



## **REFLECTING ON PEACE PRACTICE PROJECT:**

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### **Case Study**

# **Women Weaving Bougainville Together: A Contextual Case Study on The Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency Buka, Bougainville Province, Papua New Guinea**

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## **Introduction**

The intention of this case study is to document the role of one women's peace and development agency, the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency, in the context of other civil society peace initiatives, and in doing so, to highlight some of the key issues and dilemmas from a 'practitioner's perspective.' The initial approach of this author was to seek to document a significant role in the Bougainville peace process played by non-state actors. Originally the concept was to look at the role played by outsiders and expatriot interlocutors who have peopled the process from its earliest years, particularly as 'technical advisers' to either side (or to both sides). In the course of developing this approach, the author was strongly urged by several sources to look instead at the dynamic role played by organised women.

From London, it is not easy to get to Bougainville. A lot of distance had to be covered, and the flight was the easy part. This case study was made possible thanks to the generosity of many Bougainvilleans and many friends of Bougainville. Any insights gained here were made possible thanks particularly to Martin Miriori, for helping to build the track from Islington to Buka, and to Helen and Kris Hakena and all the staff at the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency for their openness and hospitality. The fieldwork was also made possible thanks to my partner Lucy Marks who looked after our two kids while I was away writing this case study.

## **Section I Historical Background**

(Extracted from Regan, A. J., 1999. *Bougainville: The Peace Process And Beyond*. Submission to the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry, June: Canberra.)

### **Papua New Guinea and Bougainville (Regan)**

"The boundaries of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville and neighbouring Solomon Islands are products of the colonial era, when the island of New Guinea (immediately to the north of Australia) and many smaller nearby island groups were divided among the Dutch, German and British. Bougainville was administered by Germany as part of New Guinea, separating them from their closest neighbours (in terms of both kinship and geography), the Solomon Islands. After World War II, Britain was given administration of New Guinea by the UN; it already had sovereignty over Papua (subsequently administered on its behalf by Australia). They became independent as the state of Papua New Guinea. At 1,000 kilometres east of the mainland national capital, Port Moresby, Bougainville is the most remote of PNG's 19 provinces. It consists of two adjoining large islands, Bougainville (8,646 square kilometres) and Buka (598 square kilometres), five main atoll groups and many smaller islands. Its 9,438 square kilometres is about two per cent of Papua New Guinea's land area. (Regan: 99)

### **Ethnic Identities within Bougainville (Regan)**

"Papua New Guinea's population of approximately four million comprises over 800 distinct languages, often divided into numerous small and semi-autonomous societies, with most groups still heavily reliant on subsistence agriculture. Bougainville, with a population of approximately 175,000 and 18 distinct languages, fits the Papua New Guinea pattern of

diversity. Its language groups have never been political units, tiny societies within them being the main units. Cultural differences existed both between and within language groups.

“Consciousness of ethnic identities associated with language groups probably emerged as colonial control ended group warfare and brought contact between diverse groups, initially through involvement of many young males in plantation labour. It was colonial administrators and missionaries that vested groups with ‘tribal’ ethnic identities by emphasising language differences. At the same time they ranked Bougainvillean language groups into positive and negative stereotypes (‘backward’ and ‘progressive’), no doubt reinforcing normal human tendencies to stereotype linguistic and cultural differences. These stereotypes continue to be significant, contributing, paradoxically, to both divisions within Bougainville, and reinforcing Bougainville identity vis-a-vis other Papua New Guineans.

“Except that Bougainvilleans are darker, few characteristics distinguish them from other Papua New Guineans. But during the colonial period this minor distinction became a focus for Bougainvillean ethnic consciousness, as result of government policies whereby Bougainvilleans, regarded as reliable with leadership qualities, were used as police, and the subsequent use of labour from the Highlands of the mainland on Bougainville expatriate plantations, and the copper mining project, leading to contempt for and resentment against mainlanders.

“Bougainville’s ethnic identity was also shaped by its distance from Port Moresby and proximity to Solomon Islands as well as the propensity of the Australian administration to leave it to missionaries to provide important services. This contributed to two related phenomena – grievances about neglect of Bougainville’s development by the colonial regime and emergence of a cohesive and educated elite unique in Papua New Guinea. The two main churches – Catholic, with about 75 per cent affiliation and Methodist with about 15 per cent – provided all education (until the first government school in 1960) and extensive health and other services. Both churches answered to authorities in the neighbouring British-administered Solomon Islands, thereby limiting links to Papua New Guinea (and reinforcing pre-existing cultural affinities) By the 1960s the Catholic education system in particular had developed a highly articulate and cohesive elite through a hierarchy of schools that selected promising students at an early age for training as priests. In 1966 students at the Catholic seminary in Madang were producing a journal that presented the first broad critique of colonialism by Papua New Guineans. By the 1960s many priests and ex-seminarians, and subsequently university students from almost all Bougainville language groups knew one another well and shared a common training steeped in Catholic social teachings. They were instrumental in the politicisation of ethnic identity from the late 1960s.” (Regan: 99)

### **Politicisation of Ethnic Identity (Regan)**

“In addition to the emergence of a cohesive, critical and educated elite, a critical factor in the politicisation of ethnicity was the opening of the Panguna copper mine against the wishes of the people and leaders of Bougainville. Other factors included: widespread antagonism to

the colonial regime, expansion of political opportunities presented by decolonisation; and political conflict with the central government from 1967 to 1977 and from the late 1980s. Reflecting variations among Bougainvilleans in culture, ethnic identity and economic status, the impact and importance of these phenomena was far from uniform.

“Australia’s failure to maintain the extensive road system and other infrastructure constructed by the Germans in parts of coastal Bougainville may have contributed to the unfavourable comparisons between regimes and to grievances about Australian neglect. Antipathy to Australia has also been ascribed to such grievances and to a loss of stature suffered through Australia’s flight in the face of Japanese invaders in January 1942. The massive scale of United States military operations and the relatively egalitarian treatment by US soldiers of Bougainvilleans also established models of development and behaviour that contrasted poorly with Australia.

“From the 1950s, opposition to development by the colonial administration of local government councils indicated increased, but still localised, resistance to colonial authorities. There were some indications of broader political horizons developing after World War II. The 1962 request for United States control was not isolated. Even earlier, in 1953, a United Nations visiting mission was told by a meeting in south Bougainville of the desire for unity with the Solomon Islands, an issue discussed between Bougainvilleans and Solomon Islanders at the South Pacific Conference in Lae in 1965.

“It was only in the late 1960s that Bougainvillean concerns about their situation escalated to public demands for secession, and this was largely in response to a dramatic intensification of grievances against the colonial regime concerning the Panguna mine. It was significant that this occurred at a time when political possibilities in Papua and New Guinea were being transformed by the beginnings of decolonisation. The first universal adult suffrage elections for the colonial legislature, the House of Assembly, were held in 1964, and thereafter at four-year intervals (1968 and 1972). Education about voting and the role of government and the increasing debate on constitutional development and independence that occurred from the mid-1960s all exposed Bougainvilleans to new forms of political activity. As Ogan has noted, there was continuity between ‘cults’ and new forms of political activity, all directed at changing a “distressful situation.” Debate on decolonisation established a context in which there were new possibilities for Bougainvilleans to define themselves in relation to the state. If independence for Papua and New Guinea was a possibility, then why not autonomy, independence for Bougainville or even union with Solomon Islands? Elsewhere too demands for autonomy or closer relations with Australia were articulated. .

“A major reason for not only the emergence of such local autonomy movements was the lack of any form of unifying national politics similar to those that emerged from independence struggles in Africa and Asia. There were no strong political parties articulating regional or national concerns. As a result the grievances of local groups against the colonial regime defined national politics from the late 1960s until well into the 1970s, giving them a great deal of influence in the pre-Independence constitutional debate.

“The Panguna mine, one of world’s largest, was developed without consultation in Bougainville, the Administration making it clear that the mine was to ensure the economic viability of an independent Papua New Guinea rather than benefit Bougainville. Even before test drilling began in the rugged mountains of central Bougainville in 1964, it was opposed by local landowner with strong support from Catholic clergy. Opposition escalated in the late 1960s as acquisition of coastal land for a mining town and other facilities greatly expanded the numbers of people directly affected and precipitated a series of bitter disputes between the Administration and landowners. The socially and ecologically disruptive effect of the mining operations, aggravated by the miners and other workers recruited from the mainland, provided a fertile ground for the mobilisation grievances. While concession of increased rent and compensation in 1969-70 reduced the intensity of opposition the proceeding disputes consolidated Bougainvillean identity. As some of these grievances were felt by Bougainvilleans well beyond the landowner groups directly affected by the mine, they tended to become generalised complaints expressed in many parts of Bougainville.” (Regan: 99)

### **“Living Between Two Guns”**

The experience of the war by the people of Buka Island and others living under ‘government controlled areas’ was significantly different than that of those living in ‘BRA controlled areas’ – and those differences led to divisions which obstructed a national ‘peace’ dialogue. Put simply, those living in the BRA (Bougainville Revolutionary Army) areas suffered the brunt of sustained attacks from the PNGDF (following the initial violent response of the PNG Riot Squads and later attacks from the “Resistance” forces, Bougainvillean militia enlisted by the PNGDF) as well as living under a de-facto blockade for seven years. Those living under martial law in government areas also suffered the sustained attacks from the BRA in 1990 when the PNG DF withdrew their forces. Their relative freedom of movement explains in part why people of Northern Bougainville played a key role in bringing the conflict to international attention and in maintaining some kind of links with the PNG government.

Though those divisions are largely overcome, the fact that the field work for this case-study was carried out largely in the former ‘government controlled areas’ likely carries with it its own bias.

### **The Peace Process**

For a detailed timeline of the peace process and its various actors see the attached chronology. Peace efforts at the personal, communal and sometimes organisational level occurred with varying frequency throughout the Province and throughout the crisis. While there were inevitably internal factors influencing the parties, it is equally fair to say that sustained negotiations were only entered into when the parties saw it as in their interest to do so. As one former BRA leader said “you can’t push a Bougainvillean; you can’t pull a Bougainvillean; you can only educate a Bougainvillean and give him the chance to choose.”

From the attached timeline, it is apparent that the peace process really took root when a minimum pan-Bougainvillean consensus was reached that the time had come to end the violence and pursue their aspirations through other means.

### **The Impact of the Conflict on Women**

The war affected women in the government and BRA controlled areas differently. For those women in the BRA controlled areas, seven years of a blockade deprived them of their access to health care, education, shelter, security and food and clothing.

“When the fighting intensified the civilians fled into the hills leaving behind their gardens. In the new locations, women had to grow new food gardens to feed their families, and while waiting to harvest the food, which took up to six months to ripen, the women had to return to the old gardens to harvest food. This took some women 4-5 hours to walk to these food gardens walking long distances with heavy baskets of food on their backs in the hot sun, posing health problems for women. Many developed urinary tract infection from lack of adequate drinking water”

(Ruby Mirinka, in *Impact of Armed Conflict on Women’s Health: Bougainville, Marginalised Women*. Asian and Pacific Development Centre Gender and Development (GAD) Programme, 2000: Documentation on Refugee Women and Women in Situations of Armed Conflict.).

### **Women as Peacemakers**

Without exception, everyone who speaks of how peace is being constructed speaks of the central role women and women’s organisations have played. This is despite the fact that women remain underrepresented in both the Bougainville People’s Congress and in the Bougainville delegations in negotiations with the national government. So what role did they play?

There is now a strong working consensus amongst most Bougainvilleans to put the conflict behind them and negotiate their demands for political status for Bougainville with the government in Port Moresby using exclusively peaceful means. This consensus is obviously the result of a number of factors, but the influence of individual women and organised women in demanding and nurturing – what in the CR jargon may be called a peace constituency – cannot be underestimated.

