to developing a national development agenda. Samoa chooses paths that the development partners wouldn't have thought of or seen as necessarily important. So donors would like a bit more of a policy dialogue with government, and a bit more evidence-based approach to strategies. This involves looking really hard at what works so that confidence is strengthened that the release of resources that we put into government does deliver results. So slowly there is now a bit more policy dialogue on these areas at national level. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

These positive views concerning the relationship between the local NGOs and donors were also supported by this NGO practitioner's comments:

There is always a good and mature relationship between us and donors, but at the same time we still need to be strong enough to say "no" to other donors as it seemed infeasible for us to fulfil all the donor requirements. Especially because we feel that we have a 'sense of responsibility' to our members as our first priority. Which means NGOs needs to be in control in terms of values and not to be driven by donors. (Interview, 22 June 2011, ED: NGO 2)

Another respondent suggested that:

NGO-donor relationship is ok. It helps but the problem is that the government has the control but hoping to have a rather more collaborative efforts of working together. (Interview, 102S, 22 June 2011, NGO 3)

Even though Samoa has a strong national agenda for development, outside influence is inevitable, as explained by one of the donors:

Samoa adopted a national development model, which is reasonably within that established thinking so it is fairly conventional economic management. The kind that is oriented to macro-economic stability, economic growth, and private sector, so Samoa is doing the things that the international community like. Thus, has been influenced by the international community. For example,

Samoa has people leading the country who have an international education, who have benefited from scholarships, so surely there is international influence, but within that Samoa is continuing in their own model. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

7.2.3.2 *Village Development Planning Pilot Project*

One of the donors commented on the working relations between GOS, NGOs and communities when he explained the project that is being undertaken by the Ministry of Women in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office:

The Ministry of Women here has got a key role because they are government. They are a part of government that has this responsibility to liaise with the communities. So they apply a social development model as well so they are a bit of “bridge” between NGOs and communities. So there is a value in the Village Development Planning Model that they are promoting, and this might be something to explore in the ABCD model. So Samoa now is working on developing plans for all village *fono* to have a Village Development Plan. This is being done with the help from UNDP, and the Ministry is planning to do it right across Samoa. UNDP has funded some of this work, while MWCD is leading the programme. So if it is done well, it could be a very powerful tool, and a place to further develop leadership in the village settings, to get the villages to be clear on where their development agendas lie. If it is done poorly, it could become another long list of demands. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

7.2.3.3 *Role of the government and donors in the ABCD context*

Donor agencies are one of the key actors in this development process. Again, in this study I have selected NZAID, EU and AusAID to represent the donor community in Samoa. They play a significant role bringing in resources for local development:

Donors bring resources, and we also bring ideas. We increasingly operate in an environment where there is a lot of scrutiny of public finances. So we bring funds to resource these development processes, but we also bring demands for results. Results within key timeframes which often can be a mismatch between

a good development process and what donors and development partners want. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

We support the Ministry of Education by providing funds to the Ministry whilst they engage with the rural communities in promoting education. (Interview, 102D, 23 June 2011, Donor 2)

In addition, the data suggests that Samoa is influenced by international thinking and thus has adopted some human rights norms that were actually developed in the international sphere and have now been localised. These are challenging issues, with few answers pertaining to development and the dynamic relationships involved. To counter this challenge one of the donor respondents pointed out that:

Engagement and dialogue are always helpful, donors can also help to prioritise and support capacity development in particularly at line ministry level. Samoa has got some good things going at the central/ministry level in administering things, and one of those areas would be being able to engage with communities even more. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

According to the interview data on the extent of the role of donors, working at the government level means no longer being placed in the community development realm, but rather working more indirectly. The data also revealed that governments really do struggle to cooperate with the community development mode of collaboration:

Government struggle to work cooperatively because they have a natural tendency of applying a 'top-down' approach, but they can develop some structures that are more of 'bottom-up' but a lot focus on delivery outwards of services. Thus, there is an inherent value of initiatives that work from the 'bottom-up' as well and NGOs are often key players in that but the bigger player is actually what is happening at the village level. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

This respondent also expressed a supportive view of the significant facilitating role played by NGOs:

It is good for NGOs to be in the facilitation and processing at the community level, that gives communities more of an idea of what they want from

government and more control over what they do themselves in their own sort of self-help activities. And how they liaise with governments, and quite often they cannot liaise with governments on their own terms. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1).

The prominent idea conveyed through these conversations was the value of improving collaboration between the levels of village and government. This was described by one of the key respondents, based on his position:

At the village, local people get a bit stuck, they have got their own village and village land, they have some sort of authority of the village and then we have the State. So they do not often work well together. The only way it is going to work is to have collaboration across the two - village and government. To show the value in those “bottom-up” approaches means that communities are better equipped to engage with government constructively. (Interview, 101D, 23 June 2011, Donor 1)

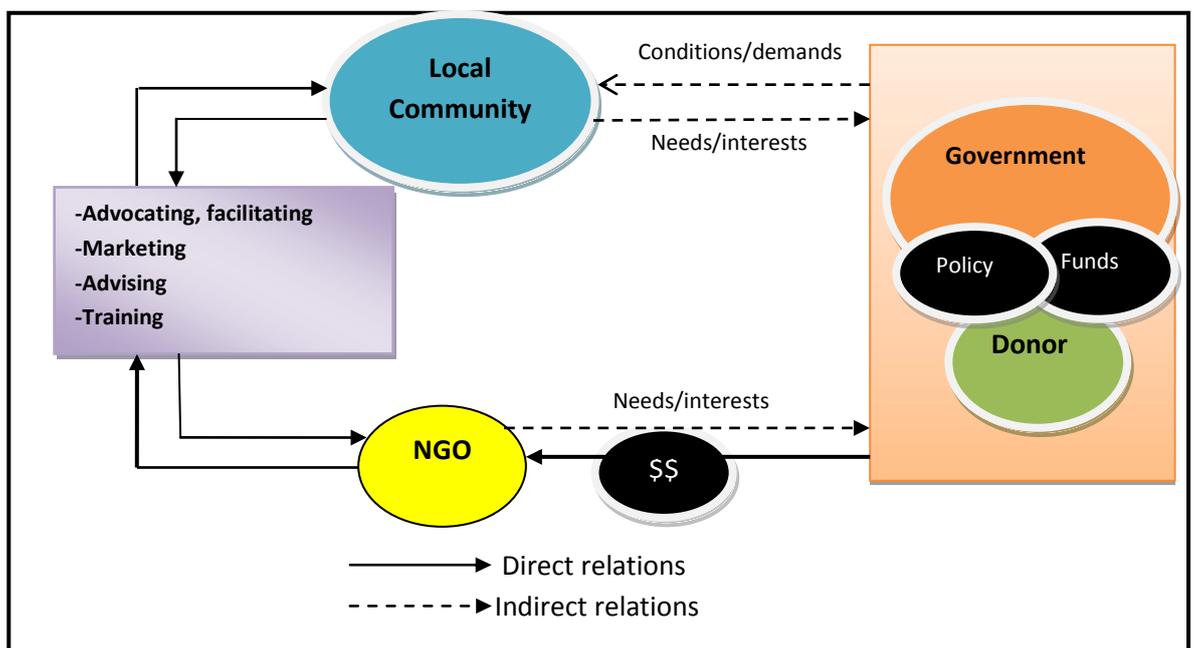


Figure 16: Perceived relations between key actors based on participants' general views and experiences

Source: Author

Figure 16 contains a ‘big picture’ portrayal of the general views and experiences of respondents regarding the existing relationships between core levels: the community, the NGOs and the government/donors (policy level). As shown in the diagram, the

dashed lines represent the indirect relations that exist between local communities and government/donors at the policy level, whilst NGOs have a more direct contact with the local community most of the time (and vice versa) providing training, advocating, advising, facilitating and marketing services. However, it remains a challenge for local community to directly present their needs and interests at policy level, even if communicated through the NGOs. The dashed box where the higher levels of government and donors are clustered represents the general perception that they work closely together, mainly by exchanging ideas in policy-making and by exchanging disbursing funds (\$\$) mostly through NGOs, for the purpose of development filtering across to grassroots people. However, the needs and interests of the local community cannot be sufficiently tailored and communicated to the policy level, and demands of government and donors sometimes do not match with local aspirations. This remains a challenge, and therefore is an aspect that needs to be improved to enhance development processes locally, and to align national policies with local aspirations.

Summary of findings

These findings have highlighted the views of local people, including donors and NGO practitioners, concerning how the ABCD concept is being ‘valued and translated’ into something that is relevant and worth exploring for enhancing local development. Most significant was the choice to interpret the term “asset” into the Samoan context using the more suitable term “*oa*”, which encompasses all the assets traditionally valued by Samoan people. The data also suggested that recognition of local assets, such as the customary practices (*fa’a-matai*) of leadership system, helps activate local people access to and control over their assets. This asks for a more proactive role internally in activating development initiatives such as using what is already in place – for instance, practicing *fa’aSamoa* which involves taking up the responsibility of being a *matai* for your family and community – can secure these rights for local people. Another important suggestion by some respondents is for NGOs to have a shift in their role from service delivery to largely facilitating. In the context of ABCD, this shift can be more empowering for local and rural communities involved in these projects, and can help reduce dependency.

