A

Catholic Women's Programme in Malaita, Solomon Islands:

Breaking the culture of silence through empowerment.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Development Studies at Massey University

Sheila Macbride-Stewart.
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Abstract

This thesis describes the initiation, development and progress of a programme to empower Melanesian village women. The women are disadvantaged in many ways, among them being minimal literacy skills and living in a patriarchal society.

This thesis found that revealing to the women their great value and skills and so increasing their self-worth and confidence was a crucial initial step of the programme. A participatory approach to the women's empowerment targeted personal inner development of the women rather than being pre-occupied with income generating projects as so many women's programmes are. The programme expanded from teaching about leadership, women's roles and integral human development, to include a health programme and a young women's programme.

The programme is assessed in terms of the achievements of its goal of empowering women. It was found to address strategic gender needs that the women themselves had identified during the programme. Women are now more able to challenge men and tradition in order to work towards a more equitable society.

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I also want to thank you the women of the Solomon Islands, particularly the women in the Diocese of Auki, Malaita. For the years I lived there you offered me your friendship, your love and your time. It was a privilege to share your journey towards empowerment. I hope that the insights you shared about your lives have been faithfully portrayed in this thesis and that the knowledge you gave me will assist others towards empowerment.

For my special friends on the Diocesan Women's Team for the hours you spent talking to me about your culture and for sharing the experiences of your own lives, I thank you. Your friendship and laughter made each day worthwhile.

I want to thank Bishop Gerry Loft for encouraging me and allowing me to be part of the women's programme in the Diocese of Auki. His deep concern for people and his unswerving faith is an inspiration for all.

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Thanks also to all friends and family throughout the world who have supported me in my study. May we all have been empowered with some new knowledge.

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GLOSSARY

CWCSI	**Catholic Women's Council of the Solomon Islands**
CWG	**Catholic Women's Group**
CWP	**Catholic Women's Programme**
DMI	**Daughters of Mary Immaculate**
DWT	**Diocesan Women's Team**
DSE	**Development Services Exchange**
LASI	**Literacy Association of the Solomon Islands**
MHMS	**Ministry of Health and Medical Services**
NCW	**National Council of Women**
PRA	**Participatory Rural Appraisal**
STD	**Sexually Transmitted Disease**
SDA	**Seventh Day Adventist Church**
SIBC	**Solomon Island Broadcasting Corporation**
SICA	**Solomon Islands Christian Association**
SIDT	**Solomon Island Development Trust**
SSEC	**South Seas Evangelical Church**
UNESCO	**United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation**
UNICEF	**United Nations Children's Fund**
VEP	**Village Education Programme**
WDD	**Women and Development Division**
WHO	**World Health Organisation**

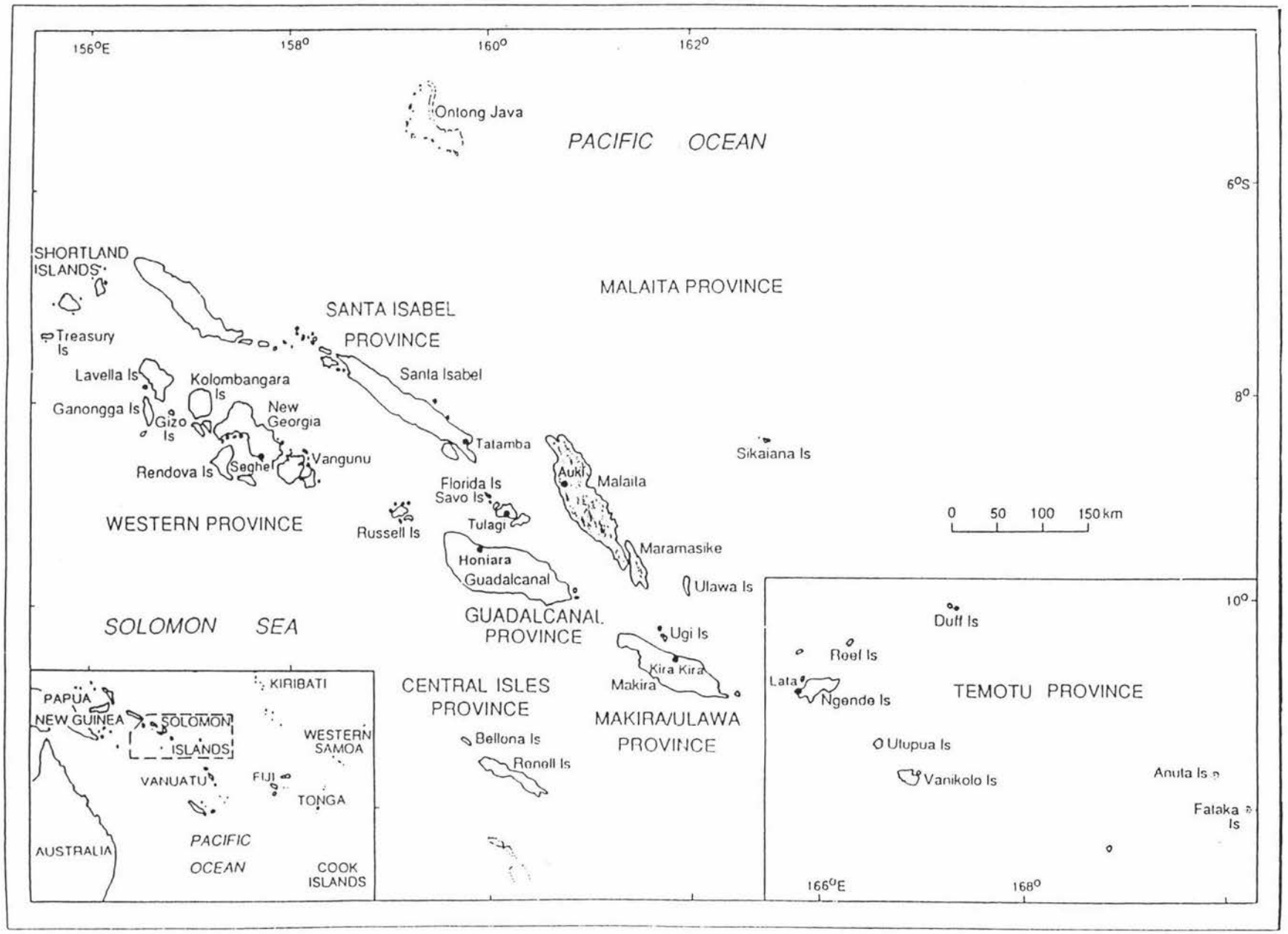

FIGURE ONE: MAP OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS SHOWING MALAITA.

CHAPTER ONE
GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTION.

This thesis sets out to help us understand the situation of women in Malaita, Solomon Islands and their journey towards empowerment. Commentators have suggested that women's programmes world-wide should be more involved in a process of empowerment through people-centred development (Sen and Grown,1987:70). A women's programme in the Catholic Diocese of Auki in the Solomon Islands has been running for the past five years and is one such programme. The Diocese covers the whole of Malaita Province (Figure One), which comprises very traditional Melanesian societies The women in Malaita generally have a low level of literacy, they have inferior status and in most aspects of life are subordinate to men. An appropriate programme focusing on empowerment should, therefore, have a major impact on their lives.

An essential prerequisite for the liberation of any group of women who lack power is to give them a sense of self-worth (Friere,1972:21), so that they come to appreciate their talents and abilities and the value of these to their families and communities. The essence of the programme in the Diocese of Auki has been to build up this self worth and to give the women a voice in the community and recognition by the men.

1a. Research Question.

This thesis will try to assess if this women's programme in Malaita Province has in fact empowered the women. This question will be considered by exploring whether their self worth and self respect have increased and whether they are beginning to take on more leadership roles in their families and communities. It will also be crucial to assess what were the obstacles that had to be overcome in order for the programme to work because then we can see if it can be replicated.

While later chapters will discuss the women's programme in Auki Diocese in detail, the remainder of this chapter will focus on describing approaches to women's development, how women's organisations can work to empower women and on defining key terms.

2. APPROACHES TO WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT.

It is important to understand that there are different ways of conceptualising

women's development needs and different approaches which can be taken in responding to these needs. Caroline Moser (1989) provides us with a useful analysis of approaches to women's development.

2a. Practical and strategic gender needs.

Gender awareness emphasises how men and women have different roles in society. These different roles are shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural determinants (Moser,1989:1800). Because women and men have different roles to play, they naturally have different needs to be met. In the past the planning process has paid insufficient attention to meeting women's needs.

Women's gender needs can be divided into practical gender needs and strategic gender needs. Practical gender needs include those immediate needs felt by the women. For example, for women in a village this may involve improved diet by way of growing vegetables, sewing skills to make their own clothes or a good water supply. Strategic gender needs are those needs which, if met, should free the women from subordination to men. For example, if women's understanding of their role in a society is enhanced, this can give them the courage to challenge the division of labour with regards to child care. In the past, most projects for women have focused on practical gender needs, but it is essential that they consider strategic gender needs too if there is to be a long term improvement in their position in society.

2b. Five policy approaches to women's development.

Following on from the concept of practical and strategic gender needs, Moser went on to identify five general policy approaches to women's development. Because they are based on different assumptions, the impacts they have on women's lives vary greatly.

Welfare.

From 1950-1970 most approaches to third world women's development in countries under colonial administration were based on modernisation theory. Modernisation theory depends on traditional values being displaced by modern ones, through diffusion from the so-called more advanced societies. Historically, modernisation is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that developed in Western Europe and North America in the seventeenth to nineteenth century (Webster,1984:53). It was assumed that women's position would improve with the increased prosperity of the men. Another focus was to bring women into development as better mothers because this was seen as their

most important role. For example, in the Solomon Islands the Women's Interest Office[1] and church women's organisations focused on promoting and improving women's skills as housewives based largely on the Western model. The women were taught advanced pattern cutting, cake making, crocheting and embroidery (Lateef,1990:31). There was little consultation with the women; they were seen as passive recipients of development rather than participants in the development process. As in other countries of the third world, motherhood was seen as the most important role for women (Moser,1993:59-60).

Modernisation theory inspired the welfare approach to women's development. This welfare approach is the oldest and still the most popular approach to development for third world women. It involves a top down handout of free goods and services which create dependency rather than self-reliance. If skills were taught, they were ones thought to be appropriate for women not engaged in paid employment. This way of development was seen to be politically safe, not questioning or challenging the traditionally accepted role of women. It did, however, meet some of their practical gender needs (Moser,1989:1808).

Equity.

In the equity approach to women's development, women are seen as active participants of the development process. It is recognised that through their paid and unpaid work they provide a significant contribution to the economic growth of the country, even if this is not recorded in official statistics.

Under the equity approach, top down interventions are constructed to meet practical gender needs by giving women access to employment and the market place. This approach places considerable emphasis on economic independence as being synonymous with equity. So by reducing the inequality between men and women, especially in the sexual division of labour, this approach at least potentially meets a strategic need.

At least two problematic assumptions are made in the equity approach. These are that development is helpful, and that women want to be integrated into the mainstream of Western designed development in which they have no choice in forming the kind of society they want. The equity approach is unpopular with third world

[1]Now called the Women's Development Division.

governments because it challenges women's subordinate position in society, making it threatening and because it is related to Western feminism (Moser,1989:1810-11).

Anti-poverty.

The third approach to women's development identified by Moser (1989) is the anti-poverty approach. This links women's inequality to men not with subordination but with poverty. So the emphasis here is not on reducing social inequality between men and women but reducing income inequality. Really this approach came about because third world governments did not want to address the issues of women's subordination to men. Many income generating schemes, especially in handicraft production, were started under this anti-poverty approach. Practical gender needs might be met by helping women to earn an income, but unless there are real changes in society then no strategic gender needs will be addressed. If the income generating projects increase women's work loads, for example, by encouraging women to plant rice in a village co-operative whilst also attending to family food production, there will be a difficulty balancing the time spent on these tasks and child care. Then even practical gender needs may not be met (Moser,1989:1813).

Efficiency.

The efficiency approach has put the emphasis on enhancing development through efficient use of women's labour and skills. It was assumed that fifty percent of human resources, women, were being under-utilised. This efficiency approach is reflected in structural adjustment programmes which expect women's unpaid labour to compensate for cuts in health and social services.

An example of this structural adjustment is seen in the health services in the Solomons. A cut back in government funding has meant that new health posts cannot be built. In order to extend the health services to cater for the increased population, communities are being encouraged to build their own health posts and select and pay their own village health workers, preferably women, who are trained to carry out basic health procedures. Increased school fees, which have also resulted from structural adjustments, mean that the struggle to pay for education will put more work on the women.

The efficiency approach relies heavily on the willingness of women to work harder and harder, in their various roles, even though in many societies the women are already working extremely hard.

Empowerment.

The final approach to women's development which Moser discusses, is the empowerment approach. This has emerged largely from grass roots organisations' experiences of working with third world women. The empowerment approach recognises that the women's movement in the third world has an independent history and that women experience oppression differently according to class, colonial history and current position in the international economic order.

At the 1985 World Conference of Women in Nairobi, the following statement on a better world for all was given by the group Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN,1985:73-75). Their ideas support an empowerment approach:

> *We want a world where inequality based on class, gender and race is absent from every country and from the relationships among countries. We want a world where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated. Each person will have the opportunity to develop her or his full potential and creativity, and women's values of nurturance and solidarity will characterise human relationships. In such a world women's reproductive role will be redefined: child care will be shared by men, women and society as a whole...only by sharpening the links between equality, development and peace, can we show that the 'basic rights' of the poor and the transformations of the institutions that subordinate women are inextricably linked. They can be achieved together through the self-empowerment of women.*

The empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women and the origins of subordination in the family. It also acknowledges that women need to increase their power less in terms of domination over others, meaning a gain for women and a loss for men, but more in terms of the capacity for women to increase their own self reliance and internal strength. This can be described as a right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non material resources. The empowerment approach seeks to empower women through the redistribution of power within as well as between societies (Maguire,1984:2).

Empowerment is said to occur through a bottom up approach emphasising the raising of women's consciousness so they will be prepared to challenge their subordination. It is being implemented world-wide through the sustained and systematic efforts of women's organisations. In most third world countries political

mobilisation is an integral part of the empowerment approach. For example, women may learn to be active in community politics first, challenging the men in their community power structures, so that the voices and needs of the women can be given recognition, before they act in broader political spheres.

3. WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND EMPOWERMENT.

The importance of an empowerment approach to women's development has been established. Now we need to consider how this empowerment can best be achieved, specifically, can it be achieved through separate women's organisations?

The strengths of women-only organisations.

Even if women were considered equal in mainstream development projects, that would not eliminate the need for separate women's organisations. This fact will remain until systemic discrimination against women ceases. Separate women's organisations offer the opportunity to develop self-confidence and skills within a supportive female framework so that women can gain access to resources and take on greater leadership responsibilities (Yudelman,1987:129-144).

Members of women-only organisations are likely to have more commonality of interests than a mixed group. Sharing gender subordination, the inequalities of work load and repeated childbearing, for example, are strong threads that can bind women together and are reflected in shared needs and interests. Within their organisations women have space to develop new skills in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. A women's organisation can provide a propitious environment in which to encourage the learning of non-traditional roles, without male competition (Buvinic,1986:662). Buvinic states that this 'catching up' can help women graduate into the modern economy by giving them access to modern services or productive resources without the risk of monopoly by men.

In many societies, it is easier to work with women's groups if you are a woman. This can be due to the fact that genders are often separated by work and *kastom*.[2] At the programme or project level, it is easier for a women's team[3] to reach targeted

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[2] *Kastom* is the Solomon Island pidgin word derived from the English "custom" but it is more broad in meaning. *Kastom* has been described as, 'as set of rules observed within a particular group...a way of life' (Kenneth and Silas, 1985:68).

[3]Here we are talking about a programme being implemented by a teaching team made up solely of women.

women's groups and greater personal involvement can emerge between the team and the participants.

The weaknesses of women-only organisations.

While women-only organisations obviously have many strengths, it is also important to consider any weaknesses they may have (DAWN,1985:93-97).

Women only organisations tend to be marginalised from public institutions and policy making organisations, giving them limited access to financial resources and limited operational and technical expertise. This marginalisation further isolates women from mainstream development. A second problem stems from the non-hierarchical, non-formal organisational structures, which often typify women-only organisations. Because of their non-formality they may fail to establish clearly defined relationships with bureaucratic decision making bodies and thus be unable to pressure them to implant policies in women's interests. Thirdly, women often avoid delegation of authority, so externally no-one feels they have the right speak out for the group and internally there is a problem because the total commitment expected of each person can lead to early burn out. If responsibilities are not defined then everyone is expected to do everything. The fourth problem which can emerge is that of building alliances. Women have experiences of being used by organisations for purposes not of their own choosing. They are suspicious of organisations not of their own making and even other women's organisations can come under attack. They need to learn to ally with other grass roots organisations without jeopardising their own autonomy.

The final concern noted by DAWN is related to the leadership style of women's organisations. How do they deal with conflict management and resolution? Widening the leadership base is essential as this distributes power and diffuses hierarchy. There must be an ethic which rejects personal aggrandisement. The leaders are there as an example of service and not to become *big women*[4] themselves. Maguire (1984:58) comments further on appropriate forms of leadership in women's organisations:

> *Women only organisations at grass roots level are a basis for collective action on local issues as well as a training ground for women. They are places for women to use and enhance their leadership skills to enjoy and expand their self confidence and to*

[4]The term, *big man/big woman* is used in Melanesian culture to define leaders who have power and status: they are looked up to. Their power and status can either be earned or be conferred through lineage, marriage or wealth.

glory in mutual respect. They are the places to begin first hand the building of new structures and relationships.

4. DEFINITION OF TERMS.

The different approaches to women's development have been explained as has the significant role women's organisations can play in empowering women. Now the key terms used in this thesis will be clarified..

Development.

Development may mean different things to different people. As this research is concerned with the effectiveness of a programme for women's development within the Catholic Church in Malaita, it is appropriate that the definition of development used here is based on a Christian definition. In Christian terms, development is seen to be concerned principally with people, but it deals with the whole person. That means that it is an approach to development that involves the spiritual side of the person and the material side of the person. This is called integral human development.[5] In order for this integral human development to take place people need help from each other and to give help to each other; they do not develop in isolation but as part of a family or community (Byrne,1983:2-7).

Todaro gives a further definition of development which in its essence covers the whole gamut of change by which a social system strives towards a condition of life that is seen to be materially and spiritually better:

> *Development must, therefore, be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty.*
>
> (Todaro,1989:88).

This thesis is based on a combination of the two definitions. Development is seen to be both spiritual and material. It comprises of a change in attitudes that will

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[5]There is a sermon that is very popular here in the Solomon Islands. It is a traditional story from Asia that goes like this. A fisherman called his son and told him to paddle only on the left side of the canoe. His son did this and the canoe went in circles, he then told the son to paddle with the other paddle from the right side. Once again there was no progress, the canoe went to the right. Then the father told the son to use both paddles and of course the canoe went ahead. On one side of the canoe he had carved, 'spiritual progress' and on the other side he had carved, 'material development'. He told his son that when you pay attention to both material and spiritual development then you make progress.

bring revived spiritual awareness as well as a change in social structures and a more equitably balanced society, particularly for the women.

Empowerment.

Chambers' English Dictionary defines empowerment as 'to authorise' which is defined as 'to give authority to' (Chambers,1988:465). To give authority to someone can imply it is taken away from someone else. It is more appropriate in this context to think about empowerment as being a discovery and use of internal power and hidden strengths, which is what Maguire (1984:2) regards empowerment as involving. It is apparent that this flourishing of the internal power of women is potentially a powerful force for change:

> *The great endurance, courage and resourcefulness of women, especially poor women, must be acknowledged as qualities which have enabled them to cope with the harshness of their lives and to survive with dignity and this strength should be envisioned as a potentially powerful force for change, both societal change as well as changing the perceptions of women themselves.*
>
> (IWTC 1980:29).

At a Pacific Women's Workshop in Fiji in 1987, a Pacific Feminist Perspective of Women, Development and Empowerment was discussed. Here, empowerment was defined as a leadership style that creates awareness and a sense of power for all women. Pacific women delegates stated that they needed a sense of sharing of sisterhood to help them in their struggle, so empowerment was not just seen in an individualistic sense (Griffen,1987:124).

Empowerment is the latest and most dynamic term to emerge in alternative development theory. It implies people gaining analytical and action oriented skills necessary for active involvement in the development process (Oakley,1984:194). When empowerment has taken place there have been visible changes. The first of these is an increase in self-esteem. Women with low self-esteem and low self-worth are unable to work for change and take control of their lives. A process of empowerment must take place to improve their self image, give them a sense of value and confirm the talents and gifts they already have so that they will feel confident to act and to grow. The second of these changes is enhanced dignity. Empowerment brings about a changed attitude of regard for self, based on an individual's assessment of their own self-worth and dignity without any element of domination of others. Thirdly, empowerment, through education, can bring liberation from oppressive

structures. This can be evidenced as an attitudinal change among women which allows their greater involvement in family decisions, community life and a vision for changing the oppressive structures that bind them. Fourthly, empowerment involves conscientisation. As Friere has said, conscientisation refers to:

> *The arousing of a positive self concept in relation to the environment and society through a 'liberating education' that treats learners as subjects, active agents and not objects, passive recipients.*
>
> (cited in Srinivasan,1977:4).

The definition that will assist us in this research joins together Maguire's definition with the one from the Pacific women themselves; stating that empowerment is the discovery of the internal power of women, which is a potentially powerful force for change, felt not only as an individual but within the wider female community. This research will look at how these strands of empowerment have worked in the lives of the women of Auki Diocese to bring about change.

Non-formal education.

Non-formal participatory education is a major means by which empowerment takes place. It needs to be defined separately because this is one of the key foci of the programme initiated by the Diocesan Women's Team (DWT),[6] whose work is examined in this thesis. Non-formal education refers to:

> *Any organised learning activity outside the formal schooling system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.*
>
> (Coombs and Ahmed, 1973:11).

Non-formal education is learner-centred and flexible. There are no non-formal methods of education, as non-formal is intended to refer to the organisational characteristics, rather than the pedagogical style of the project (Thomas and Hill,1987:103-130;Grandstaff,1973:9-10). Non-formal education is not static, it is constantly evolving. Even the objectives are subject to change as new insights into the learning process are gained through the field experience.

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[6]The Diocesan Women's Team (DWT) sometimes referred to as the Team are the women who plan, prepare and carry out the Catholic Women's Programme (CWP) in the Diocese of Auki. Over the years the number of team members has increased and since 1996, the DWT is made up entirely of women from Malaita.

Because this education is participatory in nature, it is important that new ideas and new learning experiences are incorporated into a programme as it evolves. Non-formal education should be intrinsically liberating, with group interaction being the most powerful learning technique:

> *Through education, adults must arrive at a new awareness of selfhood and be able to look at their own situation so that they can take the first steps to change the society that had previously denied them an opportunity to participate.*
>
> (Srinivasan,1997:3-7).

A full description of the methods of non-formal education used in the Diocesan Women's Programme will be given in Chapter Five.

Feminism.

The term feminism also needs to be defined for this thesis because for Melanesian women feminism will be different than for Western women who are working within an entirely different cultural context. DAWN defines feminism in a broad sense to include the struggle against all forms of oppression; they recognise that gender inequality must be accompanied by changes on other fronts, for example, overcoming ethnic inequalities. Feminism cannot be based on a rigid concept of universality that negates the wider experience in women's organisations (DAWN, 1985:18-19). The strivings of women for equality in one part of the world might not be relevant to the needs of women in other countries:

> *Women's organisations do not happen in a vacuum but correspond and to some extent are determined by, the wider social movements which they form part of. The general consciousness of society about its future, its structure and the role of men and women, entails limitations for the women's movement; its goals and its methods of struggle are generally determined by those limits.*
>
> (Jayawardena,1986:10).

The core of DAWN's vision of the struggle against oppression involves a process of social and economic development geared to human needs through wider control over and access to social and political power. The struggle is to be waged in all arenas, to include relations in the home and relations with the government. In many countries women are the ones that are most oppressed by culture. Some cultural practices can place women in marriages where they have no free choice themselves

and other cultures have health practises which are detrimental to the overall well-being of women.

It has been noted, however, that the theories and concepts of Western feminism often have little value for women in third world countries, who are involved in their own particular daily struggle towards liberation and empowerment (Griffen,1987:1-10). In the patriarchal society of Malaita, for example, the changes that village women can bring about, without full-scale confrontation, are subtle and often slow. Women need a fairer power balance in their families and in their communities they do not want to alienate themselves from their husbands and chiefs.

Using the word 'feminist' or to talk about 'women's liberation' in parts of the third world such as Malaita has a negative effect on change. This is unlikely to result in change that will radically alter men's viewpoints. In discussions with women, there may be no understanding of the word feminist or feminism. This was apparent in a workshop for Pacific Women in Fiji in 1987 (Griffen,1987:1-10). Although the delegates were involved in women's development they felt the title of feminism was unimportant. The women might not give a *name* to their work for women's empowerment, but it is taking place:

> *A recognition of diversity in issues and methods allows women to work for change within existing structures or to work to transform those structures. It allows women to challenge and debate the connections between the various immediate issues and the ultimate vision of gender equality in more fruitful ways than dogmatic assertions of the 'true' meaning of feminism*
>
> (DAWN 1985:80).

5. SUMMARY.

This chapter briefly introduced the Catholic Women's Programme in the Diocese of Auki and presented the basic research question which was to ask whether the programme has in fact empowered the women who have participated in it. The conceptual background to understand women's development was outlined using Moser's analysis in terms of practical and strategic gender needs and the five policy approaches to women's development. The empowerment approach was considered the most appropriate framework for evaluating the women's programme in Malaita, because it focused on discovering and using women's internal strength so that they would be able to bring about changes in their lives. It was also noted that working in a

women's only organisation could enhance women's empowerment by giving them access to non-formal education in a safe, women only, learning environment. This can give the women time to catch up, so they can move into a more equitable relationship with men.

6. THESIS OUTLINE.

There are five chapters remaining in this thesis and my argument will progress as follows. Chapter Two will examine the theories of alternative development that are most suited to this research. Chapter Three will look at the qualitative research methods used to study the attitudes and behaviours of the women in the villages and why qualitative research suits this particular project. Chapter Four will look at the status of women in Malaita and see how development has worked for them in the past. Following on from this, Chapter Five will describe in depth the Catholic Women's Programme (CWP) and Chapter Six will provide the conclusions.