It is also important to acknowledge that while there have been periods of political cohesion among the women of Bougainville, they have also played quite different roles, and one of their first peacebuilding tasks was to repair relations and channels of communication between themselves.

“In general, women’s groups (both formal and informal groups) played major roles in working for peace and reconciliation, both at the local and pan-Bougainville levels. Of course, this is not to say that all women in all circumstances were active in support of peace. At the local level there were women who supported cycles of revenge and violence as much as males in their communities. But in general, female leaders offered

support for reconciliation. Activities included prayer meetings, reconciliation ceremonies, peace marches, petitions, support for NGOs involved in activities such as mediation training and trauma counselling and so on. It was through organisation of such activities that various women have emerged as significant public figures in Bougainville.” (Anthony Regan: 99)

### **Women in Bougainvillean Societies**

Much is made of the fact that most language and culture groups in Bougainville are matrilineal societies. This means that kinship and the inheritance of land rights and decisions about land use are determined in terms of matrilineal lines. But as Regan points out “matriliny is not the same as matriarchy. In general, women did not exercise public political power.” Although in some societies – the Naogosi for example – women do have high status and considerable power. They could achieve a ‘big-woman’ status in many ways similar to that of a ‘big-man.’ In practice a small group of Bougainvillean women have been very effective in wielding public political power.

“The active roles played by a number of prominent female leaders during the conflict and in the development of the peace process has changed perceptions about the place of women in public life in Bougainville. Among educated women and other women with active public roles, there is a sense that things have changed now, that there are new opportunities opening for women. The leadership of the BIG, in particular, has shown openness to more public leadership roles for women. At the same time, there are signs of concern among many male leaders about the changes, and some who clearly want to see women moving back to what is seen as the ‘traditional’ role of influence rather than public leadership.” (Regan)

### **Women’s Humanitarian Networks**

When so many of Bougainville’s men were engaged in the violence – and so many families driven into the bush, with schools and hospitals and health centres destroyed – it fell to the women to keep the family together and fed. One of the informal roles which has since become institutionalised in the flowering of the number of Women’s NGOs was the provision of basic aid to the worst effected women in the crisis. Clothing, cooking utensils and medicines were distributed through clandestine networks in both government controlled and BRA controlled areas – this at a time when no other form of emergency assistance was possible. The strength of communal ties and this spirit of self-reliance inform the response of Bougainvilleans today.

“Because of the crisis, when we were scattered from our villages we were living away from one another so I went into each bush camp and I asked the women from each bush camp if we could organise ourselves and try to put some ideas on what we should be doing to try to find some sort of peace” (Lucy from Central District, ABC Radio Interview, published in Rae Smart, “Bougainville Turango: A Place in Crisis,” 1995).

Mothers were said to have gone into the bush to attempt to bring their sons home. Using whatever protection their status as married women and mothers provided – together with their leadership skills – some confronted BRAs and their Commanders on the suffering their actions were causing and the need to make peace. Under the leadership of a few, women began to organise to call for peace.

The influence of Bougainville women on the behaviour of the PNGDF was less organised and less sustained than that of organised initiatives addressing the pan-Bougainvillean community. Although some women leaders used their influence and family ties to members of the PNGDF to maintain a constructive if critical dialogue, their influence on national politics and in particular national government policies on the crisis in Bougainville was relatively limited. By 1994, when women's groups were increasingly well organised, a delegation of some 150 women organised to charter an Air Niugini flight to the Catholic Women's Federation Conference in Port Moresby. This was the first Air Niugini flight out of Bougainville organised using personal (old school) networks, and flights continued ever since. It was at the 1994 peace conference in Arawa, organised by Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan, that Bougainvillean women's groups had their first opportunity to engage in a direct dialogue with the PNG government and convey their deep commitment to reaching a peaceful settlement – and they have formed part of the negotiating teams ever since. (Women were not included in the prior set of peace talks.) But it is in their domestic influence with the BRA and Resistance that Bougainvillean women and women's groups had their most significant influence.

Anastasia La Pointe is from the island of Buka in northern Bougainville. She helped to organise a protest “peace march” against the BRA's blockade of the arrival of PNG soldiers carrying desperately need supplies:

“We women had heard that they are coming with medicines and because of also what we have witnessed during the crisis; our women have been losing children and they have been, you know, when time for delivery, most of them lost their lives. This really drove us women to get together and to do something you know, to save the women especially with medicine. And so, when we heard that the BRA in Buka and the mainland did not allow the army to forceland here on Buka, some of the women started getting together. They put my name in as someone who was calling everybody for a meeting you know, I did not make a fuss about it, but I was very worried because I know my life was in danger. So when all the women went back after the meeting and after having written a petition letter, we had some BRA members they got on their bicycles and started informing the BRA commander, so when we went back, the BRA commander's car was there and without a word, you know, they just come to me and they said can you hop in the car, you are going, don't worry we won't take you very far. But to my surprise we went far as to towards the north coast. I spoke out, I said to honestly tell you it is a women's initiative. If we had involved men there would have been danger and you know it is as well as we know it. So it is us women who are organising it. ‘Are you sure, are you positively sure? Is it the truth you are telling me?’ I keep

repeating saying, 'It is the truth, it is a women's initiative.'" (Eventually the march was abandoned after the BRA blocked the road.)

Although it was not exclusively women, the call to the international community to take note of the suffering of the people of Bougainville was led by women, some using their few but durable connections to friends outside. In so much as the governments of New Zealand and Australia made such crucial interventions, this must be at least in part attributed to the success of Bougainvilleans and in particular a handful of Bougainvillean women (BRA supporters and others) who help to put the 'crisis' on the agenda and ensure that the lives of the people of these islands had some political capital in these nations' foreign policy agendas.

In October of 1994, the national government of Sir Julius Chan, with support from UNDP and security provided by the South Pacific Peace Keeping Force, called a peace conference in Arawa, Bougainville's provincial capital. While BRA leadership failed to turn up, as many as 25,000 people gathered by the second day of the open-air conference.

Helen Hakena: "When we planned for that Peace Conference in Arawa, we organised women's groups to go in there, and when they went to Arawa, the BRA and their people, they felt free to talk to the women instead of talking to the men because the women better understood their problems. And the army and the BRA they understand the women so what role the women were playing was maybe mediator in between. So when the boys came out of the bush they had to go and talk to the women and the women would go and talk to the authorities."

Shortly following the Arawa conference, the Catholic Women's Federation organised the Bougainville Reunion held in Buka which drew more than 2,000 women from all over Bougainville (with funding from CAA). This marked the beginning of a new period of confidence for Bougainvillean women. From this point onwards, every round of peace talks included Bougainvillean women.

### **Sustaining Peace in the Long Term**

The real institutional development of a number of women's NGOs in Bougainville has occurred from 1995 to the present. Continuing to act as advocates for a settlement reached through dialogue, and with the support of increasing aid from overseas – particularly Australia and New Zealand – these NGOs began to implement a range of predominantly social-development programmes (see below). At times they continued to play a mediating role with an important initiative where women from Northern Bougainville accompanied the Prime Minister's wife, Rarua Skate, to meet with BRA women leaders in Bougainville's Central District. Women were also strongly represented and played a key role at the watershed Lincoln talks where the broad terms of a settlement were agreed and a cessation to the hostilities was finally negotiated.

### **Is it Peace Yet?**

At the time of the fieldwork for this case study, negotiations were moving towards a decisive conclusion, following two years of a cessation in the violence and an intense and

sustained period of negotiations and development. The negotiations are currently dealing with the deferred and substantive issues of the legal and constitutional autonomy arrangements, the related questions of a popular referendum and independence, and the question of decommissioning weapons. The responsibility for seeing the negotiations through is a shared one, albeit one where civil society's input is relatively small. The Bougainville People's Congress (the unofficial parallel government in Bougainville) could be described as a kind of civil society assembly with a significant role for traditional leaders and a few women's representatives. Also, women's groups continue to play a role in popular advocacy, calling upon the leaders to strengthen their resolve to reach a durable settlement (for example, the Independence Day petition, September 2000).

Once the parties have reached agreement, enabling legislation (including constitutional reform) shall have to be steered through Parliament, which is likely to be a long process.

## **Section II Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA)**

### **History**

*Leitana* is the vernacular for Buka Island, as *Nehan* is the vernacular for neighbouring Nissan Island, both in northern Bougainville. The name was coined to reflect the ownership and the community-based nature of organisation of these local women from northern Bougainville. There is now an ongoing debate as to whether their name should be changed to reflect their Bougainville-wide aspirations and to counter the chauvinist criticism that 'Buka women should not seek to do the work that should be done by women local to their district.' The organisation primarily 'organises workshops and campaigns.' 'It carries out community education workshops, and advocates on behalf of women on issues affecting them.'

Established in 1992 by a group of women from Northern Bougainville with common concerns, LNWDA coalesced around the leadership of Helen Hakena, a prominent local leader and chief who, like so many others had personally suffered in crisis and was determined to do something about it (see appendix on her personal background). Prior to founding LNWDA, Helen worked with the Catholic Women's Association undertaking to get clothing, medicines and cooking equipment donated by the local community to the worst-affected women in both government and BRA-controlled areas.

LNWDA is an NGO registered with the PNG Investment Promotion Authority.

### **“Vision Statement”**

“To meaningfully contribute to restoration of peace on Bougainville by promoting non-violence and women's rights and empowering women as agents of change to improve their social status.”

### **GOALS**

- “To reduce gender violence in Bougainville;”

- “To work towards a non-violent Bougainville through the creation of healthy, and self-sufficient communities;”
- “To help Bougainvillean women provide for and meet their own basic needs, e.g. health, food, education, shelter and clothing, by encouraging small income-generating projects;”
- “To strengthen the ability of women to effectively participate in social and economic development in Bougainville and decision making; and”
- “To provide leadership in promoting a greater public understanding of the importance of achieving these goals.”

### **Structure**

LNWDA is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors who meet quarterly. Of the eight members, five are women, three are men. They were selected and elected for their experience and commitment to the goals of the organisation. “We all just came together” (HH). Not surprisingly, they come from an established social network of friends and colleagues, and all come from Northern Bougainville (the two islands of Buka (Leitana) and Nissan (Nehan). At least one Board member is also a staff/resource person. Staff insist that the organisation’s agenda is set in their community workshops, that their planning derives from this ‘bottom up approach.’ A ‘shopping list’ of requests and suggestions comes from these events, and the Board works with the staff to cluster these and set programme priorities.

LNWDA’s small office is staffed by its Executive Director (Helen Hakena), Assistant Executive Director (George Lesi), Counsellors (Bianca Hakena & Elizabeth Behis), Project Officers (Hillary Laris & Benedicta Noneng), and Finance and Administrative Staff (Brenda Tohiana & Wendalyn Tseraha). The LNWDA office is also supported by a group of resource persons who both volunteer and work freelance on activities such as training and facilitation, production of radio programmes on Radio Bougainville, and artwork (primarily poster- and flip chart-based). This very talented group includes Julius Longa, Kris Hakena and Agnes Titus.

Through their “strengthening communities for peace” project, LNWDA employs ten teams of volunteers throughout the Province. These teams of community-based volunteers – often with multiple organisational affiliations (youth groups, women’s groups, church groups, etc.) – have their costs met but do not receive salaries. They are supported and carefully monitored by LNWDA’s Programme Officers, and they receive regular training and support from the LNWDA team. This method of working through (often overlapping) networks of volunteers seems to characterise the approach of several Bougainvillean NGOs. It also seems to have the strength of building on Bougainvillean traditions of voluntarism and working for one’s local community. With the professionalisation of NGOs like LNWDA, managing perceptions around salaried and unsalaried workers (which itself mirrors the relationships between local organisations and the aid agencies) could be the source of friction in the future and could undermine the very practice of ‘self-reliance’ it seeks to support.

