COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECTS

Solomon Islands

REFLECTING ON PEACE PRACTICE PROJECT

Cumulative Impact Case Study

Attempts at Building Peace in the Solomon Islands: Disconnected layers

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This document was developed as part of a collaborative learning project directed by CDA. It is part of a collection of documents that should be considered initial and partial findings of the project. These documents are written to allow for the identification of cross-cutting issues and themes across a range of situations. Each case represents the views and perspectives of a variety of people at the time when it was written.

These documents do not represent a final product of the project. While these documents may be cited, they remain working documents of a collaborative learning effort. Broad generalizations about the project's findings cannot be made from a single case study.

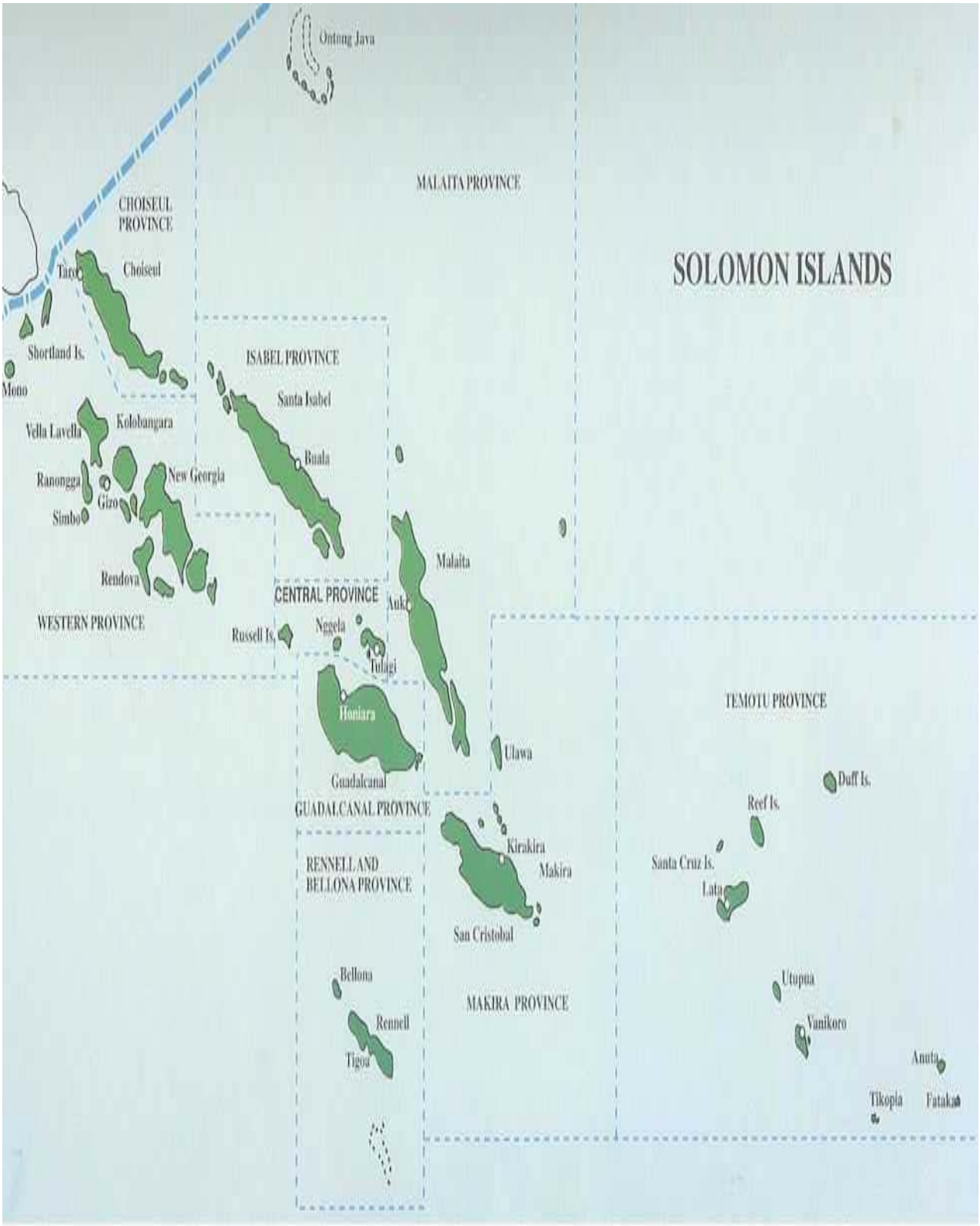
CDA would like to acknowledge the generosity of the individuals and agencies involved in donating their time, experience and insights for these reports, and for their willingness to share their experiences.

Not all the documents written for any project have been made public. When people in the area where a report has been done have asked us to protect their anonymity and security, in deference to them and communities involved, we keep those documents private.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms

ACOM	Anglican Church of Melanesia
CD	Community Development
CPRF	Community Peace and Restoration Fund
CSP	Community Sector Program
DNURP/MNURP	Department/Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace.
GRA	Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army
ICP	Inclusive Communities Program
IFM	Isatabu Freedom Movement
IPMT	International peace Monitoring Team
MEF	Malaitan Eagle Force
NPC	National Peace Council
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
PMC	Peace Monitoring Council
PPF	Participating Police Force
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RSIP	Royal Solomon Islands Police
SICA	Solomon Islands Christian Association
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SIPF	Solomon Islands Police Force
TPA	Townsville Peace Agreement
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
VBM	Vois Bilong Meri



Map of the Solomon Islands

(*Source:* [*http://www.peoplefirst.net.sb*](http://www.peoplefirst.net.sb)**)**

Timeline of the Solomon Islands Conflict

1978:	The Solomon Islands becomes independent within the British Commonwealth, with a democratic Constitution, which established a parliamentary democracy and a ministerial system of government.
1988:	Guadalcanal people march on the Parliament to publicize their grievances (*bona fide* demands).
1997:	Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, a Malaitan, is elected Prime Minister.
1998:	Ulufa'alu's government narrowly survives a motion of no confidence.
1998:	The Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA), which later became Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), claiming to represent the native people of Guadalcanal, begins to forcibly evict Malaitans, whom they accuse of taking all the jobs and land. By mid-1999, 25,000 settlers including 11,000 Malaitans, are evicted from Guadalcanal.
January 1999:	A group raids the police armory at Auki, the administrative center of Malaita, and steals all the weapons.
June 1999:	The Honiara Peace Accord and the Memorandum of Understanding between Solomon Islands Government and Guadalcanal provincial government signed.
July 1999:	As part of the Peace Process, the Marau Communiqué is signed.
August 1999:	The Panatina Agreement is signed.
Mid-1999:	The Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF) is formed in response to the actions of the IFM and the government's inability to resolve the conflict. MEF lands on Guadalcanal and quickly develops a strong presence in Honiara, with armed patrols throughout the city and establishes bunkers beyond the city limits.
Late-1999:	Fighting breaks out between MEF and IFM around Honiara. MEF, with superior arms, pushes into the previously IFM-held areas.
May 2000:	As part of the Peace Process, the Auki Communiqué and the Buala Peace Communiqué are signed.
May 2000:	Women from Honiara hold a roundtable discussion, which leads to the Women's Communiqué on Peace.
June 2000:	MEF stages an attempted coup by taking Prime Minister Ulufa'alu hostage. He is subsequently forced to resign. Violent confrontations between MEF and IFM militants escalate in areas around Honiara.
June 2000:	Women appeal to militants on both sides for peace in areas close to Honiara.
June 2000:	The National Council of Women calls for peace and democracy to be restored.
August 2000:	A ceasefire agreement is signed brokered by Australia.
October 2000:	The militant groups sign the Townsville Peace Agreement brokered by Australia. Under the Agreement, Australian and New Zealand unarmed peacekeepers are deployed to supervise the handover of arms and also supervise a 30-day amnesty for militiamen who surrender their arms.
December 2000:	The amnesty for those returning weapons, which is a part of the provision of the Townsville Peace Agreement, comes to an end, and most of the 500-800 high-powered weapons remain in the hands of the militants.
February 2001:	MEF and IFM come together to sign the Marau Peace Agreement.
September 2001:	The murder of a prominent IFM leader, Selwyn Saki, threatens the peace.
December 2001:	A national election is held, which is described as free and fair by international observers.
2002:	Economic and social problems worsen. The government is unable to pay wages to civil servants.

February 2002:	Two armed Malaitan Special Constables are shot dead by Bougainvilleans who remain in Solomon Islands after the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, which was invited by the officials of the Western Province to help establish a security force in the Province against the MEF threat, withdraws from the Province. Incident triggers retaliatory attacks against Solomon Islanders from the Western Province by Malaitans, until leaders of the Western Province, Malaitans and Bougainville take action by offering compensation to families of the victims, calling for restraint, and expressing apology.
March 2002:	International peace monitors withdraw from their posts amid growing lawlessness.
August 2002:	A government minister, Father Augustine Geve, is shot dead allegedly on the orders of an Istabu militia leader, Harold Keke.
June 2003:	Prime Minister Kemakeza asks for military assistance from Australia and New Zealand, after militants burn down villages on the Weathercoast and the plains of Guadalcanal and take more than 1,000 villagers captive. Australia, New Zealand and other regional states agree to send a policing operation, supported by military troops, (as many as 2000 military personnel and 200 police officers) to restore law and order to the Solomon Islands.
July 2003:	Parliament approves the peace enforcement plan. The regional force, consisting of troops and police from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga, is deployed, with the collection of illegally held weapons as its first priority.
6 July 2003:	Harold Keke announces a ceasefire as a response to a proposal that Australia, New Zealand, and other Pacific nations send 200 police and 2,000 troops to Guadalcanal.
31 July 2003:	A 21-day weapons amnesty takes effect to collect illegally held weapons. A total of 3,000 firearms and 300,000 rounds of ammunition are collected.
August 2003:	Six missionaries, part of the Anglican Melanesian Brotherhood, are confirmed dead at the hands of Harold Keke.
13 August 2003:	Harold Keke surrenders and is taken into custody by the Australian-led peace force along with three other militants, who are associated with the killings of a government minister and the missionaries.
11 Sept 2003:	Harold Keke is charged with the murder of parliamentarian and Catholic Priest Father Geve. Keke has already been charged with attempted murder, possession of firearms, and running an unlawful society.
2003 Oct-Nov:	Australia and New Zealand decide to scale back their military contributions, citing progress in restoring order. Peacekeepers declare the Weather Coast - an area badly hit by lawlessness - safe.
2005 March:	Former rebel leader Harold Keke and two of his associates are jailed for life for the 2002 murder of MP Father Geve.
2009 April:	A national truth and reconciliation commission is launched in the capital, Honiara. The panel was set up to investigate the conflict between rival ethnic militias in which more than 100 people died and 20,000 were displaced between 1997 and 2003 on the main island of Guadalcanal.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1998 the Solomon Islands descended into chaos and conflict. Rising tensions that had been brewing for years erupted into open violence between militants from the island provinces of Guadacanal and Malaita. The subsequent five years of crisis and lawlessness prompted a large scale regional intervention, and has resulted in a dramatic makeover of the state. Many other peace building efforts have worked alongside the state-building process, and this case study examines the impact of a number of peace approaches.

