

Building Peace in Bougainville: Gender, Development and Education for Post-Conflict Recovery

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The Bougainville Crisis disrupted life in the North Solomons Province of Papua New Guinea from 1988-1998. A wide range of government and civil society organizations were involved in attempts at ending the conflict and ameliorating its effects. Since 1998, peace-building efforts have been widespread, and again have involved a range of local, national and international actors. In particular a number of locally initiated and managed grassroots non-government organizations (NGOs) have been established in Bougainville. These NGOs undertake a variety of tasks, including humanitarian relief, advocacy, counselling, development projects, and education. This paper reports on a case study of one local Bougainville NGO, the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Organisation (LNWDA). LNWDA was formed in 1992, and has managed to survive and thrive in both war and peace, while other local NGOs have disappeared or remained relatively limited in their capacity to contribute to the peace-building efforts. This paper seeks to analyse how it is that LNWDA has managed to adapt to changing circumstances in Bougainville and continue to garner local, national and international support for its education, advocacy and counselling programs.

The war in Bougainville began as a dispute among landholders about royalty payments and the environmental and social impacts of the giant Australian-owned Panguna copper mine in the mountains of central Bougainville (Claxton 1998; McMillan 1998; Miriori 2002; Ogan 1990; Ona 1990; Regan 1998). The dispute initially resulted in sabotage against the mine and its associated infrastructure. In response to this sabotage, the Papua New Guinea government sent in the police riot squad and later the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) to quell the 'criminal' behaviour and protect their economic interests in the mine (Dinnen 1999; Namaliu 1990). However, the heavy handed tactics of these security forces and their abuses of human rights rallied many Bougainvilleans to the side of the rebels, in the form of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), and expanded the dispute beyond the issues directly related to the mine (May 2001; Miriori 2002; Ogan 1990). As a result, older issues such as autonomy and independence for Bougainville re-emerged (Ghai & Regan 2002; Hannett 1975; Havini 1990; Ogan 1990, 1999). Mounting casualties and disputes among PNGDF commanders about how to pursue the conflict led to the withdraw of all PNGDF forces from Bougainville in 1990 (Oliver, 1992; Sohia 2002). Left to rule the province, the BRA commanders and their newly formed civilian government, the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) proved incapable of controlling the various factions that comprised the BRA (McMillan 1998; Regan 1998). Violence against Bougainvilleans considered to be too closely aligned to the PNG government resulted in some disaffection with the BRA and BIG (Regan 1998). Some areas invited the PNGDF and government services to return, and some groups set up resistance forces to fight the BRA (O'Callaghan 2002; Regan 1998; Sohia 2002). In PNGDF controlled areas, up to 50,000 people were placed in 'care centres' where abuses by the PNGDF were common (McMillan 1998; Saovana-Spriggs 2000). A naval blockade of the island, and particularly the areas controlled by the BRA, meant that essential services such as health and

education were shut down, with many deaths in the war attributed to lack of medicines to treat preventable diseases.¹

Numerous attempts were made to resolve the conflict, with peace talks held on the HMNZS *Endeavour* in 1990, on the MV *Huris* in 1991, in Honiara in 1991 and 1994, at Arawa in 1994, and in Cairns in 1995 (McMillan 1998; Sohia 2002). However, an effective truce was not signed until after two sets of talks at the Burnham army base in New Zealand in 1997 (Tapi 2002). A permanent ceasefire was enacted following talks at Lincoln University in New Zealand in 1998 (Regan 1998). A peace agreement was signed in 2001, which allowed for the disposal of weapons, the development of a constitution for an autonomous Bougainville, and elections for an autonomous government. In 2004, the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government and the PNG government approved a draft constitution for an autonomous Bougainville, and elections are expected in the first half of 2005. Weapons disposal is complete in almost all areas of the province.

LNWDA was formed in 1992 primarily for the purpose of providing humanitarian relief for people in care centres. It was founded by four former school friends and members of the Catholic Women's Association who felt they had to take action to help alleviate the suffering being caused by the war. LNWDA undertook small scale local initiatives at first, and then began to obtain small grants from local politicians as well as from Australian and international NGOs such as Community Aid Abroad, Oxfam and AusAID. They used these funds for activities such as holding meetings of women and youth ("youth mobilizations") in which they promoted peace and non-violence and at which they advocated equality for women, raised awareness about the influence and impact of home-brewed alcohol, and taught women about their rights.