Note: The Hakena family is closely entwined in the organisation's structure, with Helen's husband, Kris, playing a key role as a part-time resource person and Helen's daughter, Bianca, as LNWDAs trained lead Counsellor. In theory, this way of working risks a conflict of nepotistic interests (which was said to be a deep-rooted problem amongst the public service in the Province), but in practice it seems to work well, and I heard no criticisms of the practice. I think LNWDAs has made this into a feature of their work – leading by example and showing how a family can work together, committed to social change. It is also the Hakena family's good fortune to have such talented and committed family members.

### **Funding**

LNWDAs is one of a handful of indigenous NGOs to have secured significant grant funding from overseas donors and it is leading the way locally in modelling this method of securing monies with which to operate. That said, their infrastructure is modest and appropriate to their output. The organisation survives entirely on project-tied funding. With the exception of some small grants from the British Embassy for office equipment, they have not received (nor sought) any core funding. They raise a small but significant amount of their resources from local donations, but otherwise their work is supported by project grants from Community Aid Abroad (Australia), AusAID (via the International Women's Development Agency), and Oxfam New Zealand. AusAID is their largest donor under the 'Bougainville Restoration Programme's' efforts toward 'Community Development.'

### **International Partnerships**

LNWDAs has very successfully sustained and developed meaningful programme partnerships with a number of external agencies, most importantly with the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) in Victoria, Australia. Since the early days of LNWDAs's formation, IWDA has provided support and solidarity. IWDA is acting as a project partner in the LNWDAs's present AusAID funded 'strengthening communities for peace' project. This has meant that together the two organisations developed the programme proposal and worked to secure the necessary funds. IWDA staff are in regular contact with LNWDAs and make regular visits, acting as both peer-monitors and occasionally as resource persons/trainers. IWDA has a share in the programme responsibility to ensure proper implementation and rigorous financial management, acting as guarantors for AusAID for the sound management of the project. IWDA's staffing and administrative costs are met in the jointly agreed upon proposal. IWDA has also helped to ensure that LNWDAs has access to international conference and workshop opportunities, including the 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Women in Beijing and a number of other international workshops. When asked whether participation in such conferences wasn't really a distraction from their real work, Helen Hakena very forcefully argued that such events (at least most of the ones they have taken part in) have provided them with the only concrete opportunities for LNWDAs leadership to have a form of in-service training.

Two other external organisations which have played a strategically important role for LNWDAs are the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (in offering residential training and follow-

up support for counselling skills for handling domestic violence) and the Asian and Pacific Development Centre based in Malaysia( which through its publication and seminar programmes has offered LNWDAs valuable opportunities to express itself and learn from relevant comparative experiences). A great deal of LNWDAs staff time has been spent in either attending or preparing for these events and/or hosting international visitors. This can be seen as an investment in LNWDAs skills and capacities, but at times the balance between developing themselves and investing adequate (proportional) time in their output and implementation seems difficult to manage. That said, there is a wave of international interest in Bougainville at the moment, and the staff of LNWDAs are likely to devote their lives to undertaking social development work in this Province, so they are probably pursuing an appropriate tactic – to capitalise on the opportunities as they present themselves. The LNWDAs effectiveness in building these international relationships and securing external grant-funding has not occurred across Bougainville and these disparities of NGO development are and will continue to be the source of inter-organisation and inter-personal tensions.

### **“Strengthening Communities for Peace”**

LNWDAs calls its present overarching programme “Strengthening Communities for Peace” (SCP). This was developed with IWDA and was launched with a preparatory workshop for LNWDAs staff and an extended capacity-building workshop for their volunteer teams from around the Province. This programme work of LNWDAs has several dimensions, but in terms of what could be seen as ‘peacebuilding’ LNWDAs is today less engaged with the primary parties to the conflict than it was in its earlier days at the height of the crisis when their work was more ad-hoc and they had less infrastructure (and fewer resources). In those earlier days of the crisis, LNWDAs leaders both engaged in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and engaged in active dialogue and advocacy with the various combatants. Presently, the main focus of their work could be described as post-conflict peace building, in that it is aimed to consolidate the fragile peace and address the present causes and manifestations of violence. Their present programmes cover the following areas.

### **Awareness Raising on Homebrew Alcohol Abuse & Violence against Women**

The consumption and production of locally brewed alcohol is considered by LNWDAs to be a significant social problem with enormous economic and even political consequences. The phenomenon – which is now widely spread across the Province – in part emerged following the government’s ban during the crisis on all alcohol sales within the province. This was followed by an explosion in this illegal industry. Alcohol abuse is increasingly effecting Bougainville’s youth, including ex-combatants (many of whom still possess their weapons), and is often cited as a factor in incidents of domestic violence. LNWDAs response has been to undertake a province-wide educational campaign. This involves ten LNWDAs volunteer teams visiting predominantly rural communities and running “awareness raising workshops” in villages and schools. LNWDAs staff gave an example of their approach where the volunteer takes a frog, drops him in a jar of water, and talks about how it thrives. Then the volunteer drops the same frog in a jar of homebrew (or “JJ,” Jungle Juice) and, as the frog dies of alcohol poisoning, explains the

effects of homebrew on the human body. They go on to lead discussions on the community impacts of homebrew alcohol abuse and related family violence.

LNWDA also focus their community workshops on raising awareness of women's rights as human rights, doing work on gender sensitivity and creating opportunities to discuss the links between violence against women and alcohol abuse. It also promotes the limited services available for counselling for victims of rape and other forms of violence against women.

It is part of their approach to conduct two follow-up visits and workshops to their original one-day awareness raising workshops, with the long term aim of facilitating a mutually supportive network for the 120 community representatives able to work within their communities. It is in these follow-up visits and workshops that LNWDA most significantly distinguishes itself from the other NGO interventions. LNWDA are not alone in raising awareness on these issues. Groups ranging from the Provincial Council of Women to the Australian-led Peace Monitors have also engaged in public education activities on these issues. The particular strength of LNWDA's work in this area seems to be in their outreach structures and sustained approach. Their own monitoring of their work assures them that they are contributing to raising public understanding of these issues – and that communities are witnessing changes in behaviour. Communities (and traditional leaders) are once again 'making it their business' to set limits on alcohol abuse and consumption and to condemn violence against women. LNWDA has also played a lead role in 'mainstreaming' these issues into NGO, Church, and Provincial and State priorities. From anecdotes and evidence during the author's brief visit, it can be concluded that responding to these issues will remain an enormous challenge for Bougainvilleans.

### **Counselling Services**

With staff trained at the residential courses on feminist counselling at the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and management support from the Executive Director, LNWDA offers a popular confidential drop-in service for basic counselling and legal advice on rights and procedures provided to survivors of rape, incest, and domestic violence. This service is also promoted in LNWDA's weekly radio broadcasts on Radio Bougainville. The counsellors sometimes travel to see clients, and increasingly LNWDA receives referrals from other organisations. This service is significantly oversubscribed, with over 500 young women visiting in the first six months of this year alone. The services provided were described as complementary with other (skeletal) services recently offered by the Trauma Institute in the sense that the services offered by LNWDA are by and for women in a secular setting (rather than by priests).

The author was unable to make an assessment of mental health provisions in the Province except to assume that they are not commensurate with need. Some discussion was held as to whether LNWDA's counsellors have enough clinical support and supervision, but they clearly see their role as one of an initial point of contact and support from which a referral can be made for those needing further care and treatment.

### **Integral Human Development (IHD)**

It is important to appreciate that the staff of LNWDA are predominantly (if not exclusively) Catholic and that the organisation grew out of (and still maintains a very close working relationship with) a sister organisation called Catholic Family Life.

In this project LNWDA have subcontracted a priest, Father Boniface, who received some form of specific training in this area in Sydney. Father Boniface runs workshops with volunteer support for people identified by their chiefs as ‘people suited to be trained in the IHD programme.’ These training workshops seek to ‘develop the whole person – the spiritual side, the emotional part, and the physical – making him understand who he is in relation to others.’ LNWDA are convinced that this is an effective part of social rehabilitation and their reconciliation work. ‘In a Catholic context people live better lives and more responsible lives as a result of these experiences.’ They are also mindful of the fact that the Church has limited resources and AusAID does not want to explicitly fund religious programmes. Also while this programme might more appropriately come under the work of Catholic Family Life – an NGO with close personal and professional ties to LNWDA – they have apparently not developed the institutional capacity to adequately manage the funds. This is a way around those dilemmas. That said, they do collaborate with other Churches, so the work is adopting a strong ecumenical dimension.

### **Women’s Rights Advocacy**

This is another core area of LNWDA’s work, though not so projectised as the other issues. This slightly more ad-hoc work (and often more overtly political) is led by Helen Hakena, their Executive Director, with close support from Agnes Titus, their senior resource person (former President of the Provincial Council of Women). Helen has a weekly broadcast on Radio Bougainville where she regularly shares information about women’s rights and concerns. They annually organise activities around International Women’s Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> (this year they convened a workshop). They have also run programme-planning and management workshops specifically for women’s groups and they have produced a pamphlet on the rights of women.

It is under this banner that they undertake their ongoing campaign with Bougainville’s political leadership on the issues in the peace process and how they effect women – work which is somewhat hampered by a lack of political consensus and co-ordination amongst women leaders in northern Bougainville.

### **Youth Mobilisation**

The focus of this programme is the convening of an annual 5-day conference organised with the district youth groups (who themselves have significant overlap in membership with the ex-combatants’ association). The programme is in its fifth and possibly final year of Community Aid Abroad funding. These conferences are seen as an opportunity to talk through issues of concern with young people, do some educational work, engage in some advocacy work on the central issues of concern to LNWDA and plan for future collaborative activities with these young people.

First convened in 1992, these conferences were the first efforts in the province to mobilise youth as a sector. LNWDA describes the events as ‘an opportunity to come together; to learn about each other, to explore reconciliation issues, and to promote respect for one another.’ They very much consider these events as a concrete peacebuilding strategy. They also explained that the events are always very popular – that last year ‘on the first day we had 100, and by the third day we had over 700 and we just couldn’t feed them and had to turn some of them away,’

There clearly is an enormous long-term challenge in Bougainville – as in so many post-conflict societies – to engage, support and empower young people coming out of their school years. LNWDA staff explained that most organised activities with youth are sports-oriented, and there is very little being done to help young people into economically productive activities. There is no clear government or provincial policy on these urgent issue, and LNWDA see part of their role as one of bringing government together with youth so that young people have the opportunity to collectively articulate their needs and aspiration and politicians and public servants have the opportunity to formulate ‘youth policies.’ At a recent workshop one young person said that the focus of political interest is in Bougainville’s future but “what about us – the youth of today – we are the youth of the present time and people are not worried about us.”

LNWDA make a strong case to say that focussing on the separate welfare of ‘ex-combatants’ rather than the needs of all of Bougainville’s youth is both divisive and unjust. While the need to integrate ex-combatants into their communities and into the developing economy are socially most acute, this project should be addressed in such a way so as not to prolong the social divisions caused by the crisis. While youth-work is an integral part of LNWDA’s programme (for example, volunteers in their SCP project include youth representatives), they feel that they could be doing more. In fact, they are responding to a great deal of ad-hoc demand for youth-oriented project work. Funding – and the capacity to do the necessary preparatory fundraising work – do not seem to be presently available.

“We don’t want to run things – we want to go down a clean road where everything is planned, not operating on an ad-hoc basis – where things are planned, but with flexibility”.