Hence, ABCD is accepted and viewed as an empowering approach for locals. General observations from all levels inferred a similar perspective. The comments from

community members reveal that the role of NGOs can be improved in specific areas in terms of initiating, facilitating, guiding and advising locals on carrying out projects; thus, NGO assistance is still required. The point is for NGOs to employ approaches that are empowering for local people by focusing more on their abilities and not on what is missing.

Additionally, the findings also suggest that there are many more positive views of the existing relationships between the key actors in local development than there are negative ones. These views do not undermine the reality of existing challenges to the relationships between the community level, the organisational level and the policy level. However, the significance of these relationships is one of the main determinants identified from this study affecting the local people's access and control over their assets. The government has control over most of these assets. Donors also have contributed enormously through financing the development processes; therefore strengthening these linkages between these key stakeholders through on 'integrative' policies and strategies to improve dialogue between government and donors, and equipping local communities to engage effectively with government and donors as well.

This is why empirical studies in these areas are valuable, so that people's views and experiences are collected, analysed and documented to produce data that is valid for making informed decisions for the future. For example, the relationship between the NGOs and the communities is very important, because as revealed in this study, Samoa's NGOs in general work closely and directly with local communities. Thus, the NGOs can reach those the government and donors cannot reach. This is where the government and NGO partnership is also very important, because the government and an NGO representing the communities can collaborate to ensure that national strategies and development policies are tailored to meet the aspirations of local people.

Thus, the NGO role is gradually shifting as the government has now recognised some of the NGO work, such as WIBDI's *Ie-sae* Project, and these are now undertaken collaboratively. As suggested in the findings, the relationship between the government and the communities is a challenge, but the ABCD approach seems to be an avenue for improving it in the future. There is now a joint project being undertaken by Ministry

of Women Community and Social Development (MWCD) and UNDP to establish Village Development Plans through a process of asset-mapping.

For the participants, especially those within the communities, this study has brought to the surface once again the need to realise the value of existing assets or resources. However, it seems that most have not heard of the term ‘ABCD’ until this time. Even so, the principles of asset-driven development are easily understood to the extent that many realised this is actually what they had been doing. The participants have shared their views on the need for the ABCD concept to be made known at the community and national levels. In addition, a point was made that not many NGOs are following this community-based empowering model in Samoa.

The organisational, donor and government level participants initially acknowledged the obvious significance of the ABCD concept. They also expressed belief that the principles and practices of ABCD are imperative to the works of NGOs in Samoa. In terms of enhancing local understanding and awareness of the concept, it would be helpful to consider every situation as unique and different, so that it becomes a matter of finding out what works best for each local community at the ground level.

Table 14: Components of ABCD

	ABCD Approaches and Focus
1	The ABCD approach takes as its starting point the position that people have strengths and capacities, and uncovering these is a key motivator for taking action proactively. Focus: Recognizing, identifying and developing local existing assets and local capacities for taking action proactively
2	ABCD stresses the key role played by formal and informal associations, networks, and extended families at the community level, and by the social relationships that connect local initiatives to external windows of opportunity. Focus: Recognition of social capital as an asset
3	The ABCD approach provides practical tools and methods that can be used by community members to identify and link assets. Focus: Practical tools and methods locals use for putting value on local assets and linking assets (e.g., asset-mapping, organizational structure, analysis of the local economy)
4	The ABCD approach is not only people-centered (as in the sustainable livelihoods approach), but a citizen-driven approach. Focus: Reduced dependency and citizens are encouraged to take a proactive role, replacing passivity; a shift from a welfare service delivery model to an empowering model

Source: Adapted from Mathie & Cunningham, 2003

Table 14 above again show the four main components of ABCD as the basis of this analysis listed as 1, 2, 3 and 4. **Tables 15** and **16** present a summary analysis of the approaches used by THA and WIBDI (as previously done in Chapter 6) and the extent

to which these approaches have influenced the access and control of local people over local assets.

7.3 Summary Analysis in response to Research question 2

Table 15: Analysis of the extent to which THA's efforts influence local access and control

THA activities/strategies/roles	Principle	Practice	Access	Control
Advisory role/guidance				
Asset-based activities according to THA board members who encourage members to continue using their traditional skills and raw materials	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes	Increases access to existing and additional assets	Enhances control of locals over their existing assets
Fully aware of the strategic direction of THA and understand the level of every other member, for regular members are represented at the board level as well	4, 1	Yes	Increases/ secures access	Increases/ secures control
THA identifies existing resources or assets such as traditional skills in weaving, carving and designing of handicrafts (<i>meataulima</i>)	1, 2, 4	Yes	Enhances/ secures local access	Enhances/ secures local control
THA uses these skills to earn income	4, 1	Yes	Encourages access	Boosts control
Monitoring				
THA monitors their own work and assesses quality of members' <i>meataulima</i> against one another or with other local handicraft producers on island	2, 1, 3	Yes	To improve quality, they are encouraged to access better raw materials for their use	Encourages control over what they see as their own
Mobilise their own community people to work	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes	Increases access	Increases control
Encourage/assist in planting raw materials and their proper use from own environment	1, 4	Yes	Increases access	Increases/ decreases local control
Advocacy				
THA represents their community by affiliating with SUNGO as the National Umbrella body	2, 4	Yes	Aims to increase access	Aims to increase local control
Deliberate with government and donor as a representative of community	2, 1	Yes	Partially	Partially
Capacity Building/Training				
Transfer of skills to families, other members of the communities, the younger generation with workshop held at their community-based centre at Vaiusu	2, 1, 3	Yes	Increases access	Increases control
Family members involved in the production process of these <i>meataulima</i> (e.g., husband/wife and children)	2, 3, 4	Yes (family-driven)	Increases access	Increases control
Marketing role				
THA seeks to access markets (locally and internationally) on its own with minimum help from another agent	3, 4, 1	Yes	Increases access	Increases access

Takes part in overseas cultural expo as an avenue to access overseas market (so they have gained recognition, but this needs to be further developed)	3, 2	Yes	Encourages access	Encourages control
Others				
Localised organisational structure (e.g., more community people on the board)	1, 2, 3, 4	Yes	Enhances/ secures access	Enhances/ secures access
Exercised traditional forms of authority to strengthen existing local institutions and systems within village community - this as an avenue to enhance local people's access to and control over local assets	1, 2, 3	Yes	Enhances/secures access	Enhances/secures control
Localised processes of production, and decision making	1, 3, 4	Yes	Enhances/ secures local access	Enhances/ secures local control

Source: Author

Table 16: Analysis of the extent to which WIBDI's efforts influence local access and control

WIBDI activities/strategies/roles	Principles	Practice	Access	Control
Advisory role/guidance				
Asset-based strategies as strategic direction for WIBDI as an organisation	1, 2, 3,	Yes	Offers WIBDI members opportunities for access to local assets	Enhances control of locals over their existing assets
Help identify existing resources or assets such as traditional skills in weaving, carving and designing of handicrafts (<i>meataulima</i>) e.g., <i>ie-sae</i> project	1, 4, 2	Yes	Enhances local access	Enhances control
Help utilising these skills to earn income	1, 3, 4	Yes	Encourages access	Enhances control
Monitoring				
Regular site visits to monitor weaver's performance and quality of <i>ie-sae</i>	1, 2	Yes	Helps but also hinders access	Helps but can also hinder local control
Assist in mobilising village women from 3 communities to utilise their traditional skills (e.g., <i>fale lalaga</i> once a week)	3, 2, 1	Yes	Increases access	Increases control
Encourage/assist in planting raw materials and their proper use from own environment	3, 1,	Yes	Potential increase	partially
Advocacy				
Community representative in National Steering Committees (e.g., <i>Ie-sae</i> Project Steering Committee with government)	2, 3	Yes	Aims to increase access, but sometimes hinders access	Aims to increase local control, but sometimes limits local control
Deliberate with government and donors as a representative of community	2, 3	Partially	Moderately	Moderately

Point of contact outside of the community, regionally and internationally	3	Partially	Moderately	Moderately
Capacity Building/Training				
Transfer of skills to families, other members of the communities, the younger generation	1, 2, 3,	Yes	Increases access	Increases control
Family members being involved in the production process of these <i>meataulima</i> (e.g., husband/wife and children)	1, 2, 3,	Yes	Increases access	Increases control
Marketing role				
Assist weavers to access market (locally and internationally) Market value versus traditional worth	3, 2	Partially	Helps but limits access sometimes	Helps but limits local control sometimes
Assist weavers to find sponsors for their <i>ie-saes</i>	3, 2	Partially	Helps but limits access	Helps but limits local control
Others				
Organisational structure (e.g., minority of community people on the board)	3	Partially	Can distort community efforts or NGO efforts as well	Lessens control/ disengages from big picture
WIBDI to continue positioning themselves in relation to village council and existing traditional institutions within village settings where they work	1, 2, 3	Yes	To enhance access	To increase control
Localised processes of production and decision making	1, 2, 3	Yes	Helps increase access	Increases control

Source: Author

The summary analysis is presented again in this form integrating the elements of local people's access to and control over their own assets. The findings, as shown in the tables, suggest that the more ABCD principles and practices used, the more access and control are bestowed upon the local people as reflected in the ABCD conceptual framework determined (Figure 5) in Chapter 3. Additionally, the tables have also shown a significant difference in the work of THA and WIBDI in relation to the extent of influence these approaches have on the local people's 'access' and 'control' over local assets. For example, based on the data although there is some scope of influence on development by the local community members, however, there is a need to improve and maintain the access and control of local people over local assets. Hence, the tables show that the approaches that reflect most ABCD principles (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4 or 3, 2, 1) have the potential to enhance access and control of local people. Such that the tables show THA's approaches compared to WIBDI are more asset-based and citizen-driven, for e.g. in the areas of mobilising community members, more community members'

influence on strategic direction and localising their organisational structure. There are two implications for future initiatives.