Having built up a track record in using small grants in these ways, LN teamed up with the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), based in Melbourne, and secured a large AusAID grant to undertake awareness and counselling programs in schools and villages in all the districts in Bougainville. This program, entitled Strengthening Communities for Peace (SCP), ran from 2000-2004, and used 13 teams of 7 volunteers, assisted by a number of full-time staff in the organization. More recently, LN has obtained funding from NZAid to run expanded counselling programs in Bougainville.

The work conducted by the organization has changed over time in response to the changing situation on the ground in Bougainville. The organization has been able to build up the abilities and capacities of its staff and volunteers, and partner with a range of local, national and international organizations. In this paper I analyse and attempt to explain the reasons that LNWDA has been able to continue to grow and expand its work to a variety of social sites and institutions. There are many reasons for the successful expansion and influence of LNWDA. These include the social standing of the founders and their spouses, and of the volunteers, the commitment and hard work of its founders and subsequent staff and volunteers, the willingness of partners to contribute to the work, and the ability of the organization to change and adapt to new circumstances. However, another major reason is the organization's ability to take up, use, promote and gain acceptance for its vision for Bougainville, and particularly for its ideas about the role of women in Bougainville society, its vision of peace, and its ideas about development. In this paper, therefore, I analyse how over time the organization and its workers have conceptualised gender, development and peace, and how these conceptualisations have changed in response to changing contexts on Bougainville.

In essence I am exploring how LNWDA's power operates. This is not a power that is oppressive or hierarchical. Rather, as Foucault (1975/1991: 194) observed, power is productive: "It produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth". In other words, it is through the operation of power that we come to understand and interpret the world and our place in it. LNWDA's work in conveying particular ideas about women, peace and development therefore can be seen as a struggle to change the way people view the world, and in particular Bougainville, and their place in it. Most of this work of changing the way people view the world occurs through the

¹ The number of deaths attributed to the crisis range from 10,000 (Henderson 1999) to 12,000 (Bennett 2000) to 20,000 (Saovana-Spriggs 2000).

use of language in particular contexts. Actions also have a major part to play by setting examples of how to behave. Nevertheless, the meanings of these actions are not transparent, but are explored and understood by and through language. In this paper, therefore, I focus on language and in particular the discourses about women, development and peace that LNWDA has used over time. Discourses are often the means through which power operates. Thus they too, are productive, since they “systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault 1972: 49).

In the case of LNWDA, these discourses have been deployed in two particular contexts, apart from the obvious ones of the crisis and its aftermath. The original founders of LNWDA were already active in leadership roles in the Bougainville Diocese of the Catholic Women’s Association prior to the conflict. Since the large majority of the people of Bougainville are affiliated with the Catholic Church, these leadership roles and the CWA network provided a ready-made template on which to graft peace building work. Second, and probably more fundamentally, the four women who founded the organisation all hold chiefly positions in the social structure of their clans in Nissan and Central, South and North Buka respectively. Thus they have respected and influential social connections throughout Nissan and Buka. Furthermore, within Bougainville societies, there are also chiefly connections across clans, and in some cases this meant that the LNWDA founders had connections on the mainland of Bougainville as well. These connections were sometimes used to expand LNWDA’s work into various districts in Bougainville.

In the following analysis, I show how LNWDA through its founders and associates have productively used, in the contexts described above, three sets of discourses around gender, development and peace. These deployments have for the most part been productive in the sense that they have allowed the organization to recruit a growing cohort of volunteers, obtain approval to conduct their programs in a growing number of villages, schools and other social institutions, promote their work to, and create philosophical and financial partnerships with, a growing range of local, national and international organizations, and ensure women’s issues are considered at various levels of the peace building process, including disarmament talks and constitutional committee meetings. I analyse a range of official LNWDA documents, as well as data from the interviews with LNWDA founders, paid employees and volunteers.

Women and Gender

LNWDA has employed a range of the wide variety of discourses of gender that circulate globally and that have been identified by Tong (1998). In the first few years of its existence, LNWDA tended to deploy culturally oriented discourses of gender that emphasised the important roles that Bougainville women have traditionally played in Bougainville societies. As LNWDA founder and executive director Helen Hakena noted, the early emphasis was on “kamapin gutpela sindaun long famle, mama emi bungim man, pikinini, osem mama emi bos bilong graun emi osem lida long kirapim gutpela sindaun long famle na komuniti”², that is, improving family life, mothers bring adults and children together, as mothers are custodians of the land and leaders in improving family and community life. The purpose of using these discourses was to attempt to re-establish women’s social roles that had been eroded by Australian colonialism, which ended in 1975, and by the ten years of civil war.