### **Some Observations:**

LNWDA is an exceptional organisation. It seems they are finding their way while leading the way for many NGOs in Bougainville. The fact that they have found effective ways of working in the personal (moral-spiritual), family, community, provincial, state, and international spheres is quite remarkable. While this may reflect a holistic and integrated understanding of what ‘peace’ means for Bougainville, and while they place themselves strategically to be part of that peacebuilding process, that process is not clearly a coherent or organised one of ‘partnership’ between the Bougainville and state authorities and civil society. What LNWDA is doing at the personal or community level is not necessarily being backed up at the provincial, state or international levels in terms of aid policy (for example, in the delivery of the necessary mental health services or in supporting youth

education and training schemes). But perhaps such coherence and such ‘partnerships’ are unhelpful ideals. It is just that in their absence, the value and impact of some of their work appears somewhat less sustainable. Also, it seems that their multi-mandate nature perhaps militates against their effectiveness as ‘agents of social change.’ This may, however, be a transitional issue.

Although the grant-funded world of NGOs is an economically precarious one, LNWDA are noteworthy in Bougainville for being an NGO committed both to a social vision and to developing their own institutional capacities to realise that vision. In many ways, LNWDA is more effective and dynamic than their public servant counterparts. There is also the related issue of unresolved (and hopefully temporary) tension between this provincial women’s NGO and the state’s Provincial Council of Women – which relate to these issues of competence, ‘turf’ and of course personalities. Also, LNWDA has yet to make the full transition from being a regional initiative to being seen as a full-fledged pan-Bougainvillean organisation.

In terms of its ‘peacemaking’ function, LNWDA has consistently played an enabling and supportive rather than leadership role. In its pre-formation days, the people who were to later found LNWDA played a strong humanitarian role in delivering assistance to those most affected by the violence, particularly the women who were heads of households. This role developed into one of advocating (at the personal and communal level) an early end to the conflict. This led to their playing a crucial part in bridging the social divides created by the conflict between women living in the government/Resistance-controlled areas and those living in the BRA-controlled areas. These early contacts and this coming together of women’s groups – all engaged in humanitarian activities, which they described as ‘women weaving Bougainville together’ – formed the foundation of what was to become a dialogue and reconciliation process amongst Bougainvilleans which enabled political negotiation to take place. This process continues to this day. Once a cessation in the violence was reached and the political process begun, the role of LNWDA shifted again to playing a supportive role in dealing with the causes and consequences of the violence which continues to manifest itself in Bougainvillean communities. Now LNWDA is seeking to more systematically and more professionally pursue programme strategies, which will have an impact on these root causes of violence in Bougainville. It is striking that the ways in which LNWDA as an organisation has perceived and responded to the conflict in Bougainville has not been particularly political. Their work has had little explicitly to do with the disputes arising out of the Panguna mine or issues of autonomy, devolution or self-determination for the people of Bougainville. Their peacemaking role is less a response to the war (‘the crisis’) than it is a response to violence in its various forms.

### **Section III Other Civil Society ‘Peace’ Initiatives in Bougainville**

Given the very limited amount of time to research and write this case study, what follows is a simple and incomplete survey of other civil peace initiatives. These at various times anticipated, spurred, influenced, complemented or, more often than not, positively ignored the formal and occasionally effective diplomatic efforts on the part of equally

various actors (Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu, Commonwealth, UN, South Pacific Forum, etc.) to bring the crisis to an end. The specific relationships (or lack-of) between these various initiatives would be fascinating to study, but is largely beyond the scope of this reflection.

It is also fair to say that the lines – between external and even governmental interventions and indigenous and non-governmental interventions – are somewhat blurred, given the fact that many of these civic initiatives were in part made possible by financial support from external governments, notably Australia. It is perhaps interesting to note that AusAID’s ‘table of activities’ for their ‘Bougainville Restoration Programme’ contains no civil society initiatives under the explicit heading of ‘direct support to the peace process,’ which is used instead for strictly governmental activities. Despite the relatively large sums going into Bougainville since the cessation of violence, it seems a very small percentage has been invested in ‘civil society peace initiatives.’

Here follows a brief sketch of the organisations which were consistently mentioned in interviews as having played a significant role in the peace process:

### **PEACE Foundation Melanesia (Bougainville Project)**

People & Community Empowerment (PEACE) Foundation Melanesia  
Leonard Tsitua, Arawa-based Operations Manager  
C/o David Chulai  
Director  
Port Moresby  
Fax: +(675) 321 3645

Founded in 1990 in response to urban violence in Port Moresby, the PEACE Foundation soon began work in Bougainville. Their recently appointed Director, David Choulai, describes their operations in Bougainville as nearly autonomous. Leonard Tsitua, operations manager in Bougainville, describes their mission as one of “empowering people to deal with their problems.” The PEACE Foundation is the most established NGO in the South Pacific specialising in providing training in conflict or dispute management. (For a critical assessment of the work of the Foundation, consult Jones and Large, 1999.)

The Foundation primarily provides training in the following three areas:

- ‘People Skills’ (including communication skills)
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Community Development

Each training event is lead by PEACE Foundation staff with auxiliary trainers (who have been through Foundation Training for Trainers courses). Trainers are given an honorarium and allowances in an effort to promote the spirit of voluntarism and self-reliance. The Foundation estimates they have trained three to four hundred trainers

countrywide. A normal Foundation course lasts up to 9 days, at the end of which participants are awarded a certificate. training each day lasts for 5 hours ‘to allow participants to see to their other business in the remaining time.’ The style of the workshops was described as following a format developed in their training manuals, which are constantly being revised and updated. Their approach is to combine a use of role-plays, ‘guided questions’ and group discussions. They always try to use ‘the issues which come from the villages’ as the basis for the workshops. The exception to this elicitive approach is their module on Justice and Rights where ‘sometimes we give a little talk.’ Leonard explained that it was their strategy to begin training in a community with the chiefs and then later to work with the commoners. This proved an effective way of gaining the credibility to undertake a long-term programme. They have run workshops in fourteen of Bougainville’s local Districts and have only two districts yet to reach. The Foundation has been particularly successful in offering a non-politicised opportunity to consider conflict-handling issues and in working with local authorities.

Their donors have included AusAID, NZODA, Canada Fund, and more recently Diana Fund (UK). They also collaborate with a new development called ‘Bougainville Alliance’ which is an Arawa-based, unconstituted forum for monthly meetings with donors and local NGOs including the PEACE Foundation, UNDP, Red Cross, EU, VSA (NZ), Oxfam-NZ, Caritas, Keitana District Council of Women, and the Peace Monitoring Group (as observers).

It seems their key role in the political peace process has been in their provision of professional skills to participants in the process. Particularly, 12 members of the Bougainville Peoples Congress have done the Foundation’s CR course, though this is described as a fortunate side effect rather than an intended outcome of their intervention. Their other important contribution to ‘peacebuilding’ in Bougainville can be seen in the manifold roles of the peacemakers/mediators who went through the Foundation’s courses and continue to play critical roles in a number of local disputes.

Like Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency, the PEACE Foundation does not set out to directly address their training interventions to the Bougainville conflict and its structural and political issues. Instead, they offer what appears to be a concrete and professional niche service. Their work in this way (i.e. as they do pursue multiple mandates) is more focussed. Also, their training sessions are very popular in PNG with local authorities as well as civil society. Questions arise which are perhaps generic to offering conflict resolution training when those trained come to implement the skills apparently ‘transferred’ to them. These include those dilemmas for the NGO of providing/not providing practical follow-up support for conflict management initiatives, and of raising expectations that CR courses (short or otherwise) adequately equip people for the sometimes dangerous tasks of mediation. This is possibly a consequence of the notorious language problem with ‘conflict resolution,’ where there is so often such a yawning gap between our capacities and our aspirations. These dilemmas were very real when, in 1995, in the Buin area of southern Bougainville, three members of the “Icebreakers,” a voluntary group of about 20 persons who had received training in conflict resolution provided by the PEACE Foundation were shot dead, one by a BRA

member and the other two by Resistance fighters. The trainee mediators – who acted as auxiliary trainers for the PEACE Foundation – were shuttling between government, care centres and the BRA leadership in a climate of profound distrust. Apparently the board of the Foundation decided that they did not have a share in the responsibility for the surviving members’ families and did not respond to request for some form of support from their staff in Bougainville. While this tragic incident should neither diminish the popularity of the PEACE Foundation’s courses nor their value, it does highlight certain profound risks and limitations which are certainly not unique to the PNG.

The Foundation will continue to work in Bougainville and is likely to shift its emphasis from conflict management training to an increased emphasis on providing skills training for community development projects. (Note: On balance, this short description is unintentionally weighted towards the critical. This is unintentional, and the author was impressed with the dedication and professionalism of the Foundation’s Bougainville staff.)

### **Bougainville Provincial Council of Women (BPCW)**

Theresa Jaintong OBE, President (also Minister of Health in the Bougainville Provincial Interim Government)

P.O. Box 71

Buka

Phone 973 9021 (Pamela Meura, Executive Officer)

The Council of Women is affiliated with the National Council of Women and is considered to be an official part of the Provincial government structures. Theresa is an elected officer of this long-standing women’s organisation. The Provincial Council is made up of the members of the 16 District Councils. She described their role as one of doing:

- Advocacy (promoting women’s participation in decision-making structures)
- Workshops
- Awareness raising (on domestic violence and home-brew)
- Peace education
- Community development projects (including micro-credit schemes)
- Needs assessments

The BPCW historically played a key role in the peace process with representation throughout as members of the Transitional Provincial Government. Their funding is predominantly from AusAID, EU and the Finnish Embassy. She described their approach to peacemaking as one of “promoting peace within the family unit, peace within the community, peace within the clan.”

She explained how central the role of women has been in supporting and influencing ex-combatants, and in enabling traditional reconciliation to take place (not the least of which

as women raise the pigs and have the shell money which are needed in traditional reconciliation procedures). She made the case that one of the primary conflict resolution functions of the BPCW has been in bringing together women living under government control areas and those living in the 'no-go' areas and promoting unity and reconciliation amongst Bougainvilleans which in turn has enabled their participation in the formal peace process.

She is quite confident that "the peace we have is not fragile." But she was critical of the work of other women's NGOs in the area of human and social development which 'leave the person still hungry,' and critical too of the competition for resources emerging between NGOs (and NGOs and the provincial government) which helps create divisions and a lack of consultation which leads to a working segregation. Clearly, some of these divisions were more personal than political, but no less serious for it. These problems of lack of coherence and lack of communication were already being addressed by other organisations in Arawa and Buka in efforts to convene co-ordinating 'core groups.'

### **People's Fraternity for Justice and Peace**

P.O. Box 180  
Buka, Bougainville  
Fax: (675) 973 9797

This is an initiative led by Albert Jo Noro, a public servant in the Provincial administration, from a commitment he has developed to promote reconciliation since his experiences as a victim of BRA violence in 1990. It has no office and little structure. "So much concentration is being given by our leaders to reaching a political settlement, but we don't believe that enough attention is being paid to reaching a 'grassroots' settlement. What we still need is personal reconciliation – especially among the youth." Jo has a vision of creating 'peace zones' to create spaces for reconciliation.

He recently convened a three-day open meeting on 'reconciliation and healing' jointly with the Australia-based Christian organisation, Liberty for the Nations in South Bougainville (Buin). It was attended by 200 participants and involved a combination of lectures, open (confessional) discussions and hymn singing with an local and international team of resource persons. Local costs were met by the Provincial Administration.

Jo plans to continue to play a role in promoting reconciliation between the war-affected communities and promoting 'peace education' more generally and is actively in search of support and appropriate materials.

