Exploring community-based development:

A case study of the Estate and rural community development in

North Malaita, Solomon Islands

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the

Degree of Master of International Development at Massey

University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

James Kwaimani Faiau

2013

Abstract

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

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

Acknowledgement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dedication

This is for you

Mom

(Rhoda Daminia Rigoalatha Mothenarii Faiau).

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

4th April 2010.

Today the heavenly father has filled our hearts with joy of accomplishment

Table of Contents

List of figures

List of tables

List of abbreviations and glossaries

AusAid	Australian Aid
CEMA	Commodity Export & Marketing Authority
COE	Council of Elders
EC	Estate Community
FMS	Financial Management Scheme
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
SSEC	South Seas Evangelical Church
SIPL	Solomon Islands Plantation Limited
TOD	Tabernacle of David
TPA	Townsville Peace Agreement

Chapter One :
Introduction and Thesis Outline

1.1. Research background

In Solomon Islands, about 85% of the population resides in rural village communities (SIG, 2012, p. 3). Roughan (2012a) made no mistake when he described Solomon Islands, as a nation full of villages and villagers. As such, rural development has always been a priority sector. According to previous studies (see Misite'e, 2008; Rohorua, 2007; Roughan, 2010b) the approach to rural development in Solomon Islands was mainly influenced economic development which always prioritize industrialization and economic growth, hence encourage establishment of large-scale development, instead of regional and community-based development, which is context-based and participatory that allow local communities and people to engage in their own development at the community and provincial level. Much of the large-scale developments are centralized around Honiara and in certain provinces and regions. The development activities and improvements in the rural village communities, as Wickham (2012, p. 2) pointed out are initiated by churches and local community groups. Wickham (2012) explained that the approach taken by government is mostly technology driven, for instance the dishing out of solar panels purchased with development funds for lighting in the rural communities. These hand-outs or delivery of goods and services have often failed to bring about sustained development outcome and improvement in the communities, except meeting of immediate needs. Hence, it also failed to address the fundamental goal of community development which should be about improving the total-wellbeing, ensuring participation of people in their own development and building of a strong and functional community.

In the literature, Cavaye (2006) provided two overarching goals of rural community development, which include the improvement of the total wellbeing of rural people and building a strong and functional community. To achieve these objectives, Cavaye (2001, p. 111)suggested that there is a need for a whole new comprehensive from the current partial approaches to rural

development which focuses only on service provision, discrete initiatives, information dissemination and provision of resources to meet perceived needs. Partial approaches often failed to recognize the potential of community-based groups and involvement of local people to drive local development, which can attain the above goals of improvement of the total wellbeing and building a strong community. Thus, a concept of community-based development examined in this thesis is drawn from the recent works of more 'hopeful post-development' writers who emphasize a context based development approach which is concerned with mobilizing of local communities and utilizing of local resources to bring about positive change and development (Agostino, 2007; McGregor, 2007) that not only address economic needs but also the social, cultural and spiritual aspects of community development. An all new encompassing approach also needs to recognize the significance of culture and indigenous community-based initiatives as fundamental to development.

This thesis fits within the framework of hopeful post-development, which place emphasis context-based and the role of local community bodies and initiative to drive development. By investigating a local community-based initiative – the Estate introduced in North Malaita, this thesis seeks to understand how the Estate contributes to positive development, which tries to address all aspects of development, which include the social, cultural and spiritual as the basis of community development.

1.2. Research location

Fieldwork for this thesis was conducted with in North Malaita, Malaita Province of Solomon Islands, which involved with the Estate programs and schemes. Figure 1, provides the map of Solomon Islands, indicating the islands and province of Malaita. Figure 2, provides the map of Malaita Province, indicating the region of North Malaita. In brief, North Malaita is located at the northern tip of the island of Malaita. It is one of the five regions making up the province of Malaita, which include the outliers of Ontong Java and Sikaiana, commonly referred to as Malaita outer Island; and Small Malaita, to the south (SIDAPP, 2001, pp. 4-5). The development context of the region and description of the Estate programs and projects will be presented in detail in Chapter 5.

Figure 1: Map of Solomon Islands (Insert is Map of the Pacific region)
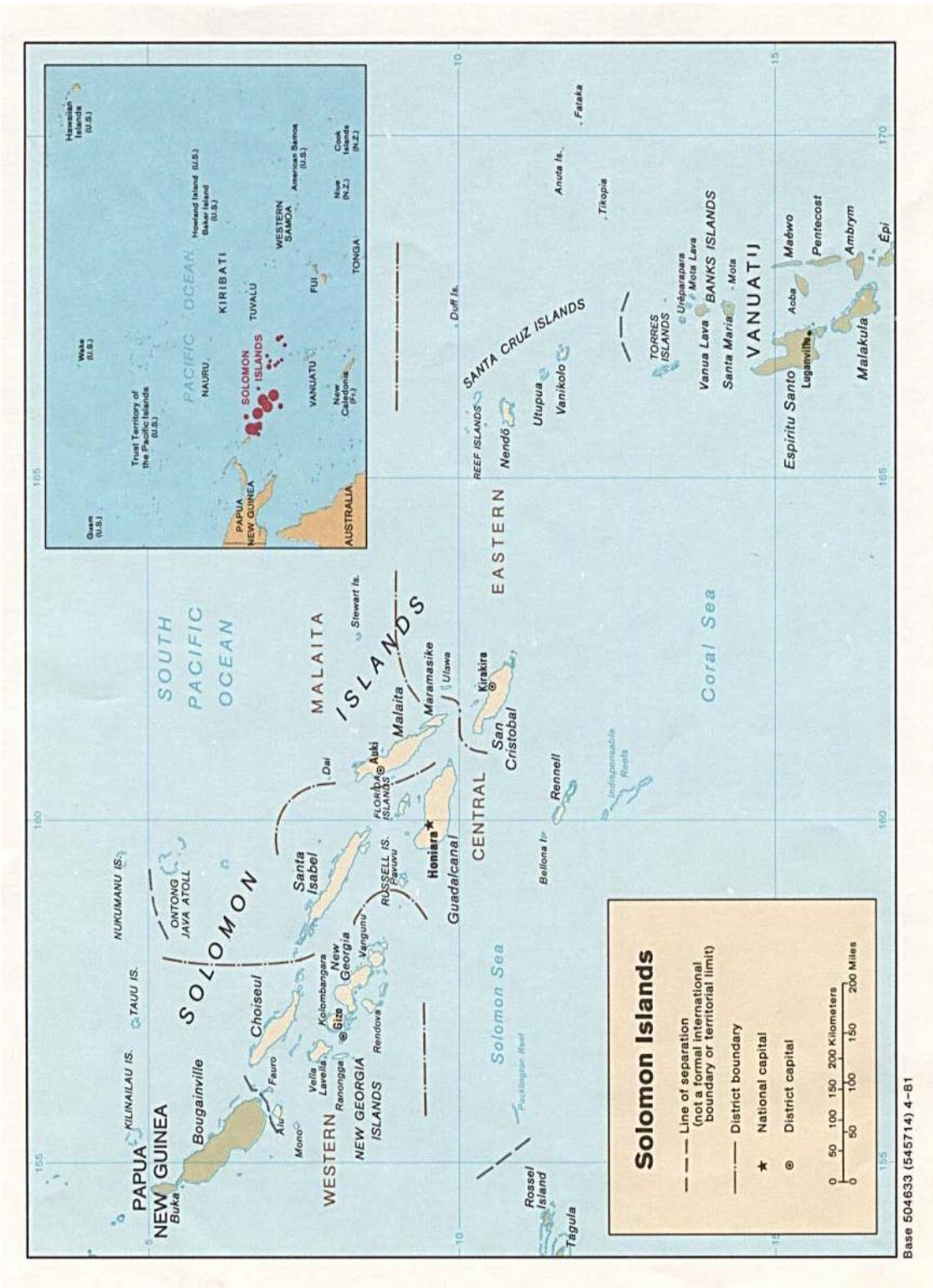
Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/islands_oceans_poles/solomonislands.jpg

Figure 2: Map of the Island of Malaita (Indicating North Malaita)
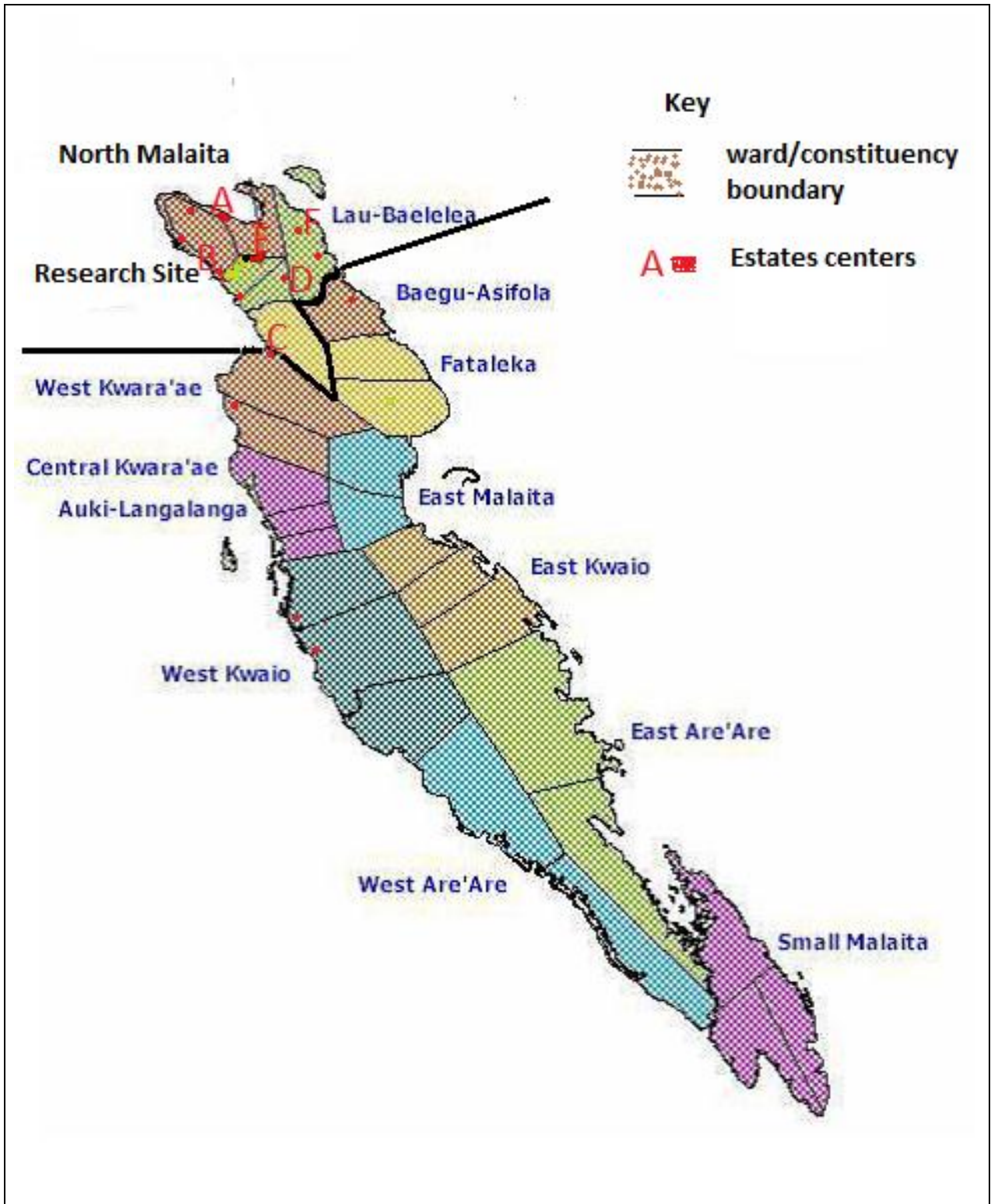
Source: Atlas of Solomon Islands (retrieved from Saeni, 2008, p.3)

1.3. The significance of this study

This thesis is concerned with a how locally formed and managed community-based initiative – the Estate – contributes to development in rural communities of North Malaita. This study contains the views and experiences of local communities leaders, members of the Estate, NGO representatives and responsible government officers concerning community development, especillay regarding the role of community-based initiatives, the common constraints and challenges in community development. This study is concerned with a new research theme in Solomon Islands, with very limited coverage in the existing literature. Most community-based initaitives are initiated by international NGOs and only implemented as part of their strategy encouraging local community involvement, which Nyamugasira (1998) argued disqualified to be called indigenous because they are not born out of a local situation, nor initiated by a local leader of the community themselves. The Estate, which this thesis investigates was considered a rare case, because it was initiated by one local leader and born out of a local situation. It was an attempt by local leaders and communities to seek alternative ways to orgnize their communities and moblize available resources to create opportunities and drive local development. This study hopes to further contribute to the discourse of community development, especially community-based and people-centered approaches which is concerned collective invlovement and utilization of local resources as the basis of local community development.

1.3.1. Motivation and relevant experience

This research emanated from personal interest in the subject of community development as well as my three years working in North Malaita as a community development officer. I was born in North Malaita and spent a substantial part of my life in a rural village, which I still refer to as home. I worked as Community development officer for the Lau/Baelelea constituency, from 2007 to 2010, under the Ministry of Rural Development. Prior employments included; working as high school teacher and tutor at the then Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (now Solomon Islands National University). As a local from the region, and my work experience has given me firsthand knowledge and familiarity with problems and challenges facing the rural communities of North Malaita. Through, this study, I hope to gain better understanding of community development, especially how community-based initiative and local institutions can contribute to creating

opportunities and meaningfully engage people at the local community level. At the same time, want to investigate and see if the model developed and promoted by the Estate in North Malaita has the potential to drive local community development which people have control and ownership of, unlike the partial community-based development initiatives which are only concerned with specific aspects of community development.

1.3.2. The research aim, questions and objectives

The aim of this research is to understand how a local community-based initiative contributes positively to development. In investigating the Estate and community development in North Malaita, this study seeks to understand the circumstances which led to the formation of the Estate, the Estate's underlying premise and ideas, the postive impacts and challenges. This thesis is framed on one key research question, which is: ***How does the Estate – a local community-based initiative contribute to development in North Malaita?*** This thesis is further guided by four research objectives which are outlined below:

- ***To identify circumstances and reasons for introducing the Estate in North Malaita.***
- ***To understand the Estate's premises and ideas of development***
- ***To examine the Estate's programs and activities and how they benefit the members and positively impact rural communities in North Malaita***
- ***To identity the constraints, challenges and concerns facing the Estate***

In addressing the above key research question and objectives, a qualitative case-study approach was selected. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this research, because according to Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 545) it is the best way of exploring a phenomenon within its natural setting, utilizing various data sources. O'Leary (2010) further stated that a qualitative case study appraoch allows for interpretation of social reality and inductively supports the emergence of new ideas. Thus, a qualitative approach is appropriate in this case-study, because this study seeks to personal stories, experiences, views and opinion of participants regarding the Estate programs and activities. The participants included the Estate leaders, members and government officers, and NGO representatives.

1.4. Thesis Structure

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. **Chapter 1,** which is this chapter, provides the overall introduction of this thesis, the research background, the significance and motivation for undertaking this research and the thesis outline.

Chapter 2 provides a review on community development. The chapter begins by providing some definition of the key terms, the general types, dimensions and goals of community development. The chapter then discusses the post-development critique of the development discourse and recognition of community-based and people-centered development. The emergence and significant role of NGOs and community-based initiative will also be discussed in light of a community-based development framework and highlighting of some gaps in the literature on community development.

Chapter 3 provides the background of Solomon Islands. The chapter provides the country overview and rural community development situations and challenges. The chapter also provides a discussion on an indigenous Solomon Islands perspective of development. The chapter ends by highlighting the government approach to community development based on the idea of constituency-based development.

Chapter 4 presents the research methodology and methods used in conducting fieldwork in North Malaita, Solomon Islands. This chapter also discusses the fieldwork preparation, fieldwork experiences and data analysis and organization.

Chapter 5 consists of two parts. The first part provides the background information of North Malaita, in terms of the region's geography, livelihoods situations, activities, constraints and challenges. The second part provides the description of the case study of the Estate in terms of its programs, projects as well as the organizational setting.

Chapter 6 presents the research findings, undertaken in North Malaita from 12th June to 5th July 2012. Findings are presented according to established themes and sub-themes in response to the key research question and four objectives outlined above.

Chapter 7 provides the discussion and analysis of findings, as well as the conclusion. The Estate's premises and ideas will be critically analyzed based on existing theories to create meaning and ascertain how the Estate contributes to positive development in North Malaita. The chapter concludes with a general outlook and some recommendations.

Chapter Two :
Community Development

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview and an understanding of the concept of community development, the key theme of this thesis. The literature presented in this chapter acknowledges that there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to address community development which is concerned improvement of the total wellbeing and building a strong and functional community, which (Cavaye, 2001, p. 109) defined formed the basis and goal of rural community development. This include developing positive values based on cooperation, utilization of local resources, and involvement of local institutions to create opportunities that improve the total wellbeing of people and community (see Cavaye, 2001; Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). According to Cavaye (2001), the current approaches to rural and regional development are partial and often focus only on service provision, discrete initiatives, information dissemination, and provision of resources to meet perceived needs. Proponents of hopeful post-development have supported context-based and involvement of grassroots movements, rural communities, and the informal sector in development (Sachs, 2010; Ziai, 2004). Cavaye (2001, p. 110) also pointed out that it is important to mobilize and empower local communities and people to take the lead to initiate, organize, reframe problems, and work cooperatively using community assets in new ways to create opportunities, improve community wellbeing, and build a strong and functional community.

In this chapter, the key terms and concepts are defined to provide a background understanding of community development. It then discusses the forms, dimensions as well as the goals and process of community development. The next section provides a post-development critique of the development discourse and recognition of community-based approach as an alternative to the imposed form of development. The factors that contribute to success and failure of development will also be discussed. The final section highlights the role and contribution of grassroots NGOs and community-based initiative in community development.

2.2. Defining community development

The origin of community development can be traced to post-war era of reconstruction efforts to rebuild less-developed countries (Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p.3). Others allude to the significant influence of the 1960s American war on poverty which dealt with neighborhood housing and social problems (Green & Haines, 2002). The concept of community development has evolved over the years in multiple conceptual and practical characterizations (Matarrita-Cascantea & Brennan, 2011, p.1). In this section, I will provide a definition of the key terms used in this study before attempting to conceptualize community development.

The term "community", Mattessich and Monsey (2004, as cited in Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p. 5) defined as "a group of people who live within a geographically defined area; and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live." According to Peredo and Chrisman (2006) 'community' not only refers to an aggregation of people with shared goals and productive activities of the enterprise, but also, by a shared geographical location, generally accompanied by collective culture and/or ethnicity and potentially by other shared relational characteristic(s). Defined in the context of this study on the Solomon Islands, the term community refers to the "rural village." This definition is consistent with Rhodes (2007) who based on her research of community sector development in Solomon Islands found that local people distinctively associates the term 'community' when referring to ordinary people in rural areas as opposed to those in positions of authority or those living in the city and urban centres.

The term 'development' according to Cowen and Shenton (1995, p. 42), is one of the terms which defies a single definition. Thomas (2004, pp. 1-2) explained that "until recently, development carries the limited meaning of the practice of development agencies, especially in aiming at reducing poverty and the Millennium Development Goals." Defined in the context of this study, development is about "providing human beings with the opportunity to develop their fullest potential and of enabling the poor, women, and free independent farmers to organize for themselves and work together" (Cowen & Shenton, 1995, pp. 42-43). This definition has become the basis for a more people-centred and locally-driven approach in development involving rural people. This concept and approach to community development is concerned with the idea of putting people first (Matterssich & Monsey, 2004; Phillips & Pittman, 2009). This conceptualization

was drawn from the work of Chambers (1983) who emphasized a more participatory and people centered process in development. This study adopts a working definition of community development as:

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

The above definition entails the idea of local people taking collective actions, aimed at improving all realms of the community and building a strong community, which Cavaye (2001) which describes as the fundamental goals of community development. Cavaye (2001, p.111) also pointed out that the approaches to community development are partial and largely focus on service provision, discrete initiatives, information dissemination and provision of resources to meet perceived needs. There is a need for a new and comprehensive approach which is concerned with empowering local communities and people to take collective action, and as a result of that collective action in developing a community (Cavaye, 2001; 2006; Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p.6). The goals and process of community development will further discussed in this chapter. The next section will discuss the different forms of community development.

2.3. The three forms of community development

There are multiple types of community development. In this section, three general types will be discussed: the *imposed, directed,* and *self-help* form of development (see Figure 3).

According to Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2011, p.7), the *imposed* form of development is concerned with improving the living conditions of rural communities through physical and economic development such as developing infrastructures, technologies, and delivery of goods and services. This is described as an example of 'development in the community' where the process involves technical skills. The process is often time-bound and excludes local community involvement, resulting in a failure to empower local residents. Under this type of

development, the government and private business are the principal actors, whilst the people are only being perceived as recipients and beneficiaries and not as initiators and actors.

Figure 3: Three types of community development

	Imposed	Directed	Self-help
View of Community	Function-based	Function-based/Associational	Associationa
Benefits	Structural	Structural/Interactional	Interactional
Principal Stakeholder	Private/Government	Government/NGO	Residents
Input	None	Limited	High
Involvement	None	Limited	High
Learning outcome	None	Moderate	High

Source: (Matarrita-Cascantea & Brennan, 2011, p. 6)

The second form of development is the *self-help*, which is concerned with building meaningful relationships amongst individual members of the community. The involvement of local residents and stakeholders is high and the process is more interactional instead of structural. The consideration is largely on *soft-issues* like strengthening of social relations, local participation, local control, positive change, capacity-building and empowerment, cohesion, identity formation, and long term sustainability (Matarrita-Cascantea & Brennan, 2011, p. 8). Ife (1995) pointed out that *self-help* often carries multiple development objectives beyond just the delivery of goods and services, which is often concerned with promoting cooperation and self-reliance. Matarrita-Cascantea and Brennan (2011, p. 9) explained that *self-help* is constantly faced with challenges, because it relies heavily on local participation and involvement and fail to foster meaningful partnership. The situation was obvious in many rural communities, where reduced levels of participation have been a well-known phenomenon.

And between the two extremes, is the *directed* form of development, which contained a mixture of administrative structure and involvement of local community organizations in the implementation and management of development projects. Many government funded projects and NGO programs fall into this category. The *directed*, like the *imposed* is functionally-based and

there is very little involvement of locals, which at the end also failed to empower residents (Matarrita-Cascantea & Brennan, 2011, p. 10).

Matarrita-Cascantea and Brennan (2011) asserted that preferring one form over the other often runs the risk of a narrow conceptualization, which may fail to account for the strengths and weaknesses of others approaches. There is a need to take into consideration the participatory processes to enable local communities better engage in informed and diverse decisions. At the same time taking into consideration that few community residents have the economic and technological resources to develop the necessary infrastructure in rural communities (Richard & Dalbey, 2006). Richard and Dalbey (2006, pp.18-22), therefore, pointed out that becoming too concerned with community development processes, which promote programs or projects that are aimed at fulfilling infrastructure development needs without accounting for the needs, requirements, and involvement of the community, faces the risk of being rejected by its residents, generating conflicts, becoming too costly, and promoting a lot of dependency.

In summary, the involvement of local communities in development is critical, as (Kenny, 2007 p. 10) argued allow local people to take ownership as well as determine the role of external support from government and stakeholders based on people's prescribed terms of reference. As much as having an understanding of the three forms of community development, it is equally important to understand the multiple dimensions of community development in order to ascertain an effective development process which concerned will all aspect of a human community. The next section will discuss the six dimensions of community development.

2.4. The six dimensions of community development

It was pointed out that community development is multidimensional. Ife and Tesoriero (2006), from an ecological and social justice perspective, defined community development as having six dimensions, which include the economic, social, political, environmental, cultural and spiritual/spiritual (see Figure. 4). As highlighted previously by Matarrita-Cascantea and Brennan (2011, p. 2) embracing the multiple aspects of community development is significant, otherwise a narrow conceptualization of development faces the risk of falling short of fulfilling multiple

aspirations of the community. The following will explain the six dimensions of community development.

Figure 4: The six dimensions of community development
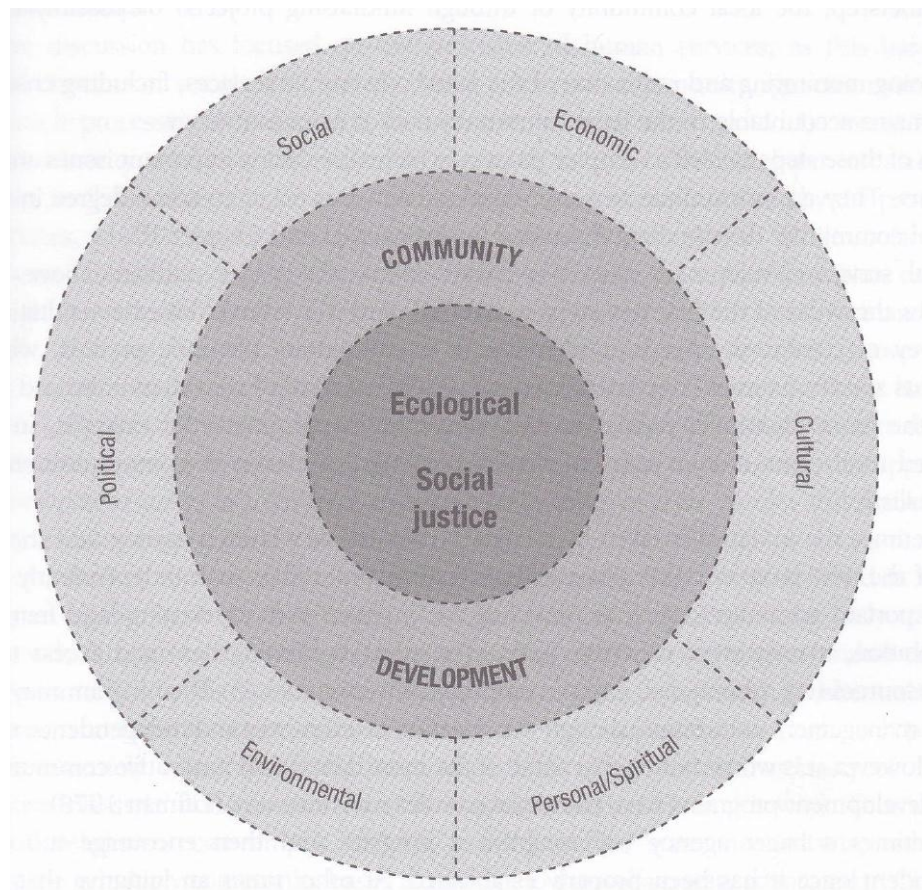
According to Ife and Tesoriero (2006) each of these dimensions is distinct, but they often interact in a complex ways, which make community development can be a challenging undertaking. In explaining these dimensions, the *social* dimension is concerned with social work and services, youth work and trainings, social needs and interaction within a community or social capital. The *economic* dimension is concerned with the local community's economic needs and aspirations. It involves local communities establishing linkages and engaging with and in the mainstream economy by attracting new industries and providing an environment that is conducive for investment. Alternatively, other communities may pursue a community-based economic development through mobilization of local resources and institutions, based on the idea of

cooperation and self-reliance (see Escobar, 1992; Ziai, 2004). The *cultural* dimension involves recognizing and strengthening of indigenous culture, common identity, and activities as part of empowering local people and preserving the unique cultures. The *environmental (physical)* dimension, on the other hand is concerned with the natural and built environment. This involves promoting awareness of the importance of the environment to rural livelihoods and ensuring sustainable management of resources. The *political* dimension encompasses community leadership and decision-making. The p*ersonal/spiritual dimension* covers personal growth and spiritual development of the community as an entity (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006, pp. 210-211).

These six dimensions play has significant contribution in community development, and different communities consider others to be more fundamental. (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006, p. 210) pointed out that in many indigenous communities, people could claim that the personal/spiritual dimension is central and the basis of community development (also see Ife, 1995, p. 132). The spiritual experiences play a creative role in development, which Lean (1995, p. 4) highlighted "is shaped by the conviction that what happens inside people influences what happens around them." Ife and Tesoriero (2006, p.210) further described that "in a community; the personal and spiritual qualities, values and norms are important in strengthening or re-establishing a strong human community." These soft-issues, according to Cavaye (2001, p.116) are like "fuel" which drives rural development. In another community, people may have a strong economic base, sound political participation, and strong cultural identity, but could lack basic human social services, motivation, and may experience a degrading environment. Lean (1995, p. 4) explained that development can be creative and sustainable when it rises from people themselves at the grassroots level and address the poorest in the society. Hence, having a better understanding of the distinct roles of the six dimensions can help determine attainable development goal(s) and sustainable outcomes. Hence, while understanding the six dimensions can be one thing, applying them in development practice is can be complex and challenging.

The next section will discuss the goals and process of community development.

2.5. The goal and process of community development

2.5.1. The goal of community development

This section will outline the goals of community development. In the literature, Wilkinson (1991) made the distinction between the notion of 'development *of* the community' and 'development *in* the community.' The later is concerned with specific programs and projects inteventions, which include construction of rural infrustructures and delivery of goods and services in rural communities. This form of development is dependent on external resources, technologies and expertise (Tatsumi & Joshi, 1996). Accoding to Tatsumi and Joshi (1996) this intervention approach was modelled by the World Bank based on the conviction that rural development cannot be achieved without infrastructure development, commercialization of agriculture, proper utilization of local resources, and social development through private sector participation. The involvement of government and private sector in the process and management is high, whilst there is little participation and empowerment of rural people. Rural communities and people are often being perceived only as recipients and beneficiaries and not intiators and significant actors in the development process and management of development outcomes.

The notion of 'development *of* a community', on the other hand is concerned with improvement of the total-wellbeing and building of a strong and functional community which Cavaye (2001, p.109) defined as the two principal goals of community development. In addition, according to Shaffer (1989, as cited in Cavaye, 2001, p.111) community development is also about creating of wealth, which includes "the things people value." These include the on-going economic, social and environmental improvement; sustaining a desirable environment; having a vital social system that fosters collaboration, equity, and freedom. Wealth is also concerned with a vital economy that is diverse, competitive and accessible as well as enhancing of people's choices, sustaining positive attitudes, improving the function of institutions, and enhancing people's quality of life (Cavaye, 2001, p.111). Development issues such as the eradication of poverty and improvement of rural infrastructure remained vital in rural community development, but as Matarrita-Cascantea and Brennan (2011) pointed out that even more important are consideration for local participation, sustainability, equitable distribution of benefits, and improving the capacity of the people to solve their own problems and create wealth. These goals require an all-inclusive

process which embraces all the dimensions and ensures a meaningful participation by local people at the community level.

2.5.2. The community development process

Ideally, community development involves both a process and outcome of collective participation. Cavaye (2006, p.1) defines the process as involving a series of actions, the choices and decisions people make; the attitude and positives, it entails developing and enhancing local people's ability to act collectively. Phillips and Pittman (2009, p. 6) added that it also involves the organization, facilitation, and action which enable people to establish the community they want to live in. Matarrita-Cascantea and Brennan (2011, p. 5) also explained that the process involves the participation of community developers to harness local economic, human, and physical resources to secure daily requirements and respond to the changing needs and conditions of the community. The outcome is concerned with the improvement, in all realms of a community (Cavaye, 2006, p. 1). This has become the basis of community-based development, which will be discussed later in Section 2.6.

According to McGregor (2007), in recent decades, the language and to some extent the approach of international development institutions such as the World Bank begun to change which showed assistance in terms of giving small grants to small communities. There is a growing recognition within the development industry or at least discursively of the desirability of small-scale, place-specific, community-owned and -controlled development initiatives. McGregor (2007, p.156) stated that, "despite claims to the contrary, such initiatives, while emanating from different ideological persuasions, appear to have some affinity with the alternatives-to-development ideas circulating in the post-development literature." Hence, the idea of people as 'actors' and stakeholders has gained the attention not only of development workers, but international development institutions. This shift has also meant that the focus turned from concentrating on poor people's needs and problems to recognising of people's potentials and involvement in the development process and management of development outcomes (McGregor, 2009; Ziai, 2007). In addition, as pointed by post-development writers, this shift has even become significant in light of the economic crisis not only facing the West but all economies (see Escobar, 1991; Ziai, 2009), which according to Escobar (1991) local people need to cooperate and cultivate a sense of hope

and self-reliance. The next section will discuss the post-development critique of development discourse and recognition of community-based development as an alternative to the top-down and externally imposed development.