Reflecting upon peace practice in the context of the Solomon Islands requires viewing the conflict and the subsequent attempts at building peace through a number of lenses. We explore the multiple and interlinked factors that worked together to cause parts of the nation to collapse into conflict. We explore the dynamics of building peace, and we reflect that there have been, and continue to be, parallel processes working at brokering peace, creating stability and (re-)creating and realizing a more sustainable peace. One is self-organizing, emergent and bottom up. It focuses upon reconciliation as a means to peace, valuing and using traditional conflict resolution processes. This has been an organic, self organizing network of communities and organizations, both secular and religious, that has focused upon healing and repair from a broader human security perspective. The other process, according to all interviewed, is an imposed system that aims to reconstitute the state as the main arbiter of order and stability. Although this effort is more visible and better funded, this process has concentrated upon what was necessary in terms of state repair, but this has proven to be insufficient. The other process is

The Solomon Islands are still working through a dynamic process of nurturing and cultivating a sustainable peace. This case study addresses the dynamics, at times chronologically and at times thematically.

Methodology

The material for this study comes from a wide array of academic and donor literature, organizational websites, field visits, focus group discussions, and phone, skype and face-to-face interviews with over seventy people. Five focus group discussions in the Solomon Islands took place with representatives from women's organizations, representatives from church organizations, the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners, and representatives from a large development program. Each discussion lasted for a minimum of two hours. Thirty formal interviews were conducted with representatives from the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, Government and opposition parliamentarians, and provincial government members. The interviews lasted for an hour to an hour and a half, and the participants were asked a series of questions that were modified to each particular interview context.

The authors held informal and formal interviews with key stakeholders in multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, as well as representatives from church organizations, the business sector, the legal sector, development programs and international and non-government organizations and media organizations. Field visits were made to seven peacebuilding programs

spread over two provinces (Guadalcanal and Malaita). At the field sites, the authors asked a series of specifically tailored questions to gauge the extent of community involvement; how the various projects or activities had contributed to restoring relationships and building peace; what were the economic, social and political spin-offs from the activities; and what were the prospects for longer-term sustainability? In each community visited, the authors discussed the effects of the conflict, and asked those present to gauge how the program had helped mitigate these. The review team then asked for community perspectives on the underlying causes and sought perspectives on how the program had contributed to addressing them. When recurrent themes arose, the review team cross-referenced these with follow up questioning of the key participants where feasible.

RPP Cumulative Impact Case Studies and Collaborative Learning Process

This case study is one of fifteen "cumulative impact" cases that have been developed by the Reflecting on Peace Practice Projects, which is based at CDA Collaborative Learning Projects in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The case studies comprise materials for joint analysis through a collaborative learning process involving the case writers, RPP staff, and other peace practitioners. The cumulative impact case studies aim to identify the factors that help efforts to "add up" to peace, through greater effectiveness and/or through linkages across actors, sectors and levels of society. Each case examines the multiple approaches to peace undertaken in a single conflict zone.

No single case study can be definitive in itself; it is only through comparative analysis across multiple field experiences that tentative lessons can be drawn for the broader peacebuilding field. Therefore, this case study must be considered as raw evidence and a first step in the learning process. At the same time, the case study does contain important reflections on the experience in the Solomon Islands themselves, even if such reflections cannot inform the global field in isolation from the other fourteen cases.[1]

[1] Most of the additional case studies are available on the CDA website: www.cdainc.com

II. UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT DYNAMICS

KEY CONFLICT FACTORS

The conflict in the Solomon Islands is a result of multiple intersecting historical, geographical, political, economic and cultural dynamics. Sometimes simplistically painted as an ethnic conflict between Guadalcanalese and Malaitans, the real causes are social and political, the result of the interaction of several struggles for power and resources. The causes listed below have played out with varying levels of prominence in different areas and times.

Political/Social Factors

The Solomon Islands is a developing nation comprised of an archipelago of 922 islands. The group is made up of six large Islands: Choiseul, Isabel, Malaita, New Georgia, Guadalcanal and Makira. There are twenty medium sized islands and hundreds of smaller islets and reefs spreading in a double chain for over 1,800 kilometres from Shortland Island in the west to Tikopia and Anuta in the east, stretching to the north, nearly 900 kilometres from Ontong Java atoll to Rennell and Bellona Island in the south (see the map on page 5). Of these islands, 347 are presently inhabited. The total land area is 28,369 square kilometres, thus making the Solomon Islands the second largest insular nation in the South Pacific, after Papua New Guinea (Stanley 1993).

Isolation and remoteness have posed significant difficulties for colonial and post-colonial government, in terms of service delivery, regional governance, access to modern systems of law and justice, and economic development. Development initiated under the colonial administration was mainly centered on a few coastal areas, and a large number of people were moved according to labour needs, sometimes against their will. The majority of people employed as labourers were from the island of Malaita. Development benefits have not been evenly distributed, leaving the poor to become poorer in the remote parts of the country. Irregular transportation services and communication have further constrained rural livelihoods. Large numbers of people, especially in rural areas and outside Guadalcanal, have struggled to meet basic needs, gain access to education and healthcare and participate in economic, social, civil and political life. These inequalities fed a sense of injustice, of not receiving a "fair share," feelings which have supported the outbreak of violence.

Cultural Factors

Systems of traditional authority track alongside and often rub up against colonial and post colonial systems. Constructing a cohesive national identity in an archipelago state where over eighty different languages are spoken has proven difficult. As Ruth Liloquila states: "While educated people may understand the benefits of being one nation, the vast majority of Solomon Islanders see it as a threat to their resources, their cultural identity and culture, their environment and the basis of their sustained community living" (Liloquila 2000:3).

Understanding the cultural dynamics operating in the Solomon Islands is key to understanding both how the conflict system evolved and why the current approaches to peace building have been adopted. Culture has been abused, manipulated, and now is being reconfigured to provide avenues for building peace. The traditional social system including kinship, clan, ethnicity and language is often referred to in Solomon *Pijin* as *wantok*. The most fundamental social group in the Solomon Islands is the extended family (Moore 2004). The family is responsible for subsistence, wealth, social stability and relations with the ancestors and the environment. In modern times, the *wantok* family and social structure has become more complex, with the inclusion of modern institutions, such as churches, unions, sports clubs and other forms of social groupings. In its modern form the *wantok* family has now extended to business dealings and intersects with local, provincial and national political alliances. Many of these social groups have political alliances and national affiliations and influence the way politics is practised (Kabutaulaka 1998).

To the Solomon Islanders, the idea of tradition and culture is conceptualised as *kastom*, a pidginized term of the word 'custom' in English. Therefore, the cultural values and principles were referred to as '*kastom way*'. "*Kastom* also refers to ideologies and activities framed in terms of empowering traditions and practices" (Moore 2004).

Land Tenure Practices as a Conflict Factor

Land has political, religious and economic significance for all Solomon Islanders. Land is not individually owned but owned by the clan or tribe. Traditional politics bind together the land-owning clan or line. Control over large areas of land is a source of political and economic power. Such control is reinforced by knowledge of oral traditions, which legitimates ownership of different portions of the land, or by successfully manipulating such oral traditions to legitimise claims over land. For Solomon Islanders, land is the centre of life, as people have rights over portions of land because of their membership in a clan or line (Zoloveke 1979).

Land ownership practices were changed during the colonial period. The concept of individual ownership with the right to sell land was introduced in the early days of the British administration. As a result, a large percentage of the best and most accessible land was alienated. In the 1960s, the colonial government introduced a 'land settlement' programme, which involved the survey and registration of customary land, documenting ownership, use rights and boundaries. This programme was later severely criticised for being ineffective and too centralised. By 1984, only thirteen percent of the land area of Solomon Islands had been registered, the boundaries surveyed and tenure regulated by statute. The rest remained in customary ownership and was used according to customary procedures (Bennett 1995).

Thus large-scale resource development is made difficult by a land tenure system in which about 87 percent of the land is in customary-ownership. Only two per cent of the land is leased to foreigners (Kabutaulaka 1998). Therefore, the state has limited access to land for the purposes of national development. While some Solomon Islanders would welcome national land-based development on their customary land, for many, *kastom* still rejects treating land as a commodity. This creates problems when economically the country depends on exports of natural

resources such as timber, palm oil, gold and fish. One of the causes of conflict remains the tension between the two forms of title.

Furthermore, there is tension between patrilineal and matrilineal forms of land tenure. The issue of land from a traditional perspective relates to mobility and property rights. On Guadacanal the cultural practice is one of matrilineal land ownership. However, when Guadalcanalese women marry men from other islands, where patrilineal land ownership is practised, their custodianship of land becomes a problem. When non-Guadalcanalese husbands settle with their family on Guadacanal they benefit from their wives' custodianship of the land. The Guadalcanal people saw the inter-island migration and settlement as threats to their traditional matrilineal heritage, and to their ownership of land and other resources.

Political Factors

The contradictions and interactions among democracy, the notion of a nation- state, and *kastom* have far reaching ramifications for the political system. Political instability has been, and continues to be, one of the major features of Solomon Islands politics. Successive governments have been characterised by weak political alignments and loose allegiances, and one-party governments are rare following national elections. Coalitions have included combinations of multiple parties, as well as independent members with very little allegiance to party ideologies. These coalitions have found it difficult to focus consistently on coherent and cohesive national development. Instead, the political system has been shaped by individual politicians buying votes, skewing development benefits to *wantok* affiliations, and manipulating *kastom* to their own economic ends.

The Honiara administration was broadly accepted, as long as it was able to provide services and infrastructure. However, in the years leading up to the outbreak of violence, this capacity broke down. Lack of access to public services, particularly policing and justice, and the perceived inequity in who benefited from government services/resources were important drivers in creating the circumstances in which armed conflict occurred. Governance has been hampered by a system and machinery in which political power has been open to corruption, or at least is perceived as such, along with the perception that power is used for the benefit of the ruling group.

Closely linked to the tension between traditional and non-traditional authority structures, the breakdown of law and justice was reflected in weakened and selective law enforcement at the local level and a lack of court capacity to deal with crises as they arose. This allowed for the development of opportunistic and criminal elements.

Economic Factors

Implementation of economic development initiatives has been complicated by the complex land tenure systems (as noted above). After independence, the Solomon Islands government enabled direct dealings between the holders of customary land and commercial interests, resulting in the influx of large numbers of Asian logging companies. Logging licenses often changed hands without resulting revenues flowing back to the public treasury. By the

1980s, falling commodity prices and the pocketing of revenues led to a large national debt. Structural adjustment programs were introduced, which created more problems than they solved. Although power has been nominally devolved to a provincial government system, this has not resulted in a better division of resources amongst the provinces, or addressed internal migration issues (Leua Nanua 2002).

The desire for economic gain has also led to opportunistic commodification and commercialization of land, for logging in particular. Land has often been sold by persons with no legitimate claim in violation of the rights of the customary holders. The deterioration of the oral traditions of customary land ownership has facilitated this process. Injustice in land transactions and perceived inequitable distribution of resulting economic benefits contributed significantly to the outbreak and sustenance of violence.

Underlying Historical Factors

Several historical factors gave rise to the conflict. To begin with, there was an inequitable distribution of national wealth and financial resources during the colonial era. The colonial administration created uneven development and a dual economy: a modern export-led economy tied to overseas markets and a traditional subsistence agricultural economy. Most of the modern economic activities were on the island of Guadalcanal and the production was designed to meet the colonial master's needs.

