Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
IN THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT OF EAST TIMOR:
A CASE STUDY OF A LOCAL NGO, YAYASAN ETADEP
(Yayasan Ema maTA Dalan ba Progressu)

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy
in Development Studies at Massey University,
New Zealand

ANACLETO DA COSTA RIBEIRO
2000
Dedicated to the people of East Timor and NGOs or development agents involving in the rebuilding East Timor who believe that development is:

"Go to the people
Live among the people
Learn from the people
Plan with the people
Work with the people
Start with what the people know
Build on what the people have
Teach by showing, learn by doing
Not a showcase but a pattern
Not odds and ends but a system
Not piecemeal but integrated approach
Not to conform but to transform
NOT RELIEF BUT RELEASE." *

(Dr. Y.C. James Yen)

* The Credo of Rural Reconstruction
The Philosophy, Principles and Practice of Rural Reconstruction,
International Institute of Rural Reconstruction.
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my Lord for His extraordinary blessing so that I can formulate this piece of work. In the most difficult times when I confronted with so much problems in my studies there was always way out. My prayers were always answered.

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Barbara Nowak and Prof. John Overton, the Head of Global Studies, for their continuous support and willingness to help whenever I needed. I wish to acknowledge their encouragement, guidance and patience for me while I was struggling to finish my studies in the most difficult times. From them the institute of Development Studies has become a second home for me.

My special thanks to my wife (Dircia) and my children (Nadia and Jonovan) and all my families in East Timor for they have been the source of inspiration and motivation for me to face and conquer the problems I encountered during the course of my studies.

I am grateful to the New Zealand Government, The ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) for the financial support (scholarship) it provided throughout my study so that I could pursue and complete my master’s degree in development studies at Massey University.

I would like to thank my colleagues in ETADEP: Mr. Gilman A.E. Santos (the Director of ETADEP) and other staff who were very supportive and contributed a lot throughout the process my data collection in East Timor.

I am thankful my East Timorese friends and families in Palmerston North, New Zealand for their support while I was pursuing my studies at Massey University.

Finally, for those who have contributed to my work but their names are not mentioned here I will always wish the best in your lives. May God bless you all!
ABSTRACT

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been actors on the development stage longer than the World Bank, the United Nations or any other official agency. Throughout the 1980s they have played a greater role than previously because of their greater diversity, credibility and creativity. Therefore, they have now moved to the centre stage of development as significant development agents in the civil society sector. Being significant agents in development, it is important to understand their roles. The current spectrum of NGO activities has emerged from the 19th Century, and been shaped in the past 30 years by the search for alternatives and by emerging new needs and concerns.

Realising the importance and relevance of understanding the role NGOs in development, this study seeks to assess the role of a local NGO, ETADEP, operating in the specific development context of East Timor. The situation in East Timor was unfavourable due to its unstable political status which has been the predominant factor affecting and shaping an NGO’s work in this local context. Thus, to gain a better understanding of the role NGOs in East Timor, the assessment should be in line with the existing factors and problems faced by an NGO in this specific context. In addition, this study also attempts to define and classify local NGOs in East Timor i.e. ETADEP into an alternative typology.

This study collects firsthand data through interviews, observations and secondary data from archival records or documents such as: reports, evaluations, publications. Documents were selected from ETADEP’s files between the years 1987 and 1998. Informal in-depth interviews were also conducted with relevant individuals who have been either actors of grass-root development or partners of ETADEP.

The findings of this study concludes that ETADEP though operated in such a unfavourable atmosphere has contributed to the process of improving socio-economic welfare of the rural community and sustainable development in East Timor through the strategy of strengthening local self-reliance groups and grassroots organisations.

Specifically, ETADEP has functioned as: a) the facilitator of development aimed at improving the socio-economic welfare of the rural community; b) the communicator between the local government, donors and the local community and
between the local communities; c) the *embryo for NGOs and grassroots organisations*; and d) the *catalyst* of innovations and participatory development approaches.

The study has also identified that ETADEP, though having multiple identities due to its incapability to identify itself properly in such a situation has embedded the four defining characteristics to be considered as an NGO in this context. Thus, a tentative typology is developed based on four main essential descriptors i.e. orientation of activities, scope of operation, main forms of control and its links with donors. This scheme, therefore, has placed ETADEP into a multiple scheme typology. However, comparatively speaking, in terms of focus and scale of ETADEP’s programs, it is more appropriate to categorize ETADEP as a *development-oriented NGO*. 
CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS i

ABSTRACTS ii

CONTENTS iv

TABLES vii

FIGURES vii

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION 1

A Brief History of NGOs' Emergence 1

NGOs as Development Alternative Agents 4

The Chances for NGOs' Wider Role in Development 6

The Problem of Defining and Classifying NGOs 7

The Focus of Study 8

The Relevance of Study to East Timor's Development 11

The Purpose of Study 12

The Methodology 13

The Organisation of Thesis 15

SUMMARY 17

NOTES 18

CHAPTER TWO

THE BOUNDARIES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF
NGOS IN DEVELOPMENT 19

The Notion Of "Development From Below" 19

NGOs: The Catalysts Of "Development From Below" 24

Building Consensus on Defining "NGO" 26

A Tentative Definition of "NGO" 29
### Alternative Schemes of NGOs’ Classification

- A Framework for NGOs’ Classification
- The Relationship between NGOs and The State
- The Legitimacy and Accountability of NGOs

**SUMMARY**

**NOTES**

### CHAPTER THREE

**AN OVERVIEW ON THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT OF EAST TIMOR**

- The Background of East Timor’s Political Status
- An Overview on Indonesian Development Strategies
- Questioning Indonesia’s Development
- The Resistance Point of View on Indonesian Development
- Chances For NGOs’ Intervention

**SUMMARY**

**NOTES**

### CHAPTER FOUR

**THE ROLE OF ETADEP IN PROMOTING GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT IN EAST TIMOR**

- The Origin of ETADEP Foundation
- ETADEP’s Community Development Programs and Projects Profile
- Strengthening Grassroots Organisations and Local NGOs
- Mobilising Public Opinion On Grassroots Development Issues
- ETADEP’s Networking and Partnership
- Strengthening the Capacity of ETADEP
- The Problems of ETADEP’s Management and Organisation

**SUMMARY**

**NOTES**
CHAPTER FIVE

A TENTATIVE TYPOLOGY FOR ETADEP 106
The Problem of Self-Identification 106
The Orientation of Development Programs 108
The Level of Operation 110
Main Forms of Control 111
Links with Donors 111
SUMMARY 113
NOTES 114

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONCLUSION 115

APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY
# LIST OF TABLES, FIGURE AND CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beneficiary groups of Rural Drinking Water Program of ETADEP (1987-1997)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The population of livestock distributed to ETADEP’s target groups in March 1993.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Distribution of ETADEP’s Agroferestry program 1997</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Growth Indicators of Credit Unions in East Timor (1990 – 1997)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Table of Contents of Bulletin FAROL</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Profile of ETADEP's Human Resources Development and Training</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 1. The dominance among the three players in society</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chart 1. The General Organisational Structure of ETADEP 1993</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>