Firstly, there is tremendous potential for local Samoan people and the wider communities to benefit from using asset-based driven approaches to enhance local development. However, it is still important that NGOs find their place in relation to existing traditional structures within village settings, and work toward a process where they are mainly there to facilitate, whilst rural communities draw on their own existing assets and resources to deliver services and products. Secondly, strengthening relationships within village groups and linkages within the wider stakeholders (NGOs, government and donors) may enhance long-term sustainability. The ABCD concept offers a model that is empowering for local people, and as such is quite different from traditional development interventions which are externally driven. Hence, it portrays a model that can be more sustainable if used and understood well, placing attention on local knowledge, local skills, local culture and local resources.

7.4 Conclusion

These projects have provided opportunities for members to mobilise themselves as groups within their own villages and communities to weave and make handicrafts for a living. Economic reasons are the main motivational factor for choosing to be part of these projects, which consequently have strengthened other existing assets. The vision which guides the works of these NGOs encapsulates the essence of the ABCD concept by encouraging locally driven development through empowering families and communities with knowledge and skills, and providing opportunities to access and control available assets. Despite the fact that the term “ABCD” per se has not been widely used or heard of by most, the principles and practices represented by ABCD are fundamentally important and relevant to what is happening in regard to local development in Samoa.

The data also suggests that the role of NGOs in Samoa is significant, and becomes even more important at the community level if the approach used is an empowering one. Strong opinions were expressed concerning the preference for NGOs to be involved predominantly at the initial stages of these rural-based projects, allowing local communities to strengthen their capacities to deliver products and services themselves during later stages of the process. The role of NGOs should not be

overstated, as in Samoa the reality is that the villages have set ways of operating according to their traditions. Some of these issues may require legislative action which brings in the role of the State, and with an intact traditional system such as is found throughout Samoan villages, the NGOs are then positioned to play a role of communicating the interests of the village community to the national government. Alternatively, one or more representatives from within the village system who have the influence and ability (and sometimes, resources) are designated to serve as that voice for the community.

Consequently, as suggested by this study, there is a need to strengthen relations between and across these main actors – communities, NGOs and national levels of the government and donors. Although the NGOs play a key role in representing the needs of local communities, those with a leadership role at the national and organisational levels should ensure that the needs and interests of community people are explicitly represented, incorporated and tailored into the national economic and development policies of Samoa.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION: ENHANCING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE WORK OF NGOs IN AN ABCD CONTEXT

8.1 Introduction

The concept of ABCD as an alternative development idea emerged to address the limitations of mainstream development approaches. Hence, this thesis has investigated and explored the value of an asset-based approach to enhance local development in Samoa. The intention of the asset-based approach is simply reflected in the principles which underpin the practices that ABCD aspires to employ, in order to achieve development that stems from within local communities. As outlined in Chapter 1, the specific objective for this thesis was:

To examine whether the work of two locally-based NGOs in Samoa reflect the principles and practices of ABCD: and the extent to which their work influences local people's access to and control over local assets, in order to enhance local development.

This specific objective emanated from the broad question for this study which was: *In what ways can NGOs use ABCD to promote locally driven development in Samoa?* In response, I specifically investigated the cases of two NGOs that are influencing local development through their involvement in income-generating projects in Samoa. One project is based in a community located in Upolu Island (Project 1: *Meataulima*), and the other project is located within three village communities on Savai'i Island (Project 2: *Ie-sae*). The following specific research questions have guided the research for this study:

- 1) What ABCD principles and practices are utilised by WIBDI and THA in Projects 1 and 2 to enhance local development?
- 2) To what extent do the efforts of the THA and WIBDI influence local people's access to and control over their existing assets, in order to enhance local development?

Using a qualitative case study approach, this study explores the perceptions of the NGO clients or local citizens, NGO practitioners and other key stakeholders concerning the value of an asset-based approach to local development, and the ways in which NGOs can use ABCD to enhance community development in Samoa. The findings reveal that most of the principles and practices of the ABCD concept are

reflected in the work of WIBDI and THA, but there is no explicit awareness of ‘ABCD’ as an international known concept.

The main finding of this research is that all participants at the community level, who are involved in the *Ie-sae* and *Meataulima* projects, report their lives have improved since taking up income-generating initiatives through the help of these NGOs. All 11 participants from the communities, who are members of THA and WIBDI, acknowledge the work done by the NGOs. However, there are concerns raised by some participants regarding issues with the ‘middle-man role’ taken up by one of the NGOs, which is positioned between the communities and the outside entities, particularly because it somewhat limits the citizens’ full access to and control over their own assets, due to the constant assistance, which is seen as disempowering for village-based local people and communities.

An integrated finding of this study identifies that none of the participants at the community level have heard of the term ABCD: and only a few of the NGO practitioners and donors interviewed report familiarity with the principles that ABCD represents. One of the donors states that only a few NGOs in Samoa are practising asset-based methods, whilst the remainder are still operating in a service delivery mode.

This final chapter places the main findings presented in previous chapters into the context of the research questions identified for this research. Section 8.2 describes the principles and practices of the ABCD concept, as reflected in the work of THA and WIBDI, in response to the first research question. Section 8.3 discusses and presents findings related to the second research question on the value of ABCD and NGO influence on local people’s access to and control over local assets. Section 8.4 answers the general research question: *In what ways can NGOs use ABCD to promote locally driven development in Samoa?* The chapter ends with a final concluding statement, recommendations for future policy decisions and a possible agenda for further research regarding ABCD.

8.2 Discussion on Research Question 1: ABCD Principles and Practices reflected in the Work of WIBDI and THA to Enhance Local Development

This section discusses the first research question of this study: *What ABCD principles and practices are utilised by WIBDI and THA in Projects 1 and 2 to enhance local development?*

In order to assess the work of WIBDI and THA, this study uses the principles and practices offered through the work of Mathie and Cunningham (2003), as the basis for analysis (see Table 1 and also the four component summary, shown in Table 2). The results of this assessment are presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

The findings also document that, together with the acknowledgement of NGO accomplishments, there is also a suggestion that NGOs should be involved predominantly at the initial stages of planning, and then shift to a more facilitative role and leave communities to drive and deliver the services and products. The role of NGOs should not be overemphasised mainly because, within the Samoan context, there are cultural and traditional factors that must be incorporated into these development processes, in order for NGOs to be representative of the local context, as promoted in the ABCD approach. These factors are further illustrated in the diagram in Figure 5 (see Chapter 3), which offers a ‘bigger picture’ viewpoint of utilising ABCD, in order to enhance local development, as opposed to an externally driven approach.

To reiterate what ABCD represents and what it offers: it is not only a people-centred approach — it is also a citizen-driven approach (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). It is important to draw out the insight described in Bebbington (1999) that assets are more than just resources with instrumental value for economic purposes. Rather, the value of assets (assets identified as important in this study include natural, human, social/institutional, cultural and financial), which is why defining “asset” and the term ABCD into the Samoan context was very important (as presented in Chapter 7), which also lies in their power to give people the capacity or potential to act and thus secure a source of meaningful engagement with the world. The significance of focusing on assets, capacities and capabilities, is to encourage a proactive role for the citizens, thus replacing the passive and dependent role of clients on the state and affluent agencies of a needs-orientated approach, with a positive language of action that includes

ownership and wealth (Gibson-Graham, 2005). However, such assets cannot be activated without people having access to them.

An understanding of ABCD as a citizen-driven approach is now presented in Table 17 below, which comprises characteristics of development that is locally driven. In Table 17, I compare the two projects from this study, showing that the THA project demonstrates higher levels of locally-driven or asset-driven development than the WIBDI project. In the WIBDI project, aspects such as planning, monitoring and decision-making are not substantially driven by community members.

Table 17: Characteristics of locally-driven development from an ABCD perspective, as observed in Project 1 and Project 2

Characteristics of Locally Driven Development (LDD)	THA Project			WIBDI project		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Local initiatives dominant			Active contribution by members		Some contribution by community	
Identify and map available resources to local capacities and aspirations			Actively identified by community members		NGO and community both contribute	
NGO involvement at initial stages			Actively identified by members who are board members and also regular members		Community involved mostly at implementation phase NGO mainly designed the project	
Local people involved in every phase from planning, implementation and monitoring to decision-making processes			THA members actively involved throughout the process		Some contribution by the community members	
Citizen-driven development			Initiatives actively driven by THA members (e.g. THA organisation was an idea initiated by Vaiusu villagers themselves)		Some extent of involvement by local citizens	

Source: Author

Implication

Table 17 shows the structure of NGO impact and how it influences the alignment of its goals to community aspirations — and I would suggest that the use of ABCD principles can help enhance this alignment.