### **Bougainville Trauma Counselling Institute**

Fr. John Bosco Barames, S.M. (clinical psychologist), Director

Buka

This was described as a new training drop-in centre. Its Director acts as the co-ordinator and supervisor of teams of volunteer counsellors. These teams of volunteers – also referred to as ‘core groups’ – work to raise awareness of psycho-social trauma and other mental health issues arising from ‘the crisis,’ as well as awareness of the services available from the Institute and its counsellor trainees. They are also doing advocacy with the Interim Government Authorities and the Buka Hospital to employ a social worker to follow up on referrals from the Institute. It is also hoping to be able to offer accredited training, perhaps in conjunction with the Divine Word University.

Founded in 1997, it is supported with grants from AusAID and NZODA. The service appears to complement the nascent feminist counselling services available from LNWD.

### **Bougainville Inter-Church Women’s Forum (BICWF)**

Sister Lorraine Garasu,  
Kokopau  
P.O. Box 209  
Buka  
Fax: 973-9014

There is a strong and long tradition of women organising within their various churches in Bougainville, and the Inter-Church Women’s Forum grew out of that tradition despite the fact that ‘a lot of women are not politically minded.’ At the government-sponsored peace conference in Arawa in 1995, ‘which was organised by men,’ women’s church groups from across the conflict-divided communities met and asked ‘how do we talk with one voice?’

With support and facilitation provided by Joy Balazo from the United Church in Australia, women of all Bougainville’s major churches formed a committee in 1995. ‘We wanted peace: the one thing we all had in common was that we wanted to find a way out. But how to link? Communication was a problem.’ Early attempts to come together province-wide (in 1995) failed, so dialogue work was done in northern Bougainville with the BRA, PNG government and the PNGDF on various abuses of the rights of the civilian population.

‘In 1996 (25-26 August) we convened a forum in Arawa for one week. 700 women took part. We talked about rape, we talked about broken marriages, the killings of members of our family, raiding of our homes, and sickness in the government care centres, and shortages of food. We talked of our problems and our experiences of the crisis and we went back and talked to our leaders (BRA and PNG). Delegations of women, mothers, elder women, married women representing their districts went to talk to the authorities – they had to respect us – we explained that we wanted to deal with our own boys. We

were committed to taking every opportunity to demand peace – to say, ‘you on the political side must talk.’” (Dora)

By drawing in ‘non politicised women’ and as a pan-Bougainvillean and ecumenical organisation, BICW complemented the work of the Provincial Council of women and their district structures. Though women from government-controlled northern Bougainville were in leadership positions in the organisation, thanks to their integrity and the nature of their work (including their humanitarian work, which dominated their activities in 1996) they managed to bridge these social divides. This was also helped by meeting other Bougainvillean women in international fora in Australia and elsewhere and in their co-operation with the Pacific Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Like LNWD, staff saw the opportunities of attending international seminars and workshops as opportunities for developing their skill and idea base necessary for their work.

Since 1995 they have operated a little office with support from Australian churches. BICW has a chair and a board. Their staff (including eight trainers) are volunteers – they pay themselves modest allowances – but they also earn money selling ice blocks and in sewing and other projects. Their director, Sr. Lorraine, also works with the Catholic Church, providing family counselling services as well as running training workshops in Conflict Resolution.

With the cessation of hostilities, the focus of their work shifted. At first, ‘we were just talking in the air. We wanted to do something constructive.’ The focus of their present work is in literacy and small business training. Very recently they secured AusAID funding for this work through a partnership arrangement with the Marist Mission Centre in Hunters Inn, Australia. The literacy training is addressed to those who were failed by the formal education sector, and instruction is in the local vernacular.

Their small-business training is run by teams of two or three (graduates of a residential course on the PNG mainland) in four phases over two week periods with breaks in-between. “This suits the life of the people. After the initial project planning phase participants often ask, ‘now can you help us to get a loan?’ We reply, ‘we will give you training in how to get a loan.’ We train men and women, but we want to train more women.” (Dora) They have recently been contracted by the Provincial Women’s Council to run a training session to help women run their own micro-credit scheme.

“We see the programme as self reliant. We give ourselves to this work – for our people. We don’t want to be fed like babies – dependent on foreign aid. I’d like to see donors help to develop our people – we need your skills I’d rather see people educated than the big aid projects we see today.” (Dora)

BICWF is an extraordinary, vision-led organisation: ‘we have to go first, we have to do something solid on the ground.’ While they are not alone in doing so, BICWF and the individuals working within it self-consciously model a radical example of self-reliance, very relevant to the economic challenges in Bougainville. It is a subsistence NGO, which

survives in part thanks to external support, but largely survives on the initiatives of its members and the support of the communities in which they live. Its reach (in terms of delivering practical support) and influence (on the peace and reconstruction processes) appear to far outweigh their modest infrastructure.

### **Bougainville Women for Peace & Freedom (BWPF)**

Arawa

The author was unable to interview members of this organisation, but it was mentioned as a significant new initiative. A predominantly humanitarian organisation, BWPF is engaged in the distribution of emergency relief supplies to women affected by the war. It was founded in 1999. It now has a base in Arawa, in central Bougainville, and it enjoys strong links to the BRA and strong external support from groups in solidarity with Bougainvilleans and their struggle for self-determination. Its Director, Lucy Madoing, is now a member of the Interim Provincial Government. Many of the leading women in the organisation and among its supporters are both prominent BRA/BIG activists and partners of BRA/BIG leaders based at home and abroad.

### **Bougainville Community Integrated Humanitarian Programme (BOCIHP)**

Ruby Mirinka, Director  
P.O. Box 1379 Honiara  
Solomon Islands

“The civilians in the non-PNG government controlled areas have become determined not to sit idle and wait for a rescue mission from somewhere. But rather we would use our own community and resources within the community to bring about community development in attempts to alleviate the sufferings and death of our people from common preventable diseases. And hence, this philosophy of self-reliance. In 1990, immediately after PNG Government had imposed the blockade, our community development program began with the formation of village health committees in selected villages of Central Bougainville.”

Founded in 1989, by Ruby Mirinka, the former matron of the Arawa District Hospital, BOCIHP has been perhaps the lead agency delivering humanitarian assistance, particularly to BRA-controlled territories throughout the blockade years. BOCIHP ran ‘bush health clinics’ delivering medical supplies to the BRA-controlled areas during the conflict period and advocated for the restoration of health services to the island. They particularly targeted the needs of women and delivered education and sewing materials and relief supplies to women’s groups.

More recently it has lobbied to upgrade the Arawa Health Centre to a district hospital and conducted research on the health impacts of the crisis on women's reproductive health (1999).

Their core programme includes:

- Training women in 'critical literacy' to educate the community;
- Supporting and educating traditional birth attendants;
- Educating communities in personal and community hygiene, sanitation, and on improving the nutritional status of mothers;
- Advocating encouraging PNG and Bougainville leaders to continue the dialogue to settle the issue of Bougainville's political status.

'BOCIHP has continued to educate women about personal and child health, and provided health services to women in the past 11 years.'

### **The Educational Development Centre (EDC)**

"Teachers in the EDC are graduates of Universities and Colleges in PNG. They have been living in the bush throughout the war and have accepted the job of training Bougainvilleans in the skills necessary to develop our community:

- Community health courses
- Education
- Agricultural training
- Dental training

"All workers under BOCIHP program are not paid wages. Instead they receive support from the community. The community makes gardens for health staff and teachers. The community provides food if workers' gardens have not been made. The community provides coconut oil for vehicles, generators, cooking and for lamps..."

### **Foundation for Bougainville Community Development (FBCD)**

Naihuwo Garry Ahai, founder and Director  
C/o The National Research Institute  
P. O. Box 5854  
Boroko, Port Moresby, NCD  
Papua New Guinea  
Fax: 326 0213  
Email: nri@global.net.pg (ATTN: Dr. Ahai)

The Foundation for Bougainville Community Development (not to be confused with the PEACE Foundation Melanesia) was set up by a young Bougainvillean researcher and linguist, Naihuwo Ahai, in 1992. The Foundation was a workshop-based initiative which pursued two themes. The short term theme was to explore and develop a broad

understanding of Peace (not just the absence of physical violence) and equip participants, through counselling and conflict resolution training, to play a role in the immediate rehabilitation and reconstruction of their communities. In the long term, the Foundation's goal was to assist individuals and communities in exploring and developing strategies for achieving and sustaining peace through community development.

Prior to launching the work of the foundation, Dr. Ahai undertook two province-wide social science surveys on behalf of the central government's sponsored research centre, the National Research Institute. The first looked at the basic educational reconstruction needs of the population and made recommendations to the North Solomons Provincial Government (i.e., the Bougainville local government). He undertook the study in the midst of the 'crisis' which involved the closure and destruction of many of Bougainville's primary and secondary schools. The second survey was a social rehabilitation needs assessment, which looked at the social and economic rehabilitation needs of specific demographic groups such as children, youth, women and populations displaced by the civil war. Dr. Ahai explained that the intervention of undertaking the surveys raised local hopes and expectations that there would be appropriate actions by the national government and provincial governments following the recommendations of the surveys. Unfortunately, at that time there was not a consensus within national or provincial government and there were some who felt that the 'Bougainville problem' could be resolved militarily and were not committed to prioritising social rehabilitation programmes.

In undertaking these two surveys, Dr. Ahai gained access to a network of motivated youth, women, church and local government representatives. It was his vision for this initiative that he would convene a series of 'peace education' workshops to be followed by concrete development project work. With a combination of support, direction and resource persons from the Quakers in Australia, Oxfam-NZ, Community Aid Abroad, AusAID, and Moral Re-armament (MRA-Australia), the foundation was established, staff were contracted and over the course of 2 years (1994-96) ten 'peace education' workshops were held. According to Dr. Ahai, these workshops/training sessions were organised by 'a partnership of local and international NGOs, and in collaboration with government, churches and communities in parts of Bougainville which were accessible at that time. "The workshops provided a friendly environment at which Bougainvilleans shared experiences of life during the crisis and developed a common understanding towards a peaceful Bougainville." Before this programme of work was completed, Dr. Ahai left for Australia 'to take a break from Bougainville.' The Foundation continued to be actively involved in Bougainville up to 1999 when management and funding problems affected its work.

#### Impact:

- Dr. Ahai explained that the work of the FBCD was meaningful in several ways. For the participants in the workshop it was a first opportunity to see the conflict affecting their communities from a wider perspective. It provided a critical opportunity for the

participants to reflect, analyse and construct a common understanding of the root (and economic) causes of the crisis.

- Having reinforced the sense that this knowledge and understanding came from the people themselves, he feels that the workshops acted as a catalyst for individual and collective and constructive responses to the conflict. Many of the participants in the peace education workshops are spread throughout Bougainville and continue to play crucial roles in their communities and in the youth, women, church and local government bodies they are associated with. Many still comment positively on the value of the workshops to their lives and what they are currently doing. Three of the persons trained as trainers in the series of workshops have gone on to take leadership roles in larger organisations.
- The workshops were themselves an opportunity for reconciliation and social bridge-building for participants coming from adversary communities. It was a time when Churches were pitted against Churches, clans against clans and language groups against other language groups. The workshops brought people together across these District and Provincial divides.
- Another impact of the workshops was the “opening up of frontier” role it played for government and other agencies. Because the war was still going on, many parts of Bougainville were inaccessible as lives of development agency workers were under threat – whether this was the government or non-government organisation. Government and NGO services were therefore not accessible in some districts. In several instances, the peace education workshops were the first external intervention in the districts since the war. The workshops provided an opportunity for development agencies and government to assess the needs of the people and begin service delivery.

Workshops would last between one and two weeks. They involved up to 60 people, and they were residential. The workshops had a kind of cumulative popularity, and the organizers had to prevent the number of participants from swelling during the course of each event.