Following the establishment of Honiara as the capital city after the World War II, many people from other islands saw the economic and educational prospects in the city, so they started to migrate to Honiara. As more economic activities were concentrated on Guadalcanal, the inflow of people to the city steadily increased. Malaitans, representing approximately a quarter of the country's population, became a significant portion of the labour force in the plantations on Guadalcanal and elsewhere in the country.

By the 1990s many Malaitan settlements were established on the northern and western parts of Guadalcanal. In the early days, the Guadalcanal land owners gave permission to use a portion of their land for settlements. However, as the number of settlers increased, squatter settlements were established. In most cases, these settlements overstepped the agreed original boundaries. In 1999 the Solomon Islands population was 409,042 with a growth rate of 2.8 percent (Solomon Islands Government 1999). It is estimated that the population was 432,000 in 2001 and by 2004, it exceeded 500,000 (Moore 2004). At this rate, the population is expected to double in 25 years. The increasing population growth has already outpaced economic output, exerting increasing pressure on the economy and government resources.

As the illegal squatting on Guadalcanal escalated, local people felt that they were being culturally marginalised in their own land. They felt that they were also economically marginalised, because they were not receiving adequate benefits from the major investments on their island. The non-Guadalcanal people appeared to have exploited the economic opportunities, such as jobs and services, created by these major investments on Guadalcanal.

A SYSTEMS VIEW OF THE CONFLICT

Though the conflict's main cleavage was between Guadalcanalese and Malaitan elements and was often overlaid by ethnic rhetoric, the conflict is rooted in deeper social and political grievances. We can think about the conflict as *a system of interacting factors*, rather than independent elements. In this regard, it is important to determine how the factors described in the sections above interact with each other in dynamic ways.

Figure 1 below presents the core conflict dynamic, using a classic paradigm, called "success to the successful." This model or archetype lies behind the notion of the poor get poorer and the rich get richer." Those who have influence, relative wealth, or access are able to gain additional resources and increase their success, while those who lack those advantages remain trapped or actually become poorer. In the Solomon Islands case, it is both the perception and reality that Malaitans and others in and around Honiara have benefitted in the post-colonial period, while those from outer islands languish.

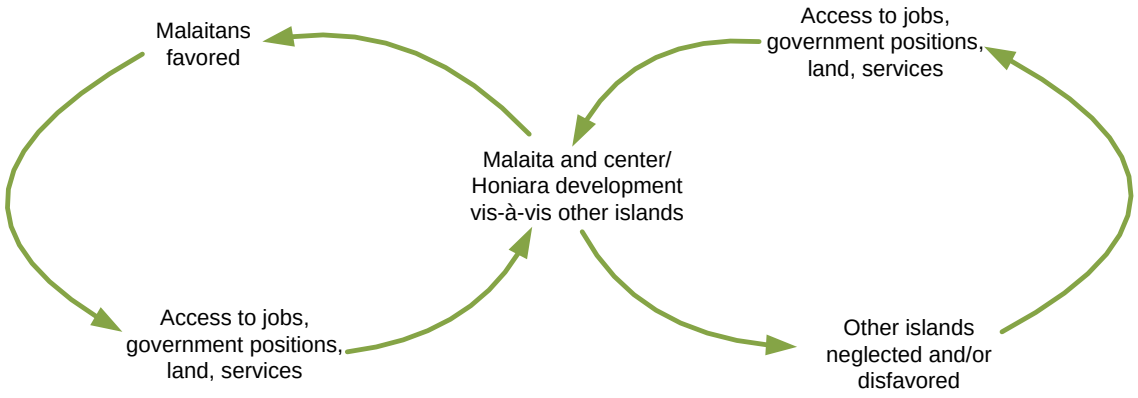


Figure 1: Success to the Successful in the Solomon Islands

While Figure 1 captures the essential dynamic, other important factors have also been identified, which must be added to attain a more complete understanding of the conflict system. Figure 2 retains the fundamental model at the center of the conflict "map," and shows how other factors have contributed to the conflict dynamics.

We can see that *wantok* plays an important role, contributing to dynamics on both sides of the system. First, as a network of relationships and loyalties it feeds into the systems of favoritism and business relationships. It also represents stronger bonds than any notion of national identity. These elements, in turn, support poor governance and corruption, as well as the ongoing favoring of Malaitans, in terms of access to jobs, government positions, and the police force. The biased police force encourages the factor of criminality and opportunism, which is seen as contributing to inter-group tensions directly, as well as the availability of young men for militant activities.

On the upper right of the diagram, *wantok* (along with colonial policies) also contributes to a sequence of effects related to land. The breakdown in communal land ownership has resulted in the sometimes questionable sale of land to commercial interests (often feeding

corruption), which has contributed to the overall decline in economic life and marginalization of communities. This has, in turn, led to inter-island migration, where migrants have occupied land and encountered conflicting systems of land ownership. Over time, the residents of Guadalcanal have developed a list of grievances (*bona fide* demands), which have largely been unmet. The lower right quarter of the diagram represents a vicious cycle, in which the relative neglect of the outer islands results in marginalization and out-migration, and then conflicts over land ownership and the demands of the Guadalcanalese for redress. These elements contribute directly to inter-group tensions and the occasional eruption of violence—which has stalled development efforts, contributing again to the neglect of outlying areas, bringing the cycle full circle.

Figure 2 also shows how the central dynamic interacts with other factors. *Wantok* feeds the element of inequity and favoritism, which lie behind the core dynamic in which Malaitans and the capital area around Honiara benefit. The neglect of the outer islands, part of the core dynamic, contributes to marginalization and fits into the vicious cycle.

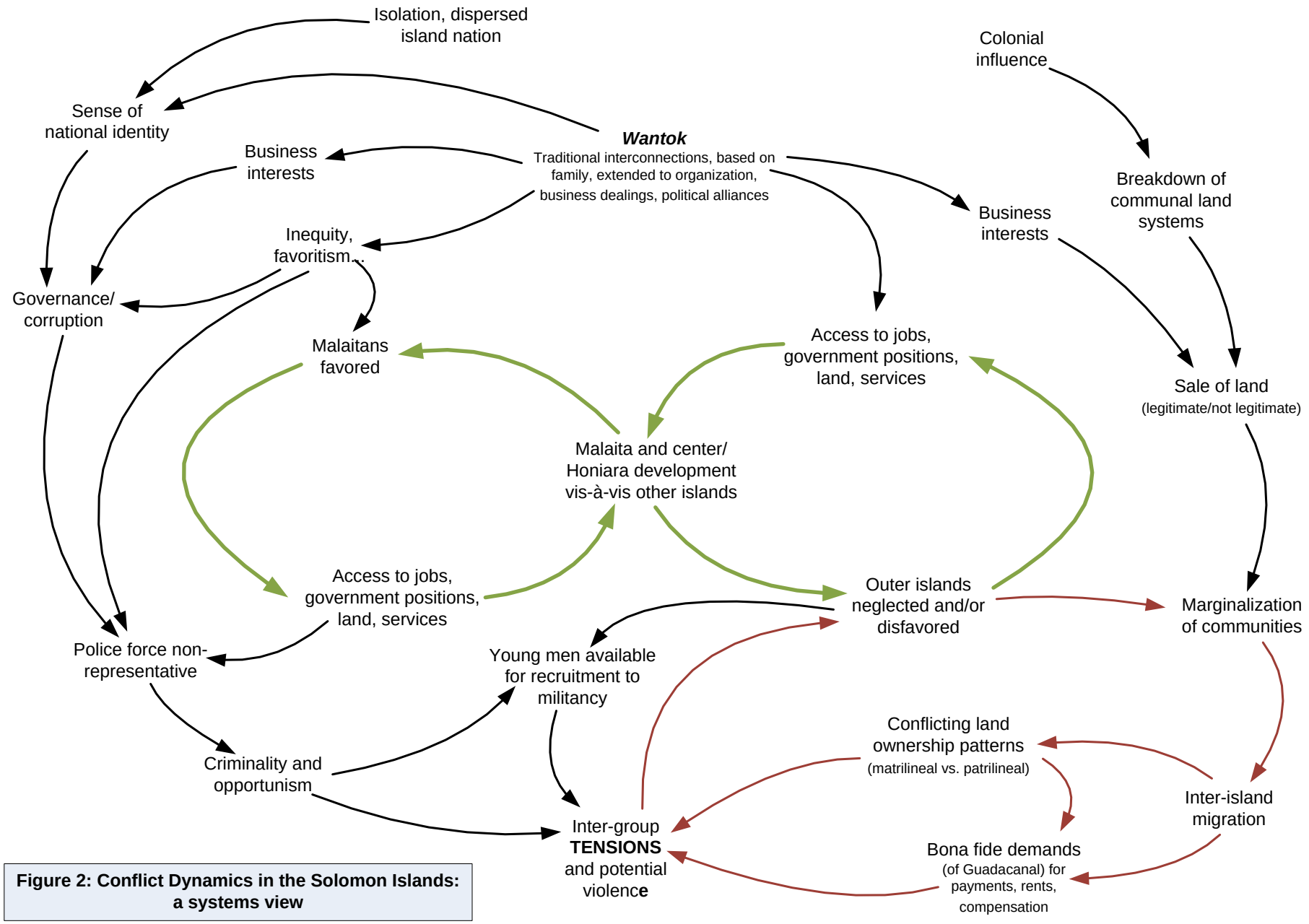


Figure 2: Conflict Dynamics in the Solomon Islands: a systems view

EMERGENCE OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

The issues described above and associated resentments grew over decades, and, in 1988, formed the basis of what came to be known as the "Guadalcanal *bona fide* demands" to the government. In 1998, the premier of Guadalcanal province demanded compensation for the murders of twenty-five Guadalcanal people that had taken place in Honiara during the previous twenty years; the return of lands that were rented, purchased or occupied by Malaitans; and payment from the national government for the land on which Honiara was built. Failure of the government to address these demands further aggravated the grievances, contributing to the emergence of violent conflict.

The ethnic conflict in the Solomon Islands, locally referred to as 'the ethnic tension', began in 1998, when a group of militant youths (Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army-GRA) attacked settlements of islanders, predominantly from Malaita, in northwest Guadalcanal. Their actions were ignited by the failure of successive national governments to address issues raised by the indigenous people of Guadalcanal. The increasingly aggressive behaviour of the Guadalcanal militants resulted in some 25,000 Malaitans fleeing Guadalcanal and an estimated 11,000 from Guadalcanal fleeing the capital city to the interior of the island (Pollard 2005).

The violence escalated at the start of 2000, when a resistance group named the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF), claiming to represent the interests of the Malaitans who had been displaced, armed themselves by raiding police armouries and subsequently took control of Honiara. Battles using small arms took place frequently between MEF and Guadalcanal militants who had transformed themselves from the Guadacanal Revolutionary Army (GRA) into the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) around the city area and other key areas on Guadalcanal and neighbouring islands.

KEY DYNAMICS OF THE ARMED VIOLENCE

The violence dynamics operate on three distinct dimensions which are linked to the key actors in the conflict. These include large scale organized armed militancy, private or personal militant associations, and criminality and societal communal conflict (Roughan 2006).