In the mid-1990s, and particularly after two key members of the organization, Helen Hakena and Agnes Titus, attended the International Women’s Forum in Beijing in 1995, LNWDA began to deploy liberal discourses of enhancing women’s opportunities and protecting and promoting women’s rights. This was partly a result of discussions that Helen and Agnes held with women in parishes on Buka, who decided “women’s rights” was compatible with what they needed. The women realised they needed to speak out (as was their right) because the men were “bagarap” (incapable) and too scared to speak. Helen gave the example of two of her uncles who were murdered in front of their children for speaking out about killings and disappearances perpetrated by the BRA at Hanehan.

² Interview, Helen Hakena, 19 February 2004

These liberal discourses of women's rights are reflected in LNWDA documents. For example, article 3.6.1 of the LNWDA constitution (1997) states that one of the aims of the organization is:

To promote, maintain and protect the interests, rights and privileges of the women of Bougainville irrespective of religion, colour, creed or affiliation.

The proposal submitted by LNWDA and IWDA to AusAID for the Strengthening Communities for Peace (SCP) project indicated that one of the proposed outputs would be "increased awareness throughout Bougainville Province, PNG and the Pacific about women's rights and concerns" (LNWDA and IWDA, 1999, p. 3). Similarly, the 2000 Annual Report notes that the overall goal of the SCP project is to "contribute to the restoration of peace in Bougainville by promoting non-violence and women's rights" (LNWDA 2001a, p. 10).

A promotional brochure produced in 2001 takes up the theme of women's rights, as well as indicating a concern with enhancing women's social standing

To meaningfully contribute to restoration of peace in Bougainville by promoting non-violence society and Advocacy of women's rights. And also empowering women as agents of change and the improvement of their social status (LNWDA 2001b)

Most recently, the LNWDA strategic plan (LNWDA 2003a, p. 1) identified as one of its key strategic priorities the promotion of rights, and in this case the discourse of women's rights has been extended to include children's rights. For example, the strategic plan (LNWDA 2003a, p. 5) states that the organization exists for "the promotion of women and children's rights". According to one of the monthly reports for the SCP project (LNWDA 2003b) one of the achievements of the project has been the inclusion of a statement on women's and children's rights in the draft constitution for an autonomous Bougainville.

LNWDA also deployed a discourse focused on international conventions and national obligations to strengthen their claims concerning women's and children's rights. This is a practice that Chan-Tiberghien (2004) refers to as leverage politics. It involves using the ideas, status and standing of international conventions and declarations to lobby for change at the local level. The 1999 Annual Report (LNWDA 2000a, p. 6), for example, stated

LNWDA in a small way carries out public awareness on the rights of women stipulated under the Papua New Guinea constitution and any other international laws and declarations issues under the United Nations charter.

Furthermore, the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan (LNWDA 2003a, p. 5) states that the organization promotes these rights "as stipulated in the Convention on all Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)".

Another impact of the Beijing forum was that LNWDA openly eschewed certain elements of separatist radical feminist (Tong, 1998, p. 47) discourses that excluded men from contributing to the organization's work. Rather, they argued that in Bougainville societies women, men and children work together, and therefore it would be inappropriate to adopt a separatist stance.³ Furthermore, as one founder noted in the margin of the interview transcript which she proof-read:

If we confine gender issues to women only to deal with, then it will be seen as women's issues. But we are involving men to make them feel they are part of the issue and it is their issue, too. So the problems are community issues to be worked out together, by men and women.

³ Interview, Helen Hakena, 19 February 2004

Thus, in a submission to International Alert (LNWDA 2000b), LNWDA stated: “The issue on gender development has to be aggressively promoted to enable men and women [to] work hand in hand on issues and programmes affecting their lives”. Similarly, in the 2000 annual report (LNWDA 2001a, p. 10), LNWDA stated:

There is a big need for men to see women as equal partners in all areas of development. Bougainville men and women need to work together hand in hand to find a lasting peaceful solution to the armed conflict on Bougainville.