2.6. The post-development critique of development discourses and the recognition of community-based development

Post-development critique of the development discourse was widely discussed in the literature and often criticized as being cynical (Morse, 2008; Simon, 2007). According to Ziai (2004) more optimistic views have acknowledged the potential of post-development for accurately identifying the shortcomings of development theory, policy, and practice. Ziai (2004, p.1045) explained that, "development from the start was understood to be a misconceived enterprise undermining cultural diversity and local contexts through the universalising of Western institutions." As such, McGregor (2009) and Ziai (2007) suggested that there is a need to rethink the approach to community development by putting the people first and by cultivating a culture of hope and possibility based on endogenous process and potentials rather than partially trying to address people's problems and needs.

Initially, (Morse, 2008) pointed out that the radical intention of post-development was to break away from a developed world hegemony that has been implemented by affluent agencies. Based on this initial argument, Escobar (1997, p. 500) reasoned that external intervention as an intentional means of development had only shaped an unequal discourse, which undermines local people's perspectives and denies their rights to self-determined development. In recent decades there has been a shift to focus on place-based development which is dominated by local concerns and politics, articulated by new social movements and community representatives (Escobar, 1992; Gibson-Graham, 2005; McGregor, 2009; McKinnon, 2008). As such, there has also rise of grassroots movements, rural communities, and the informal sector, as critical in development, which according to Escobar (1997) could enable local communities to respond to their own development aspirations in often creative and locally relevant ways. Cavaye (2004, p.18) also pointed out that local initiatives often enable and empower local people to take the lead to initiate, organize, reframe problems, and work cooperatively using community assets in new ways.

18

There is also a criticism of post-development theorists for not offering any clear means to alternative development (Nustad, 2001; Simon, 2007). Nevertheless, Brigg (2002) and Pieterse (2000) pointed out that some authors argued that it is not their role to put forward alternatives, they only provide an analysis of current failures. However, there are others, including NGOs that have strongly advocated for the recognition of alternative approaches to community development. Mitlin, Hickey, and Bebbington (2007) supported that NGOs have been considered relevant and are closely associated with offering alternative services and development outside of the realm of the state and the market.

In recent years, one thing has become clear, that is development has failed to address the needs of the people equitably and sustainably (Ife, 1995, p. xi). Escobar (1995) proposed that in such time of economic failure, rural communities need to look inward to cultivate endogenous development potential and self-reliance. This is significant, because as McGregor (2009) pointed out that for too long, development had only focus on people's needs and problems, and not their potential and assets. McGregor (2009) therefore proposed that one way to focus on potentials is through the asset-mapping programme, which encourages communities to re-imagine themselves in terms of their strengths rather than weaknesses. For example through this asset-mapping exercise "community members can identify various farming, business and entrepreneurial skills within the community of which they were previously unaware and utilised these to develop local networks and pursue independent local place-specific enterprises and futures which instilled a sense of pride rather than powerlessness and dependence" (McGregor, 2009, p.1698).

Furthermore, according to Ife (1995, p. xi) the current social, economic, and political initiatives and institutions have been unable to meet two of the most basic prerequisites for human civilization, and that is; (1) the need for people to live in harmony with their environment, and (2) the need for people to live in peace with each other. Ife (1995, p. xi) also argued that the "dominant order's failure to meet these needs seems obvious through the crisis currently facing not just Western societies, but all societies." Ziai (2007, p. 4) further argued that 'the modern welfare state had fallen short of delivering its promises and as a result people in the Third World have raised their voices – through grassroots movements and in some cases arms – stressing that local people must lead dignified lives, have access to social and economic opportunities and live in societies

19

with greater social and gender equity. The demand is that people must contribute towards the construction of a political order that is coherent, responsive, and participatory at both the domestic and the international level (also see DAWN, 1995). Post-development critique of the development discusses has provided the basis to rethink approaches to community development in particular those that are more people-cantered and context-based and which recognise the potential of local community to organize and drive their own development. The following sub-sections further discuss the community-based development approach and factors which contribute to the success and the challenges to community development.

2.6.1. Community-based development approach

In recent decades, community-based development has gained recognition as an alternative approach for delivery of services and equitably meeting of human needs (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006; Nel, Binns, & Motteux, 2001, p. 3). However, contrary to the notion of "delivery" this thesis focuses on the role of community-based initiatives organizing local communities and mobilizing of local resources in new ways based on cooperation and self-reliance. According to Green and Goetting (2010, p. 6) community-based development approach "entails collective solutions to problems by building on existing resources within the reach of the community." The rising popularity of community-based approaches to development was attributed to a number of factors such as the "roll back" of the state from rural communities; the on-going crisis in rural agriculture industries, experienced poverty, and lack of opportunities in rural communities (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006, pp. 12-13, also see Burkes, 2007; Narayan, 1995); and the growing pressure of globalization and relocation of individual entrepreneurs to areas of low per-unit cost (Wilkinson & Quarter, 1995, p. 526). These factors often forced local communities and people to seek alternative solutions based on cooperation and self-reliance.

The alternative approach emphasizes the role and involvement of local institutions and assets in community development. This is important, because according to Ife and Tesoriero (2006, p. 15) "the history of industrial society and capitalism has been a history of the destruction of traditional community structures; whether based on the village, the extended family, or the Church." They suggested that community development must include programs aimed at re-establishing and

strengthening these basic community structures to ensure meaningful engagement. Also, community-based development emphasised local culture as a significant dimension of development. According to Radcliffe and Laurie (2006, as cited in McGregor 2009, p. 1697), "culture does not necessarily oppose development, as the industry has undergone a cultural turn in recent years, indeed localism is something of a new orthodoxy in development." Although accusations of romanticism still haunt post-development's pro-local stance, McGregor (2009, pp.1697-1698) highlighted that there are numerous studies which showed how local culture contributes to positive development by creating hope and opportunities where meaningful engagement can take place. McGregor (2009) also highlighted that that there is a growing influence of indigenous system and knowledge, in places where modernism has failed or undergone crisis. Increasingly, local structure(s) are likely to become more visible in the current economic crisis putting further pressure on already deteriorating post-colonial sovereignties. However, in some cases local alternative approaches may be condoned by the state, such as Thai King Bhumibol's recent vision of a Sufficiency Economy based on Buddhist principles where communities take 'a careful step backwards' and seek household and community sufficiency before engaging in external trade (see UNDP, 2007).

Regarding the concept of self-reliance, Stohr and Taylor (1981, cited in Hill, Nel, & Illgner, 2007, p. 574) argued that it is unlikely that rural communities can succeed unaided and they will still require external support. Bebbington (2004) suggested that there is needed for a supportive state which can assist by permitting and encouraging bottom-up development through offering the best advice and guidance possible. Similarly, Gibson-Graham (2005, p. 1698) stated that local agencies can provide an enabling role in ensuring sustainability and meaningful partnership at the local community level. This is significant as local institutions can provide the support base essential for community ownership and empowering of local communities, while the external agencies provided the resources and skills that are urgently needed, which may not be available within the community. This community-based and participatory development has become a central theme in post-development in recent years which emphasized context-based and involvement of rural people in their own development.

Generally, there are two general models or approaches to community development: the externally driven and locally initiated and driven development. Table 1, provides a summary and

the distinction between the two models. The externally driven approach focuses on problems and needs while the locally driven development places emphasis on community strengths and potentials. In the externally driven model, the government and private business sector are the key stakeholders while the communities are recipients therefore the resultant development projects implemented contributes to little improvement and learning and development outcomes. The alternative community and driven development on the other hand emphasises greater community involvement, which leads to the empowerment of the rural populace and greater learning and development outcomes. There is also emphasis on cooperative involvement to drive local development. As discussed earlier Ife and Tesoriero (2006) explained that community-based represented a 'locally initiated-driven community development,' which carries the mantle of development of the community.

Table 1: Externally driven verses locally initiated-driven community development

Elements of community development	Externally driven community development	Locally initiated-driven community development
Goal	Development in the community	Development of the community
Focus	Problem, needs	potential/strength
Objective	Specific, short term	Multiple, long term
Principal stakeholders	Private, Govt., external NGOs	Rural resident, local initiatives & institution
Community	Recipient	Actor and beneficiaries
Local input	Low	High
Local learning outcome	Low	High, empowering
Government	Funder	Facilitator
Private sector	Developer	partner, stakeholder
Development model	utilization and mobilization of resources and social development through private sector participation only	utilization and mobilization of resources and social development through local cooperatives

Source: Author

In the following two subsections will discuss the factors contributing success and the constraints and challenges to community development.

2.6.2. Factors contributing to the success of local community development

This section will discuss the factors that contribute to successful community development. Cavaye (2001, p. 111) stated that the success and failure of community development depend on several factors, which can include adequate rural infrastructure, access to venture capital, right policy settings, and delivery of essential social services in the rural communities. Cavaye (2001) also stated that while the above factors contributed to the successful delivery and movement of goods and services; it is the less tangible components or the *soft-capitals,* which include community ownership, effective local leadership, collective action; rethinking and motivation that often contribute to the success and sustainability of development in rural communities. These intangible elements are like 'fuel' which drive local development. For example, "the benefits of community development, such as employment and infrastructure, often come through local people changing attitudes, mobilising existing skills, improving networks, thinking differently about problems, and using community assets in new ways" (Cavaye, 2001, p.112). The following paragraph will discuss local leadership, collective participant and involvement, ownership and partnership, and their role in contributing to community development.

Local community leaders were widely discussed in the literature as a key factor in effective community development. Studies in rural Australian Aboriginal communities by Cavaye (2001) and in rural Bangladesh by Datta (2007) confirmed that effective local control and visionary leadership are critical for successful community-based development (also refer to Korsching & Allen 2004). For instance, based on a study in rural Bangladesh, Datta (2007) found that effective control, ownership, strong leadership, transparency in information sharing, and decision making contributed to the success and sustainability of rural community development projects. The study also highlighted an example of a committed leader who ensures participation, respects transparency and accountability, and promotes second line leadership which contributed positively to sustainability, even in an adverse socio-political context, or with limited capacity-building support (Datta, 2007, p. 47). Korsching and Allen (2004, p. 387) also assert that committed and visionary

23

leaders often set aside personal interests and focus on achieving the interests of the larger community and building the capacity of the community to address their own problems. These determine the trust, integrity and confidence of members of their leaders and committees (see Datta, 2007; Nel et al., 2001) without which the success and sustainability of community development projects could be undermined.

Participation and representation of community members in the development process is also important. According to Datta (2005), in rural communities, the roles and capacities of women and youths in the development process are often overlooked. Datta (2005) further stated that "there should be an equal recognition and representation of every member's effort and talents, irrespective of their gender and social status." Cavaye (2001, pp. 119-120) also argued that how local people perceive community assets and opportunities often determine development priorities and meaningful people participation in development. Cavaye (2001, p. 120) further pointed out that people are tired of committees, public meetings, and "traditional" forms of participation, which often appear to be used by default. Instead, people are seeking more informal, temporary, and social ways of participating in their community. In a study of rural cooperatives in Thailand, (Suksawang, 1990) revealed that appropriate management of member participation is critical and can lead to the successful and sustainability of community development. Hence, as Cavaye (2001) and Datta (2007) pointed out members' attitude towards cooperation, commitments and a sense of trust and mutual respect between leaders and members is important in collective participation.

The next important factor in community-based development is community ownership. Narayan (1995, pp. 1-2) explained that the reversal of control and accountability from central authorities to the community level is fundamental for successful participatory programs at the community level. As such, there is a need to integrate indigenous knowledge, familiarize with local needs and empowering of existing networks and social interactions at the household, group and community level as components of community capacity building programs (Narayan, 1995, p. 2). Narayan (1995) also pointed out that the failure often resulted from attempts to achieve results on a wide scale through the infusion of external management, funds, and technology, controlled from distant places instead of engaging and building the capacity of local people to take ownership over their development. Again a study, by Datta (2007, p.61) in Bangladesh revealed that where there

24

is a strong sense of control and ownership, communities often achieve better results when it comes to implementation and management of projects, even with minimal external support.

In addition to the above, relevant government agencies and support institutions play an important role in local community development. The role of government include creating an enabling environment and ensuring the availability of proper rural infrastructure development, market outlet opportunities, and training and incentives that promote community involvement and cooperation amongst rural farmers (Cavaye, 2001). In most instances, governments often engage in "service delivery", but Cavaye argued that an agency's work should involve conducting delegated work in a way that fosters community relationships, shares power with local people, and supports communities in becoming more organized. It also involves facilitating a process that engages a diversity of people, supports community 'champions', helps people plan action, networking, and conflict resolution (Cavaye, 2001, p. 121). This includes both government agencies and NGOs as partners in community development. However, the involvement of government and external NGOs could in some instance undermine the principle of self-reliance (Mercer, 1999; Nel et al., 2001).

Finally, fostering of closer regional links and networks with local community groups as well as national and international is important. Regional networks involved community members, local government, private businesses, government agencies' and NGOs (Cavaye, 2001). Engaging community members will not only broaden a membership base, but also allow members to contribute certain skills, knowledge, and resources. However, Nel et al. (2001) cautioned that when engaging with governments and donor partners, the roles and contributions of respective stakeholders must be clearly spelt out and made explicit based on people's terms of reference. In addition, any external and local partnership arrangements have the potential to support alternative community imaginaries provided that it is based on the community's terms, otherwise development will continue to be driven from the outside which carries the risk of locals having little sense of ownership over their development aspirations.

2.6.3. Constraints and challenges to community development

Physical constraints, social-economic challenges, and threat of globalization are also some of the factors that have negatively impacted on local community development. Most rural communities are often isolated and lack the basic social and economic infrastructure like roads and communication systems and have also experience limited access to financial capital and markets (Sarkszy-Banoczy, 2010). Sarkszy-Banoczy (2010) pointed out that the situation is further exacerbated when government prioritize infrastructure development only in areas perceived to have high economic potentials often leaving populated regions with little or no economic potential to be left out.

In rural communities, Cavaye (2001) pointed out that the issue of illiteracy and "ignorance" is often experienced despite their potential role in undermining community cooperation and creativity. For example, the condition of the environment or the quality of infrastructure receives different priorities in different communities depending on local values (Cavaye, 2001, p. 117). This also applies to the value of cooperation and equal participation of both genders in decision-making and project implementation.

The social and economic issues such as rural-urban migration, increasing number of school dropouts, limited employment opportunities, and underutilization of local resources are other major challenges facing rural communities. These challenges have often forced communities to look externally for solutions and resources, which often create the problem of dependency. This often threatens the capacity of local communities to address their own development needs and aspirations based on their own terms as discussed previously. However, Green (2010) also stated that lack of government support at rural community level often presents a challenge when community-based groups tried to organize local initiatives to meet community needs or generate opportunities. As always is the case in the rural communities, due to lack of opportunities, most skilled human resources (including youths) often drift to the cities, leaving mostly children and the elderly in the village. Thus, unless there are improvements and opportunities created in the rural village, the challenge of shortage of skilled human resources will continue to be experienced, leaving little room for progress and innovation.

And finally, globalization presents a real challenge to local communities. According to Green (2010, p.1) it can become complicated when local community seek local solutions, while at the same time want to integrate into the larger society and economy. Phillips and Pittman (2009, p. 353) pointed out that in this age and time, rural communities cannot afford to ignore globalization when planning for their future, regardless of their location. The idea of economic integration and interdependency as highlighted in Section 2.4; already had profound implications on communities of all sizes, in the developing countries throughout the world. The increasing dependence on oil and petroleum products as well as international markets for export of local commodities like copra, cocoa and coffee, according to Phillip and Pittman (2009, 353) are realities facing local communities in developing countries. Hence, Ife (1995, p. xi) explained that the current economic crisis facing the Western countries is affecting all societies.

The next section will discuss the role NGOs and community-based initiatives in community development, especially in mobilising local communities and facilitating the process in the absence of traditional players such as the government and the market.

2.7. Grassroots NGOS in community development

Grassroot NGOs or community-based initiatives, Clark (1998, p. 37) defined as 'people's organization' which are formed and managed by the community themselves (also see Miraftab, 1997). The grassroots initiatives or association, according to Miraftab (1997, p. 363) are membership-based organization which are sometimes unregistered and without judicial status, whereas NGOs are not membership-based organization, instead they consist of professional paid staff serving a group beyond themselves. As mentioned in subsection 2.6.1, the rise of grassroots NGOs was due to the "rollback" of the state from rural communities (see Brown & Kalegaonkar, 2002, p. 231; Pieterse, 2000; Uphoff, 1993). Peredo and Chrisman (2006, p. 312) pointed out that social-economic stress, incremental learning, lack of individual opportunity, social disintegration, and alienation of a community or subgroup from mainstream society, environmental degradation, post-war reconstruction, and/or volatility of large business are some of the factors which have underpinned the formation of grassroots NGOs. Miraftab (1997) explained that the legitimacy of community-based initiatives is derived from the fact that often they are initiated by local community leaders, born out of a local situations and strong support of its members– often known as the

'target' or 'beneficiary' groups which actively participate in various social and economic projects managed by local leaders on behalf of the community (also see Kamat, 2004; Mercer, 1999; Uphoff, 1993). Thus, Uphoff (1993) asserted that grassroots NGOs often have a strong sense of affiliation and ownership than if it was initiated by outsiders

In the rural communities, the NGOs play a significant role in mobilizing and organizing the community and people (Kamat, 2004; Uphoff, 1993). Based on a study of civil society groups in Uganda, Nyamugasira (1998, p. 300) found grassroots NGOs made a substantial contribution in forging community solidarity, uplifting the human spirit, promoting togetherness, and helping to combat the feelings of helplessness that poverty can induce. At local community level, the NGOs are becoming more effective in promoting community consciousness and awareness (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006; Taylor, 1997). In addition, Curtis (1999) stated that often regional NGOs have strong national and international networks. This has provided them with a platform through which small grassroots organizations and populous can put pressure on government on certain issues regarding change and services on behalf of rural communities. Access to outside networks and working collaboratively with each other, local communities and people can be empowered to exert pressure on the government and stakeholders. Furthermore, international development agencies are increasingly attracted to NGOs and community based organization because of their conviction that working through NGOs could be less costly. In recent years, development funds are increasingly being channelled through NGOs as worthy partner in project implementation at the grassroots level (Miraftab, 1997). Miraftab (1997, p. 362) described the NGOs as becoming the new 'darling' of the international development organizations and funding agencies. Caldwell (as cited in Nyamugasira, 1998, p. 298) also pointed out that the growth of NGOs during the past century has changed the character of international relations, broadening their scope, multiplying the number of participants, and sometimes outflanking the formal protocols of international diplomacy. It therefore, can be concluded that in many ways, the grassroots NGOs have become a mechanism through which local people organize themselves to work cooperatively to drive their own development, when and where government and the market has failed.

The NGOs have often being criticized in terms of their role and approaches. Miraftab (1997) explained that most community-based programs are only effective and successful at the community level. There have been criticism of lack of involvement of the ultra-poor and

marginalized groups, and the accusation that NGOs encourages dependencies (Buckland, 1998; Dicklitch, 1998, cited in Nel et al., 2001, p. 5). The role of NGOs in regards to the state has been questioned. Arellano-Lopez and Petras (1994, p. 555) pointed out that it was unclear whether NGOs are superior to state agencies in their ability to fight poverty. They pointed out; there is a real danger of NGOs replacing the state. Robinson and Wood (as cited in 2004, p. 156) stated that the NGOs, unlike the government, often have no mechanisms by which they can be made accountable to the people they serve In most developing countries, the 'NGO boom' spawned a multitude of localized organizations. For example, based on a study of Tanzanian NGOs, Mercer (1999) found that what transpired from the 'NGO boom' was that people who were involved were mostly urban-based elites who have knowledge of NGOs and international donor preferences. He argued that this is problematic, because the NGO sector is imbued with the rhetoric of participation and empowerment, of working with the grassroots and strengthening 'civil society' (Mercer, 1999, p. 250). Mercer (1999) pointed out there is little representation by the grassroots, instead an increasing involvement of urban elites. Nyamugasira (1998, p. 300) was adamant that many Southern NGOs are not qualified as `indigenous' because they are not born out of the situations and initiated by local people, which according to Mercer (1999) are sometime are formed just to source funds from governments and donors. As a result, (Arellano-Lopez & Petras, 1994, p. 557) explained local NGOs and grassroots groups compete against each other for funds from government and international funders instead of fostering cooperation in building strong alliances that could benefit them during their power struggles with government. There is also a shift in recent years of the approach of NGOs, from being organizations of opposition to organizations of proposition and dialogue (Fox & Hernandez, cited in Miraftab, 1997, p. 362). Also Miraftab (1997, p. 362) pointed that there is move away from voluntarism to advocate professionalization and working *for* the poor as consultants instead of working *with* the poor as a de-professionalized act and also of mobilizing under the self-help initiatives and programs. These recent developments pose a significant risk in disconnecting NGOs from the populace which gave rise to the conception. Addressing this requires increased efforts targeted at empowering grassroots NGOs in different aspects of project management, a stronger supportive and watchdog role by national governments, and strong accountability requirements from the donor community.

To sum, grassroots NGOs have played and will continue play significant role rural community development which includes functions such as organizing of the rural communities and

mobilizing local resources. Green and Haines (2002) argued that the role and contributions of community-based imitative must not be ignored, and this is crucial given their immense potential in providing a mechanism for delivering positive outcomes for rural communities. As discussed above, this has become even more significant in a situation where the state has failed to deliver real development in rural communities (Uphoff, 1993). In most instances, despite the challenges, the NGOs have established themselves as a new emerging sector in development often promoting alternative forms of development that resonates with the rural populace and consistent with their value systems and development aspirations.

2.8. Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has provided the key definitions of community development. The concept of community development as discussed in this thesis refers to local people organizing themselves and utilizing their local resource to create opportunities and improve their wellbeing. Integral with this definition is the goal of building a strong and functional community. As understood in this thesis community development is not only concerned with meeting the basic needs of the poor but about creating opportunities and as the basis of building a strong community (refer to Ife & Tesoriero, 2006 and Cavaye, 2001). As defined, community development involves a process of developing and enhancing the ability of the community to act collectively and through this collective action, results in improvements in all the realms of the community. The development of positive values based on cooperation, collective participation, and self-reliance were also discussed as important for community development. The idea of context-based and involvement of people and local institutions in their own development as pointed from hopeful post-development writers enabled local people to contribute towards their own development in a creative and meaningful way. Factors that contribute towards the success of development were also highlighted as well as the constraints and challenges. These include adequate rural infrastructure, strong community leadership, local community ownership and the support of local and external institutions. In the final section, the role of grassroots NGOs or local initiatives in facilitating development in the rural communities were discussed.

The next chapter will narrow the focus to look at the background and rural community development context of Solomon Islands.

Chapter Three :
Solomon Islands

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the background information on Solomon Islands and the rural community development context. The first section provides a country overview in terms of the geography, political history, economic activities and recent happenings such as the ethnic-conflict and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The second section will provide the history of rural development which outlined the different approaches to rural community development in Solomon Islands. The indigenous notion of development will also be discussed as the basis for alternative approach to community development in Solomon Islands, which addresses not only the economic needs, but also the social, cultural and spiritual aspects of community development. The chapter also will highlights the constraints and challenges to rural development in Solomon Islands and the government attempts to introduce a "bottom-up" or constituency-based development which is more participatory and people-centered.

This chapter will begin by providing a country overview and the history of rural community development.

3.2. Solomon Islands: Country Overview

Solomon Islands, is a double chain of islands comprised of six main islands: Guadalcanal, Malaita, Santa Isabel, San Cristobel, Choiseul, and New Georgia. Altogether there are more than 900 islands and atolls making up a total land mass of 27,556 square kilometers, spread over a sea area of 725,197 square kilometers. The archipelago was first discovered by a Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana in 1568 and given the name Solomon Islands. In 1892, Great Britain colonized the islands under her mandate over the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. Solomon Islands gained political independence on the 7th July 1978 (Bennett, 1987, p. xvii). At independence

Solomon Islands adopted the Westminster Parliamentary system of government with one house parliament. The country remained a member of the Commonwealth with the British monarch as the head of state represented locally by a Governor General. The Prime Minister is the head of cabinet and government who is elected by parliament. The Provincial Assembly formed the second tier government. There are nine provinces[1] and one municipal authority[2] (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2011).

The country is culturally diverse with multiple islands and tribal groups. There are about 80 local languages and vernaculars spoken across the islands (Dinnen, 2002, p. 285). English is the official language but only spoken by a tiny majority of Solomon Islanders. *Pidgin* is the common language spoken by 85 % of the population.[3] The major ethnic groups include Melanesians (93%); Polynesians (4%), Micronesians (1.5%), Europeans (0.8%), Chinese (0.3%) and others (0.4%).[4] In 2010, the national population in 2011 was estimated at 571,890 with a 2.2% annual growth rate. About 85% of the country's population is located in the rural villages (SIG, 2012, p. 3). The population density stands at 19.23 persons per square kilometer (World Bank Report, 2011). The urbanization rate is very slow as reflected in Table 2 where in 1976 about 88% are rural 12% are urban population and managed to only increase by 4% in 1989 and 1% between 1989 and 1999. Between 1999 and 2009 due to the ethnic conflict which show a lot of people returned to reside in the village from urban areas.

Table 2: The rural Solomon Islands population and urban population from 1976 to 2009

Year (census)	Rural population	Urban population	Difference
1976	88%	12%	
1989	84%	16	4% increase
1999	83%	17%	1% increase
2009	85%	15%	2% decrease

Source: Roughan (2011, p. 1)

---

[1] The nine Provinces of Solomon Islands include Guadalcanal, Malaita, Isabel, Western, Choiseul, Central Islands, Rennell & Bellona, and Temotu

[2] The Honiara City council is the only municipal authority in Solomon Islands

[3] Retrieved http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Solomon-Islands.html, 4/011/12

[4] Figures extracted from the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (2011). 4/11/12

Agriculture and natural resources that include forestry, fisheries, copra, cocoa and palm oil form the basis of the economy. Agricultural plantations[5] and extraction of natural resource, especially logging, fisheries and mining contributed substantially to the country's gross domestic product. It was reported that the logging sector alone, in 2009 made up 18% of the country's GDP and three quarter of the country's foreign earnings (DTIS Report, 2009, p. 51). The biggest sector in terms of budget spending is the public service which absorbed about 84% of all government revenue compared to only 16% for development (DTIS Report, 2009, p.51).[6] This shows that much of the country's wealth is spent in Honiara and the urban centers, compared to rural villages, which according to Wickham (2012) sacrificed their natural resources to generate much needed revenue for the country. This disparity was also reflected in the income level of rural households and urban households. The Household Survey Report of 2009 showed that those in Honiara their income level is three times higher than those in the rural areas (DTIS Report, 2009, p.51). This means there is less cash circulation in rural areas compared to Honiara and urban centers. The rural development sector however remained a priority for all government policies and programs.

In the late 1990s the resentment of the people of Guadalcanal against the failure of the state to address the pressing demands related to unresolved land dealings and social disputes on Guadalcanal culminated into what become 'ethnic conflict' – commonly known as the ethnic-tension[7] between indigenous people of Guadalcanal and settlers who are of Malaita origin (Maeliau, 2003). Maeliau (2003, pp.19-20) stated that the root cause of the ethnic-tension was due to the failure to equitably distribute development to all provinces, and in particular Malaita – being the most populated island and province. Roughan (2010) pointed what transpired in the ethnic conflict was a result of the poor decisions national leaders made in the 1980s and 1990s and the deep-seated problems perpetuated by the government's failure to invest in basic village services and rural livelihoods. Political competition and corruption amongst local politicians and unfair

[5]Plantation here refers to coconut and recently oil palm which form the backbone of the economy since colonial times and after independence. At one stage the local economy depended entirely on revenue from copra (see Judith Bennett (1987) "Wealth of the Solomon", pp. 167-185

[6] Government budget allocation for that year showed SBD$1,426.6 million for government services and only SBD$274.4 million for the development estimate (Diagnostic Trade and Integrity Study Report, 2009, p.51)

[7] The period 1998-2003, the country experienced civil war or "ethic tension" where Guadalcanal militia group, the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army fought to remove settlers of Malaitan origin from Guadalcanal. More than 20,000 Malaitans were displaced and repatriated back to the island of Malaita at the height of the conflict

distribution of economic benefits derived from logging to real resource owners further aggravated the problem. This caused discontentment of people against the state, loggers, politicians and their cronies. The ethnic-tension had negative impact on the economy, and Solomon Islands was heading to be declared a 'failed state' in 2003 (see Dinnen, 2002; Fraenkel, 2004). Major investments like the Solomon Islands Plantation Limited, Gold Ridge Mining and Solomon Taiyo Fishing and Processing Company had to close operation (CBSI, 2009; Roughan, 2010a). During this difficult period it was the rural small-hold farmers and the subsistence sector which provided source of livelihoods for the people and also helped the economy to stay afloat (Roughan, 2010a; Warner, 200; SIG, 2007). These included the rural smallholders' cocoa and copra farmers and the fishermen (SIG, 2007; Roughan, 2012).

In October 2000, Australia and New Zealand, facilitated the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) which begun the process of ending the conflict and finding peace (Dinnen, 2002). Thereafter, the conflict ended with the signing of the TPA, but the problem of law and order and restoration of peace remained difficult to address. The level of trust and confidence on public institution such as the police was all time low. Roughan (2010) pointed out that what was only a Honiara problem, has spread to the provinces and the rural areas. Attempts at fostering reconciliation between province of Guadalcanal and Malaita or a nation-wide has also failed. Dinnen (2002) and Fraenkel (2004) pointed out that Solomon Islands, was at the brink of social-economic bankruptcy and being declared a first 'failed state' in the Pacific. In July 2003, at the request of the Solomon Islands government a regional taskforce, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) lead by Australia and New Zealand intervened to help restore law and order and build the capacity of the government in the precarious post-conflict environment (Dinnen, 2008). This year (2013) the mission celebrates its 10 years anniversary, but while law and order situation has improved and public confidence slowly returning, the root cause of the problem has't been address well enough. The root-causes of the problem as Roughan (2010) and Michael (2003) argued is more a developmental one and therefore a real sollution can be pursued by investing in people – which in the context of this study, the 85% of population residing in rural communities and provinces.

3.3. Rural development context

The backbone of development in Solomon Islands lay with its rural population and natural resources. The simple fact is 85% of the population and about 86% of the country's land under customary tenure and located in the rural areas (Roughan, 2012a; Saeni, 2008). Roughan (2012a) defines Solomon Islands as "a nation of villages." The intention of successive governments over the years is engaging the 85% rural population and utilizing of the people's customary-owned resource for development (Misite'e, 2008; Rohorua, 2007). But according to Misite'e's (2008) based on his study of community leadership and rural development in Central Kwara'ae of Malaita Province, the policy approach of successive governments has always been influence by the idea of modernization and industrialization which focus more on economic growth and meeting the demands of the market than encouraging alternative forms of investment in rural communities which is participatory and empowering (Misite'e, 2008; also see Rohorua, 2007). Hence, since the colonial times development was heavily influenced by economic starting with the introduction of coconut plantation, later cocoa and oil palm. The following subsection will discuss the history, approaches and major stakeholders in rural community development.