Large organized armed militancy

Initially the conflict was characterised by small scale violence perpetrated by armed GRA/IFM militants against individuals with the purpose of driving Malaitans out of their settlements on Guadalcanal. Armed violence and skirmishes escalated when the Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP) began to confront the IFM militants. As this continued, the morale of the police force declined, the government lost control of the situation and police weapons were smuggled to the IFM and MEF militants. The police armory was raided in January 2000, and MEF militants gained control of military weapons (Roughan 2006). Later the national RSIP armory was seized. At this point violent armed clashes erupted around the outskirts of Honiara.

The capacity of groups to threaten, intimidate, injure and kill was enhanced by the availability and spread of weapons. These included a large number of homemade weapons, as

well as a number of military and commercial small arms, many flowing from the Bougainville conflict and raids on police armouries, amongst other sources. Though not numerous compared to other conflicts, these weapons had a large impact on the communities into which they flowed. The introduction of powerful weapons also promoted the militarization of the identity of disaffected youths.

In recent times, the population of Solomon Islands has increased dramatically. A 1999 census indicated that more than 40% of Solomon Islanders were under fifteen. The inability of the economy to absorb this population growth contributed to widespread youth unemployment. In turn, this led to many disaffected young men identifying with and joining the armed groups.

Private or personal militant associations and criminality

The violence was funded and exacerbated by individuals with business and political interests in destabilising the political system. The chaos caused by the frequent skirmishes between militants allowed the rise of private criminality, characterised by vendettas, family retributions, theft, intimidation and extortion. The most striking example of private criminality intersecting with larger conflict dynamics can be seen in Harold Keke's behaviour. He raided a local police station in early 1998, spurred on by local businessmen and politicians, and subjected communities on the Weathercoast of Guadacanal to killings and human rights abuses for a number of years before finally being restrained by the regional intervention.

The criminal element escalated after the 2000 coup, when MEF associates used guns to demand compensation from individuals and business houses simply for their own monetary gain.

Societal communal conflicts

Longer-term underlying communal conflicts were exacerbated by the chaos. Prior to the violence, there were cases of inter-island conflicts, which were not adequately resolved through the existing dispute resolution mechanisms. In addition, long term neglect of structural issues and causes, such as the lack of legal recognition by government of traditional tribal land tenure rights, unequal economic opportunities and poor government service delivery, all generated communal conflicts over the years (Roughan 2006).

III. RESTORING BASIC SECURITY AND INITIAL EFFORTS AT BUILDING PEACE

USES AND ABUSES OF CUSTOMARY APPROACHES

The approaches to peace adopted in the Solomon Islands are grounded in long held customary approaches to peacebuilding. In traditional conflict resolution practices, reconciliation precedes peace building and confidence building measures. Distortion of these customary approaches resulted in the prevalence of compensation as a means of buying peace in Track One approaches. The same customary approaches explain why reconciliation and healing were prevalent in Track Two and Three approaches to securing and building peace.

Reconciliation and compensation are important dynamics in restoring peace in the Solomon Islands culture. There is a two-phased approach to compensation. In the first phase, according to *kastom*, when a conflict erupts, compensation needs to be paid to bring the conflicting parties to a negotiate settlement. Compensation can take the form of shell money or pigs, items of significant economic value. Compensation is thus purposely aimed at extinguishing the conflict, to allow settlement negotiations to take place. When the parties involved come together with the aid of a conflict mediator, other relevant compensations are paid by the warring parties to each other according to the measure of wrongs committed. This type of compensation aims at reconciling the warring parties. Usually part of the compensation is shared among relatives and the community, as a sign to everyone that the conflict has been resolved. The reconciliation ceremonies act as public acknowledgement that negotiation has taken place and that the restoration of relationships can now proceed in earnest. They serve as a confidence building measure, a healing mechanism, and a public declaration.

Thus the approach that emerged, which involved negotiating a ceasefire and then reaching a peace agreement, can be seen to mirror these kastom systems. Political negotiations were combined with a compensation approach that focused upon buying off the parties to the conflict. In the period immediately following a formal peace agreement, the government and civil society relied upon confidence building measures and the art of persuasion to encourage combatants to disarm.

In the breathing spaces created by the peace agreement and then the regional intervention, civil society and donors concentrated upon reconstituting and reconfiguring community and village level processes through traditional reconciliation and confidence building measures. When the conflict dynamics continued nonetheless, due to the rise of criminality, the government in desperation called upon regional assistance to enforce the peace. Regional counterparts focused upon the reconstitution, reform and rebuilding of a functioning central state through institutional reform and through promoting more transparent and accountable economic management and development processes. The creation of a discrete Department, later a Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP), whose task is to advance and coordinate peacebuilding approaches, can be seen as an attempt to institutionalize the political and financial approaches to peace. Many of these approaches ran concurrently and influenced each other in both positive and negative ways. Only recently

have there been any attempts to connect the two processes, and such connections remain incomplete at best.

NEGOTIATING A POLITICAL SOLUTION

Early attempts to resolve the conflict were focused upon central government negotiating a political solution. This approach assumed that once the Guadalcanal political representatives were appeased they would be able to rein in their militants. Track One efforts at brokering peace began shortly after the violence in Honiara and the Guadalcanal plains erupted. By concentrating on finding a political solution to the crisis, these efforts sought a series of accords and memoranda of understanding between national government and provincial governments around the issues raised by the Guadalcanal provincial government. (See the Timeline presented on page 6.)

In return, the provincial government agreed to negotiate with the militants to curb their violent activities. But the militants were not easy to contain, and by mid-1999 the violence had escalated to the point that the national government declared a state of emergency. Further attempts at settling the conflict through political means resulted in a series of accords and agreements between national and selected provincial governments. These accords and agreements variously called for investigations into illegally acquired land, calls to curb the perceived bias of the police force, measures to stop squatting, and for policies to ensure even development of the different provinces in the hope of curbing urban drift.

Recognizing the need for international armed assistance to halt the violence, and aware of the inadequacy of the police force, the SI government called for regional assistance from Australia and New Zealand from the beginning of the conflict. Prime Minister Ulufa'alu asked for Australian police to be sent to help restore law and order, but the Australian government ceded responsibility to the Pacific Island Forum, requesting that police from Fiji and other Pacific countries be sent instead. In September 1999, the central government dismissed the former Commander-in-Chief of the police and replaced him with a neutral police officer from New Zealand. An international police assistance group was invited to help monitor the provisions of the various accords. The Commonwealth Multinational Police Assistance Group consisted of twenty unarmed police officers from Fiji and Vanuatu, who were to control the handover of weapons by the IFM. The group was financed by the Australian and United Kingdom governments and was the first attempt at a regional assistance solution. The group, however, had little success, due to the fact that the police force supported the Malaitan population, and there were few incentives for armed militants to give up their weapons (Boge 2001).

During the first year of the conflict, insufficient attention was focused upon finding a way to stop the violence from escalating; the militants were not easily appeased, having discovered the power of the gun. Furthermore, collusion between the militants and the police force meant that there were few in Solomon Islands society with enough authority or power to halt the militant activity. For the first two years of the conflict, representatives from the militant forces were not invited to participate in talks or accords; the government had proscribed them in February 2002, effectively excluding them from any Track One efforts.

Civil society input to the peace process was at this time focused upon direct negotiation with militant groups, and advocacy by women on both sides to try and encourage militants to give up their weapons. The Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) established a peace office in August 2000, in an attempt to co-ordinate civil society efforts at peace. Church officials were involved in mediation as well as advocacy for peace, (Pollard and Wale 2004: 592-3). A National Peace Conference aboard the New Zealand Frigate HMNZS Te Kaha attended by 150 civil society members called for the inclusion of all stakeholders in the peace process. Yet despite their presence and influence, civil society was also excluded from official negotiations, because they posed a threat to government authority. Militants harassed civil society members who voiced their dissent.

In an attempt to institutionalize the peacemaking approaches, the Government established a specific department: The Department of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace (DNURP). This department was given responsibility for facilitating a crosscutting peacebuilding approach. It was to do this through a range of policy initiatives, as well as by funding and managing different sectoral approaches to reconciliation and peacebuilding. In a later section we examine the impact of this Department.

The ceasefire and the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA)

In August 2000, both the MEF and IFM, buoyed by the promise of financial compensation, agreed to cease hostilities, and provisions were made for a return to safe havens, which they controlled but were confined to.

The ceasefire agreement stipulated that the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order should be returned to the Solomon Islands police force. A Ceasefire Monitoring Council was set up to monitor the agreement. There were some breaches, but in general the ceasefire held.

Within three months, Australia offered financial and logistical support by inviting delegates from the IFM, MEF, the provincial governments of Malaita and Guadalcanal and the central government to Townsville in North Queensland, to obtain a peace agreement. Over the course of six days the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) was negotiated. The TPA was a hurried agreement where there was no balance of negotiating power. The Sogavare government was linked to the MEF, and there was provision for police officers who had been involved with the IMF and the MEF to continue to serve in the Solomon Islands police force. Civil society actors were not present, and pre-agreement intra-party dialogue processes had not taken place. Negotiators who were present reflected that it seemed easier to agree than disagree, given the financial opportunities presented through the inclusion of a compensation package. The provisions of the agreement were more focused upon recovery tasks than addressing the conflict drivers and dynamics.

Despite these issues, the TPA called for more autonomy for the Malaitan and Guadalcanal provinces and the establishment of a Constitutional Council to rewrite the Constitution in order to devolve power to the provinces. Provisions were made to set up a commission of inquiry into illegally acquired land and a general amnesty and a weapons amnesty were included. Two independent monitoring bodies, the Solomon Islands=administered Peace Monitoring Council (PMC) and the internationally-administered International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) were set up to collect the surrendered weapons.

DNURP was tasked with facilitating the peace agreement through promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding measures, and, given a co-coordinating role in terms of monitoring and reporting on the provisions of the Townsville Peace Agreement.

Attempts at brokering peace: manipulating *kastom* in an attempt to buy peace

In the traditional context, reconciliation and compensation are inseparable when it comes to brokering peace. In traditional practice, reconciliation and compensation are undertaken in the presence of the conflicting parties, and the conflicting parties themselves, as a token of reconciliation, pay appropriate compensation. In the course of the Solomon Islands peace process, this cultural practice of reconciliation and compensation was abused purposely for personal and political gains.

The accords and agreements brokered the establishment of a mechanism to pay adequate compensation as a means of addressing the grievances. In an early effort to broker peace during the conflict, a government-funded public reconciliation feast was held in May 1999 at Honiara's cultural village. The ceremony began with a church service where reconciliatory prayers were offered. This was followed by the exchange of traditional gifts. Leaders from Malaita and Guadalcanal dressed in their traditional costumes exchanged traditional gifts of shell money and pigs. Everyone who witnessed the occasion could sense the unforgiving spirit in both parties, as reflected in the speeches given by the leaders. As a compensation, a cheque of SI$100,000 was handed by the Malaita premier to the Guadalcanal premier and *vice versa.*

The reconciliation feast was correct, according to traditional practice. However, in a real traditional context, a reconciliation feast is usually undertaken in the presence of those who are directly involved in any conflict. Similarly, traditional gifts exchanged and compensation paid has to be shared on the spot according to the nature of the wrong one has committed. This fabric of *kastom* was violated in this ceremony, as only the leaders were present, while the militants were still skirmishing around the Guadalcanal plains, and only an hour after the conclusion of the reconciliation feast, waves of GRA attacks on Malaitan settlements were reported in the northern Guadalcanal plains. If the ceremony was aimed at brokering peace talks, then the exchange of traditional gifts would have been more appropriate. Payment of compensation is culturally done when issues that gave rise to a conflict have been resolved. The government pre-empted the reconciliation process, as the Guadalcanal *bona fide* demands had still not been addressed at the time of the ceremony.