LNWDA also uses other cultural discourses of gender, particularly when lobbying for women’s representation at disarmament talks and other public political forums that men attempt to numerically dominate. These cultural discourses argue that Bougainville women as Bougainville women have a unique place in Bougainville societies and therefore particular roles to play in peace making and post-conflict recovery. This is a form of what Tong (1998, p. 47) calls a radical cultural feminism in which “Women should not try to be like men ... they should try to be more like women, emphasizing the values and virtues culturally associated with women”. For example, in the SCP proposal (LNWDA and IWDA 1999, p. 5), the executive director of LNWDA was quoted as saying, “Our women feel that their potential and capabilities in helping with rehabilitation and development need to be recognised because they hold important keys no one else can turn”. Similarly, in the 2000 Annual Report (LNWDA 2001a, p. 10), LNWDA argued, “Women have a special place in the Bougainville society ... as a result of the matrilineal system that existed on Bougainville”. The LNWDA promotional brochure (LNWDA 2001b), also takes up this theme: “We recognise and endeavour to build upon capacities of people to resolve their own conflicts and we support the distinctive peace making roles of women in societies affected by the violent conflict”.

In some contexts, such as international forums, LNWDA deploys global feminist discourses, in which all women are viewed as part of a sisterhood, despite their differing experiences of oppression (Tong, 1998, p. 242). For example, in a speech in Melbourne marking International Women’s Day in 2003, Helen Hakena (2003) addressed her audience as “sisters”.

Development

In terms of development, there has been a shift in the emphasis that the organization makes on social, cultural and economic change. In its original form as a humanitarian relief organization, LNWDA provided clothes and medicines for women and children who had been moved from the war zones into ‘care centres’ by the PNG military. Later, the organization began to emphasize development. For example the LNWDA Constitution (LNWDA 1997) states that one of the organization’s objectives is “to work towards the improvement of the living standards of the women of Bougainville so as to enable them to achieve gradual economic and social development”. By the end of the 1990s however, and with a truce in the war, LNWDA began to emphasise integral human development (IHD), based on certain Catholic teachings that argue that economic and infrastructure development is premature without personal, spiritual, and moral development. For example, in the SCP proposal, one of the major activity outputs was to be, “A mutually supportive network formed of 120 community representatives able to work with their communities in an ongoing fashion using IHD principles to address social problems” (LNWDA and IWDA, 1999, p. 3). The same document gave a detailed description and rationale for IHD:

IHD provides a holistic approach to community development that highlights the inter-relatedness of social problems. The IHD workshops will explore the wide range of factors that cause violence and disharmony in the community, including anger, grief, fear, trauma and lack of self understanding, lack of self worth and insufficient guidance/direction for young people ... the workshops will aim to equip the community representatives with the

tools to facilitate psychological, emotional and spiritual rehabilitation, and to motivate communities to creatively address social problems. (LNWDA and IWDA 1999, p. 10)

The above quote particularly indicates the priority given to non-material development as a pre-requisite for economic and physical development. Other documents provide further insight into the reasons for this priority. For example, the 1999 Annual Report (LNWDA 2000a, p. 1) states that IHD is a priority because “many Bougainvilleans were traumatised and suffered a lot during the ninth [sic] year armed conflict on Bougainville”. Furthermore, the 2000 Annual Report (LNWDA 2001a, p. 1) states, “The focus on Integral Human Development must be given priority in order for Unity, Peace and Development to prosper on Bougainville.” LNWDA tends to view IHD as ‘people-centred development’. The promotional brochure (LNWDA 2001b) states, “Above everything else, men, women and children of Bougainville shall be at the centre of any form of development politically, economically, socially, spiritually and culturally”.

Most recently, the organisation’s strategic plan (2004-2007) has continued to emphasise holistic development:

The organization will practise a holistic approach to development that encompasses physical, spiritual, social and economic well being. LNWDA believes that each person deserves an opportunity to develop, to the fullest possible extent, his or her own physical, mental, emotional and spiritual potential. (LNWDA 2003a, p. 5)

For several years, LNWDA has promoted integral human development as a prerequisite to economic and infrastructure development. We believe that any form of development should improve the quality of life for all Bougainvilleans. (LNWDA 2003a, p. 3)

It is noteworthy that in both of the above passages, there is a shift from the 1997 constitution, which focused solely on women’s development. In the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan, the vision has expanded to improving the quality of life for all Bougainvilleans.

