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Exploring community-based development:

A case study of the Estate and rural community development in

North Malaita, Solomon Islands

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of International Development at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2013
Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the concept of community development. In particular, the role and contribution of a community-based initiative in development will be explored. Based on the case study of the Estate, which was introduced in North Malaita in the mid-2000s, this thesis seeks to explore how this initiative contributes to positive community development, which is concerned with not only economic aspects, but also social, cultural and spiritual aspects of development. This study also seeks to understand the underlying premises and development values, the success stories and positive impacts of the Estate programs and projects on people’s lives and communities, as well as the constraints and challenges facing the Estate and rural community development in North Malaita of Solomon Islands.

This study of the Estate and community development in North Malaita recognises that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to development which should focus on all dimensions of development which is concerned with the goal of improving the total wellbeing of the people, and on building a strong, healthy and functional community. The Estate has shown that this all-comprising development can be based on collective involvement of local people and institutions driving their own development. This study found that partial approaches to development that only focus on service provision, discrete initiatives, information dissemination, and provision of resources to meet perceived needs have failed to bring about tangible and transformative change and positive development in rural communities in North Malaita and Solomon Islands. Thus, a different approach is being suggested, one that is context based and inclusive, with emphasis on the role of local people to organize their own communities and to utilize local resources to drive development. Far more than a concept that is about development in the rural communities, this study embraces the notion that community development is about development of the community, which includes improvement of the total wellbeing – or the ‘good life’ and keeps building a strong community.
Acknowledgement

Reaching this milestone could not be possible without the following people:

Firstly, acknowledgement to my supervisors: Dr Maria Borovnik, thank you so much for the many advices and the faith you always have in me. Many moments of confusion and stress always turn into smiles, self-belief and determination from your encouragement. My family also extends our sincere thank you for your kindness and many supports. Associate Professor Glenn Banks, thank you for your invaluable advice and wisdom. Your thoughts always give new insights of my work. Special thanks to Professor Regina Scheyvens for facilitating the group presentations. Thank you for your critical comments. Massey Development studies team is small and strong.

Secondly, the Estate leadership: Rev. Michael Maeliau, you are an inspiration and mentor. It was unfortunate that missed an interview with you during the fieldwork. Your life and wisdom will continue to impact North Malaita and the Estate movement. Thanks Mr Glenn Waneta for all the arrangement and awareness which made my fieldwork a success.

Thirdly, the New Zealand Government’s NZAID program, thank you for funding my fulltime study at Massey University. Sincere gratitude to Ms Silvia Hooker, Ms Leuaina Vaai-Hatier, Mr Jamie Hooper and the staff at the International Student Office.

Thirdly, all Interview participants thank you all for availing your time and knowledge. This page is limited to acknowledge you by name. This project could not be possible without you.

Fourthly, Mr. Sunlou (sonny) Liuvaie, at the Pasifika Centre for Teaching and Learning, thank you for your invaluable support, advice and proof reading of my thesis. Also, sincere thanks to Mr John Terry of Massey chaplaincy centre.

Finally to my dear wife (Sandy R. Manate’e-Kwaimani) and two girls (Emma Taga’alatha & Rhona Rigoalatha), you are such a blessing in my life. Thank you dad (Festus Faiau) for your many prayers, today, as always, you prayers have been answered.

i.....e God ae, thufa lea nau ae, ku’tago ku’tago oe God nau o lea olea, Lea la ma fa’ino la ku falea i femu, i femu, Te oe bona” (All glory to you my God!!).
Dedication

This is for you

Mom

(Rhoda Daminia Rigoalatha Mothenarii Faiau).

You left an empty vacuum in my life when you were called to the eternal home on


Today the heavenly father has filled our hearts with joy of accomplishment
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<tr>
<td>AusAid</td>
<td>Australian Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEMA</td>
<td>Commodity Export &amp; Marketing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE</td>
<td>Council of Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Estate Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMS</td>
<td>Financial Management Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMSI</td>
<td>Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSEC</td>
<td>South Seas Evangelical Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIPL</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Plantation Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD</td>
<td>Tabernacle of David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPA</td>
<td>Townsville Peace Agreement</td>
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