In mid-1999, a Reconciliation Trust Fund of SI$2.5 million (US$ 320,000) was set up by SIG "in recognition of the social costs being borne by the indigenous people of Guadalcanal as a result of the capital being located in Honiara" (MOU 1999). Compensation demands were made by the Malaitan and Guadalcanal provincial governments. Other accords promised monies to those who had suffered loss of properties during the conflict, and for the dissolving of the militia and the handing in of weapons. The government offered $SI6.8 million (US$ 2.1) to Malaita province and $SI3 million to Guadalcanal province. This public offer of compensation sparked behind-the-scenes negotiations between a central government envoy and the militants who were also eager to gain access to government monies. Militants were offered up to SI$150,000 each in return for agreeing to the ceasefire.

The TPA further monetized the peace process, in that the national government committed to paying compensation for lost property, and the agreement included SI$12 million to be paid by the national government to the provincial governments of Guadalcanal and Malaita and to the militants. Australia offered promises of a peace dividend in the form of a large funding facility, if the agreement provisions held. *This focus on compensation as a means to ending the conflict, although perfectly acceptable under traditional cultural dispute resolution processes, started a disturbing trend which led to the monetization of the peace process, and a new cycle of violence.* Observers working in civil society organizations at the time lament this 'monetization of the peace process' and the precedent it set raising the importance of money in securing peace (Pollard and Wale 2004: 588-9).

DNURP was responsible for implementing the Townsville Peace Agreement compensation process. As part of the Townsville Peace Accord, the government was required to seek and secure assistance from development partners in order to compensate persons who had suffered loss or damage as a direct result of the crisis on Guadalcanal. The Republic of China was approached for assistance, and a commercial loan of US$25 million (SI$146.2) was facilitated through a Taiwanese Bank. Criteria for a compensation package were established and a number of Ministries (including the Department of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Economic Planning) collaborated with DNURP to set up a coordinated process, although authority to disburse was vested solely in DNURP. Amounts were established for loss of property, loss of economic opportunity, and loss of economic assets, such as trees and gardens.

Ultimately, DNURP staff lacked the capacity to manage and control the funds for the compensation package, and the process and methods established to determine the validity of the claims was subject to corruption. Thus many false claims were filed, and money was extorted at gunpoint by former MEF militants. Attempts to rectify the process included the appointment of a task force and a number of committees composed of ex-MEF and IFM members, whose role was to strengthen transparency and accountability. But these too became involved in corruption and disagreement around procedures. The process of compensation was subject to political wrangling, corruption and extortion, during which both combatants and political representatives filled their bank accounts. The former permanent secretary of DNURP, for example, has been charged and convicted of making a false claim for compensation in 2005.

Getting to what needs to be stopped: disarmament and demobilizing processes

Attempts at demobilization and disarmament were initially facilitated by the general weapons amnesty and the presence of national and international unarmed peace monitors.

The Peace Monitoring Council was an indigenous body made up of eminent Solomon Islanders, including ex-combatants from both factions. The PMC comprised councilors who were the managing body and largely based in Honiara, and field monitors comprising chiefs, church members, teachers and other local community people, who staffed the PMC outposts. People were chosen by reputation, based on their integrity, their moral authority, or their perceived neutrality. (That said, in the most conflict-affected areas, North Malaita and the Weathercoast of Guadacanal, it was not easy to find people who were impartial). Focusing on the conflict-affected areas in Malaita and Guadalcanal, the PMC's objectives were to identify

and assist in local level reconciliation processes, encourage combatants to disarm, collect weapons and promote a Weapons Free Village Campaign. The PMC had no enforcement authority; it relied on persuasion, advocacy, and *wantok* relationships to facilitate confidence building processes and encourage disarmament (Hegarty 2003).

The PMC provided a platform for Solomon Island individuals and organizations committed to peace to legitimize and bolster their peacemaking efforts. The monitors, by their presence, facilitated confidence building and relationship building among factions and communities. By establishing and maintaining outposts in conflict-affected communities they were able to act as informal ad hoc intermediaries between the grass-roots and SIG through their information gathering, analysis and reporting processes. They also acted as advocates for peace by disseminating information related to the peace process and provided logistical support (boats and fuel) to facilitate movement of key players in the peace process.

IPMT comprised forty-nine monitors drawn from Australian and New Zealand police and defense forces, civilians from government departments, and later police personnel from other Pacific Island states, including Tonga and Vanuatu and the Cook Islands. It consisted of six teams, including four on Guadalcanal and two on Malaita, that relied, like PMC, on the art of persuasion and encouragement to convince combatants and communities to give up their weapons and involve themselves in reconciliation activities. They facilitated meetings between factions and between ex-militants and government representatives (Hegarty 2003).

Given their size and the fact they relied on persuasion and encouragement rather than force, the disarmament campaign was relatively successful. By late 2002, the Weapons Free Villages campaign had certified approximately four hundred villages, and had conducted a series of advocacy campaigns, including the *wakabaot for pis* in Honiara, which 10,000 people attended. At times IPMT and PMC, and its later iteration the National Peace Council (NPC), were viewed as *de facto* police, given that the police force was party to the conflict, and communities approached them for advice and help on regulating criminal activities.

IPMT/PMC's ongoing activities were supplemented by international and multi-donor programs supporting the demobilizing and reintegrating of ex-combatants. Under the provisions of the peace agreement, it was determined that militants could transfer to the police and thus the number of reservist special constables rose sharply. This increase placed a drain on SIG public finances, and whilst some of the activities undertaken by special constables did support law and order, many abused their authority. The United Nations Development Programme committed to demobilizing nine hundred Special Constables by providing an appropriate resettlement and reintegration package to each. This included providing financial support for resettlement and reintegration support through skills training in micro enterprise development. This project came under criticism, as it was seen to be providing special assistance to only one group of former militants, those who had transferred into the Police Reservists, and were mainly ex-Malaitan Eagle Force members.

Another donor approach to demobilization was the Malaitan roads project, an example of multi-donor/government co-ordination through an infrastructure project. Construction of the road was overseen and funded by the Asian Development Bank, Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) personnel, the AusAID funded Community Peace and Restoration Fund, and its successor the Community Sector Program. Logistical support was provided by the Department of Infrastructure. At first, combatants

worked on the road as part of the reintegration/employment generation process, and were given a subsistence allowance. Work commenced, but dissatisfaction at the allowance rate escalated into conflict and theft of fuel and equipment. Thus work on the road was interrupted and ultimately halted in the post-Townsville Agreement period. *Both these attempts at demobilizing ultimately failed, as they took place in a highly volatile environment where incentives to give up the power of the gun were small in comparison to the potential for control of the compensation process through extortion.*

RETURNING TO CHAOS

Collection of weapons and demobilization processes were negated by the murder of an IFM commander, Selwyn Saki, in 2001, and the ongoing criminal activities and skirmishes perpetrated by Harold Keke on the Weathercoast of Guadacanal. Divisions were reinforced and it became increasingly less likely that weapons would be handed over. The IPMT eventually withdrew in mid-2002, four months before the Townsville Peace Agreement lapsed, and the Peace Monitoring Council became the National Peace Council, and was tasked with the continuation of the PMC's and IPMT's work. In addition, the NPC was expected to facilitate processes aimed at building national unity (Pollard and Wale 2005).

The NPC structure comprised councilors and advisors representing each of the nine provinces, plus two for Honiara, led by a Chairman. The number of field monitors was enlarged to 87 working from twelve monitoring posts, supported by ten administrative and logistical staff in Honiara. NPC supported many 'traditional' reconciliation ceremonies organized by various communities by providing logistical support and funds to purchase pigs, rice and other items. These feasts became an opportunity for elders in the community to publicly voice their support for weapons free villages and the ongoing peace and stabilization process. As one of the NPC Advisors reflects:

> In the absence of inspired political leadership or will within SIG, or of consistent or coherent leadership from the churches, or an effective civil society, NPC created and occupied a unique space between government and the civil sector. At the same time, it had greater influence and contact with government than other civil society organizations (McAvoy, 2009, personal communication).

Neither the PMC/NPC nor the IPMT focused upon addressing the key drivers of conflict, as this was not in their operational mandates. Instead they concentrated upon the immediate short-term post recovery tasks, whilst at the same time advocating for reconciliation and peace. Although designed separately, IPMT and PMC/NPC by virtue of the fact that their activities were almost identical, learned to co-operate. Indeed the rapid turnover of IPMT placements (just three months) meant that the PMC's local contextual knowledge and long-term relationships with communities were extremely important to facilitating IPMT's access. While ostensibly under the direction of MNURP, funding requirements and political issues meant that NPC operated for the most part independently of MNURP and indeed SIG. MNURP's mandate stipulated that the Department should play a key role in facilitating and reporting on the progress of the internal and external monitoring

bodies: the PMC/NPC and the IPMT. However, relationships and communication between the monitoring bodies and the Ministry were strained and, at times, tense due to a range of factors, including both undue internal and external political influence. Different funding provisions meant that MNURP staff often felt like the poor cousins to the NPC and IPMT, who were better resourced and had much more reach and presence.

IV. TWO FUNDAMENTAL APPROACHES TO BUILDING PEACE: STATE BUILDING AND COMMUNITY-BASED RECONCILIATION

This section examines the approaches and dynamics that have enabled the transition from outright chaos and lawlessness to a more stable system. There are two systems currently operating. One is a *state–focused system* that concentrates on bolstering the mechanism of the State; the other is a more organic *community-driven system* that concentrates on healing and bolstering intra-community strengths.

EXTERNAL PEACE ENFORCEMENT: THE ADVENT OF THE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION TO SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Townsville Peace Agreement bought breathing space by agreeing to pay vast sums of money to the militants and their provincial governments. However, it was a flawed process, in that there was little parity of power or esteem, and thus little chance of reaching a balanced outcome. Despite the many attempts at demobilization and weapons collection, in reality the cycle of violence continued. Unarmed monitors, civil society actors, and the government itself had little effect upon the militants, who were enjoying the power afforded to them by the gun. The police force was in disarray and the government had no recourse to military sanctions to quell the hostilities.

As noted above, the Solomon Islands government had requested armed military and police assistance from Australia and New Zealand. Both the Ulufa'alu (2000) and Sogavare (2001) regimes submitted formal requests, which were declined on the grounds that such a force would be widely resented in the Pacific region, would cost too much, and would not have a definable exit strategy (*The Australian*, 8 January 2003, quote from Alexander Downer). Yet Australian attitudes to intervention changed as a result of increased fears of regional terrorism following September 11, 2001, and the view promulgated by an Australian think tank and supported by other academics that the Solomon Islands was close to becoming a failed state, due to its continuing culture of violence and lawlessness and thus a potential harbor and breeding ground for terrorism (ASPI 2003). The fact that many state institutions and processes were subverted so as to serve the political and economic interests of a small political elite at great cost for the rest of society, backed by wayward elements of the police and the militants, was reason enough for Australia and its counterparts to design a multi-faceted approach to intervention that extended beyond initial peace enforcement duties.