Many of the interviewees subscribed to the integral human development model. When asked what was development, they mentioned ideas such as: assisting people to know and understand themselves and how to relate to others; developing respect for other people; that development had mental, physical, spiritual and social dimensions; that it involved the whole person; creating good people; changing attitudes and behaviours, including one’s own; decreasing troublemakers; and ridding the community of bad things such as homebrew, domestic violence and child abuse. One interviewee suggested that development was about training and informing the public about issues, providing opportunities to debate issues, and knowing the differences between various approaches to dealing with specific issues. Some interviewees, when defining integral human development, contrasted it with models that focused only on infrastructure, such as buildings, schools, bridges and rainwater tanks. One interviewee, however, argued that development did involve “schools, trade stores, and providing services to the people”. One interviewee argued it is no use building schools and clinics if people are in the frame of mind to burn them down, which is what happened during the war, and therefore it is important to deal with the psychological trauma of the war before re-establishing infrastructure. According to another interviewee, reconciliation as well as psychological healing is necessary so that people trust each other and can work together to improve their lives. This interviewee cited two instances in which an outside aid organization had implemented programs prior to adequate levels of reconciliation and healing occurring. In one case, the program had sapped people’s initiative and led to a hand-out mentality, while in the other case, it had made people suspicious of the aid organisation’s local partner, with the result that the local partner had to work hard to allay these fears.

Some of the interviewees who advocated IHD also argued that development involved employment generation projects, such as those that supplied sewing machines, ovens, or seeds, or provided for the creation of other small businesses. There was a sense that people needed to be

gainfully employed so that they did not go back to making home brew and causing trouble. One interviewee also observed that such projects worked best when focused on the extended family, rather than the whole community.

The source of a substantial proportion of LNWDA's ideas on IHD is a book by a Catholic Priest, Father Tony Byrne (1983), which focuses on "Integral Development", although in the LNWDA documents the word "human" is inserted in the phrase. Byrne (1983, p. 6) cites Pope Paul VI's 1967 book on "The Development of Peoples", which defines development as the "promotion of the good of people, every person and the whole person", rather than the development of material things such as buildings. The book promotes a consultative, participatory model of development, and advises against paternalistic approaches. At the same time, it treats the question of gender equality dismissively with the following anecdote:

Some time ago I asked a group of people attending a development seminar to draw their idea of development. One Sister who was attending the seminar had a good sense of humour. She drew a picture of a Sister wearing a bishop's mitre ... I suppose we will have to wait for some time before we have that kind of development! (Byrne 1983, p. 6).

Yet the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan makes it quite clear that LNWDA itself highly values gender equality:

The promotion of gender equality is an underlying principle of the organization ... The organization will promote and practise equal participation by women and men in all aspects of LNWDA operations. It is important that the organization serve as a role model of gender equity. (LNWDA 2003, p.5)

This exemplifies how LNWDA selectively appropriates discourses of development and gender that they consider useful to them at particular points in time. Further examples are found in recent documents, which consecutively take up three other development discourses. First, starting in the late 1990s, LNWDA used a discourse of empowerment. Initially, the focus was on the empowerment of women. The SCP proposal (LNWDA and IWDA 1999, p. 3) aims to have "women around Buka and Bougainville Islands empowered by access to counselling, basic legal advice and referrals to lawyers to extricate themselves from abusive domestic situations". Similarly, the 2001 promotional brochure states (LNWDA 2001) that LNWDA has the aim of "empowering women as agents of change and the improvement of their social status". Yet LNWDA also argues for broader levels of empowerment. The 2000 annual report argues, "Youth Empowerment is the key to Youth Development on Bougainville" (LNWDA 2001, p. 11). The 2004-2007 Strategic Plan (LNWDA 2003, p. 5) also suggests empowerment for the population in general, since "empowering communities and their organizations" is one of the five strategic areas in the plan, and "LNWDA recognizes that people have the right to organize in pursuit of their own interests and should be empowered to define and lead their own development efforts".

Several of the interviewees mentioned these kinds of ideas when discussing development. One of the LNWDA founders said development involved "empowering women to be agents of change", while one volunteer said development meant "developing women to exercise their rights", as well as helping men to understand women's rights and not think of them as servants or slaves. One of LNWDA's project officers said that development involves making women aware of their rights and of where to get help when they need it, and to involve women in decision making.