While it is difficult for the author to trace impact and follow up to these workshops, Dr. Ahai's colleagues Jobson Misang, Joe Taruna, Rosemary Moses, Theresa Vaviri, and many others continued to work in the field. The recent development of work on psychosocial trauma can be in part traced back to the need having been identified as an area of priority. Furthermore, the work of Allen Weeks, with the Australian branch of Moral Re-Armament, and his "trust building project" was certainly informed by his involvement in this project. Local NGOs continue to speak of the Foundation in the present tense as one of the most significant NGOs in Bougainville.

## **The Bougainville Consultative Group**

C/o Naihuwo G. Ahai  
The National Research Institute

The BCG was an informal group of Bougainvilleans residing in Port Moresby. It included Bougainvilleans from diverse educational and professional backgrounds (such as medical doctors, lawyers, accountants and businessmen, bankers, senior government officials, academics, researchers etc.) whose common agenda was to influence the peaceful resolution of the Bougainville crisis. This was done through the provision of advice to leaders of the major stakeholders or by being unofficial observers during negotiation processes – behind the scenes diplomacy. The group was never formally established and recognised but convened if and when there was a need. Meetings would be called at the request of any member of the group. Other times meetings would be convened by the four Bougainville representatives in the National Parliament to seek advice on various issues pertinent at that point in time. At other times, members of the group would meet with visiting international delegations, such as the World Council of Churches, and try and present a balanced and independent view of the situation as opposed to the propaganda coming from major stakeholders.

The group does not exist any more but some of its members continue to play influential roles in the current negotiations. The group was an attempt to utilise Bougainville expertise in the resolution of the conflict. This expertise was not being officially mobilised by any of the major stakeholders at that time because of the distrust of expatriate Bougainvilleans by major stakeholders.

One of the more notable pieces of work the group worked on in 1994 was the issue of “power sharing” between the National Government and the Bougainville Government in the event of autonomy being declared. The group identified areas for legislative changes and structural changes to accommodate an “autonomous Bougainville.”

## **MRA & the Bougainville Trust-Building Project**

Moral Re-armament  
Alan Weeks  
Melbourne, Australia  
Fax: ++(613) 9822 6871  
AB\_weeks@compuserve.com

“Moral Re-Armament (MRA) has been active in Papua New Guinea since the 1930s and was directly involved on Bougainville in 1968-69 in connection with the agreement reached between the people of Rorovana village and CRA(the mining company) regarding the development of the port at Loloho . . . The assistance given helped the Rorovana people achieve an equitable agreement directly with CRA and removed the

final obstacle to the opening of the mine at Panguna since all other landowner groups had already concluded their agreements with CRA through the Administration.”

“MRA’s involvement in the Bougainville peace process at the ‘Track II’ level began in May 1989 when contact was mainly with PNG Minister for Justice, Hon. Bernard Narokobi. . . . Subsequently three MRA advisers (including Australian Alan Weeks) accompanied Mr. Narokobi during talks on HMNZS Endeavour in 1990. In early 1990, contact was also made with BRA leaders Francis Ona and Joseph Kabui.”

“In October 1994, Sir Paul Lapun asked for an MRA presence at the Pan Bougainville Peace Talks in Arawa. Five of us . . . were accredited as delegates to those talks. Following the Arawa talks MRA was approached by one of the spokesmen in Australian for the BIG, Mike Forster. His proposition was that we use our respective links with Moresby and Bougainville to establish meetings between the Bougainvillean parties. . . . Subsequently a close working relationship was developed with Provincial Premier Theodore Miriung and with Mike Forster, leading to the two rounds of talks that took place in Cairns in September and December of 1995.”

“At this point – as a Track II initiative we stepped aside and let the Track I process take over.”

“MRA continued to have a close relationship with the PNG government. . . . And was invited by Premier Sinato to attend the talks in January 1998 at Lincoln University . . . but was not, in the event, allowed on campus.”

“In parallel with the above, in 1994 at the request of the (Australian) Minister for Pacific Island Affairs and with AusAID assistance, MRA established ‘the Bougainville Trust Building Project.’ This project has been run in association with the Koebule (KB) Youth Training Centre, Milne Bay Province and the Provincial Social Development Authority on Bougainville. The project has been responsible for running 43 successful development workshops exclusively in the Siwai and Bana districts in south and Southwest Bougainville, as well as training trainers from Bougainville at the KB Centre.”

“Each of these workshops was of approximately one-week duration with the mornings spent in biblical reflection and the afternoons in developing practical development skills. There have been a number of concrete community-scale development projects, which have directly resulted from the trainings” (The Bougainville Peace Process: An Evaluation, Alan Weeks).

While the Trust-Building project has run its course, MRA continues to play an active role in Bougainville. In 2000, MRA supported a team to travel to their international conference on reconciliation in Caux, Switzerland.

**Other organisations mentioned but not interviewed by the author include:**

- Catholic Women’s Association
- Catholic Family Life

- The conflict resolution training interventions by the Australian Lawyers, White and Plunkett
- World Vision
- Caritas

#### **Section IV Key Issues and Themes from the Organisations Interviewed**

While the focus of this case study has been to document an answer to how women's organisations have sought to promote peace in Bougainville, this section seeks to flag in no particular order a number of generic observations or key issues.

##### **Women's Participation in the Peace Process (i.e. politics)**

Why did women individually and collectively play such an important role in bringing peace to Bougainville? Was it because of the respected position held by mothers, elderly women and wives in Bougainville's matrilineal society? Was it because of this strength and the fact that they stood slightly apart from the combatants? Or did they play these roles because they were roles left to them, like the family's unwashed dishes? Does this say as much about the relative strength of women in Bougainville's societies as the relative weakness of men (particularly the non-combatant men)? Or at least about men's relative inability to organise a consensus for peace?

Why are women largely absent from the formal negotiation process? From their disadvantaged position, a debate took place at the Bougainville Constituent Assembly in 1999 about the numerical representation of women in the proposed Peoples' Congress. It was reputed to have been the President of the Women's Council who carried the debate arguing that the 'time was not yet right' to demand more equal representation. It is also very striking how in seeking to document the roles of women's organisations a kind of separate history is told, a parallel history which only rarely rejoins the mainstream version. Symbolically perhaps, when the vital Lincoln Agreement was finally reached in 1998 effectively ending the conflict, a separately drafted women's statement on peace was signed and tabled. Striking too was the fact that some – particularly those working with women's church groups – perceived their form of activism as fundamentally non-political and perhaps humanitarian.

It is indisputable that the absence of women in Bougainvillean politics is a great loss to both provincial and national governments. Some see reversing this situation, and modernising the traditional place of Bougainvillean women in governance, as a long-term project. According to Ruby Mirinka, 'For women to be effective political leaders in shaping and developing future Bougainville, political education for women is of importance. Also girls must be given an opportunity for primary and college level education in Bougainville. Women need to be educated on the rights of women.' For this generation of young women and girls born in hardship and conflict, without access to formal education, there are even greater obstacles to overcome than those faced by their mother's generation. One of their few advantages is in having such impressive role models.

### **Justice and/or Reconciliation**

During the course of the fieldwork, there was a lot of talk of reconciliation and very little mention of justice. Government-sponsored and spontaneous reconciliation ceremonies, which were said to be enormously moving and sometimes meaningful events, have taken place across the province. Almost without exception, where the violence was between Bougainvilleans, the victims know the perpetrators. Many combatants remain unable or unwilling to confront their past. For some victims of violence, traditional reparations like pigs and shell money are not enough to compensate for their losses and they are demanding cash settlements. All those interviewed felt that the traditions, community structures, and authorities remained strong enough to resolve these outstanding issues over time. The mediating roles of women, elders and chiefs will remain central to the success of these processes.

Some, Ruby Mirinka for example, are demanding that human rights abuse cases (including rape) which occurred during the war still must be brought to justice. The mobilisation of these demands – if this occur – appears to be awaiting a final negotiated settlement on the political status of Bougainville.

One related issue reported to the author was that many Bougainvilleans believe that in order for the soul of a departed family member to be at rest (and not to wander about causing mischief and seeking revenge) it must be ceremonially returned home from its place of death. Many people in Bougainville still do not know where (or sometimes how) their relatives died, which is the source of a great deal of unresolved tension. It seems that establishing the ‘truth’ about the location of the death of these victims of the crisis is a role yet to be played by the provincial, traditional or non-governmental authorities.

### **‘You Can’t Eat Peace:’ The Limits of Social Development ‘Peacework’**

It seems to be a core dilemma for most NGOs to resolve the tensions between the need to do more and the need to work to the best of our abilities within our capacities and limitations. A consistent theme in discussions with NGOs doing workshop-based social development work in Bougainville is the need to engage in development projects which could have a measurable impact on improving the economic security of people’s lives. And yet very few found ways of integrating development opportunities into their programmes. It seems that the development of indigenous NGOs in Bougainville is a relatively new phenomena and one that has grown with the enormous influx of aid monies since the signing of the Lincoln Agreement. Many of the organisations interviewed are changing their focus from a peace-focus towards community development. For some, there is a certain dilemma about multiple roles and overstretched capacities. Is such an integrated approach desirable? Possible? Essential?

One issue for the author was the importance of the economic model set by the NGOs and the many messages given to individuals and community-based organisations. Some discussions were held on this topic. Helen Hakena said that it is in the nature of local businesses and local NGOs to try to copy one another’s success. ‘Look how many shops in town are trying to sell tin fish – look how many NGOs are doing similar work.’

Perhaps NGOs don't have to create country-wide programmes whose implementation relies on a dynamic secretariat and an expanding resource base. They need to test out and 'market' successful ways of working, and it is in the nature of aid and trade economies that others will try to replicate successful models. The particular strengths of NGOs is not in acting as alternatives to governments, but acting as alternatives to self-serving commercial interests. This is not to underestimate the need that local NGOs have to find independent economic bases, though many NGOs are not looking to create long-term or permanent institutions.

Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the PEACE Foundation Melanesia not only model their proficiency in accessing multiple sources of international grant-aid which seemed to hold out the prospects of seemingly endless exploitation, but they also exemplified how poorly paid NGO workers (and in the case of the Hakenas, families) can supplement their incomes with other commercial interests like, for example, the Hakena Guest House. Of course such economic proficiencies favours the internationally well connected, the English-speaking, international-conference-travelling, probably middle class, and possibly ex-pat NGO personnel. The radical 'self-reliance' model provided by the Inter-Church Women's Forum is perhaps more down-to-earth and replicable though it has its own inherent limitations.

### **The Problem with Men**

From the outset of writing this case study, gender was always going to be a central (and personal) theme. Things got off to a rocky start when my sponsors at CDA/RPP wrote to the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency apologising for my being male, explaining the extenuating circumstances that at least I did have some relevant experience. Two words into the case study, 'women' and 'peacemaking' and we are already waist-deep in assumptions and sensitivities. Should a man undertake such a case study? Can a man do the job well enough? Of course with a long list of other difficulties and obstacles (language, culture, distance, relationships), in the end my gender seemed the least of my problems.

LNWDA explains why it employs men in its work in this way: "In our Melanesian culture, the strength and survival of a family and the community rests with every man, woman and child. Their work complements each other. The spirit of co-operation and support is in the hands of the family." With that explained, men still apparently come under a certain amount of criticism. Also, some areas of their work, counselling for example, remain exclusively staffed by women.

### **Religion and Conflict Prevention**

Is this a world-view issue? It has become a platitude in our field to say that how we understand the conflicts we face informs how we respond to the problem. If one sees a problem as one of security – or rather as a military problem – one's response is informed that way. If one sees the problem as predominantly a spiritual one, - then again one forms a response accordingly, understanding the conflict in moral as well as social, political, and economic terms.