The issue to be addressed, according to the findings of this study, is the level of involvement of NGOs, as raised by some of the participants from the various levels involved in this study. The legitimacy of NGO work becomes questionable, as addressed in Chapter 2 by Edwards & Hulme (1992), Curtis (1999), Storey, (1998) and Miraftab (1997), in addition to recent studies by Teegan et al (2004) and Saibul (2010), if they are not in alignment with the cultural, traditional and environmental aspects of the local society with which the NGO is involved. Therefore, it is important to take into account the local context, when NGOs or any other development agent or practitioner take a role in local development. This awareness is promoted by ABCD concepts that include valuing, appreciating, mapping and utilising the local assets – whether these are natural, human, cultural, social and/or financial – as suggested by the pioneers of ABCD, Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) (see Figure 2 and Figure 3 in Chapter 3) and they are supported by Eloff and Eborsohn (2001), Mathie and Cunningham, 2003, Haines (2009), Chirisa (2009) and Green and Goetting (2010).

In conclusion, WIBDI and THA approaches to development (based on the assessment completed for this research) do to some degree reflect the principles and practices of ABCD. However, as shown in Tables 15 and 16, WIBDI approaches are not so locally-driven compared to THA, but due to its long establishment and regional and international recognition and linkages, WIBDI can offer more economic opportunities for local people. These findings also show that these NGOs have been applying the principles of ABCD and this study suggests that they continue to do so, as a means to further enhance the role of NGOs, in order to achieve development that is locally driven.

8.3 Discussion on Research Question 2: The Value of ABCD and the Extent to which NGO Work Influences Local People's Access to and Control over Local Assets, in order to enhance Local Development

This section discusses the second research question in this study: *To what extent do the efforts of these NGOs influence local people's access to and control over their existing assets, in order to enhance local development?*

It was interesting to discover that the majority of the community participants felt that participating in this study provided them with a reminder of the value of their own assets. Many of them had not heard of the term 'ABCD', although a majority suggested that the concept had the potential to work very well in Samoa and it should be generally made known, especially as an approach that exemplifies the potential of local communities. In their eyes, ABCD appeared to be a practical approach that could help enhance local development, particularly through change agents such as NGOs. This study shows that local communities have resorted to NGO assistance for guidance and advice and to experience the challenge of subsequently maintaining access to and control over existing resources or assets, as addressed by Haines (2009).

In fact, the findings show that NGOs are reliant upon these development efforts within local communities, which therefore challenge the optimism of Haines (2009) and Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), regarding communities' abilities to revitalise on their own. Such significant involvement of communities, as suggested by Ife (1995; 2002), can be more sustainable and empowering, according to Bebbington (2004), but it remains a debatable issue due to its vagueness, as addressed by Green and Haines (2002). Hence, this study also reflects the views of Green and Goetting (2010) and Siegel (2005) that investing in existing assets helps to build capacity and strengthen community assets and thus, it is particularly supportive at the initial phases of development.

Confirming the findings of other research, this study shows that NGOs could be better at working directly with local communities and empowering them, whilst donors and the government do not have such a clear understanding of such work (Saibul, 2010). In addition, it appears that sometimes, when addressing development issues, the government sees locally driven approaches as a threat. However, the government should not view these initiatives as a threat but rather as an opportunity to strengthen ties and

relationships across various levels, as addressed by Elliot (1987), Storey (1998), Korten (1990), Mathie and Cunningham (2003b) and Krishna (2004).

Furthermore, this study identifies that it is very important for donors to consider that Samoa's traditional civil society is quite intact, and a traditional political structure for a village exists at family and community level. According to the viewpoints observed during the interviews, these traditional roles also function as development agents, but this depends very much on the quality of leadership that exists within each community. Culturally, an intact functioning family model has (in some ways) more legitimacy than the NGOs. This is mainly because it is 'owned' by the people. One of the donors comments that the reality is that NGOs are generally urban-based and they are resourced from outside. As a result, they struggle to sustain themselves, but nevertheless they still have a valuable role to play.

In contrast, another donor suggests that the best approach is to build the capacity of local communities and encourage NGOs to limit their role to serving as a facilitator for these locally based projects. However, in some areas, local communities still want more comprehensive assistance, in order to build their own capacities.

It is important to also note the key motivational factor behind why the participants join income-generating activities. The data shows that "economic benefits" drive them to make handicrafts or to weave an *ie-sae*, in order to make a living. The NGOs acknowledge that they come in to add value to what their members can produce, thus assisting these locals to identify what is economically beneficial and marketable. Despite some concerns being raised over the issue of benefits not being equally distributed (especially between the NGO as agent and the clients) the NGO role of mediator and administrator is still important to both the members and the NGOs. This matter is a sensitive issue and WIBDI members, in particular, were not very open about it.

Table 18, below, presents a summary list of the challenges and opportunities faced by project participants or NGO members, in relation to working with NGOs and the impact on their access to and control over local assets.

Table 18: Summary of challenges and opportunities from Project 1 and Project 2 which indicate the extent of NGO influence on local people's access and control over local assets

THA project		WIBDI project	
<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>
Smaller scope of work, as compared to WIBDI	More citizen involvement, so less external influence More manageable activities/processes	Affluent influencing NGO operations restrict community members' voice	Having more funds helps WIBDI to sustain itself financially and corporately
Limited national, regional and international networks	More room to improve on their local and national coverage as they advance towards their regional and international linkages	Less community member leverage at strategic level	WIBDI still has more rural-based projects which involve many village communities Focusing first and foremost on building families More recognition of projects at national and global level
Lack of funds to sustain itself	More dependent on self-determined processes than outside help, although they do need some funds to sustain their office and employed staff	Lack of members trust regarding payments from the NGO for their weaving	Stronger membership due to regional and international recognition and well-established linkages
	THA efforts can be empowering for their members, since it is run mostly by the villagers who are also members. Thus, they have more opportunity to be involved in all phases of the process from planning and implementation to decision making, with minimal assistance from outsiders.	More external influence due to a larger scope of work and they network locally, nationally, regionally and internationally	As leverage to also help sustain WIBDI, since it continues to gain recognition beyond national boundaries
	Community interests are more explicitly represented at national level with community members taking over the board Salvaged? of members' skills/knowledge and talents for economic and social benefits	Community interests are not always explicitly represented with fewer community members on the board (most of them are involved in the implementation phase) The affluent have strong influence on WIBDI strategic direction	However, it is still seen as the voice of the local people at national level due to sitting on national steering committees Credibility due to recognition of their work in publications/donor reports

Source: Author

8.4 Discussion of the General Question: In what ways can NGOs use ABCD to Promote Locally Driven Development in Samoa?

It has been argued that interest in community-based, or locally based, development has grown over the past two decades (Green & Goetting, 2010; Green & Haines, 2012). It is true that more NGOs are now working in partnership with government agencies and communities, where NGOs bring in a new dimension to development practices and studies, considering the complex nature of practising development (Krishna, 2004; Storey, 1998). The majority of NGOs would claim that their goal is to empower local communities to provide for their own needs (Bebbington, 2004; Elliot, 1987). However, such claims have also been constantly challenged because conventional agencies also expound the same agenda (Bromideh, 2011). Nevertheless, recognition of NGO efforts continues to grow in developing countries, particularly over the past 40 years, and NGOs have been recognised as offering an alternative approach to enhancing development (Green & Haines, 2002; Saibul, 2010).

Another key finding reports that the main reason motivating local people to join these initiatives is to achieve some form of economic benefit, which would build on their existing assets, including cultural, environmental and social assets. Indeed, financial independence is one of the primary results acknowledged by members who have joined these programmes. Subsequently, members state that these projects have also strengthened their social network within their village communities, in addition to national based organisations including NGOs (WIBDI and THA) and government and donor agencies, who are the main sources of financial support for NGOs. However, some of the issues that arose still have to be confronted as a way forward, such as finding a way for these rural women to directly access markets locally and internationally, instead of using a middle-man.

The findings of this study reflect the reality of the claims about NGOs, but they also highlight a lack of understanding of the role of NGOs (e.g. when WIBDI monitors the work of the weavers) and sometimes it overlaps with the role of the government and donor agencies (Arellano-Lopez & Petras, 1994). This study's findings support the argument that NGO assistance has been valuable and it is still needed by the majority of grassroots people. Even governments and donors have acknowledged the ability of NGOs to do what they themselves cannot do, that is, reach the poor, despite criticisms (Bromideh, 2011; Korten, 1990; Saibul, 2010).