The legitimacy and rationale for intervention was further strengthened by references to the Biketawa Declaration of 2000, in which the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) called for support and assistance by its member states in the resolution of crises in the Pacific Region. In 2003, the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) intervened, endorsed by the PIFS Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting at the end of June, and ratified by the SIG through an act of parliament in July 2003.

Seen as a partnership between the people and the Government of Solomon Islands and nominally fifteen countries of the Pacific region, RAMSI's mandate was to:

- Ensure the safety and security of Solomon Islands;
- Repair and reform the machinery of government, improve government accountability

and improve the delivery of services in urban and provincial areas;

- Improve economic governance and strengthen the government's financial systems;
- Help rebuild the economy and encourage sustainable broad-based growth; and
- Build strong and peaceful communities.

On 24 July 2003, RAMSI defence, police and civilian personnel intervened in the Solomon Islands, and began the process of restoring order. The Chair of NPC, Paul Tovua, provided advice and the local contextual knowledge to RAMSI, and NPC field monitors facilitated their entrance into the more difficult communities. NPC was seen as a trusted intermediary, and in the August 2003 weapons amnesty directed by RAMSI, of the 3100 weapons collected, 2200 were handed directly to NPC monitors and/or office staff in preference to RAMSI personnel. NPC also provided logistical and advocacy support spreading the RAMSI message in their fields of operation and becoming the *de facto* intermediary between RAMSI and the communities into which it wished to intervene. Six hundred arrests were made and over one hundred charges brought against individuals by the end of 2003. A key factor in RAMSI's early success was its display of overwhelming force. There were 325 police personnel and some 1,800 military personnel, including 450 combat troops. This overwhelming armed presence created enough fear amongst the militants and their supporters for them to comply with RAMSI demands (McMullan and Peebles 2006).

There is consensus in the Solomon Islands that the initial armed intervention stopped the lawlessness and contributed to the restoration of civil order and stability. The RAMSI presence provided a safer and enabling space, so that routines could be restored and people could begin to move around again. The key question remains as to whether the stability felt now due to the presence of armed regional personnel will continue after their withdrawal.

Reforming the institutional mechanisms of the State: necessary but not sufficient

RAMSI was designed not only to restore order but also to provide support for the reconstitution of the failed state. Its programs in the areas of Machinery of Government, Law and Justice and Economic Governance provide technical advice, financial support and other related assistance to the Solomon Islands Government and its institutions. The components aim to address several of drivers of conflict: poor economic governance; lack of access to and provision of essential services; and inequitable distribution of resources.

The Machinery of Government component focuses upon improvement of parliamentary processes; reformation of the public service; the implementation of transparent accountability mechanisms and institutions; the provision of civic and electoral education; and improvement of provincial level governance. The Economic Governance component focuses upon developing balanced national budgets; managing revenue and expenditure; facilitating negotiations to restructure loans to reduce the government's debt burden; reforming the taxation system and the foreign investment system; providing support to farmers; and building the capacity of government's financial management processes. The Law and Justice component focuses upon policing, the courts and the prison system.

The Participating Police Force (PPF) is composed of about 250-300 police. PPF works in partnership with the reconstituted Solomon Islands Police Force (SIPF) at every level and in every province. The PPF has established sixteen police posts in all provinces.

The PPF train, mentor and advise the SIPF. The Law and Justice component provides personnel, infrastructure and administrative support to key justice agencies and the courts. Assistance is being provided to the Solomon Islands Prison Service in the form of prison personnel, specialist advisers, training and improvements to infrastructure and equipment. Prisons have been refurbished in Guadalcanal, and work is ongoing in Auki (Malaita Province) and Gizo (Western Province). To date over 6,300 people have been arrested and 9,100 charges have been filed.

RAMSI has provided stability, increased access to justice, and has mobilized the public service and government departments. Elements of the government reform package have been greatly appreciated. The reforms of the financial system and particularly the tax system have renewed the flow of revenues, and Ministries are once again able to deliver services. The worst criminal elements have been tried and sentenced, and the public has seen that justice has been done.

However, initial enthusiasm is now tempered with confusion and disenchantment on several fronts. External reviews, such as those undertaken by the Pacific Island Forum Eminent Persons Group in 2005 and Oxfam in 2006, suggest that Solomon Islanders wish to see the concept of peace and security enlarged to encompass the broader notion of human security, and for RAMSI to achieve real progress in rebuilding the capacity of Solomon Islands institutions, based on an understanding of traditional structures, and tackling the persistent drivers of conflict and insecurity (EPG Review 2005; Oxfam 2006). Emphasis on law and order and the resultant court and prison sentences has interrupted necessary and ongoing reconciliation processes at inter- and intra-community levels.

External reviews and our own interviews suggest that emphasis placed on reformation of central government may be misguided, as long as islanders continue to show no loyalty to the idea of a nation state. The ongoing disconnect between RAMSI-bolstered national government approaches, processes and institutions and the rest of the Solomon Islands community has, to date, resulted in a lack of coordination between efforts at the national government level and efforts at the village community level, in terms of peacebuilding approaches and service delivery. The central government will need to address the issue of devolution of powers to some form of government at a lower level, whether to the existing provincial governments or to the new state governments recommended by the constitutional review. However, RAMSI has also the potential to exacerbate further conflict by continuing to privilege the Honiara area over other islands; by being insensitive to the importance of traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution, and by continuing to advise and direct long beyond government's tolerance of its presence.

The EPG and Oxfam reviews of RAMSI have called for a more balanced representation from other Pacific Island countries. The main participating countries have always been Australia and New Zealand, whose citizens comprise the majority of defence, police and civilian personnel deployed in country. (Over 90% of the technical advisors are from Australia and New Zealand.) Experience in other Pacific Island countries, such as Bougainville and Papua New Guinea, suggests that participants from other Pacific nations are more culturally sensitive, more effective at building trust, and have more successful outcomes. The legacy of colonization and ongoing patronizing attitudes are still very much felt by Pacific Islanders. To its credit, RAMSI has made significant efforts to recruit

personnel from other Pacific island nations, but people with relevant experience and expertise are often already employed in their own governments, or contracted to other donors.

The lack of an agreed timeframe for completion of RAMSI's activities and subsequent withdrawal is also a matter of disquiet and concern, particularly amongst the country's politicians and civil society leaders. They would like a more concrete timeline than the adage, we will be here for as long as it takes," which is currently used in RAMSI parlance.

COMMUNITY-LED HEALING AND RECONCILIATION PROCESSES

The confidence-building activities that the IPMT and PMC/NPC catalysed early on in the peace process were further complemented by a number of intersecting actors and dynamics. Donors have funded church initiatives, traditional dispute resolution processes, and community development efforts to enable communities to proceed with their own peacemaking processes. The priority for communities was to heal themselves, as a precursor to reaching out across divisions. Church organizations play a key role in facilitating, supporting and giving meaning to such intra-communal healing processes.

Psycho-social support as a precursor and accompaniment to village level reconciliation activities

Because the church in the Solomon Islands has such influence, it is considered as important a stakeholder as the government. Indeed, in many communities where government presence or government delivered services are negligible, the church is the main service provider and community support agent. During the tensions, post-TPA and currently, the various denominations have actively promoted peace and reconciliation activities. These range from offering psycho-social support, to facilitating trainings in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, to advocating for a formal Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to funding inter- and intra-community reconciliation activities.

During the height of the tensions, local church organizations (most notably the Solomon Islands Christian Association, and *Tasiu* (the Melanesian Brotherhood), despite the intensification in violence, continued to advocate for a cessation of fighting and tried to facilitate negotiations and between the parties to the conflict. They also provided humanitarian support by housing displaced people and feeding and caring for those injured during the conflict.

CARITAS supported the churches in creating a network of counselors in 1999 to offer basic trauma counseling to people affected by the violence and destruction. Counselors were trained in how to deal with trauma, gun related crime, and arson, as well as how to deal with children and women and provide support to unemployed people and single parent families. The network of trainers became supervisors who trained village level coordinators with basic listening skills and supported them in advocating for the benefits and integrity of trauma counseling support services. Supervisors provided advice and support to village counselors and debriefed and collected data on issues facing people in these communities. Area profiles were compiled, and these became a form of social barometer and functioned as an early warning system. Catholic priests and sisters now do the support work and data collection. The program is well established, and there are currently negotiations underway to transfer the

program to government by ceding control of the activities to the Ministry of Health and the Department of Social Welfare.

Likewise, the Church of Melanesia trained over forty church members in trauma counseling and community support skills, and in Malaita they have engaged in an information gathering exercise designed to surface old hurts, and to identify current reconciliation needs and key issues facing communities.

Church leaders have long advocated for a formal Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a means to institutionalize the healing process. This has finally been realized with the passing of an act of Parliament and establishment of the Commission in late 2009. The TRC will be examined in more depth in a later section.

Other church organizations have adopted a peace education and training approach to building longer-term peace. Trainings in peace education, conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities have been running at village level across the country, in an attempt to help heal the wounds of tension and violence between and among communities and to encourage them through complimentary activities to re-engage with each other in productive and sustainable ways. The Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM) has established a ministry of reconciliation and peacebuilding. Through this ministry, ACOM is now reaching out to conflict-affected communities on Malaita and Guadalcanal, providing mediation, trauma counseling and facilitating traditional reconciliation processes. ACOM, through its Inclusive Community Program (ICP) is also engaging in prison rehabilitation program.

The churches engagement in building peace has provided the avenue for people to heal through telling their stories of suffering. The training programs have acted as a safe space in which people can divulge their fears and their experiences of the violence. In the absence of other service providers, the church has consistently provided support to village life. Many externally funded infrastructure and community development processes have survived because the church has been an active participant and has coordinated committees and village teams responsible for maintenance, upkeep and use of the processes and structures.

The work of the churches is challenged by the fact that donors and government do not provide church bodies with adequate financial resources to carry out their peace and service work, although they recognise the churches as having contributed to addressing the issues and as being proactive in creating structures and mechanisms that begin the processes of building peace at the village and communal level.

Reconciliation as a precursor to building peace: restoring and healing community life and enhancing community resilience

Operating concurrently with the confidence building work that PMC and IPMT were engaged in and the psycho-social support processes that the churches were facilitating, community level reconciliation processes were vital to the reintegration of combatants and revitalization of community life. The violence and subsequent lawlessness reactivated old wounds that had been lying dormant. Thus many of the reconciliation ceremonies and, indeed, those still waiting to be held, do not involve only issues arising during the 1998 – 2003 period, but also involve decades-old arguments, family and intra-communal splits.

PMC and IPMT encouraged people to address the issues, and donors supported concomitant development activities, both as a financial incentive and as a way to build healthy relationships and connections in communities affected by violence. Given that 85% of Solomon Islanders live in rural communities, the political, economic, social and cultural unit from which people take reference is the village. The conflict and lawlessness destabilized and disrupted village life. People living at the epicenters of the conflict were afraid to leave their houses. Old grievances, over land for example, were rekindled by people taking advantage of the lawlessness, and communities feared the threat of violence. Many communities that did not experience open violence during the tensions nonetheless expressed general feelings of anxiety and fear. People were 'not free to move around.' The delivery of services and the economy had ground to a halt.