Not surprisingly, many of the Christian-led organisations and individuals are convinced that the excesses of violence during the crisis and the social problems which are continuing to be experienced today are partly the result of a certain falling away from the moral teachings of the Bible. Their strategic response is to work with their Church(es) and support work which could be said to be proselytising to those who are not living by Christian values. In perhaps more political terms, it could be said to be an education for Christian Citizenship. To question the effectiveness of this strategy may be (perhaps) foolhardy, but for this author the approach raised certain questions. There are obviously many strengths to these religiously informed approaches, but these kinds of intervention strategies can be self-limiting. Of course, this pertains to a pedagogical approach to conflict management more generally.

Another issue is the divisiveness of the Churches and a proselytising business. Some of the social violence in Bougainville has occurred along fault-lines of the Churches, and while it is not like Northern Ireland, tensions did exist and still do exist between the followers of the different Churches. These differences are not resolved when one Church secures a grant to undertake social services work. Of course, this concern is itself addressed directly in the work of such inter-faith or ecumenical organisations as the BICWF.

### **Postscript**

Several other issues which occur to the author as meriting some discussion, include:

- How aid in Bougainville has undermined, or at least set-back, their developing a culture of self reliance. How can we promote peacework without dependencies?
- Bougainville sets perhaps a challenging benchmark in cultural complexities for external interventions. What lessons are learned?
- The case study throws out the problem – not unique to small societies – of how personal conflicts have impacts on provincial and national processes. What can be learned from this?
- Is it a useful measure of the work of the NGOs to ask to what degree their projects address the priorities for securing, consolidating and building a just or “positive” peace?
- Who is responsible when peacemakers are injured or killed in undertaking their work?
- What does this study say about the value of international networks and contacts?

## **Appendix I:List of People Interviewed and Spoken to**

1. Martin Miriori
2. Mike Foster, BRA.BIG (Australia)
3. Various Port Moresby cab drivers (Vincent, in particular)
4. William Dihm, Bougainville Peace and Restoration Office
5. Nihuwo Gary Ahai, National Research Institute
6. David Churai, PEACE Foundation
7. John Murray, AusAID
8. Sister Lorraine Garasu BICWF(not really an interview)
9. Helen Hakena
10. Chis, George, Agnes
11. Aaron Rigamu, Deputy Administrative Secretary, Bougainville Provincial Interim Government, P. O. Box 322, Buka, Ph:973 9793; fax:973 9797
12. Albert Jo Noro, People's Fraternity for Justice and Peace & the Bougainville Trauma Counselling Institute
13. Theresa Jaintong OBE, President of the Provincial Council of Women, P. O. Box 71, Buka, Ph:973 9021
14. Graham Anderson, EU contractor
15. Leonard Tsi (Plus two local auxiliary trainers)
16. Judith
17. Hillary K. Laris & Benrard Hanga, Malassang Village
18. Agnes Titus, Nissan Island team leader, LNWDA
19. Helen Rosenbaum (ex-IWDA, now freelance)
20. Rev. Emily & Dora from the Inter-Church Women's Forum
21. Pamela Meura, Executive Officer, Bougainville Provincial Council of Women
22. Mark Bell-Chambers, Civil-liaison Officer, Peace Monitoring Group
23. Graeme Binin, Buka Police Station
24. James Tanis, Vice President, Bougainville Peoples Congress
25. Joseph Lera, University Centre
26. Niki AusAid, Moresby
27. Helgo Oda, Chief Executive Officer BPRO

## **Appendix II Outline History of the Bougainville Conflict and its Resolution**

*(Note: Bougainvilleans have a rich tradition of oral history which is not represented in this more traditional Euro-centric outline)*

### **Pre-contact**

26,000B.C.

Evidence of human habitation on the island of Bougainville (archaeologist Steve Wicker).

### **Contact**

1666

Spanish Captain Don Alvaro de Mendaña becomes first European Explorer to set foot on the Solomon Island shores naming them after "King Solomon's Mines." The main Island of Bougainville is later named after the French navigator Louis de Bougainville who 'rediscovered' the region a hundred years later, in 1768.

1870-1905

"Blackbirding," i.e. forced recruitment of Bougainvilleans to work the plantations in Australia's Queensland, Fiji, Samoa and New Britain takes place extensively.

1888

Islands of Bougainville and Buka added to the German Colony of New Guinea.

Catholic Marists missionaries are the first 'whites' to establish permanent, continuous residence in Bougainville.

1914 (WWI)

German colony surrendered to Australians. The colonial administration maintained the German administrative system of recognising village clan structures (including paramount and assistant chiefs).

1924

Australia given administration of New Guinea (including Bougainville) by the League of Nations (a 'C' class Mandate). It already had sovereignty over Papua (subsequently administered on its behalf by Australia).

28,000 hectares of arable land and shipping points now 'alienated' and under the administration of non-Bougainvilleans.

1942-46 (WWII)

Japanese forces occupy the province until their defeat by U.S., New Zealand and Australian forces.

1949

- Australia joins the territories of Papua and New Guinea under one administrative unit: Territory Legislative Council for T.P. (Papua) and N.G. (New Guinea).
- 1953  
A United Nations visiting mission was told by a meeting in south Bougainville of the desire for a legal affinity with the Solomon Islands.
- 1962  
Visiting UN De-Colonisation Committee hear representation from a Bougainvillean delegation objecting to the alignment of Bougainville with the Territorial Legislative Council of T.P. & N.G.
- 1964  
CRA test-drilling began in the rugged mountains of Panguna in central Bougainville, opposed by local landowners, backed with strong support from local Catholic clergy.
- 1965  
Confrontations between villagers and geologists continued throughout the year.  
  
Bougainvillean student groups throughout the Territory formed associations protesting against Australian administration and the CRTZ company, calling for the people of Bougainville's right to self-determination (as part of the Solomon Islands or alone). Bougainvilleans at Holy Trinity Seminary, Madang, discuss secession.
- 1968  
Local demands for a referendum on secession articulated. *Mungkas* (Telei language for 'blackskin') Association founded at meeting of Bougainvilleans in Port Moresby and calls for referendum on secession.
- 1969  
Construction and mining began at the Con-Zinc Rio Tinto Panguna Mine. (Yash Ghai: "The socially and ecologically disruptive effect of the mining operations, aggravated by the miners and other workers recruited from the mainland, provided a fertile ground for the mobilisation of grievances. While concession of increased rent and compensation reduced the intensity of opposition the preceding disputes consolidated Bougainvillean identity. As some of these grievances were felt by Bougainvilleans well beyond the landowner groups directly affected by the mine.")
- 1970  
An informal vote on the issue of secession organised by a pro-independence group in central Bougainville, Napidakoe Navitu Movement. The independence proposal received strong support in areas closest to the mine but also prompted ambivalence

and even opposition elsewhere, especially in northern parts of Bougainville Island and Buka.

1972

The central importance of antipathy to 'red-skin' Papua New Guineans as a factor in Bougainville ethnic identity was demonstrated in December 1972 when two senior Bougainvillean public servants were victims of 'payback' killings by villagers after a road accident in the New Guinea highlands. With opinion inflamed against 'red skins,' support for independence consolidated dramatically in all areas of Bougainville.

June

A committee of the House is appointed to consider Papua New Guinea's independence constitution. The Constitutional Planning Committee's (CPC) was expected to find acceptable ways for the integration of Bougainville and of other groups demanding autonomy. The *de facto* chairperson of the CPC, Catholic priest Fr. John Momis, was a Bougainvillean. Its two key members, John Momis and John Kaputin, had political affiliations with local groups seeking autonomy (Bougainville and the Mataungan Association of East New Britain respectively).

1973

A committee of leaders from councils and other groups from all over Bougainville, the Bougainville Special Political Committee (BSPC), was set up to negotiate the future status of Bougainville with the Port Moresby government. The CPC and the BSPC, together with the first Papua New Guinean-led central government, now became key actors in the development of proposals for constitutionally entrenched decentralisation arrangements.

(Yash Ghai) "Bougainville's demands of July 1973 – essentially for a confederal arrangement with a right to choose independence at a later date – were 'a deliberate overbid.' The real concern was to obtain both a reasonable share of the revenue flowing from the mine and the autonomy to use it as Bougainville determined. As a result, a compromise was possible about establishing an interim provincial government. There was also steadily increasing awareness of the immense practical difficulties involved in secession."

### **Between Independence and the 'Crisis'**

1975

(Yash Ghai) "With the rejection of the recommendation on provincial legislative supremacy, Bougainville leaders responded by declaring the intention to declare their own independence on 1<sup>st</sup> September, ahead of PNG's scheduled independence on 16th September. Following a Unilateral Declaration of Independence of the Republic of North Solomons (the name to emphasise traditional links to neighbouring Solomon Islands), the national government suspended the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government and withheld grant payments. Otherwise, aware of its limited capacity to impose its will by force, and determined

to avoid bloodshed that could both divide the new state and destroy international confidence in it, the national government was moderate and conciliatory. Bougainville leaders sought recognition at the United Nations and explored possibilities of union with Solomon Islands, but to no avail.”

September 16

PNG gained its independence from Australia.

1976

Following anti-National Government riots, Bougainville agreed to accept Papua New Guinea sovereignty and the National Government undertook to restore the provincial government provisions to the Constitution. Immediate moves were made to introduce the constitutional amendments, inclusive of a provision that provincial laws might prevail over national laws.

*Bougainville Agreement* of August 7 between the National Government and the Province of Bougainville) attempts to recognise the ‘special relationship’ between the province and the national government.

The *Constitution of the North Solomons Provincial Government* passed containing restrictions on the right to vote for and stand for election to office in the provincial legislature, mainly directed at limiting the influence of ‘red-skins’ and other minorities (Chinese) at the same time as it proclaimed North Solomon ‘sovereignty.’

Following four years of intensive lobbying on the part of the BSPC, the *Organic Law on Provincial Government* came into effect, granting a high degree of decentralisation to all provinces.

1981

Serious disputes with the national government emerged over demands for increased resources for Bougainville in the context of a periodic review of the agreement governing the Panguna mining project.

1982

Bougainville made a number of efforts (in the late 1970s, in 1982 and in the late 1980s) to remove residents of squatter settlements around the main urban areas, generally people from other parts of Papua New Guinea who were blamed for increasing crime in Bougainville. But with very limited legal authority due to constitutional guarantees of equality and freedom of movement, and in the face of strong criticism from other provincial governments, such efforts were limited. Inter-ethnic tensions are heightened with the harassment and murder of a Bougainvillean nurse by a ‘mainlander.’

1987

By the late 1980s, Bougainville was the only province in PNG with a major mine, and received around US\$5 million per year in royalties, providing the North Solomons Provincial Government with far more funds to spend at its discretion than

any of the other poorly funded provincial governments. The failure to review the mining agreement and the escalating number of mismanaged disputes – particularly around the environmental consequences of the mining operation – contributed to splits within the landowner groups and public demonstrations. The scarcity of flying foxes and rain were popularly blamed on the Panguna mine. Cocoa prices (Bougainville’s primary export crop) drop by one third.

## **Violent Conflict Begins**

1988

Local landowners broke into Panguna Mine explosives storage and stole dynamite following police action to clear a landowner roadblock. Almost immediately a campaign to blow-up power pylons began. Some disgruntled land owners organised themselves into a militant group codenamed “Rambos.”

1989

The police riot squads (and PNG Defense Forces brought in to assist the police), comprised almost entirely of ‘red-skins,’ engaged in indiscriminate violence (burning houses, raping women, killing civilians) that contributed to making ethnic identity a central issue. Several unrelated incidents of violence between Bougainvilleans and ‘red-skin’ labourers or squatters occurring early in 1989 added to the intensity of feeling.