3.3.1. Introduction of plantations

The concept of rural development was introduced by the colonial administration in Solomon Islands (Misite'e, 2008; Rohorua, 2007). As early as the time of Charles M. Woodford,[8] the conviction was that plantations[9] would be the basis of Solomon Islands economy (Lilo, 2012). In the years leading up to the Second World War and after, the economy of the Solomon Islands was solely relied on copra. According to Bennett (1987, p.185) about two-third of Solomon Islands relied on plantations and associated activities for cash income to pay for trade goods and head tax. The plantation industry had forced inter islands migration of local men from Malaita, Makira and other islands to work on coconut plantations on Guadalcanal, Isabel and the Shortland Islands in the Western group. In the 1950s and 1960s the coconut plantation industry continued to form the basis of the economy until independence in 1978 (Bennett, 1987, pp. 185-186). After

---

[8] Charles Morris Woodford (1852– 1927) was the first BSIP Resident Commissioner from 1996 – 1915
[9] Plantation here in its formative years refers exclusively to coconut planation, but increasingly prior to independence cocoa and other small crops being to form basis of the plantation-agriculture economy of Solomon Islands.

independence, most plantations were either returned to the original landowners under government's policy on return of alienated lands to the provinces and landowners or managed under new ventures created by the government, such as the former Levers Brothers plantations on Guadalcanal and Russell Islands taken over by the Russell Islands Plantation Limited (Lilo, 2012). At the same time, the plantation industry started to diversify into other commercial crops like palm oil, but coconut and increasingly cocoa remained the basis of the plantation-agriculture industry (Roughan, 2010b;CBSI, 2010). At the rural community level people begun to engage in the coconut and cocoa industry through small-hold farming basis. Most large large-scale plantations and industries are located on Guadalcanal plains and Russell Islands in the Central Islands provinces (Bennett, 1987, pp. 185-186).

3.3.2. Extraction of natural resources

The extraction of natural resources which include forest, fisheries and minerals became a new form of investment in late 1980s and the 1990s (Roughan, 2010). The aim was to help local resource owners gain economic benefits in the form the forms of royalties and the government in the form of tax revenue. As pointed previously, the extraction industry since the 1990s became the major contributor to the economy in terms of foreign earnings. Experience, however, showed that politicians and cronies of the Asian loggers were the ones ripping bulk of the economic benefits from the real resource owners (Roughan, 1997, 2010). There is alarming increase of corruption involving politicians, top government officials and Asian loggers (Kabutaulaka, 2000; Roughan, 2010). Now, it is anticipated that logging will scales down in 2015, and mining will soon become the leading sector (ADB, 2011; DTIS Report, 2009). Already, the question of how rural villagers – the true resource owners are going to benefit remains a challenge for the government and rural communities. Plantation and extraction of natural resources are example of 'development in the rural communities' as discussed in Chapter 2, which aimed at providing employment opportunities and generating income for the rural populous, but often fail to empower local communities and people to have greater control over their own development. This heavy handed approach of government in encouraging economic development through the extraction of the country's natural resources often failed to bring tangible development to the rural communities, instead Wickham (2012) argued that the wealth - operating capital and surpluses have only been absorbed in Honiara. The resource owners in rural villages, whose natural resources are extracted and

exported to bring this money, receive little in return. Thus, in Solomon Islands, one can describe that there has been a lot of rural development and but very little community development. The following subsection discusses the major stakeholders in rural development.

3.3.3. Major stakeholders in rural community development

In Solomon Islands, the major stakeholders in development included the government, churches, donor agencies, NGOs and community-based groups. This sub-section will highlight the above stakeholders' contributions to rural community development in Solomon Islands.

The government consists of the national and provincial government. After independence, Roughan (2010, p. 2) observed, the government started the development plan in the traditional way: enhance medical coverage, strengthen and extend educational opportunities, assist villagers with their agricultural production and help people earn modest amounts of income from small businesses, sales of produce and employment. As highlighted previously in this Chapter, the aim was to engage the rural population in economic development. Roughan (2010; 2011), however, argued that the government has failed to invest in basic rural livelihoods and activities that improve wellbeing. The focus has been more on medium-to-large scale developments which is not a bad idea, but the problem was there were little control and empowerment of the rural communities. As Roughan (2010) also pointed out that from logging, cash revenue did come and received in the form of tax for the government and royalty payment for resource owners. However, the industry did fuel a lot of corruption involving politicians, causing political instability and dispute over rural community resources.

In the rural communities government also introduced micro-project funding schemes. These included the Provincial Development Fund, Small Islands Communities Project Scheme, and the Rural Constituency Development Fund which were introduced in the early 1990s (Nanau, 1995). The Rural Constituency Development Fund (initially the constituency development fund) was introduced in early 1990s by the national government to assist with constituency based projects and programs. This fund falls under the discretion of the Member of Parliament it has a lot political control on it (Sasako, 2007a, 2007b). The government currently through the Ministry of Rural Development allocates around SBD$5 million (USD$ 500,000) per constituency per annum

for constituency development (John Ministe'e, pers.com, 16/06/12). These micro-funding has a noble intention, meaning more funds will be spent in the rural constituencies, but the problem is with the administration to generate maximum benefit for the communities and people. (Sasako, 2007a) pointed the fund is susceptible to being abused by politicians or given only to close associates and relatives (also refer to Nanau, 1995). Also worth highlighting is that except for Republic of China (Taiwan) which continues to fund substantial amount of the Rural Consistency Development Fund, these funds are disconnected from donor or government programs, and under how they relate to community priorities.

The second group of stakeholder is the international donor agencies. In Solomon Islands, the donor agencies often complement the government and NGO effort in providing various forms of assisting to rural communities (Clements & Foley, 2008). Major bilateral and multilateral donor partners had large components of their aid programs targeting rural community development. For example from 1998-2003, the period of the ethnic-conflict, Solomon Islands largely depended on donors, for about 80% of its development budget (DTIS Report, 2009, p. 51). Table 3, provides the percentage break down of ODA funding from 2005 to 2007. As reflected in the table, RAMSI's[10] accounted for about three-quarter of total ODA funding which are spent on areas such as restoration of law and order, institutional strengthening and capacity building of government machineries after the conflict (DTIS Report, 2009, p. 51).

Table 3: The table shows major donors and percentage of ODA contribution

ODA donor	2005	2006	2007
RAMSI	74%	68%	64%
Australia (bilateral)	7%	6%	4%
New Zealand (bilateral)	3%	7%	5%
European Union	3%	4%	12%
Japan	6%	5%	5%
Taiwan ROC	3%	4%	5%

Source: Ministry of Finance (2008)[11]

---

[10] Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was and Australian lead mission of Pacific Islands countries which intervened at the request of the Solomon Islands government for restoration of law and order
[11] Retrieved, DTIS Report (2009, p.51)

The rural sector programs under ODA funding included the Japanese Grassroots Program; AusAid Community Sector programs, Republic of China (Taiwan) Rural Constituency Funding, and EU Micro-Project (MRD, 2011). Donor funds were usually spent on community projects such as school classroom building, clinic building projects, livelihoods and income generating projects. The EU micro project program, for example, targets income-generating projects as well as basic infrastructures in rural areas. The AusAid community sector program (initially the Community Peace and Restoration Fund) which was initiated immediately after the conflict targeted rural infrastructure and rehabilitation and social and income-generating projects. These micro-funding assistances are administered and implemented directly by the donor offices in Honiara, while other channeled through government ministries for example the AusAid rural water supply and sanitation programs through the Ministry of Health (MRD, 2011).

The churches also contribute significantly to rural community development. Apart from providing services in rural areas, McDougall (2003) based on her study of United Church Women's Fellowship group in Western Province revealed that the church provided a space where interest groups like women, youths are convened and contributed positively to development. During and after the ethnic-tension, the Churches also play a leading role in community-peace building, reconciliation and counseling (Maebuta, 2011; Hegarty cited in McDougall, 2003). In the rural communities, Wickham (2012) argued that most improvements in villages were made by the Churches and community groups. The success and strength of the Churches as agents of development in the community, as Clements and Foley (2008) pointed out is because of its strong national networks and the commitment of the church leaders. It could also be attributed to a holistic approach to development which addresses the social-economic and spiritual development even with little support from the government.

At the rural community level various forms of formal and informal initiatives and associations play a significant role in community development as part of the third sector in development. As discussed in Chapter 2, third sector which refers to NGOs and community-based initiatives play an important role in rural communities, apart from the state and the business sector, which are often located in the urban centers. This study is concerned with one such community-based initiative – the Estate – which was initiated and managed by the rural communities themselves (See Chapter 5, Section 5.4). As Nyamugasira (1998) argued that community-based

initiative can be quliatitive as indigenous if they emerged out of a local situation and initiated by local leaders and the communities themselves.

In summary, as stated above the key stakeholders, which include the government, churches, donor agenceis and local community groups playa significant role which include delivery of social services and facilitation of rural economic development in the rural communities despite various limitation (Clements & Foley, 2008). The problem, as pointed by previous studies (see Ministe'e, 2008; Rohorua, 2007) relates to how little the communities themselves are invloved in their own development. The government's heavy handed approach was impartial and focussed more on economic aspects of development that it failed to adopt an alternative approach which was comprehensive and context-based. Also there was little recognition and partnership with local community initiatives to facilitate and coordinate development, whereby local communities and people could take control and ownership of the process. The next section explores the indigenous notion of development which accomodates a more holistive approach to community development.

3.3.4. Indigenous notion of development

In recent years, some of Solomon Islands academics have researched indigenous notions of development, putting forward alternative conceptualizations which are context-based and holistic (Gegeo, 1998; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2002; Rohorua, 2007). Rohorua (2007, p. 193) investigating the concept of development on Ulawa island, based on the notion *mwa'ora(nga)* explained that indigenous understanding of development refers to the 'healthy growth of crops', and "the place where supplies (cut off or dried) are replenished." Hence, in Ulawa, development "refers to simply sustaining life" (Rohorua, 2007, p. 195). Similarly, Gegeo (1998, p. 298) in his study on the concept of *gwaumauri'anga,* translated as the 'good life' in Kwara'ae,[12] argued that for the people development is about the 'good life' which is embedded in a range of Kwara'ae cultural values and endorses a holistic approach encompassing the spiritual and psychological, as well as the physical (Gegeo, 1998).

---

[12] Kwara'ae is the biggest language group on Malaita

According to Gegeo, there is a distinction between development and business. "Business is seen as dead, individualistic, the pursuit of material things, which often result in powerlessness in decision making. Development on the other hand is seen as rooted in local knowledge, and must be sustainable and beneficial to the entire community" (Gegeo, 1998, p. 305). Both, Rohorua (2007) and Gegeo (1998) argued that unless indigenous understandings of 'development' are realized, there can be no meaningful development in Solomon Islands. The past development activities, Rohorua (2007) argues, are deficient and not taking into consideration the beliefs and *kastom* of local people, resulting in uneven development that is not modified and influenced by local context and realities. Similarly, Maeliau (2003, p.59) argued that people need to organize and engage in development at the village level where they have direct access and rights over their natural resources and any approach has to start from the 'bottom of the ladder' – in other words from the people in rural communities. This conceptualization of a context-based and holistic development is consistent with more recent hopeful post-development writings in Chapter 2, where proponents of hopeful post-development pointed out that there is a cultural turn in recent years which favors context-based or localism as the new orthodoxy in development (McGregor 2009; McKinnon, 2006). McKinnon (2006) argues that consideration for local culture can creates hope and opportunities where meaningful engagement can take place within the sphere of community.

The next section will discuss some of the constraints and challenges to rural community development in Solomon Islands.

3.3.5. The constraints and challenges to rural community development

There are multiple challenges facing development in Solomon Islands. Roughan (2012) points out that in Solomon Islands whether you are smallest, largest, the poorest or the richest organization, all face the same challenges of 'the scattered nature of the nation's hundreds of islands, its many village settlements, the tens of different languages with their differing customs and traditions to the very high percentage of young people in the population all make up the vital and basic context right across the nation' (Roughan, 2012b, p. 1). The geographical dispersion of rural communities and provinces causes the physical difficulties of isolation. The inter-island sea routes and travel is also a major constraint and challenge linking most rural communities and provinces to the outside market opportunities (DTIS Report, 2009, p. 105). The youthful population

of Solomon Islands, dropouts from schools, and unemployment present a huge challenge to rural development and the nation as a whole (Roughan, 2012b; Clements & Foley, 2008). The young deserting the rural villages to the city and urban centers in search of opportunities has become a problem affecting the rural and the urban setting. In rural communities it means loss of needed manpower skills and in the urban setting it means added social burden of unemployment.

The problem of lack of corporate culture, limited financial literacy and management skills also hinder development in rural communities (DTIS Report, 2009). Misite'e (2008) identified that the local socio-cultural dynamics had contributed to the failure of many rural community projects in the past. The downfall of the cattle industry was in part due to cattle killed for Christmas feasts and marriage without any cash return. This caused the failure of this industry in many rural communities (Misite'e, 2008, p. 29). In addition, the issue of customary land rights and ownership also hinder development in the rural communities which can fuel unending dispute (DTIS Report, 2009; Saeni, 2008). Major planned development projects like the Bina Seaport and Auluta Oil Palm on Malaita Province continued being held up due to land dispute, which is common in Melanesia where around 80% of land is held under customary laws (Saeni, 2008).

Furthermore, previous studies have also identified that institutional challenges largely due to weak government capacity to delivery services to rural areas has affected rural development (DTIS Report, 2009; Clements & Foley, 2008). Sanga (cited in Misite'e, 2008, p.32) also pointed out that one major problem with the government delivery system is the lack of clarity on the role and responsibility of different stakeholders, including donors, national and local governments and the NGOs sector to work collaborative to address rural community development. Rhodes (2007, p. 4) in her review of community sector programs in Solomon Islands found that often donors have different views of development and fail to understand and support respective government agencies the private sector and community organizations. This institutional weakness and failures has transpired in the call by many provinces for a federal government system or even their independence (Lilo, 2012). The provincial government only served as 'agent' of the national government in implementing and managing social services and development at the province and rural community level (Nanau, 1995). The provincial government is weak and depends on the national government for resources. At the rural community level, there used to be 'loose' unit of government called the Area Council which was abolished in the 1990s (Faiau, 2010; Tozaka

Report, 1999). The abolition of the Area Council created a gap that successive government, including the current PM Lilo lead NCRA government tried to fill through the constituency-based development policy(Lilo, 2012; NCRA government policy statement, 2010).

According to the Tozaka Report (1999) there are already existing bodies, such as the Traditional Chiefs or the community Council of Elders in rural communities that the government needs to work through to empower and engage communities in development. These local community bodies and associations, it is argued need to be legally recognised and empowered to play active and leading roles in rural community development and governance (Tozaka Report, 1999). In the absence of a legitimate development framework at community level, Faiau (2010) pointed out that all arrangements are done through ad-hoc basis, such as the constituency and ward committees are prone to political manipulation and control. These constraints and challenges provided the need for greater cooperation and organization at the local community and strategizing of the stakeholders approach to rural community development which is concerned with not only the needs of the people, but also participation of people in their own development. The next section highlights briefly one current policy approach of the government too rural development – the 'bottom-up' or constituency-based development.

3.3.6. The search for alternative solution

It is a popular sentiment in Solomon Islands that the government has failed to effectively deliver development to the rural communities. In 2006, the Grand Coalition for Change Government (GCCG) under Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare introduced what then was described as "the bottom-up" development – or constituency-based development policy. The policy, since 2006 has been pursued by the two successive governments including the current PM Gordon D. Lilo led NCRA government (Lilo, 2012). The principle objective as outline in the policy is to engage and empower rural people in their own development (MDP&AC Report, 2007, p. viii).[13] Below is a statement in one of the government policy document.

---

[13] Also refer to (MDP&AC Report, 2007), Solomon Islands agriculture and rural development strategy

It is only when Solomon Islanders benefit from 'development', that the government can say truly that it is addressing our national needs. In other words, we – the people – should be the center of development….the CNURA [government] will ensure that our people will remain our central focus (CNURA Government policy statement, 2008, p. 1).

The underlying notion is to bring fundamental changes in the development of the country after decades of dismal performance since independence. This includes direct delivery of services and participation of rural people in development at the rural communities and constituencies level (Misite'e, pers. comm. 14.06.12). The aim is to link the 50 constituencies through the Ministry of Rural Development by creating of a Constituency Development Authorities instead of the provincial mechanism (MRD, 2011).[14] There is still a lot of debate surrounding the influence and control seating MPs and politicians in this constituency-based development model (Sasako, 2007b), and will dismal improvement in the rural livelihoods and wellbeing of the people majority in the rural communities.

3.4. Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter discussed the general context of rural community development in Solomon Islands which include the history, the forms and approach to development by the colonial administration then and the government and other stakeholders after Solomon Islands attained political independence in 1978. As highlighted in above in this chapter, the approach of government has been heavily influenced by modernization and industrialization which always focus of economic growth and meeting the demands of the market (see, Misite'e, 2008; Rohorua, 2007). Such economic dominated agenda of development influenced government leaders and stakeholders to venture into extraction of natural resources in the form of logging, fisheries and mining as forms of development. The approach was framed on the idea of creating more employment opportunities and generating income from people's natural resources. In rural communities, people continue to really of subsistence agriculture, small-holders cocoa and coconut plantation activities. In the rural communities, the churches and community groups continue to play a significant role in organizing and facilitating community-based activities and development which

---

[14] Also see Lilo (2012)

aimed at empowering local communities to fully participate in their own development. The indigenous notion of development was also discussed in the chapter which concerned wellbeing – or 'good life' (Gegeo, 1998) and 'sustaining the good life' (Rohorua, 2007). The indigenous concepts of development as discussed in this chapter proposed a holistic approach to development which embraces the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions.

Leading on from this chapter, the next two chapters will provide the research methodology and methods used in the fieldwork (Chapter 4) and background to the region and description of the case study concerning the Estate programs and projects (Chapter 5).

Chapter Four :
Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology and methods used in the fieldwork. It discusses the process involved from fieldwork preparation to actual fieldwork (data collection) and data analysis. The chapter also highlights some personal experiences and the lessons learned whilst conducting fieldwork in North Malaita particularly within the To'abaita and Baelelea cultural societies.

This research was undertaken as a qualitative case study exploring circumstance leading to the formation of the Estate in North Malaita. This study also explored the premises and ideas of the Estate of development and how these ideas are implement, the benefits, and the constraints and challenges. The research used semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion to collect data during the fieldwork. The aim was to gather firsthand information from those involved based on their opinions and experiences regarding the Estate introduced programs and schemes.

4.2. A qualitative case-study

Methodology is like a road map which points a course to follow in conducting a research. According to Yin (2003; 2006) what methodological framework and strategies to use in a research situation depends on the type of research and the questions that will be asked. He identified five research strategies: experiment, survey, archival analysis, history, and case study. This study used the qualitative case study strategy to investigate the Estate community-based development initiative in North Malaita.

Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 545) define a qualitative case study as a way of exploring a phenomenon within its natural setting, utilizing various data sources. O'Leary (2010) explained

'qualitative' as the best methodology when it comes to social research which seeks to understand and interpret social reality and supports the emergence of new ideas. Also a qualitative case-stucy strategy is commended as appropriate and valuable in exploratory research on human perspectives, experiences and ideals, as it allows generation of rich data about real people by using observation and interaction (Richard, 2009, p. 35). Critics often argue that qualitative research lacks scientific rigour (Mays & Pope, 1995). However, proponents argued that this is a flawed criticism, as all research methodologies have their own means of maintaining rigour within specific methodological frameworks (Blaikie, 2000; Carr, 1994; Mays & Pope, 1995). Duffy (1986, cited in Carr, 1994, p. 718) pointed out that the strength of qualitative research is that it allowed actual interaction with participants. It is during this process of interaction that first-hand information and data can be obtained and new knowledge generated.

Carr (1994, p. 719) revealed that a qualitative approach "allows the researcher to become immersed in the context and subjective states of the research subjects that they are able to give the assurance that the data are representative of the subject being studied." He further pointed out that with qualitative research there are fewer threats to external influence. The approach allows the subject to be studied in their natural setting and encounter fewer controlling factors compared with quantitative research conditions which is highly controlled and often lacks flexibility (Carr, 1994, p.719). Yin (2003) further described that a case-study strategy is attention-holding and is therefore appropriate for in-depth analysis and study of the subject of investigation. Furthermore, a case study approach is considered when the purpose of the study is to response to the 'how' and 'why' questions (Yin, 2003, p. 1). Thus, in the context of this thesis a qualitative case study methodology is appropriate, because the key question asked about *how* the Estate – a community-based initiative – contributes to community development in North Malaita.

There are four types of case-studies: a single case-study, multiple case studies, embedded case-study design and holistic design (Yin, 2006). The single case-study is often used when the case represents a critical test of existing theory, rare circumstances, a representative or typical case, a revelatory case or for longitudinal purpose. Multiple case studies involve collecting and analyzing data from more than one case can be useful for replication purposes. The embedded case study design is used when there are multiple units of analysis; whilst the holistic design is used when the focus is on a single unit of analysis (Yin, 2006).

47

This research was conducted as a single case-study. A single case study allows the researcher to investigate a phenomenon in-depth to provide rich description and understanding of the subject being studied. The use of multiple case studies can be useful for making comparison and coverage (Yin, 2006). But this is not the intention of this research. This research is about having an in-depth understanding of the Estate vision and approach to community development and how successful the Estate programs and schemes helped contribute to creating opportunities and community development in North Malaita.

Figure 3.2 shows the longitudinal process undertaken in this case study from start to finish. The design phase involves developing a theory surrounding a selected case study, which in this study is the Estate in north Malaita. Data collection phase involve the process and methods used in data collection. The third phase involves case analysis interpretation where date collected is compared with existing theories to confirm or establish new theories (Yin, 2003)

Figure 5: A diagram of a single case study method
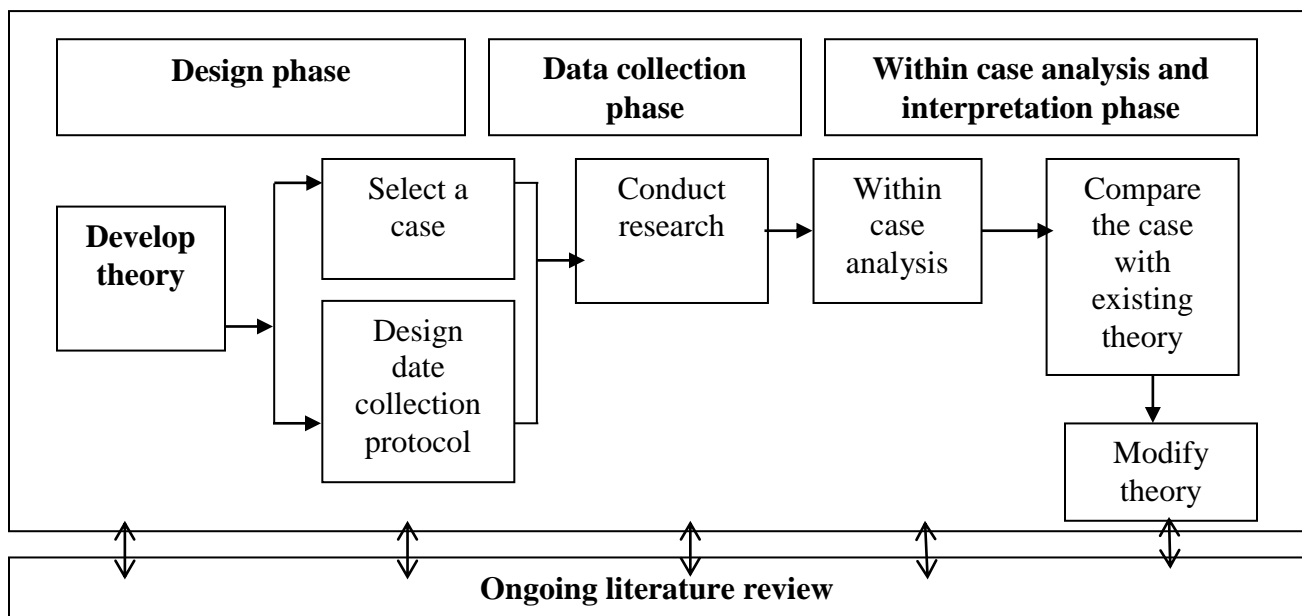
Source: Yin (2003)

There are some concerns and criticisms regarding the merits of the qualitative case study strategy. These include the limited "scope for making valid comparison" (Cooper & Schinder, 1998,

p. 13); the limitations inherent in the drawing up of conclusions based on a single study; and limited ability of the researcher to generalize concepts and theories in relation to other comparable settings within the institution (Yin, 1994, p.10). However, Yin (2003, p.10) also states that like experiments, scientific facts are rarely based on single experiment; rather they are based on several experiments that have repeated the same phenomenon under different conditions.

4.3. Research Methods

Research methods are tools used to conduct research in the field. Research methods used in a qualitative case study must be based on their appropriateness to the research topic and question. Two main methods were employed in conducting fieldwork for this research: (1) semi-structured interviews and (2) focus group discussions. The use of mix methods in research is appropriate in a qualitative case study because it allowed different treatment of participants in different situations (Carr, 1994; Patton, 1990). For example some would be comfortable on one-on-one interviews, while the focus groups allows for a more interaction between the groups and the researcher which could be otherwise not be possible with the first method.

4.3.1. In-depth semi-structured interviews

The semi-structure interviews are used to facilitate more focused exploration of a specific topic, using an interview guide. This method presents the interviewee with a particular topic and questions which are thoroughly designed to elicit ideas, opinions, and personal stories, rather than preconceived notions. The semi-structure interview method allowed flexibility and space for meaningful interaction and discussion; a process O'Leary (2010) pointed out otherwise impossible under highly controlled structured interviews. According to Mason (2002, p. 62) the flexibility of the interview process allows the researcher and interviewee(s) to cover any unexpected themes that seemed relevant by a follow up question for further clarity and ideas. However, Mason also cautioned that in any interaction, all conversation must be done with a purpose and always kept within the confine of the established research theme and question(s).

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher develops a framework, referred to as an interview guide, under which the interview will be conducted. Generally, one-on-one interviews

have advantages, like allowing some private space for participants to freely express opinions with confidence. Semi-structured interviews can either be conducted on a one-to-one situation or collectively with a group of respondents, as in focus group discussions. In this study, one-on-one interviews were conducted with individual members and leaders of the Estate, representative of important stakeholders which included government officers and NGO representative based on the set of guiding questions (see Appendix V). The intention was to get their views and personal stories regarding the Estate activities and impact in the areas as well as the general situation pertaining to rural community development in North Malaita. Yin (2006) argued that using more than one method to collect data in research is more beneficial than relying on just one method. This study opted for focus group discussions as a second method.

4.3.2. Focus group discussions

The focus group discussion is often advantageous in the way knowledge is shared openly in a group setting where participants tell of their experiences and views, and at the same time learn from each other (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). Kitzinger and Barbour (1999, p.5) argued that "focus groups are ideal for exploring people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns." The method is particularly useful as it allows participants to generate their own priorities, in their own terms and in their own vocabulary. During the group discussion, general views were observed and made reference to, while at the same time personal opinions and voices were treated separately.

Two focus group discussions were conducted during the fieldwork. The first one was conducted with a mix group consisting of one Estate Chairman, two coordinators, and two members, a total of five participants. The participants were from different Estate communities. The experience showed both positive and negative aspects. The first focus group discussion went for two hours, and was very interactive with various opinions and experiences shared. The views from five participants were fascinating as each one shared their own account and personal stories which each one shared amongst the group, as reflecting on research questions. The second focus group discussion consisted of three female participants from the same community. Having an all-female group allowed more space for interaction between the women and the researcher, an experienced I learned to be different from the first group, which consisted of only one female and four males. Also the fact that they were from the same Estate community reflected more a collective response

of that particular community than having only one representative of different communities. My experience was that overall the focus group discussions were successful because they allowed meaningful interaction and generating of ideas, not only with the researcher, but amongst the participants themselves.

Apart from interviews and focus group discussions, field-notes of personal observations and informal conversation/discussions were taken. This proved important where people often found it hard to communicate directly or kept all conversation formal at times. There were situations where an interview started with one person and then kept adding contributions to the discussions by others which ended up something like a group discussion. Also some times after the interview it could happen that some important information was given or a correction made to the previous statements. I regarded such information as conversation which I entered in my diary/field notes.

4.4. Research procedures before fieldwork

This section describes the research procedures before fieldwork. The research procedures included two processes; the fieldwork preparation and submission of an ethic application to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) for consideration and approval before venturing into the field.

4.4.1. Fieldwork preparation

A proper preparation before going into the field for data collection is always a very important stage in the research process. According to Leslie and Storey (2003) a good fieldwork preparation leads to achieving a positive outcome in any research undertaking. Fieldwork preparation allows a clear direction and deeper understanding about the process of research as what to do, where to go, and who to contact and recruit in the field as participants. Nash (2000) strongly supports the idea that having sufficient and appropriate preparation for fieldwork is not only a crucial element in facilitating a positive experience in the field, but also a major influence on the ultimate success of a research project.

After receiving feedback from the Head of the Development Studies programme at Massey University's School of People, Environment and Planning that my proposal was approved, I started drawing ideas from the literature on the established research topics and themes. The literature review broadened my understanding and perspective on the research topic and also of the existing gaps within different approaches to community development that this research was keen to investigate.   The review of relevant and up-to-date literature also helped in constructing and refining the research questions which are the formulated in manageable interview questions, targeting different groups of participant in field.

During the fieldwork preparation, I was given invaluable advice and support from my two supervisors, Dr. Maria Borovnik and Associate Professor Glenn Banks, concerning the interview questionnaires and preparing the in-house ethics documents. The level of support and guidance was invaluable. The next step in the fieldwork preparation was the preparation of the ethics application and submission.

4.4.2. Ethics application and approval

 Fieldwork preparation included the process of ethics consideration and approval before venturing into field for collection of data. A good ethnical standard is particularly important in qualitative research that includes interviews and interaction. Creswell (2003, p. 87) suggested that in any research it is vital to protect the rights and interests of participants at all times. To ensure that this study complied with appropriate ethical guidelines, this study followed the Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants requirement. Because this study was considered low risk; a full application to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) was not required. Instead a low risk notification application was submitted to MUHEC which was approved (see Appendix I).

Prior to submitting the low risk notification application, the researcher had an in-house research ethics consultation and coaching session with supervisor Dr. Maria Borovnik and two other panelists; Professor Regina Scheyvens and Dr. Trisia A. Farrelly from Massey University's School of People, Environment and Planning. The purpose was to discuss all ethical issues and considerations before engaging in the fieldwork. A key issue discussed in the consultation included

guidelines for selecting research participants. This was to enable fair recruitment and respect for the privacy of recruited participants and the host communities. This in-house ethics consultation also enabled me to draw-up a workable strategy of how to conduct research in the community and consideration for local people's cultures and space. Following this discussion, it was agreed that information sheets, consent forms, and questionnaires were to be translated from English to local language, which in this research the Solomon Islands *Pidgin* (see Appendix II).

The issue of protecting the identity of the participants was also discussed. In this study I opted to use of code names instead of real names. As agreed during the fieldwork, by participants, indigenous names of edible fruit trees were selected and used (see Appendix V). The six Estate communities from which participants were recruited were also coded with the letters: A, B, C, D, E, and F, instead of their real name. This is important to keep the identity of interviewed participants and their communities confidential. Getting the consent of the participant is one standard ethnical research protocol that all researchers must uphold. In this study, a consent form was provided to the participants before any interviews were conducted (see Appendix IV). I reminded the participants of their right to withdrawn from answering any question or not to be involved, should they feel the research goes against their rights or undermined their position.

The issue of protection of collected data and information was also discussed and is important in research. As much as possible collected data was protected and used only for the sole purpose of research and related publications. Adhering to these is consistent with upholding the integrity and good reputation of the researcher and that of Massey University and also of protecting the interests of the research participants and their community.

4.5. Positionality

In research, 'positionality' is a significant consideration. According to Robertson (2002, pp. pp. 788-790) it is useful when one's position is reflected upon and articulated with respect to its influence in terms of fieldwork. In undertaking this research, I become mindful of the fact that as an insider and that I have been working as CDO (community development officer) in one of the electorates could potentially have some influence on the research. This provided both an

advantage as well carried misrepresentation from the community regarding the researcher. My familiarity with the region and connection with some members of the community was an advantage in terms of point of contact and logistical support. However, there are certain factors that may have influenced or caused biasness in the selection and association with certain communities and participants in the communities. This was especially important given that a wide range of people in the community which included the Estate leaders, members and also representative of other local stakeholders, such as the Church and Chiefs were interviewed. As much as possible I tried to remain impartial and selective as to whom to interview and when to conduct an interview, otherwise personal association with certain leaders and community groups may have influenced the personal position and decisions as researcher.