The combination and integration of traditional community dispute reconciliation processes with longer-term development outcomes and organic-community-led approaches to restoring peace, demobilizing combatants and enhancing community resilience have proven successful at creating the conditions for peace. Working in concert with traditional reconciliation processes and mindful of traditional authority structures, community-focused development activities, such as those practiced by the Church of Melanesia Integrated Community Project, the Community Peace and Restoration Fund and the Community Sector Program, have contributed to building peace at the local level. Capitalizing on community strengths and community resilience, activities recognize and reinforce already existing community networks. These programs have chosen to implement their activities by encouraging and modeling collaborative and consultative approaches, and using local resources, labour and expertise where possible. This approach has had a profound effect on revitalizing associational life. By requiring that communities concentrate on projects that are of mutual rather than individual benefit, community development activities have strengthened the connecting factors in village life. Many of these activities initially took the form of infrastructure rehabilitation or construction projects that built or rebuilt schools, clinics and resource centres. They became the mechanism by which the different sectors of communities could experiment with working together again.

Independent reports, such as the Community Peace and Restoration Fund (CPRF) Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (2005) and the independent Community Sector Program (CSP) Evaluation, document how working on projects of mutual benefit has contributed to building peace. Community members had to negotiate together over design, materials, transport of materials, and the organization of working parties to build community structures. Such infrastructure and economic livelihood projects helped to rebuild trust and confidence that had been eroded by the tensions. The process of working together on the superordinate goal of the project allowed people to re-engage with each other and re-identify their place in the community networks.

The process of rebuilding trust has been particularly relevant for the youth who were caught up in the fighting. By participating in the projects and taking responsibility for ensuring the success of the projects (such as leading labour teams or transporting materials) the youths were able to regain the trust of the community. Project activities kept them busy and out of trouble and learning aspects of leadership in preparation for future roles.

This holistic approach to community development has bolstered healthy communal dialogue. In designing a community project, youth, women and elders are tasked to discover what projects have been successful and identify the reasons for their success. Reconfiguring traditional patterns of authority by developing more participatory planning processes has enabled young people and women to be vibrant drivers of community development, while elders provide the necessary advice and support to the community development initiative. Current participatory planning processes value traditional modes of authority but also encourage transition to more inclusive planning processes, in which the voices of women and youth can be added to village decision-making processes.

Intra-community peacebuilding approaches: a pre-condition for inter-community peacebuilding approaches

Given the weakness of central government and the nation state, peacebuilding approaches that concentrate on the village and community level are appropriately focused. Independent evaluations suggest that the success and sustainability of reconciliation and concurrent socio-economic development activities demonstrate that systemic change is occurring at the village level (Spence and Wielders 2007; CSP VAP Evaluation 2009). The activities are rehabilitating, revitalizing, reconciling and reconfiguring communities and community processes and livelihoods and strengthening those processes that work in the Solomon Islands, processes that are culturally, economically, and politically relevant.

A key lesson arising from the Solomon Islands case study is that, given the ongoing and historical absence of any form of nation building or national unity, peace writ little, (that is, the intra communal and intra-village processes of reconciliation) are as vital as the larger peacebuilding attempts. Thus the healing, restorative justice and reconciliation efforts practiced at the community level, supported by infrastructural and community development activities, represent the most practical and efficacious approach, whilst government at the national level is still struggling to re-invent itself. RAMSI's attempts at nation building and government strengthening should be seen as a complementary approach that is not likely to bring peace at a village level, because that is not how society has functioned to date. Peace ensues at the intra-community level when local reconciliation processes have been enacted.

Malaita province in particular has placed emphasis on intra-community and intra - village peacebuilding, as a pre-condition for wider inter-provincial and national reconciliation programs. The province began planning for peacebuilding programs at the first Malaita Leaders' Peace Summit in 2004. The aim of the summit was to determine how to implement the development projects identified for Malaita in the TPA. The thinking at that time was that establishing big development projects would generate economic activities and employment opportunities, which would enable Malaitans to return home. .

Over time leaders realized that major development projects on the island could only come to fruition if Malaita communities and villages reconciled their conflicts. This realization led to the second Leaders' Peace Summit in 2007. The focus of the summit was to start the intra-communal reconciliation process. The reconciliation programs were first aimed at getting former militants to reconcile with their community leaders, before reconciling with their provincial leaders. The militants did reconcile with their provincial government leaders, particularly the Oeta provincial government, which was ruling during the conflict. This intra-

communal reconciliation process prompted twenty communities to organize their own reconciliation efforts. On Guadalcanal, there is a need for more intra-communal reconciliation ceremonies, to prepare the province for the inter-provincial and national reconciliation ceremonies. So far the province has undertaken two intra-communal reconciliation ceremonies.

Inter-communal reconciliation processes: reaching out across geographical and cultural divisions

The most visible divisions during the tensions ran between Malaitan and Guadacanalese people, and to some extent, between Malaitan people and all other Solomon Islanders. On Guadalcanal, 25,000 Malaitans were displaced and returned to Malaita. Many of them have since returned to Honiara, but are no longer welcome in most of rural Guadalcanal.

Although options for rebuilding relationships and trust at an inter-communal level between Guales and Malaitans are still somewhat limited due to the changed circumstances on the ground, civil society actors have encouraged and supported, where possible, the restoration of inter-group relationships. This support manifests itself in community exchange processes, joint socio-economic development projects and sporting activities. For example, CPRF and CSP supported a community-based rehabilitation resource centre in the Borderline community in Honiara, a densely populated and ethnically diverse area, home to many people who have been involved or affected by the tensions. They also helped upgrade a women's care centre in Honiara, which cared for displaced Malaitan and Guale women during the tensions. Youth and women from different provinces were brought together in Honiara through a Peace Music Concert and a Solomon Islands Christian Association Federation of Women workshop on the effects of the tensions on women in Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands Football Federation run inter-island competitions, and support youth displaced during the tensions.

Community exchange projects have been facilitated by World Vision, in which chiefs, women and youths from Malaita were brought across to Guadalcanal at different times, and took part in inter-communal reconciliation ceremonies, resulting in communities agreeing to lay the past to rest.

The Lighthouse Project is a multi- dimensional program that works with high profile ex-combatant prisoners from opposing sides of the conflict. They regularly undertake joint peace and reconciliation activities, and the community looks up to them as examples of positive change. Upon their release, the ex-combatants go back to their villages and reconcile themselves with their families. This process is facilitated by the Sycamore Tree Project and partially funded by MNURP. To date, high profile ex-militants have been involved in facilitating joint reconciliation processes between ex-Malaitan and ex-Guadalcanal militants and between opposing forces on the Weather Coast. They are also involved in settling squatter disputes. MNURP has recognized the skills and the high profile work and are now using these men as reconciliation facilitators in a number of Ministry-funded reconciliation events. For example, the Marau reconciliation process held on the Weather Coast in November was jointly facilitated by an ex-Malaitan and an ex-Guadalcanal militant.

The power of alternative voices: the role of women as peace brokers

Women in the Solomon Islands have always been active participants in traditional conflict resolution and peace mediating processes. This cultural heritage has allowed women to play formative roles in attempting to broker peace between the militants at various stages of the conflict. National women's bodies aimed at brokering peace and disseminating information were formed at the height of the crisis, and these bodies have had substantial influence in local communities, and have influenced government policy.

In early 2000, women in Honiara coordinated their various efforts by creating a national body, Women for Peace, whose objective was to build trust and confidence with the two militant groups through sharing perspectives, exchanging information, and raising women's issues—and by letting the militants know the extent of the suffering caused to women and children as a result of the violence. Women for Peace was able to broker peace between the women from Malaita who were corralled in Honiara and the women from the Guadalcanal Plains who were unable to access Honiara due to checkpoints. As a result, the women exchanged food and set up a market whereby those in Honiara could exchange goods, such as soap and kerosene, for fresh food from the plains. The market ran successfully for many years and was a meeting point for women to share stories and ideas and maintain connections. Their activities were supplemented in 2001 by the establishment of the women and peace focused media organization, Vois Bilong Meri (VBM) (The Women's Voice), whose objective was to influence public opinion about women and peace issues, and to provide timely and relevant information that would enable women to make informed choices. During 2001 and 2002, VBM broadcast stories of women reaching out across the conflict lines; advocacy stories around trauma healing; and personal stories of how women had transformed conflict.

Militants interviewed suggested that the women had played an important role in persuading them to agree to the initial ceasefire provisions. However, this influence was not reflected in the formal peace negotiation processes, as women were not involved in the Townsville Peace Agreement. The subsequent peacebuilding processes at a government and regional assistance level have also not adequately included women peace actors. However, in many ways, the disruption to the status quo and the arrival of a regional assistance mission has generated space for women's organizations to advocate for women's issues and to reframe issues using a gender lens.

For example, in 2005 VBM contributed to a gendered early warning initiative funded by UNIFEM. VBM gathered stories and contributed to the development of the indicators, providing the bridge between local communities and UNIFEM while the indicators were being developed, and then helped to raise awareness and gather data on the indicators in local communities. VBM has opened the media to women's voices, which was previously lacking. In the eight years of its existence, there has been a transfer of this voice to mainstream media who are now increasingly reporting on women's issues as a matter of course. VBM has consistently advocated for and modeled changes in social norms by showing stories of successful women and promoting an alternative to the status quo. With the creation of a Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs (enjoying external funding assistance and technical support) women's issues have become visible in government policy debates.

Recently a domestic violence policy has been adopted, and the Ministry continues to lobby for Temporary Special Measures to require quotas for women representatives in parliament.

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE HEALING PROCESS

The Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

As mentioned above, the central government established, with donor support, a central Ministry of National Unity, Peace and Reconciliation (MNURP), in an attempt to co-ordinate approaches to peace and reconciliation. From the time that MNURP started, it was never expected to address the drivers of the conflict. Instead its purpose has been to strengthen the on-going reconciliation and peace processes among groups and communities in the country, as a way to enhance nation building and unity. Due to increased multinational support and focus, processes that have promoted reconciliation are finally being linked to the resolutions of the Provincial Leaders Summits. These resolutions emphasize support for national unity and peace-building efforts and strengthening the capacity of existing government agencies and other stakeholders to enhance peace and reconciliation (Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2006).

MNURP's capacity to coordinate and manage these broad-ranging and multivariate activities is currently constrained by lack of personnel and ongoing hiccups in disbursement of funding. That said, it is ramping up activities and has set up *provincial Peace and Reconciliation Committees,* in an attempt to bring together key stakeholders in intra-communal dialogue, as a precursor to supporting inter-communal dialogue. The Peace and Reconciliation Committees are made up of people active in local reconciliation processes, including representatives of churches, chiefs, members of INGOs and NGOs who are working on peace activities, and provincial government members. Furthermore, field-based community mediators in each ward of each province in Malaita and Guadalcanal have responsibility for promoting awareness of the need for healing and reconciliation, identifying parties needing reconciliation, and referring parties needing reconciliation to the Peace and Reconciliation Committee for funding. These Committees replicate existing structures, such as the CARITAS and Church of Melanesia activities discussed above. However, this represents an attempt to institutionalize and support, at a national government level, the processes of reconciliation that have been taking place to date.

In an attempt to facilitate the more sensitive inter-communal reconciliation processes, MNURP has designed and is implementing a series of Public Dialogue Forums in Guadalcanal and Malaita, in an attempt to ascertain the substantive issues still needing to be addressed. These Dialogue Forums aim to overcome fragmentation, identify core needs and prepare the parties for future cross-community engagement. To this end, public reconciliation processes are being planned between the Solomon Islands Government and the Guadalcanal Provincial Council; the Guadalcanal Provincial Council and the Malaitan Provincial Council; and the Guadalcanal Provincial Council and all the other provincial councils. MNURP will play a key organizational and logistical role in ensuring that these inter-communal processes occur.