Clandestine meeting between Solomons-based, pro-independence Bougainville leaders and the Rambos group took place convincing the latter to adopt a self-determination platform to sustain popular support.

Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) officially formed under the leadership of Francis Ona, and Sam Kauna and others.

“Peace rescue package” of special benefits for Bougainville proposed by the National and provincial governments’ Namaliu Peace Agreement (between PNG government & BRA). June 26<sup>th</sup> State of emergency comes into effect for Bougainville and over 600 villagers are resettled in ‘care centres.’ Unsuccessful peace initiative led by the Catholic Priest, Fr. Leibert. John Bika, proponent of the peace package and member of the Provincial government, assassinated by the BRA. An unsuccessful “peace ceremony” took place in Central Bougainville attended by 1,500 people including the Prime Minister, Church and traditional leaders.

1990

January

PNG government withdrew public servants, and all banks, offices and services are closed down. Expatriates largely evacuated the province.

February

Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) formed loosely in association with the BRA as the self-declared political arm of the Bougainville movement for independence and declared its readiness to negotiate with the PNG authorities.

March-November

PNGDF withdraw from Bougainville, imposed a naval aid and trade blockade and internecine violence (between BRA and civilians) dominates the formerly government-controlled areas of the province, particularly on Buka.

May

BIG issued a unilateral Declaration of Independence under the name of Francis Ona as President.

October

New Zealand warship HMNZS *Endeavour* hosted peace negotiations, and agreement was reached on a ceasefire and the restoration of services. Talks included three advisers to the PNG government from the civic organisation Moral Re-armament. One week later the PNG security forces return to Buka, effectively ending the ceasefire. Buka leaders sign the *Kavieng Agreement*, calling on the national government to re-establish order and services in Buka.

Earliest women's delegations from northern Bougainville talk to the BRA on ending the war

1991

Peace talks facilitated by the Solomon Islands government in Honiara in January resulted in the *Honiara Declaration*, an agreement on the provision of a multinational peacekeeping force.

PNGDF form a counter-BRA group, the Resistance Force from the Buka Liberation Front (BLF).

Hutjena Education and Reconstruction Workshop convened at the request of Fr. John Momis, then Minister for Provincial Affairs, who 'was interested in using education as the catalyst for resurrecting and creating a new Bougainville society.' 1,000 men women and children attended, mainly from the government controlled areas.

In an initiative led by local women a 'Peace Area' is declared by the Selau people in the northern tip of Bougainville on August 17<sup>th</sup>. The community took steps to disarm the local BRA and agreed not have Resistance Forces in their area. Sister Lorraine: "We take it as our responsibility to create an environment where we can dream about a peaceful solution to the conflict. It is not 100 percent but we plan to trust each other again."

1992

August

As a result of BIG lobbying in Europe with some logistical assistance provided by European NGOs (in particular, UNPO) first UN resolution passes at the 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the Sub-Commission.

8 Nov

First Catholic Women's Association Meeting at Hahela with Australian Red Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency founded in northern Bougainville.

BIG, Government of PNG, meet inconclusively.

1993

PNGDF pursued their counter-insurgency tactics of forcibly displacing civilian population into 'care centres.'

BIG and other members of the pro-BRA 'Bougainville Freedom Movement' attend UN World Conference on Human Rights in Brussels.

Bougainville leaders forum – convened by leaders of Interim Authorities over concern about the 'restoration and rehabilitation exercise' – held in Buka, involving some 600 people, says that 'secession demands an impediment to peace.'

1994

Bougainville Foundation for Peace and Development founded and begins first of ten 'peace education' workshops over two years. Bougainville Reunion of the Catholic Women's Federation, held in Buka (drew more than 2,000 Women), included women from all over Bougainville.; 150-woman delegation to the Catholic Women's Federation Conference in Port Moresby. North Nasioi Council of Chiefs prepare their 'Peace Document' which listed their grievances, which they understood to have given rise to the crisis, and spelled out governance issues in a new Bougainville. The Loosley Report published.

July/August

Major PNG DF offensive "Operation High Speed 1" to recapture Panguna Mine.

Following the dismissal of the PM Wingti and the appointment of the new PM Sir Julius Chan, negotiations begin with BRA/BIG in Honiara in June and September resulting in two agreements "Honiara Commitment to Peace" and the "Ceasefire Agreement," taking effect from 2 September. This was to create a "neutral zone" for the October 1994 Arawa peace conference (with security provided by the South Pacific Peace keeping Force).

October

Peace Conference in Arawa convened by the National government of Sir Julius

Chan, with support from UNDP, and security provided by the South Pacific Peacekeeping Force—. As many as 25,000 people gathered in the shade of two big trees. Much of BRA leadership failed to take part due to concerns about the alleged presence of the PNGDF in the “neutral zone.”

December

PNG establish the Bougainville Transitional Government with the signing of the “Mirigini Charter” (between Chan and Miriung), with Theodore Miriung as Premier (formerly with BIG).

1995

In the Buin area of southern Bougainville, three members of the “Icebreakers,” a voluntary group of about 20 persons, who had received training in conflict resolution provided by the PEACE Foundation were shot dead, one by a BRA member and the other two by Resistance fighters. The trainee mediators – who acted as auxiliary trainers for the PEACE Foundation – were shuttling between the government care centres and the BRA leadership in a climate of profound distrust. (D.Young)

Women from BRA and government controlled areas of Bougainville in separate groups attend 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Women in Beijing. On their return, women of northern Bougainville conduct a silent march in protest against the war, defying the declared state of emergency.

Cairns, Australian meetings of representatives of the Bougainvillean groups from both the provincial government (including the Provincial Council of Women) and the BIG/BRA in September and December to seek ways and means of restarting peace negotiations with support from the Australian government. The first meeting was the result (in part) of a ‘Track II initiative’ led by MRA, supporting dialogue between Government of PNG and BIG. The second meeting was facilitated by the UN and the Commonwealth Secretariat and resulted in a “Joint Communique” being delivered to the PNG PM, signed by BTG and BIG/BRA. Returning BIG/BRA delegation narrowly escaped an attack by the PNGDF while in transit from the Solomon Islands near Koramira.

1996

“Simbo Massacre” of 10 civilians killed by the PNGDF in South Bougainville. BRA launch raids into government-controlled areas of Buka and North Bougainville. PNGDF launch “Operation High Speed II.”

July 15

Battle for Aropa Airport resulted in a military defeat for the PNGDF.

August 25-31

Women’s Peace Forum – with the theme ‘In search of genuine peace and reconciliation – held in Arawa, organised by the Inter-Church Women’s Forum

(BICW). A spin-off meeting on peace takes place between organisers of the forum and a BRA group in Central Bougainville. “They invited a woman to chair the meeting, and that was a very good meeting, a successful meeting. That’s why we believe that we can discuss peace on our own land” (Sister Lorraine).

Unofficial negotiations with the Chan government.

BICW accompany John Momis to participate in the negotiations for the release of five PNGDF prisoners held by the BRA in Buin after the BRA launched an offensive to “free 1,000 civilians from the Kangu Beach Care Centre” in southern Bougainville.

1<sup>st</sup> LNWDA organised Youth conference, Hahela High School.

October

Meeting of Sister Lorraine (BICWF), Ruby Mirinka, and Daphne Sale (BOCHIP) and other Bougainvillean women at a forum ‘Women Speak Out’ in Sydney to discuss ways of getting the warring parties to stop fighting. This produced a position paper on the end to the war, which was used “as our stepping stones for discussions” at the Peace Talks at Burnham (Sr. Lorraine).

Theodore Miriung, Premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government and senior negotiator, assassinated in southern Bougainville allegedly by PNG and Resistance forces.

1997

Prime Minister Julius Chan contracted Executive Outcomes/Sandline International in a deal reputed to cost US\$36 million entitled “Operation Oyster” to retake the Panguna copper mine.

March 16<sup>th</sup> PNGDF officers arrest the Sandline commanders and shortly after the government of Sir Julius Chan falls.

*The Peter Barter Peace Plan*, developed February to April, emphasised the need for a negotiated peace.

Women from the Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency accompany Rarua Skate (the PM’s wife) to meet with BRA Women Leaders at Kurai Village, Central District.

June

Lawyers Plunkett and White lead an influential CR training course with ten members of the BIG/BRA leaders in the Solomon Islands who later provided financial support for radio and satellite communication equipment to support their participation in the peace process.

July 5-18

Burnham I talks held in New Zealand leading to the Burnham Declaration. This was a meeting of a wide range of Bougainville leaders, without direct involvement of the PNG national government.

October

*Burnham II*. This was a meeting of officials of the PNG national government and all main Bougainville groups. It was the first meeting to involve quite large numbers of leaders from the fighting groups. It included both senior and middle-level leaders of the BRA and the Resistance, as well as senior PNGDF and RPNGC officers. Australia's Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer pledges an aid package of 100 million Australian dollars a year for Bougainville for five years (to be taken from the 300 million annual budget to PNG).

November

Second Youth Conference, Gogohe. Also, Cairns peace talks between PNG, BTG, BRA/BIG.

BICW negotiations with the Tinuputs BRA for the release of Momis and Billi.

1998

*Lincoln Agreement*, signed Lincoln, Christchurch, NZ 23 January.

This was an agreement signed at the end of a meeting of political leaders from all parties. Many officials of all groups also attended the meeting. Representatives of the UN and of the countries involved in the TMG also witnessed the agreement. An adjoining Women's statement on peace also presented and signed.

Lincoln Agreement Annex – 'Agreement Covering Implementation of the Ceasefire' – signed in Arawa, 30 April, effectively ending nine years of violent conflict. The *April 1998 Cease-fire Agreement* was signed by all parties and was also witnessed by the same international and regional interests as witnessed the Lincoln Agreement.

Bougainville Constituent Assembly convened to appoint the Bougainville People's Congress (only four women represented, following a debate on the floor between two of Bougainville's leading women leaders). The argument that 'the time is not yet right' for stronger female representation prevailed.

1999

BPC formally established with Joseph Kabui as President. 114 members elected, selected or appointed in line with BCA constitution: BPC Executive formed.

Government of PNG refuses to recognise the BPC and as a result there are two parallel governments working together in Buka. Public servants serve both the BPC and the Provincial Transitional Government.

The *Matakana and Okataina Understanding* was signed at meetings held in various parts of New Zealand in late April and early May 1999. The main reason for these meetings was to resolve political conflict that developed from December 1998 over the interim political arrangements for Bougainville.

Reconciliation Meeting between Bougainville leaders at Nissan. As a result, a *Nehan Resolution* was signed allowing Bougainville to negotiate with the national government on autonomy and the referendum.

#### November

Hon. John Momis MP won a court case where he challenged the state's suspension of the province. As a result, Hon. John Momis is now the Governor of Bougainville.

#### December

One-day reconciliation ceremony staged at Hoko, Gogohe, between the Leitana BPC members and the Leitana Council of Elders.

Round of negotiations between the National and Bougainville leaders held at Hutjena United Church. A *Hutjena record* signed by leaders.

#### 2000

##### March

Int'l Women's Day march and workshop on domestic violence.

2<sup>nd</sup> round of negotiations between the government and the Bougainville leaders held at Hutjena High School; 4<sup>th</sup> round at Loloata Island, Port Moresby.

##### September 4-6

Political talks in Rabaul, 6<sup>th</sup> round discussions continued on Autonomy, Referendum and Arms disposal. Of the 52-strong Bougainvillean delegation, two were women.

##### September 13

North Bougainville Women's Peace March. The women presented a petition to the governor Hon. John Momis

##### October

Negotiations on the primary issues of the referendum, arms disposal and the structure of autonomy arrangements continue. The prospects of their reaching a sustainable agreement look promising, although many uncertainties remain, including the process of steering the legislative package through the National Parliament.

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