Therefore, this study can contribute to identifying ways in which NGOs – especially those in developing countries – can improve local development through the use of ABCD principles and practices. This takes into account the fact that NGOs influence policy development and legislation and they operate in the development area through lobbying, consultation and collaboration, in addition to undertaking projects (Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001; Potter et al., 1999). In response to the ongoing questioning of NGO legitimacy and ingenuity (Miraftab, 1997; Teegen et al., 2004), this study provides some answers. For example, the findings verify that NGOs, as development institutional entities and channels established in developing countries (including Samoa) to help local communities achieve development locally, are effective, if their approaches are asset driven. This is indicated in the summary provided in this paper, which shows that the main approaches provided by NGOs are identified as reflecting the principles and practices of ABCD. However, the mechanisms of how NGOs operate, relate and function across levels need to be refined (as shown in Chapter 7, Figure 16). NGOs ongoing assistance is still required considering that, for social capital to be activated, a mediating agency is required (Krishna, 2004). This mediating role is played by the NGOs, in this case to help citizens make the necessary connections with the state and other key actors (Krishna, 2002). This will also involve extensive awareness of the ABCD concept, both locally and nationally, as suggested by these findings.

In terms of the extent of local people's access to and control over their own assets within an asset-based context, this study shows that the use of ABCD principles correlates with enhanced access and control by local people over their assets. However, it is still important that NGOs find their place in relation to existing traditional structures within village settings: and they must work towards a process where NGOs are mainly present, in order to facilitate, whilst rural communities draw on their existing assets and resources to deliver development on their own. The ABCD concept offers a model that is more empowering and it is quite different from traditional development interventions, which are externally driven. Green and Haines (2012) claim that the asset-based model has been widely adopted, however, very scarce research has been undertaken on evaluating its effectiveness (Pawar, 2010).

It is important that the Pacific countries, including Samoa, should be well aware of this asset-based approach to development, which draws on the strengths, assets and resources present in the region, considering that Pacific countries are different from

Asian countries in terms of culture, scale and resources (Hooper, 2005). This study also shows that Pacific countries have constitutions which assert the legitimacy of their distinctive culture and traditions, and this places culture at the heart of national economic and political life (Hooper, 2005).

Although the existing national level development policies and strategies in Samoa focus on the elements of local development: empowerment, sustainability and country ownership, as emphasised in the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Aid (AAA), approximately 99 percent of Samoa's Official Development Assistance is funded by bilateral and multilateral donors, who are signatories to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. It was found that there have been significant changes in the way aid is being delivered in Samoa over the past decade: and that these changes have been somewhat strengthened by the Paris Declaration (Government of Samoa, 2010, p. 3).

Therefore, this study has found that there is ability for NGOs to continue their work for local Samoan communities and (with the use of ABCD principles and practices) their efforts can be further enhanced. It is a challenging task, considering that the ABCD concept is not widely known locally or nationally. Overall, the local communities and people acknowledge the support of the NGOs and also suggest ongoing collaboration with other stakeholders.

8.5 Final Concluding Statement

This research shows that, within the Samoan context, an asset-based approach to community development (ABCD) has contributed to the enhancement of local development through the work of NGOs. The principles upheld by the ABCD concept are very relevant to the context of Samoa as a state which is respectfully holding onto its values, beliefs, customs and culture. Since Samoa has a history of being able to sustain its own way of life (*fa'aSamoa*), ABCD holds the hope and potential for a concept that places attention and emphasis on what is local. Therefore, this study indicates that ABCD is a concept worth exploring and it needs to be utilised more widely in the future. This means that NGOs will continue to play a vital role in executing asset-based approaches, as identified in the study, whilst addressing some of the challenges and concerns as a way forward for the enhancement of local community development in Samoa.

The data from this study suggest that the NGO structure employed by both WIBDI and THA can influence the practices they use to reach out to their target communities. To reiterate, organisational structure can be one ABCD instrument used by development NGOs to align community aspirations with their structure of work: and this has also been suggested by Mathie and Cunningham (2003). These organisational structures could be designed to deliver approaches that are family-orientated, and community-led. Overall, the data suggest that the work of (and the approaches taken) by these NGOs have been (and are) asset-based driven. Therefore, it is significant that this study draws out the key principles and practices of ABCD that are reflected in the work of WIBDI and THA in facilitating community-based projects.

Samoa has demonstrated improvement in terms of taking ownership of development processes that indicates advanced progress and this improvement needs to be maintained (Government of Samoa, 2010a). The findings of this thesis suggest that the approaches used by NGOs are an important factor impacting on local access to and control over assets. As mentioned earlier, NGOs are widely understood as working more directly with local communities than government and/or donors. Therefore, their existence and their role are quite significant. With this understanding, NGOs are thus seen to exercise influence on the extent to which local people can drive their own form of development.

Finally, the study suggests that there is potential for NGOs to promote local development through utilising ABCD principles and practices. There are challenges, however, in terms of local NGOs being influenced by outside entities, such as the donors on whom they generally depend for funding, and their ability to be responsive to global changes and certain operational concerns. However, NGOs can still offer more effective assistance to local communities, by identifying their rightful position in relation to the existing traditional institutions and cultural aspects already in place within Samoan society, which are very much intact and functional, in order for development processes to be localised and more sustainable.

8.6 Recommendation for Policy and Further Research

This research can assist to develop a better understanding and awareness of a citizen-driven development approach, that is, the ABCD concept — especially in the context of Samoa. In particular, since there are similarities between the two case studies involved

in this study, the research findings may be used by NGO management to reflect upon their approaches and roles regarding their involvement with target local communities. Decision-makers involved with development and economic policies, at both local and national levels of government and organisations, may also take advantage of these findings, specifically in relation to asset-based approaches for further enhancing the development of rural and urban communities.

The government and donor agencies may be aided by this research to further understand the basic principles that underpin asset-based or people-centred approaches. These approaches may be considered in the development of strategies which are designed to engage the local community and further empower them, whereby NGOs can shift their role to one of facilitation only.

There are several areas in which further research into ABCD, in order to enhance local development, could be useful. Firstly, research into the organisational structures and frameworks employed by NGOs and how these impact, function and represent the interests of locals would be valuable, since there still appears to be a lack of explicit representation of community interests at higher levels of deliberation and consultation, or when it comes to policy-making. Thus, complementary research to discover the best and most practical structure for working more effectively with NGOs and thereby increasing engagement across levels would be very useful, in order to develop a broader knowledge and understanding of how organisational structure can be an effective tool for enhancing local participation, engagement and ownership of development initiatives and processes: and it can also be used as a catalyst to generate practical benefits for both the NGOs as agents of change and the grassroots communities.

Secondly, a study of NGOs with a focus on the mechanisms for community representation in NGO structure and framework (that is, who is involved in strategic decision making; who plays a dominant role in the planning, designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and decision-making phases of any project and organisation as a whole; how the mechanism of involvement is to work; and whose interests matter) is recommended.

Thirdly, another area of interest that urgently calls for further research in Samoa is the relationship between the key stakeholders involved in development, namely local communities, NGOs, the State and donor agencies. This study has identified that the

majority of these participants prefer working in partnership with other actors and they favour the idea of strengthening these relationships across levels. It might be useful for the newly established Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS), with its primary aim of adding value to local resources, to assess how ABCD can be implemented across different stakeholders within a partnership approach.

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Appendix 2: Interview Guide in Samoan for community members

TA'IALA –FA'ATALATALANOAGA (Sui Auai-THA & WIBDI)

E lua(2) Sini 'autu o lo'o taula'i iai lenei sailiiliga; pe faigofie ona umia ma pulea e tagata Samoa ni aseta, atoa ai ma le taua tele o le matafaioi a NGOs e faalauiloa ai ma unai'a atina'e i totonu o le atunu'u.

(A) O le malamalamaga o tagata Samoa, ile taua ma le aoga o le polokalame o le ABCD i le atina'eina o le lautele ole atunu'u, ose isi lea tulaga ua tataua ona taga'i toto'a iai

1. Fa'amatala mai lou sao ile fa'atinoina o lenei atina'e?
2. Ua iai se suiga aoga i lou olaga e mafua mai lava i lenei atina'e? (tamaoaiga, soifuaga)
3. E iai nisi tulaga ua fa'aleleia pe fa'aopopo ai ni mea aoga mo oe e mafua ma i lenei atina'e?
4. Na fa'apefea ona e filifilia lenei atina'e? Na fa'apefea ona fa'atupeina?
5. E galulue uma lou aiga i lenei atina'e? Oa latou galuega e fai?
6. Ua e silafia pe ua e fa'alogo ile polokalame ua taua o le ABCD?
7. O lea sou silafia e mo'omia pea le a'oa'o o le polokalame lea ole ABCD mo le fa'aleleia atili ai o atina'e ile lumana'i.
 - Lagolagoina
 - Le lagolagoina
8. O lea sou silafia olea le matafaioi po'o le pitola'au a NGOs i le fa'aogaina o aseta olo'o maua lava i totonu ole atunu'u?
9. O lea sou silafia, o iai le agava'a i nu'u ma alalafaga i tua latou te fa'alauiloaina ai lava e latou a latou atina'e (ele mo'omia tele se fesoasoani, po'o e le mo'omia se fesoasoani). Afai e ioe pe leai lau tali, aisea?