CHAPTER TW0
ALTERNATIVE THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT.

1. INTRODUCTION.

The impasse that effected development theory in the 1980s has left the discipline of Development Studies open to new ideas and new practices (Schuurman,1993:16-25). In this chapter we will look at some of the newer alternative theories which are being applied to work with rural people in the developing world.[7] These alternative theories allow the people's indigenous knowledge to have greater input to the design and implementation of programmes and projects. Development programmes are no longer always being imposed by experts from the developed world but have been written with local people in a participatory process and are, in that way, empowering them.

2. ALTERNATIVE THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT.

It is important from the outset to have a clear idea of what is meant by alternative development:

> *Alternative development means improving the conditions of life and livelihood for the excluded majority, whether on a global, national or regional scale. It is justified because it promises to further the self development of human beings as individuals.*
>
> (Friedmann,1992:12).

Alternative theories of development attempt to transform people into agents of their own development, giving them opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills that they need to analyse and solve problems for themselves. Friedmann (1992:31) states that:

> *Alternative approaches to development are people-centred rather than being centred on profits.*

Within the general domain of alternative theories of development a number of specific approaches can be discerned. These theories are somewhat diverse but there

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[7]The more conventual 'grand' theories of development have been discussed extensively by other authors. See:Frank, A. (1967), Taylor, J. (1979), Wallerstein, I. (1974), Warren, B. (1980).

is also some overlap between them. Korten's vision, which will be examined first, is of a people-centred development.

2a. People-centred development.

This approach argues that the critical development issues for the 1990s is not growth but transformation, which must include justice, sustainability and inclusiveness (Korten,1990:4). Justice refers to the distribution of resources, to ensure that all people have the means and opportunity to make a decent life for themselves and their families and to use the earth's natural resources in an equitable way. As Korten (1990:67) elaborates:

> *Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capabilities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.*

There is a push for sustainability under the people-centred approach because it is argued that development currently supports increases in economic output that depend on the unsustainable depletion of the earth's natural resources and life support capabilities of its ecosystems. If this is continued there will be little to hand over to future generations.

Inclusiveness is seen as important because substantial segments of society are being deprived of the opportunity to make valid contributions to the improved well being of society as a whole. These segments are the marginalised and the poor, categories which disproportionately include women. Korten (1990:68) argues that a gender perspective will be needed for any projects concerned with sustainability.

2b. Development from below.

The development from below approach emerged because of problems with top down approaches to development. In the past there was a top down model of development, with outside agencies assessing what development was needed for a particular community or region. Any consultation with the local people was incidental; the dominant element of identification was from above. There was a lack of attention to cultural factors and to the way a society operated. The recipients of this sort of development, such as a rural water supply project, would be expected to provide labour and some local materials, for example, sand or stones. They would

also be expected to maintain the project after completion. This was often not forthcoming because the project was seen to belong to the outside donors.

In the development from below approach, everything was turned upside down. The recipients became the active participants and had a say in the way that the programme was planned, implemented and assessed. Most of this sort of development refers to work with communities thus it is small in scale in comparison with larger infrastructural developments, such as road building or wharf construction.

This approach was developed in a third world context. It was influenced by the populist and anarchist thought of the nineteenth century allied to the major contributions of thinkers such as Julius Nyere and Mahatma Gandhi (Taylor and Mackenzie,1992:233). It was more recently influenced by dependency theory and concepts of ecologically sound development. For example, in Schumacher's 'Small in Beautiful' he was arguing early in the debate that:

> *Development started with people, their education, organisation and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped potential.*
>
> (Schumacher,1973:141).

There are several development from below approaches, but one is most appropriate for this research, as we shall see.

Target the poor development.

Often the rural poor are overlooked by development practitioners, thus Chambers (1983) stated there should be an explicit aim in the development process to target those most in need. He argued that the allocation of most of the resources in any country stops in the urban areas and the idea that there will be a trickle down effect for the rural people is a fallacy. Thus there has to be a shift of resources to the rural sector and within it to the rural poor, the most marginalised. This is the overriding developmental task contained within the target the poor approach (Chambers,1983:141).

Development from within.

Development from within has arisen from the ideas of development practitioners working in Africa. They have identified that there is a social struggle going on in Africa, whether it takes a visible form of co-ordinated action or a less visible form, as a

more sustained form of everyday resistance inside and outside the household. As MacKenzie (1992:2) states, it is an 'internally generated self-reliant process of development'.

From the perspectives of the local people has come the realisation that they cannot rely on the state either to meet their basic needs or to further their development objectives. They are taking their destiny into their own hands and are finding ways to survive and improve their own lives and their communities.

From Tanzania, we learn about development initiatives that have involved both men and women, producing not only local crafts for income generation, as well as co-operatives that make farming implements for the local communities. This development is expected to produce multiple benefits for the local population through additional household income, employment and increased food. Social and political strategies under the development from within approach include the provision of water supplies, health care facilities and primary schools (Nkhoma-Wamunza,1992:182-189).

Nkhoma-Wamunza (1992) sees a characteristic that runs through the examples of development from within from Tanzania. The people are taking their destiny into their own hands and are not relying on outsiders. The people themselves show initiative, are entrepreneurial in their outlook and the population is large enough to make use of these development activities.

Grass roots development or bottom up development.

Now let us look at another model of development from below. This is called grass roots development or bottom up development. Both titles describe models of development that use essentially the same principles; they are people-centred and start with the marginalised in society.

Grass roots or bottom up development is based on maximum mobilisation of each area of natural, human and institutional resources, in order to satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of that area. The building block is the rural territorially based community at the smallest scale that is efficient and effective. Oriented to basic needs, it is labour intensive, it uses appropriate technology, makes use of regional resources and is ecologically sensitive. This development occurs on a small scale, with the daily lives of the participants being highlighted.

Built from the bottom up, grass roots development allows for the real experiences and concerns of the people to provide the raw material for higher level analysis so that they play a part within the project and the development that is taking place. Participants are active in the design and implementation of the project, organising to improve both their economic power and status within the rural community. Bottom up or grass roots development builds on the existing skills and knowledge of the people concerned and takes into account their cultural constraints and practices. Both of these forms of development from below use a participatory methodology (Brydon and Chant, 1989:102). This research combines aspects from all the models of development from below.

2c. Participatory approach.

The third alternative development approach focuses on the idea of participation. It is called the participatory approach and is supported by Edwards (1993) and Oakley (1984).

They state that the participatory approach involves equality, sustainability and respect for human rights. The main concern, however, is the individual's ability to share in decisions which will affect them and hence increase the control they can exert over all aspects of their lives which concern them. Indeed, the real goal of participatory development is to equip people with the skills and confidence, information and opportunities they need to make their own choices.

But by its very nature, the process of participation is uncertain. It is possible to initiate the journey to participation in a structured way, using participatory techniques and methods, but no matter how much a facilitator would like to direct the participants, the ultimate destination is always determined by the participants. As Edwards (1993:86) states:

> *If people are involved in the creation and use of their own knowledge there is more chance that this knowledge will be used for causes which they approve of.*

One feature of using a participatory approach is that because it involves the people there is an emphasis on the culture and traditions that continuously effect all aspects of life. Later in this thesis we will examine whether the resurgence and rediscovery of some *kastom* is benefiting the communities in Malaita.

Rahnema (1992:127) adds another dimension to the participatory approach, recognising that the spiritual side of the person needs also to be part of the developmental process:

> *In a sense to participate means to live and relate differently. It implies above all a sense of recovering one's inner freedom, that is to learn to listen and to share.*

2d. Empowerment.

The final alternative approach to be examined is that of empowerment. The notion of participation as an exercise of empowering rural people has gained wide support recently (Oakley,1984:9), as indicated by the discussion of women's empowerment in Chapter One. Empowerment places the emphasis of the decision making on the participants, using local self-reliance and indigenous knowledge in an experiential learning process. Empowerment starts in the community because society is most readily mobilised around local issues. It allows for diversity and differences rather than simply universalising falsely from Western perspectives (Townsend in Schuurman (ed),1993:173).

Empowerment can be the development of skills and abilities to enable grass roots people to manage better. This empowerment approach is complimentary to Moser's empowerment approach discussed in Chapter One. Women have to challenge oppressive structures using their own inner strengths and local knowledge. The discovery of the internal power of women happens within the dialectic between learning and organising, between theory and practice (Maguire, 1984:4).

To achieve the goal of empowerment, the educational component of any strategy is critical. Only certain educational orientations are likely to produce empowerment (Oakley,1984:194). Paulo Friere, the Brazilian educator, best expresses the empowerment approach. He wrote that the oppressed are locked into a situation where development of their own critical awareness and response is practically impossible. This he calls the 'culture of silence of the dispossessed, whereby the rural poor have no voice, no access and no participation in development' (Friere,1972 cited in Scrinivasan,1977:10). His basic premise is that ignorance and powerlessness of the poor are rooted in social structures that determine the unequal exercise of power in society. The remedy is social transformation for which education is the prerequisite.

Education that helps people reflect on themselves and their roles in society and develops a capacity to participate rationally, critically and democratically in public life is encouraged. Education provides the poor with skills to transform unjust power structures and relationships. The role of the educator in this process is to engage in a dialogical praxis with the participants recognising they are equally knowledgeable, if not more so, about their own situation.

Schuler sees that empowerment is the capacity to mobilise resources to produce beneficial change (Schuler,1986:29-34). The process of empowerment begins with raising individual consciousness about issues, which then leads to organisation and should result in mobilisation for action. Raising individual consciousness means developing an understanding of the problems at the level of personal awareness. Organisational consciousness, alternatively, involves identification and sharing a problem with other people. People will then increase their capacity to work together for achieving goals based upon a common understanding of the problem.

Another level of consciousness raising is mobilisation. This is where the collective skills and resources of the group are translated into action to produce the desired change. Political action is not just the power to vote, it is the power to speak out as well as collective action. Voices raised effectively as a group in the immediate community can bring about changes in the way things are run in the community for the betterment of the peoples lives.

Friedmann, who has written much on empowerment, does not feel that alternative development needs to be limited to the micro level nor that it cannot involve state action:

> *Alternative development is not trying to substitute a people centred for a production centred development or to reduce all developmental questions to the micro structures of the disempowered. It wants to work with the Government plans through a politics of inclusive democracy, appropriate economic growth, gender equality and sustainability. It calls for a state that is responsive and accountable to its citizens.*
>
> (Friedmann, 1992:34).

3. APPROPRIATE THEORIES FOR THIS RESEARCH.

The alternative development approaches discussed provide a set of disparate ideas with common elements. It is important that we consider now which of those

Table One: Showing various alternative development approaches.

Alternative Approaches	**Brief Description**	**Strategies**
People Centred	Movement towards transformation. Inclusiveness, sustainability and justice are necessary for development.	Fair distribution of resources, sustainable development and targeting the poor and marginalised.
Development from Below Three main strands	1. Target the poor --- 2. Development from within --- 3. Grass roots or bottom up development	Resources to be targeted to those most in need. --- People take their destiny into their own hands. --- Active participation by the people in design and implementation.
Participatory Development	Equality, sustainability and respect for human rights.	Equip people with skills and confidence, information and opportunities to make their own choices. Decision making rests with the participants.
Empowerment Approach	Social structures determine the unequal exercise of power in society. Rural poor have no voice, no access, no participation.	Mobilisation of people's internal power. Development strategies focus on local self-reliance and indigenous knowledge seen as important.

ideas can be used to help us understand women's development opportunities on Malaita. The various approaches are summarised in Table One. There is a combination of approaches that are useful for this particular piece of research.

Through focusing on alternative development approaches we have found that Friedmann's concept of empowerment can be achieved through grass roots movements of women and men. This reinforces Moser's ideas explained in Chapter One, which discussed how an empowerment approach can gain much more for women than one based on welfare, equity, anti-poverty or efficiency. It is participatory in approach advocating the use of Paulo Friere's non-formal educational practices.

Although the justice and inclusiveness aspects of the people-centred approach are relevant to this research, sustainability is not examined in detail in this thesis. However, through the empowerment aspect of a women's programme, women could be placed in a better position to address the important issues concerning sustainability (Wacker,1984:139).

While the development from within approach seems to work well in some African contexts, in the Solomon Islands the population is small and is scattered over a large area with a poorly developed infrastructure. However aspects of this approach where the people take their destiny into their own hands is of value. This research programme will be analysed using a participatory approach that is empowering, combined with aspects from all these development from below approaches

4. SUMMARY.

In Chapter Six I shall take the theories of Moser, Friedmann and Friere, and use them to analyse the Catholic women's programme in Malaita to see if the process of empowerment using non-formal education and being participatory in approach did in fact achieve the results that were aimed for. In the next Chapter the methodologies used in this research will be studied.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION.

There are over one hundred Catholic women's groups in Malaita within the Diocese of Auki and this research is directed towards these groups. As stated before, the research aims to assess whether the women have been empowered through the programme instituted by the Diocesan Women's Team, (DWT). The methodology used to collect information on this topic used qualitative techniques far ranging in their scope. This chapter will describe my methodology as well as examining the ethical considerations that the programme faced and my own relationship to the research participants. It needs to be stated here that the members of the DWT played as important a role as I did in carrying out research at certain times.

Because my research is concerned with empowerment, I aimed to make it as participatory as possible. Participatory social research can empower all those involved. In my research the women were listened to. Previously it has been mainly male voices that have been heard; now the women are adding their story to make it complete (Bhavnani,1987:44).

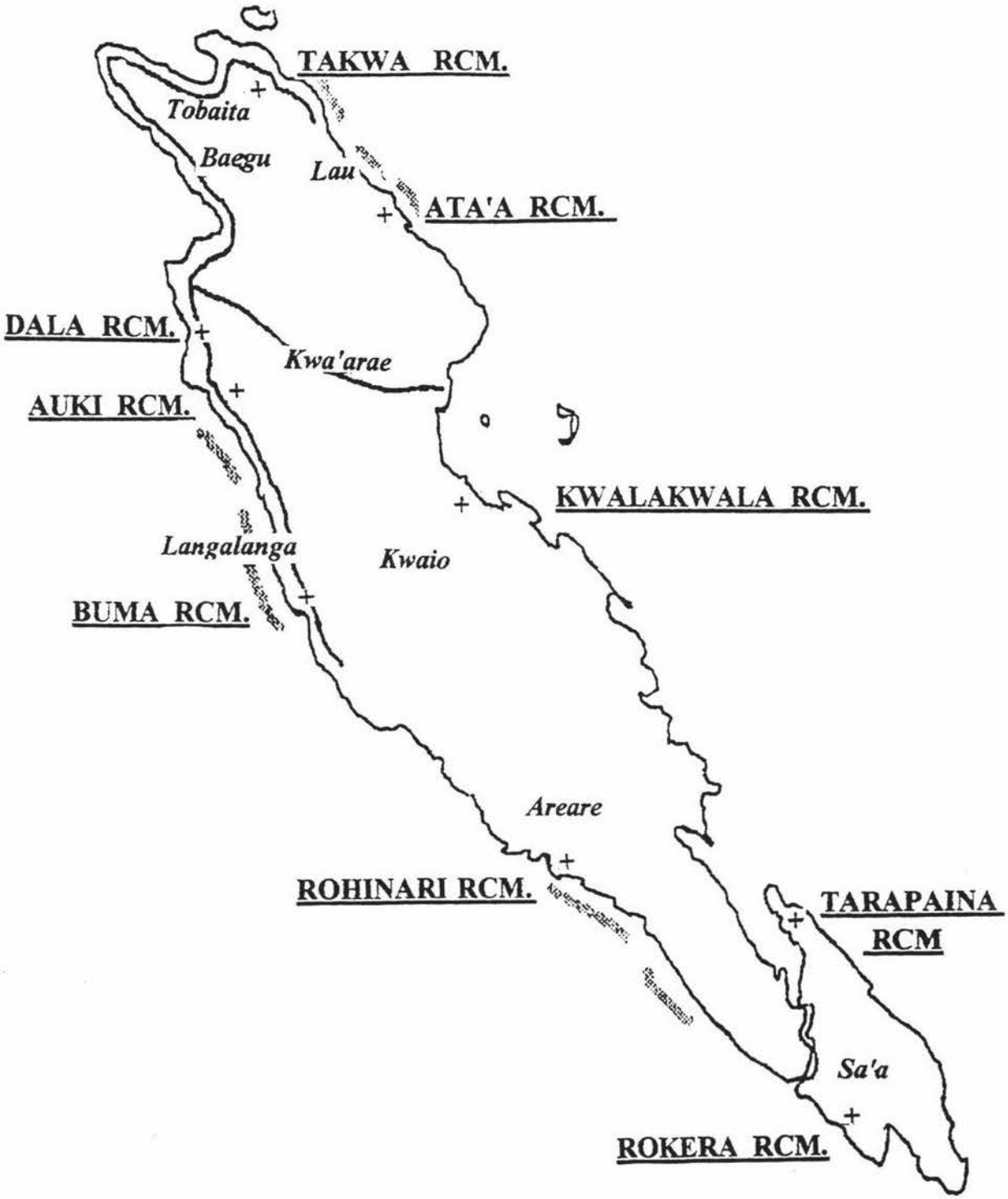
While the fact that I was involved with the implementation of the Catholic Women's Programme (CWP) in Malaita may place some limitations on my research, as will be discussed later, it is also true that one of the achievements of bringing research and practice closer together is that they can be mutually enriching:

> *We should always examine wider focus and trends 'through the eyes of those who experience and act in them' for it is in their perceptions and actions which give meaning to these forces. This is the same as 'building from the bottom upwards' in development research or to put it simply, generalising from the particular. For if we are not learning by comparison from one real life situation to another how are we learning?*
>
> (Edwards, in Schuurman (ed), 1993:84).

2. MALAITAN CONTEXT.

The group researched consisted of the Catholic women on Malaita who had been touched by the activities of the DWT. The data was collected almost exclusively from women either in the villages or when they attended courses in one of the nine parishes.

Figure Two: Map of Malaita showing
Catholic mission stations and the main language groups.



The two most important logistical factors impinging on the research were the difficulty with transport and the distinct language groups present in Malaita. There is a road stretching 110 kilometres from Auki, making three parishes accessible by road. The other six can only be reached by sea-going canoe. The most southerly parish is about twelve hours by canoe from Auki. With the high rainfall, the unsealed coral roads were, at certain times of the year, almost impassable, even to the CWP four wheeled drive vehicle. Travelling by sea, usually with a fully laden canoe, myself and the DWT were dependant on good weather and a good driver. Planning the courses, and my corresponding research, so that travelling was done in the dry season and not in monsoon weather helped to overcome some problems.

There are eight distinct language groups and many varying cultures each with its own particular *kastoms* that effect the women, who are oppressed in almost all aspects of their lives. The distinct language groups were catered for by trying to ensure that the members of the DWT were able to make themselves understood in the relevant language or to use a local woman as interpreter. I do not speak any of the local languages but I am fluent in Solomon Islands Pidgin. This enabled me to talk to almost all of the women leaders of the groups and many other women as well. At all times women were happy to interpret my pidgin back into the local language. Often the entire course was in a local language, with me asking for a translation at various points when I was aware of interaction inside the group. It is a mark of the women's acceptance of me that they often addressed me in a local language forgetting that I did not understand.

3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Naturalistic research can be seen to be a particular way to enter the social setting of the village community. It is emergent in nature, so the ethical decisions made before entering the field might change and new ones emerge. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:8), state that:

> *The research should be carried out in ways that are sensitive to the nature of the setting. A key element of naturalism is the demand that the researcher adopts an attitude of 'respect' and 'appreciation' towards the social world.*

There are certain ethical matters that need consideration: my presence as a European and my changing role in the programme; the anonymity of the women and the ethical considerations in the report writing; and finally, whether this research

should have taken place at all. By answering these questions the potential negative consequences that this research could have on the women and the programme are addressed (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:18).

3a. My changing role in the programme.

I lived and worked on Malaita from 1988 to 1996. From 1990 I was involved in getting the CWP established then working as a facilitator to the overall programme which developed as time went on. It was only in 1995, during the final health courses, that my role changed to that of being a researcher.[8] Whilst I tried to explain to the women this change, I am not sure that they fully understood the significance of the research and its outcomes. These hidden aspects were a problem for me, but on discussion with the women they brushed it aside as being unimportant. By the time I came to do my research, respect and trust had already been established on both sides.

There are different obstacles for anyone trying to carry out research on a development programme. For outsiders the main drawback is that it takes time to understand what is going on, to ask the right questions and then to know what the next question should be. Often outsiders do not have that sort of time for their research, nor do they have the trust of the participants built up over an extended period of time. It takes time even to begin to understand the politics of a society and outsiders can be misinformed. In order to work in another culture, time is needed at the beginning to watch and wait. By slowly building up relationships with the women, being interested in their lives and by trying at all times to learn about and understand their culture, I felt that I was placed in a good position to research the impact of the CWP on their lives.

3b. My position as a European.

How did the very major differences of my race and background hinder the research? I was often aware of the difference in the colour of my skin and my lack of understanding of the way Malaitan society worked and operated. As such I was aware that a number of issues concerning my status as a mature, white woman would impact on the research findings.

Without doubt being a married woman with children and grandchildren gave me easier access and greater respect and status within the communities I visited. The

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[8]My field research on the Catholic Women's Programme was concluded in December 1995 and I left Malaita in February 1996. The programme will be continued by the Diocesan Women's Team. My research will enable the Diocese, the DWT and the donor agencies to assess the success or otherwise of this particular programme.

questions an outsider is asked when they first arrive in a Melanesian village are: "Are you married?" "How many children do you have?" "Which church do you belong to?" and, perhaps, "How old are you?" The educational standing of an outsider has little significance. Judgements are made on the way you present yourself and how you talk to the people. When I was helping to establish kindergartens close to Auki in 1989, at the first meeting I explained the importance of play for children and that I would like to help with the children. The women asked me to wait. They then went off to discuss whether they thought I was the sort of *araikwao*[9] they wanted to teach their children. After an hour they returned with a collective decision accepting my offer of help. The way you behave and the way you dress is noted. Offence would be given if any women working amongst them in Malaita wore shorts, trousers or other attire they considered to be immodest.

Another aspect of acceptance is continuity of service. Usually volunteers come to the Solomons for a two year contract. During that time it may only be in the last six months of their stay that they begin to have some inkling on the way a society operates. Because I lived in Malaita for seven years my presence was accepted and, as expressed above, I had time to build relationships with the women. I also had advantages over the short stay researcher who arrives with fresh eyes, yearning to grasp the human situation, but who has little background knowledge with which to put this information into context.

One of the disadvantages of my familiarity with Malaitan people was that it was difficult for me to distance myself from the investigations and to look at my research objectively, I will discuss this below in section 3d..

3c. Ethical considerations concerning anonymity.

Anonymity was requested by and given to individuals who participated in the research. In this thesis when I attribute an idea or comment to a particular person I only identify them by their position rather than by name. Likewise, individual villages are not named but the Parishes are. Nevertheless the information presented in this thesis is still likely to be recognised by the women involved. This seemed unavoidable.

3d. Ethical considerations concerning reporting research results.

There are a number of ethical obligations concerning the analysis of information and reporting to the women and the Diocese. The shortcomings of my research must

[9]Araikwao, used extensively throughout Malaita, is the Langalanga word for a white person.

be reported:

> *It is important to avoid the temptation to save face by describing your findings as the product of a carefully pre-planned analytical strategy when that was not the case. Many findings arrive unexpectedly -- even though they may seem obvious in retrospect.*
>
> (Babbie,1992:469).

It is also important to be prepared to report on negative findings even if this is challenging to those involved with the programme.

As the research took place comments and ideas were sought from the DWT, the leaders in the women's groups and the Diocese as a whole. On completion it will be made available to them to give useful feedback on the programme. On a positive note, this means that research is not just being carried out to help me attain a Masters degree. The research may help the women of Malaita plan effectively for their own development and empowerment in the future. The negative side of this is that the research might, by highlighting achievements of the CWP, bring in an increased number of outside consultants and Government officers who would like information on effective grass roots women's programmes. This could become a time consuming burden, with little benefit to the team or the programme.

3e. Should the research be carried out by me?

For the first four years of the CWP I was involved in getting the CWP established, working as a facilitator to the overall programme which developed as time went on. It was only in 1995 that my involvement changed to being a researcher. By being interested in women's lives and at all times trying to understand their culture, I believe that the women accepted me and trusted me whether I was facilitator or researcher.

Michael Edwards in his article, 'How Relevant is Development Studies?' (Edwards cited in Schuurman (ed)1993:90).states that:

> *The purpose of intellectual enquiry in this field of study is to promote the development of people denied access to knowledge, resources and power for hundreds of years. The most effective way of doing this is to unite understanding and action, or theory and practice, into a single process which puts people at the very centre of both. This is the real task for development theories in the 1990s.*

Through my involvement in the Catholic Women's Programme in Malaita, both as facilitator and researcher, I tried to unite understanding and action. I was, however, very aware that because of my intimate involvement in the programme there was a danger that I might be too subjective in my opinions.

This was balanced by two factors. Firstly, the experiences that I had during the six years in the field with the programme were tempered by the knowledge I was gaining from my extra-mural study. In 1991 I started a Diploma of Development Studies and found myself constantly challenged by the attitudes of the women to development and development theory.

Secondly, because the CWP is a participatory programme it was appropriate for the research and evaluation to be carried out by those most closely associated with the programme. As Choudhary and Tandon(1988:8) clearly state:

> *The central characteristic of participatory evaluation is that people involved in a given development programme, both as implimentors and as beneficiaries, start participating in and taking charge of the evaluation efforts.*

Keeping in mind all of these ethical considerations, the qualitative research for this thesis was carried out using the methods discussed below.

4. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH.

My research philosophy was based on the ideas of Lofland and Lofland (1971:11):

> *The overall goal is to collect the richest possible data. This means the data will have a wide, diverse range of information collected over a relatively long period of time. Face to face contact with, and prolonged immersion in, some social location or circumstance. You may wish, that is, to earn 'intimate familiarity' with that sector of social life.*

To achieve such 'intimate familiarity', I chose to use qualitative methods. Reinhartz, in her book on Feminist Perspective in Social Research (1992:51), argues that qualitative methods of research are more likely to capture the meaning of changes in the women's lives and give insights into behaviour and attitudinal changes.