MNURP has further been tasked with setting up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The main objective of the TRC will be to engage stakeholders in a reconciliation process premised on genuine facts and confessions, examine the root causes of the ethnic conflict and the Honiara riots, and develop strategic policies to prevent recurrence of conflict. The TRC can ascribe responsibility to parties in the conflict, as the basis for judicial action. There is no amnesty provision in the Act of Parliament which legitimized the Commission, and it operates as an independent body. However, maintaining its independence from MNURP, without clear autonomy and budget lines, is currently difficult and will present a significant obstacle to the Commission implementing its work effectively. Without autonomy, the TRC will be perceived to be subject to political interference, which will compromise its independence and trust. If people perceive it to be another arm of government, they will be reluctant to come forward to share their stories. However, the TRC Commissioners view their role as primarily a coordinating one, providing the connective tissue between all the currently isolated but complementary efforts at healing and reconciliation. Headed, as it is, by a member of the Church of Melanesia, it already has already gained some trust through its church structures.

V. REFLECTING UPON THE SOLOMON ISLANDS EXPERIENCE USING THE RPP MATRIX AND CRITERIA OF EFFECTIVENESS

We can reflect upon the wide-ranging and multivariate approaches to building peace, by using the RPP Matrix (see Figure 3). The Matrix represents a tool for examining peacebuilding strategies. The two vertical columns differentiate *who* is engaged. The left-hand column includes efforts aimed at the broader population, mobilizing greater numbers for peace, reaching out to new constituencies, and is labelled More People. The right-hand column shows efforts aimed at people who have the power and authority to either promote peace or to block it, and is labelled Key People. The horizontal rows denote different kinds of *change* promoted by peace efforts. The upper row involves Individual/Personal Changes in attitudes, behaviours and skills, and so forth, while the lower row shows changes in inter-group relations, norms, institutions, structures and even culture, and is labelled Socio-Political Change.[2]

The various peace efforts we have described in the previous sections are distributed on the Matrix, providing a visual "mapping" of the range of approaches to peacebuilding attempted in the Solomon Islands.

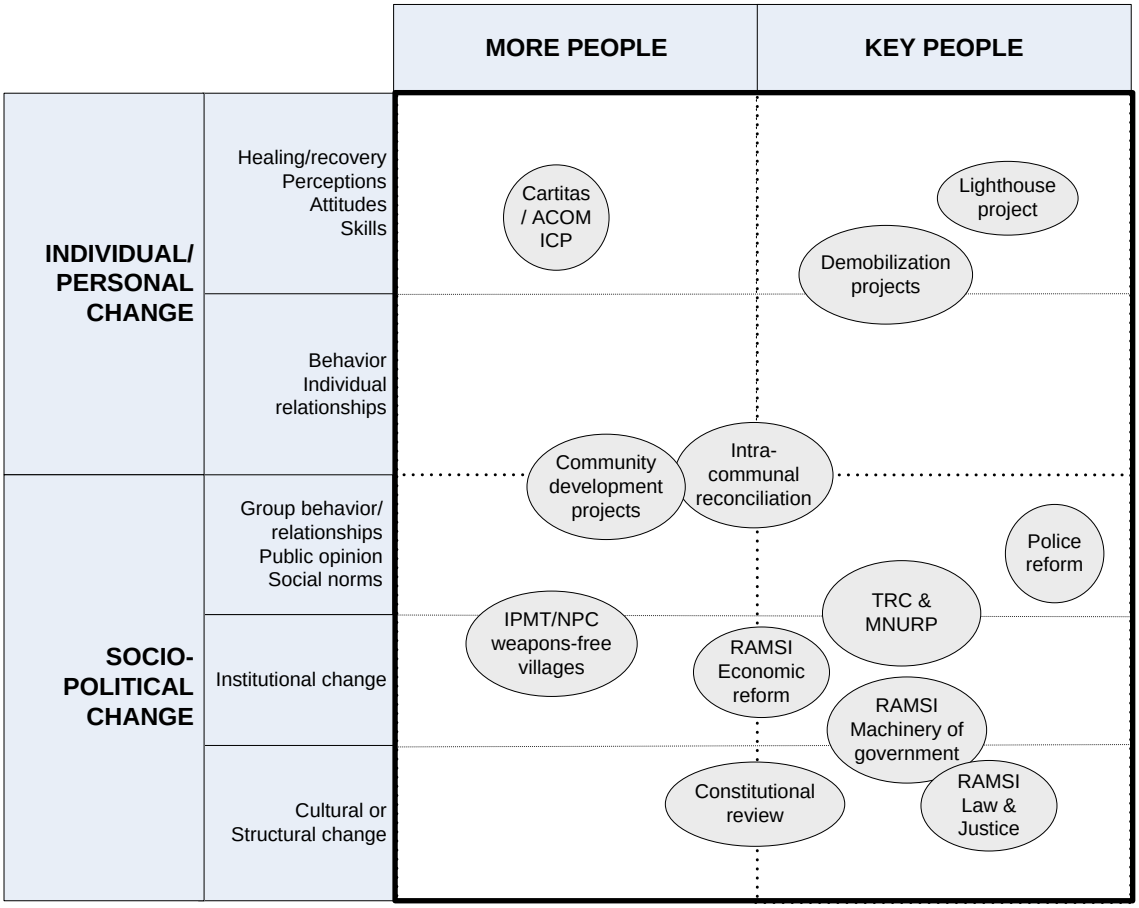


Figure 3: Peacebuilding Approaches

[2] For a more complete explanation of the RPP Matrix, see www.cdainc.com.

As noted, one set of efforts has used traditional methods for reconciliation focused on individual change, including both key people, such as ex-combatants and militants, as well as broader initiatives that involve community members, women and youth. For the most part, these programs are disconnected from the efforts aimed at state building and institutional change, largely supported through funding and technical assistance by RAMSI.

We can also view the peace efforts in the Solomons through the lens of the RPP Criteria of Effectiveness. The Criteria of Effectiveness are as follows:

1. The effort results in an increase in people's security and in their sense of security;
2. The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence;
3. The effort results in the creation or reform of institutions or mechanisms that address the specific grievances that fuel the conflict;
4. The effort causes participants and communities to develop independent initiatives that decrease dividers, increase connectors or address causes of conflict; and
5. The effort results in meaningful improvements in inter-group relations.

Using the Criteria, it becomes evident that there has been progress in terms of building a wider peace. RAMSI's success in restoring law and order and creating a more stable environment coupled with ongoing reconciliation processes and community development processes at the village level have resulted in an increase in people's security and their sense of security (Criterion #1 above). More and Key People have re-engaged with village life; combatants and those displaced from Guadalcanal have managed to reintegrate into their villages. However, there is a feeling in Solomon Islands that the current stability is not sustainable without the presence of RAMSI. The riots that took place in April 2006, when the Chinatown area in Honiara was burnt down, point to the fragility of the general law and order situation and the broader governance issues that remain unresolved.

The healing and reconciliation ceremonies and processes have likewise increased people's sense of security. Nearly all peacebuilding activities, no matter at which level, or whether catalyzed by government, non-governmental actors, or individuals, are a mix of three theories of change. First, there are activities focused on more people, on healing the individual, providing them with skills and opportunities to reengage with communal life, whether through reconciliation activities or skills training. These have been an essential part of enabling communities to rebuild healthy working relationships (#5).

Second, efforts have engaged people in working on goals of mutual benefit, in order to rebuild healthy relationships based on mutuality. Such efforts have both preceded and been made possible by reconciliation activities and the reintegration of internally displaced people and key people such as ex-militants. These processes have resulted in numerous independent individual relationship-building initiatives, such as reconciliation activities and joint community projects taking place. These can be viewed as independent initiatives that decrease dividers, increase connectors, or address causes of conflict (#4), that also focus on creating positive change at the individual relationship level.

Finally, the focus on individual and communal healing and the acceptance back into communities of ex- combatants has now been institutionalized (#3) at government level through MNURP's current focus on providing logistical and other support to intra-communal reconciliation activities and the public dialogue forums as a precursor to inter-communal reconciliation activities.

Although many of the drivers of conflict have not yet been addressed, the most logical and culturally appropriate approach to peace at present is the intra-communal approach, which encourages the reintegration and the restoration of relationships fractured by the tensions and lawlessness. These efforts have prompted people to resist violence and provocations to violence (#2). Reflecting on the length of time it takes to build a coherent and sustainable peace, these intra-communal strengthening processes can perhaps be seen as the foundations upon which additional inter-communal processes can be built in the future.

RAMSI is focusing at the institutional level by reforming government mechanisms and the law and justice sector as well as by creating a more vibrant economy. As a result of the creation and reform of legal, financial, and security institutions, government is becoming more accountable to its communities. Revenue is beginning to flow from central government outwards, and there are plans for large-scale economic development projects on other islands. The police service is being reconfigured, and re-trained, and the prison system has been revitalised. In addition, various mechanisms that deal meaningfully with injustices or grievances that are key to addressing the drivers of conflict have been set up, including the Guadalcanal Land Dealing Commission and the Constitutional Review (#3). While the government would do well to implement the recommendations arising from these new structures, this could prove difficult, as the matrilineal system and ownership of land on Guadalcanal remains an obstacle to peace. Important land decisions are made at the political level, yet to date there is no female representation in parliament.

In an attempt to restore meaning to traditional compensation processes, which were so abused during and after the tensions, MNURP has been providing logistical support to meetings of chiefs and church members in Malaita and Guadalcanal to provide a venue where these key stakeholders can discuss and redefine what reconciliation means and how compensation should be practiced.

Perhaps the least effective efforts have been those aimed at improving relations amongst groups in conflict, but the groundwork in terms of building intra community confidence has been laid. Symbolic but successful community exchanges between Mailata and Guadalcanal have been held, and the upcoming inter-community and inter-provincial/national government reconciliation processes are key to promoting reconnections and confidence and trust building among the parties to the conflict.

VI. CONCLUSION

Building a sustainable peace takes many years, and cumulative efforts to do this have been described in this case study. The parallel processes of state reformation and community confidence building may eventually intersect through MNURP and the TRC. These two approaches have begun to add up to a more sustainable peace that has yet to be fully realised. Addressing the key drivers of the conflict is now a priority for the current Solomon Islands government and RAMSI, and both recognise that stability and law and order is only the first step towards building a more comprehensive peace.

The financial, land, institutional and governmental reforms at both national and provincial level described above can be seen as the beginning attempts to address the issues of poor governance, inequity in service delivery, unequal development patterns and inter-island migration. Large-scale development projects, coupled with small-scale economic livelihood projects on Malaita and other islands, promise improved economic growth for these islands. There is more work to be done however. The organic community- and church-driven approach to peace requires ongoing coordination and funding, and links must be made to the RAMSI programs where possible. The RAMSI programs are adequately funded, but they require more community involvement, and, at the very least, a clear timeline for transfer of resources and responsibility to the government.

Finally, whilst peace and stability may be realised in Guadalcanal and Malaita, building peace across the Solomon Islands will very much depend upon the idea of nationhood taking root in Solomon Islander consciousness. This will involve a very different suite of long-term activities aimed at bolstering a common identity and a common frame of reference.

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