4.6. Fieldwork process and reflection

4.6.1. Getting to North Malaita

The fieldwork was conducted in North Malaita, Malaita province of Solomon Islands. Fortunately, I met up with my key contact person in Honiara who made prior arrangement on my behalf with some Estate leaders and communities concerning my research in their communities. I arrived in Honiara from New Zealand on 12th June and left Honiara for North Malaita on the 17th, where I spent the next two weeks. I returned to New Zealand on the 5th July 2012. To access participants, I traveled from Honiara via inter-island ferry to Auki and by truck for two hours to my first stop at Folotana Village in West Baelelea, where I conducted my first field interviews with the Estate leaders and members. I then traveled to nearby communities in West Baelelea, West Fataleka and finally to Malu'u and then back to Auki and Honiara.

O'Leary (2010) states the purpose of fieldwork is to gain firsthand information from reliable sources. There are strategies to select participants. In this research participants were selected using a "snowballing" and "purposive" sampling strategy. Although the snowball sampling does not guarantee representativeness, O'Leary (2010, p. 170) pointed out that "it does develop a population profile" of the group of persons interviewed. This strategy involved a referral system where the first identified participant within a particular group was interviewed and then made

54

recommendations of the next suitable person(s) to be interviewed (O'Leary, 2010). Participants were drawn from six categories: the Estate leaders, officers or coordinators, members, observers groups and other stakeholders. During the fieldwork, personal conversations and stories from a couple of observers within the Estate boundaries were also interviewed regarding their observation and views of the Estate as non-members. A total of 22 participants were interviewed (see Table 4).

Table 4: Total interview sample population

Category	Female	Male	Total
Estate Advisory Board		1	1
Estate Office (chairperson & coordinators)	1	5	6
Estate Members	3	2	5
Local stakeholders (Chief, Church & NGO)		3	3
Government (1 x Province, 2 National Govt.)		3	3
Observers	1	3	4
Total interview population	5	17	22

The first interview was with a senior executive member and advocator of the Estate. After that and with his advice I mapped out which Estate communities in North Malaita I would be going to visit. To ensure fairness, my criterion for selection included population size, reported successes and weakness as well as accessibility. The Estate community population was divided into three groups: (1) large – 250 plus members, (2) medium – 150 to 250 members, and (3) small – 150 less members (see Table.5). Two highlands and four coastal Estate communities were interviewed.

From the total twenty-two, fifteen participants were recruited from the six Estates which comprised of leaders, coordinators, members and observers. Leaders were interviewed regarding their positions, involvement and the success and challenges facing the Estate schemes. The members and non-members were interviewed regarding their general observations on the Estate activities and experiences. The government and NGO representatives were also interviewed regarding their views and roles in community development (refer to Table 5). In the result the participants were coded indigenous names such as "sosome" – local name for pawpaw. The used of code name was suggested during the interviewed were participants agreed to before signing the consent form to commence the interview.

Table 5: Estate communities & interviewees

Estate Communities	Location	Estate population Size	Report state of Success & Failures	No. of Interviews
A	Malu'u	Medium	Progressive	3
B	West Baelelea	Large	Experience some problems	5
C	West Fataleka	Large	Very active Estate	4
D	Baelelea highlands	Small	Physical difficulties	1
E	East Baelelea	Small	Very active	1
F	Estate Baelelea	Large	Very active	1
Total participants interviewed				**15**

During the fieldwork, relevant secondary data from various sources were collected. These included the Estate documents and reports, government policies and reports, NGO reports, newsletters, and articles from local media sources, manly newspapers. These secondary data provided a wider coverage of the research subject and issues and also enable the researcher to hear from people's experience and get the feel about rural community development situation in North Malaita and Solomon Islands that might not have been highlighted in the interviews.

4.6.2. Fieldwork experience

A total of twenty-two days were spent in the field: thirteen days in North Malaita and nine days in Honiara. At the time of fieldwork, the road within North Malaita was at its worst condition. In the rural village communities there was no power supply, except Malu'u, where it only comes on at night and goes off during the day. There was no internet service, except for the People-first Distance Learning Center internet café at Malu'u which is not very reliable. Telephone communications was very expensive, especially international calls. Given these challenges, it was difficult to do any transcribing of recorded interviews. All typing work had to be done at Massey University upon returning from the field. Two contacts were made with my supervisor through email; first within days upon arrival in Honiara before traveling to North Malaita and second a few days before returning to New Zealand. This was to keep my supervisor and the university informed of my situation and progress.

Generally, even as an insider I learned not only about people's perception and experiences regarding the Estate and rural community development in North Malaita, but also about certain principles and protocols embedded in the region and people's culture which are relevant to this research and/or any research. In To'abaita/Baelelea society, the concept of *kwaimania* (which means mutual relations, acceptance and friendship) and *ununu'ofua* (mutual sharing by conversation) are highly esteemed cultural values and practices. The concept of *ununu'ofua* like the concept of *talanoa* (Otsuka, 2006; Prescott, 2008) found in other parts of the Pacific which entails mutual conversation and sharing. *Ununu'ofua* is not only concerned with the exchange of speech but also about establishing *kwaimania* (mutual relations and connection) with the people one is into contact with, and in this case, the research participants.

According to Ofasia (2003) the concept of *kwaimania* is applied to "reconciliation" or restoring relations, but essentially *kwaimania* denotes establishing relations, friendship and connection through the process of *ununu'ofua* (mutual conversation), *falea* (gift giving), or *fanga'ofua* (sharing a meal). Otsuka (2006) and Prescott (2008) in their research have been involving indigenous people in Pacific communities, that the building and enhancing relations to establish trust and connectedness between the researched and the researcher is crucial. Vaioleti (2006) asserted that during the process of sharing, either formally or informally, knowledge is generated, shared and passed on to others. In the context of this research, *ununu'ofua* and *kwaimania* are essential for establishing relations and sharing of knowledge. A researcher cannot engage in *ununu'ofua* without first establishing *kwaimania*. In indigenous communities research is about gaining the trust and confidence of the people. In Baelelea society people made reference to the idea that "unless you are called *wane-kwaimani* (male friend) or *ai-kwaiminia* (lady friend) "*e afetai oko tatha do ni rakena airae*" (unless they call you friend, it is impossible to know what is inside of a boar's belly).

Traditionally, the concept of *kwaimania* and *ununu'ofua* are often depicted by the simple act of sharing of "*betel nuts*"[15] – a practice common in Melanesian, much like "*kava*" drinking in central and western Pacific. Although, *betel-nut* chewing is discouraged for its health risks; the act of sharing the same "*nut*" like drinking from the same "*kava bowl*" symbolizes *kwaimania*

---

[15] Fruit of betel palm (*areka palm*) commonly chewed in Melanesian countries of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, part of ceremonial and social culture

(togetherness and friendship). It shows that one is being welcomed and accepted as part of the family. As an insider and aware of these cultural practices, I ensured that some element to share like a packet of coffee or biscuit instead of betel-nut was prepared, so that when the time was right such cultural practice could be appropriated. Essentially it is not the object but the act of love, sharing and acceptance that matters when coming into contact with the culture of the people of North Malaita.

These principles have been consolidated with the influence of Christianity in North Malaita, like anywhere in the Solomon Islands and/or the Pacific, where the church played an important role in the community and people's life. As Otsuka (2006) and Prescott (2008) both observed in the Pacific, it is not only about respecting the culture of the people, but even more important the Church. In North Malaita, this was equally true, considering that the Church played an integral part of the community and people's lives (Saeni, 2008; Ofasia, 2003). Ofasia (2003) points out that Christian principles and teachings of love and respect reinforces the cultural concept of *kwaimania*. Having come into contact with these cultural realities and practices only reinforce my personal perception of doing research in rural communities, where culture and the church are two significant structures which bind the people together. And even more fascinating is how they contribute to positive development of the community.

4.7. Data analysis and organization

Data analysis is the single most important process after fieldwork. With qualitative case-studies, as O'Leary (2010) and Yin (2003) pointed out, the data analysis can be a very difficult process, because the case study approach does not have any one single formula. Each case study is unique and therefore the analytical approach can also be different and difficult. Thus, in order to create meaning and generate knowledge it requires a high degree of analytical ingenuity on the part of the researcher (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). This is because qualitative data involved participants' views and voices. In regards to this research, the first process was the transcribing of recorded interview data into a narrative format. Each digital recorded script of the twenty-two interviews was transcribed into separate written script. After all the interviews have been transcribed, they were grouped into different categories. The transcription process was very difficult

because most interviews were done in Solomon Islands *Pidgin* English and even some in the local dialect. However, the exercise was refreshing as when listing and putting participants' voices into written scripts, one can start to actually relate to and make meaning of what the participants were saying.

After fully transcribing all the scripts, the next thing was analyzing of the scripts to make meaning and connections between what the interviewees. From the data and in response to the key research question and guiding objectives I was able to create key themes and sub-themes that the information was organized under. The process of data analysis and coding [or deconstruction], O'Leary (2010, p. 226) argued "is important for reconstructing of codified data to established theoretical understanding." The coded data were then linked to the research question and the literatures chapter to determine consistency or inconsistency with the findings in regards to existing theories.

4.8. Chapter summary

A qualitative case study strategy was used in this research. In social science research, a qualitative methodology is useful because it allows the researcher to interact with the researched and it is during this interaction that information can be shared and knowledge is generated. Form the multiple approaches in qualitative study, this research employed a single case-study to investigate how the Estate – a local community initiative – contribute to development in North Malaita. A single case study was used because the research seeks to have an in-depth understanding of the circumstance surrounding the introduction of the Estate, the ideas and vision development, and its impact on people and communities.

To gain credible data, two methods were used. These include the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The two methods are the commonly used in qualitative study because of their flexibility which can help ensure meaningful interaction. A total of 22 participants were selected and interviewed from six Estate communities as well as government officers and NGOs representative working in North Malaita. A total of twenty-two days were spent collecting data in the field, both in North Malaita and Honiara. Overall, the fieldwork went well despite few a changes in terms of scheduled interviews. Significantly, however, during the

fieldwork I learned not only about the Estate systems, success and problems but also about some social-cultural issues which researchers need to be aware of when conducting research in North Malaita where culture and the Church do have a central role and influence on the community and people. The principles of *kwaimania* (friendship/relationship) and *ununu'ofua* (mutual conversation) are very relevant when conducting research in To'abaita and Baelelea of North Malaita.

The next section provides the description of North Malaita (region of case study) as well as the background of the Estate (case study).

Chapter Five : The Estate and rural development in North Malaita

5.1. Introduction

Leading on from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3; this chapter provides the background and description of the case study (the Estate) and rural development in North Malaita. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will present the social demography, the culture groups and practices, and the rural community development situation in North Malaita. The second section will provide background information of the Estate community development initiative in North Malaita in terms of its key ideas and introduced programs and projects.

5.2. People and Culture

There are two dominant language groups in the area of this case study: *To'abaita* which is spoken within Ward 7, Ward 8 and part of Ward 9, including the highland communities of Gwaiau, Faumalefo and Anokwaikwai of in North Malaita constituency; and *Baelelea* which is spoken in Ward 6, Ward 10 and part of Ward 9 within the Lau/Baelelea constituency (SIDAPP, 2001, p.10). North Malaita is predominantly a patrilineal society, which means the male is the head of the family and tribe where all possession of land and property are normally transferred through. However, decedents from the female line still claim secondary rights over tribal land for gardening and other purposes (Saeni, 2008, p. 109). The cultural value of cooperation and interdependency was common amongst the two groups in North Malaita. Normally the families and tribes cooperate for events such as the paying of bride-price and other social-cultural obligations. While it may not be obligatory, ones contribution during events such *fufu'ue* (payment of bride-price), *maea* (funeral) and *fabua* (compensation payment) is a 'kastom' (*biraga*) are highly regarded. Participating in these events can cement ones social status in the community (Ofasia, 2003; Saeni, 2008). Saeni (2008) relates that in the pre-contact times, tribes cooperated and collaborated in the event of a raid or war on another tribe or party; based on the notion of 'one good turns deserves another.' These cultural practices and values shaped and influenced livelihood activities in North Malaita

society in many ways (Suinao, 2008) and formed the basis of the family's safety net and security where everyone depends on each other in times of need.

Figure 6: Map of Lau/Baelelea Constituency Settlement patterns
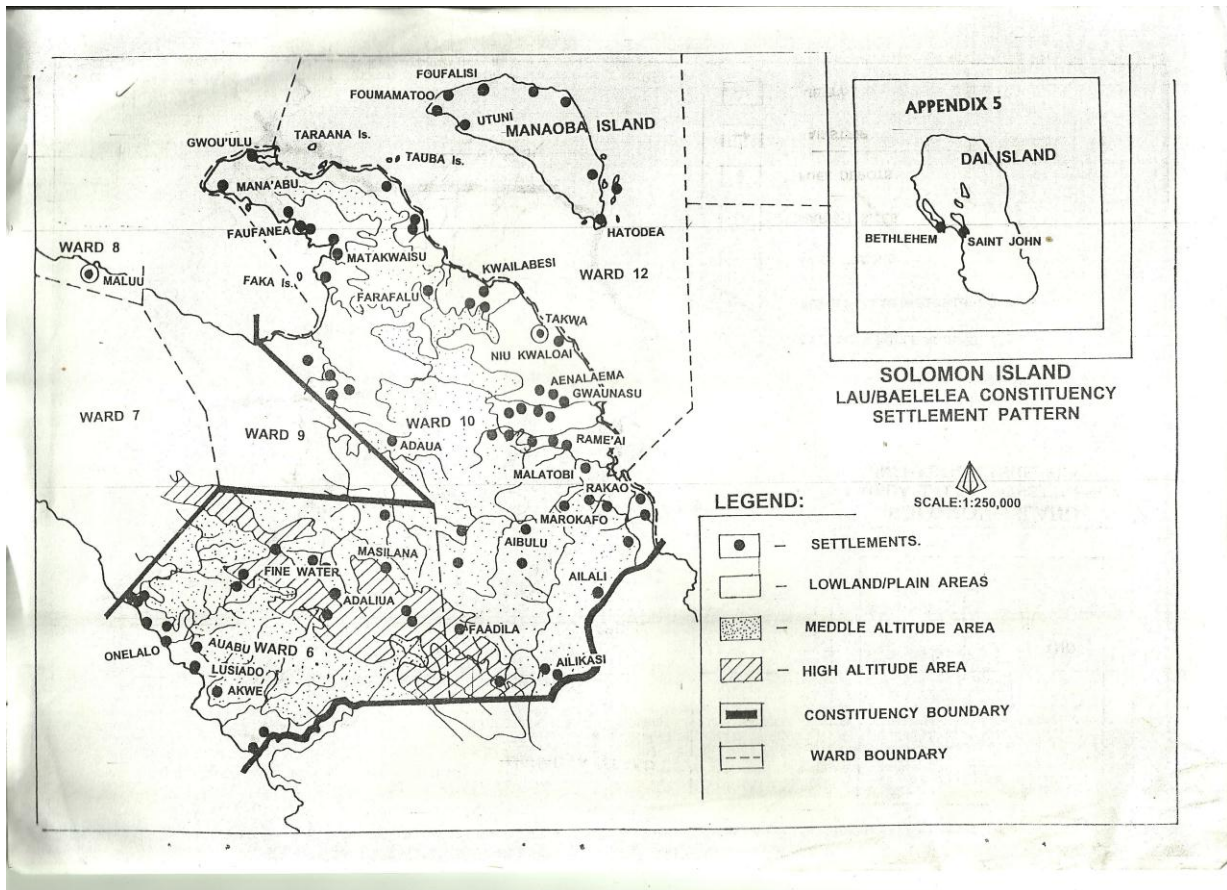
Source: Lau/Baelelea Constituency Report (1999/2000)

The people of North Malaita settled in communities according to tribal groups and families (SIDAPP, 2001). However, since the introduction of Christian missions in the early 1900s, people converted to Christianity and moved to reside in the new mission villages on the coast such as Fo'ondo, Manakwai, Malu'u, Loina in the To'abaita (Griffiths, 1977) where different families, clan and tribes begun to live together. Nowadays the majority of the population resides in the coastal village communities. But there are still pockets of villages in the highlands of North Malaita, like Faumalefo and Gwaiau in Ward 7 and Fine Water, Masilana and Fadila in Ward 6 and 10 within central Baelelea. Figure 5.1, showed some of the village settlement within the Lau/Baelelea Constituency of North Malaita covering some of the village communities involved in this study.

62

5.3. Rural development context

This section will discuss the rural development situation in North Malaita. These include the subsistence livelihoods activities, the basic rural infrastructures and services, the important actors as well as the constraints and challenges facing the region.

5.3.1. Subsistence agriculture

North Malaita is largely an agriculture region. Subsistence agriculture provides the main source of livelihoods for rural villagers in North Malaita. The land resources provided significant sources of livelihoods and other necessities, like building materials. Fishing provides an additional source of livelihoods for the coastal communities. Population pressure, unsustainable "slash and burn" agriculture practices and the introduction of coconut and cocoa in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in clearing of significant forest areas either for gardening or coconut and cocoa plantations (Suinao, 2008). Suinao (2008, p.3) reports that about 80% of agricultural land on the coast has been planted with coconut and cocoa which remain the two key economic activities and source of cash income for families and communities. The upland areas are generally mountainous, which limits the potential for large-scale farming (SIDAPP, 2001). Rice farming trials were carried out by the communities in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Taiwanese Agriculture Technical Mission in the past (Suinao, 2008). The project failed to be sustained due to several factors; one of which is the demanding labor compared to traditional crops like potatoes and taro farming (Baete, 2012; Suinao, 2008).

Rural livelihood activities like crop and livestock framing are common in the region. Most people in North Malaita are subsistence farmers, but when they produce surplus, it can either be sold at the local markets or at Auki and Honiara markets for cash income (see Figure 7). There are potential in fruit trees like pawpaw, guava, and mango for processing as well as crops like vanilla, chili, turmeric and coffee (Suinao, 2008, p. 3). In highland communities like Gwaiau, Fine Water and Masilana some villagers started to grow coffee. But road access has been the main hindrance any widespread development in the highland communities. Livestock farming of pig, cattle and poultry are common in North Malaita. In the 1970s and 1980s, certain people in the region

engaged in the cattle industry through government funded projects (Suinao, 2008, p.4). However, since the collapse of the cattle industry in the early 1990s (refer to Misite'e, 2008), the cattle farming in North Malaita also ceased leaving piggery and poultry as the only forms of livestock farming. There is a potential in further developing the industry, given that pig ranching is part of the local culture and there is always a market for pork meat (Misite'e, 2008; Suinao, 2008). There is also a potential in poultry. But the experienced difficulty according to Suinao (2008, p.2) is the reliability of feed supply and market outlet and good storage facilities

Figure 7: Taro and ball cabbage from North Malaita at Honiara market

Source: Author

5.3.2. Business and Commerce

The main forms of entrepreneurial activities in the village include retailing and bakery. The goods commonly sold at the village canteens and hawks include rice, noodle, and the most basic

necessaries. Two local businesses[16] at Malu'u provide wholesaling for smaller retail outlets and canteen in the area. In the communities where the Estate Schemes operate, members have shares through their small investment in the Estate canteens. Families and individuals, especially women are involved in baking. This contributes additional source of income for the families. The income earned from baking can also go towards the meeting of family expenses such as school fees and medical. In the past, attempts were made in processing of coconut oil at Malu'u. A local businessman at Malu'u invested in coconut oil processing and soap making but the project failed due to lack of management and proper marketing strategy. There is, though, still potential for coconut oil and soap processing given there is better technical assistance from relevant stakeholders (Suinao, 2008, p. 4).[17]

There were no large-scale commercial activities in North Malaita. In the 1980s and early 1990s, there used to be some logging activities in the nearby region of West Fataleka but operation, has since closed down. As for fisheries, two facilities storage facilities were established in the area, one at Malu'u and another at Takwa funded by the Overseas Fisheries Cooperative Foundation of Japan[18] but had also closed in the late 1990s due to a land dispute and spillover from the ethnic conflict (MRD, 2009, p.14). This means until major development projects are implemented in the region, the rural communities of North Malaita will continue to rely on subsistence agriculture and small-scale economic activities ranging from retailing to cocoa and copra as their sources of income.

5.3.3. Rural infrastructures and Services

The major rural infrastructure which serves the region is the North Road which runs from Auki, the provincial capital and ends at Fouia in North East Malaita, servicing most of the coastal communities of West Baelelea, To'abaita and East Baelelea (SIDAPP, 2001). The inland communities and areas remained relatively cut off and isolated. The government extension services like the Rural Health Clinic and a Nurse Aid training school, agriculture and fisheries office, and a community high school are located at Malu'u, which serve the entire region as far as

---

[16] The two business doing wholesaling at Malu'u are Grassroots Marketing and El-Shaddai Enterprise (Suinao, 2008), personal observation
[17] Also see John Suifalu (2010) 'North Malaita Constituency Report', Ministry of Rural Development
[18] The OFCF funded facilities included (1) Storage station at Malu'u and (2) Ice-processing facility at Takwa station (MRD, 2009)

the outlier communities of Ndai and the Malaita Outer islands (SIDAPP, 2001).[19] In terms of education facilities, about sixteen primary schools, seven community high schools and one senior secondary school are located in the region. In addition Ngalikekero Rural Training Center,[20] at Bita'ama in Ward 7, provides basic-skill trainings for primary and secondary school dropouts in carpentry, mechanic, and agriculture (Suinao, 2008).

There was no banking institution in North Malaita and all banking services can only be accessed at the provincial capital, Auki. Services like electricity and communication are in serious considerations for North Malaita. The introduced mobile telecommunication system connects the rural communities of North Malaita to the outside world. As for electricity, only communities around Malu'u have access to power which supplies the station from a nearby hydro-power grid at Manakwai. It was estimated that the hydro, powered about 60-70% of the homes within the Manakwai and Malu'u area (Suinao, 2008, p. 7). At the time of fieldwork the hydro dam was closed by local landowners, which forced Malu'u station to resort to fuel generators for electricity.

5.3.4. Local community institutions and NGOs

Local community institutions, like the church, traditional house of chief and community-based organizations played important role in development in the region. In North Malaita, since the arrival of Christian missionaries, the Church had made a significant contribution to the social and spiritual upbringing and development (Ofasia, 2003). The dominant church denomination in To'abaita and Baelelea is the South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC), which arrived at Malu'u in 1894 (Griffith, 1977, p.23). Other denominations include the Anglican's Church of Melanesia, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Jehovah's Witness, Baptist, Assemblies of God, and Apostolic (Suinao, 2008). The Church-based groups, such as the Dorcus of the Seventh Day Adventist, the Mothers Union of the Church of Melanesia, and the Women's Band (Mothers Arise) of the SSEC also contributed in providing spiritual guidance, and also social and small income generating activities involving it members. Furthermore, as Ofasia (2008) and Saeni (2008) pointed

---

[19]Malaita Outer Islands here refers to communities on Ontong Java and Sikaiana atolls (Ward 32/33) in the Malaita Provincial Assembly jurisdiction (SIDAPP, 2001)

[20] Rural Training Center is a community-based vocational training which provides skill trainings in areas such as carpentry, motor mechanic, agriculture, etc.

out in North Malaita, the Church continues to play a significant role in mediating and resolving conflict and spiritual counseling which ensure peace and harmony within the people and communities. In many ways it is the Church leaders and community groups, that Wickham (2012), in Chapter 3, pointed out play a leading role in organizing and facilitating positive changes within the rural communities, compared to other stakeholders. As in the context of this study, the Estate, as a community based initiative was introduced by a SSEC minister and community leader.

Like the church, Traditional house also plays a significant role in issues of community governance and development, complementing work of other stakeholders, which include the government and the church. In North Malaita, there were twelve Houses of chiefs covering Baelelea and To'abaita. The Houses of chiefs come under two Councils of Traditional Chiefs representing the two cultural groups of Baelelea and To'abaita (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Traditional chiefs governance structure (North Malaita)
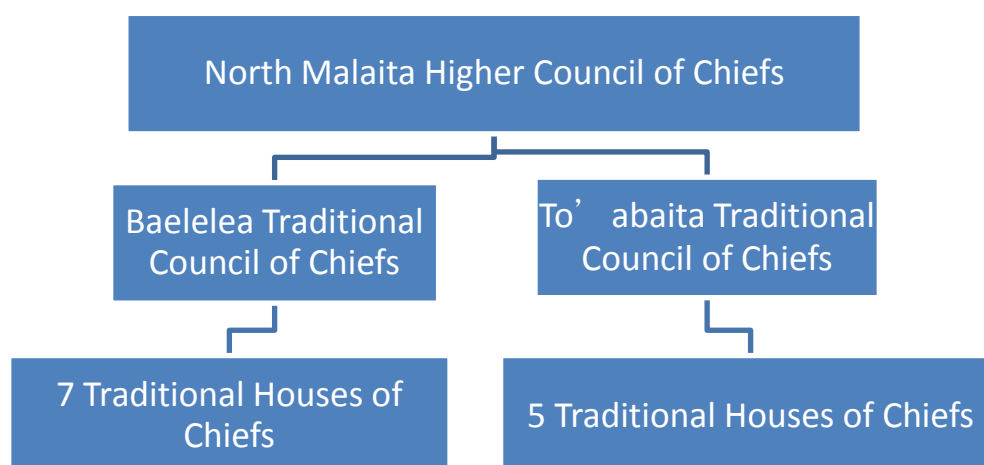
Source: Author

The legal recognition of the "traditional chiefs" is provided for under Section 114, subsection 2 (b) of the National Constitution of Solomon Islands.[21] These traditional institutions played significant role in the village community governance and development related issues like determining land boundaries and ensuring peace in the community. The role of such traditional institutions, as McGregor (2009), explained is becoming significant in indigenous communities where communities undergone socio-economic crisis.

---

[21] Refer to the Constitution of Baelelea Council of Traditional Chief, n.d., p.1

NGOs were also involved in rural community development in North Malaita in diverse livelihoods and income generating activities. The Kastom Garden Association was active in the region in providing livelihood trainings and workshops in local crops farming techniques and food security through its field-based staff. Recently the Adventist Development Relief Agency has being heavily involved in income generating activities targeting community youths and women's groups (Shadarch; Flickson, Personal interview, 23.06.12). The Solomon Islands Credit Union League through partnership funding used to engaged in the community in the area of saving and credit facilities in the past. It has failed to sustain its operation in the rural communities over time (Suinao, 2008). The reasons for failure were the heavy handed approach the league took and involvement of the external funding which cannot be continued when funding ceased. There was suspicion amongst league staff and administrator of abuse of project and people's money, which is consistent with Mercer's (1999) regarding involvement of donor funds and urban-based elites, the question of credibility and conducts of NGOs representatives become questioned. An interview with a local NGO representative, working in North Malaita revealed that most donor funded income generating projects have failed because of the cash involved from external sources, and very little input from the local people themselves (Flickson, Personal interview, 23.06.12). The involvement of NGOs and donor agencies in rural community development projects like building school classrooms, water-supply and sanitation, however, seemed to be successful positively improves the basic life in the village (Roughan, 2011, p1).

5.3.5. The constraints and challenges to rural community development

The constraints and challenges to community development include poor rural infrastructure due to lack of government support and land disputes. Highland residents often travel and transport goods by carrying them which proved to be difficult and challenging. Lack of government support for small-hold cocoa and copra farmers and potential community entrepreneurs is also a problem. This often was demotivating for local people who want engage in development activities in the communities. Land disputes between different tribal groups and families also hinders development in the region (Saeni, 2008). Social issues also undermined developments in the area, for example lack of cooperation amongst communities, tribes and families. The failure and limitation of the

68

government to support rural services and create opportunities has forced rural communities and their local leaders to seek alternative ways to ensure development and improvement of their communities. However, these constraints and failure created both challenge and opportunities for local community leaders and people, which according to Cavaye (2001), in Chapter 2, to seriously evaluate and seek new ways to address community development through community-based initiatives with the support from external stakeholders. The Estate which this study investigates was one such local community-based development initiative, which will be discussed in the following section.

In summary, the development situation in North Malaita presents both a challenge and an opportunity for local communities and leaders to become innovative and creative. The challenges include the remoteness of local communities and lack of major developments in the region which limits economic activities for local communities. There is however a lot of untapped potential which include natural and human resources, strong culture and social system; and strong support from local institutions such as Churches and Houses of chiefs. These elements can form the basis for community development. The idea of the Estate which will be discussed in the next section is an attempt by local leaders and communities in North Malaita to mobilize local resources and engage their people to collectively participate in community development which not only concerned with income generating, but with improvement of the total wellbeing of the people and building strong communities.

The section part of this chapter provides description of the Estate concepts, programs and activities.

5.4. The Estate and community development in North Malaita

The Estate was introduced in North Malaita by Rev. Michael Maeliau[22] in the mid-2000, in the aftermath of the ethnic tension in Solomon Islands, discussed in Chapter 3. The Estate promotes the idea of collective involvement by organising local village communities and people into clustered village communities, defined in this thesis as 'Estate community' or as some people might refer to as an association. Since idea was introduced, the Estate has expanded in terms of membership and coverage throughout the region. At the time of the fieldwork, in North Malaita alone has registered twelve Estate communities, spreading over three constituencies and six provincial wards. Four Estate communities are established in West Kwara'ae and West Kwaio in the Central Malaita region and one in Honiara. All together there are 17 Estate communities. The most populated Estate community recorded 700 plus members and the smallest 60 members (see Chapter 6).

5.4.1. Definition of the Estate

The Estate carries two definitions; (1) the Estate (or and "an Estate") – is a boundary within which there is social, religious, economic and political cohesiveness; and (2) the Estate (or E-state) is a system, where 'E' stands for excellent or eternal.[23] During the fieldwork, interviewees repeatedly referred to the Estate as a system – the Estate system. Terminologies and descriptions such as the Estate Association, Estate approach, Estate concept, Estate movement, Estate cooperative and the *E*-state have also emerged during interviews and cited in related documents. According to the Estate constitution, the Estate is described as equivalent to a micro-state or nation. Fundamental to the definition is the concept of 'commune' (or communion) which is "a community of individuals who hold the same beliefs, values, and principles; and are determined to put them in practice" (All Peoples Community Universal, n.d., p.1).[24] For the purpose of this study, 'the Estate' is simply a community-based development initiative, which collectively embraces all the 17 communities. The 17 communities are defined in this thesis as the Estate communities.

---

[22]Rev. Michael Maeliau was a South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC) Minister, former politician, farmer and local community leader
[23] Refer to the Estate constitution, p. 1, Appendix VI
[24] See Appendix VI

5.4.2. An Estate community

An Estate community is a collection of village communities and individuals established with a common vision to work together within a defined territorial boundary and operating under a management office. In North Malaita there are 12 Estate communities (see Figure 9). Within an established Estate local communities are organize and mobilize local resources for the purpose of creating opportunities where local people can be engaged. An Estate functions as a micro-state within its defined boundary and running its own designed program and projects. All the Estate communities come under an umbrella board – the Estate Council of Elders (COE), which serves as advisory (consultancy) counsel and not as management body.