Qualitative research often takes place in small scale settings, where ordinary individuals loom larger than usual and the interaction of family and social life can be seen more easily. I sought to understand the research question outlined in Chapter One through the use of interrelated methods of research, including unstructured interviews, field research, historical data collection, participatory rural appraisal and a semi-structured questionnaire. These all provided rich sources of data for analysis.

The qualitative research that I was engaged in could almost be described as ethnography because I immersed myself in and learned from the cultures I studied for seven years. Hammersley and Paul (1983:2) describes it as follows:

> *The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned.*

Ethnography also means trying to put your own deductive hunches and hypotheses on hold and learning from inductive logic. It is as if you are ignorant of the subject and seeing the informant as having the relevant knowledge. There is still much debate as to whether the data that comes out of this kind of naturalistic research is too subjective, just impressions that cannot be scientifically analysed.

For this particular research project, I was seeking out the subtle nuances of behaviour and attitudes and examining social processes over a period of time. The multi-method approach described above increased the likelihood of understanding what was being studied:

> *Multiple methods work to enhance understanding both by adding layers of information and by using one type of data to validate or refine another.*
>
> (Reinharz,1992:201).

5. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TECHNIQUES.

The specific qualitative techniques chosen and how they were applied is discussed below.

5a. Participant observation.

Lofland and Lofland (1971:12) refer to participant observation as:

> *A process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many sided and relatively long term relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of that association.*

In my research, therefore, participant observation, involved overtly and covertly participating in the women's lives for an extended period of time, watching what was happening, listening to what was said and asking questions that would throw light on the situation. It was carried out whatever the social setting: in the village, sitting in the women's groups, attending courses, in the market, chewing betel nut[10] under a tree, or wherever women were grouped together. Over a period of time field notes were taken describing various social interactions and social scenes. Positions of the women in relation to each other, facial expressions, body movement, clothing and general appearance all helped to recall the situation more accurately. These field notes were put into an expanded form at a later date and coding threads helped to make sense of the observations. The expanded field notes gave new insights and dimensions to understanding the social interactions that were recorded.

This data from the women in the villages provided insights as to how they lived their daily lives, how they exercised leadership skills they had learnt from the ongoing women's programme, how they looked after and disciplined their children, how they talked to each other and how they took on responsibility and leadership roles. The relationships between the men and the women in the village were observed, with attention paid to the way the work was divided.

Changes in communities as a result of the programme were also observed and interesting information emerged. For example, previously community gatherings and feasts were a time when the leadership of the men was highlighted, the women just preparing and serving the food. Some time after the CWP started, however, I observed women taking over the actual organising and planning of the feasts themselves.

5b. Unstructured interviews and semi-structures questionnaires.

In my research women from each of the nine parishes in the Diocese were interviewed: some were leaders, some were members of the women's groups, some

[10]Betel nut is the kernel from the nut either chewed with lime or the husk of the nut chewed on its own. It is of great importance in Melanesian cultures. It is a sign of welcome, a sign of acceptance, a sign for the start of discussion. It is used as part of the bride-price ceremony, when the men from both sides of the family chew betel nut as a sign of unity and blessing for the couple.

were members of the DWT. Unstructured interviews were utilised as they added a further depth to the research, so that the voices of more women were heard.

> *Intensive interviews also known as unstructured interviewing is a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee, rich detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis.*
>
> (Lofland and Lofland,1971:12).

These were carried out either in a one to one setting or in a small group setting to encourage the participants to talk about their lives, through a series of direct and non-direct open-ended questions. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants, either using a tape recorder or hand written, whichever was the least obtrusive at the time. Taped conversations were later transcribed and the emerging themes were noted.

Ann Oakley, a British sociologist, advocated a new model of feminist interviewing that strove for intimacy and self-disclosure and 'believing the interviewee' (Oakley,1981:30-61). In my own interviewing I regarded it to be a two way process which involved interaction and reciprocal self disclosure.

I also used semi-structured questionnaires when interviewing informants (Appendix 1). Two or three parish or zone leaders from each of the nine parishes were used as key informants so I could learn more about the effect the CWP was having on their lives. From these questionnaires, information was produced giving statistics about the programme.

The DWT wanted information from the parishes about how the CWP was working in the villages and what changes were happening in the community and in the families. So a series of questions were put together and it became a means of getting the women to give information on specific areas of concern. The questions were kept very simple. Some women chose to fill out the questionnaire on their own, but the majority used it as an opportunity to spend time with the DWT to talk more fully about the Catholic women's group in their village. The easier questions led up to those asking about attitudinal changes. These questions took longer for the women to understand. What did change mean? Some had seen changes in the community but had not related it to their own achievements. When they were given time to think and to discuss with others, they were eager to share the changes that had happened in their families and in their communities.

5c. Participatory approach and participatory rural appraisal (PRA).

The participatory approach was the central core of the CWP, thus it was logical that PRA should be an integral part of my research. PRA encouraged local people to determine an agenda, to gather, express and analyse information and to plan. Participatory rural appraisal was used because it empowered the women through the very process of the activity, as we shall see from the following examples. Whilst other research methods are in the control of the researcher, this method 'hands over the stick' (Chambers,1994:1255) to the local people. Rapport between facilitator and the participants is the key to facilitating PRA. It provides an opportunity for the most overlooked members of the community to have a chance to share their knowledge

There were four times when we used PRA in the research. The first was when village women mapped their village involved in a *supsup gaden* project (Appendix 2). First the houses were mapped, then the women started to add other information, standpipes, houses with young children, *supsup gadens*, literacy of the families. The participants added to and changed the map many times. The women were empowered because they shared their collective awareness about the social structure of the village. At the end, they asked for paper and pens to be left with them so they could repeat the mapping again for the wider community in the evening. The second time PRA was used was prior to writing the health course. The DWT called together village women to list the main sicknesses affecting them and this led to a discussion on the use of *kastom* medicine which was the first health system they usually used. Taking this local knowledge seriously and using body mapping to facilitate communication, the DWT asked the participants to draw a pregnant women and someone with malaria (Appendices 3,4). Thus women's existing knowledge was built upon by those running the health course. Where appropriate, local knowledge and idiom were incorporated into the health teaching, thus the women responded on a deeper level having made it their own. The third time, the PRA involved drawing time lines for the CWP, to show how the different courses had involved the women's group in that particular area. It highlighted how the increased interest inside the village group was dependent on outside stimulus (Appendices 5,6).

On the fourth occasion, with a larger group of wives attending a Catechist's course, we tried a PRA to gather information on how active their groups were. Because many of the women were not actively involved in the CWP and were illiterate, we used flowers, stones and shells instead of words or pictures. The use of local materials, made it easier for them to share their ideas. When asked if their women's group was active, they either piled up many flowers on the paper or put one

or two. If there was a women's house it was depicted by a stone. This 'handing over the stick' to the participants, helped the women to take an active part in the proceedings.

5d. Historical data collection.

Historical sociology is not a special sociology, it is the very essence of the discipline. How we behave now is largely a matter of what experience has made possible for us:

> *At its best, historical sociology is rational, critical and imaginative. It looks for mechanisms through which societies change or reproduce themselves. It seeks the hidden structures which frustrate some human aspirations whilst making others realisable, whether we appreciate it or not. This knowledge is well worth searching for.*
>
> (Smith,1990:1).

We cannot hope to understand the women's movement in Malaita without the use of historical materials, and the lives of the women cannot be understood without reference to the institutions within which their biography is enacted (Mills,1959:161). The historical analysis of the Diocesan reports and the parish reports from the women leaders revealed how the CWP developed over the years. It showed where and when the courses were run in the Diocese and what new topics were added to the teaching. It showed the changing attitudes of the women, their husbands and the communities. Most of this data was from primary sources, reports written by the women leaders in the parishes or the DWT.

I had to be aware that these documents were not written by objective observers: they will contain biases. The picture they conveyed would no doubt show up the good points of the programme whilst glossing over the negative aspects. Problems that occurred, either with transport, co-operation, leadership, finances or venue, might have been missing from the written reports. As long as I was aware of these shortcomings, a more accurate picture could be built up from my primary sources. They provided a rich source of data that would convey the momentum, direction and growing impact of the programme.

5e. Secondary sources.

Secondary sources provided a broad background on the culture and *kastoms* of Melanesia, and more specifically, on Malaita. Official documents and government

publications were used to gather information about the status of the women in the Solomons with regard to health, education and subsistence farming. This is needed to understand the broader context in which women's empowerment can occur.

Other secondary sources included textbooks, research papers, articles and literature on women throughout the world and their struggle for empowerment and the strategies being applied to achieve this goal.

6. HOW THE RESEARCH WENT IN PRACTISE.

From the time I started sitting in the villages, in my role as a facilitator to the CWP, before this research was thought about, I was observing the women, making notes and asking questions. Without being aware of all the various methodologies open to me I followed a naturalistic approach allowing me to be sensitive so that the customs in the different areas were taken into account.

Over the years the formal way of entry into the villages changed. I was able in the latter years to arrive at the villages without prior notification but still did not enter the actual village until someone invited me in. It was always important to be courteous and to respect local *kastom*. However well I planned ahead there was always the *Solomon factor,* a rogue card that could disrupt all plans at the last moment. For example, the parish canoe that had been arranged to take the team South the next day would suddenly not be available. Frantic new arrangements for a private canoe had to be negotiated at a huge extra cost to the CWP.

There have been times when the setting for the data collection became difficult. If there had been some particular occurrence or dispute and the women were divided then they would try to influence me to take one side or the other. Similarly, a death in the village would stop any course or group activity. These were the times to withdraw and resume when the women asked us back.

The PRA sessions suited the Melanesian character as a consensus was reached through prolonged debate and sharing. At first a bit hesitant and shy, the women achieved something for themselves using their own local knowledge. It was empowering as we knew the information gained was used by them on other occasions both inside their village communities and outside the Diocese, as we shall describe below.

In one PRA session the women highlighted the impact that the various courses have had on their Catholic women's group (CWG) and on the women themselves. They noted how the women's involvement in the CWP fluctuated in direct relation to the external inputs from the DWT. The interaction between the women, each adding something to the overall picture and making time for the oldest and most reserved to have a say, was very noticeable. The women spent much time getting each Diocesan course plotted at the right month, relating it to all sorts of other women's activities: 'when so and so was in hospital', 'after Betsie was delivered'. At the end of the day, after much laughing, there was a sense of achievement; they had been part of a process to formalise their own history. The women analysed why the group failed at various times and from there new insights came as to how to overcome these problems in the future. This analysis was then used by the women in their report to their parish council, in talks in their village committees and was incorporated into the teaching of the DWT both in Malaita and in Honiara. It was an empowering research technique.

As mentioned above, a semi-structured questionnaire was presented to selected women in the parishes by myself and a member of the DWT (Appendix 6). Giving a clear explanation to the women about the purpose of the questionnaire and being available to help them answer the questions elicited information about how their lives and attitudes had been changed by the CWP. It also allowed them to ascertain how active their CWG was, how many women attended and whether the Parish teams were operating.

The first questions led on to more searching questions when the women sat and talked freely about the problems they were experiencing, and the changes they saw in their own families and communities. The question about whether there was a women's house in the village showed changes in acceptance by the men in the communities. Men's changing attitudes were something the women started to discuss. Before the CWP there were no houses specifically built for women's activities, but now the women were not only wanting a women's house, but were prepared to build one themselves which was challenging the accepted division of labour. The presence of a literacy group showed that the community had seen the great need for teaching literacy and had mobilised themselves to fill this need.

Historical data collection and analysis took place in the later stages allowing me to draw together all the threads from this research to present a full picture of the impact the CWP had on the women of Malatia.

7. SUMMARY.

We have seen that a participatory approach is the most suited to this research, in order that the attitudinal changes of the women can be studied. Using the various research methods described in this chapter the women responded on all sorts of levels, whether it was in the PRA sessions, or when telling their story in an interview, they themselves began to analyse the CWP and realise their own value and achievements. In Chapter Four we shall start to look at the lives of women in Malaita and see how development has effected them.

Photo. 1. Women from Dala Parish returning from the bush: heavily burdened with firewood.

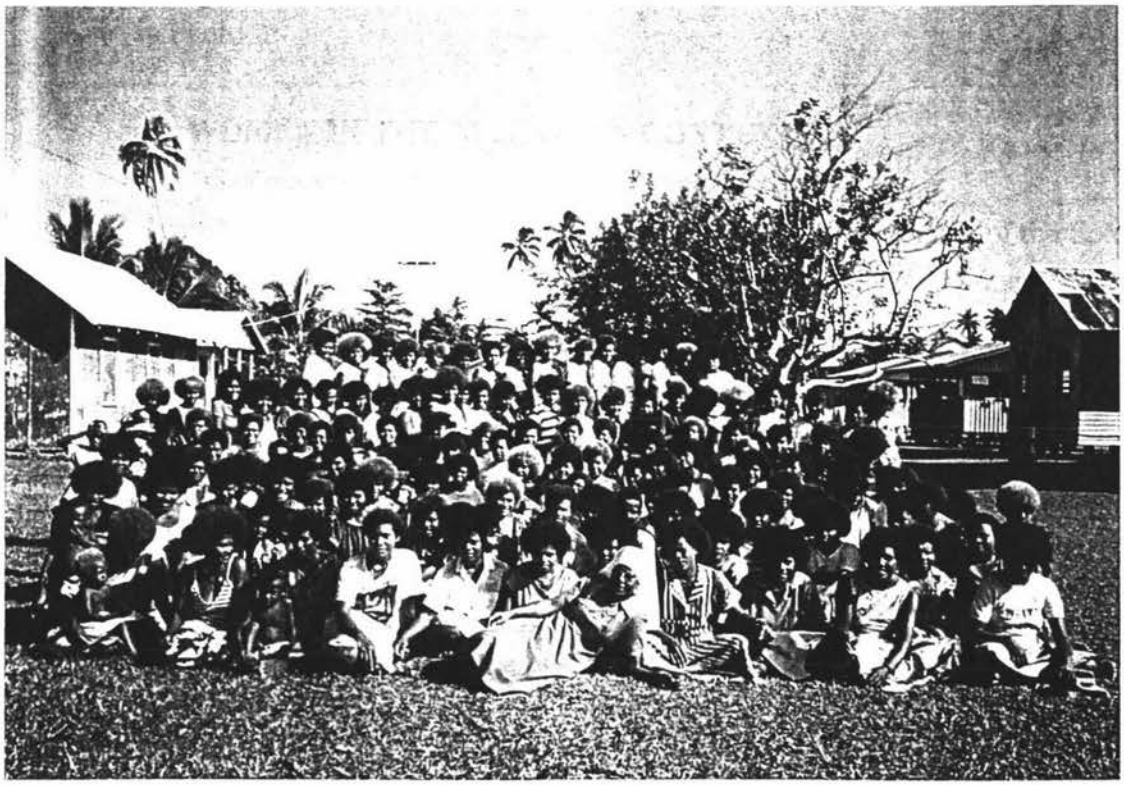

Photo. 2. Women's Week 1991: one hundred and twenty women assembled at Buma Diocesan Training Centre.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT AND THE WOMEN OF MALAITA.

1. INTRODUCTION.

This chapter looks at the background to life in Malaita, including the geographic description of the island and the history of colonisation, missionisation and the major change from barter to a cash economy. This is in order to consider how these changes have effected women's lives particularly. A discussion of Melanesian cultures gives us insights into the behaviour of the women now and the customs that still impact on their lives. The workload of the women (Photo 1) and the differences in gender roles are described in a section on village life for Malaitan girls and women.

Chapter Four also explores the Solomon Island government's position on the whole issue of women's development and the programmes that the government and the NGOs are involved in to assist women's development. This will provide the context in which a detailed discussion of the operations of the Catholic Women's Programme (CWP) will take place in Chapter Five. The first beginnings of that programme are seen in Photo 2.

2. WOMEN IN THE MALAITAN CONTEXT.

2a. Geography and infrastructural development.

Malaita Province has almost one quarter of the entire population of the Solomon Islands. The main land area consists of two large islands separated by the Maramasike passage. The main land mass is some 186 kilometres long and 31 kilometres wide. It has a central mountain range and little in the way of roading infrastructure.

Malaita is an island of physical and human contrasts. The narrow coastal strip leads to impenetrable bush covered mountains. It is the coastal area that is the most densely populated: the people resident within this geographical area make up two thirds of the population. They are known as the salt water people. The remaining one third are the people who live in the bush[11] away from the coast.

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[11]Bush people live in the more isolated regions of Malaita. The villages are accessible by foot, and have limited health facilities and schools.

The last official census was in 1986. The revised figures from the Health Information System state that the total population for the Solomon's for 1995 is 393,759 and that for Malaita the population is 96,947 (Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services,1995). The national population growth rate is 3.4 percent but for Malaita it is only 2.7 percent because of migration to the capital, Honiara in Guadalcanal Province, to the rest of Guadalcanal Province and to Western Province (Malaita Province, Health and Medical Services, Annual Report,1994).

There are over two thousand villages on Malaita with an average of ten households, thus in each village there are about fifty people (Solomon Island Government Census,1986:72). The population is highly dispersed. There is electricity only in the provincial capital of Auki and on one other government station, Malu'u. The water supply is from rivers and streams, which might be piped and running to standpipes in the villages. Sanitation is undeveloped, with the beach, the mangroves or the bush being used as toilet and rubbish areas. This was appropriate before the rising population pressure rendered such practices a danger to health.

2b. *Kastoms* and culture.

There are certain cultural traits that bind all Melanesian people together. So what is the essence of existence for a Melanesian?

> *The key value for Melanesian society seems to be what can be called 'life'. In this context it means well-being, peace, health, wealth, meaning. In brief, it means everything positive the human heart desires. The primacy of 'life' is the family and the roots of life are in community. Thousands of years of experience have taught the Melanesians that the only feasible way to 'life' was and is the community. One could find security, acceptance and meaning only within the community.*
>
> (Mantovani,1987:1).

This community or clan group Mantovani refers to is formed by relationships. By entering into a relationship one enters or forms a community. This stretches further than merely kinship. The relationships are not limited to the living or to human beings, they extend to the dead and the whole environment, the water, the bush and the food gardens.

Traditionally, each household within a community consists of a group of people who live together, who co-operate in producing and consuming food and who are

related by blood or marriage (Jolly and Macintyre,1988:2). Gift exchanges regularly accompany the celebration of life-cycle events. The relationships within the community are strengthened and mended if broken, through exchange and the giving and receiving of visible material gifts.

In times past the young people were separated, the young men staying together in the men's house and being taught about tradition from the chiefs and elders. The girls were initiated into womanhood by their contact with other women in the menstrual huts and through garden work. Menstrual blood was traditionally seen as polluting to men, robbing them of their power and therefore surrounded by rituals to protect the men. Social status of women in relation to men was low and women's lives were circumscribed by men:

> *Such unequal relationships were sanctioned by every element of culture tangible and intangible, be it language or bodily deportment, myths or eating practices, time concepts or the siting of village buildings. To men and women alike, the social order constantly reinforced and reinforcing, seemed normal, inevitable and unchanging.*
>
> (Bennett,1987:13).

Traditional marriage, however, ensured that married couples had a secure cultural and social anchorage for their lives together. The marriage gave continuity to the clan, and so Melanesian societies took care to support and protect it. Choosing a marriage partner was considered to be too important a decision to be left to the young man alone; family and clan were all involved in the decision (Mantovani,1987:25). Brideprice was paid for the bride and this is still the common, though not strictly adhered to, practice.

The idea of a prospective groom paying for his bride makes Western minds think of the women as chattels. However, in Melanesian *kastom* the value of women is enhanced by bride payment. A girl for whom no payment was made was mourned by other Solomon Island women because 'they felt she was downgraded and could no longer claim her rightful place and function in their society' (Inglis,1969:552).

Malaitan society is patrilineal. Descent is traced through the men, who also take charge of the land. Decision making traditionally is by consensus, which takes time.

2c. Change over time: missionisation and the cash economy.

The coming of Christianity and the change from barter exchange to a cash system, are two historical changes that have greatly affected the women of Malaita. After the coming of the missionaries, some were converted to Christianity. Often everyone in the clan would followed the chief's lead, if he converted. But attitudes and practises of paganism were still strong in their lives. Women were still seen as defiling and robbing men of power, and there were *tambu*[12] places where women were forbidden to go. Some cultural beliefs pertaining to women were challenged with the coming of Christianity and the elders' power was reduced (Bennett,1987:22). Even today, in certain areas of Malaita, where *kastom* is strong, compensation would be asked for if a women gave birth on a market truck, or in a canoe on the way to hospital. This is because to some men menstrual blood is still thought to be defiling.

The most important agent of change that effected the lives of the women, was the introduction of cash or *seleni*[13]. Traditionally the skills that each person had in the community had an exchange value. Men skilled, for example, in building houses exchanged their labour for food or other needed goods. Traditionally, the bush people exchanged sweet potatoes and vegetables for fish caught by the salt water people, in that way the diet of both groups was improved. However with the introduction of cash, this exchange system broke down.

In the 1930s cash was used increasingly instead of barter, even in the ordinary exchange of goods between villages, turning social relationships with reciprocal obligations into cash relationships without obligations. Cash was changing other relationships as well. In 1938 men of status and wealth were asking not only shell money, as previously, but they added five pounds cash for their daughter's bride payment. Ordinary villagers asked for ten shillings (Bennett,1987:257).

The effect on women of the introduction of the cash economy and the status accorded to those who accrued cash, was detrimental. Women had no access to cash themselves despite the fact that they were the main food producers for the family. As Kate Young states with relation to a wider range of third world countries, no matter that there have been improvements in health, education and life expectancy, the structural position of women has not improved:

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[12]These places can still be recognised in the bush of Malaita. They are usually on a hill, with a clump of large trees. Originally they were sacred places where custom priests performed rituals to call on the ancestors.

[13]Seleni is the pidgin word for money or cash.

> *The social position of women, whatever their class, has worsened as a result of the integration of developing countries into the market, regardless of whether or not women's condition, has improved.*
>
> (Young,1988:2-3).

This is backed by Sen and Grown (1987:28). In the organisation Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) they found that, with few exceptions, women's relative access to economic resources, incomes, and employment have worsened, their burdens of work have increased, and their relative and even absolute health, nutritional and educational status has declined.

Cash was and still remains the most powerful agent for change and is the root cause of most deterioration and breakdown in society and consequently, further denigration of women (Bishop Loft,1995:pers. comm.). Malaita is a patrilineal society and traditionally women have been excluded from almost all financial discussions and decisions. Men traditionally make the financial decisions within the family. The cash priorities of the women, for example, to pay for school fees, clinic visits, kerosene and other basic neccessities, can easily be ignored by the men.

Money is largely under the power of the men. When the women do earn a little money they find it hard to keep. A story from a village on one of the artificial islands in the Langalanga lagoon tells how the women had grown tired of carrying the water from the mainland twice a day by canoe. So they formed themselves into a union to work on a plantation. To raise enough money to buy a rainwater tank for their island. When they had earned four hundred dollars they were going to take it to the bank, but time after time the husbands came to the treasurer's house and demanded the money that their wives had earned in the union. Soon all the money had been taken back by the husbands. Resistance to the men's demands would have ended in violence.

2d. Women's versus men's work.

Traditionally, clearing the bush for new gardens and protecting the women from attack was men's work. With stone axes, clearing the bush was time consuming, but with the advent of steel tools the work was made easier and quicker. Women still used a digging stick for their roles in planting so their work time was not decreased. With pacification men no longer needed to accompany their women to the gardens to protect them from attack Men's traditional role has changed so much that now it is often the women who clear the new gardens. Subsistence farming takes most of the

women's time; they go to the gardens five or six times a week. They produce most of the food that the family consumes with extra gardens planted to provide food for weddings, feasts and village activities.

In 1986 the statistics for Malaita indicated that only 5.3 percent of adult females were engaged in paid work (Solomon Island Government Census,1986:186). But women perform multiple tasks in the village. They cut and collect the firewood, carry the water, care for the health of the family and are involved in church activities, village committees and building good relationships. In Malaitan society, the women are valued for their reproductive role and for their ability to work in the garden, whereas government and development planners find value only in paid employment.

Men's work is valued when they are paid wages; then they have status. Although the men in the villages in Malaita are hardly ever in full time employment, only 16.7 percent according to the 1986 Census (Solomon Island Government Census,1986:186), they think of themselves as the primary income earners. Their income is derived mainly from cocoa and copra which needs only sporadic work. Clearing and harvesting of these cash crops is often done by the women, but the marketing would nearly always be done by the men. The money derived from the sale of these cash crops on the commodity market typically stays with the men. Men do not now have such clearly defined roles: they do not teach the young about *'kastom'* and tradition as before and leave most of the child rearing to the women. The men are involved in community activities but in a markedly different way to the women. They are involved in leadership roles which bring status to themselves and respect from the other men.

Contemporary decision making bodies are predominantly male. There are thirty one elected members in the provincial government, from which is elected a premier who in turn appoints an executive committee. This is the decision making body of the province. Within the province in 1995 there was only one provincial member who was female. All the other chiefs, area council members and members of provincial government were male.

2e. Village life for Malaitan girls and women today.

This section provides a description of village life, in order to illustrate gender biases and the educational and health status of woman in Malaita. In this way a picture of their lives at this changing time in history will emerge.

From birth onwards a boy will be more important in the family. It has been said that a father expecting a first child will say, *'If the child is a boy, we will kill a pig.'* If a girl child is born there will be no such celebration. Young girls are raised to start looking after their own brothers and sisters from an early age. It is usual to see a three or four year old carrying an infant on her hip. She is taught to carry out simple tasks; sweeping, washing the plates, carrying water, and other jobs that are done round the house. The boys are not expected to do any of this work and are not given instruction about this work.

Girls are raised not to answer back and not to hit their brothers, although it is acceptable for the boys to hit the girls. Fathers do not usually encourage their daughters to attend school. When money budgeted for exercise books and school fees is short it is typically spent on the boy. Some parents feel that too much education will lessen girls' chances of marrying and settling down in the village. A higher brideprice will be asked and fewer young men will be willing to pay. In the same way, males are privileged in terms of food distribution. When a fish is divided the largest portion goes to the father and then the male relatives and the boys. The mother and the young children all eat off the same plate. This reinforces even further the unfair distribution of protein and other food.