(E) Puleaina o aseta o lo'o maua i totonu ole atunu'u e tagata Samoa.

1. O a aseta o lo'o mafai ona umia ma pulea lava e tagata Samoa?
 - Si'osi'omaga (ele'ele, sami...)
 - Poto ma agava'a masani fa'a le aganu'u
 - Tagata
 - Tupe
2. E mafai ona fofoa mai nisi aseta taua i le galueaina o lenei poloketi?
3. O le a le malosi ma le tele oni au aseta o iai ma lau pule i nei aseta? Au mai se fa'ata'ita'ga..
4. O le a lou silafia o ai e sili ona tele aseta ma le pulea o aseta?
(ta'ita'i o nu'u, matai o aiga...)
5. E ia te 'oe le pule o nei aseta pe tutusa tou aia ma nisi tagata?
Ioe / leai, /isi
6. E iai nisi ole tou aiga e nonofo i atunu'u mamao? E maua mai se fesoasoani mo 'oe lava, po'o se fesoasoani mole fa'atinoina o lenei poloketi? O le a sou silafia, ole fesoasoani lea e maua mai aiga i fafo, ose aseta taua e ui o lo'o nonofo i atunu'u mamao?

(I) O le a le malosi o lo'o mafai ai lava e atina'e i totonu ole atunu'u ona una'ia lava latou? (po'o olo'o aia mai iai isi fa'alapotopotoga)

1. O le a sou silafia, o aia mai nei fa'alapotopotoga mai tua i le faatinoina o nei atina'e? O a nei fa'alapotopotoga? (fa'ata'ita'iga; latou olo'o fa'atupeina atina'e, NGOs, malo o Samoa, tagata Samoa olo'o alala i atunu'u mamao)

O le a sou silafia i nei a'afiaga mai fafo atu ole atina'e, o fesoasoani ile atina'e pe leai? E iai ni fa'afitauli i lea tulaga?

2. E fa'apefea ona fesoasoani le polokalame o le ABCD e fa'aleleia ma una'ia atina'e i totonu ole atunu'u?

(O) Matafaioi taua a NGOs i le fa'atonutonuina ma fa'amalosia atina'e i le atunu'u lautele.

1. Oa ni auala ete silafia olo'o mafai ona fa'ailoa mai ai e NGOs lagona ma mana'oga o le lautele ole atunu'u i nu'u ma alalafaga?
2. O le a sou silafia i le matafaioi a NGOs i le fa'atonutonuina o atina'e i Samoa?
3. O le a le matafaioi a NGOs i le tulaga lea o le fa'atauaina lea o aseta o lo'o mafai ona maua i totonu lava ole atunu'u?

Appendix 3: In-depth Interview Guide: (NGO Practitioner)

(A) Local understanding and the Value of ABCD to local community development as an alternative approach

1. What is your understanding of the ABCD, and what can ABCD offer to effectively promote community development?
2. Do you think there is a need to learn more about this ABCD concept to enhance local development in future?
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
3. Do you see NGOs playing an important role in promoting asset-based approach as an alternative approach? (If Yes, how?)
 - a. Yes
 - No
4. Do you think rural communities have the ability to promote community development on their own? Or do you still see the need for NGO intervention to achieve development? (with minimum or no outside influence- If Yes/No, why?)

(B) Access and control of locals over local assets

5. What assets do you know local people have access to and control over?
 - Environment (land, sea)
 - Local/traditional skills and knowledge
 - People
 - Financial
6. To what extent do they have access to and control over these assets? Can you give examples...
7. Who do you think have the most access to and control over these assets? (Village leaders, family matais...)

(C) To what extent is development being locally driven (or externally influence)

8. Do you think local development is still being influenced by outsiders? Who are these outsiders in your view? (e.g donors, NGOs, Government, Samoan living overseas)
9. What is your view of this influence by outsiders? Does it help or hinder development locally?
10. How can ABCD offer to improve locally driven development?

(D) Crucial role of NGOs as facilitators of community development process

11. In what ways do you think NGOs have represented the interests of rural communities?
12. How do you view the role of NGOs as facilitators of these rural-based projects?
13. How important is the role of NGOs in promoting locally-driven development?
14. How do you see your relationship with donors? Does it help or hinder them in taking the asset-based approach?

Appendix 4: Interview Guide in Samoan for NGOs

PEPA FESILI – (Faalapotopotoga Tumaoti)

(A) O le malamalamaga o tagata Samoa, o le taua ma le aoga o le a’oa’oina ma fa’alauiloa le polokalame o le ABCD aua le atina’eina o le lautele o le atunu’u, ma o le isi lea tulaga taua ua tatau ona taga’i toto’a iai.

1. O lea sou silafia i le a’oa’oina o le polokalame o le ABCD, ma o le se aoga o lenei lava polokalame mo le fa’alelei atili o le atina’eina o le lautele o le atunu’u?
2. O lea sou taofi, e mo’omia pea le a’oa’oina ma fa’alauiloa le polokalame lea ole ABCD e fa’aleleia ai pea atina’e i le lumana’i?
Ioe / Leai
3. O taua le tiute fai a NGOs i le fa’alauiloaina lea o aseta ma meatotino o lo’o maua lava i totonu o Samoa? Ioe /Leai
Afai e Ioe lau tali, aisea?
4. O lea sou silafia, o iai le agava’a i nu’u ma alalafaga i tua latou te fa’alauiloa ai lava e latou a latou atina’e? Pe latou te mo’omia pea le lagolagosua a NGOs ina ia mafai ai ona maua le sini oa latou atina’e? (ele mo’omia tele, e le mo’omia)
Ioe /Leai Aisea?

(E) Aseta o lo’o maua i Samoa ma le puleaina o ia aseta.

1. Olea sou silafia, oa aseta o lo’o mafai na maua lava i Samoa, ma o ai e iai le pule o nei aseta?
 - Si’osi’omaga (’ele’ele, sami)
 - Poto ma agava’a masani
 - Tagata
 - Tulaga tau tupe
2. Ole a le malosi latou te fa’aaogaina, aiaina ma pulea ai nei aseta? Aumai se fa’ata’itaiga...
3. Ete silafia o ai e sili atu ona iai le pule ma le aia e fa’aaogaina ai nei aseta? (ta’ita’i o nu’u, matai o aiga, ...)

(I) O lea le malosi o lo’o una’ia ai lava e nu’u ma alalafaga a latou atina’e? (o aia mai isi fa’alapotopotoga?)

1. O lea sou silafia, o iai lava ni a’afiaga p’o ni fa’afitauli i le fa’atinoina o atina’e ona ole aia mai o isi fa’alapotopotoga i fafo atu? Afai e iai, o ai nei fa’alapotopotoga? (fa’ata’ita’iga;latou e fa’atupeina atina’e, NGOs, malo Samoa, latou olo’o alala i atunu’u mamao...)
2. Ete silafia oa ni a’afiaga ile tulaga ua taua iluga? Ma o fesoasoani e fa’alelei atina’e pe leai?
3. Oa ni tulaga e mafai ai ele polokalame ole ABCD ona fa’aleleia atina’e i nu’u ma alalafaga?

(O) Matafaioi taua a NGOs ile fa’atonutonuina o atina’e i le atunu’u lautele.

1. Oa ni auala ua mafai ai e NGOs ona fa'ailoa mai mana'oga ma lagona mo'omia o le lautele ole atunu'u i nu'u ma alafaga i tua?
2. O lea sou silafia i le matafaioi a NGOs i le fa'atonutonuina o atina'e i nu'u ma alafaga i tua?
3. O lea le taua o le matafaioi a NGOs ile fa'alauiloaina ma le una'ia o atina'e i totonu ole atunu'u?
4. O lea sou silafia ile faiga pa'aga ma i latou o lo'o aumai ai fesoasoani tau tupe e fa'atinoina ai atina'e? O fesoasoani pe o iai se fa'afitauli ile fa'aaogaina lea o aseta o lo'o maua i le atunu'u?

Appendix 5: In-depth Interview Guide for Government/Donor(s)

(A) Local understanding and the Value of ABCD to local community development as an alternative approach

- 1) What is your understanding of the ABCD, and what can ABCD offer to effectively promote community development?
- 2) Do you think there is a need to learn more about this ABCD concept to enhance local development in future?
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
- 3) Do you see NGOs playing an important role in promoting asset-based as an alternative approach? (If Yes, how?)
 - a. Yes
 - No
- 4) DO you see Donors playing an important role in promoting asset-based as an alternative approach to local development? (Do you see ABCD as an alternative approach?)
- 5) Do you think rural communities have the ability to promote ABCD on their own? Or do you still see the need for donor intervention to achieve development? (with minimum or no outside influence- If Yes/No, why?)

(B) To what extent is development being locally driven (or externally influenced)

6. Do you think local development is still being influenced by outsiders? Who are these outsiders in your view? (e.g donors, NGOs, Government etc)
7. What is your view of this influence by outsiders? Does it help or hinder development locally?
8. How can ABCD offer to improve locally driven development?