Figure 9: Estate community linkage to the Council of Elders

The Estate Council of Elders

| Marodo Estate | Dale Estate | Alefe Estate | Afenakwai | Matakwalao | Fauʾdedema | Manuʾlafa | Boboa Estate | Rumanifau | Nofe Estate | Lamede Estate | Arao Estate |
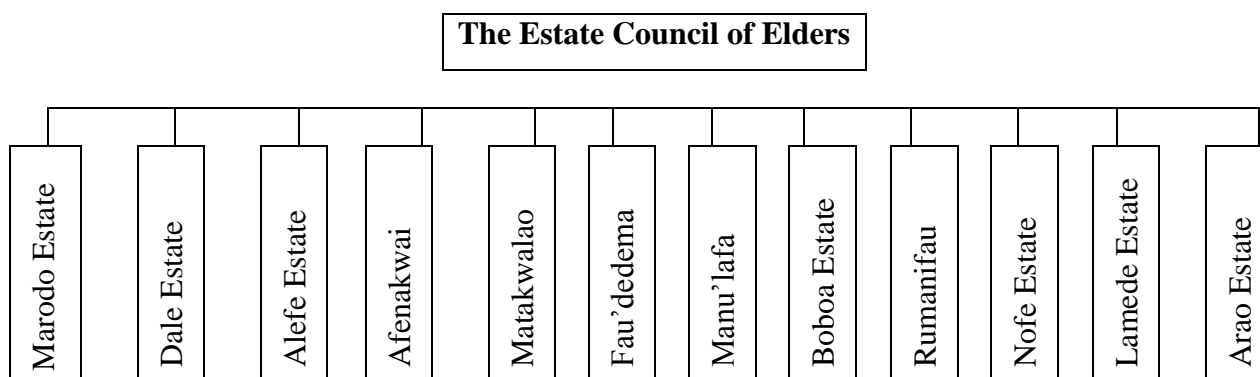
Source: Author (based on interview)

Within an Estate, the administrative office consists of a Chairman,[25] Vice-chairman, Secretary, and Coordinators who are responsible for different programs and activities. The Estate office oversees all daily activities and operations of an Estate. **The Representative Assembly** and **People's Forum** provide avenues through which common issues of interests can be discussed and information disseminated. The Assembly serves as a formal gathering of representatives of cross a section of the community which come under an Estate on any matters of interest; whereas the Forum is where members gather either for education awareness or to form a general consensus. Estate members are linked to an Estate through the forum and assembly or through

---

[25] The Estate Chairman is sometimes refers to as the Estate Governor based on some biblical terminology and also in line with the Kingdom concept of an Estate as a little state or nation

directly participation in the programs and activities authorized by an Estate. The Estate programs and projects (schemes) are introduced as mobilization and involvement strategies. Figure 10, shows an administrative set-up of an Estate community.

Figure 10: An Estate community governing structures
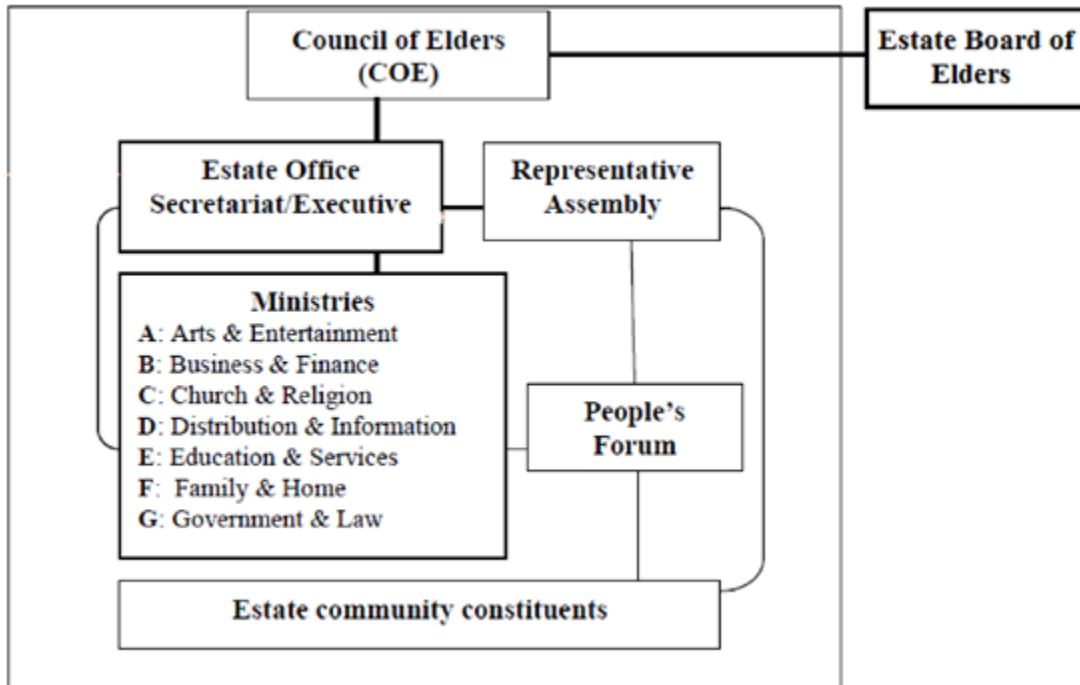
Source: Author (based interview/document)

5.4.3. The Estate programs

The Estate programs include all the social and spiritual programs. The Estate's priority spiritual program is code named Tabernacle of David (TOD). TOD is a chain prayer and worship program which goes around between the different Estate communities involving members and local churches. The principal aim was at developing and deepening one's personal and spiritual relationship with God and with people. Participants explained that the TOD programs was essential for building the spiritual base and growth of the movement and community, apart from the local church daily or weekly programs and annual regional Arise Programs (see Figure 11). A component of the TOD program involves youths and children in the area of arts and music, where they get involve and at the same time get reassurance of their spiritual growth and developments. The other programs include the "Arises" – Mothers Arise, Fathers Arise, Youth Arise and Children's

Arise which aimed at reaching and enhancing spirituality of these groups. Figure 11 is highlight of the Estate Youth Arise Program 2011 at Malu'u and Figure 12 shows the EM Children's Choir ministry from Arao Estate in west Baelelea on tour to Honiara in early 2012. These spiritual programs are important strategy for mobilizing the community and people in spiritual involvement and so as to become responsible individuals in the community.

Figure 11: The Northern Region December 2011 Youth Arise at Malu'u

Source: Aroma Family connect (retrieved)

The Arise programs are coordinated and convened in collaboration with the SSEC local churches. They are held annually or sometimes biannually within the regions as well as nationally. Initially, only members of the SSEC attended, but increasingly members of other denominations also joined at special invitation or because they are members of an Estate. The Estate leaders have their own spiritual program called the Throne Room Counsel. This is a time of prayer, fellowshipping, and seeking spiritual guidance of how leaders should lead. The program is so significant for building and strengthening the spiritual vision and relations amongst the Estate leadership and the communities. The Estate believes in a strong spiritual commitment as the basis for meaningful development, which not only address the material things but also the spiritual affairs of the people and community. As a common saying goes "when the heart is right, the action will be right".

Figure 12: The EM Children's Choir, Honiara Tour 2012

Source: Courtesy of Jack Mamai, BiF Network

5.4.4. The Financial Management Scheme

Financial Management Scheme (FMS) operates as a savings club, where the Estate members simply save their money into the different accounts (see Table 6 below). The Estate system does not impose any membership fees or contributions. The system only encourages members to save and invest in one of the schemes. Every community member is encouraged to be a "saver" and "investor" irrespective of age, status and church affiliations. The FMS operates five accounts namely tithe, long-term, special, project, and personal. These different accounts represent specific need and interest: **Tithe account**, is allocated based on Biblical principle of tithing (God's money) or tenth payable to the church or related activities. **Long-term saving** is for the next generations and cannot be drawn at any time otherwise only for the purpose for investment or retirement. **Special Needs** is for 'rainy days' and can be drawn for purposes like school fees, medical costs, funeral, and marriage. **Project** is for purpose of building a new home or investment where a small loan repayment can be drawn; and **Personal** or "daily bread" is the

account where the saver can draw from at will. Under the FMS scheme, as shows in Table 6, suppose a member deposit SBD$10,[26] the deposit is then divided according to the set percentage.

Table 6: The Financial Management Scheme account sheet

Date	Description	Income SBD$	Expenditure SBD$	Tithe 10%	Long-term 5%	Special 15%	Project 10%	Personal 60%	Balance
01.12.10	Plantation work	10.00		1.00	0.50	1.50	1.00	6.00	10.00
02.12.10	Buy bread		5.00					1.00	5.00
05.12.10	Deposit	10.00		1.00	0.50	1.50	1.00	6.00	15.00

Source: All People's Communion Universal (refer to Appendix VI)

5.4.5. The Resource Management Scheme

The Resource Management Scheme was introduced in the coastal communities where there are a lot of coconut plantations. The scheme involves management of clustered small-holder coconut plantations under a common arrangement that binds the plantation owner(s) and the Estate workers. Under the scheme, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed between plantation owners to surrender their coconut plantations to the Estate management. The plantations include village-based family owned coconut plots which are normally managed and harvested by the families themselves. As stipulated in the signed MOU, once the plantation is surrendered, plantation owner is not allowed to harvest any crops, until such time the tenure of the MOU lapses. It is the prerogative of the Estate management to engage workers to work in the plantations, from which they get their pay from their work.

5.4.6. Estate Enterprise and Investment Scheme

The third scheme is the Enterprise and Investment. This scheme operates as a community cooperative where members invest part of their savings from the FMS into various community

---

[26] The figure exemplify is in Solomon Islands dollars (SBD), SBD$10 is equivalent to USD$1.00

enterprises and projects. At the small-scale, most Estate communities invested in economic enterprise ranging from canteen, buying of copra and transport service servicing the community. The Estate encourages everyone, including children, women, those from other denominations and tribes who reside within a demarcated boundary to become member and investor in the Estate introduced and managed schemes. Other possible areas for investment included vegetable farming, piggery and poultry.

5.4.7. A Future Proposal

As stated in the Estate program of actions and also highlighted during fieldwork, planned development include setting up a Coconut Milk factory in North Malaita. As anticipated, the planned project is going to be a joint partnership between the National Government and the Estate through the National Coconut Sector Development strategy which aims to modernize the coconut industry. The project is still a long way, as far as preparatory work is concerned. Other Estate plans include establishing a rural banking facility;[27] Estate Home Security Scheme, Estate Agency Scheme, Estate Spawning Scheme, and Agency Marketing Scheme (**see Appendix VI**). These are big projects in the Estate planning for the future.

5.5. Chapter summary

North Malaita, like any rural regions on Malaita and in Solomon Islands, continues to face multiple challenges in its pursuit of development. As outline in this chapter, some of challenges and constraints are related to the physical makeup and isolation of the region. There are also challenges, due to lack of opportunities and major economic activities in the region and on Malaita. Poor road condition in the region also hindered development in North Malaita. However, the potential for development really lies with the abundant human and natural resources, which can be tapped to drive positive community development. Local community institutions, such as Churches, Traditional Houses of Chiefs, youth and women's groups and associations also continue to function

---

[27] The idea of setting up a Community Bank was being pursued by the Estate. According to field interview, the experience of lack of banking and strict conditions of current financial institutions provided the reason for North Malaita communities, through the Estate to pursue this idea.

as important stakeholders. The Estate, as described above was spontaneously initiated in the region by a local leader and has been operating in the region for more than five years. The initiative engages in organizing local communities and people, through the introduced community-based programs and projects, which seek to address development holistically.

The next chapter presents in detail findings based on fieldwork undertaken in North Malaita, of the Estate programs, and rural community development in the region.

Chapter Six :
The Research Findings

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings collected from fieldwork conducted in North Malaita with the Estate communities during the period of four weeks from 11th June to 5th July 2012. As described in Chapter 4, this research was conducted as a qualitative case study, using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, which seek to gather the views and personal stories regarding the Estate and how the local initiative contribute to positive development in rural communities in North Malaita. This thesis was framed based on one key research question: *How does the Estate – a local community-based initiative – contributes to development in North Malaita?* This study was further guided by four research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. These include:

- *To identify circumstances and reasons for introducing the Estate in North Malaita.*
- *To understand the Estate's premises and ideas of development*
- *To examine the Estate's programs and activities and how they benefit members and positively impact rural communities in North Malaita*
- *To identity the constraints, challenges and concerns facing the Estate*

Research findings in response to the above objectives will be presented, under four established themes (sections) in the chapter.

This chapter will begin by providing a general overview and description of the six Estate communities, where participants were recruited from. As mentioned in Chapter 5, there are twelve Estate communities in North Malaita. During the field work, participants were drawn from six of the twelve communities. Figure 13, provides a general overview and description of the six Estate

communities based on information gather from participants which include Estate leaders, members and observers.

Figure 13: Description of the six Estate communities[28]

Estate A

Estate A is located in the semi-urban area of Malu'u. The Estate is involved in Financial Management and Savings scheme and canteen. Members include government employees at Malu'u and members from the surrounding village communities. Despite some opposition when the programs started, the Estate programs have gain recognition and foster partnership with government agencies and local bodies with the area.

Estate B

Estate B is located in West Baelelea and has 300 plus members. Membership could increase with the move to combine two Estate communities under the one Board of Elders and House of Chiefs. The spiritual programs are very active, but the coconut plantation scheme has halted and only the Estate canteens and FMS are running. Lately one of the canteens was broken into and intruders stole goods and cash worth thousands of dollar. There were also reports of unaccounted funds and the blame was on some Estate leaders. Lack of competence, disseminating untrue information, and involvement in local politics by some senior leaders negatively affected the Estate. It was highlighted that combining the two Estate communities under one board and House of Chiefs should strengthen the Estate leadership and management. The Estate was fortunate to have a permanent office building funded by national government through the Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF) in 2008.

Estate C

Estate C is located in West Fataleka, bordering West Kwara'ae constituency with 450 plus members. The Estate operates canteen, copra trading and a pick-up truck transport service. The Estate plans to venture into piggery and poultry but still assessing the situation and especially having the right people to manage the new projects. At the start they experienced some leadership issues with a former coordinator who failed to account for some project funds. But the issue has already been dealt with in a Christian way, with no charges laid. It was expressed that the success or failure of the Estate depends on the management. It was reported local landowners and chiefs in the area are very supportive and offered to work with the Estate in big ways should there are plans to venture into bigger projects. The Estate did not receive any form of support and assistance from government or donor agencies. The local women have shown strong indication and interest working in partnership with any NGOs or interest groups on certain planned projects in the future.

Estate D

Estate D is located in the highlands of Baelelea with 118 members. The Estate is involved in growing and selling of highlands root crops and vegetables as well as FMS and investment scheme. It was reported that since it started the Estate revolving fund had accumulated to about USD$3000. Their biggest difficulty is connection and accessibility in terms of road and transportation. This hindered all planned development in the area, and incurred burden and extra cost to engage community groups and individual as carriers. The level of cooperation and commitment by members and leaders was very good.

---

[28] Refer to Figure 2, for location of the Estate communities in North Malaita

Estate E

Estate E is located in East Baelelea. It is one of the smallest community with 60 members, but very active in their programs and activities. They engaged in FMS, copra trading, and canteen. The Estate started with initial capital of about USD$5,000 from members savings. After one and half year the Estate stock and revolving fund was estimated to be around US$15,000. The success was attributed to capability and commitment of Estate members and leaders. One of the coordinator was a former clerical officer who had invaluable experience working in some of the Government Corporations and private companies. He has returned home at the height of the ethnic tension and remained in the village as fulltime volunteer with their Estate ever since.

Estate F

Estate F is located in East Baelelea with a membership of about 700. The Estate operates a canteen and farming of water melon and vegetables which are sold at local markets as well as Auki and Honiara. It was reported that the end of 2011, the Estate recorded about SBD$200,000 (USD$25,000) revolving fund in their FMS and enterprise account. International NGOs, like ADRA (Adventist Development Relief Agency) which also have a field office in the area offered to help financially with some of the projects, but the leader interviewed revealed that while partnership is welcome to accept external funds for time being would reflected negatively on the Estate or defeat the notion of raising local support as the scheme tried to support. A leader of this Estate is said to be careful when external money is used, because as he stated the primary focus is motivating members to cultivate self-reliance and making use of local resources until such time external help is needed, especially funds for income-generating projects.

As reflected in the summary in Figure 13, have different experiences of success and challenges. The Estate communities located further inland experienced setback and limited opportunities, despite being rich with natural resources. The Estate communities located along the coastal are served by the rural road going around the region. They also heavily involved in cocoa and copra as their main activities. All Estate spiritual programs are reported to be active in all communities which are under the Estate. The next section present finding regarding the reasons for introducing the Estate in North Malaita.

6.2. Reasons for introducing the Estate in North Malaita

Findings in this study revealed three underlying reasons for establishing the Estate as a community-based initiative in North Malaita. One, the Estate was formed as an attempt by local leaders and communities in North Malaita to engage in community-based development activities after the experience of the inter-island conflict commonly referred as the ethnic-tension which forced displacement and repatriation of Malaitan settlers and workers from Guadalcanal and other provinces back to Malaita. Two, the issue of unequal distribution of development to all the provinces was also identified as a factor. Participants argued that most large scale developments

were located in Honiara and Guadalcanal. Malaita being the most populated province attracted little attention for establishing major industries to engage people at the provincial and community level. As senior leader of the Estate revealed:

Because of the ethnic crisis, we cannot go back as Malaitans to establish ourselves as we used to be before. The Estate concept wants to promote the idea that people should stay at home and with whatever knowledge and resources they have they should start developing from there. (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12) [29]

And thirdly, participants explained that despite the remoteness and lack of any major developments in North Malaita, the region is rich in terms of natural, human, culture, social and spiritual capitals which can drive local community development. As findings revealed in the rural community, people do not often regard themselves as poor or lacking in anything, as one community leader explained during the interview:

In the community, we have the land, resource, knowledge and local authorities such as the chiefs, churches, and elders. We also have the labor of our young people and wisdom of our elders. What is lacking that we need to do is organize our communities and people to utilize these resources to bring development. (Alite, Community chief, 17/06/12)

Thus, this study revealed that one of the visions of the Estate is to help local communities and people realize their God given resources, which include the natural, social-cultural, economic as well as the spiritual and potentials that these resources can be best utilized to enhance personal growth and community development. The problem of poverty or "being poor" was because of the unfair capitalist system which always works in favor of the rich and powerful and exploitation of common resources perpetuated by greed. The Estate's vision and approach is to mobilize and organize rural communities and people in North Malaita see the bigger picture of development which in the context of the Estate encompasses all aspect of development – that include the

---

[29] Sosome is not a person's name. As explained in Chapter 4, code name is being used in this thesis instead of real name. The work 'sosome' in Baelelea dialect means 'pawpaw'. The same applied to all other participants (see **Appendix IV**). Also included in the bracket is description of participants and date of interview.

economic, social, cultural, physical and spiritual. This experience and new realization provided the basis for introducing the Estate and the vision of development.

Leading on from the above section, the next section outlines findings regarding the Estate's premises and ideas of development.

6.3. Estate's premises and ideas of development

This section presents findings in responds to the second objective which seek to understand the Estate's premises and ideas of development as outlined in the introduction. Findings contained in this chapter are derived from interviewing of key figures in the Estate and as well as review of Estate documents which include the Estate constitution regarding the ideas that the Estate promotes in rural communities of North Malaita. There are several ideas, which the Estate promotes as the bases of community development. Firstly, findings in this research revealed that the Estate promotes the idea of regional or community-based development where people remain in their regions, Estate and local communities and engage in their development by mobilizing their local resources and labor to drive development and create opportunities. A Senior Executive officer and advocator of the Estate in an interview explained:

> *We have to develop Malaita through the Estate system, where people stay at home, like us in North Malaita, we don't need to go to Kwara'ae, those in Baelelea or To'abaita for example do remain in Baelelea and To'abaita and with all the resources and education you have, you start developing your own area and with resources available. There will be certain national developments, where it requires national input and sharing of human resources. The other will be state development, whilst others will be at the community level where people don't need to go to other Estates. People remain in the local area and keep engaged in their own Estates projects. This should avoid the problem of dominance by the other group as we experienced that lead up to the ethnic crisis* (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12).

As stated above the Estate's principle idea of development is that people remain their communities and regions and engage in their own development that is more participatory and there is a sense of people ownership. Participants also explained that there is a significant emphasis on the value of utilizing local resources than always depending external resources, especially money. The Estate defines local resources to include the spiritual, the social, cultural, economic, and physical capitals which can be utilize to bring development.

Secondly, the Estate promotes a holistic approach to community development which emphasis improvement of the total well-being of people which include developing of positive spiritual/personal values and attitudes. As one Estate leader explained:

We want to create a community where there is a balance development. The spiritual must work together with the physical – economic, social and cultural to create a community that is peaceful, prosperous and happy. At the community my evaluation, because there has been a lot of emphasis on personal and spiritual development, the level of people involvement in spiritual programs and impact is very high. The physical is still not match up with the level of commitment and cooperation of people born out of their involvement in the TOD (Ororo, Estate chairman, 17/06/12).

Furthermore, development according to the Estate is about improvement of the total wellbeing and creating of opportunities which lead to generating of wealth and experiencing of 'good life' within a community. The following two quotes represented these concept of development which the Estate tries to promote based on a holistic development which goes beyond material wealth:

*Wealth is not measured in terms of money only but includes the total wellbeing of the nation as a whole and her citizens. Peace, Prosperity, health and society in which justice, righteousness and all virtues prevail are the hallmark of a blessed nation (*Estate draft constitution, n.d, p.2) [30]

---

[30] Refer to Estate draft constitution: **Appendix VI**

In the community, our people need to see and appreciate that everything which includes wealth, peace, and good life are blessing from God. Speaking from experience, it was obvious that when one fall away from his love and commitment to God and the good values in life, one experiences a lot of evils and misfortunate and people will hate you. But when one recommits his life and faith in God, then positive things and blessings come. (Kekene, Estate member, 21/06/12)

Thirdly, findings also identified that the Estate encourages active participation of community groups such as women, youths as well as the aged and the poor in development. A key objective of the Estate in development reads: *"There shall be no poor amongst us"* (Estate constitution, n.d, p.2). Interviewed Estate leaders explained that in the community everybody has something to contribute towards the 'common good' irrespective of age and status. Regarding the above objective, one participants explained: *"the work of the Estate is to help people have a mental-shift and to value their potentials – which include resources and talents that can be positive used in developing a community where no one is a spectator, but everyone are actors"* (Daedae, Former coordinator, 19/06/12). And finally, findings revealed that the Estate promotes collective involvement of community members and institutions such as the extended family, the tribe, the church, traditional leaders and interest groups. The members involvement through labor or financial savings and investment in the schemes and participation of local stakeholders' leaders explained are important to ensure that no-one is 'left-out' from development and also ensure sustainability of development.

The next section presents on the outcomes or positive impacts of the Estate programs and projects on rural communities in North Malaita, and especially those who have involved for example the leaders and members.

6.4. Estate community programs, activities and success stories

This section presents findings in regards to objective three, which seeks to examine the Estate programs, activities and how they had positively benefited the Estate members and rural communities in North Malaita. The findings highlighted in this section are derived from interviews with members and leaders about their experiences, personal stories and views regarding the

Estate and how programs and schemes introduced contributed to community development. Table 7, below provides a summary of findings concerning the different programs and projects involved in by members within the six Estate communities covered in the fieldwork.

Table 7: Overview of six interviewed Estate Communities

Estate community	Location	Members	Estate program		Estate schemes	
			Types	Status	Types	Status
A	Semi-urban area	400+	TOD	Progressive	FMS Canteen	Active
B	Coast - accessible to road	300+	TOD Children Ministry	Very active	FMS canteen	Not so active
C	Coast - accessible to road	450	TOD	Very active	FMS Canteen/copra truck transport	Very active
D	Highlands - not accessible to road	118	TOD	Very active	FMS canteen farming	Active
E	Highland - accessible to road	60	TOD	Very active	FMS Canteen/ copra	Very active
F	Coast - accessible to road	700	TOD	Very active	FMS canteen farming	Very active

As shown in Table 7, different communities have different experiences of the level of success and challenges. The Estate communities located in the highlands (i.e. D and E), findings revealed that lack of road access is a real constraint. But at the same time, there participants mentioned that there was high level of commitment amongst members and their leaders. The big Estate communities, on the other hand, are located mostly around the coast and have been involved in copra and cocoa. The following subsection provides findings regarding specific Estate programs and activities.

6.4.1. Estate community programs

Findings revealed that the Estate emphasizes personal and spiritual dimensions as fundamental to be included community development. As one Estate leader stated: "*in a community the spiritual and physical development must go together for a balanced development and strong community*" (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12). Another Estate leader also expressed*:* "in our

little nation if the spiritual and physical development worked well it will be really great" (Ororo, Estate Chairman, 17/06/12). Most participants highlighted that in most Estate communities; the spiritual programs are very active and involved various groups of people such as youths and women. As one of the Estate leaders expressed:

My evaluation is that the level of spiritual development is really good and very high than physical. For example, in terms of worship, TOD was really high the problem is with the physical development it still lags behind. Had we built and worked well in tandem with spiritual growth and development I guess in our little nation we could be functioning really well. (Ororo, Estate chairman, 17/06/12)

A review of the Estate constitution also highlighted the aim of the spiritual programs which is to help create a social cohesiveness and harmony within the communities, where social order and respect are maintained at all times. Based on this conviction, one Estate chairman stated:

Speaking from experience as leader involving in the TOD and other spiritual programs helps us develop spiritual values and important listening to God for clear instruction and to become sensitive in our action as leaders. The Estate programs helped build and strengthen the Estate vision and improve relations amongst us community leaders and the general population (Kenu, Estate Chairman, 21/06/12).

I particularly included an extract of engaging youths from North Malaita in the Children's Choir ministry from one of the communities involved in the Estate in Figure 15. The article highlights the EM Children's Choir ministry from West Baelelea in North Malaita on tour to the capital city, Honiara, in 2012. This children's ministry is active in all Estate involving children and youth from all Church denominations and not just from South Seas Evangelical Church.

As reflected in Figure 14, engaging youths in spiritual programs and outreaches, as to the Honiara city, provided good exposure and new learning experiences. By positively engaging children and youths in spiritual programs, participants highlighted helped avoid them from being

involved in unwanted social behaviors and problems, such as smoking and drinking *kwaso*[31] a common problem in many rural communities.

Figure 14: Positive engagement of children in spiritual programs and outreach

<div style="border:1px solid;padding:10px;">

EM Children's Choir rock Honiara city
Monday, 16 April 2012

The EM Children's Ministry from Lau Baelelea constituency staged an exciting gospel concert at multipurpose hall yesterday.

A sound which has been compared to African Gospel music, the EM choir touched the heart of many fans and supporters who braved the humidity in the multipurpose hall, listening to the beautiful voices of the children.

Led by their choir master Jack Hayford, the concert opened with a contemporary music mix which involved, a traditional wooden drum and Ukulele, followed by a welcome song performed in a 'marching band' style format.

The welcome song stirred the crowd who remained glued to their seats despite the uncomfortable heat inside Honiara's multipurpose hall.

Opening the concert the group performed a melodious song called "Oe God" followed by a brief introduction of the choir members.

Most of the children's ages in the choir, ranged from 9 to 15 years

The EM Children's choir highlighted some of their most popular songs, including "The Lord's Prayer – Our Father, Rejoice, Malaita, E yelele and Ligamoana" a touching combination of English, Lau/Mbaelelea and Tobaita dialect.

The talented children not only sang but also presented traditional dances never seen before in the country.

To the surprise of the crowd, renowned gospel singer from Vanuatu Vanessa Quai, also joined the choir to sing a Christian African song called "E Sikalela", which means 'rejoice'.

Many people, who attended the show, had praised the EM children's choir for their beautiful youthful voices and their performance of cultural items, which had not been seen in a long time.

EM children's choir performed two shows yesterday. They completed their second show last night at Lunga.

By Charles Kadamana

</div>

Source: Solomon Star Newspaper (2012)[32]

According to most participants, the principles, practices, spiritual values, and attitude are cultivated in the TOD programs, which aimed at developing spiritual values and godly characters. As one Church leader and Estate Chairman explained: "*the TOD prepares our people for live and the work place. If our people could approach God with reverential fear and good attitude, the same*

---

[31] *Kwaso*, is a homemade beer, common in Solomon Islands.
[32] Solomon Star Newspaper, 16 April 2012,[retrieved: http://www.solomonstarnews.com/features/local-entertainment/14291-em-childrens-choir-rock-honiara-city]

should be reflected in one general conduct in the community and towards their work" (Ororo, Estate chairman, 17/06/12). Also, the TOD program has helped promote a sense of cooperation amongst community members to become responsible members of the community. One female participant shared: "*the TOD spiritual program brings us closer to each other and I can see cooperativeness and being responsible amongst us women*" (Ute, Women leader, 21/06/12). Another female member also expressed: "*the TOD program brings us together, because it emphases cooperation and being responsible. For example, with us women who make cake we allocate each day for certain women to make and sale their cakes at our daily streets market. The system helped us mothers a lot*" (Amau, Women leader, 22/06/12). Finding also showed that active involvement of church leaders has made the spiritual programs active and successful. As such, Estate leaders expressed that the spiritual programs has helped them develop positive values and commitment by the Estate leaders towards the vision of building a peaceful, prosperous and functional community in North Malaita.

Apart from the spiritual programs, all other livelihoods and economic activities are defined as schemes or projects which involved all Estate members. At the time of the fieldwork, there were three active schemes in the Estate communities. These include the financial management scheme, coconut plantation scheme and enterprise or investment scheme. The findings contained in this sub-section are derived from Estate leaders and members regarding the benefits and positive impact of the three schemes on people involved.

6.4.2. Financial management scheme

The Financial management scheme (FMS) function as a savings club. Participants stated, they feel motivated to be involved in financial savings and some form of investment, after the scheme was introduced. Also, members revealed that the scheme has helped educate them about the importance of saving and investment even at the community level. Reflected in the statements below are views of members of the Estate expressed in regards to the positive impact of the schemes.

I see the Estate as a number one system that enables us old people, children and anybody to invest and become part of the scheme. The Estate system is very helpful; it enables us

to manage our family finances and spending. Even the poorest of the poor, the old and elderly in the community who cannot do anything productive, and children are happy about the Estate. I often hear elderly ladies and widows said "thank God for the Estate." What they do is with whatever little money they have or is given to them from their working sons or relatives in Honiara, they would come spent at the Estate canteen or deposit in their FMS saving. The money is hardly kept in the houses now. Within 6 months, we saved enough funds in our FMS and investment which enable us to purchase one reconditioned truck at a cost of $48, 000 (NZ$8,500). People begin to develop a sense of cooperation and ownership (Kenu, Estate chairman, 21/06/12).*

The good thing about the scheme is that I learned about the importance of savings. Before, I used to spend unnecessarily, but now that we deposit and have our savings kept in the Estate, we can take anything from the Estate and they could withdraw from our accounts. Also, when I receive income from my marketing and gifts I quickly deposit in the Estate before I spent it altogether. I was happy that my money did make some profit. If it stays with me it will never make any profit, I will just eat it away and that's the end of it. I also get feedback from other women. They also have the same experience and happiness as I am; they said oh this is good thing (Ute, Women leader, 22/06/12)

When I saw the return from my investment I was very happy. It really motivates me to invest more; because the more one invests the more will be his or her return from investment. The system has it that when you invest the money, it's like a big man now is working for you. It will certainly bring back some for you (Thago, Estate member, 22/06/12)

As for our Estate Enterprise, membership is 60 and we started with a capital fund of about $40,000 and now we run into about $120,000 after one year (Ngali, Estate coordinator, 19/06/12)

As reflected above, most members attributed positive development far more in terms of improved social relations and values than economic outcomes. Participants explained that the Estate reinforces positive values of cooperation and commitment as positive aspect of

89

development in the community. The next subsection presents findings concerning the coconut plantation management.

6.4.3. Coconut plantation management scheme

The coconut plantation scheme was introduced in most coastal Estate communities. According to respondents, the scheme helped mobilize communities to work together in certain coconut plantations which come under the Estate management, through a signed memorandum of understanding with the local plantation owners. Participants spoke highly of the benefits sharing mechanism between plantation owners and Estate engaged laborers, most of whom do not have coconut plantations. The scheme had benefited members who involved as the following quote from interviewees revealed.

When the copra plantation management scheme was running everyone involved benefited, even those without plantation like me because we work and from our work and the money made from copra we got rewarded (Kabirai, Estate member, 21/06/12)

I remembered the Plantation management scheme involved up to 300 to 400 people. All plantation owners who have their plantations under the scheme were happy because their coconut plantations are clean all the time. The people involved benefited from their hourly rate payments. I was involved with the coconut plantation schemes and the rate they pay us at that time is SBD$3 per hour. Most time we work four hours per day and that's SBD$12 per day. That is quite small, but for those who hardly make anything in a day, this is money. Because I also invested in copra trading I also received my calculated percentage dividend paid after the copra consignments were sold. So to ask if I benefited, yes I did benefit from this scheme when it was fully in operation (Kekene, Estate member, 21/06/12)

Findings showed that the strategy was effective in mobilizing and organizing rural communities to collectively participate. Working together and creating wealth through community work was the real intention of the scheme. Most community members involved were happy with the

scheme, especially that most of them do not own plantations, while the plantation owners collected their calculated share (income) without struggling by themselves. The next scheme is the enterprise and investment.