Second, the discourse on capacity building appears around about the year 2000. The 2000 Annual Report describes workshops that had been run that year to "build capacity" of Buka youth (LNWDA 2001a, p. 9) and Siwai women (LNWDA 2001a, p. 11), while similar workshops were run in 2001 for Buka women (LNWDA 2002, p. 5). The current Strategic Plan also deploys this discourse, particularly with respect to the organization itself, which has "Strengthening the capacity and sustainability of LNWDA" as one of its five strategic areas (LNWDA 2003a, p. 1). None of the

interviewees specifically mentioned capacity building, although one team leader did mention that development involved increasing people's skills in business management.

A third and more recent development discourse focuses on "good governance." This discourse first appears in the title and content of the 2004-2007 strategic plan (LNWDA 2003). One of the strategic areas in the plan is "practising good governance", while a goal of the plan is "To promote good governance within the organization and in our relationships with key stakeholders" (LNWDA 2003, p. 15). Among other things this is to be done by having "appropriate policies and procedures ... in place to ensure accountability and transparency" (LNWDA 2003, p. 15). Although good governance appears as a discourse in official documents, none of the interviewees mentioned it specifically as a component of development.

Some interviewees identified a cultural component to development, which had two dimensions. First, some interviewees saw development as involving a return to the lifestyle or customs that existed before the war. For two interviewees, development meant moving towards attaining "sindaun bilong bifo" (life in the past), in which traditional customs were followed such as sharing, speaking properly, respect, working together and not fighting. For one of these interviewees, development also meant reducing the impact of custom on women's rights. Second, one interviewee noted that development projects have to be compatible with, and fit in with, ceremonial schedules. For example, participants in a development project should observe the ten-day mourning period after a funeral and obtain permission from the chiefs before recommencing work.

Peace

Like the discourses of gender and development, the discourses of peace employed by LNWDA have shifted in response to the changing situation in Bougainville. The LNWDA constitution (LNWDA 1997), which was developed at about the same time that the 1997 truce came into effect, lists as objectives of the organization "women's integration into the reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation process of Bougainville"(article 3.4) and "to assist and partake in the peace process of Bougainville thus ensuring that normalcy returns to Bougainville" (article 3.10). The former article in particular indicates an emphasis on participating in three of the major tasks of post-conflict recovery. The triumvirate of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation has persisted into the discourse in the current strategic plan, with an acknowledgement of the inter-linked contributions of a range of actors at various social levels:

Bougainville is now on the road to recovery. We are in the process of rebuilding our lives and restoring essential services. Reconstruction, reconciliation and rehabilitation are people's highest priority. Peace-building programs are being implemented in all area on Bougainville, supported by communities and assisted by churches, NGOs, the government and international aid agencies (LNWDA 2003, p. 4).

The SCP proposal (LNWDA and IWDA 1999) shifts the 'peace' emphasis somewhat from the crisis itself, which effectively finished in terms of armed conflict in 1998, to violence in general and against women in particular when it argues that the overall goal of the project is to "contribute to the restoration of peace in Bougainville by promoting non-violence and women's rights" (LNWDA and IWDA 1999, p. 6). Identical wording is used in the SCP Year 2 Annual Plan (LNWDA and IWDA 2001, p. 4). The work of reconciliation was a particular aim of the youth mobilizations held in the late 1990s. The 2000 Annual Report reflects this when it states that one of the aims of the Youth Mobilization held at Tinputz in north Bougainville was to "bring together youth as a means of promoting peace, unity and reconciliation among youth" (LNWDA 2001a, p. 9). In addition to reconciliation, the organisation has emphasised emotional and psychological healing as an important component of the peace building process:

Weapons can be containerised and disposed of, expensive infrastructure can be built, with assurance of a better and brighter future by leaders. However, peace will be just a dream if people's minds are not healed. (Hakena 2003)

There is an intersection of the discourse of gender and the discourse on peace. In particular, the radical culturalist feminist discourse that identifies unique social and cultural roles for women, described above, is employed to explain the role of women in both peace making and post-conflict recovery:

It was the women who risked going out into the jungle to persuade our sons, husbands and brothers to avert war. It was the women who really made peace, not the menfolk. They were busy killing, destroying and raping women. (Hakena 2003a)

Women are not passive victims. We are contributing actively to peace making. Our courage and contributions have made the world a better place to live and work. Imagine what more we could do if we women were enabled to take a more equal place at the negotiating table. (Hakena 2003a)