(C) Crucial role of NGOs as facilitators of community development process

9. In what ways do you think NGOs have represented the interests of rural communities?
10. How do you view the role of NGOs as facilitators of these rural-based projects?
11. How important is the role of NGOs in promoting locally-driven development?

(D) Role of Government

12. What is the crucial role of the Government of Samoa (GoS) in this process of promoting ABCD and local development? (to sustain development, financial source, facilitator, partner, etc ??)

(E) Role of Donor

13. What is the crucial role of donor agencies in this process of promoting ABCD and local development? (to sustain development, financial source, facilitator, partner, etc ??)

Appendix 6: Information Sheet

TOPIC: The Asset-Based Community Development Approach (ABCD) in action: An analysis of the work of two NGOs in Samoa

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher's Introduction

My name is Ronicera Fuimaono, 28 years old and currently undertaking studies towards a Master's degree in Development Studies here in Massey University, under the supervision of Dr. Rochelle Stewart-Withers. I have worked in Samoa in the last 5-6 years with the Non-governmental Organisations (Civil society sector) and thus my interest in this specific field of development stemmed from my invaluable experience gained from being engaged in this sector.

Project Description and Invitation

The main purpose of the research is to examine the works of two locally-based Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). The two rural-based projects selected for this research are; (i) fine-mate (ietoga) project facilitated by Women in Business Development Inc. (WIBDI); and (ii) hand crafting project facilitated by Tagiilima Handicrafts Association (THA). Special attention is given to the approaches used by these NGOs to achieving development locally, as facilitators of these rural projects. The assessment will be done in the context of the so called Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in terms of access and control of locals over existing local assets. ABCD offers a set of principles and practices to sustain community economic development. It is an approach to community-based development based on the principles of; (i) appreciating and mobilizing individual and community skills, knowledge and assets (rather than on problems and needs); (ii) community-driven development rather than externally driven by outside agencies. The key stakeholders required to be involved in this study would include the NGO members (rural project participants), NGOs staff/Board, and donor agencies.

Therefore, researcher courteously invites these stakeholders to take part in this study.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

Letters of request have been issued to the organisations involved. Researcher will consult with the NGOs (WIBDI and THA) involved regarding prospective participants. The sites are purposely selected since that one project is based on the main Island (Upolu) while the second project is situated on the other Island (Savaii), hence acquires more of a rural setting. The researcher still has to be careful that these gatekeepers do not take control of the selection and recruitment process of participants involving the NGO members, but rather use another approach appropriate to identify participants. The study intends to have about 10-15 participants, whereby 5 project members involved in the rural projects will be selected, 1 NGO staff, NGO CEO or Director, and a representative of the donor agencies (including NZAID, AUSAID and EU).

The names of the NGO members will be obtained from the NGOs. Focus group discussion will also be conducted with the project participants from each NGO.

Project Procedures

Both NGOs have given approval of participation in this study as a response to the letters of invitations that have been issued to them. The NGOs as gatekeepers will be consulted by the researcher again when on island to assist with selecting and recruiting prospective participants. The researcher will then have to obtain contact details of these participants and other key

informants to arrange for meetings including date and time of availability for the interviews. These interviews will be carried out according to time and place most suitable to the participants, and the duration for each interview is intended for a maximum of 60 minutes.

The home-located fieldwork process is planned for a maximum of 6-8 weeks (from mid-May until late June 2011). Researcher ensures to minimise risks as the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants will be maintained throughout the course of research.

Data collected from this research will be stored securely by researcher, and used solely for the purpose of this study. A summary of the findings from this study will be sent to participants upon request and can be accessed online via Massey Library.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study (specify timeframe);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

If any other questions with regards to this research, please do not hesitate to contact;

Researcher:

Ronicera Fuimaono

Email: rc.fuimaono@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Dr. Rochelle Stewart-Withers

(Lecturer Institute of Development Studies)

Email: r.r.stewart_withers@massey.ac.nz

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz”.

.....

Appendix 7: PEPA O FA'AMATALAGA (Information Sheet in Samoan)

O le taua ma le aoga o atina'e ma faiva alofilima a se fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti a tagata Samoa lava latou, e fa'aaogaina ai lo latou lava atamai, e faia lava i totonu o Samoa. O leni su'esu'ega e aga'i tonu lava i galuega taulima ma faiva alofilima a fa'alapotopotoga nei ua taua o le Tagiilima Handicrafts Association (THA), atoa ai ma galuega fai ma faiva alofilima a le fa'alapotopotoga a Tina fai Pisinisi Samoa i totonu lava o Samoa, ua taua o le Women in Business (WIBD). O Tala po'o Galuega Fa'atusatusa ia i totonu lava o Samoa.

Upu Tomua

O lo'u igoa o Ronicera Vaipaepae Fuimaono, e 28 o'u tausaga ma o le taimi nei o lo'o o'u a'oga ile Univesite i Massey i P/North i Niusila ma o lo'o tau fa'amae'a lo'u fa'ailoga o le Master's Degree fa'atatau i le atina'eina o atunu'u tau atia'e aemaise tagata lautele (Development Studies), ma o a'u o lo'o i lalo o le ta'ita'iga a le faiaoga o Dr. Rochelle Stewart – Withers. Sa ou faigaluega i Samoa mo le sili atu ile lima(5) tausaga i se fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti, NGO, ma o iina na ou maua ai se lagona naunauta'i tele ou te fia faigaluega ai pea aua le atina'eina o tagata lautele aemaise i latou e mo'omia le fesoasoani mo le fa'alelei o tulaga tau le tamaoiga, i nu'u ma alalafaga i tua.

Fa'amatalaga o le Poloketi

O le autu po'o le manulauti o leni su'esu'ega, o le fia iloa lea o galuega ma faiva alofilima a nei fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti i totonu lava o Samoa.(Two local-based NGOs). A nei atina'e po'o faiva alofilima o lo'o fa'atinoina i alalafaga i tua ua taua;

- i) Ie toga (ie nini'i) e pei ona fa'atinoina ma taulamua ai le Fa'alapotopotoga a "Tina fai Pisinisi i Samoa" (Women in Business Development Inc.) (WIBDI)
- ii) O galuega Taulima po'o faiva alofilima o lo'o fa'atinoina e le Fa'alapotopotoga a le Tagiilima Handicrafts Association(THA)

E fa'apitoa lava se tulaga e taga'i iai ma se sa'ili'iliga i auala o lo'o fa'aaogaina e nei fa'alapotopotoga (NGOs), mo le 'ausiaina lea o matati'a ma le fa'amanuiaina lea o nei atina'e i totonu lava o Samoa, ona o latou o lo'o fa'atinoina pea nei galuega ma nei atina'e. O leni su'es'uega o lea fa'aaogaina ai se auala i le fa'aaogaina pea lea o aseta po'o meatotino o lo'o maua lava i totonu o Samoa atoa ai ma le fuafua lelei ma va'ai lelei o nei mea totino. Ua ta'ua lea tulaga o le Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). Ma ua iai ni ta'iala ma ni alafua ua fa'ata'atitia e leni fa'alapotopotoga (ABCD) ina ia maua'a pea tulaga o le tamaoiga ma lona atina'eina ele gata i tagata lautele a'o le atunu'u. O ia ta'iala ua taua i lalo;

- i) Aloa'ia ma una'ia agava'a ma le poto masani i tagata lautele, atoa ai ma le taliaina o aseta po'o meatotino ua iai, ('ae fa'ata'atia ese fa'afitauli ma manaoga ele mo'omia)
- ii) Ia una'ia atina'e ma galuega i totonu lava o le siosiomaga o Samoa ma tagata lautele, ae aua le fa'alagolago i isi tulaga ma tagata fafo atu o le fa'alapotopotoga. Ma o uo ma pa'aga e patino tonu iai leni su'esu'ega e aofia ai sui o lo'o galulue i fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti (NGOs), (i latou o lo'o galulue i nu'u ma alalafaga), sui

faigaluega ale NGO, sui ole Komiti Fa'atino ale NGO, ma i latou o lo'o maua mai ai fesoasoani tau tupe e fa'atino ai nei atina'e.

O mafua'aga na o le mo'omia o sao oi latou na, po'o uo ma pa'aga aua le fa'atinoina o lenei su'esu'ega.

Tulaga mo'omia e fa'amaonia ai Sui Auai.