Girls have little control over their own destiny. Decisions concerning their lives are typically made by the male members of the family. When a couple comes to marry the two families come together to decide on the brideprice. The way that the young woman works in the garden, her knowledge of *kastom* and her general behaviour in the community will effect the brideprice. Traditionally this will be hand made shell money called *tafuli'ae.*[14] The *tafuli'ae* is six foot long with multiple strands and as many as twenty of these will be asked for. With the coming of the cash economy other goods are expected also, including outboard engines, sewing machines, rolls of fabric and cash.

Brideprice used to be a way of binding together two tribes in an intricate web of exchange. It was amassed by the extended family of the groom, each contributing to the agreed brideprice. It was then redistributed within the young woman's family to repay previous debts. This made the marriage a family affair with both sides eager to

[14]Tafuli'ae is the traditional shell money, hand made from shells which are chipped into round shapes, then drilled so make a central hole, strung onto fishing line and smoothed with stones. Women from the Langalanga area of Malaita make the money. A tafuli'ae will take about two months to complete and in 1996 is worth about NZ$100.

see it work. If the marriage failed then the shell money had to be returned to the husband's family. The marriage would have failed if there were no children after five or six years. In that case the man's family would expect the brideprice to be returned.

When young women marry, they leave their own village and go to live with their husband's family. This means that if a young woman marries into another tribe where the language and the traditional ways of working are different, she has to learn the new ways. The differences might be in the way the gardens are prepared or the potatoes peeled. It depends on which village and tribe a young women marries into, as to whether she will receive help with learning the different ways. Often the young bride is left to struggle on her own. Sometimes a newly married woman does not return to her own village for a long time. She needs her husband's permission to do so and money for the transport.

The *kastom* regarding the defiling nature of menstrual blood is still prevalent in Malaita. In some areas the chiefs have told the women to go back to using the menstrual huts when they have their period and some women still give birth on their own in the bush. Children are usually born in quick succession, which is a high risk for the young mother. This, together with the incredibly hard work that the women are involved in, causes chronic ill health in many cases.

Family life is changing rapidly, with children beginning to decide for themselves whether they want to marry or when they want to go to Honiara the capital. At present the number of young women being forced into marriages arranged by their families is falling. More and more young women rebel by running away with a young man and in many such cases the full brideprice is not being paid. Parents are facing new challenges with their teenagers and life is not as simple as before.

With the barter system no longer operating, cash is needed for many things and this has put pressure on the family unit. The family unit itself is changing, the *wantok*[15] system of an extended family caring for those who do not have work or are becoming old is breaking down to focus more on the nuclear family. With this significant change parents are floundering as they have few skills to know how to communicate with and listen to, their young men and women. Feelings are not easily expressed in Malaitan

[15]Wantok means literally, one talk. People from the same extended family are tied together by family relationships and expect to be given support by their relatives as they have an obligation to care for them.

society, which can cause frustration and anger on both sides and mounting family tension.

3. MALAITAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT.

Against this background of the significance of history and culture for Malaitan women, it is necessary to examine women's situation with regards to key indicators of development: education, health, nutrition and agriculture.

3a. Education.

Less than ten percent of villages have primary schools in the Solomons. It has been stated (Moore,1990:47) that:

> *Only approximately 40 out of 100 children enrolling complete primary education. Of these who have never attended school 60 percent are women. Ten years earlier this was 57 percent, so the relative disadvantage for women is increasing.*

In Malaita Province 62.8 percent of the population aged ten years and over were enumerated as having no education at all (Solomon Island Government Census,1986:166.275). Of the remaining children who did attend school, 41.5 percent were females. The imbalance grew at each level, primary, secondary and tertiary. The figures for secondary education nationally indicate that one third of all primary school pupils go on to secondary education. In Malaita, female enrolment in form one at secondary schools was 30.4 percent in contrast to 45 percent in Honiara (Solomon Island Statistical Bulletin,1992: no11).

The percentage of girls going to secondary schools is kept low for a variety of reasons. One is that secondary schools are boarding schools and have fewer places for girls in the dormitories. Another is that parents are concerned that the girls will be poorly supervised when they are away from home (Lateef,1990:18). Education is seen as a way of securing paid employment which as we have seen is unlikely for girls in Malaita so is seen to be of less importance. Also, parents will ask a higher brideprice for an educated girl and thus her chances of marrying may be lessened. Of all Malaitan women, only sixteen percent are literate in English,[16] compared to thirty one percent of the men. Thirty five percent of women speak English whilst forty seven percent speak Pidgin. Because of these gender inequalities in terms of access to formal education women are further disadvantaged in securing paid employment or

[16]Literacy here means to be able to read and write competently in that language.

contributing fully to the development of the country (Solomon Island Literacy Committee,1992:36).

3b. Health.

In 1986 the total fertility rate for the Solomon Islands, that is children per women at childbearing age, was 6.1 children (Solomon Island Government Census,1986:v). This, combined with a high incidence of malaria, anaemia, poor diet and a heavy work load, contributes to the poor general health of Malaitan women.

The main disease affecting Solomon Islanders is malaria, which for women can also affect the healthy growth of the baby during pregnancy. Depleted iron stores due to repeated malarial attacks, malnutrition, repeated pregnancies, or menstrual loss all combine to cause chronic ill health in many women. Complications with pregnancies and miscarriages occur frequently. Chronic skin sepsis, chest infections, tuberculosis and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases are health problems facing women.

The family's orientation towards health care is pragmatic. They will usually use *kastom* medicine to treat an illness first.[17] The decision as to which health system to use will depend on the family's previous experience with *kastom* medicine and Western medicine. They move from one healing system to another with ease. Usually the male members of the family make the health care decisions, although it is the women who are the first health care providers. At the same time, health is perceived as a family concern. There is constant discussion within the extended family and decisions change during the course of the illness as symptoms develop. Kleinman (1980:306) has found such family involvement in health care a common feature of health care in third world countries.

Because of the strong cultural constraints in Malaita, male doctors or nurses have to obtain signed permission from the husband, or husband's male relatives, before a woman can be examined gynaecologically. It is not infrequently refused. This can further limit a women's access to health services. There is only a five percent acceptance rate for family planning practices. Although birth spacing is desired by

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[17]*Kastom* medicine in the Solomon Islands involves *kastom* doctors in the villages. These practitioners have herbal remedies for most common illnesses. Some of these medicines are taken by mouth, some are rubbed on and some leaves are tied round the ankle or wrist. As well as herbal remedies, bone setters can be found in most areas. *Kastom* doctors expect payment for their remedies, either in cash or with shell money. An important factor in the value of *kastom* medicine is that the *kastom* doctors speak in the people's own language and are sensitive to their culture and traditions.

many women it is culturally unacceptable to most men who feel that by paying brideprice, their wife has a duty to provide them with many children (Director of Health and Medical Services,1995: pers. comm.).

3c. Nutrition.

The Solomon Island National Nutrition Survey (1990:36), showed that 75 percent of Malaitan women had not eaten a balanced diet within the last twenty four hours. This concept of balanced diet comes from the current teaching on nutrition that each person should eat some food from the three main food groups each day. These three main foods groups are the energy foods or carbohydrates, the body building foods or proteins and the protective foods or fruit and vegetables.

The findings in Malaita show that the diet of women is poorer than that of men. This is partially due to the fact that the men and boys eat first and that the women eat off a shared plate with the younger children. There are also *kastom* taboos that stop women from eating certain kinds of food during pregnancy. The Solomon Island Nutrition Survey (1990) noted that these are almost exclusively body building or protein foods such as, eggs, fish, shell fish and pork. Medically these are the most important foods for a pregnant women. This poor diet leads to chronic ill health so that women have little energy reserves when they become pregnant or have repeated malaria attacks. The notion of a balanced diet is unknown to most women. The idea that food had something to do with health and well being was not understood. Solomon Islanders eat for fuel, not for taste or health promotion.

3d. Agriculture.

Melanesians have a strong affinity with the land. The growing, gathering and preparation of food is the single most time consuming activity for women. Subsistence farming is carried out almost entirely by women and this sector provides about eighty percent of the population with their livelihood. It is the non-monetary economic base of the Solomon Islands (Frizelle,1992:1). In 1991 subsistence farming production represented seventeen percent of the Gross Domestic Product compared to 4.4 percent for forestry and 6.8 percent for fishing. At a conservative value of 0.85 cents per person per day, with eighty percent of the population involved in subsistence farming this equates at a non-monetary value of 24 million dollars for Malaita alone per year.[18]

[18]Based on Population Projections for Malaita 1992(Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Malaita Province) and Consumption of Home Produce Data (1982&1988) updated to estimate 1992 prices.

Most of the training that has been given by the government's agriculture division has been focused on the men and cash cropping. There has been little research on new strains of basic root crops or plant fertility and little technical assistance given to the subsistence farming sector. Most soils are poor in potassium. Heavy leaching means tropical soils need long fallows of about fifteen years between one or two years cropping but the women are finding that because of the population pressure and demands for land for cash cropping and other uses, the fallow periods have had to be shortened. Steeper gardens have been planted and the stability of the system is under threat (Frizelle,1992:1). In most instances the more fertile soils have been taken for cash crops of coconuts and cocoa, so the women have to work harder to obtain the same yield.

With the logging that is now taking place the women have become even greater victims of development. The planted food gardens are often destroyed as a logging company moves into the bush. New gardens have to be planted, on less fertile ground on steeper slopes at a greater distance from the village. Women's workloads, therefore, are often increased as an impact of logging.

4. DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PLANNING IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS.

Even though the constitution states that the fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed to all citizens of the Solomon Islands there are areas of discrimination against women found within government policies and practices, as seen in the previous section on education and agriculture. Other inequalities are discussed below.

4a. Planning.

There is an institutional lack of planning expertise which affects all planning throughout the country but especially women's development. The development process is guided by what the provincial divisions of the various ministries decide to focus on for the future. At the Malaitan development planning session that took place in September 1995 in Auki, there were no women present at all. The heads of divisions of the Provincial Government departments were there, leaders of telecommunications, banks, electricity departments and pastors, all male, so the input from women in this province was zero (Malaita Province Development Plan Workshop,1995). The provincial plans which are drawn up at such meetings are then

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$0.85/person/day at 96,947(estimated 1992 pop)x 0.8 (% of pop in subsistence sector) x365 days= $24 million/annum.

duly incorporated into the National Development Plan and women again will be the forgotten target rather than part of the plan (South Pacific Commission,1994:32).

Urban primacy impedes development. The gap between urban and rural development widens progressively, with middle class interests in Honiara gaining at the cost of rural development interests. A large proportion of the overseas funding stops in Honiara as new hospital complexes, dual carriage highways, parliament buildings, tourist hotels and casinos, all go to feed the wants of the capital city, without developing the rest of the country. This happens not only with buildings but with personnel. As Sevele argues, with reference to Pacific Island countries in general:

> *The rural people are underserved by health, housing, education, transport and administrative facilities. Little aid reaches them because the development of policies of the recipient countries generally favours urban-based projects and activities in which poor people cannot participate owing to their peculiar circumstances.*
>
> (Sevele,1985:4).

4b. Government policies for women.

There is little doubt that the status of women in the Solomon Islands is below that of men. This is reinforced by the fact that the male minister in charge of the Ministry for Youth and Sport also looks after the Women's Development Division and by the fact that the government is reluctant to ratify the National Women's Policy. The unratified National Women's Policy focuses on the equal opportunities of women in the development of the country. The policy states,

> *Proud of the wisdom and worthy customs of our ancestors, mindful of our common and diverse heritage and conscious of our common destiny and as a basis of our Nation, we agree and pledge that the fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed to the citizens of the Solomon Islands regardless of gender.*
>
> (Solomon Islands National Women's Policy Draft,1988:5).

The National Women's Policy seeks for women to be recognised as equal partners with men in the development process in the country (Appendix 7). It notes in the area of agriculture that women are already the providers of the family food but that they are not equal recipients of the services provided. It states that women are the main users of the health system and their specific health problems need to be identified

and addressed. This includes providing access to quality health services and information on family planning, giving special attention to rural women. It is further stated that health education programmes directed towards and appropriate for women are needed recognising that non-formal education will improve the knowledge of the women and help them understand how to look after the health of themselves and their families better.

The need for greater access and equal opportunities at all levels of education being made available for girls was stressed. The policy called for an increase in the number of boarding places for girls and greater access to vocational schools. A review of the whole education system was called for, so that girls could benefit better from the system. Non-formal education was seen as vital for the ongoing education of rural women particularly and it was stressed NGOs should be encouraged to carry out this work. It was argued that training programmes for women in management, small business and decision making are urgently needed.

Finally it was recommended that discriminatory laws against women should be eradicated and advice and education on women's rights should be promoted (Solomon Islands National Women's Policy Draft,1988:20-33).

For Malaitan women this policy, if passed and acted upon, would go a long way towards providing a basis from which they can work for change. Then they would have recognition as being fully part of the development process in the province. With increased access to agricultural information and active support from the agriculture division the concerns that are being expressed about infertile soils and low yields could be addressed. In the area of health, access to improved health services that are suitable for illiterate rural women would be of value. Births are still taking place in the remote villages with no ante-natal care being given to the mother. Any ongoing health programme that addresses the health education needs of women in the rural areas would help the overall health of the family and community. Non-formal educational opportunities for women could achieve many of the objectives of the National Women's Policy. Knowledge about health, nutrition, agriculture, sustainable development and the physical growth of young women, could all help the women to take a fuller role in decision making in the family unit.

For these changes to come about, the policy needs to be ratified in Parliament and supported with adequate funding for the programmes. In October 1995 the government refused to ratify the policy for the third time, saying that the women's

groups had become too political and were not addressing the needs of rural women (Solomon Island Broadcasting Corporation, News Broadcast, October 1995).

Whenever it is passed it will need political muscle to carry it through. This political muscle has a prerequisite which is the conscientisation of a significant body of women, with increased leadership skills and self confidence. It is not enough that this is achieved only in the urban area among the well educated women; it must happen in the rural areas also. Little that is planned or done on a national political scale impacts positively on rural people. As they say, *'No mata, mi fella kaikai kumara no moa,'* the meaning of this saying is that, 'it does not make any difference to us, we will still be eating sweet potatoes'. For this reason women's programmes based in the rural area and directed to the empowerment of rural women are crucial to any true advancement of the women.

5. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MALAITAN WOMEN: GOVERNMENT[19]

5a. Ministry of Youth, Sport and Women's Development.

The Women's Development Division (WDD) through its Rural Women's Skills Training Programme, has helped the four main church groups in Malaita Province: Anglican, Catholic, South Seas Evangelical Church and Seventh Day Adventists. With funding from New Zealand a grant is available to each particular church for training in community development, business skills, sewing, nutrition and home management (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade,1994).

The WDD provincial officers also run training workshops in the fields of sewing, cooking, child care, nutrition and leadership training. The emphasis is on women as housewives largely based on the Western model, teaching sewing, pattern cutting, craft work such as appliqué tablecloths, cooking skills and kitchen management, which includes how to make charcoal stoves. Leadership courses run by the division deal mainly with teaching the correct procedure to run a meeting and the work of the office bearers. Little emphasis is given to the women's traditional leadership skills which are already applied in their everyday community life (Lateef,1990:29-33).

The WDD also funds small income-generating projects, usually sewing projects or poultry projects. The success of these is low and they do not last long. In Malaita

[19]I will only look at those government programmes which specifically have an impact on women in Malaita.

any increase in the earnings of the women is not likely to benefit the women themselves. The men, using their traditional authority regarding the status of women, manipulate projects so that the returns come directly to them. The women are in no position to resist such manipulation and pressures. The end result is to place the women in an even more invidious position. Physical violence will force the funds out of their hands and the women will suffer. Instead of the project increasing the women's dignity it will have had the opposite effect (Bishop Loft,1992: pers. comm.).

5b. National Council of Women.

The National Council of Women (NCW), was established in 1983. It takes the major part of its funding from the Government and so it is appropriate to discuss the council under this heading. The NCW has not yet evolved as an effective forum to address women's developmental needs. It is an urban based organisation with no officers in the province. This organisation has had little impact on the eighty five percent of Solomon Island women who live in rural areas.

However, the NCW officers in Honiara are working in the sensitive area of domestic violence and during 1995 secured premises and funding to operate a safe house for women in need. The NCW has also been part of a new initiative working with the police encouraging ongoing training for the police force in to how to deal with domestic violence. It encourages the police to work together with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, so that appropriate action can be taken against the guilty party. A training course has taken place at the police compound in Auki which should mean much needed help is given to the women living in violent situations (President NCW,1995:pers. comm.). Women from church groups should have been involved in this course, but so far they have been ignored. This initiative does indeed address a short-term need, but as Maguire (1984:59) notes with relation to other remedial forms of development action taken around the third world, it needs to be coupled with education and action for long term meaningful change of the underlying problem.

5c. Ministry of Agriculture.

The agriculture division in Auki has worked with the Catholic Women's Programme in Malaita since 1991. At the request of the Diocesan Women's Team they made funds and extension officers available to teach agriculture as part of the programme. Working as part of the team, they had input into at least ten agriculture courses.

The agriculture division did not, however, show any initiative to act on their own. They relied on the DWT to request their help to make a contribution to the programme. This division's attitude could be said to be typical of many government divisions which are not proactive when it comes to promoting women's development.

6. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MALAITAN WOMEN: NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

6a. Umbrella organisation for NGOs.

The NGO sector in the Solomon Islands is organised with many NGOs coming under the umbrella of a networking body, the Development Services Exchange (DSE). DSE, however, works almost exclusively with other Honiara-based NGOs and has not provided a good service for NGOs in the provinces. For three years the CWP subscribed to membership of this organisation but they notified Malaitan organisations about meetings, courses or workshops when it was too late for representatives to attend. Their new policy from 1995 stated that they would only work with NGOs in Honiara (President DSE,1995:pers.comm.). Thus all provincial NGOs have been further disadvantaged.

6b. NGOs active in Malaita.

There are, however, several NGOs which are involved in specific aspects of women's development in Malaita and their contribution to the women is extremely important. They are the Solomon Island Development Trust, the Literacy Association of Solomon Islands and the Village Education Programme, which was originally known as Danchurch Aid.

Solomon Island Development Trust (SIDT).

SIDT is the most well known NGO in the Solomons. They are a unique NGO in that rather than focusing on funding projects, all their energies are devoted to development education, much of this in rural areas. They have two hundred and fifty village staff in eleven centres throughout the Solomons.

In North Malaita in 1993, the Women's Initiative Programme of SIDT ran one village programme for twelve women teaching appropriate technology and leadership roles and skills (SIDT,1993:11). From the annual report for 1993, SIDT states over four thousand people attended their workshops in North Malaita, that is around ten percent of the population (SIDT,Annual Report,1993). In 1992, they were involved in

running two courses on environmental health, women's roles and *supsup gadens.*[20] Also in 1993 SIDT were involved in a women's week organised by the East Kwaio Women's Association, which is an interdenominational organisation of Kwaio women. Continuing their involvement in East Kwaio, SIDT ran sanitation awareness talks in village communities in 1995.

Courses run by the male theatre group and mobile teams teach about environmental issues concerning logging, to help educate the land owners about the effects of logging: *'Before, the companies came sugaring them with lies'* (SIDT,1993:14). Other theatre presentations highlight population issues, urban drift, nutrition and malaria. In 1993, the theatre group toured South Malaita for two weeks visiting seven villages. From 1995 there was a women's theatre group but its operations have been based mainly in Honiara.

Literacy Association of Solomon Islands (LASI).

LASI represents, through its elected board, most NGOs with an involvement in literacy. Originally it simply co-ordinated project proposals seeking funds from overseas charities. More recently, with funding from the British Overseas Development Administration, it commenced an ambitious project called Literacy 2000. In 1995 LASI ran only one training course for literacy teachers in the whole of Malaita, in Afio in the South. This was for the South Malaita Women's Association. There were forty nine women trained as literacy teachers, thirty of them being Catholic women from Tarapaina, Rokera and Rohinari parishes (Diocese of Auki Report, Rokera:1995).

Village Education Programme (VEP).

This organisation has made a conscious effort to reach rural women through a participatory approach similar to the Catholic Women's Programme. It operates under Solomon Island Christian Association (SICA), an interdenominational organisation. The aim of the programme is to enable village people to improve their own life by giving them a better understanding of the most common community health problems and how to solve them and to teach them how to manage food resources in a way to give better health and better income possibilities for the family.

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[20]*Supsup gadens* is the pidgin term used to describe a vegetable garden grown in the village, close to the house. The garden would ideally contain a mix of vegetables, tomatoes, shallots, egg plants, cucumbers, long beans and snake beans as well as fruit trees. This is different from the traditional food gardens which are located some distance from the house and contain root vegetables and slippery cabbage.

VEP and the CWP have worked closely together since 1990. VEP has a mobile team of women who go out on request to women's groups to teach about improving the nutrition of the village, planting *supsup gadens*, sanitation and hygiene. They are also involved in training of trainers, which involves training village women to be teachers who go back into their own villages and use the teaching charts they have been given (Village Education Programme Report,1994:1). Their topics include planting *supsup gadens*, nutrition, sanitation, clean water, hygiene and other simple health messages.

Women's groups in other churches.

The other churches present in Malaita have their own women's organisations: the Anglicans have the Mother's Union, the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) have the Dorcas group, and the South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC) has its Women's Fellowship. All these groups are easily recognisable at various gatherings by their uniforms.

In a typical women's group the main emphasis is on prayer, bible study and singing. There is also some pastoral care of old people in the community, praying with them, feeding them and tending their gardens. There are some day time meetings where cooking is taught or sewing is done for fund raising purposes, as well as evening prayer meetings and bible school. The women's groups sing regularly in church and go to other villages for prayer meetings, singing and evangelisation.

7. SUMMARY.

In Malaitan society any attempt to change women's role in society can be opposed as being against *kastom*. Women are thus stopped from entering more fully into all aspects of the development process. From birth onwards, males have greater advantages in areas of health, education, agriculture and income generation. Because the decision making processes are male dominated, women have less expectation of being involved in critical decisions, even for those that affect their well being. Two examples of women starting to change *kastom* can be seen in the photographs on the next page (Photos 3 and 4). Women's houses, as we shall see, are a new phenomenon and women being allowed to dance outside their own village environment also breaks with tradition.

Government departments and divisions have been slow to provide equal opportunities to women and men. For example, girls do not have equal access to

secondary education and there was no building programme for increasing the female dormitory spaces in boarding schools. Still there are a few women who have been trained in health education and as agriculture field officers. Much of the training provided by the WDD is home economics based, while the NCW concentrates its activities in the capital.

However, we have seen that there are some NGOs that are trying to provide rural women in Malaita with training. In a country where so few women have received a formal education and where their needs with regards to their health, agriculture and literacy are so great, it is essential that this type of training continues and is strengthened. In order for this aspect of their work to increase, there needs to be a national swing towards valuing the worth of women in society.

Photo. 3. Preparing a feast to celebrate the opening of the new women's house, seen on the left, Langalanga Lagoon.

Photo. 4. Women's traditional dance to celebrate the opening of the new Maternity Unit at Kilu'ufi Hospital, Auki October 1994.

CHAPTER FIVE
CATHOLIC WOMEN'S PROGRAMME IN THE DIOCESE OF AUKI

1. INTRODUCTION.

While previous chapters provide the context within which my field research is situated, in this chapter we shall get to the heart of this thesis by examining the philosophies that guided the Catholic Women's Programme (CWP) from its conception. Some were adopted unconsciously at the beginning but became more defined as the programme progressed. This chapter will also examine the nature of the CWP. This will provide the basis for an analysis, in the final chapter, of the extent to which women were empowered by the CWP.

Issues examined here include the selection and ongoing training of the Diocesan Women's Team (DWT) and how the programme is run within the setting of the Diocese, using the structures that are already in place. The latter part of the chapter looks at the programme during its first five years, how it has developed and expanded through the web of interchange that has occurred. I shall also try to convey the effect it has had on the lives of the women.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME.

2a. Philosophy.

There were three main principles upon which the philosophy of the programme rested. These were the participation of the Church, control by grass roots women and self-reliance.

The first principle related to the Church. It included the fact that the programme took place within the context of the Catholic Church and the moral and social teachings of the church were accepted as the basis of the programme. Real value was placed on the spiritual development of the women with emphasis on prayer and service to one's fellow human beings. As already stated, the CWP was open to other church groups but the Catholic teachings were not compromised or changed.

The second principle concerned the women themselves, emphasising that empowerment is not imposed on the women, but is based on their free participation in the development process of the programme. Because the programme was flexible it

could respond to the various needs that became apparent, keeping in mind the ultimate goal, which was to empower the women and improve their self-worth. Because Malaitan women were the participants, there was an automatic cultural sensitivity. Team members knew, in order for it to succeed, that husbands and chiefs needed to be kept informed of the content and progress of the programme. The decision making process was both female and Melanesian, meaning that the leadership was based more on leading as a group and by consensus. Melanesians traditionally reach decisions after prolonged discussion in the village and this was a characteristic of the programme from the very start.

The third and final principle was for self-reliance. One of the difficulties of the CWP was to overcome the *'aid mentality'* which is part of life in the Solomons. If you need anything, then you write a project proposal, send it overseas and money comes back. The CWP was not there to give aid in the obvious form of, for example, sewing machines: the funding was for ongoing education of women. Self-reliance has been stressed from the beginning; it is one of the guiding principles of the participatory process. Whenever there was a course the women were expected to bring their contribution of local food and to pay their own fares to attend. This meant they had to plan ahead to attend the course and to be involved in some fund raising in their Catholic Women's Group (CWG) in the village. The Diocese funded the course, provided the rest of the food in the form of shop food and paid the fares back to the villages. Funding was targeted solely towards personal development and community development, not for income generating projects.

2b. Emergence and operations of the Diocesan Women's Team (DWT).

A process of participatory development rarely evolves as a spontaneous phenomenon. In the case of the CWP the process of participation began with initiatives taken by an external agent, myself, and the nature and future direction of the CWP has been influenced by my style and approach. The participatory approach does not agree on what to call this person: educator, animator, change agent, activist, facilitator, catalyst, group organiser or simply development worker (Oakley,1984:175). As stated in Chapter Three, I called myself the facilitator of the CWP.