6.4.4. Enterprise - local canteens

The enterprise and investment schemes operate in most Estate communities. The scheme operates as local cooperative where members have shares in small enterprise activities like canteen and buying of copra and cocoa. Findings revealed that collective involvement and investment in the Estate managed canteen promoted a great sense of cooperation and loyalty amongst community members. Participants stated that through their membership and shares, they claimed ownership, than having only one person owns a canteen in the community, which often fueled a lot of social jealousy. As reflected in the statements below, the enterprise scheme is a positive development because it includes everyone as members.

I involved in the Estate because I come to see that I benefited from it. Before I used to run a canteen and bakery, but the problem is that everything ends up with no profit. It's "on and off" thing. With the Estate investment is good because it allows everyone to become investor in whatever scheme introduced and at the end of the day one receives his/her share in terms of interest paid into ones account kept at the Estate. Before when I operate a canteen people owned things own on credit and never pay, I usually end up bankrupt because of this. Now to a body and somebody else running it for you is better than you doing it yourself and then you spoil it or "ani'funua" – one just eats it and left nothing to reproduce. (Kabirai, Estate member, 20/06/12)

Since our Estate invests and operates a canteen, the faraway members have to skip other local canteens to come to buy at the Estate canteen because they know that the money spend will come back to them and that they have some sense of ownership. Similarly now that the Estate has owned a truck they will always wait for Estate Truck. (Kenu, Estate chairman, 21/06/12)

91

As reflected in the above statements from participants, the three schemes had contributed positively to community development through creating some form of economic involvement and investment which bring some financial benefits (returns) to members from their shares in the community-owned canteen or work in the coconut plantation management scheme. More than that, findings showed the schemes had helped strengthened community spirit, commitment and cooperation in the community.

6.5. The general success stories and positive impact on the communities

Apart from the success stories and benefits members and community experienced as a result of the programs and projects; findings also revealed that the Estate concept itself was quite successful in mobilizing rural communities and stakeholders in actively involved in their development. The Estate ideals have helped members see the 'blessings' of working together and avoided unhealthy competition, as reflected in the two statements below from two interviewees:

The Estate system has helps us to work together and not compete with each other, this avoids social jealousy. In the past if someone opens a canteen or a bakery, everybody would go into doing the same activity. Now that we have an Estate operated canteen on behalf of the members, there is a sense of community ownership and this is really a positive thing. As for us women we still do baking and selling of cakes, but we also got our flour from our Estate canteen which we have a share in. We become more organized and work together than in the past (Kabirai, Estate member, 21/06/12)

In our community, the people begin to see the purpose and goodness of working together. The people felt that Estate is more about bringing and binding people together than dividing the community. The principle aim of the Estate is to help everyone come together and work together towards common goals. Even a little child or the poorest of the poor in the community are encouraged to have an account in the Estate. This fostered inclusivity and ownership (Kenu, Estate chairman, 21/06/12)

Mobilizing of the communities not only included members but also local community institutions and leaders. In most communities, Estate leaders revealed that work of the Estate with

local community stakeholders and institutions was already at an advanced stage, as one of the Estate coordinator interviewed commented:

At the community level, local stakeholders and bodies have shown great support for the Estate, for example we had a good working relation with local landowners of the land we are situated on, they even offered close to 10 hectares of land for the Estate to develop should it wish to venture into other bigger projects like building copra milling, wholesale, office, etc. (Kenu, Estate chairman, 21/06/12).

A similar story of successful fostering of community stakeholder involvement was experienced within the semi-urban Malu'u, where the Estate had taken the initiative to mobilize all local community stakeholders which include community leaders, churches, and government agencies to collectively seek ways to address the increasing anti-social behavior and issues in the area. As outlined below are statements from two members of the Malu'u community regarding Estate involvement.

In Malu'u two weekends ago, we organize within our Estate boundary which united local community chiefs, government representatives, church elders and the community without everybody realizing that it was an Estate initiative. People turn up in good numbers and we discuss around social issues like stealing and drugs. (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12)

From recent development in Malu'u I can say that the Estate has started to foster workable connections and partnership with other community stakeholders. Malu'u as you know is used to be a place of strong opposition to the Estate. Two weeks ago we go through the Director of the Nurse Aid Training school at Malu'u to organize a community meeting involving all stakeholders to seek solutions to the anti-social behaviors in Malu'u and the surrounding communities. Everybody, without realizing the Estate being the initiator, the meeting was convened and attended by every Heads of divisions at Malu'u and all community and church leaders. All Estate arrangement and sponsorship were done behind the scene. To everybody's surprise the meeting was well organized and catering was done by the Estate mothers. After the meeting, the Malu'u government Administration Officer

admitted that he should be the one organizing and sponsoring such a meeting. He mentioned that he will sponsor the second meeting with all Estate mothers to do the catering. This is now a beginning of worthy partnership and collaboration between Estate body and community stakeholders. Interestingly, it is the Estate that is taking the lead and all stakeholders just fall in. (Daedae, former coordinator, 19/06/12)

Another area most participants revealed also experience success was regarding personal and spiritual commitment to physical activities. Such included experienced improvement in the level of food preparation and catering amongst women groups to deep commitment to the community and Church related activities and programs. As one elder of the Estate expressed:

Before we didn't have table houses in the village, now if you go around in almost all church-village communities you will see table houses. The level of food preparation improved a lot because not only church women groups involved in cooking class and trainings but the attitude displayed in food preparation and everything was done as part of worship and reverence. The Estate system and its ideals have affected our lives and the way we do things in the home and in the community. This is based on the scripture which says 'whatever your hands find to do, do it faithfully not as unto man but God (Ororo, Estate chairman, 17/06/12)

Beyond the communities in North Malaita, findings have also revealed that the Estate has already made a mark or impressed other external stakeholders. An interview with the Chief Executive Officer of CEMA[33] who was familiar with the Estate's involvement with the copra industry in North Malaita has stated that the Estate was really a very good model of community participation. Below is his observation:

The Estate offers a potential model of organizing our local coconut and cocoa farmers. At the rural level, it has already been a success. My hope and part of what I tried to do is to see how such a strategy be nationalized or further supported. Other donors too, like the World Bank and ADB have already been impressed with the Estate. I think when the time

---

[33]Community Marketing & Export Authority (CEMA) is a government regulatory body responsible for all matters of local commodity (esp. Coconut and Cocoa) activities in Solomon Islands

is right they the Estate projects will be supported to become a national project (Malego, CEMA CEO, 2/07/12).

All in all, as reflected in the above findings many saw the Estate as no ordinary development but some sort of blessing from God where communities learn to live together and build a strong, prosperous and peaceful community. As outlined above, the Estate promotes spiritual programs as priority because it motivates community people to develop positive spiritual values and principles. It also included the children, youths and women which is significant. The schemes have helped the communities to mobilize their resources to create opportunities and also motivate people to become actively involved collectively. Despite that, findings also revealed that the Estate operation and development situation in North Malaita continued to face numerous constraints and challenges. The next section outlines some of these challenges according to fieldwork.

The next section will highlight some of the constraints, challenges and concerns for the Estate and rural community development in North Malaita.

6.5. Constraints, challenges and concerns for the Estate

According to research findings, the general constraints and challenges facing North Malaita, which affected the Estate activities in the region, include poor rural infrastructure and lack of support from government, incompetency of community leaders and managers of the Estate schemes, and poor cash flow situation.

6.5.1. Poor rural infrastructures

Regarding rural infrastructure, most participants interviewed pointed out that poor rural infrastructure was the major setback for Estate activities and development in their areas. A program coordinator for one of the highland Estate Community revealed: "*for us in the highlands our biggest challenge is transportation and accessibility to market outlets. Every day we had to engage people to carry our cargoes and produce to and from the coast which is very burdensome and challenging*" (Aitonga, Estate chairman, 19/06/12). Respondents also raised the lack of

maintenance of the coastal road system as a problem hindering the transportation of copra, cocoa and other local commodities in time to the market and extra expenses. The road situation as witnessed during the time of the fieldwork was at its worst condition. Participants also expressed dismay that the government always seemed to only focus development only in Honiara and urban center roads and not the rural roads. However, one problem with infrastructure development is the issue of customary ownership which always hinders development in rural areas. Most Estate activities are done on customary owned land and there has to be a good partnership and understanding with landowning groups should the Estate want to venture into bigger projects like the Coconut Milk Factory or build permanent offices. This reflected in case with the coconut plantation scheme where some landowners started to demand some percentage of the income derived from plantation activities because the plantations are located within their customary owned land and that the scheme only benefited the plantation owners and workers and not the landowners, in the case where the landowner is a different party. Although according to respondents land issue was not said to be cause halting of the coconut plantation management schemes in most Estates, it may have contributed or could potentially have some hindrance to future developments.

6.5.2. Lack of government support

The next issue identified was the failure of the government to improve rural infrastructures in the region, especially road. Also, as highlighted by participants, lack working partnership between government agencies and with local communities groups, including the Estate has slowed rural community development activities in the area. Participants pointed out that in some countries their government had actively engaged NGOs and community-based groups to facilitate and deliver development in rural communities. In most cases, local CBOs and groups have been successful in organizing rural communities through self-supported initiatives, as one of the participants raised.

> *Some CBOs are well organized and have been very successful at the rural community level very much without the support of any government or donors. In other countries, their governments do have a strong partnership with NGOs and always work through them to implement their projects and programs. This is what our government should see and do,*

because I believe if our government does this it will really help achieve a lot of its development objectives in the rural communities. (Takari, NGO rep., 23/06/12)

Some participants further revealed that lack of government involvement which local community-groups has discouraged some people from becoming involved. They have view and question of why bother with something that any government does support or recognize in terms of providing assistance or improving the rural infrastructures. However, others observed that it is more to do with people's mentality, as one participants explained: "*the thing is our people are always concerned about what is "now", include seeking free handouts from government, and that is why we need to educate our people to have a mental shift and aware of what is good and best for them and to be patient* (Daedae, former coordinator, 18/06/12). This leads to the big problem in rural communities, which is illiteracy and over dependence on government and external assistance as only means of development.

6.5.3. Illiteracy and negative perception of some community members

Findings in this study revealed that the problem of illiteracy has caused some people to misunderstand and misinterpret the Estate, which tries to promote a holistic development based on cooperation and self-reliance. In an interview one member, he explained: "*Illiteracy is a big problem. It caused our people not to see things in a bigger picture. When we tried to organize, people would say, why bother on something for someone else success and benefit* (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12). Another participant observed: *"the problem is the understanding and acceptance of the principles in practice. People should know that hard work and community working together is good. May be because of illiteracy and ignorance, people are lazy and less cooperative* (Alite, community chief, 17/06/12). Malaita Province development advisor in an interview shared the same opinion regarding lack of community cooperation and organization.

> *Our people want development, but at the same time they usually failed to see the need for cooperation and organization, they are so concerned with individual and family interests. In a community situation, people have to cooperate and organize; only if our people see development in a bigger picture then we can drive development that benefits the greater community and everyone.* (Aitaga, Estate chairman, 25/06/12)

97

These issues cannot be address by the communities themselves, but it required partnership and collaboration between the different stakeholders, including the government as findings seemed to imply. The next section highlights common issues facing the Estate leadership – as a community-based initiative.

6.5.4. Estate Leadership and Management challenges

The issue regarding the character and capability of community leaders and managers were repeated raised by participants. Most members admitted that Estate leadership and management capacity remain a challenge for most communities and for the Estate operation. The problem related to trustworthiness and personal integrity of some Estate community leaders and coordinators are often questioned. As two Estate members raised in the statement below:

The main problem is with our main Estate leaders. The people, I see there is no problem…The problem I see is misinformation. For example, at one stage last year, the leaders preached very soon with the new scheme one coconut fruit will be worth $10. We will not be doing copra, but milling. After some time people observed and it did not happen, people started questioning the integrity of our Estate leaders assumingly they were not telling the truth. You know our people are very quick to accept information, but also very quick to criticize you for not telling the truth. These things make people to "drifting back". You know our people are smart in their outlook and always watching the actions and words of our leaders. (Kekene, Estate member, 21/06/12)

There are lots of complains against Estate leaders and this forced some Estate leaders to withdraw. In our Estate this is what caused our Estate to become less active, because some of the leaders who come to join the Estate Council of Elders had failed to be sensitive and started to do things in their own ways, thus exposing their weakness instead of their strengths and potentials. (Daedae, Former coordinator, 19/06/12)

The problem of lack of motivation by leaders was also highlighted as problem affecting the Estate. One member of the community explained: *"the problem I see is our leaders are easily*

discouraged. That is why we need people with capability and strong heart to manage these Estate enterprises" (Hafisu, Observer, 18/06/12). Furthermore, lack of trust and accountability of coordinators was mentioned as problem, where certain entrusted people failed to account or deliberately misuse members' fund kept at the Estate. From the fieldwork, at least two Estate communities out of six communities, experienced serious problem regarding funds been unaccounted for by coordinators.

6.5.5. Poor cash-flow situation and unstable price for local commodities

The issue of poor cash-flow situation in rural communities of North Malaita was mentioned as a problem. In North Malaita, people mostly depend on coconut and cocoa as their main source of income and livelihoods. These crops are primary commodities, and often experience periodic instability of international market price, which severely affect the inflow cash income and circulation of money in the rural communities. In terms of copra, one Estate project coordinator explained: "*The challenges are beyond our control, for example the sudden fall of copra price. Now we have 105 bags of copra, but with the current price of $2/kg, we already anticipated a small margin of profit or even a cut even"* (Kenu, Estate coordinator, 22/06/12). As a result, another member in the community explained: "*our biggest problem is cash flow. We can venture in growing of cabbage and other crops. Production is not a problem; speaking from experiences our people, they can produce, but the market and transportation system also contribute to the circulation of money in the community and getting local produce quick to the markets"* (Ororo, Estate chairman, 17/06/12). Hence, cash flow problem and instability in international market price of local communities are problems the rural communities will continue to face as part of the capitalist market system where economic activities seemed to be concentrated in the cities and urban environment.

6.5.6. Some concerns

This final subsection highlights findings in regards to the long term sustainability of the Estate projects. Findings revealed that the Estate reached a stage that it must expand and engage fulltime workers. All alone, the Estate leaders have been volunteering and sacrifice a lot to keep

the programs and activities going. This presents a possible risk factor to project operation and sustainability, as two participants explained:

The reality our people face is just too much, to maintain one's family obligations such as school fees and welfare is huge challenge for us leaders to weigh between our family obligations and commitment in community work. To work voluntarily is sometimes hard. A time we had to do additional things to give some supports to the family. But, because we see this as serving God, it's also fulfilling. Those who work expressed we need to get these projects to a profitable level so that we work fulltime (Ororo, Estate chairman, 17/06/12).

I have been with so many community based organization and initiatives. The real problem is lack of sustainability, for the first few years it will be ok but as it goes on, others factors will play in to the demise of the organization. I think the Estate will be sustainable given they improve on the mentioned issues – leadership and management and having a strong working relations with other local stakeholders, especially church bodies and traditional house of Chief and government (Alite, community chief, 18/06/12)

Findings revealed Estate partnership with local stakeholders such as the local Traditional House of Chiefs and churches have been strong. Other than that, there is a need to strengthen partnership with land owning groups, other NGOs, local business bodies such as shippers, wholesale suppliers and/or market outlets in Honiara and Auki. Practical skill-based trainings were also mentioned as of grave need for the Estate. As one participant revealed: "*I can see education and capability of leaders and people is one concern worth highlighting, its time better trained and capable person manage our Estates*" (Wane, observer 25/06/12). There is also need for young and capable people be given more responsibility, which can be able to learn from past leaders mistake and build a new leadership platform especially when old leaders have failed or becoming an obstacle to change and innovation.

Final, there is a concern for diversification of the Estate economic activities, apart from coconut and cocoa which is seasonal and depend very much on international market price. Some mentioned the prospect of investing in transport business sector and operate buses in the city or

perhaps consider buying of investment shares in some big businesses. Participants also mentioned the need to speed up the planned establishment of a rural banking facility - Community Bank – to serve the need of the rural people and the Estate. At the same time, potential members must be encouraged to venture into new business opportunities or get existing businesses to partner in new ventures such as the planned coconut milk factory, as they might have the capital resources to complement the Estate resources.

6.6. Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter presented a number of findings. To recap, findings revealed that the Estate, as a community-based development initiative, evolved out of a local situation resulted from the failure of development in rural communities and self-realization that despite no major development in North Malaita, the people have potential should they organize and utilize their locally available resources. Also, findings as outline above showed that the Estate promotes a community-based and holistic development approach which not only concerned with only economic needs but improvement of the total-wellbeing of the community, which included the spiritual, social and cultural dimensions of community development.

In community development, as findings in this research showed, the successes are measured in terms of how local communities and people strengthen cooperation, create opportunities; improve personal and community wellbeing and a sense of attachment and loyalty to place and vision of development of the community. Also, despite the limitations in terms of physical-infrastructure development, cash-flow problems, local people have the manpower and natural resources that can be utilized to drive development. The constraints and challenges to development according to this study include incompetency and lack of trust and confidence on local leaders, poor infrastructure, lack of government support and partnership with local community groups; poor cash-flow situation in the rural communities. Overall this study revealed that the local initiative – the Estate was successful in mobilizing local communities and people through spiritual programs and project activities.

The findings presented in this chapter will be discussed in the next chapter in refection with the literature chapter.

Chapter Seven :
Discussion and Conclusions

7.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings of the study in response to the main research question of this thesis: *How does the Estate – a community based initiative – contributes to development in North Malaita?* *It* discusses the results in Chapter 6, four themes and subsequent sub-themes will be discussed in response to the above research question and outlined objectives in Chapter 1.

The first section will discuss theme one, which is concerned with the context and reasons for introducing the Estate in North Malaita. The second section will discuss theme two, and focuses on the Estate's premises and ideas and how it contribute to positive development in North Malaita. The third section will discuss theme three, and highlights the success stories of the Estate programs and activities in the communities and people involved. The fourth section discusses theme four, which covers the constraints and challenges of the Estate and rural community development in North Malaita. The final section provides a general summary and conclusion, as well as the general outlook and recommendations for improvement in the community development practice.

7.2. The reasons for introducing the Estate in North Malaita

This section discusses the findings in response to research objective one: *to identify circumstances and reasons for introducing the Estate in North Malaita*. The Estate was introduced in the mid-2000, by a local community leader in North Malaita after the period of the ethnic-conflict as highlighted in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 respectively. The study shows that in line with the idea of the "rollback of the state from rural communities" in Solomon Islands. This change

was a result of failures in past approaches to rural community development in ensuring local people's meaningful participation in development at the local community level. This is consistent with Ziai (2007) who argued that the modern welfare state had fallen short of delivering its promises to rural communities to live a decent life and live in peace with each other. Finding of this research also confirmed past studies by Misite'e (2008) and Rohorua (2007) that in Solomon Islands the focus has always been on large-scale development ventures, which were driven mostly by industrialization and economic growth. This form of development often forced rural people from their communities and provinces in search of employment and economic opportunities in Honiara and other islands and provinces. As a result, local communities are left to depend largely on subsistence agriculture, small-hold cocoa, and coconut plantations as sources of income and livelihoods. This is consistent with Narayan (1995) who argued that a heavy-handed approach to community development which tried to achieve results on a large scale through externally controlled systems seems not to be working in the Solomon Islands. This heavy-handed approach is often driven by profit and market forces and therefore failed to put people at the centre of development, which according to Matterssich and Monsey (2004) should be the focus of development. As such, it often failed to improve the wellbeing of those in the village and to create opportunities necessary to enable local people to meaningfully engage and contribute towards their own development aspirations.

This study shows that there has been is a failure to deliver equitable development in all provinces and regions. As highlighted in Chapter 5, Malaita, being the most populated island and province has been unfairly treated in terms of being prioritised for large-scale development projects. Most large scale-industries are located in other islands and provinces, including Honiara. For example, Solomon Islands Plantation Limited (now Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited) and Gold Ridge mining on Guadalcanal, Russell Islands Plantation Estate Limited on the Central Islands' province, and Noro Fish Processing and Kolombangara Forestry Plantation limited in the Western province. Interestingly about half of the entire workforce in these plantations and industries were Malaitans (Maeliau, 2003). While some have returned to Malaita, many bought land around Honiara and on other islands and have now become permanent residents, many of whom are quite successful in their host communities and provinces. This has caused envy and resentment, which led to the ethnic-tension. Hence, regarding the 'roll-back' and failure of the state, Maeliau (2003) argued that in Solomon Islands, the government has failed to distribute

development evenly throughout all provinces and islands enabling local people to engage in development activities in their own areas within the communities where they have rights and control over their resources. This also supports Roughan (2011) who argued that the government has failed to invest in the basic life of those that live in the village and improving the lives of the majority of Solomon Islanders living in the village to enjoy peace, harmony and tranquillity daily.

Participants pointed out that the 'ethnic-tension' between the people of Guadalcanal and settlers on Guadalcanal of Malaita origin reflected the failure on the part of past governments and stakeholders to invest in regional development. Instead major developments have been centralized mainly around Honiara, on Guadalcanal, and few other provinces. Other provinces, including Malaita, the most populated province were left out. This realization and experience during the ethnic-conflict (1998-2000) and failure by the state to provide equitable development provided motivation for local North Malaitan leaders and communities to seek an alternative form of development. As one leader and advocator of the initiative explained:

Because of the ethnic crisis, we cannot go back as Malaitans to establish ourselves as we used to before. The Estate concept wants to promote the idea that people should stay at home and with whatever knowledge and resources they have and they should start developing from there. (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12)

Thus, in one sense, the Estate was a post-conflict response where local leaders and communities were compelled to seek alternative ways by looking internally to organize and cooperate in fostering a sense of hope and common purpose in development. This finding supports Escobar's (1997) argument that in times of socio-economic stress, rural communities and people need to seek solutions by cultivating endogenous potentials based on cooperation and self-reliance. Also, this finding is consistent with McGregor's (2009, p.1697) observation that in recent years there has been a significant recognition of the place and role of indigenous systems and knowledge in the current economic crisis affecting all societies and not just Western countries. Thus, the findings from this study confirms the views of Peredo and Chrisman (2006) that community-based development often emerge in response to some combination of factors such as economic crisis, lack of opportunity, social disintegration, and social alienation of a community or

subgroup from mainstream society, including factors such as environmental degradation, post-war reconstruction, and volatility of large business.

Mercer (1999) explained that one of the rationales for establishing many grassroots NGOs or community-based initiatives is to source funds from government and donors. In this study, findings showed that the basis for establishing the Estate is to mobilize local resources, which include economic, cultural and social aimed at creating development opportunities within the community. The government, as mentioned above has failed and therefore leaders of the Estate expressed that people should not depend on the government and donors, but start initiating ideas and mobilizing local communities and people through involvement with local cooperatives. Participants admitted that the biggest problem in community development is lack of cohesion in communities and not having a common vision for developing the community. The findings also shows that in the community people started to develop the mentality that they are not poor; they only lack the opportunity and capacity to fully organize, participate and utilize their local resources in new ways which create opportunities and wealth. This is consistent with what Datta (2007) stated, that an organized community ensures equal participation, which can achieve maximum benefits even with limited external capacity-building support.

In summary, the Estate emerged out of a local situation (the ethnic crisis) and was initiated by a local leader, which according to Nyamugasira's (1998, p.300) can be qualified as an indigenous development initiative. The need for local communities to look inward to cultivate a sense of hope and possibility was also supported by most 'hopeful post-development' writers, whereby local communities can organize and utilize locally available resources in new ways to bring about development. This is discussed more in detail in the next section, which focuses on the Estate premises and ideas of community development.

7.3. The Estate's premises of development

After much contemplation…I was convinced that the search for solutions has to start from the bottom of the ladder of society and work its way up. (Maeliau, 2003, p. 54)

The above statement reflects the views of the founder of the Estate, that the idea of real community development is about starting at the bottom of the ladder or the village community and developing from there by mobilizing local available resources to create opportunities that bring maximum benefits to the people. This section discusses the second research objective: *To understand the Estate's premises and ideas of development*. The findings in this study identified three key premises or ideas in respect of the above objective. Firstly, the Estate promotes regional or community-based development, which focuses on developing local areas and engaging people in their own development. Secondly, the Estate promotes a holistic development approach, which emphasizes on developing a community's consciousness and positive spiritual and cultural values. And thirdly, the Estate emphasizes the importance of mobilizing of local resources and institutions to drive local community development.

As highlighted in Chapter 6, the Estate promotes community-based development which places emphasis on the engagement of local people at the community level. As revealed by one of participant:

"*We want to develop rural communities in Malaita through the Estate system, where people stay at home, or local area and keep engaged in their own development. Like us in north Malaita; we don't need to go to Kwara'ae and those in Baelelea or To'abaita to remain in their region and with all the resources and education you have and start developing your own area*" (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12).

Although the idea of regionalism and community-based development seemed to be inconsistent with the free movement of people in search of opportunities, the context of Solomon Islands as discussed in Chapter 3 is rather different. Saeni (as cited in the DTIS Report, 2008, p. 51) pointed out that more than 86% of the land resources are customary owned and are located in the rural areas. As such, Maeliau (2003, p.59) argued the need is to organize and engage people in development right at the village level where they have direct access and rights over their resources. This approach to development is consistent with a hopeful post-development perspective, which emphasized 'place-based development' dominated by local concerns, politics, new social movements and local initiatives which enabled local people to take lead and control over their own development. Participants argued that people would still be required to engage at

the national level or in other provinces, but that not everyone will find employment. They stated that the majority who remain in the village must still be meaningfully engaged in development. This finding supports Cavaye (2004) that in community development, it is the local people who should take the lead to initiate, organize, reframe problems and work cooperatively utilizing their community assets in new ways to improve their livelihoods and build a strong community.

As showed in Chapter 6, the Estate promotes a holistic approach to development, which emphasizes the spiritual, social, cultural as well as economic development. The Estate's notion of development, as outlined in Chapter 5, is concerned with improving the total wellbeing of people and maintaining peace and cohesion in the community at all times. This perception of development is consistent with Ife and Tesoriero's (2006) six dimensions of community development, discussed in Chapter 2, which encompasses the economic, social, cultural, physical, political, and personal/spiritual (refer to Figure 4). Table 8 shows how the Estate's conceptual framework and appoach to development fits to the six dimensions.

The Estate promotes a community-based economic development model as opposed to to being intergrated into the mainstream economy as suggested by Ife and Tesoriero (2006), as an alternative approach taken by many rural communities. The Estate promotes rural cooperatives and schemes involving everyone in the community. In terms of the social dimension, the Estate contributes to strengthening of social relations as well as spiritual and cultural values as an integral part of community development. Yet, a shortcoming experienced is the lack of a practical approach to environmental related (sustainable) development. As observed during the field visit projects such as sustainable tourism could be promoted using environmental and cultural initiatives with good potential for development which could be adopted by the Estate. However findings also revealed that the current involvment of the Estate is still around economic and spiritual development. Overall, there is a need by the Estate to diversify its activities, however its capacity is yet to match up with its vision and ideas of development, which hinges around all the dimensions of community development, as proposed by Ife and Tesoriero (2006)..

Table 8: The Estate and the six dimensions of community development

The six dimensions	Literature According to Ife & Tesoriero (2006)	Gaps	Findings (According to the Estate)	Development outcomes
Economic	Emphasis on local communities, establishing links and engaging in the mainstream economy Attracting new industries and investment	More market/project driven than people driven More emphasis on external capital than local capitals Little emphasis on alternative community-based economic development and collective involvement	Promoting of alternative community-based development which emphasizes establishing local cooperatives, community financial savings and utilization of local resources as the basis for community economic development Collective involvement	The mobilizing of local people in cooperative schemes has proved to be successful, but the project is said to face difficulty in terms of supportive infrastructures and global market focus (instable price of copra/cocoa) There is weak partnership with local business and other stakeholder (for example existing local businesses)
Social	Emphasis on social work and services Focus on social needs and interaction	Little emphasis on potential of local people Little emphasis on social capital and human values	Strengthening of social bonds Daily interaction in social activities and spiritual programs Emphasis on potentials and values	Improved levels of cooperation and commitment of community members People feel motivated
Political	Decision making is on local communities levels and external stakeholders	There is no clear distinction of who defines as community leader	Well defined community leaders as church and tribal leaders The role of other leaders such as women and youth leaders are integrated into existing leadership domain (i.e. part of church or tribe)	The character training and motivation is high but the level of competence and up-skilling needs addressing
Environmental	Extracting of natural resources as part of development Conservation of defined areas	Extraction of natural resources is destructive Little emphasis on cultural aspects of the environment	Environment is part of God's creation and human beings are stewards to care and protect the environment Emphasis that the cultural and spiritual is significant for the of environmental stewardship	Little practical attempts are made to preserve and conserve significant areas and resources as part of development
Personal & spiritual	Personal growth and spiritual development are part of community development	The approach to personal/spiritual development is separated development projects	Spiritual/personal development is integrated in all project activities and programs Developing strong spiritual commitment and life-style through values and principles Personal characters and values are important in community development	The practice and involvement in spiritual programs is very active and there are positive results in others dimensions of development often attributed to be developing of spiritual values and experiences Personal commitment is devotion and worship
Cultural	Culture is dying and it must be conserved and protected from being lost	The idea was more of preserving and there is little involvement of cultural values and practices in development	Culture is part of living community that must live and not just preserved. In fact there is no such thing as preserving. Culture can only be practiced	The Estate integrates cultural values (e.g. cooperation) and arts (e.g. music) as part of personal development

All in all the above concept of development promoted by the Estate supports, Gegeo's (1998) definition based on his study of the Kwara'ae concept of *gwaumauri'anga,* translated as the 'good life' which endorses a holistic approach encompassing the spiritual and psychological. According to this study, participants believe that peace; prosperity, good health, justice and righteousness are blessings from God and a hallmark of a strong and aspired community. The above perception of development confirms what Ife and Tesoriero (2006), that in indigenous communities, people often emphasized the personal/spiritual dimension as the basis of development. Hence, like Cavaye's (2001) argument, people's spirituality and culture is a way of life which helps contribute to building a strong community.

The findings further revealed that through the Estate programs people learned that cooperation is a way of life and has been embedded in their local culture and belief system. As discussed in Chapter 5, cooperation is *biraga -* meaning norm or practice, which revolves around social and obligation events like *fufu'ue (pride-price)*, and *maea* (funeral) where it requires people's cooperation. In addition, cooperation and commitment were often exhibited during spiritual programs and activities organised by the church. This realization provided the basis for the Estate leaders to conclude that if cooperation is a cultural norm and a Christian principle, then it could equally be applied in community development, where people cooperate to utilize their resources and talents in new ways to create opportunities and maximize benefits for them. This finding regarding renewed level of cooperation and commitment supports Phillip and Pittman's (2009, p.6) definition that community development is a process of developing and enhancing the community's ability to act collectively, and as a result of collective action it contributes to n improvements in all realms of the community.

This study supports the findings in Cavaye (2006) and Phillips and Pittman (2009), as that community development involves both the process and outcome of community participation. As one of the Estate executive explained: "*in a community, even the poorest or weakest deserves dignity; and some form of recognition and involvement as part of the community*" (Sosome, Senior Executive, 16/06/12*)*. This includes everyone, the children, the elderly, disabled and those from other religious communities and church. They are given equal opportunities to be involved in the Estate, and through their involvement, they derived some form of development benefits. This

inclusive approach supports Datta's (2007, p.51) view that participation of women and youths in the development process must not be overlooked. This study showed that inclusive participation is particularly important in the context of the region. As discussed in Chapter 5, North Malaita is a patrilineal society where the male is the head of the household and the tribe. Thus to promote the value of inclusiveness and equal participation reflected well on the Estate and entailed positive development in the rural communities of North Malaita. This value of inclusivity also carry the idea that in a community "no-one should be poor" if people are organized and equal participation of groups like youths and women are supported in the development process and outcomes. These values found in the Estate are consistent with Datta (2007, p.51) as highlighted in Chapter 2, where he argued that an organized community which ensures equal participation for all members can experience positive development even with limited external capacity-building support.