Ua mae'a ona tau'a'aoina atu tusi vala'au aloa'ia i Fa'alapotopotoga nei. O lea fa'apena foi ona faia ni fa'atalatalanoaga ma fa'alapotopotoga nei, ua taua ole (WIBDI & THA), e uiga i sui e tatau ona auai mai lenei a'oa'oga po'o se su'esu'ega fo'i. O le filifilia oni nofoaga e faia ai nei a'oa'oga e taua tele ona o se tasi o atina'e e fa'aogaina i leni a'oa'oga o lo'o fa'atinoina i Upolu, ma e fa'apena foi i le isi atina'e, o lo'o fa'atinoina i le motu tele i Savai'i, ma e mo'omia se si'osi'omaga talafeagai aemaise nu'u ma alalafaga ona e taua tele mo lenei su'esu'ega. Ma e iai fo'i le fa'aetete i lenei su'esu'ega i le filifiliina foi o i latou e tatau na auai i lenei su'esu'ega, aemaise le a'afia ai o sui o NGOs, ma e sili ai ona fa'aaogaina se 'auala talafeagai lelei e filifili ai ni sui e tatau na auai. O lenei su'esu'ega e fuafua ia auai ni sui se 10-12, mai fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti(NGOS), aemaise lava NGOs o lo'o iai atina'e ia o lo'o fa'aaogaina i lenei su'esu'ega, ma, 4-5 ni sui e mo'omia mai iai latou o lo'o fa'atinoina nei atina'e, 1(tasi) se sui faigaluega mai le NGO o lo'o lagolagoina lenei atina'e, ole Pule sili(CEO), po'o le sui Fa'atonu(Director), atoa ai ma se sui mai le Ofisa o lo'o maua ai tupe e fa'atino ai atina'e, o le ofisa o Niu Sila, (NZAIID).

O suafa o i latou e fai ma sui o NGOs po'o fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti e maua mai ofisa o NGOs nei. O lea vaevaeina uma sui e auai i lenei a'oa'oga ini vaega(groups), ma e fa'aaogaina uma ai lava sui aemaise i latou o lo'o fa'atinoina ma lagolagoina nei atina'e mai fa'alapotopotoga po'o NGOs ta'itasi.

Fa'agasologa o le A'oa'oga/Su'esu'ega

Ua mae'a ona fa'aailoa mai le taliaina e nei fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti (NGOs) lo latou auai ma ii lenei su'esu'ega/a'oa'oga e tali fuaitau mai ai i tusi vala'au sa tu'uina atu iai. Aepeita'i ane, o le auai aloa'ia mai ale fa'alapotopotoga tuma'oti ale (THA), e le'i iai se fa'amaoniga ale Komiti Fa'atino. Talu ai ona o NGOs o le faitoto'a lea mo sui e tatau ona 'auai mai i lenei a'oa'oga, o lea fa'apea ona feso'ota'i ma talanoa pea iai pea fa'aolatia i fanua le faigamalaga aua lava le filifiliina ma le tofia lelei oni sui auai. Ma olea fa'apea foi ona ou taga'i ile filifiliina o sui auai ina ia mautinoa ia lelei ona fa'atino, ia 'aua ne'i iai se fa'aitu'au ma le fa'aailoga lanu, ina ia mautinoa ia sa'o ma lelei ni fa'ai'uga ma fa'amatalaga e maua mai i lenei a'oa'oga. Ma olea mana'omia uma tulaga mo'omia/talafeagai mo le feso'ota'i atu i sui o lea auai, ma olea fa'apea fo'i ona tapa nisi tulaga e mo'omia e fuafuina ai ni fonotaga po'o ni fa'atalatalanoaga ma sui o lea auai, pei o taimi, aso ma nofoaga e fai ai ni fa'atalatalanoaga. Ma o nei fa'atalatalanoaga o lea fa'ataunu'uina e fuafua i le taimi ma nofoaga e matua talafeagai mo sui o lea mafai ona auai i lenei a'oa'oga. Ma ole taimi fuafua mo nei fa'atalatalanoaga e fuafua ia le sili atu ma le 60 minute.

O lenei su'esu'ega/a'oa'oga e fia fa'atinoina i Samoa, ma e fuafua e fa'aaogaina uma motu tetele e lua, o Upolu ma Savai'i. Ma o le fa'amoemoe pea sologa lelei mea uma, e fuafua e fa'atinoina mo se taimi e tusa ma le ono(6) vaiaso, ma ole taimi fuafuaina (mai le ogatotonu o Me – Iuni 2011). Ma olea silasila toto'a lava iai lo'u nei tagata ina ia mautinoa ia puipuia aia tatau ma nisi tulaga talafeagai mo le saogalemu a sui olea auai i lenei a'oa'oga e ala lea i le fa'ata'atitia lelei o aiaiga talafeagai mo nei fa'amoemoe i le taimi e fa'atino ai lenei a'oa'oga.

O fa'amatalaga uma o lea maua i lenei a'oa'oga o lea mautinoa le teu malu ma puipuia lelei, ma olea fa'aaogaina lava i le mafua'aga tonu na ala ai ona fa'atino lenei a'oa'oga po'o lenei su'esu'ega. O se ripoti tu'ufa'atasi fo'i mai lenei su'esu'ega, o lea mafai ona lafoina atu i sui auai pea talosagaina, ae le gata i lea, e mafai ona e silasila iai i luga internet i lalo ole Massey Library.

Aia Tatau a Sui Auai

E leai se afaina pea e le taliaina le vala'aulia. O lou fia 'auai, o lau aia tatau lava lea a 'oe;

- E le fa'amalosia lou taliina o se fesili
- E mafai ona e tu'ua le a'oa'oga (ise taimi ua e fuafuaina)
- E mafai ona e fesili i so'o se fesili e fa'atatau i le a'oa'oga i taimi e fa'atino ai le a'oa'oga
- O fa'amatalaga o lea tu'uina mai, e mautinoa o lea le fa'ailoaina lou suafa se'i vagana ua e finagalo malie lava 'oe e fa'ailoa lou suafa.
- E mafai ona e silasila i se ripoti tu'ufa'atasi ai fa'ai'uga ma fa'amatalaga e maua ma ii lenei a'oa'oga pea mae'a.

Afai e iai nisi tulaga e fia malamalama atili a ii leni lava a'oa'oga, fa'amolemole fa'afeso'ota'i mai;

Ronicera Fuimaono

Mobile: # +6420211840030

Phone: # +6423587328

Email: rc:fuimaono@gmail.com

Supervisor

Dr. Rochelle Stewart – Withers

(Lecturer Institute of Development Studies)

Email: r.r.stewart_withers@massey.ac.nz

O lenei poloketi sa iloiloina e le vaega e iloiloina mataupu fa'apea ma sa iai se latou fa'ai'uga e fa'apea e maualalo lava le tulaga e ono a'afia ai le fa'atinoina o lenei poloketi. Mulimuli ane e le'i iloiloina lenei poloketi ele Komiti a le Univesite O le latou matafaioi lena;(University's of Human Ethics Committees). O i latou o lo'o fa'auluulu iai le fa'atinoina o lenei poloketi e pei ona taua i luga o lo'o ua fa'alagolago lava iai le fa'atinoina i tulaga uma mo'omia ma le talafeagai mo le sologa lelei ole poloketi i ona vaega uma lava. Afai lava e iai se vaega ile fa'atinoina o lenei poloketi e te le fiafia iai, ma e le mafai ona e talanoa iai latou o lo'o fa'auluulu iai lenei poloketi po'o lenei a'oa'oga, e mafai lava ona fa'afeso'ota'i nisi oi latou ile Univesite pei o; Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to Vice Chancellor (Research Ethics)

Appendix 8: Participant Descriptions

Community Participants' descriptions by NGO, position, village, project and gender

NGO	Position	Village	Project	Gender
THA	Board member/regular member	Vaiusu	Project 1	Male
THA	Board member/regular member	Vaiusu	Project 1	Male
THA	Board member/regular member	Vaiusu	Project 1	Female
THA	Board member/regular	Vaiusu	Project	Male
WIBDI	Member	Sataua	Project 2	Female
WIBDI	Member	Sataua	Project 2	Female
WIBDI	Community representative on the Executive Board/regular member	Tufutafoe	Project 2	Female
WIBDI	Member	Sataua	Project 2	Female
WIBDI	Member	Falealupo	Project 2	Female
WIBDI	Member	Sataua	Project 2	Female

Organisational Participants' descriptions by position and gender

Organisation	Position	Gender
THA	Advisor to the Board/Member of THA	Female
WIBDI	Executive Director	Female
SUNGO	Chief Executive Officer	Female
Government of Samoa: Ministry of Finance	Civil Society Support Program (CSSP) Manager	Female
NZAID Donor Agency	NZAID Manager (in Samoa)	Male
EU Donor Agency	EU Manager (in Samoa)	Male
AusAID Donor Agency	Activity Manager	Female

Appendix 11: Focus Group Discussion at THA's display Centre (Vaiusu)





Ie-sae Weavers



Ie-sae weavers in Savai'i. Every Wednesday the women gather at their usual place (*fale-lalaga*) to weave. Fortunately, I was able to visit them on a Wednesday during their *fale-lalaga*.



Appendix 12: Human Research Ethics Committee Approval Letter



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

12 May 2011

Ronicera Fuimaono
105 Clifton Terrace
Fitzherbert
PALMERSTON NORTH 4410

Dear Ronicera

Re: The Value of an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach to Development: Case Study of Samoa

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 12 May 2011.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research."

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

John G O'Neill (Professor)
**Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)**

cc Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers
School of People, Environment and Planning
PN331

Prof Regina Scheyvens
School of People, Environment and Planning
PN331

Mrs Mary Roberts, HoS Secretary
School of People, Environment and Planning
PN331

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Te Kunenga
ki Pūrehuroa

Research Ethics Office, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand
T +64 6 350 5573 F +64 6 350 5622
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animalethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz
www.massey.ac.nz