The teachers in the programme are the DWT, which has changed and expanded over the years. At the beginning one Malaitan women and a Solomon Islands religious sister from the order of Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI), made up the team. Now five women are involved almost full time in the work with others on a more

casual basis. In late 1995 there were no DMI sisters in the team. In 1994 the Catholic Overseas Volunteers from New Zealand sent a nurse trained in midwifery to help with training and teaching in the health programme. Her husband helped in the Diocesan office and also put the health book and other teaching charts on computer as future resources for the CWP.

The original DWT leaders emerged from village meetings where their leadership skills and ability to speak out was first recognised by the facilitator. With support and encouragement they started to learn more skills to run the programme efficiently. They had little formal education, which could be their strength as well as their weakness. It was a strength because they were able to communicate in the right language and at the right level with other village women. Their sensitivity to, and awareness of, the personal and group needs of rural women had not been blunted by education, urban living and political ambition. They also knew how to be culturally aware of all the differing customs and cultures that the CWP came across. The difficulties they experienced were related to the administrative side of the programme: writing reports, making teaching charts, planning and handling the finances: these skills all had to be learnt as the programme developed.

Table Two: Diocesan Women's Team planning for a Parish course: stages in methodology in participation.

Team to identify the place for the course
Set the dates, well in advance
Check the dates with Parish priest, the women and the chiefs.
Send out letter with date, place, topics, household arrangements. 8 weeks ahead
Send out radio message 3 weeks in advance
Set programme for course, decide on teaching topics
Produce teaching charts, for own use and to leave for Parish leaders
Choose Team members for the course
Train team to teach topics
Team to decide own areas of responsibilities
Arrange Diocesan food, transport

The team were responsible for notifying by letter a parish where a course was to be run two to three months in advance, followed by radio contact one month later (for details, see Table Two). The DWT then selected which team members would teach that particular course, choosing which topics were to be taught and what resources were needed. When the topics had been decided then they needed to be practised and the delivery improved if need be. The team had to arrange the food, diesel, transport and finally divide the various responsibilities of actually running the course. They had to decide who would be the overall leader, who was responsible for the cash, who looked after the distribution of the food, who organised the liturgy each morning. Although planning and management are not strong characteristics of Melanesians, the team developed skills in both these areas and made a commitment to ensure the programme was carried out. The planning for the following year took place at the end of the year, so that the parishes and the Diocese could be notified about the courses and integrate them with their own programmes.

The CWP followed an action, reflection, discussion method, so the learning process for the team was ongoing. A course was always discussed afterwards and evaluated. Any problems that occurred were shared and solutions sought, then the reports were written. Team building took place as a regular and important feature of the work. Under the CWP it was agreed that the first commitment for each team member was her own family. If for family reasons, one women was not free to go on a certain course then another team member would take her place.

The management of conflict and its resolution was ongoing. The team learned to bring problems into the open and deal with them as a group. Collective confrontation with an overlay of consensus was the norm. This way of resolving problems was a skill for the team to learn, but it enabled everyone to build better relationships with each other.

2c. Diocesan structure.

Organisation is a critical dimension of the practice of participation. In the case of the CWP, the Diocese provided an organisational structure (Table Three). A vital link was the radio schedule linking all the parishes every day. This communication to the parishes enabled the programme to run relatively smoothly. Each parish was already divided into smaller groupings called zones. Each of these zones consisted of a cluster of smaller villages around one larger village.

Table Three: Diocesan structure showing how the Parish relates to the Catholic Women's Programme.

Parish Structure	Catholic Women's Groups
DAILY RADIO SCHEDULE TO AUKI AND ALL OTHER PARISHES	DAILY RADIO SCHEDULE TO AUKI AND ALL OTHER PARISHES
BISHOP	BISHOP
PARISH PRIEST	DIOCESAN WOMEN'S TEAM
CATECHISTS	PARISH CO-ORDINATORS
PARISH COUNCIL	PARISH TEAMS
ZONE REPRESENTATIVES	ZONE CO-ORDINATORS AND ZONE TOURING TEAM
VILLAGE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES	WOMEN LEADERS FROM CATHOLIC WOMEN'S GROUPS
CHURCH COMMITTEE	VILLAGE WOMEN

All parishes had a parish priest; all zones and most of the villages had a catechist. There was a church in most villages, ranging from ones built of local materials to more elaborate permanent buildings.

The leadership in the parishes followed fairly well defined lines, involving a parish committee or council with representation from all village committees. In the villages there were a series of ministries[21] or groups which acted to build up the faith of the people. There were separate committees responsible for the running of each of these ministries inside each village. So for the newly fledged women's programme there was a structure already in place for the organisation to be based upon.

Women co-ordinators for each Parish were voted for at the larger parish gatherings, at Christmas, Easter, or at the parish bazaar, by votes from village women.

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[21]1 In the Catholic Church the word 'ministry' means using the gifts God has given to people for the work of service to build up the community. The ministries we are talking about are made up of the following, all or some of which will be present in each community: parish council, catechists group, village committee, church committee, pastoral care of the old, sick and disabled, health committee, family life ministry, marriage encounter, liturgy group, school committee, prayer group, women's group, youth, young women's group and Sunday school.

These women co-ordinators, with their vice co-ordinators, were responsible for planning the women's programme within their own parish, in conjunction with the plans of the DWT. The parish co-ordinators and a parish women's team were meant to tour the villages teaching the topics they had learned about from the DWT. Zone leaders were appointed with a vice zone co-ordinator and they also fanned into a flame the first stirrings of the women's groups in the villages. As the programme developed, the parish teams found transport costs were high and the touring now rests with the zone leaders.

At village level there was little understanding of this wider Diocesan structure and genuine surprise was expressed mainly by the men who thought it was only in their immediate area that the women's groups were operating (Figure Three). The links to the Diocese of Gizo and the Archdiocese of Honiara and the Catholic Women's Council of the Solomon Islands showed a fuller picture of women's groups in the Solomon Islands to all course participants (Diocese of Auki Report, Oct:1993).

2d. Participants.

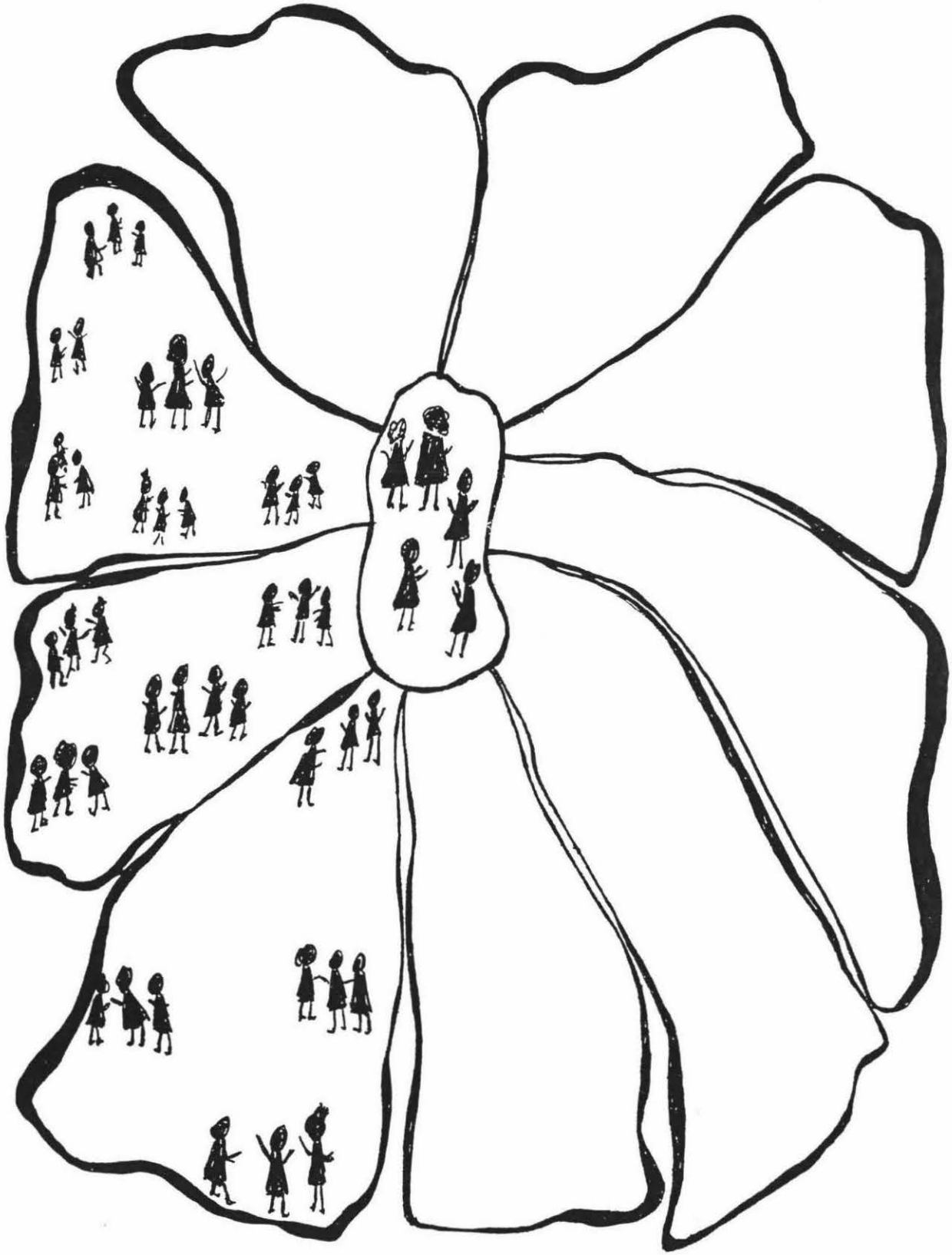
The women who participated in the CWP were mainly Catholic women living in Malaita. They were of all ages, unmarried young women, married women, grandmothers, and widows. All women in every Catholic village were eligible to join the group as there was no entrance fee and no payment expected from the women. Sometimes when there was more than one denomination in the village the Catholic women accepted women from other churches to join their groups. This was a decision taken by the Catholic women's group in each particular area.

3. TEACHING METHODS ADOPTED.

Before we look at the phases of the CWP the teaching methods that were utilised will be discussed. Education as awareness is concerned to break the women's mental isolation and to reverse the deeply imbedded feelings of inability and inferiority. It prepares the women so they can explain things as they see them, to speak out, to analyse, to plan and to act. This form of education liberates them and provides the basis for their active involvement in development. It is a vital preliminary step and it is also a slow process. If these first steps are taken slowly then the roots that are put down for real change will be deeper and stronger (Oakley,1984:194). There were several different methods used by the CWP to educate the women participants. These are now explained.

Table Four: Showing How the Catholic Women's Groups Developed.

The nine petals of the hibiscus flower represents the nine parishes. The groups of women within those parishes represent the starting of the Catholic Women's Groups in the villages, with the Diocesan Women's Team placed at the centre.



3a. Non-formal, participatory methods of teaching.

In the past, if courses were run in the villages, there was a tendency for the teachers to be men who used long words and delivered the talk in English in a didactic lecture form. This further isolated the women who were too frightened to ask questions or to speak out in case they appeared uneducated.

With the women's team, the communication was either in a local language or Pidgin, taken at a gentle pace, so the women were able to interact and learn from the topics taught. Stories were added at appropriate times, drawn from real life experiences, serving as a way to get the participants to share their own stories.

Non-formal, participatory methods of teaching were used so that through group discussion and ongoing participation the women started to look at their own life situations and speak about their heartfelt needs. The teaching was essentially by village women to village women. Intuitively the participants were aware that the teachers were similar to themselves, both educationally and socially. Barriers broke down and there was a greater sharing and interchange of ideas and knowledge.

Knowledge that the team gained from other Parishes or villages in the Diocese was easily added to the teaching as time went on. This was of great importance as it laid the path for networking and understanding between the women from different tribal areas. They were interested to hear, for example, how one area worked closely with the house of chiefs, how another area planted yams not kumara, and how some women only went to the garden three times a week.

3b. Materials used.

The teaching resources had to be simple and easily available. Brown paper and marker pens were originally used to make the teaching charts. These were developed further as the programme continued and marker pen on fabric was used later on. This development came about because the paper charts became creased and damp, unable to withstand too many wet canoe journeys. The teaching charts used simple English or a combination of English and Pidgin. They served as a reminder for the teachers, so that all the points in each topic were covered.

It was expected that after the team had given the teaching one of the participants would stand up and repeat the teaching in her local language using the charts as a reminder. This did in fact happen. From the very beginning the women were prepared to stand up and try to teach the topics, in local language, for their sisters.

3c. Songs.

It is a part of Malaitan culture to tell stories and the use of song and drama are a way to retell significant events from history.[22]

From the beginning CWP used songs for participation: church songs, action songs, community building songs and health songs. In fact, the women themselves used song and dance to remember the history of the women's groups. At the Central Deanery Women's Week the women from Buma Parish composed a song and dance to tell about the starting of the women's programme in their area of Dorio (Diocese of Auki Report, June:1993).

3d. Drama.

From 1994-1995 a new development for the DWT teaching skills was the use of drama. Before that, although drama was used traditionally in the villages for social evenings almost exclusively by the men, the DWT had not used drama as a teaching method. When drama was used, it was found to be an entertaining way for the health topics to be communicated. When attending the health courses the women were prepared to act out a drama, both during the course and afterwards in their communities. They were particularly quick in being able to take in the essential health teaching and adding other dimensions that portrayed the problems in their particular village.[23] Through drama the health messages reached a much wider audience than they would otherwise. Indeed, the CWG in a village in the Langalanga lagoon won first prize at a large social night for their health drama. Besides spreading an educational message further, this also enhanced the self-esteem of the women presenting the drama (Diocese of Auki Report, January:1995).

3e. Video.

Between 1990-1995 I filmed, edited and copied four full length videos which were then distributed to the nine parishes in the Diocese. The first one, in 1990, was about the technicalities of planting a *supsup gaden*. This was followed by another one on *supsup gadens* and the health benefits to that community. In 1993, the three large

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[22]The richness of traditional cultural forms of story telling through song and dance, is still present in Malaita. The recounting of the murder of Governor Bell in 1927 at Sinarangu Harbour, in East Malaita, is still performed at village celebrations.

[23]When acting out the drama on *short wind*, pneumonia, they highlighted how a husband often left his wife in the village with a sick child, whilst he went fishing. When the husband returned the wife was worried and cross. She had no money for transport to go to hospital and by now the child was very sick. Thus women's frustrations about a lack of support from their husbands was made part of the drama.

gatherings for the women's weeks were videoed and in 1995 during the health courses the twelve health topics and the dramas were videoed. Many other unedited videos were handed to women's groups at the end of DWT courses or from social events.[24]

The use of video as a teaching tool was very effective, as it overcame illiteracy. They were dubbed into local languages so women for the first time saw and heard a video that was relevant to their own lives. All these videos have become part of the ongoing teaching of the CWP, not only for the women, but for the rest of their communities. It gave the women recognition and status in their own communities and also to a wider audience, as they were used at Kilu'ufi Hospital as part of their health education programmes.

4. CATHOLIC WOMEN'S PROGRAMME: ITS DEVELOPMENT.

In order to visualise for this thesis how the programme developed, I have divided it into five development phases. Starting with the pilot project in 1990, we will then see what was offered over the following years, the lessons learnt and the achievements gained. In practise, however, the programme was not so strictly divided up.

Before 1990 there were no courses in the Diocese run for women only. There were no women's meeting houses,[25] no women were on Parish Councils and there were no recognised women leaders in the Parishes or the zones. Literacy groups had been started in 1982 in Takwa, but had gradually ceased. Within the Diocese of Auki there were no literacy groups running for women when this programme started in 1990.

Table Four: Achievements of the CWP in Malaita 1990-1995.

Number of Courses run by the DWT 1990-1995	66
Number of women attending courses	4,750
Number of husbands attending awareness courses	300
Number of women's houses built 1990-1995	55
Of 8 parish councils, number with women councillors	8
Of 32 zones in the Diocese, number with women leaders	25

[24]Mission stations or local business men with a generator and video player, run video shows. Usually showing violence and killing, locally made videos are appreciated by the women.

[25]Fifty five women's houses were built in the villages between 1990-1995 providing a place for the women to meet. They were a new phenomenon.

From Table Five we can see that over the five years from 1990-1995 women were taking a more active part in the affairs of the Diocese and in their own communities. How this was achieved is explained through the development of the different phases.[26]

4a. Development phase 1: 1990 Pilot project.

When women close to Auki asked me to help them start women's groups, I responded by going to four villages and sitting with them on a weekly basis over a period of eight months. This was called the pilot project, where the needs of the women were initially listened to. They were then responded to via the CWP over the following years.

Slowly from these first four villages[27] the needs of the women emerged. At the beginning the women asked for sewing machines and material to sew. This was the only model of women's training they had heard about. Only when they were offered other alternatives were they able to choose differently.[28]

The women were also unsure of their talents. They told me that they had no leadership skills and thought they would be unable to start a group on their own. When the women discussed the way the chief in their village was a leader, they saw him being in charge and telling others what to do. Over the first few months their understanding about how women's leadership could differ from men's developed and they saw that all the time they had been exercising leadership skills in the family and in the community. The CWP decided through discussion to cultivate a Sarah's Circle type of leadership in the women.[29] They were then able to move onto the next stage of consciousness raising, which meant they asked what were the qualities of a good leader and how should they choose a leader for the women's group. Eventually leaders for the village groups in the pilot project were chosen and a structure evolved.

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[26]The full list of courses run by the Diocese since the beginning of the programme is to be found in Appendix Eight.

[27]There were four villages consulted initially, but this grew to seven villages by the end of the eight months of the pilot project.

[28]Lee, (1985:233) found a similar situation with regards to women in PNG.

[29]The teaching about women's leadership is based on Sarah's Circle, as opposed to the Jacob's Ladder style of male leadership. Sarah holds hands with her sisters and they all try to work together for the betterment of the group and the empowerment of each other. Jacob, however, is seen trying to get to heaven by climbing a ladder, pushing others off the rungs above and below him so that he can gain the topmost rung on his own.

To bring the women's groups together in this pilot phase, the DWT started with enjoyable pursuits, such as fabric painting, cloth dying, sewing children's garments and cooking demonstrations. The groups gave the women a reason to come together and taught them new skills to share with their own families. They also became, as the trust and friendship between the women was established, a place to talk about deeper concerns and worries.

During 1990 the report of the Solomon Island National Nutrition Survey was published. For Malaita it indicated deficiencies in the diets of women and children, not because there was insufficient food, but because of a lack of understanding about eating a balanced diet from the three food groups. The report was discussed in the groups and we found that the women did not understand the concept of a balanced diet or how to improve the diet of their families, thus the DWT initiated nutrition education. We learned to proceed very slowly with nutrition teaching, with much repetition and using games, such as nutrition bingo, to make learning more fun.[30]

One of the DWT had some training in agriculture so she started teaching about growing vegetables close to the house in a *supsup gaden*. This meant that the families had an easily accessible supply of vegetables for daily use. When the garden had been marked out, the women threw in all the organic kitchen rubbish to act as nutrients for the soil. In the Langalanga lagoon the villages are all built on coral, so the women had to carry a bag of soil back from their gardens in the lower foothills each day, as well as the usual potatoes and firewood they carried. This soil was found to be of poor quality so they were taught how to collect the mud from the mangroves, pile it up and allow the sun to dry it and the rain to wash the salt out. After about three weeks it could be used as soil for the *supsup gaden.* The women worked together helping each other to carry the soil, prepare the gardens and plant the seeds in raised beds, to keep away the hens and pigs. These gardens proved to be very productive, one women commented, *'We thought we were useless, but now..'.*

After the new varieties of vegetables had been harvested, the DWT found out that the women were selling them all at the market because they did not know how to cook them. A series of cooking demonstrations taught the women new skills. An

[30]Nutrition bingo, produced by the South Pacific Commission, names foods from the three food groups. Whoever links the three foods groups in a line across the card calls 'bingo'.

older women with grown-up sons said, *'My sons said they thought I was too old to learn to cook such nice food.*[31]

Through working together on the *supsup gadens* the friendships and the solidarity of the women increased. This mobilisation of the women caused many comments from the men; it was something new for village life. The planting of the *supsup gadens* in the villages made women's leadership more visible. The men did not challenge the new roles women were taking on. They were just pleased because the added vegetables improved the meals for each family.

In June 1990 the Catholic women from the four villages attended, for the first time, the Inter- Church Women's Week in Auki. It was the first time a group of women had slept away from their home village. This women's week was organised by the Women's Development Division of the Solomon Islands Government. The emphasis was on practical cooking demonstrations, appliquéed tablecloths and pot holders.[32] Despite the limited nature of the training, there was much interaction with a feast and dancing at the end of the week. Many friendships developed as the following statement by one of the participants shows: *'Now when we meet in the market we are not strangers, we are friends'* (Diocese of Auki Report, June:1990).

Auki Parish Women's Committee was formed and met regularly to discuss how the CWP was developing and how it should be extended. A further team member was recruited and the other government-run courses and NGO courses available for women were actively sought out. The Auki Parish Women's Committee arranged a gathering for women from Auki and Dala parishes in August 1990. Eighty women turned up for teaching and prayer.

At this stage it was apparent that the pilot project had worked. So that the programme could reach out to other Catholic women, the leaders from the four women's groups in the pilot villages met with the Catechists' wives from throughout the Diocese who were gathered at the Buma Diocesan Training Centre. In that meeting the women decided to call together women's leaders from Takwa, Ata'a, Dala, Auki, Buma and Kwalakwala parishes in November 1990 so that the CWP could reach

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[31]What is significant here,is that women were learning new skills and gaining confidence, not only for their menfolk but for themselves.

[32]I was asked by the politicians' wives in Auki to teach flower arrangement and table setting, which I refused to do.

the entire Diocese. The women discussed what sort of things they wanted to learn about through the CWP.

In that November meeting, forty three women who were active in their parishes came together for the first Diocesan women's meeting. This was a significant event for them, as one participant indicated: *'This is the first time we have had anything offered to us as women: we are hungry for everything'* (Diocese of Auki Report, November: 1990). The DWT taught the course we had developed in the pilot project, including teaching about the aims of CWGs, women's leadership, role of women in Malaita, how to improve communication within the family and within the community, development of Christian attitudes, nutrition and planting *supsup gadens.*

In Phase One there was still confusion about whether the Diocese was going to give the women cash in their hands. In line with the philosophy of the programme, which called for self-reliance, we changed the name from the Women's Development Programme to the Catholic Women's Programme, because the men still associated the word 'development' with cash handouts.

The achievements of this first phase were that the topics were pitched at the right level and that the initial teaching had stimulated in women a hunger for new knowledge. The women who had been isolated in their villages found friendship, strength and solidarity with other Catholic women and were at last able to start to articulate their deeper needs. With the flexibility of the programme, new topics could be introduced easily and directions altered in response to the women's needs. Networking with other church groups and between Catholic women had started to happen.

4b. Development phase 2: 1991-1992 Expansion of the programme.

The plan for the next two years was to take the CWP to the nine parishes in the Diocese, starting with the parishes accessible by road, and then moving to the more isolated parishes accessible by canoe. This was so all the Catholic women had an opportunity to hear the topics taught in the pilot project.

The same lack of confidence in their own worth and abilities shown by women in the pilot project was shown in the rest of the women throughout the Diocese. Yet over these two years 758 women attended nine courses, one in each parish. Four separate courses were run on agriculture and nutrition with representatives from every

parish attending. Three further courses were run for leaders in the CWP and over two years 216 women attended from every parish in the Diocese.

The women wanted more information. As soon as we had completed one topic, different aspects of that topic or new topics were asked for. The expansion phase was a time of addition, to the teaching charts and to the skills of the team. The area of child development was expanded, as was Christian development, basic Christian communities, and prayer. Ideas for new topics were identified through discussions with women from the whole Diocese. There were many lessons learned and acted upon.

In this expansion phase it was realised there was a need to keep the husbands aware of the value of the programme. This led the DWT to run three courses for husbands' awareness. In all 176 men attended to learn about how the women's programme was established in the Diocese and the topics that were being taught. This consciousness raising for the men helped the women's programme. The men became more supportive and started to encourage their wives to attended courses, even helping to look after the children at home and tending the garden in the absence of their wives.

As we had seen from the pilot project that women needed to learn how to improve the diet of their family and community, so four agriculture courses were run with seven parishes invited to attend. All over the Diocese *supsup gadens* were appearing, recipes were exchanged, fruit drinks were made and children had bright shiny eyes as the diet slowly improved.

On a more practical note, when the DWT went into the parishes to teach courses the evenings were spent discussing how to start a women's group and listening to the stories about groups already established. At the end of the courses each village group was given sewing material, cotton, needles, elastic, pins, patterns. These groups were just starting out and the women still associated women's groups with sewing skills, so sewing materials were distributed. To enable the women work together gaining solidarity, seeds were distributed for *supsup gadens* Taking the seeds to plant and having something to sew meant that they had something to work at after the course finished. The DWT also realised that the parish co-ordinators needed teaching charts for all the topics. These were made and given to each parish co-ordinator.

Special attention was given to building strong leadership amongst the women, so three ten day meetings were run at this time. Women from every parish were invited. In all 216 leaders attended these meetings. When the leaders came together for the Catholic Women's Week in Buma in 1992, over 120 women came together from all over the Diocese. There were tears as women from different tribal groups started to share their life stories describing all the hardships they had endured since they were young. The women felt that it was a safe place for them to unburden themselves; no men were present and there was trust between the women. The tears, during the week, changed to laughter and friendships were built and strengthened (Diocese of Auki Report, June:1992). Previously even women who lived in villages only a short distance from each other had not developed friendships. They relished the opportunity the CWP provided to build new friendships. *'Women's groups brings every woman just like one person, it makes every woman work together and not to think of too much of jealousy'* (Diocese of Auki Report, November:1993).

Throughout the Diocese women were starting to look at their lives and ask questions. The silence was being broken and they were finding their voices. From the teaching about the role of women, women looked at the injustices in their lives in the division of labour, and in the topic on basic Christian communities, they talked about all members in the community being actively responsible for care and support in the community. Likewise, teaching on integral human development asked the question, 'What do we mean by development?', which encouraged the women to consider the idea that development was something more than a coconut plantation. The women were starting to think about issues and challenge accepted norms.