The volunteers and staff members interviewed for this study defined peace in terms of particular absences and presences. The most common definition, mentioned by nine respondents, was that peace means to have a good life, to 'stap gut' or have a 'gutpela sindaun'. Six respondents said that peace meant 'freedom', which is not surprising because during the war freedom of movement was curtailed with many displaced persons in the government controlled areas confined to care centres and those behind the BRA lines unable to cross the blockade (see, for example, Siviri and Havini, 2004). Three or less respondents mentioned other components of peace, including contentment, satisfaction, respect for others, respect for property, abiding by the law, 'bel isi' (tok pisin for 'peace'), reconciliation, cooperation between people, loving each other, living as one, listening to chiefs, being happy ('amamas'), enjoying life, respect for traditional values, having basic needs met, being settled, and 'brukim bonara, wokem bikfala kaikai, wokem lotu' (ie the traditional peace making rituals of breaking weapons, having a feast and a church service – see Howley, 2002; Fisher, 2004).

In terms of absences, there were a wide variety of responses. The most common were that peace involved an absence of violence (four respondents), war (three respondents), fighting (two respondents), threats (two respondents), fear (two respondents), and harassment (two respondents). Individual respondents also mentioned an absence of danger, disturbances, discrimination against women, retaliation, trouble, the desire to kill, problems ('hevi'), stealing, use of weapons, land disputes, hatred and alcohol related problems.

In general, the respondents showed an understanding of peace that went beyond simplistic definitions of peace as the absence of war. In particular, there was an emphasis on the quality of life, both for individuals and for groups. A similar level of sophistication was displayed concerning respondents' understanding of the causes of peace. A common response was that peace begins with a change in one's own perspective. One respondent said that "a change in people is needed; a transformation to respect others as oneself". Another said that "peace grows from within us ... realising what I've done wrong to the other person". A third respondent said that peace was the result of "lustinging olsem pait, stil" (forget about doing things like fighting and stealing). A fourth said that peace was the result of a spiritual change, while a fifth said that peace involved "rehabilitation of the minds of the people". The heart was considered by a number of respondents to be a locus for initiating peace: "It has to come from the bottom of your heart", and "genuine peace comes through the heart" were two responses. Alternatively, families were considered by some respondents to be a starting point for peace making. One respondent said peace "must start with the family", while another said that "children must respect parents na tok tok gud long famle [and speak respectfully to family members] in order to make a different community".

A number of respondents argued that once individuals were at peace with themselves, this would have a flow-on effect. One respondent said “Emi stat long ol wan wan man na emi save go long famle na long ples” (It [peace] starts with individuals, then spreads to the family and community). Another said, “We have to produce peace in ourselves, then the family, community, district and province”.

For some respondents, the spreading of peace described above was not inevitable, but required actions such as cooperation, a collective effort, hard work, reconciliation, forgiveness and trust-building. One respondent suggested that it is necessary to reconcile, admit failures, give compensation and return stolen property. Another respondent indicated faith in traditional methods: “Not just shaking hands, but killing a pig and giving it, witnessed by the chiefs”. On the other hand, two respondents were sceptical of the efficacy of traditional reconciliation methods. One said that if peace is “just a handshake and a feast ... that’s superficial and won’t last ... [we] need to address all the unfinished issues such as polygamy, stealing, adultery, domestic violence.” Another said, “Reconciliation feasts won’t work if it doesn’t come from the heart”.

While most of the respondents saw peace as a process that involved individuals, family and community transformation, only one respondent took a more external, political view that reflected some of the issues that provoked the Bougainville crisis. He argued that “sipos jastis emi kamap bai pis emi kamap” (if there is justice, then there will be peace), and that if independence comes, then peace will come.

A number of respondents discussed the consequences of peace when defining peace and its causes. Apart from general comments about making communities better places to live, six respondents mentioned that peace meant that health and education services could be available, and other development work could be done. During the blockade, these kinds of services were difficult or impossible to maintain (see Siviri and Havini, 2004), and one of the major arguments used to promote the peace process and to encourage reluctant ex-combatants to join has been the promise of the so-called peace dividend, namely improvement of living conditions and restoration of services (see, for example, Barter, 2004). One of the founders’ spouses developed this point by remarking that peace building was not just about reconstructing the economy, but also about reconstructing morals and culture.

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