In community development, developing of personal/spiritual values, as Cavaye (2001) and Ife and Tesoriero (2001) pointed out helps promote social cohesiveness, and develop a sense of respect and responsibility within a community. As highlighted by most participants spiritual values help build and strengthen the vision and cooperation amongst community leaders and the people. The Estate members interviewed revealed that the Tabernacle of David Program, which involved community members' prayer and worship; helps nurture positive spiritual values and refreshing experience. The programs help members reflect on the goodness of God on their lives and how spiritual experience can transform not only their lives but also the community as a whole. By involving community members in spiritual program(s), it helped strengthen their spiritual lives and interpersonal relations with others. This involvement of local community members in spiritual programs and prayers supports Ife and Tesoriero's (2006) emphasis on personal/spiritual qualities, values, and norms as fundamental in strengthening and re-establishing a community, where people become committed and responsible. The Estate's prioritization of spiritual/personal development also concurs with Lean (1995) who pointed out that often people carry the conviction that what happens on the inside affects what happens on the outside, when she referred to spiritual values and personal characters in community development.

Furthermore, the Estate emphasized the mobilization of local resources in community development. According to the findings, most people interviewed perceived that they are not poor.

As one participant expressed: "*In the community, people are not poor; we have the land, abundant natural resources, knowledge and wisdom of our leaders, strength of our people and the leadership of the Church and chiefs*" (Alite, Community Chief, 17/06/12). The problem, as most participants identified was not with resources, but with how local communities organize and mobilize these local resources, such as natural resources, coconut plantations, labor, and finance to create opportunities and encourage development. This collective approach of utilizing local resources and strengths supports McGregor (2009), who argued that for too long, development had only focused on people's needs and not their potential and assets. Focusing on people's potential and assets are important, because as Nel et al. (2001) argued development must be based on local context and consider utilizing of local resources and talents. This idea of utilizing local resources emphasized by the Estate is also consistent with Green and Goething (2010, p.6) who strongly supported collective solutions by utilizing existing resources within the reach of the community. This is even more important considering that cooperation can enable local communities to have the negotiation power and capacity to increase production, as experienced with copra and cocoa production, in terms of high production turnover from North Malaita as reported by the Commodity Export and Marketing Authority.

Finally, the involvement of local institutions which included the extended families, tribes, church and interest groups in the process of mobilizing local communities and people in development was supported. Participants expressed that they feel more closely attached and identified with certain Church denominations and particular tribal or village communities. This finding confirmed those of previous studies (see for example Ofasia, 2003; Saeni, 2008) that in North Malaita the church and traditional institutions are an integral part of the community. These basic community institutions play an important role when it comes to spiritual matters, land issues, and efforts towards peace building. This finding concurs with McKinnon (2006) that consideration for local culture and institutions often create hope and opportunities where meaningful engagement can take place within the sphere of community. As also highlighted by Radcliffe and Laurie (2006,as cited in McGregor 2009, p. 1697), there is a significant shift in recent years which recognize the place and role of culture and traditional institutions in community development. Hence, the Estate emphasizes the role of cultural institutions, which agrees with Ziai (2004) who argued that from the start development was understood to be a misconceived enterprise

undermining cultural diversity and local contexts by universalizing of Western institutions. Ife and Tesoriero (2006, p.15) also supported this claim and argued that re-establishing and strengthening of community basic structures, whether it be the village, the extended family, or the Church as part of community development is important. This is because the history of industrialization has been the history of destruction of these traditional structures.

In summary, this section has presented the rationale and approach of the Estate in community development. The premise is that given the right development approach and support, people remain in their local areas and communities and collectively engage in development by utilizing local resources and talents. The findings in this study are consistent with the views of 'hopeful post-development' advocates, that there is a need for context-based and a more comprehensive approach in development, which focuses on people's potentials and concerns. This is especially important in light of the social-economic crisis currently facing not only the third world but also all societies as explained by Ife (2007) and Ziai (2007). In the context of this study the approach adopted by the Estate became necessary after the experience of the ethnic-conflict which revealed that centralization of development in certain areas and provinces had only created problems which not only destabilized communities but also had severe national implications. Through community consciousness and awareness programs, people are beginning to appreciate and value the idea of cooperation and developing personal/spiritual values which Cavaye (2001) considers as significant in establishing solid bonds and building a functional community. The above findings confirmed that in North Malaita, the place and involvement of the church and cultural institutions have played an integral part in people's lives and the community. These basic community institutions are significant in mobilizing rural communities and resources in development.

7.4. The Estate programs and schemes and impact on community development

This section will discuss findings in response to objective 3: *To examine the Estate programs, activities and how they benefit members and have positively impact on the rural communities in North Malaita.* The views and information from Estate members and leaders are based on their personal observations and experiences. This section first discusses the overall success of the Estate and the positive impacts of respective programs and projects. As reflected in the findings in Chapter 6 (refer to Figure 14 and Table 7) the level of success differed across the different communities involved in the Estate programs and activities. This study identified several factors determining the success of the Estate programs and projects, and this include proximity to essential services and facilities, having transparent and visionary leaders, effective management, and partnership with other local community-based institutions as well as external support institutions.

Regarding external services and infrastructures, participants revealed that the Estate communities located in the highlands faced setback in terms of lack of road access. This difficulty hindered planned development projects and activities in the natural resource-rich highlands. This experience of physical constraints regarding lack of proper road infrastructure was also noted by Cavaye (2001, p.111), who identified that adequate rural infrastructure can drive local community development, especially delivery of goods and services. However, the finding also revealed that one positive aspect about these highland communities was the high-level cooperation and commitment of leaders and their relatively small and manageable populations. For example, Estate D has only about 118 members and more than 90% are from the same Church denomination. Estate community E, another smaller Estate with the total membership of 60, and an experienced manager, showed that it is extremely active and successful over their two and half years in operation. These factors are consistent with Datta's (2007) who observed that in rural communities despite extreme difficulties, having effective leadership and committed members can enable local communities and people to overcome these challenges even without external assistance.

Finding regarding the Estate E showed that the community has being served by a feeder road, which is connected to a boarding school in the area. The members have also established good working relationships with the boarding High School. The proximity to the school and good partnership formed enabled members to sell their produce to the school and from time-to-time members are engaged in part time employment at the school. In addition, the Estate leaders revealed that the working relations and partnership with the local authorities, which included the Traditional House of Chiefs and local churches in the community has been positive. In the semi-urban community of Malu'u, where Estate A was located, positive engagement are also reported with the local stakeholders, including government agencies to seek solutions to combat rising anti-social behaviors in the areas. The result was reported to be successful in particular the way the Estate started to mobilize and engage with the local community stakeholders. The following three sub-themes will discuss the Estate programs and projects, where members have been involved and how they have positively contributed to community development.

7.4.1. *Personal and spiritual development*

Findings revealed that members' personal/spiritual development form the basis of the Estate development practice. This emphasis on spiritual by the Estate is consistent with what Ife and Tesoriero (2006) identified that in indigenous communities, people often advocate the personal/spiritual dimension as central to other dimensions of community development. As highlighted in Chapter 6, and discussed above in Section 7.3, participants revealed that the Estate organised spiritual programs have helped deepen their spiritual commitment and personal relations which significantly promotes social cohesiveness, cooperation and harmony within the family and community. This finding regarding people's spiritual involvement and positive experience confirmed Ife's (1995, p. xi) argument that fundamentally development should be about ensuring people live in harmony with their environment and live in peace with each other within a community, which the current social, economic and political initiatives and institutions have failed to achieve. Also as Datta (2007, p. 47) and Kamat (2004) argued that interaction with the members on a daily basis helps build relationships, trust, and understanding of the diverse needs of the community. As highlighted earlier, the Estate programs and invlovement of people has helped develop new level of consciouness and positive values of coopertaion, participation, and certain personal/spiritual

charcaters and principles. The above finding supports Wilkinson and Quarter (1995) that community consciousness is an important process in establishing solidary bonds and mobilising rural community towards achieving a common goal through mutual association.

The Estate leaders also expressed that the spiritual programs have helped build and strengthen the vision and cooperation amongst them and the people. This finding confirms Ife and Tesoriero' (2006) views that spiritual values and positive experiences can contribute to strengthening and reestablishing a community (see Table 8). This is defined by most participants as positive development. According to findings in Chapter 6, most female members expressed that the TOD spiritual program has helped bring them closer to each other and they can see cooperativeness and being responsible as the blessings of working together. The *active* involvement of youth and children in spiritual programs and activities considered a very enriching experience. This is a positive development, ensuring equal participation is important as Datta (2007, p.51) noted that often the role and involvement of women and youth in the development process are overlooked. However, it could be argued that whether the same level of women and youth participation is reflected in decision-makings remain a challenge. For example, it was revealed that in the six Estate communities, few women leaders serve as coordinators and committee members, but one woman has serve as chairperson.

Overall, the spiritual programs have helped the youths and children, and as a result kept them away from becoming involved in unwanted social behaviors and problems. Through spiritual programs, children can develop positives values and good characters. As compared with Estate activities and projects, the programs are very active and successful in most Estate-affiliated communities. As one participant revealed: "M*y evaluation is that the level of spiritual development is really good and very high than physical. Had we built and work well with spiritual growth and development I guess in our little nation we could be functioning really well"* (Ororo, Estate chairman, 17.06.12). In many cases, as this study highlights the level of spiritual development is high because of the strong involvement of the church leaders in the community's spiritual affairs. The next subsection will discuss the financial and investment schemes and how they have contributed to positive social and economic development.

7.4.2. Financial management and investment scheme

The Estate introduced the Financial Management Scheme (FMS) which operates as a savings club. In addition it also introduced the enterprise – that includes a canteen, and buying of copra, which function as local cooperatives. The idea of the Estate is to promote a community-based economic development through the FMS and Estate investment schemes, which is consistent with Ife and Tesoriero (2006, p.210) who pointed out, in Chapter 2, that resorting to alternative community-based economic institutions such as credit union, savings club or community bank in rural communities where people lack adequate financial and banking facilities are some of the ways local communities engage in economic development at the rural community level (see Table 8, also refer back to Section 2.3, in Chapter 2) .

As discussed earlier the intention of the Estate for introducing these schemes is to mobilize and pool community financial resources into one common account to be managed by the Estate on behalf of its members. Findings contained in Chapter 6, revealed that the schemes had helped educate and motivate members about the importance of saving and collective investment, even at community level. As one member stated: "*The good thing about the scheme is that I learned about the importance of savings…Before, I used to spend unnecessarily, but now that I deposit and have my savings kept in the Estate…If it stays with me, it will never make any profit, I will just eat it away and that's the end of it*" (Ute, women's leader, 22.06.12). The savings and investment schemes have helped community members develop basic financial literacy skills and knowledge, enabling them to spend wisely saves some of their income. It also helped local members have confidence in their own ability to make wise financial decision and appreciate the potential of cooperation. In addition, findings revealed that the FMS and investment scheme provides equal opportunity for everyone to become members and investor irrespective of their age, gender, and religious background. This is positive development as shared by a participant that: "*The Estate is a number one system that enables us old people, children and anybody to invest and become part of the scheme. Even the poorest of the poor, the old and elderly in the community who cannot do anything productive, and children are happy about the Estate…through their membership and share they feel part of the Estate*" (Kenu, Estate coordinator, 21.06.12). This inclusive participation is consistent with Datta's (2007, p.51) argument that the recognition and

involvement of everyone, including youths and women in development is important to develop sense of cooperation, loyalty, and ownership, without which people with feel less part of development and the community.

7.4.3. Coconut plantation management scheme

Mass mobilization of the community's population in the coconut plantation management scheme was a positive approach to community development. This study revealed that the scheme is effective in mobilizing local community labor and local plantation owners through cooperative engagement. The management of this project is consistent with Cowen and Shenton's (1995, pp. 42-43) definition rural development as about providing human beings with the opportunity to develop their fullest potential and of enabling the poor, women, and free independent farmers to organize for themselves and work together. Findings revealed that under the arrangement the scheme benefited members who were involved and plantations owners who surrendered their plantations to come under the Estate's management. Plantation owners were delighted because in the past their property were hardly maintained and production rarely reach their maximum capacity. Also community members who do not own a plantation benefited through their involvement in the scheme as workers. As one member revealed: "*I am involved with the coconut plantation schemes and the rate they pay us at that time is SBD$3 per hour. Most time we work four hours per day and that's SBD$12 per day. That is quite small, but for those who hardly make anything in a day, this is money"* (Kekene, Estate member, 21/06/12). However, at the time of the fieldwork, the scheme has halted operation due to problems reported to be beyond the control of the local communities. Some of the factors which have affected the project will be discussed later in Section 7.4. Already the coconut plantation scheme has significantly mobilized the rural community small-holder coconut plantations and as highlighted earlier external stakeholders such as the Commodity Export Marketing Authority has been impressed with the high rate of copra production coming from North Malaita, especially from the Estate communities involved in the scheme to be specific.

In summary, the above findings revealed that the Estate, through the introduced programs and projects has been effective in mobilizing the resources and efforts community and people. The Estate's spiritual programs have proved to be an effective strategy in raising community

consciousness and developing some core spiritual values and principles which have encouraged cooperation and commitment towards the bigger vision of developing the communities by creating opportunities and wealth. The financial management and investment schemes have provided the motivation for people to save and create positive values about collective engagement and utilisation of local resources.

7.5. The constraints, concerns and challenges for rural community development in North Malaita

This section will discuss the findings in response to objective 4 which is: *To identity the constraints, challenges and concerns facing the Estate.* As highlighted in Chapter 6, participants identified the main constraints and challenges to community development in North Malaita affecting the operation of the Estate include poor rural infrastructure, lack of support from external stakeholders and agencies, failure and incompetency of Estate leaders and managers, and poor cash flow problem due to high dependence on f agricultural primary products namely copra and cocoa which are heavily influenced by international market price.

This study revealed that poor rural infrastructure was a major setback to rural community development in North Malaita. Participants expressed that lack of proper rural infrastructures is a major constraint for the transportation of local produces and services to the market. In this community, local people have a lot of produce like farming of local crops, like taro and vegetables. Lack of a reliable transport system and storage facilities had restraint local communities and people from venturing into new business opportunities or expanding local production. As pointed out earlier North Malaita has huge potential in cocoa and coconut production, mostly amongst small-holders. Participants raised that it was obvious that most infractructure development is concentrated in and around Honiara and certain areas, such as where large-scale economic activities are located like SIPL/GPPL and Gold ridge on Guadalcanal. This argument is consistent with Sarkszy-Banoczy (2010) that often infrustructure development seemed to be prioritized around areas with high economic potential and less of a priority in areas of less economic potential even if they are regions with high ppulation. In North Malaita, however, the findings showed that there is

high economic potential in the region, but because most activities are community-based and small-scale, little attention is paid by the government and relevant stakeholders to improve rural infrustructure. Most participants, including a government officer interviewed expressed that there is a need to develop the required infrastructures in the rural regions to drive local development. As stated earlier, participants in this study argued that in rural rural communities, the people are not poor, they just lack the enabling infrastructure and means to spur more involvement in their own development. Therefore improvement of rural infructures such as roads, which Cavaye (2001) pointed out, is an important enabling factor to drive rural development.

Wilkinson and Quarter (1995) and Ife and Tesoriero (2006) pointed out that external stakeholder such as government agencies also play an important role in success and sustainability of community-based initiatives. However in this study the participants confirmed stated that there is little collaboration and support from government on local community-based initiatives like the Estate and the work of other NGOs groups. Participants argued that contrary to developments in some countries where there are strong working relations between the state agencies and NGOs that was not the case in Solomon Islands. Despite this most community-based groups and initiatives are very effective in mobilizing and organizing around certain ideas to improve their communities and areas, with moral backing and support from local stakeholders such as the Church and traditional Chiefs. However while partnership with government is welcome some have reservations and fear being stuck in the system and becoming dependent on external assistance (Desai 1995; Green 2010; Seckinelgin, 2006) and this can defeat the notion of self-reliance and voluntarism (Miraftab 1997, p. 362).

On a positive note, Taylor (1997, p.23) argued that partnership can enable the government to engage with the grassroots, utilize its network to deliver services, conduct trainings, and carry out research exploring a more people-centered approach. For the local NGOs and local community groups, partnership could mean accessing and utilizing the existing government facilities to create opportunities and deliver services directly to the people at a less cost (Kamat, 2004; Taylor, 1997). The findings in this study showed that after more than five years of mobilizing and involving the communities through its community-based and self-supported programs and projects the results have shown to be effective. However participants also expressed that relevant partnership with external service providers and institutions such as government agencies, the business sector,

training institutions, and credible NGOs are important in promoting networking and sharing of relevant skills and knowledge which could further strengthen the capacity of the community to deliver effective and sustainable intended outcomes. Likewise Nel et al. (2001), in Chapter 2, supported partnership as a means of enhancing the capacity of community-based programs, however at the same time it was pointed out that partnership must be based on clear expectations or people's own terms of reference and not dictated by external orgnizations and institutions.

The failure of local leaders and managers due to incompetency and overwhelming family and personal issues and concerns were also raised as challenges facing the Estate. There were incidents where leaders' credibility was questioned. This challenge on leadership is consistent with Datta's (2007) findings that any community-based development projects will always be undermined, when people loses their trust and confidence in their leaders. This can be dues due to community leaders' inability to disseminate the right information, delegate responsibility to young capable leaders, and lack of transparency and accountability. Estate leaders admitted that everything falls on the leader; if the leader is good and can be trusted then everything is good, but if leaders fail to perform or have lost the trust and confidence of the people, the whole thing will fall apart. Also leaders stated that leading a community is in itself a great challenge, because unlike a leader of any other organization, a community leader is leading a diverse group of people: the old, youth, children, educated, uneducated, different families, interests and so forth. In the community-based and self-help initiatives like the Estate, leaders in particular have committed a great deal of effort as volunteers to serve the interests of the people and to achieve the common good. This is consistent with Korsching and Allen's argument (2004, p.387) that often a committed leader sacrifices his/her personal comfort and interests by focusing on achieving the interest of the larger community. However, the interest and wellbeing of community leaders must also be taken into account at all cost as part of the interest and wellbeing of the community. This is particularly important because leadership burnout or acting irresponsibly is a common phenomenon associated with community leaders and leadership.

Similarly, the capability of local managers/coordinators to effectively administer the affairs of the Estate members is considered a challenge especially when some communities want to expand their operation. This study found that with few exceptions of qualified personnel, most

managers or coordinators of the Estate schemes raised up to the challenges through involvement or on the job training. This study revealed that the Estate has reached a stage that in order to expand and ensure sustainability they need skilled people. As one observer expressed: "*One thing I see with our leaders is they are easily discouraged, we need people who are capable and with strong heart to manage these Estate enterprises*" (Hafisu, observer, 18.06.12). However to get skilled people to remain in the community is difficult, as most participants expressed that the skilled people who have returned or remained in the community have often worked as volunteers, because of the conviction to serve the local communities, based on the message of: "return to your God and to your land"[34].This was echoed very strongly at the height of the ethnic conflict. In addition, some people who returned and became involved with the Estate are retirees who settled back in the community after many years serving the government or working in the private business sector. Consistent with development of technology where access to the use of computer is becoming important, some members recommend the need to train people in computer skills. As one member explained: "To *manually keep accounts of about 600 members is already an exhausting task. I think we need people with computer skills to help us in record keeping and secretarial job*" (Thago, Estate member, 22.06.12). Further recommendations were also made on the importance of providing relevant training in computer skills as the Estates expand operation.

Finally, the findings showed that in rural North Malaitan communities, cashflow was a problem. In most communities people depend on cocoa and copra for cash income. Participants explained that at peak times when the price of these commodities are high, there is adequate cash flowing in and circulating in the community, but when there is a sudden reduction in international price this affects cash flow in the rural communities. This also have flow on effects such as less people involved in copra production and further reduction in income. This is one possible challenge of globalisation which has affected rural communities. This finding therefore is consistent with that of Phillip and Pittman (2006) who cautioned that rural communities must not afford to ignore globalization when planning for their future regardless of their location. The suggestion for the diversification of the cocoa and copra was highlighted, but it was also realized that unless there is improvement of on-the-ground factors like infrastructure, storage facilities, skilled manpower then the industry and the cashflow situation will always remaina challenge. At the same time, members

---

[34] It is one of the fundamental bases of introducing the idea of local community development.

confirmed that lack of manpower capacity of the Estates, poor transportation systems and accessing best available markets seemed to have constrained any planned expansion into new areas and projects.

7.6. Summary: the success and positive contributions to community development

This section provides the overall summary of the findings, and identifies some positive contributions that have been made by the Estate to community development in North Malaita. This study confirms that the Estate's programmes offer an effective strategy in mobilizing local communities through community-based programs and projects. The Estate programs have proven to be active in most communities compared to Estate projects. This is attributed to a number of key principles and approach adopted by the Estate in managing community development projects. There is a strong emphasis on the spiritual/personal component of development. People have begun to meaningfully engage in spiritual programs which principally help nurture and develop positive values, reflected in re-strengthening of community cooperation and commitment. Also, through community consciousness and involvement, people have broadened their perspectives about development. The people have begun to define development as being about the improvement of the total wellbeing and creation of wealth (Cavaye, 2001). This broad conceptualization of development has therefore contributed towards establishing a strong and functional community, where people enjoy peace, prosperity, good health, harmony and tranquillity daily. As exemplified, in the community-based development process, there are two key elements: community consciousness; and development of positive values and mobilising of rural communities and resources to drive local community development. The involvement of women and youths in the Estate programs and projects are positive aspect of community-based development, ensuring the collective participation and improvement of the total-wellbeing of the people. This study also confirmed that the involvement of local leaders and institutions such as the Church and traditional Chiefs in the process is important. These two institutions, at least in North Malaita are like 'glue', which like in any other institutions holds the community together.

The community-based projects, however, have continued to face issues, some of which are concerned with ineffective leadership and management due to poor capacity. This study also has identified that poor rural infrastructures and poor cash flow situations other key challenges which have hindered the success of community-based development. Furthermore, meaningful partnership with external stakeholders such as government agencies, business and established NGOs has been lacking. Also, in rural North Malaita communities there poor coordination of activities by external agencies like government, and NGOs and businesses have tried to do their own without little involvement of community-based organizations and initiatives.

7.7. Final conclusions

The aim of this study was to examine how the Estate – a local community-based initiative –has contributed positively to community development in North Malaita, Solomon Islands. The results confirmed that the Estate's programmes and projects have contributed significantly to positive community development by helping to organize and mobilise local communities and people in North Malaita to collectively engage in development with a focus on utilization of locally available resources and creating of opportunities. Regarding the aim and vision of the Estate, the findings were consistent with the overall goal of development, which according to Cavaye (2001) is concerned with the improvement of the total wellbeing of the people and building of a strong and functional community. Regarding the context and rationale for introducing the Estate in North Malaita, the findings of study supports the argument that aggress that common experiences and realization of endogenous potentials has contributed to establishing the Estate in North Malaita as local community based and managed development initiative. This study used a qualitative case study strategy. Semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions methods were used in data collection. As highlighted in by Carr (1994) qualitative case study and semi-structure interviews allow meaningful interaction between the researcher and participants. As a result of mutual interaction, first-hand information and data are obtained and new knowledge generated which in this study is about examining the role and positive contributions of the Estate in rural community development in North Malaita.

In respect to the general aims and objectives of this study, a number of conclusions can be made. Firstly, the impartial approach to development which focuses largely on large-scale economic development has failed to contribute positively to community-based and locally driven development where local people have control and sense of ownership. As discussed in Chapter 3, in Solomon Islands the concept of rural development was introduced during colonial times and over the years, rural development has largely focused on the delivery of goods and services with minimum participation and integration of local people and institutions in development. This delivery model of development has failed to sustain and empower rural communities to drive their own development. As highlighted by Gegeo (1991) he conceptualized development based on the Kwara'ae notion of *gwaumauri'anga,* which is simply translated as the 'good life' which endorses a more holistic approach instead of 'partial approach' to development. According to this study it is therefore pertinent for the Estate; promote holistic development which emphasises improvement of the total wellbeing (including spirituality) of the people and community as a whole. This study is consistent with Narayan (1995) who argued that often the heavy-handed approach to rural community development has failed to create opportunities at the community level and sustainability of this 'good life.' In Solomon Islands rural villages, as Wickham (2012) pointed out much of the improvement are initiated by church and community groups, while the government is largely technology driven. This study showed that the introduction of the Estate as a community-based development initiative in North Malaita was driven by local situation faced due to this failure of development intervention and the realization that positive development can only be realized when local communities and people are organized and work cooperatively.

In addition, this confirms that the idea of regional or community-based development was heavily influenced by post-development, which emphasised looking inwardly to cultivate endogenous potential based on cooperation and self-reliance. Development can be empowering and engaging when local people are given the responsibility to lead and organize themselves in mobilizing local resources in new and creative ways. Like McGregor's (2009) findings this study argued that development needs to focus on local potentials and not problems and needs. This is because for too long development had only focused on people's needs and not their potential and assets. Hence, by focusing on common experience and endogenous potentials it can help drive local development by creating opportunities and building a strong community, rather than trying to

meet a particular community need and problem. This study also found that the involvement of local institutions such as the Church, House of Chiefs and community groups such as youths and women in the process of development is both empowering and can contribute to positive development. In North Malaita rural communities, it was found that people are closely associated to these local institutions and groups than government agencies. Thus, to exclude these institutions and local leaders in community development can undermine people's ownership of local development initiatives and their sustainability. Furthermore, this study also found that personal/spiritual values play a crucial role in community development. This finding is consistent with Cavaye (2001) who argued that it is these positive values, ownership, local leadership, collective action; rethinking and motivation that acted like fuel which drives regional development.

Finally, in examining the Estate programs and projects, this study found that the Estate programs are more active and successful compared to the projects. Significantly, the programs initiatives by the Estate are important in mobilizing local communities and people with the aim of engaging them (women groups and youths) and developing positive spiritual values, in people to be cooperative and committed towards a bigger vision of development. As revealed, the success of the Estate programs and schemes are measured not only in economic terms, but also in terms of the social-cultural improvements, especially regarding personal commitment, cooperation, and community having a greater sense of ownership of their lives and development aspirations. The place and role of community traditional structures such as the family, tribes, churches and villages are important in the Estate's initiates. They are the basic building blocks of a community of which people are strongly identified with than any state agencies. As such, it is concluded that by actively engaging with the traditional structures in the community it can contribute to the success of community-based development programs. However, as for the Estate's projects, they continue to face internal as well as external constraints and challenges, some of which are beyond local control. Participants confirm that poor rural infrastructure in the communities, lack of competency of leaders and managers are some internal factors. The external factors are: lack of support from government, and instability of international market price for local commodities (cocoa and copra), low cash-flow situation in the rural communities which contributes to a reduction in the level of cocoa and copra production. This is a difficult situation with local communities in North Malaita where their only source of income is copra and cocoa. Therefore, the focus should be on strategies

that integrate local communities with credible stakeholders and bodies with an emphasis of sharing of ideas, resources, networks and developing successful and long term partnerships.

7.8. Research outlook and recommendations

In this study the views and personal stories of local community leaders, Estate members, NGOs representative and responsible government officers are shared regarding community development, especially about the role of community-based initiatives, and the common constraints and challenges experienced in community development. Although community-based development is not a new concept, the framework and approach taken by the Estate, offers an interesting case for mobilizing rural communities and people to collectively engage in development programs and activities. Most importantly this approach addresses all the dimesions of community development, further promoting the idea of local community-based development. This is a new development approach and new research topic in Solomon Islands. Therefore there has been limited studies available in the existing literature. Most community-based programs and projects as discussed in Chapter 2, are impatial in their approach and are often initiated by outsiders, which Nyamugasira (1998) stated, are not qualified to be called indigenous, because they are not born out of a local situation, nor initiated by a local leader or the community themselves. This study of the Estate is therefore confirmed to be a rare case. The Estate concept was initiated by a local leader and born out of a local situation which promotes the idea of community cooperation and self-relaince. This study revealed, the Estate was an attempt by local leaders and communities to seek alternative ways to organize themseves, mobilize local resources and create opportunities bring about positive community development. It is hoped that this study will eluminate and contribute to a broader understanding of the concept of community development, which can influence better and effective community-based and people-centered appraoches to community development. In Solomon Islands, one could infer that there has been a lot of rural development, but very little community development, which based on the above notion of 'development *of* a community' carries the goal of improvement of the total-wellbeing and building a strong community, as opposed to the delivery of goods and services approach to address specific needs and situations in the rural poor communities.

A number of propositions can be drawn from this thesis for the purpose of informing further research or improving community development practice. Firstly, this thesis will help contribute to hopeful post-development thought which focuses more on the local context than externally driven development which often focus on economic or service delievery as the form of development. Development in the context of this study is more about improving the total wellbeing of the community and persons, creating opportunities and buidling a strong community. As discussed earlier the notions of development according to Gegeo (1991) is *gwaumauri'anga* which simply means the 'good life' in Kwara'ae. Development therefore is contextualized and holistic which encompasses the economic, social, cultural, physical, political and spiritual/personal, further confirming the six dimensions of community development outlined by Ife and Tesoriero (2006). These dimensions contribute towards improving the 'good life' or the wellbeing of the people. Thus, any approach or study of community development involving indigenous communities must take into consideration these factors which contribute to the improvement of people's wellbeing and development of a strong community.

This study offers some important lessons which can be used to inform approaches development. This involves ensuring equal participation of local people and involvement of local institutions such as the church, tribal bodies and the extended families in the development process as well as better management of development projects. In the process of mobilizing the community, the Estate involves members in spiritual programs and activities which include women groups and youths. This is important because as Datta (2007) asserts these groups are often overlooked in rural communities. At the same time the Estate community programmes helped people interact and learn from each other and should be part of developing the interest and strengthening the bonds and attachment between community members.

Finally, developing of networks and partnership between stakeholders is important to ensure sharing of resources and information. As in the case of the Estate, partnership with local bodies such as the church helps strengthen its community-based programs; the projects on the other hand continued to experience difficulties in expanding due to certain limitations, such as the capacity and competence of local leaders and managers as well as externally inflicted challenges from factors

such as the unstable international market price for copra and cocoa. It was highlighted that partnership is a possibility for successful local private business; they could venture into new business to diversify activities and create economic opportunities in the local communities could be a possibility. This partnership can help the Estate and any local community groups to have access to information and assistance, which otherwise would not be available locally. Overall, one thing has become clear is that in community-based development people need to take the lead in and driving community development however it is vital to ensure that development is context-based and inclusive.

Reference

ADB. (2011). *Solomon Islands: ADB Report 2011*. Retrieved from
    http://www.adb.org/countries/solomon-islands/economy

Agostino, A. (2007). Post-development: Unveiling clues for a possible future. In A. Ziai (Ed.), *Exploring post-development: Theory and practice, problems and perspectives* (pp. 197-211). Oxon: Routledge

Arellano-Lopez, & Petras, J. (1994). Non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in Bolivia *Development and Change, 25*(3), 555-568.

Baete, S. (2012). *Factor Affecting Rice adoption in Solomon Islands: a case study of Fiu village, Central Kwara'ae, MalaitaProvince* (Master thesis), Massey University, Palmerston North

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. . *The Qualitative Report 13*(4), 544-559.

Bebbington, A. (2004). NGOs and uneven development: geographies of development intervention. *Progress in Human Geography, 28*(6), 725-745.

Bennett, J. A. (1987). *The Wealth of the Solomons: a history of a Pacific archipelago, 1800-1978* (Vol. 3): University of Hawaii Press.

Blaikie, N. (2000). *Designing Social Research*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brigg, M. (2002). Post-development, Foucault and the colonisation metaphor. *Third World Quarterly, 23*(3), 421-436.

Brown, L. D., & Kalegaonkar, A. (2002). Support organizations and the evolution of the NGO Sector. *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly, 31*(2), 231-258.

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. (2011). Background Note: Solomon Islands. Retrieved 18/04/12, from http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2799.htm

Carr, U. (1994). The strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research: what method for nursing? *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 20*, 716-721.

Cavaye, J. (2001). Rural community development - new challenges and enduring dilemmas *Regional Analysis and Policy, 31*(2), 109 - 124.

Cavaye, J. (2006). Understanding community development. http://www.communitydevelopment.com.au/publications.htm

Clark, G. (1998). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and politics in the developing world. *Political Studies 46*, 36-52.