The main achievement during Phase Two was that over these two years the empowerment module[33] was taken to every parish in the diocese. Also co-operative work was done through the Village Education Programme and Agriculture Division so more women could be reached rather than just relying on the DWT. Women had also started accessing other sources of help for themselves. In two parishes, training courses for literacy teachers had been arranged via the Literacy Association of the Solomon Islands (LASI) and literacy classes sprang up. The momentum of the programme was beginning to take hold: through the husbands' awareness courses,

[33]The empowerment module included the teaching about the aims of the CWGs, leadership, communication, role of women, integral human development, basic Christian community, family relationships and child development. These were combined with the topics on agriculture, *supsup gadens*, nutrition and diarrhoea

women were being given greater freedom to attend courses, to be part of parish women's teams and tour their own areas.

Village communities also noted changes because of the CWP. Attitudinal changes were beginning to show in the women. They took on the pastoral care of disadvantaged in their own villages. This meant old people in the villages were being cared for, their houses were being repaired and the women were involved in going out to the hospitals and prison to take food to the patients. All the teachings about basic Christian communities, and integral human development, were heard and acted on. It was these teachings, combined with their greater confidence that brought about attitudinal changes in the women.[34] The spiritual side of development was starting to flourish. Different ways of prayer used at the courses were now being used not only in the communities but in family prayer.

4c. Development phase 3: 1993

Consolidation and Catholic women's weeks.

The consolidation phase was characterised by Catholic women's weeks held in three Parishes. Combined with the nutrition and agriculture training there was a great surge in women's activities in the Diocese. The South Deanery women's week was made up of Tarapaina, Rokera and Rohinari parishes. Around 320 women came by canoe or walked to Rokera. Women of all ages arrived. One old woman commented: *'I am sad. This good teaching has come too late for me, but you young ones and married ones this is your chance'* (Diocese of Auki Report, Rokera: 1993). Comments such as *'Every topic fits*[35] *grass roots women; they are excellent'* were made. As the areas of tradition and culture were talked about one the women said: *'Our elders hide these traditional attitudes'.* She was referring to how brideprice used to bind families together, but this traditional meaning had been superseded by brideprice meaning wealth for the family.

In Dala, Central Deanery, Buma, Auki and Dala parishes came together. There were over 360 participants but we were feeding 520 women and children by the time all were counted. They were eager to hear every topic being taught. As one women said: *'It has been a long time coming, we as women have been longing to know about things'.* Again and again the women expressed the idea that, *'Before we sat in the village, just like a stone, not moving'.* The picture of the women, marching with their

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[34]Malaitans would usually expect payment for that this sort of work for others. The women's attitudinal changes saw it as part of Christian life, helping their community.

[35]By 'fits' she means 'suits', or 'is appropriate for,' grass roots women.

parish flags and wearing their new purple uniform with pride and joy, was a sight to be remembered. The Dala men, playing pan pipes, led the women to church for the opening Mass.

At Takwa, in the North Deanery, 320 women gathered from Takwa and Ata'a parishes. They proudly lined up behind their parish flag to march to the opening ceremony (Photo5: page 87). The weather was too rough for Kwalakwala parish to attend. Instead we held a women's week there the following month, when the sea was calmer. Two canoes came from Ndai Island, the first time those women had attended a CWP course; in fact the first time some of the women had left the island at all. Everyone was eager for the chance to be part of the CWP movement.

These women's weeks mobilised women who had not been involved in the CWP before. Difficulties about sleeping arrangements, cooking facilities and transport were forgotten as the enthusiasm of the women gathered together brought solidarity.

Four agriculture courses were run with the Agriculture Division during 1993, focusing on subsistence farming. Both agriculture field officers and our DWT were trainers. Women from all the parishes were invited. Out of the 152 women who attended one women commentated: *'We have waited too long for you Government people to come, we thought you just came for coconut and cocoa'.*[36] The teaching about vegetable growing gave the women new skills, *'Before we only knew how to plant taro, not vegetables and we did not know what a balanced diet was, so now we learn many new things which helps the body and soul'.*

Over this two year period the DWT called three meetings for the emerging leaders. These strengthened the friendships between the women: *'We are from different tribes and areas but now we are one'*[37] (Diocese of Auki Report, November:1992).

As we discussed earlier videos were made of each of the women's weeks and sent back to the parishes. Two years later the Southern Deanery video is still the most popular video around Rohinari mission station. It shows three hours of the women

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[36]Coconut and copra plantations are traditionally under men's control. The Ministry of Agriculture has paid little attention to the subsistance farming sector.

[37]Up until recently there would be fear amongst people mixing from different tribal areas. Usually the sleeping arrangements at the Buma Centre would put each tribal group together. In the case of the CWP, however, the women instead wanted to mix freely with each other.

participating in various activities during five days of the women's week: singing, teaching, marching, dancing and feasting.

Not everything occurring during this phase went well, however. The pressure put on the women in the parishes to organise the large gatherings put too much stress on them. The ongoing work of the groups was stopped, and the momentum was slowed down. The death of a leader in the South, who was struck by lightening when returning from teaching village women, caused all touring to be stopped. For a long time the women waited patiently in their villages until they were given permission by the men to continue the work.

The constraints that faced the implementation of the programme were enormous. With women in the villages held back by *'kastom'* and rigid local traditions, isolated in male households with lack of communication, unable to attend courses because of lack of transport and money to pay the fare, coping with sick children with malaria or diarrhoea, it was no wonder that the programme did not proceed uniformly throughout the Diocese. Seeds for the *supsup gadens* did not germinate, bad book keeping, illiteracy, roads that were impassable, seas that were too dangerous to go out in: all these have at one time or another effected how the programme went in practice. The DWT learned that the teaching charts given out last year had not been used because, *'rat hem kaikai evrisamting'*[38] and the seeds that had been sent out had not always been distributed into the villages. All this information came out later, when we did the participatory rural appraisal, and in the reports from the parishes.

Despite problems which arose, some good progress was made during this phase. The greatest achievement was a growing sense of ability and worth in the women. At the leaders' meetings the women had confidence to tell their stories without so many tears as before and with the interchange of ideas, plans for the next two years were made.

4d. Development phase 4: 1994-1995 Health courses.

The main thrust of the programme in 1994-1995 was the health courses. The women from the start of the programme in 1990 had asked for more teaching about health issues and this was now being addressed.

[38]This means that the rats ate all the charts.

The World Health Organisation's book entitled, "Facts for Life" (UNICEF/WHO/UNESCO, 1993) was adapted by simplifying the English and using some Pidgin words which were more easily understood by the village women. The topics were re-arranged so that the women were introduced to the programme by covering more familiar ground first, for example, how to keep clean and cover food from flies. The simplification of the text was carried out over several months by the DWT and refined throughout 1994-1995.

At the initial Training of Trainers course for the health course thirty women came from five parishes so they could become a health resource person in their parish. Over the two year period, a copy of the revised WHO book was given to all the women leaders. Other participants were given a simple version of the twelve health messages that the DWT were teaching.[39]

The health course was where drama really came into its own. As already discussed, the health messages were acted out to give another dimension to the teaching. The participants in all the parishes repeated the teachings given by the team, practising how they would teach each topic in the village. The dramas were a sure way to involve all the women, with much interaction.

The health courses gave the women, from different areas, an opportunity to discuss the *kastoms* that held them back from taking full advantage of the health facilities offered at the hospitals, clinics and aid posts. Lack of knowledge about ante-natal care made the women defer a clinic visit until the last moment and *kastom* stopped the women taking time away from the gardens for many clinic visits. Taking rest towards the end of a pregnancy was laughed at. Evidently mothers-in-law scolded them and reminded them they were paid for to work not to rest. Birth practices were discussed. Whether the women went to a clinic or delivered in the bush depended to a great extent on their husbands and the area they came from. But women from all areas told horrifying stories of mothers haemorrhaging after giving birth in the village and no one giving any help. The women were left to try to get transport to the nearest clinic, either by canoe or truck or else carrying them out on a stretcher. After these health courses many women put their names forward for training as traditional birth attendants.

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[39]These 12 messages were: how to keep clean, diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria, immunisation, child growth, child development, growth of young girls, healthy mothers, breastfeeding, spacing births and STDs.

Women were concerned about the health of their families and children especially. Health teaching taught that poor sanitation and lack of clean water leads to diarrhoea especially in children. Often inappropriate *kastom* medicine to treat diarrhoea was used without success and on admission to hospital the child was seriously sick. Mothers now learned that treating this sickness early, with lots of green coconut water would help to stop the diarrhoea quickly.

Kastom expected the women to work in the gardens nearly every day for about six hours. Young babies, from a few weeks old, were left in the village to be looked after, maybe being fed some dry potato until the Mother returned. Because of these poor feeding practices, less breast milk was given and this inappropriate weaning meant babies often lost weight. There was then a loss of contraceptive effect with erratic breast feeding. The teaching on breast feeding and weaning were incorporated into the CWP as well as in the health courses to help the women understand the need to feed small amounts and often.

There were also outreach programmes run by the DWT for the catechists' wives at Buma, for the domestic workers at Kilu'ufi, for the WDD in Honiara and for the Village Education Programme at a workshop in Auki. All involved teaching some, if not all, of the health messages.

The main achievements in this phase of the programme was that all nine parishes had now participated in the health course, even the most isolated ones on (Photo 6: page 87). More than 450 women had been taught the health messages. This new knowledge enabled them to become 'life-savers', to act quickly with simple cures or to recognise when other medical assistance was required. This is likely to have a beneficial effect on themselves, their own families and communities.

There was also a new found confidence in the women in this phase. When they stood up to share ideas and stories, there was no more crying; they were no longer so frightened to speak out. They were willing to do the teaching: '*Trae hem no moa*'.[40] The dramas especially have given the women a freedom to express themselves through action. Their sense of humour became apparent and great interaction occurred.

4e. Development phase 5: 1994-1995 Young Women's Programme.

The Young Women's Programme (YWP) emerged because the young women,

[40]This is pidgin for, 'I am willing to try'.

encouraged by their mothers, had been attending the CWP from the beginning. However, the DWT found that their needs were different from the needs of the married women. It was realised that the young women in the villages needed a separate programme. Although it evolved under the guidance of the women's programme, from 1995 the YWP was run separately and co-ordinated by two young women who organised the programme through a participatory approach. The programme was directed at young women who had left school but had not yet married.

The main aim of this programme (YWP) was to build up their self-respect, dignity and confidence and to teach them new skills. The hope was that this would help the young women to make choices for their own future. Improved communication skills would open up family discussions, and improve family relationships. Teaching about tradition and culture helped to give them a better understanding of their own lives and to judge the new value systems which were coming into the communities. In the area of health, the physical and mental growth of young women was taught about. Changes in their bodily growth, menstruation, and pregnancy, together with the other health topics are all part of the YWP.

The crying happened with the young women as had happened earlier with the older women. Tears fell when they started to talk about their lives. Because there was little communication within the family often the young women did not feel loved, they were never praised for work done. This was an important stage for the young women. There needed to be a time to cry, to empty out the frustrations and pent up anger that they had been unable to express anywhere else. The YWP gave them freedom to speak out about the injustices they felt in their lives, because their parents could not hear them.

During the health courses for the first time women's health, reproduction and growth of young women was talked about openly. In times past, the women taught the young women about their menstrual cycle and the changes in their bodies, when they shared the menstrual hut. When this practice changed, the teaching for the young women stopped. Almost all of the young women who attended the health course had no instruction about their menstruation and reproductive cycle. Teaching about the ovulation method was included with the health teaching, to give the women more choice on how to space births. Pidgin words were used for anatomical terms so as not to offend the village women. But the team still had a complaint in South Malaita, that they thought this teaching should not have been given to young women as they could use it in the wrong way. With this health

education young women are bringing out into the open areas that were not allowed to be talked about before. Hopefully this teaching gives the young women more control over their own bodies so that they will be able to make choices effecting their future lives and have greater confidence in themselves.

The greatest lesson the DWT learned was that the young women had no other source of teaching and encouragement. This was a big problem because the fast changes in society, problems about early marriage, broken relationships and the pull to a cash economy had left the young women without any direction. This programme started to fill the needs expressed by the young women.

The achievements of the YWP were that it gained the support of the parents who allowed their daughters to attend the courses. Also, communication started to take place inside the family, with parents discussing concerns with their daughters for the first time. The involvement in the health programme opened up discussion on menstruation and child birth, which few young women had a good understanding about in the past. With their new knowledge there may be fewer unplanned pregnancies in the future. The YWP certainly helped the young women to realise that they had choices, even if those choices were fairly limited.

4f. Summary of phases.

The beginning of the CWP was slow as the DWT tried to understand the needs of the women. As the programme reached out to many other parishes the women started to respond to the teachings and a real movement from within the villages took place. The women networked amongst themselves and talked about the CWP. Confidence was gained and changes started to happen. At the beginning the DWT asked, *'when will the crying stop?'* The women did stop crying and they found that together they could bring about changes in their own communities. They started to breakdown the culture of silence.

5. LINKAGES.

To finish off this chapter's discussion of the background development and activities of the CWP in Malaita, this section will discuss linkages which were established between the women, within the Diocese, with the other two Diocese and with government departments and NGOs.

5a. Shared knowledge between the women.

The teaching was structured so that the knowledge the women took from the

course was passed on to the rest of the women in their Catholic Women's Groups. The women were given resources to take back with them to assist them in this outreach. Many major hurdles have to be overcome in Melanesian societies for knowledge to be passed on. The Melanesian way of thinking is that knowledge has power. People's first allegiance is to the close family unit. If knowledge is received it is for your own family and no-one else outside your close relatives. The DWT, however, taught that knowledge was to be shared, for the good of all the women in their community. Constant encouragement was needed to get across this idea that the gifts and skills of each individual should be shared in the community. When it was seen that the team members were sharing their gifts and talents, then it was a model for other women. We asked the women to put what they learnt into practice in the family first, then their Catholic Women's Group, and the community. As one women expressed it: *'We will take the good teaching and live with it in our future'* (Diocese of Auki Report, May:1994).

5b. Linkages within the Diocese of Auki.

Support from the Bishop and priests was essential for the success of the programme. We have already discussed that husbands were more willing to allow their wives to attend courses because the CWP came from the Church. There was a trust already built into the organisation which gave the women more freedom to be part of the CWP. Continual teaching from the church leaders, catechists and priests about personal worth, Christian attitudes and justice helped to educate everyone about the importance of women's position in society. For the first time women were praised from the altar, for their faithfulness and hard work. Men's attitudes were challenged in many sermons, so that the messages of equal worth and value of women's abilities were highlighted.

5c. Networks with the Diocese of Gizo and the Archdiocese of Honiara.

The networking also spread to the two other Catholic Dioceses in the Solomon Islands. Delegates from the Gizo Diocese and the Archdiocese of Honiara attended a DWT course in Auki in 1992, and were given practical ideas on starting a women's empowerment programme in their own Diocese.

The DWT was able to restart the National Catholic Women's Council under its new title of Catholic Women's Council, Solomon Islands (CWCSI). In November 1994 the first meeting was held in Auki. Since then, by working together the leaders of the three Diocese have secured funding for Catholic Women's Programmes to cover the whole Solomon Islands.

5d. Networks with Solomon Island NGOs and Government Departments.

Working with the Village Education Programme (VEP) and the Auki Agriculture division of the Ministry of Agriculture the programme built up valuable links with government and non-government organisations (Diocese of Auki Report, May:1995). This meant that the knowledge and skills built up by the team was spread far beyond the bounds of the CWP in Malaita. The VEP proved to be run on similar lines as the CWP and it encouraged us in our work and gave assistance when we needed it.

Towards the end of 1995 the DWT were invited to teach at the WDD officers' training course in Honiara. A number of other trainers also taught in this course. These officers were from each of the Provinces and had already received overseas training in Fiji in order to do their work.[41] Still the WDD were not very active in Malaita Province at this time. The DWT were given two days to teach topics on child growth, child development and young women's growth. When the WDD wrote to thank the team, they had been voted the best teachers on the course and were invited back for the next training session. The WDD officers present were surprised that uneducated rural women had developed such good teaching skills. In contrast, the WDD officers felt their own training had not given them the confidence to teach well.

The DWT accepted an invitation from the Medical Division in Auki to teach the health course to the domestic staff at Kilu'ufi Hospital. It was recognised that the domestic workers often had the first contact with patients and thus increasing their knowledge about health would help them in their contact with women who were often frightened to speak to the nurses about health worries. Some of the nurse aids at the hospital also asked the DWT to come back to teach them the same course as they had heard it was taught in a simple way with charts and drama that was also appropriate for them.

5e. Linkages with donors.

With Diocesan support and overseas funding, the DWT was given the opportunity to promote the programme throughout the Diocese. We had the advantage that the Government was not actively working in this area of empowerment and there was little else being offered to the women. The overseas Church donors

[41]WDD field officers, have an initial training course in Fiji, lasting for one year. They also attend a variety of other courses in the Pacific, as part of their ongoing training. These are mainly related to the welfare approach to women's development, but some are related to producing resources using silk-screen printing.

were keen to fund women's programmes, particularly those that have a women's health component. Funding was committed to the programme for five years. The donor agencies all allowed a certain amount of freedom in the way the programme evolved and was managed.

Many overseas donors have a policy not to fund programmes that are involved in empowerment and education. They are often more concerned with income generating projects.

5f. Overseas networks.

Two members of the Diocesan Team visited New Zealand for the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation (WUCWO) conference in 1993. After hearing the two Malaitan delegates address the conference, the Catholic Women's League in Australia decided to make the Solomon Islands a special project. As a direct result of this contact, the Catholic Women's Council in the Solomon Islands (CWCSI) has been established and funds for the next six years are secured.

The Catholic Women's Programme also is listed in the 1993 Pacific Women's Directory printed by the South Pacific Commission.

6. SUMMARY.

It can be seen that over the years the CWP has developed and filled a great need for the women of Malaita. The original philosophies were that it was established within the setting of the Catholic church. So the main thrust of its message was for spiritual development and service, leading to happier families and making communities a better place to live.

Secondly, the principle of empowerment was addressed by respecting the experience and wisdom of grass roots women and helping them to write their own programme and to discover strengths they did not know they possessed. Finally self-reliance is coming from these new discoveries, as one women commented at a village course: *'I came with my basket*[42] *empty and now it is full'*. The word 'development' has come to mean something different to the women. They now see empowerment as true development for them, by developing their inner potential so they can take on a fuller role in family and community life.

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[42]'Basket', here refers to a small hand woven fibre bag, worn hanging round the neck. It usually contains valuables, such as betel nut or tobacco. The woman here is saying that she arrived at the course with nothing but is going away full of good and valuable things.

Photo. 5. Women of Ata'a Parish lined up ready to march at the North Deanery Catholic Women's Week; Takwa 1993.

Photo. 6. Unloading firewood and food supplies from the canoe; Women's Health Course, Kwalakwala 1995.

CHAPTER SIX
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION.

As we saw in Chapter Two, alternative development is an ideology, arguing for the rectification of existing imbalances in social, economic and political power and it is people centred not profit centred. The empowerment approach to development is vital for disadvantaged groups in society including rural women in Malaita because it is an example of alternative development in practice.

This research shows the theories and concepts of alternative development in practice. The most valuable resource for constructing the Catholic Women's Programme (CWP) in Malaita was the women themselves, who effectively wrote the programme and put into practice the various stages of its development.

To analyse the CWP in Malaita I will use the theories of Friedmann, Moser and Friere, as discussed in Chapters One and Two. We shall look at whether there was mobilisation of women into a cohesive group which led to the challenging of oppressive structures and situations. As Friedmann (1992) suggested, gains in social power must be translated into political power, so that the interests of the people (women, in this case) can be effectively advocated, defended and acknowledged at regional and national levels. I will apply Moser's theories to consider whether the women addressed strategic gender needs and whether conscientisation, which Friere (1972) stressed was so important, took place.

This chapter draws on the ideas of these theorists to help us determine the effectiveness of the CWP in terms of women's empowerment and to look at what lessons could be applied in other programmes for the benefit of disadvantaged women.

2. CHANGES.

Friedmann argues that there are three kinds of empowerment, social, political and psychological. We will start by looking at whether the CWP empowered women in each of these ways.

2a. Social changes.

Culturally women did not used to have freedom to move about as easily as men.

The start of the CWP saw this limiting aspect of culture challenged. Because the programme was under the auspices of the church, the men were more prepared to let the women attend courses in other villages or at other mission stations. Women now are being given greater freedom to temporarily move out of the villages. This has been achieved not without considerable pain on the part of some women. Permission would be given at the last moment, as the last canoe was leaving for the course (Diocese of Auki Report, Buma,1993). Members of the DWT gained permission from their husband or family to be away from home for up to ten days at a time when they were touring.

Women's houses have been built, which means that the women no longer have to meet under a tree or on a veranda of a house. To begin with the husbands scoffed when they saw the women cutting and carrying trees. One women commented, *'Every husband asked us, what is it for? Now they see with their own eyes that women do not plan with empty words, but they do action'* (Diocese of Auki Report, Dala:1995). In those villages with women's houses the women are to a greater or lesser degree getting recognition from men. Men do not seem to see the CWP as a direct threat and this may suggest a change in the attitude of the men towards the women and what they are doing. The men seem to recognise at least unconsciously that there is a new reality in their society and that it must be catered for. The significance of this change which is allowing women more power and more freedom should not be underestimated. Social empowerment has occurred.

2b. Psychological changes.

Diocesan Women's Team.

The team members were very dependent at the beginning of the programme, constantly seeking advice, explanations and confirmation. They ascribed the success and motivation of the programme to others. By 1995 they no longer showed this dependency and did not need continual affirmation in what they were doing or what they planned to do. There was a growing ability of the DWT members to listen to the women participating in training sessions, to learn more about their cultures and customs and to increase their knowledge of other women's organisations. This has enabled them to see possibilities of action that were dormant before. There is no doubt that the team members have a greater sense of confidence, that they have been psychologically empowered. One member told how *'Before I couldn't stand up in front of a group, I didn't even talk out inside the family. I was frightened, frightened in case I said something wrong'.* Now she is one of the most gifted teachers (Diocesan Women's Team,1995: pers. comm.).

Participants.

For the women in the villages, a new phenomenon has surfaced. They are eager to tell about the work of the CWP and to make plans for their women's groups. They have a new freedom and awareness of their own ability to effect change within their communities and families. Returning to the practices of community building that were in their society *befoa*,[43] the women are renewing and reawakening some *kastom* practices.

In *kastom befoa* the community looked after and cared for the disabled, the sick and the old. Food was shared, gardens planted and tended for those in need in the community, but these practices had been forgotten and died out with the coming of the cash economy. A rediscovery of community spirit based on caring principles has emerged.[44] Women have organised themselves to go out to feed the patients in the hospitals and clinics and to visit the prison. It has revived the spiritual dimension in everyday relationships in the community. In this sense, empowerment means to live and relate differently, releasing an inner freedom, and so acquiring a tremendous life power for the betterment of one's own life, but also contributing in a meaningful way to everyone else's struggle for a better life: *'Before women did not know each other, did not share their ideas, many problems happened between women. Very big changes have come. Now we know how to pray, we share our ideas, we are learning new skills in our group and helping each other'* (Women's Leader, 1995:pers.comm.).

This attitudinal change has come about through working together. The village can be a place for gossip, a place for pulling people down, but with the CWP there has been a change, a conscious effort on behalf of the women to leave that behind and to work together as a cohesive group. The jealousies from before and the fighting have been replaced by a willingness to solve problems and to keep the lines of communication open: *'Before the group started, we did not talk kindly to each other, I hit my children, didn't feed them before school, just looked after my own house. Those bad ways from before have changed. Now we work together and talk together'* (Zone leader, pers. comm.1995).

Education on relationships, on working together and building basic Christian communities all empowered the women. The community is seen, by women, as an

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[43]*'Befoa'* in this society means in times when custom was strong. It can imply before any explorers, traders, or colonists set foot in the Solomons, but it can also mean in their grandparents' time.

[44]Although this can add to a women's work load, the pleasure they get from doing this caring work gives them a sense of achievement.

extension of the family and good relationships inside and outside the family are an essential part of women's well being and happiness: *'We did talk before, but not really. Women's group changed all that. Now when my husband asks why I go to women's group, I tell him, I go because it helps the family, helps me learn about children and about us. Now he lets me go. Our family has changed."* (Mother of five, 1995: pers.comm.).

It is interesting to note that at the beginning of the programme the women found it important to have a uniform, and indeed at the large women's gatherings there was a sense of solidarity between the women associated with the purple uniform. Now there seems less demand for this outward sign. The women have been changed internally so the outward sign has lost much of its significance.

2c. Political changes.

Political empowerment refers to the power of voice and of collective action in local communities and at broader levels. The first stage of political empowerment in the CWP saw self-respect and confidence building growing amongst the women. The second stage saw collective and collaborative effort to build up the community. The third stage saw the ability to understand social change at village and family level and plans to act on this. The fourth stage comprised collective action, through the community, provincial and national political processes. Without the first three fundamental steps the fourth would have been unattainable. Evidence of all four stages of political empowerment in CWP in Malaita is discussed below. Political empowerment will best come about, not by confrontation, but by working within the cultural structures that have to be changed (Charlton,1984:217).

Women's power at the community level has increased in several ways. Slowly the Catholic women of Malaita have won over the respect from the catechists[45] by their faithfulness to pastoral work. There was a power struggle in some villages, where the catechist would not work with the women, but now in almost all places they carry out the work together for the betterment of the whole community.[46] There has been a flourishing in all the ministries in the villages. The women have acted as catalysts for new community activity and concern.

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[45]There is one woman catechist in Malaita, all the rest are men.

[46]For the women to lead the prayer services and pray with sick in the villages they needed the support of the catechist and the parish priest. Otherwise the women could be stopped from doing such work.

The women are finding courage to speak out for greater consideration to be given to them as a group from the nurses in the clinics, from agriculture field officers and from village chiefs. Such challenges a few years ago would have been unheard of. The DWT have challenged the clergy on their lack of support for the women's programme on two occasions (Diocesan Women's Team,1995: pers.comm.). Without support and encouragement from the clergy, planning and running a village or parish course can be difficult for the women to organise.

Village-based women leaders are taking it upon themselves to be part of the touring parish team that visits all the villages. Women are speaking up at parish council meetings and are sitting in the house of chiefs in South Malaita so that the needs of the women will be heard. Village committees have women members who have little fear of speaking on behalf of the local women. Politicians heading for re-election are asked what their policies are regarding women. If they have not incorporated women's needs then the women are beginning to look for other candidates (Diocese of Auki Report, June:1993). It can thus be seen that women are expressing political power at all levels, from community to the National Government.