Clements, K., & Foley, W. (2008). *Solomon Islands Report: towards effective and legitimate governance: states emerging from hybrid political orders'*. Brisbane: University of Queensland

CNURA Government policy statement. (2008). *Coalition for national unity and rural advancement government policy document*. Honiara Solomon Islands Government Retrieved from http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/16

Cooper, D. R., & Schinder, P. S. (1998). *Business research methods* (6 ed.). New York: Irwin: McGraw Hill.

Cowen, M., & Shenton, R. (1995). The invention of development. In Crush (Ed.), *Power of development* (pp. 27-43). New York: Routledge

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3 ed.). London: Sage Publication.

Curtis, R. (1999). Action on the front lines. . *World Watch* 12-21.

Datta, D. (2007). Sustainability of community-based organizations of the rural poor: Learning from Concern's rural development projects, Bangladesh. *Community development Journal, 42*(1), 47-62.

DAWN. (1995). Rethinking social development: DAWN's vision. *World Development, 23*(11), 2001-2004.

Desai, V. (1995). *Community participation and slum dwelling: a study of Bombay*. New Delhi Sage

Dinnen, S. (2002). Winners and losers: politics and disorder in the Solomon Islands 2000–2002. *Journal of Pacific History, 37*(3), 285-298.

Dinnen, S. (2008). Dilemmas of intervention and the building of state and nation. In S. Dinnen & S. Firth (Eds.), *Politics and state building in Solomon Islands* Canberra ANU E Press and Asia Pacific Press

DTIS Report. (2009). *Solomon Islands diagnostic trade integration study* Honiara: Solomon Islands government Retrieved from http://www.enhancedif.org/EN%20web%20pages/Where%20we%20work/Solomon_Islands.htm

Escobar, A. (1992). Reflections on 'development': grassroots approaches and alternative politics in the Third World. *Futures, 24*(5), 411-436.

Escobar, A. (1997). Anthropology and development. *International social science Journal, 49*(154), 497-515.

Faiau, J. K. (2010). *Local community governance and institional arrangement in Solomon Islands* Tokyo Local Autonomy College

Fraenkel, J. (2004). *The manipulation of custom. from uprising to intervention in the Solomon Islands*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Gegeo, D. W. (1998). Indigenous knowledge and empowerment: Rural development examined from within. *The Contemporary Pacific 10*(2), 289-315.

Gegeo, D. W., & Watson-Gegeo, K. A. (2002). "How we know": Kwara'ae rural villagers doing indigenous epistomology. *The Contemporary Pacific, 13*(1), 55.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2005). Surplus possibilities: postdevelopment and community economies *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, 26*(1), 4-26.

Green, G. P., & Goetting, A. (2010). Community assets: building the capacity for development In G. P. Green & A. Goetting (Eds.), *Asset buidling as a community development strategy* (pp. 1-13). Philadelphia Temple University Press

Green, G. P., & Haines, A. (2002). *Asset building and community development.* Thousand Oaks: London Sage Publication.

Griffiths, A. (1977). *Fire in the islands: the acts of the holy spirit in the Solomons* Wheaton, Illinois Harold Shaw Publishers

Hill, T. R., Nel, E. L., & Illgner, P. (2007). Partnership for successöcommunity-based economic development: a case study of Ngolowindo cooperative, Malawi. *Environment and planning: government and policy 25*, 573 - 590.

Ife, J. (1995). *Community development: creating community alternatives - vision, analysis and practice*. Melbourne: Longman.

Ife, J., & Tesoriero, F. (2006). *Community development: community-based alternatives in the age of globalization* (3 ed.). NSW: : Pearson Education Australia

Kamat, S. (2004). The privatization of public interest: theorizing NGO discourse in a neoliberal era. *Review of International Political Economy, 11*(1), 155-176.

Kenny, S. (2007). *Developing communities for the future*. Melburne Thomson

Kitzinger, J., & Barbour, R. S. (Eds.). (1999). *Developing focus group research: Politics, theory and practice*. London: Sage Publication.

Korsching, P. F., & Allen, J. C. (2004). Locality based entrepreneurship: a strategy for community economic vitality. *Community Development Journal, 39*(4), 385-400.

Lean, M. (1995). *Bread, bricks, beliefs: communities in charge of their own future*. Hartford, Conneticut: Kumarian Press.

Leslie, H., & Storey, D. (2003). Entering fieldwork In R. Scheyvens & D. Storey (Eds.), *Development fieldwork: A practical guide* (pp. 119 - 138). London Sage Publication.

Lilo, G. D. (2012). The Hon Gordon D. Lilo, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands: The economy of the Solomon Islands [Public Lecture]. Sydney ANU

Maebuta, J. (2011). The church and post-conflict eeconstruction: building peace and community empowerment through church-based development programs in Solomon Islands. *The International Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Society, 1*(1), 1-13.

Maeliau, M. (2003). *Trouble in Paradise: The Future Direction. Honiara, Solomon Islands*. Honiara Aroma Ministries.

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching* (2 ed.). London Sage Publications

Matarrita-Cascantea, D., & Brennan, M. A. (2011). Conceptualizing community development in the twenty-first century. *Community Development*, 1–13.

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (1995). Qualitative research: rigour and qualitative research. *BMJ: British Medical Journal 311*(6997), 109-112

McDougall, D. (2003). Fellowship and citizenship as models of national community: United church women's fellowship in Ranongga, Solomon Islands. *Oceania, 74*(1/2), 61-80.

McGregor, A. (2007). Development, foreign aid and post-development in Timor-Leste. *Third World Quarterly, 28*(1), 155-170.

McGregor, A. (2009). New possibilities? shifts in post-development theory and practice. *Geography Compass, 3*(5), 1688-1702.

McKinnon, K. (2008). Taking post-development theory to the field: Issues in development research, Northern Thailand. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 49*(3), 281-293.

MDP&AC Report. (2007). *Solomon Islands agriculture and rural development strategy: building local foundations for rural development*. Honiara Solomon Islands government

Mercer, C. (1999). Reconceptualizing state-society relations in Tanzania: are NGOs 'making a difference'? *Area, 31*(3), 247-258.

Miraftab, F. (1997). Flirting with the enemy: challenges faced by NGOs in development and empowerment. *Habitat International, 21*(4), 361-375.

Misite'e, J. N. (2008). *Community leadership, social capital and rural development in Solomon Islands: a central Kwara'ae constituency study, Malaita Province,.* (Degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies.), The University of the South Pacific, Suva

Mitlin, D., Hickey, S., & Bebbington, A. (2007). Reclaiming development? NGOs and the challenge of alternatives. *World Development, 35*(10), 1699-1720.

Morse, S. (2008). Post-sustainable developlment *Sustainable Development 16*(5), 341-352.

MRD. (2011). *Ministry of rural development annual report*. Honiara Solomon Islands Government

Nanau, G. (1995). *Decentralisation, development and popular participation in the Solomon Islands: a Study of the provincial government system.* (Unpublished MA thesis in Development Studies), University of the South Pacific, Suva.

Narayan, D. (1995). *Designing community based development*. Paper presented at the Social development notes, Washington, DC. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11662

NCRA government policy statement. (2010). *The national coalition for reform and advancement (NCRA) government policy statement* Honiara Solomon Islands Government Retrieved from http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/16

Nel, E., Binns, T., & Motteux, N. (2001). Community-based development, non-governmental organizations and social capital in post-apartheid South Africa. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography, 83*(1), 3-13.

Nustad, K. G. (2001). Development: The devil we know? *Third world quarterly, 22*(4), 479-489.

Nyamugasira, W. (1998). NGOs and advocacy: how well are the poor represented? *Development in Practice, 8*(3), 297-308.

O'Leary, Z. (2010). *The essential guide to doing your research project* (2 ed.). London: Sage.

Ofasia, J. (2003). Traditional Toabaitan methods of forgiveness and reconciliation. *Melanesian Journal of Theology, 19* (2), 6-39.

Otsuka, S. (2006). *Talanoa research: culturally appropriate research design in Fiji*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2005 International Education Research Conference., Melbourne, Australia.

Patton, Q. M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2 ed.). California: Sage Publications.

Peredo, A. M., & Chrisman, J. J. (2006). Toward a theory of community-based enterprise. *Academy of Management Review, 31*(2), 309-328.

Phillips, R., & Pittman, R. H. (2009). A framework for community and economic development In R. Phillips & R. H. Pittman (Eds.), *An introduction to community development* New York Routledge

Pieterse, J. N. (2000). After post-development. *Third World Quarterly, 21*(2), 175-191.

Prescott, S. M. (2008). Using Talanoa in Pacific business research in New Zealand: Experiences with Tongan entrepreneurs. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Scholarship, 4*(1), 127-148.

Rhodes, D. (2007). *AusAID analysis of the "community sector" in Solomon Islands*. Retrieved from http://scholar.google.co.nz/scholar?start=20&q=history+of+cooperative+society+in+solomon+islands&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5

Richard, L. (2009). *Handling qualitative data: a practical guide (2nd ed)* London Sage Publication

Richard, L., & Dalbey, M. (2006). Creating great places: the critical role of citizen participation. . *Community Development: The Journal of the Community Development Society 37*(4), 18-23.

Robertson, J. (2002). Reflexivity redux: a pithy polemic on "positionality". *Anthropological Quarterly 75*(4), 785-792.

Rohorua, F. I. (2007). *The concept of development in Ulawa in Solomon Islands and its implications for national development policy and planning.* (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Waikato, Hamilton Retrieved from http://waikato.researchgateway.ac.nz/

Roughan, J. (1997). Solomon Island nongovernment organizations: major environmental actors. *The Contemporary Pacific, 9*(1), 149-166.

Roughan, J. (2010). Towards a fairer world! Retrieved from http://tingting2009.blogspot.co.nz/2010/12/towards-fairer-world.html

Roughan, J. (2012a). Villagers 'learn' the city boy! How the Solomons village became SIDT's work station *Solomon Star* pp. 7-8.

Roughan, J. (2012b, 17 February 2012). Who delivers the best service? , Letter to the editor *Solomon Star* Retrieved from http://www.solomonstarnews.com/viewpoint/private-view/13651-who-delivers-the-best-service

Sachs, W. (Ed.). (2010). *The development dictionary: a guide to knowledge and power* (2 ed.). London Palgrave Macmillan

Saeni, F. D. (2008). *Customary land ownership, recording and registration in the To'abaita region of the Solomon Islands: a case study of Family Tree Approach.* (Master of Applied Science), Lincoln University, Christchurch.

Sasako, A. (2007a). The lost millions in constituency names, *Islands Business* Retrieved from http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerName ToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=18533/overideSkinName=issueArticl e-full.tpl

Sasako, A. (2007b). Politics/Solomons: a slush fund thats turning against its dispensers Retrieved from http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerName ToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=18152/overideSkinName=issueArticl e-full.tpl

SIDAPP. (2001). *Malaita Province development profile* Honiara Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development.

SIG. (2012). *Statistical Bullentin No. 6/2012*. Honiara: Solomon Island government Retrieved from http://www.spc.int/prism/solomons/

Simon, D. (2007). Beyond antidevelopment: discourses, convergences, practices. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, 28*(2), 205-218.

Suinao, R. (2008). *North Malaita constituency report* Honiara Solomon Islands Government

Suksawang, O. (1990). Dynamics of cooperative developmen. *System, 90*(1103).

Tatsumi, K., & Joshi, N. M. (1996). *The roles of communities in rural development: potentials of community-based approach in Nepal*. Paper presented at the 4th Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA) International Conference.

Taylor, J. (1997). NGO capacity building in the Pacific *Development Bullentin 43*(1), 23-26.

Thomas, A. (2004). *The study of development*. Paper presented at the Paper prepared for DSA Annual Conference, London.

Tozaka Report. (1999). *Report of provincial government review committee on provincial government* Honiara Department of provincial government and rural development

UNDP. (2007). *Thailand human development report: Sufficiency economy and human development*. Bangkok:: United Nations Development Program

Uphoff, N. (1993). Grassroots organizations and NGOs in rural development: Opportunities with diminishing states and expanding markets. *World Development, 21*(4), 607-622.

Vaioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa reasearch methodology: a developing position on Pacific Research *Waikato Journal of Education 12*.

Wickham, A. (2012). *Living in a foreign land: The rural/urban divide in Solomon Islands*. Honiara

Wilkinson, P., & Quarter, J. (1995). A theoritical framework for community-based development *Economic and industrial democracy*

World Bank Report. (2011). *Solomon Islands population density 2010*. Retrieved from http://www.tradingeconomics.com/solomon-islands/population-density-people-per-sq-km-wb-data.html

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study reserach design and methods* Califonia Sage Publication, Inc

Yin, R. K. (2006). Mixed methods research: are the methods genuiely intergrated or merely parall *Research in the schools 13*(1), 41-47.

Ziai, A. (2004). The ambivalence of post‐development: between reactionary populism and radical democracy. *Third World Quarterly, 25*(6), 1045-1060.

Ziai, A. (Ed.). (2007). *Exploring post-development: theory and prasctice, problems and perspective*. London: Routledge.

Appendix

Appendix I: Letter of approval from MUHEC

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

5 June 2012

James Faiau
2/309 College Street
West End
PALMERSTON NORTH 4410

Dear James

Re: **Exploring Community-Based Development: A Case Study of Community Estate and Rural Development in North Malaita of Solomon Islands**

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 1 June 2012.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

J. O'Neill

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

cc Dr Maria Borovnik   Assoc Prof Glenn Banks
   School of People, Environment and Planning School of People, Environment and Planning
   PN331   **PN331**

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

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Research Ethics Office, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand
T +64 6 350 5573 +64 6 350 5575 F +64 6 350 5622
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animalethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz

Appendix II (a): Research information Sheet (English)

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

Exploring community-based development: A case study of the Estate and rural community development in North Malaita of Solomon Islands

Hello! My name is James Kwaimani Faiau, Masters Student in Development Studies at Massey University, Palmerston North of New Zealand. I am undertaking this thesis research for a Masters of International Development.

This research explores the concept of community-based development based on a case study of the Estate and rural development in North Malaita. This research asks: *How does local community-based initiative contribute to community development?* This study seeks to understand how a community-based approach can help to facilitate and promote sustainable rural livelihoods and community development where it allows for more community participation, cooperation and self-reliance.

I gladly invite you to take part in this research. If you are willing to participate you have the option to take part in an informal interview ora focus group discussion, each should take no more than an hour. This may be voice recorded if you are happy with this. The identity of all participants will be kept confidential, and those participating in a focus group will also be asked to keep all that is said confidential.

When I finish the field research I will produce a summary discussion of my findings, which I can post to you if you would like. Information from the research will be used primarily for academic purposes (my Master's thesis). In addition, it may be used for related publications, reports and conference presentations. The thesis will be available online once it has been completed and met with the university requirements.

Your rights as a participant in this research:

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you do decide to participate:
▸ you may withdraw from the study at any time (and you do not have to give an explanation for this withdrawal)
▸ you may decline to answer any particular question
▸ you may ask for the recorder to be turned off at any point during the interview
▸ you may ask any questions about the study at any time during participation
▸ you provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used
▸ you will be given access to a summary of findings at the end of the study if you wish

Research Project Contacts

My contact details are: My supervisor:

James K. Faiau   Dr. Maria Borovnik
2/309 College St   School of People, Environment and Planning
Palmerston North   Massey University,
New Zealand   Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North, N.Z.
Email: jkfaiau@gmail.com   Email: M.Borovnik@massey.ac.nz
Phone: +64 022 073 8855   Phone: +64 6 356 9099 ext. 7249

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email J.G.ONeill@massey.ac.nz

Te Kunenga
ki Pūrehuroa

School of People, Environment & Planning
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand.
T +64 6350 4343F +64 6 350 5737www.pep.massey.ac.nz

Appendix II (b): Rserach information sheet (Pidgin version)

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

Exploring community-based development: A case study of the Estate and rural development in North Malaita of Solomon Islands

Hallo! Nem blo mi James Kwaimani Faiau. Masters Stiuden lo Development Studies lo Massey University, Palmerston North of New Zealand. Mi duem thesis research fo qualifikason of Masters of International Development.

Research yia hem luk lo idea lo local communiti-base development wea mi look lo idea blo Community Estate n how ogeta promotim rural development lo side lo rural livelihoods lo North Malaita. Research question na: *How na local community-based initiative help kam apem community development?* Study yia like save lo how na community-base approach ogeta takem yia hem help facilitatim and promotim rural community development lo side lo rural livelihoods wea hem allowem community for cam togetha, waka togetha for helpem ogeta seleva n not for rely tumas lo outside help.

Mi hapi fo invitem u fo take part lo research yia. Ones u agree bae u savi participate lo interview or lo group discussion. Interview n group discussion bae save go fo one hour nomoa. U savi signem "Consent Form" or mi savi rocrdem voice blo u time u readem loud statement lo Consent Form yia. Position blo u and what you talem bae hem confidential. Only u and me nomoa savi what umi tufal tok about n no anyone moa. Same ting hem apply lo Focuss Group Discussion.

Time research hem finish bae me makem wan summary lo main points lo research yia and givem youfal befoa me go back lo university if ufal likem, becos of callem ufal moa fo umi meet hem bae hard. Again ogeta somting lo research yia hem for thesis paper only and nothing moa. Time bae this fal thesis paper when finish and out lo public bae mi savi talem ufala lo check fo electronic copy osem lo internet fo ufala wea access lo internet for readem and savi aboutim findings yia.

Raeti blo u fo tek part lo research yia:

Mi no pressurem u fo participate or takem initation yia. U free fo choos fo participate:
- u savi withdraw from tek part any time (if you feelem hem against what you tingim or no like)
- u savi no talem anser tu lo any wan question you ting hem no stret lo u
- u savi ask forecorder fo hem ten ova too lo any time or point time lo interview yia
- u savi ask tu any questions lo side lo study yia any time u like during lo interview yia
- u providem information yia lo savi wea name blo u bae hem no used writem lo thesis yia
- u bae me givem summary lo findings lo end lo study only if you likem

Contak blo mi n subavisa blo mi

Contak address blo :

James K. Faiau
2/309 College St
Palmerston North
New Zealand
Email: jkfaiau@gmail.com
Phone: +64 022 073 8855

contak address blo subavisa blo mi

Dr. Maria Borovnik
School of People, Environment and Planning
Massey University,
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North, N.Z.
Email: M.Borovnik@massey.ac.nz
Phone: +64 6 356 9099 ext. 7249

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email J.G.ONeill@massey.ac.nz

Te Kunenga
ki Pūrehuroa

School of People, Environment & Planning
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand.
T +64 6350 4343F +64 6 350 5737www.pep.massey.ac.nz

Appendix III: Participant consent form

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL

	I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time or withdraw from the interview at any time should I wish so.
	I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
	I agree to the interview being sound recorded.

Full Name (PRINT): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM –Focus Group Discussion

	I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time or withdraw from the interview at any time should I wish so.
	I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
	I agree this focus group be sound recorded.
	I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the Focus Group Discussion

Full Name (PRINT): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix IV: List of participants (interviewee) coded by native names of fruit trees and shrubs

Estate Leaders	Position	date of interview
Sosome	Senior Executive/Trainer	16/06/12
Ororo	Chairman – Estate B	17/06/12
Daedae	Former Coordinator	19/06/12
Kenu	Chairman – Estate C	21/06/12
Aitonga	Chairman – Estate D	19/06/12
Ngali	Chairman – Estate E	19/06/12
Akame	Chairman – Estate F	"
Estate Members		
Kekene	Member – Estate B	21/06/12
Kabirai	"	21/06/12
Kateilaliakwa	Member/advocator - Estate A	19/06/12
Thago	Women leader – Estate C	21/06/12
Ute	Member – Estate C	21/06/12
Amau	"	21/06/12
Observers		
Hafisu	School teacher/observer	18/06/12
Ugali	Observer	25/06/12
Wane	"	25/06/12
Weo'agi	Retired church pastor	21/06/12
Stakeholders		
Alite	Community Chief	18/06/12
Takari	NGO representative	23/06/12
Aitaga	Provincial Project Officer	25/06/12
Bobolou	Govt. Director – Rural development	14/06/12
Malego	Commodity Export Marketing Authority	02/07/12

Appendix V: Research questionnaires

The Estate coordinators

- When did you begin to involve with the Estate?
  - How do you become coordinators?
  - Do you enjoy your work?
- Can you tell your background (education/work) before becoming engaged with the Estate?
- What is your work as coordinator?
- Do you think you make a difference?
  - What kind of difference?
  - Your success stories
  - Any challenges you come across?
- Do you think people are aware and appreciate your work and that of the Estate?
  - Do you find people very cooperate or less cooperative and ignorance?
  - Generally what can you say about your Estate community and people?
- What are some of the challenges you come across?
  - How do you deal with them?
- How do you see the future of your Estate?
  - Future success and sustainability
  - In terms of support from other stakeholders and sectors

The Estate beneficiaries

- When did you become member of the Estate?
  - How do you become a member?
- Do you think the Estate make any difference in the community?
  - What difference and changes?
- Do you personally and family benefit from the Estate?
- Any problems you see with the Estate?
  - How effective are these people addressed?
- What is you observation of the future of your Estate?
  - Is your Estate going to successful and sustainable?
  - Will it going to get a lot of support from other organizations (e.g. govt.)?

Local community Stakeholders (Chiefs/Churches/CBOs)

- Do you involve with the Estate?
  - Can you tell your involvement with the Estate?
- Do you think the Estate make any difference in your community?
  - Can you tell me any success stories or projects initiated by CE?
- From experience/observation, any problems you can see with the Estate?
  - How are these problems being addressed?
- How do you see the future for the Estate?
  - The success and long term sustainability of the Estate?
  - Supports from other stakeholders (govt. etc.)?

The Govt. agency and NGOs

- What is your involvement in rural community development?
  - What types of programs/projects?
  - What types of assistance you give?
- Do your program/project also involved working with local community-based organization?
  - What is their involvement
  - How significant is their involvement?
- Can you tell me of any successful projects?
  - What makes it successful?
- What are the most challenges issues you faced in working with rural communities?
  - What do you think the causes these problems?
  - How do you try to address them
- If you are to make changes/improvement what will you do to see more participation and sustainability of development at the rural community level?

Appendix VI: Draft Constitution (Extract)

THE ALL PEOPLES COMMUNION UNIVERSAL

(Draft Constitution)

THE PREAMBLE

The All Peoples Communion Universal is based on the Biblical concept of the Kingdom of God. The Lord's Prayer is; 'Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.'

The Kingdom concept believes that;

- Man is the crown of all creation
- The value of the human life is of paramount importance
- The driving force and the motivating factor behind all activities and programs are **people** and not monetary profit, material gains or pleasure.
- All institutions, systems and programs are there to serve man to honour and glorify God
- Man's chief goal in life is to enjoy peace, prosperity and harmony between each other and creation as had been designed by the Creator.
- The Family, constituting the husband, wife and children is the foundation and the basic unit of society that must be preserved, promoted and protected at all cost.
- History has proven that it only took something to go wrong within a single family in the Garden of Eden and everything thereafter went wrong everywhere throughout the whole world and history.
- In order for the **'Whole World'** to be put right, it only requires one thing to be put right first – **'The Family'**.

I.   THE ALL PEOPLES COMMUNION

The Fundamental and Foundational Beliefs are:

I.1 That God is the creator of all things,
I.2 That God is sovereign over all things,
I.3 That God is the ultimate judge of all things.
I.4 That man is given the duty to have dominion over all things on earth.

II.   DEFINITIONS:

II.1 **The E-State** is the name created to distinguish the System from all other systems in existence today. The word E–State co notates the word excellent or eternal.

II.2. **An Estate** by definition is a geographical area with a defined boundary within which there is social, religious, economic and political cohesiveness. It is the smallest State there is.

II.3. **Communion** is the term used to describe a community of individuals who hold the same beliefs, values and principles; and are determined to put them into practice.

1

II.4. **Wealth** is not measured in terms of money only

but includes the total well-being of the nation as

a whole and her citizens. Peace, Prosperity, health

and a society in which justice, righteousness and all

virtues prevail are the hallmarks of a blessed nation.

III.   OBJECTIVES

The ultimate objective of the Communion is to meet the basic needs of the individual person. These needs are so basic that they can rightly be categorized as the rights of every individual.
Every Person has the right to:

III.1. Worship
III.2. Food
III.3. Water
III.4. Power
III.5. Sanitation
III.6. Clothes
III.7. Shelter

The Communion Moto is: **'There shall be no poor among you'**

IV.   WORSHIP

(In honour of King David, the man, the Bible called, 'a *man after God's heart'*; who had a real heart to serve his God faithfully, in spite of many limitations and failures and who made it his normal practise to consult God at all times and in all things both individually and by consulting the Prophet of the day - the 3 TODs are made in reference to him.)

IV.1. God the Object of Worship

(TOD 1 – Tabernacle of David)

The acknowledgment of God must go beyond words and statements but actually

demonstrating it in practice by organizing a program of 24 hours a day non-stop

Worship and prayer (24/7). This practice is referred to as 'The Tabernacle of David'

(TOD 1) and 'The Watchmen on the Walls of the World' (WWW).

2

VI.5 Peoples Forum

The Peoples Forum is open to the whole community. It is an avenue for sharing of ideas, acting as a sounding board, an educational platform, endorsement of government policies and emanation and dissemination of information.

The main reason behind it all is to provide a place and time for the people to gather together for fellowship and interaction between each other and their government.

VI.6 Ministries

The seven (7) spheres of society is a convenient way of understanding society so that all sectors are addressed and not overlooked. The seven Ministries can be expanded but the determining factor is the Biblical number for government which is the number twelve (12). In the Bible there are the reference to the Twelve Elders and included in that are the Five Fold Ministries and the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. So the number for the ruling House is between 10 and 12.

NB: Note again that the Eldership is the Ruling Government and the Representatives Assembly is as has been described above.

VII. THE ESTATE SCHEMES

The Schemes are introduced to serve a number of reasons. First and foremost is to radically break the traditional and conventional mindset as to doing things and cultivate a completely new mindset. They are used as teaching tools and aids to achieve a mental shift by doing.

Secondly, they offer a simpler and secure way of development that ensures that the bottom line is that there are no poor people in the world **(Eradication of Poverty).**

They offer the alternative to other systems that are in existence today.

These are:

VII.1 Financial Management Scheme (FMS)

Money is a wonderful servant but a very bad boss. The Bible says that the love of money is the root of all evil. Intensive education on all aspects of money by word of mouth and by doing through the schemes is essential to the success of the whole system.

VII.1.2 Right Attitude to Money

Every body in every culture has a certain mindset about money that has to be corrected if they are going to benefit from the system. With the right attitude every thing else will not work.

VII.2 Resource Management Scheme (RMS)

VII.3 Estate Enterprise Model (EEM)

6

VII.2.1 Resource Management Scheme (RMS)

The Resource Management Scheme can be applied to any resource with appropriate modifications but initially it is applied to coconut plantation and related projects. The main reason is that the coconut is the one industry that touches the lives of most people throughout the nation. Again this industry lends itself most readily for the purpose of educating the populous in the skills of resource management, stewardship and work ethics. The scheme does not stop at the production level. It continues into other schemes to facilitate selling, protects exploitation of the hardworking producer and ensures a fair play by all stakeholders so that they are all winners and no losers.

The plantations and the owners in an Estate are identified regardless of the size of the plantation. After an inventory is established, three levels of management is set up and the owners choose which level they prefer and are capable of handling. Advice and guidance is provided free but entry into the schemes is optional but highly recommendable.

VII.2.1.1 Level 1. Management by the Estate

The management of the Plantation is handed over to the Estate Management Committee. The proceeds are distributed according to the following percentage as per the table below:

Distribution of the Proceeds

Date	Description	Income	Expense	Tithe	Mangmt.	Labour	Owner	Balance
				10%	30%	40%	20%	
01.11.10	Labor. costs		(400.00)			(400.00)		(400.00)
11.11.10	Expenses		(200.00)			(600.00)		(600.00)
15.11.10	Copra Sales	1,200.00		120.00	360.00	(120.00)	240.00	600.00
05.12.10	Expenses		500.00			(620.00)		(20.00)
15.12.10	Copra Sales	1,400.00		260.00	780.00	(60.00)	520.00	1,380.00
16.12.10	Mangnt Fee		780.00		Nil			600.00
20.12.10	Prsnl. Drawn		520.00				Nil	80.00

11

VII.3 – Estate Enterprises Model (EEM)

Everybody is familiar with the Capitalistic system and the Communist system of doing enterprises. The Estate Enterprise Model (EEM) is the E – State model of doing business. Initially it resembles a cooperative or an association. In the long run it is different because it begins with the assumption that the bottom line is that 'there will be no poor among.' While there is a bottom line there no ceiling – the sky is the limit. The second assumption is that no one misses out. It swallows up every single person in society and eventually, the whole world. There are no losers and no enemies. The whole E – State system has to be seen as a package before one can agree with this notion.

After the boundary of an Estate is established the Financial Management Scheme and the Resource Management Scheme are the first to be introduced. The reason is simple. By the time the Scheme is introduced every member, without exception should have some money to invest. There are some who may already have some spare money or capital floating around.

At this point the Estate Investment Scheme is introduced. As a policy the Long term saving of all members are automatically destined for investment in multiples of $100.00. At the start a canteen is opened for business to meet basic needs of the community. Experience has proven that the enterprise grows in leaps and bounds by local standards. For the purpose of encouragement and education dividends are work out and paid quarterly but after some trial and error it was decided to do that on a six monthly basis.

When all the Estates do pick up you can be dealing with a lot of goods and money. At this point it is necessary to set up an Agency. This will be discussed later.

As part of the enterprise a grocery is then introduced. Any body that has anything to sell beginning with foodstuff brings it to the sales point. It is then valued and the amount entered into the personal account in the FMS. If a member wishes to buy something in the canteen or grocery it is simply deducted from the personal account in the FMS.

The advantages of this system are many fold. For an example, a poor person who does not have to have enough goods to worth trip to the market to do business. He can still sell any produce at any time regardless of the amount. The person does not have to waste time sitting at the market waiting for the goods to be sold. The Estate takes charge of marketing the produce anywhere all the way to processing and eventually exporting when required.

The biggest hurdle in the beginning is to covert the people to the system. But after a short while it proves its worth and attractiveness very quickly. Then the next challenge begins. And that is to train the operators to do things professionally to maintain confidence. Mistakes had been made and even mishandling either by ignorance or design and they have to be dealt with swiftly but the system keeps marching on. There is no age limits to joining the schemes.

VII.4 Estate Investment Scheme (EIS)

The Estate Investment Scheme allows the opportunity for every single member within the Estate to be an Investor. Under the scheme an investment Fund is created at the Estate level. Every member only invests into the Investment Fund. They hold no individual shares in any enterprise. The Estate then through the Estate Investment Scheme (EIS) invests in any venture at any level. The dividends from any investment are then distributed to members. The income from any investment dividends goes back into the personal FMS as normal income. By this time there is the need for a great amount of coordination, with prudence and every professionalism that can be mastered.

APPENDIX VI

VII.5 Estate Agency Scheme (EAS)

VII.5.1 Fanukia Development Company Limited

To stewardship this movement a company called the Fanukia Development Company (FDC Ltd.) was set up by the founder back in 1994 with this vision in mind. After a long struggle and numerous mistakes the vision is slowly taking shape. The company is registered as a normal private and not a public company. It is provided for in its constitution and Article of Association to engage in any business venture of any nature. **However, its single handed, primary and ultimate objective is to stewardship this movement.** There are no shareholders in this company. No dividends are paid to anyone but all employees and services are paid their dues including any legitimate expenses that are approved by the Board of Directors. The company is set up in the name of the founder as a memory to this vision and innovation from the Lord. A Board of Directors who share the vision and trusted by the founder will continue to dispose of the trust invested into the vision of this movement by none other than God himself.

There is a far deeper reason why this company is not opened up for share holding by anyone not even through the Estate Investment Scheme. Human history can testify that any slight inkling of share holding in any business is bound to open itself up for the temptation for exploitation out of self interest regardless of the purest and most noble intensions of the moment. The sinless Adam fell in the Garden of Eden much less the sinful man in a fallen world who stands in need redemption and awaiting restoration.

14