3. GENDER NEEDS.

Moser offers a slightly different but essentially complimentary approach to that of Friedmann. She argues that through empowerment women can attempt to overcome inequalities between men and women and their subordination within the family. Women experience subordination and oppression differently specific to their race, class, history and current position. Women, through their grass roots organisations, have to challenge these oppressive structures simultaneously at different levels through consciousness raising so they can challenge their subordination (Moser,1989:1815).

Moser theorises that practical gender needs can be addressed as a basis through which strategic gender needs can be reached (Moser,1989:1815-1816). Women's organisations starting around concrete practical gender needs such as sewing, agriculture and health have led women to identify strategic gender needs (Table Six:). These strategic gender needs are identified in column three of Table Six. Empowerment can be achieved this way through women's sense of self worth being improved, enhancing their sense of value and confirming the inner power they have within themselves.

Table Five: Expressed needs of the women and how they were met by the Catholic Women's Programme.

EXPRESSED NEEDS OF THE WOMEN	PRACTICAL GENDER NEEDS THAT WERE MET	STRATEGIC GENDER NEEDS (SGN) THAT WERE MET
TO IMPROVE THEIR SELF-WORTH TO UNDERSTAND WOMEN'S ROLE IN MALAITAN SOCIETY		UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP BUILDING WOMEN'S HOUSES SGN. CHALLENGED THE DIVISION OF LABOUR SGN. CHALLENGED POWER STRUCTURES
IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS		WORKING TOGETHER COMMUNICATION FRIENDSHIPS + NETWORKS SGN. COLLECTIVE ACTION AS IN LITERACY PROJECTS SGN. CHALLENGING GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY
BALANCED DIET	SUPSUP GARDENS NUTRITION EDUCATION	
CHILD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PARENTING SKILLS GROWTH OF YOUNG GIRLS	EDUCATION ON CHILD GROWTH/DEVELOPMENT GROWTH OF YOUNG WOMEN	SGN. MORE EQUITABLE DIVISION OF LABOUR, CHILD CARE + GARDEN SGN. CHALLENGED CUSTOMS ABOUT MENSTRUAL CYCLE AND *KASTOM* MARRIAGE
WOMEN'S HEALTH AND FAMILY HEALTH	EDUCATION TO UNDERSTAND HEALTH MESSAGES SANITATION	GIVEN INFORMATION ON REPRODUCTIVE CYCLE AND TRAINING FOR *KASTOM* MIDWIVES SGN. CHALLENGE *KASTOM* HEALTH PRACTISES
YOUNG WOMEN'S PROGRAMME		EDUCATION FOR FUTURE CHOICES SGN. CHALLENGING POWER STRUCTURES SGN. CHALLENGING MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

The CWP enabled women to start to understand how to cope with local power structures, how to articulate demands and how to use organisational strength to counter gender biases and rigidities inside the home, as will be seen in the examples below. By meeting the short term practical gender needs of women, the CWP

provided the basis upon which women went on to challenge oppressive structures within their societies.

3a. Practical gender needs (PGN).

The women started to ask for instruction on sewing, nutrition, *supsup gadens* and health: all topics concerned with practical gender needs. Starting at this level was of extreme importance. There was a lack of trust between the women: there were jealousies, they were not friends, they did not share their problems. Slowly over the months and years while working together to meet practical gender needs trust between them was built up. The women's group was a time to enjoy, to laugh and to learn new skills together. The community work was discussed and divided between themselves. Here they started sharing their deeper needs. This time of conscientisation, where they talked about life situations, was the first step to empowerment.

Instruction in sewing and *supsup gadens* not only met practical needs of the women by generating a little income for the individual women or for the group, but these lessons provided an opportunity for solidarity, cohesion and unity of action for the group. These classes were also an acceptable way of behaviour as far as the men were concerned, thus they did not encourage controversy. The women were joining together doing housewifely activities: they were not threatening the men. These women's activities were undervalued by the men, seeming to be of little consequence (Bryden and Chant,1989:221).

Yet this time of building relationships was a significant step for the women. During this time the DWT were asked to help with problem solving in the groups. Previously when something went wrong in the women's club[47] there was a falling out, then there was gossip, back biting and everyone walked away with hurt feelings, leading to the finish of the group. Now the DWT were teaching a different approach involving forgiveness, reconciliation and communication: all the new topics that improved family relationships and helped build up the community.

Teaching on health topics, nutrition training, child development and child growth also fulfilled practical gender needs. However, there was a further outcome of these teachings. For example, as women started to learn about their reproductive cycle they began to initiate discussion on many areas concerning marriage and childbearing. Experiences and ways of dealing with problems were shared amongst the women.

[47]Name given to women's groups in the 60s.

Women now realised that the way to change the high brideprice set by the men was for them to take part in the negotiations for future marriages. Young people had been taking the decision into their own hands and running away to live together without payment being made, causing family distress. The women realised their participation in negotiations could improve this situation.

3b. Strategic gender needs (SGN).

According to Moser, the empowerment approach utilises PGNs as a basis through which SGNs can be met. Thus through addressing a PGN for women to understand how their bodies worked, women went on to play a stronger role in marriage negotiations, resulting in a SGN being addressed. There were also activities of the CWP which directly addressed SGNs.

Achievement of strategic gender needs (SGN) would, for example, remove the traditions that expect women to work in the gardens all day, that talk about women as *"bulldozer blong mi; hosi blong mi"*[48] (Diocese of Auki, Project Proposal,1992:4).

Challenging the sexual division of labour.

Examples of changes in the division of labour show how a SGN was addressed. In Malaita, *kastom* has it that women are not allowed to be higher, or over the heads of, men.[49] When the women first started caring for the old people in the communities, they found that many of them were living in broken down houses with rain leaking through the rotten leaf roof. They asked the men to mend them. Nothing was done. Then women decided to climb up to mend the leaf roof themselves. Some of the women laughed about it afterwards: *'We thought we might be struck down by lightening, but nothing bad happened to us'* (Diocese of Auki Report, October:1993). They shared that story at the leaders' meeting so then more women began to mend the leaking roofs.

Having achieved that, when communities decided they wanted a women's house, in some places the women went ahead on their own to build one. They cut and prepared the timber, marked out the site and started to dig the holes for the posts. Then some men agreed to use their expertise and encouraged and helped the women

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[48]This phase describes women as bulldozers or workhorses belonging to the husband.

[49]There was a heated debate in Honiara as to whether they could build a pedestrian footbridge over the new highway, because it would mean that women might be walking on the bridge when men passed in the cars underneath. There was also the additional hazard that the women might be menstruating at the time.

to build a house that would be large enough (Zone Leader,1995:pers.comm.). A practical gender need for a space for women's meetings turned into a strategic gender need when the sexual division of labour was challenged. In that example the power base of the men was also challenged.

The husbands' awareness programme focused on women's roles. The men looked for the first time at the hidden work in a women's day, highlighting the inequalities of the work load. The men and women together started to discuss how to achieve a fairer distribution of work responsibility and decision making. Thus husbands' awareness directly addressed a strategic gender need.

Husbands' awareness was an integral part of the programme and went a long way towards men understanding the role of women in society. Husbands started to allow their wives to attend courses. The men stayed at home and were willing to look after the children, feed the pigs and work in the garden, all of which are traditionally women's jobs. This awareness raising therefore challenged the sexual division of labour. As the husbands understood the programme more they were more supportive and began to take pride in the achievements of their wives. One comment from husbands at an empowerment course in Buma Parish was that: *'I thought you all just wasted time in women's groups, I did not understand, I wasn't clear about the good work you do. Now it is clear and I want to support you all the way'.* (Diocese of Auki Report, Buma Parish:1995). A women graphically described how things used to be before the husbands awareness courses, using the metaphor of a frog whose legs were tied: *'Husbands bind our arms and legs with string, like a frog, not letting us take part. Sometimes they let our legs go free, so we can do a little bit, but now they have taken off all the ties and we are free to do our women's work'* (Diocese of Auki Report, Buma Parish, October:1995).

In the same way, after the health courses the women realised that a lot of sickness in the community was related to a lack of good sanitation. They first tried to get the environmental health officers to help them construct slab toilets, but they only received promises not action. So instead they used the information from the health course on how to improve the toilets in the villages using bush materials alone. This could be seen as adding to women's work load. In fact, however, because the incidence of diarrhoea was lessened, women did not have to stay home looking after sick children or taking them to the clinic or hospital as often. The women have also repaired water supplies that have been broken for years, by going to the source and

cleaning out the debris (Diocese of Auki Report, October:1993). Ideally, in the long term, men's attitudes need to be changed so that they take on some of these tasks.

Challenging authority.

Building the women's houses not only challenged the sexual division of labour, but challenged the power base of the men in the villages. Traditionally men were the ones to build houses and the ones who decided what would be built. By allowing the women to go ahead and build they have relinquished some of their power to the women. A strategic gender need for the women was filled by challenging the unequal distribution of power in their lives. The men seem to have accepted this new inner strength of the women. The reasons for this are unclear but it is hoped that the men are recognising more the value of the women to their lives and communities.

There are stories from the villages that the fighting and domestic violence is much diminished since the CWP started. What are the reasons for this? They say that the women have learned skills about how to deal with the violence, how to move away until the situation has defused. The women have taken information given in the programme about family relationships, communication, parenting skills and are using them as tools to help combat violence. The stronger friendship between the women ensure they now have places to run to in times of trouble. Improving lines of communication between husband and wives, with ongoing education for the men will help to avert conflict

Before the start of the CWP there had been Diocesan programmes for marriage enrichment but at such courses the women sat silent, too frightened to speak out and the men did all the sharing and talking. One women commented *'Before women were not free to speak for their rights, never free to speak of their problems, but now there is freedom'* (Diocese of Auki Report, Ata'a:1992). Great changes have happened in the latest Family Life Ministry programme and Marriage Encounter programme. The authority of the husbands and the power they held over their wives is being changed. Now the husbands are recognising the women as equal partners. The women have been able to share their dreams and heartaches about their marriage and family relationships with their husbands.

As mentioned under the section on political empowerment, women are now sitting on Parish Councils. The women are no longer sitting quietly, but are voicing out the needs of the women's groups and the help that they need from the men. In the same way the women are having the courage to speak out in village committees and the men are taking notice of what they are saying.

As mentioned earlier, women have also started to question the church hierarchy and the catechists. Publicly the women have challenged those who are not giving help and support to the women and those who have prevented the CWP from going at full steam.

Challenging chiefly authority and *kastom*.

Kastom has been challenged from many different angles. During the young women's programme in a village in Buma Parish, the chief was asked to come and talk to the participants for one hour about *kastom* marriage. He decided that he had not been given enough time to talk, and came back and tried to intimidate the team to let him talk for the entire last day of the course. With great skill the DWT member pointed out that the ninety three young women on the course actually lived in his village or close by. His teaching about *kastom* should have been ongoing. She encouraged him to carry out his chiefly duties by regular teaching to the young women about *kastom* and culture, thereby challenging the chief and pointing out the areas that were of concern to the women and reminding him of his duties.

In South Malaita the women have strengthened the ties between the women's groups and the House of Chiefs. Seeing the way the women carried out their work in the community the Chiefs invited the women sit in the House of Chiefs and to voice their needs. The chiefs may be being distracted on side issues, trying to stop the young women from tying their hair into a 'pineapple' style [50] and wearing shorts, but the fact that women sit in the House of Chiefs is a good starting point and they might be able to gain more power in this way in the future. The issues women would like to see addressed include the breakdown of traditional values in the communities such as the breakdown of discipline and the increased number of teenage pregnancies. Also, in some areas the chiefs are trying to bring back the use of menstrual huts, maybe not because they are concerned for the good health of the women but to take back some of the power that rested before with the men. The women's presence in the ongoing discussions on this issue is of great significance.

The chiefs are realising that the women want to learn more about culture and *kastom*. The CWP has opened discussion on aspects of community life *befoa*, value systems, how marriages were contracted, who looked after the widows, who disciplined the young people. This whole area of *kastom* is being discussed in

[50]Hair is pulled up and secured on top of the head looking a little like the top of a pineapple.

appropriate ways by the women, avoiding direct confrontation and keeping the relationships good as both the CWG's and the Chiefs want the dialogue to proceed.

In the health course there were many instances where the women spoke about the times *kastom* held them back from making or carrying out good health practices. In some areas the women still rely on an untrained traditional midwives to cut the cord with a bamboo knife.[51] Pregnant women often stay away from the ante-natal clinic, taking the advice of the old women in the village who think clinic visits are a waste of time. During these health courses the medical division were able to identify women who wanted be trained as traditional birth attendants (TBAs). With more knowledge the women and these TBAs will be aware of simple health practices that will help the mother and her family and they will be in a better position to challenge those who try to prevent them from seeking medical attention when necessary.

The health topics give ongoing education to the women so that they can make better health decisions for their family and at times will be the life savers in the community because they acted quickly and gave the appropriate early treatment. The new knowledge gives the women the tools to challenge *kastom* practices that are detrimental to the overall good health of the community. In some places *kastom* tries to curtail the intake of protein during pregnancy, so the baby is small at birth. Nutrition teaches that women need a richer diet during pregnancy for the good growth of the foetus. Good nutrition of young girls is also important; it means they develop well. Also if families can be encouraged to delay the marriage of young women until after eighteen years, the pelvis will be fully mature before child bearing begins.

As mentioned before, there are stories about how chloroquine tablets taken during pregnancy will harm the baby, how cerebral malaria is due to a devil and how medicine paid for from the *kastom* doctor is better for diarrhoea than green coconut water: these are all part of each women's conditioned knowledge. New information helps the women understand what is needed for better health practices. The increased confidence and cohesion of the women's groups means that these *kastoms* are being challenged in committees, councils and meetings. Thus through meeting practical gender need for health education, a strategic gender need is also being addressed.

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[51] A bamboo knife is made by stripping a sliver of bamboo from between the nodes. When freshly cut it is extremely sharp, but can still give the mother or child tetanus if she is not immunised. That is one reason why the ante-natal visits are so important.

Challenging governmental authority.

Again through greater confidence in themselves the women have challenged authority on several different levels. The women have recognised the immense need for literacy and in many places have gone ahead on their own to teach simple literacy to other women in the villages.[52] Some parishes have organised literacy training for women to become teachers. This outreach to help improve the community is a significant change for the women, made more so by the fact that they have become self-reliant and organised it themselves.

Through the health course, they have had the courage to question the nurses about immunisation procedures. Sometimes the clinic nurse will refuse to immunise the baby and try to send the mother away. The child might have a runny nose, or a slight fever. With the new health teaching, the mothers have learned that a slight cold is not a reason to refuse immunisation. They now have the courage to teach the nurse and insist that the injection be given (Diocese of Auki Report, Tarapaina:1995).

Over the past three years the Agriculture field officers have been asked why they kept secret the knowledge about subsistence farming and never shared it with the women. A woman asked them: *'Why have you only come before for cash cropping and not for subsistence farming?'* The officers have fallen back on the fact that it was not acceptable for men field officers to come and teach women. This led to the next question from the women: *'Why are there no women field officers?'*

The team have challenged the Women's Development Division (WDD) in Honiara about the failure of their programme in Malaita. A welfare approach to women's development has not led to any noticeable empowerment of the rural women. As discussed in Chapter Five, by providing two days teaching for WDD officers in Honiara the DWT showed how rural women could be successfully empowered.

4. CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR THE PROGRAMME.

4a. Recognising strengths and weaknesses of the programme.

Despite the significant achievements of the CWP as detailed above, not all the approaches of the programme were quite so successful. But because of the flexibility

[52]A story emerged from one of the parishes about a woman going to literacy class for two months. Her husband was going to Auki so she asked him to withdraw money from her passbook: $100. He withdrew $200 and drank the extra $100. Soon the woman could read a little and recognise numbers. She returned from class one day, looked at the passbook and saw her husband had taken out the extra money. When he came home she said, 'Now I can read. I see you have taken out extra money each time, but now I will come to Auki and put the passbook in my name, with my signature'.

of the programme, these died a natural death fairly quickly. At first the DWT tried to establish women's committees and touring teams in every parish. Transport costs made this unfeasible. From the beginning the DWT had taught about oral rehydration solution to be given for diarrhoea. After many months the DWT realised this was not being used so green coconut water was recommended as the easiest readily available treatment.

Chapter One discussed the advantages of having separate women's organisations The DWT would reinforce this finding. We found that being a separate women's team has meant that leadership has developed without competition from men and the shared leadership style has ensured that all the new skills learnt have been passed freely around the group. Being a separate women's organisation was a strength of the CWP and must be continued for the greater advantage of the women in Malaita. It is of primary importance that the women continue to be the teachers and planners for the programme because the women gain confidence and relate to other women on the right level (Photo and 8 page 107).

It is crucial that the CWP continues to recognise its own strengths and weaknesses so that it can address any problems before they escalate.

4b. Overcoming urban bias.

The women involved in the CWP felt frustrated when they saw the number of courses, workshops, overseas consultants and donor agents who went to Honiara but never came to the provinces. As discussed in Chapter Four, urban bias impedes development. There has to be a determined and sustained effort by urban women and visiting consultants to make a conscious commitment to the most marginalised women in the rural areas. Government and overseas funding for women's development programmes need to be targeted to the most marginalised otherwise programmes like the CWP may collapse in the future. Regulations about accessing those funds need to be simplified so that those women who have low literacy and numeracy are not further marginalised by bureaucracy. Nevertheless rural women are already starting to address their own strategic gender needs and the ways they are achieving this are of great significance for the country.

4c. The pull towards income-generating projects.

The major ongoing trial that faced the women's programme was the pull towards income generating projects; the pull towards cash. The husbands' awareness programme went some way towards explaining to the men that there were no hand

outs from the CWP, no sewing machines and no cash in the hand. With limited literacy and numeracy and poor management skills, women had always struggled to be successful with income generating projects. Nevertheless the Diocese of Auki received annually many proposals requesting financial support for income-generating projects, and over half of these purported to come from women's groups. However, on further investigation, these proposals were found to be written by and conceived by men. Too often the income generated would go directly back to the men, even if the women did the work. If development agencies decide to support such schemes, women again become the victims of development. First, there needs to be conscientisation of the women through ongoing non-formal education, leading to simple numeracy and project management skills.

As stated earlier, one of the objectives of the CWP was to encourage self-reliance amongst the women. The Diocesan funding is for the ongoing education of the women as this is seen as the best way of enhancing self-reliance at present.

4d. Encouraging men's participation in non-cash development.

Women are already overwoked in Malaitan society. Through this CWP their work load in community care, health care, agriculture and better nutrition has increased. We have seen that the women are taking over some tasks to do with sanitation and building. But the women see the advantages that the programme has started to bring and are so far willing to do the extra work.

The Integral Human Development programme running in the Diocese over the past three years is starting to address the issues concerning true development of people. The men have been so used to cash handouts from donor agencies that the concept of participation in non-cash development has come as something new to them.

Raising the men's awareness of the injustices in this society has already started, but that conscientisation will need much ongoing education. The marriage encounter programme now running in the Diocese encourages couples to speak about their love for each other. This is something entirely new for married couples in Malaita. For the first time they are starting to speak about the love and value they place on their partners. Such programmes could start to address a cause of domestic violence, that is that women are held in low esteem, with little respect accorded to them. Through conscientisation of the men increased value and respect will be hopefully given to the women.

Some men are beginning to take on some child rearing tasks and to start to help the women with their work load in food production, but to change these *kastoms* will take a long time. The men constantly ask for a programme to themselves. Over the past six years they have opportunity to see the CWP as an example on how a participatory programme can be empowering and change peoples attitudes. Maybe now is the time for a programme to be developed by rural Malaitan men that is relevant to the needs of other village men and boys.

4e. Relationship with the church.

At the present time the women of Malaita live in a male dominated hierarchically structured society. They do not recognise the male domination of the Church as being a problem, as it is entirely consistent with the society they live in and which they know and understand. Further consciousness raising and liberation of women may lead to women challenging the structures within the church and the rest of society in the future.

As discussed in Chapter One, the women of Malaita are not feminist in an outward way: at present they accept the church hierarchy, church proceedings and exclusive language without obvious concern. It must be recognised that the church is not blocking their empowerment. In fact, the only empowerment programme being offered to women throughout the whole of Malaita has come from the Catholic Church.

The Church hierarchy actively supports the programme, with few exceptions, and lay leadership is encouraged at all levels. Where difficulties arise, in village situations, the women have been able to deal with communication breakdown as soon as it has happened. Communication in all Parishes has developed as the programme has expanded with new insights and management skills being learned all the time.

4f. Conflict resolution.

The DWT has to actively persue conflict resolution strategies. Working in a Melanesian context, no one is called to account when problems arise. Confrontation is avoided at all costs, which often results in no resolution of the problem, no change in behaviour and no future growth. The well-being of each team member and her continuing enthusiasm for working in the programme is based on ongoing conflict resolution. When this is neglected, the well being and happiness of the team is weakened. Ongoing training for the team has given them strategies to deal with conflict and its resolution.

5. REPLICATION..

In conclusion, we can say despite the obvious achievements of the CWP, replication would be difficult. The support and encouragement of the Bishop and priests in the Diocese of Auki would not necessarily occur elsewhere. Devaki Jain, one of the founding members of the Indian Association of Women's Studies currently the director of the Institute of Social Studies Trust in India states that:

> *There are several reasons why...successful micro-level projects are not generalizable. One is the charisma and dedication associated with the 'first' experiment which usually cannot be replicated. Another is that the financial and ideological 'investment' put into the original is often missing or hard to duplicate. A third is that certain cultures absorb what others cannot. My view is that the inability to replicate stems from all these, and more. It is the innovative process itself that generates the first success which counts.*
>
> (Jain,1989:76).

Other women's organisations around the world may learn from the success of the CWP, particularly the importance of building women's self-esteem and confidence and being prepared to address strategic gender needs. New innovative processes will be needed for each different location.

6. CONCLUSIONS.

Looking at Paulo Friere's approach we see that the first step of conscientisation is mandatory if the deep roots for change are to be put down. We have to break the *culture of silence* where the women have no voice, no access and no involvement (Friere,1972). This conscientisation is brought about through a participatory approach to learning through non-formal education and is seen as a means of empowerment that will bring about change. See Photo7 and Photo 8 on page 107.

Participation is a process and the style of empowering programmes has to be adjusted to fit this process. But there is a coherence, a structure and even a discipline to the process of participation, as this research has tried to show. It is a complex process involving social, political and psychological factors and there are no universal models, only guide-lines (Oakley,1984:270).

We have seen that the women are learning to shed traditional submissiveness and to withstand family and community pressures. They have begun to work together and

to improve conditions for themselves and for others. The women are becoming organised to use traditional cultural ways to raise the consciousness of men and women about injustices and inequalities.

Many significant changes are slowly going to alter the status of women and the nature of the lives they live in their families and communities. There is increasing confidence and a growing sense of their own dignity among the women both as individual persons and as a group. There is a greater participation and contribution to formal village and parish meetings by the women and they are altering traditional structures. They are exerting regular pressure on the hierarchical structure of the church and others in authority to cater better for their needs. The search for literacy training has already brought its own rewards. Women who were unable to read before can now read letters sent to them from their children at secondary school. The desire for literacy is evident in the communities and now the women are in a position to make it happen.

The process of empowerment needs the sustained and systematic efforts of the Catholic Women's Groups and other like minded groups so that the strategic gender needs can be met. This will mean ongoing mobilisation, consciousness raising, and non-formal education (Moser,1993:76). All these are mechanisms to ensure that women and gender aware organisations are included in future planning processes. The process of empowerment can be slow to mature and can be subject to many hostile forces, but when it takes hold it sets down deep roots. We may only see the first shoots and not be too impressed but the seeds for change have been planted (Bishop Loft,1995:pers.comm.).

It is of vital importance that the political awareness comes from the grass roots and is not imposed by the women in Honiara. Then the issues fought for are the issues that affect rural women and are not something that has been grafted on from another agenda. Social and structural change will come about as a result of this programme even if it is only within Malaita to start with. As we have seen, however, networking was, by 1995, bringing messages of change to other parts of the country too.

Grass roots Catholic women in Malaita are finding a voice that has the support of other women. Together they feel strong enough to speak out about the injustices in their lives. They are working together for the betterment of their own lives and that of the community. They are aware of the importance of networking with other women and so they are reaching out to others to help them in their growth. They are aware

that the impetus for change will be left to them because the men are caught up in other '*bisnis*'[53]

> *The men are not organised today and there is a tendency to worry about material things. If I am right, the women will convert Malaita instead of we the men. Women of Malaita have been put down in the past, but now they are finding they have a great power which was made to stay silent. This is now coming up, even to teach us men.*
>
> (Vicar General,1993: pers.comm.).

[53]'bisnis' here means income generating projects.

Photo. 7. Village women enjoying their participation in the Women's Health Course; 1995.

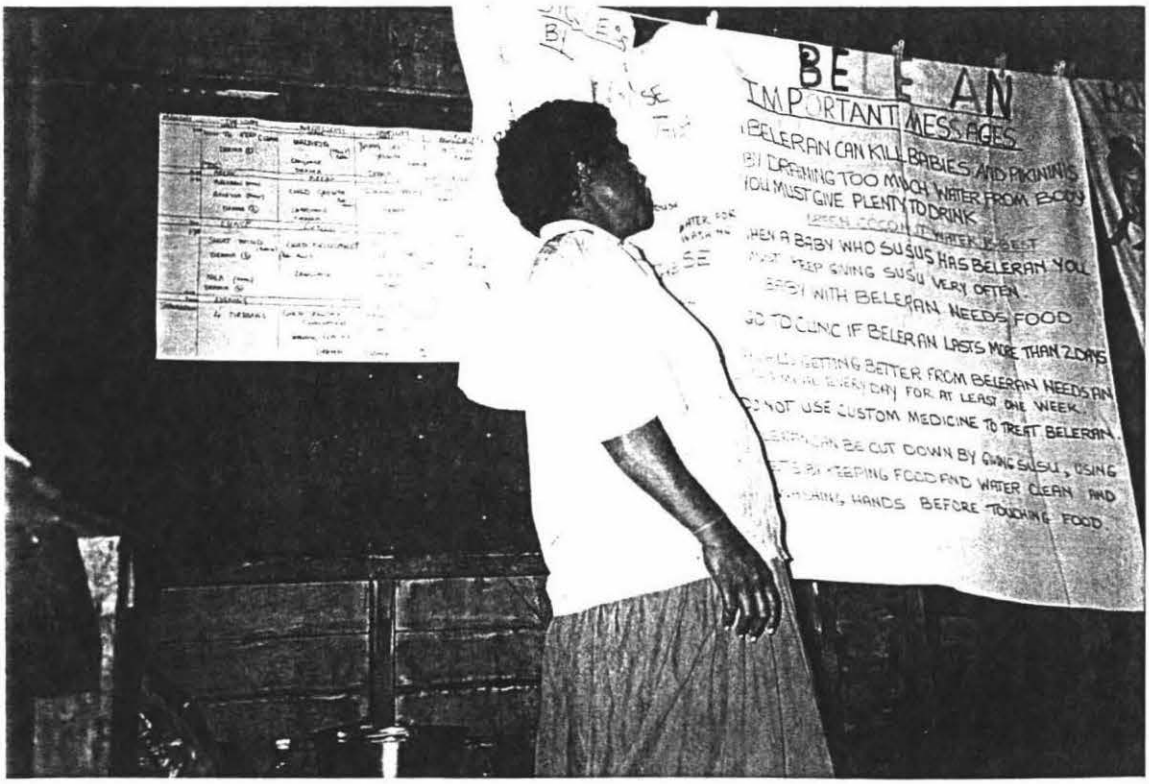

Photo. 8. Parish Co-ordinator teaching in Kwaio language from health charts; Women's Health Course 1995.

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November	1990
November	1992
June	1993
October	1993
November	1993

May	1994
September	1994
January	1995
May	1995

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Rokera Parish	1993
Buma Parish	1993
Tarapaina Parish	1995
Dala Parish	1995
Buma Paris	1995
Rokera Parish	1995

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APPENDIX 1.

Questionnaire.

Follow-up programme in the Diocese 1995..

Key questions about the Parish.

1. Is there a Parish co-ordinator?
2. Is there a Parish team?
3. Does the Parish team tour the zones?
4. What topics do they teach?
5. What are the problems that stop touring?
6. What courses have you attended?
7. What topics helped you most?

Key questions about the women's group in your village.

1. Is there a women's group in your village?
2. How many women attend?
3. Do you have a women's house?
4. Is your group active or not?
5. What activities do you do in women's group?
6. Do the Catechist and Chief support you?
7. Is there a literacy group?

** 8. What changes have happened in your community because of women's group?

** 9. What would you like for your group?

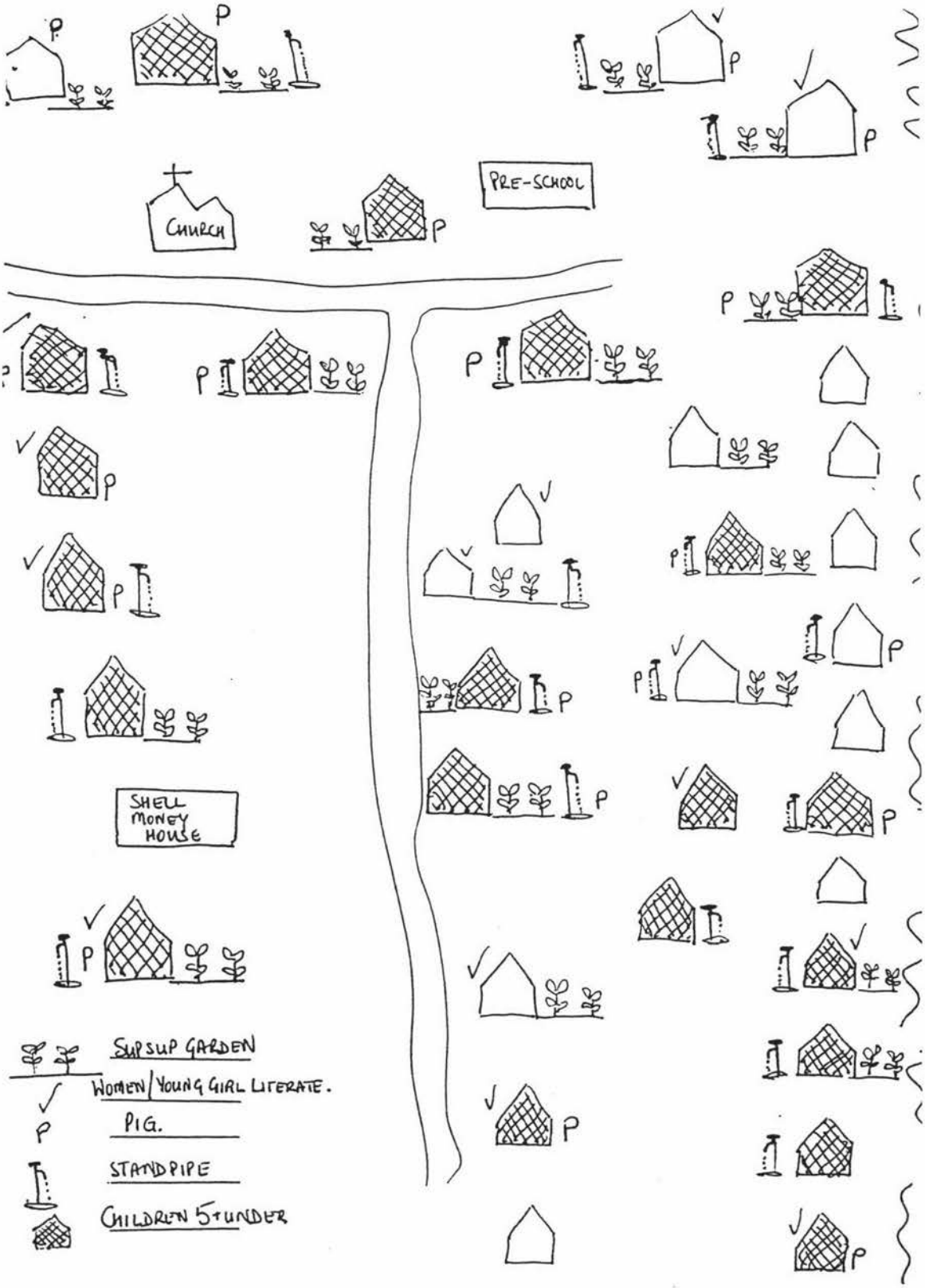
Key questions about yourself.

1. Does your husband support your group?
2. What changes have happened in your family because of women's group?
3. Communication with your husband, how?
4. What problems?
5. What topics would you like to hear again?
6. Do you want to train to teach literacy?

** Question marked with an asterisk usually needed a lot of time with the women before they are able to answer.

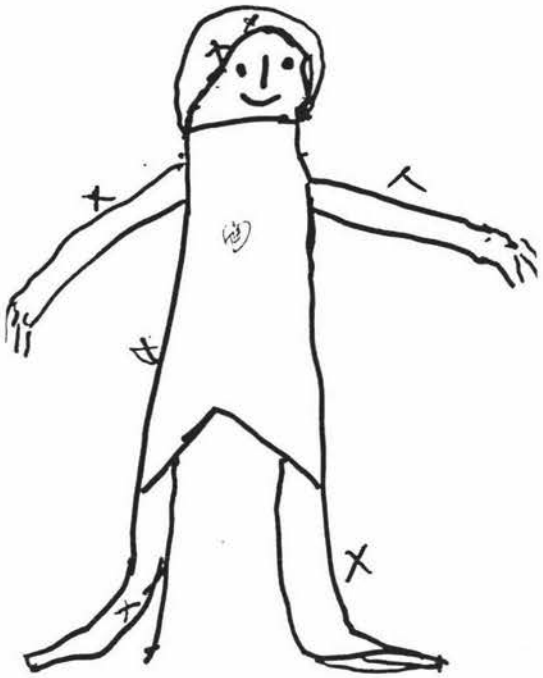
APPENDIX 2

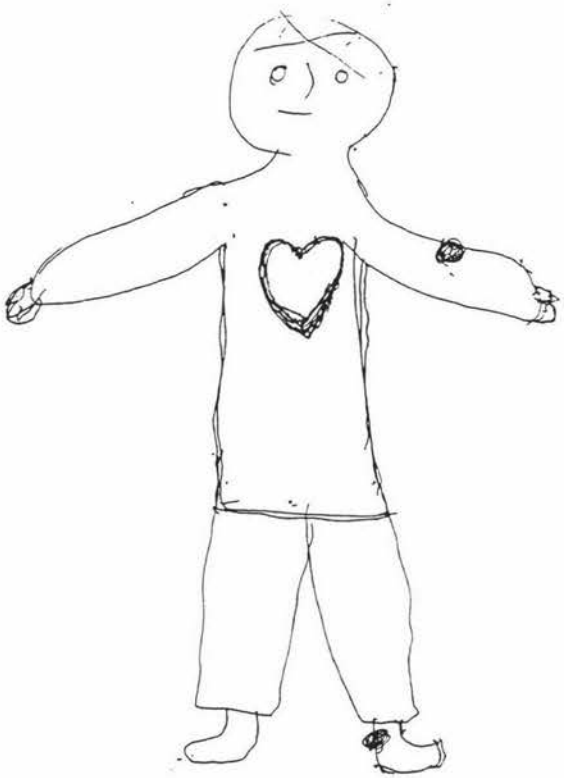
Participatory Rural Appraisal
Village Mapping for *Supsup Gadens.*

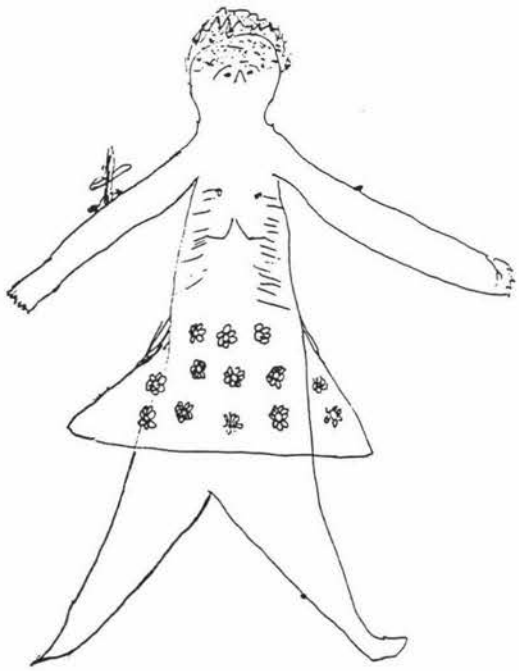


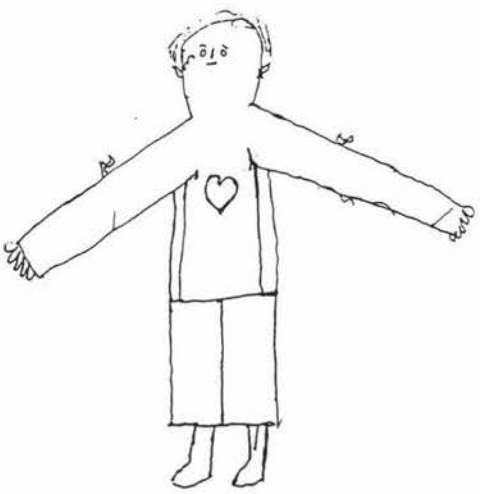
APPENDIX 3.

Participatory Rural Appraisal
Body Mapping, Malaria



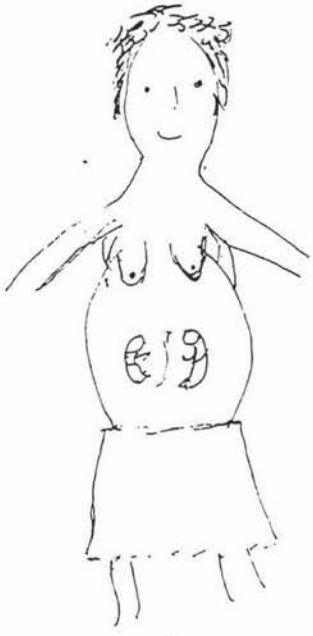


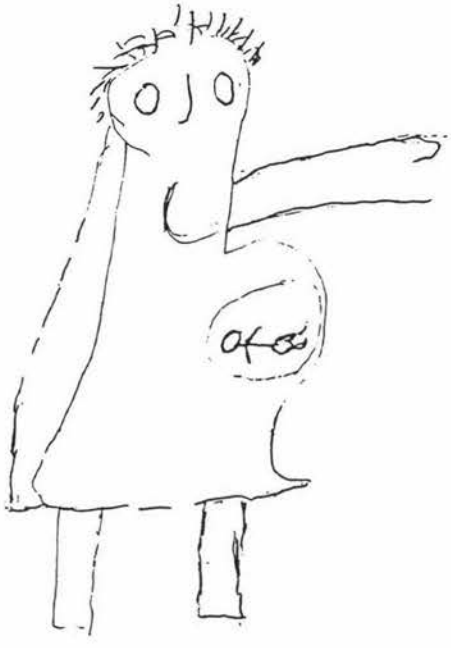


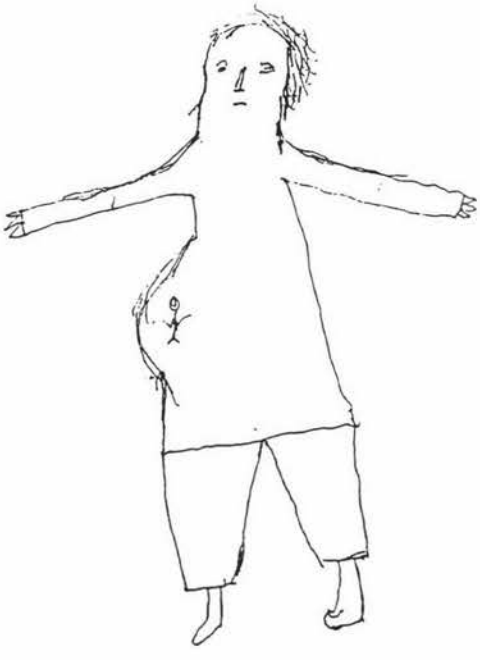


APPENDIX 4

Participatory Rural Appraisal
Body Mapping, Pregnancy.





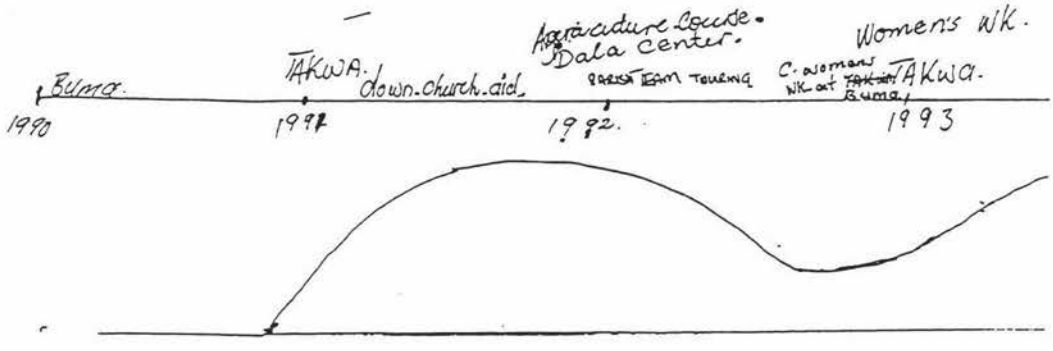


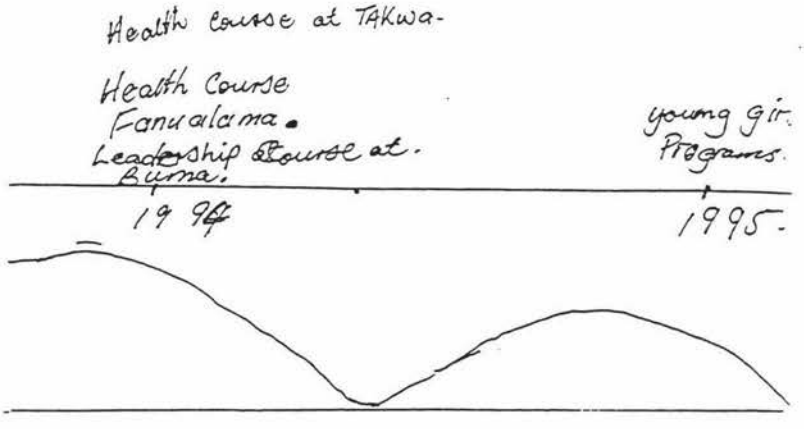
APPENDIX 5

Participatory Rural Appraisal
Time Lines

Top line shows the date, the next line shows the activity within that Catholic Women's Group. There is a close relationship between the external input and the rise in activity in the village group. Appendix 5 and 6 was carried out at Takwa Parish by two different groups of women.

GROUP ONE





APPENDIX 6

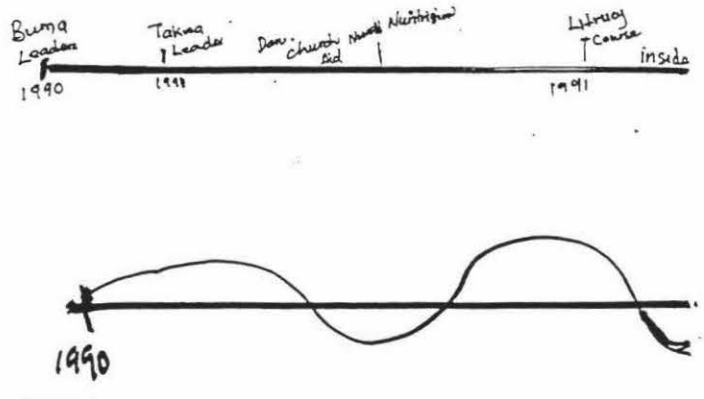
Participatory Rural Appraisal

Time Lines.

GROUP TWO

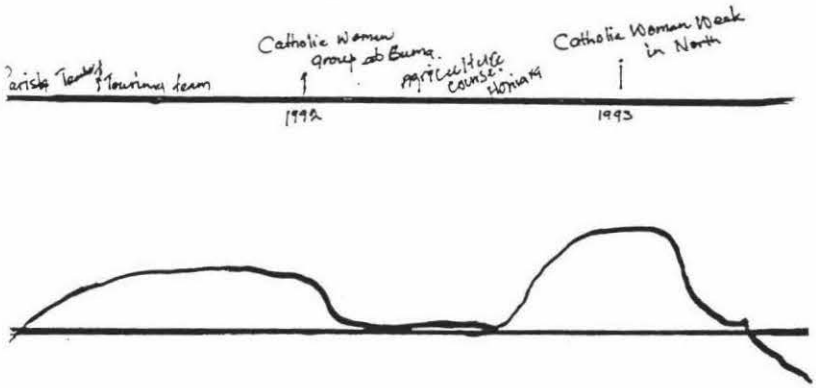
A

1990 - 1991



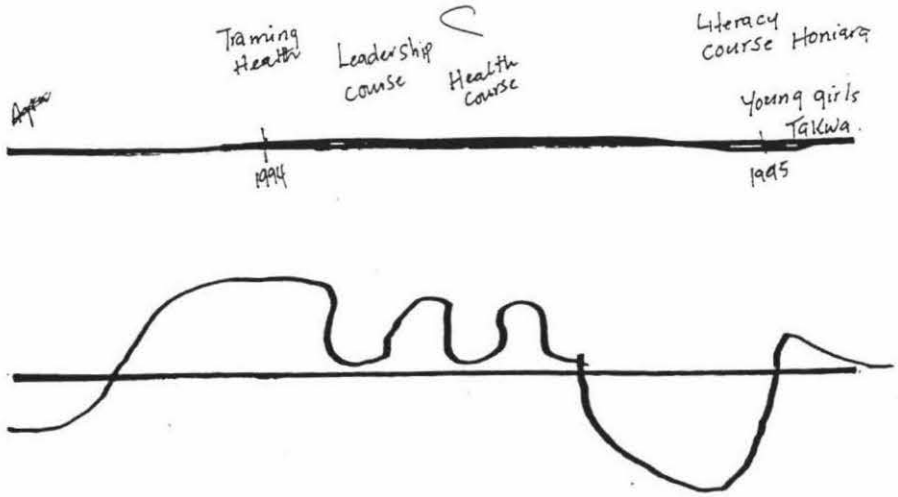
B

1992 - 1993



C

1994-95



APPENDIX .7
National Women's Draft Policy.

The National Women's Policy is based on the following guiding principles,

a. Our constitution whereby we pledge to uphold the principles of equality, social justice and the equal distribution of incomes and beyond this the equal access to government attention and social benefits from development activities.

b. That women have the right of access to information and government services and equal opportunities to contribute to this nation's development and to perform at the highest level of authority, without discriminatory barriers to their participation potential, whether perpetrated by patriarchal or matriarchal systems.

c. That women constitute almost half of this country's population and as such constitute the other half of this country's human resources.

d. The stable role played by our women contributing in many ways to the well being of this nation to ensure its identity and stability at the family and community level.

e.Our traditional heritage and identity which identifies us as a proud nation.

f. Equality and participation as partners to our men for the development of this nation and our concern for the proper development of our limited natural resources base.

Solomon Islands National Women's Policy Committee.1988

APPENDIX 8.

Courses Run by the Diocesan Team

1990-1995.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S PROGRAMME 1990-1995
DIOCESE OF AUKI

COURSES RUN BY THE DIOCESAN WOMEN'S TEAM SINCE 1990

DATE	COURSE	PARISHES	NOS.
MAY 1990	DAY at FA'ASITORO	Auki	80
OCT 1990	LEADERS' MEETING	Ata'a.Takwa.Dala.Auki.Buma.	43
FEB 1991	WM'S. EMPOWERMENT	Takwa. Ata'a.	74
APR 1991	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Dala.	72
MAY 1991	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Buma.	72
JUNE 1991	HUSBANDS' AWARENESS	Auki. Dala.	140
JUNE 1991	WM'S WEEK at BUMA	ALL 7 PARISHES at Buma	120
AUG 1991	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Kwalakwala	40
SEPT 1991	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Ata'a.	75
NOV 1991	CO-ORDINATORS	ALL 7 PARISHES at Buma	16
MAR1992	AGRICULTURE	Buma.	44
MAR 1992	SEWING COURSE	Auki.	10
MAR 1992	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Tarapaina.	86
MAR 1992	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Rokera.	84
APR 1992	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Auki	70
MAR 1992	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Rohinari.	120
AUG 1992	DAY at FA'ASITORO	Auki. Dala.	140
AUG 1992	AGRICULTURE	Takwa. Ata'a.	44
AUG 1992	AGRICULTURE	Rokera.Tarapaina. Rohinari.	40
SEPT 1992	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Ata'a.	65
SEPT 1992	AGRICULTURE	Kwalakwala	24
OCT 1992	HUSBANDS' AWARENESS	Takwa/Tauba	36
NOV 1992	LEADERS' MEETING	ALL 7 PARISHES at Buma	80
MAR 1993	NUTRITION at BUMA	Catechists wives at Buma	28
MAR 1993	AGRICULTURE	Ata'a.	75
APR 1993	AWARENESS	Auki/Lilisiana	45
APR 1993	AWARENESS	Takwa/Faufanea	50
MAY 1993	AGRICULTURE	Dala.	42
MAY 1993	WM'S WEEK at ROKERA	Tarapaina.Rokera.Rohinari.	320
JUNE 1993	WM'S WEEK at DALA	Buma. Auki. Dala.	520

JULY 1993	WM'S WEEK at TAKWA	Takwa. Ata'a.	320
JULY 1993	WM'S WEEK at KWALAKWALA	Kwalakwala.	60
AUG 1993	YOUNG WOMEN'S PROG	Tarapaina.	22
AUG 1993	AGRICULTURE	Rohinari.	40
SEPT 1993	AGRICULTURE	Tarapaina.	38
SEPT 1993	YOUNG WOMEN'S PROG	Rohinari.	30
OCT 1993	HUSBANDS' AWARENESS	Buma/Kwa'a	60
OCT 1993	YOUNG WOMEN'S PROG	Auki/Oibola	35
NOV 1993	AWARENESS	Takwa/Ndai Island	48
FEB 1994	EMPOWER/ YNG WM'S	Rokera/ Waimarau,Oriore	101
FEB 1994	EMPOWER/YNG WM'S	Kwalakwala/ Goala Loama	60
APR 1994	HEALTH TRAIN TRAINERS	Auki.Buma.Dala.Takwa.Ata'a.	30
MAY 1994	EMPOWER/YNG WM'S	Tarapaina/Hatakau Narioa	91
JUNE 1994	LEADERS at BUMA	ALL 7 PARISHES	32
JULY 1994	HEALTH COURSE	Ata'a.	40
AUG 1994	HEALTH COURSE	Buma.	40
SEPT 1994	EMPOWER/HEALTH	Catechists wives at Buma	25
SEPT 1994	HEALTH COURSE	Dala. Auki.	82
NOV 1994	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Takwa/Ndai Island	45
NOV 1994	HEALTH COURSE	Takwa.	40
NOV 1994	YOUNG WOMEN LEADERS	ALL 7 PARISHES	28
FEB 1995	HEALTH COURSE	Auki/Lilisiana	48
MAR 1995	EMPOWER/HEALTH	Catechists wives at Buma	25
MAR 1995	YOUNG WOMEN'S PROG	Takwa/Takwa Basakana	39
MAR 1995	AGRICULTURE	Ata'a.	42
APR1995	HEALTH COURSE	Rohinari.	50
MAY 1995	YNG WOMEN'S/HEALTH	Tarapaina/Hautahe Haunasi	161
MAY 1995	AGRICULTURE	Takwa/ Afufu	20
JUNE 1995	YOUNG WOMEN'S PROG	Buma/ Kwa'a Radesifulamae	131
JUNE 1995	AGRICULTURE	Tarapaina/ Nariaoa	48
JULY 1995	YOUNG WOMEN'S PROG	Takwa/ Faufanea	32
JULY 1995	HEALTH COURSE	Tarapaina.	43
AUG 1995	YOUNG WOMEN'S PROG	Dala/ Rufoki Dala	88
SEPT 1995	HEALTH COURSE	Rokera.	26
OCT 1995	HEALTH COURSE	Kwalakwala.	56
OCT 1995	WM'S EMPOWERMENT	Buma/ Kwariekwa	95
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