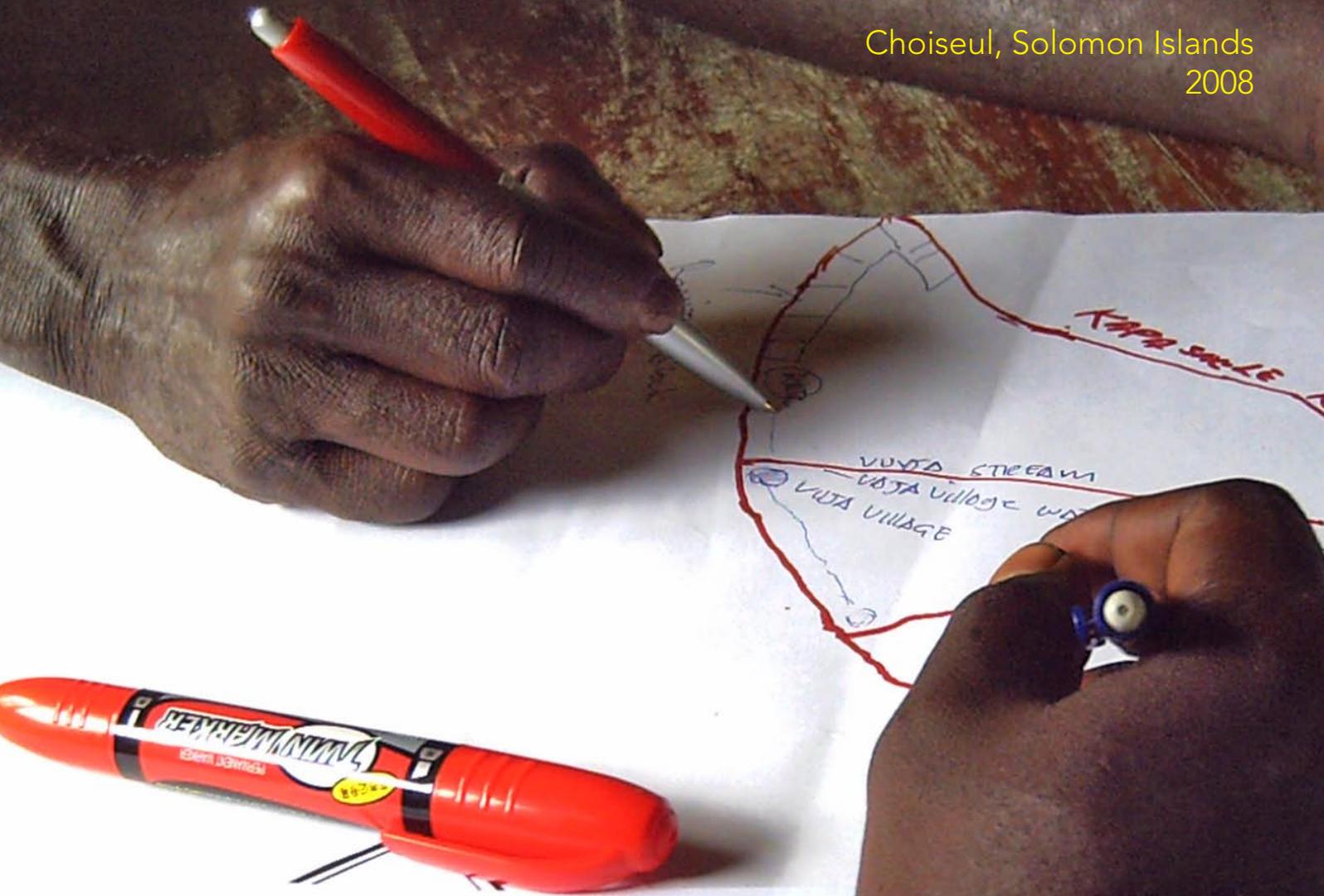


Research into the Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Natural Resource Based Conflict in Local Communities

Choiseul, Solomon Islands
2008



Conflict identification
• Circle around resources
that cause conflict
between community
groups or individuals



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Environmental Education

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
MAIA	Mobilization, Anticipation, Innovation and Action
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
PDA	Pilot and Demonstration Activity
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisals
SI	Solomon Islands
RAP	Research of Attitudes and Perceptions



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Executive Summary

Eco-systems in the Solomon Islands are under immense stress from logging, over-fishing, sedimentation, marine harvesting and most importantly lack of collaborative management. Tribal conflicts are posing a significant risk to sustainable, community-based management of Solomon Island's rich natural resources. Much of the conflict derives from inability to build dialogue across communities, difficulties in reaching agreements on sustainable use, lack of knowledge on how to manage and sustain natural resources, cultural and historical constraints and indeed lack of good will.

To reach their full potential, interventions in biodiversity conservation must have the capacity to manage community conflict and put in place sustainable use plans that promote environmentally sound livelihood options for coastal communities.

*This research sought to provide an understanding of the perceptions held by community members regarding their **needs, problems, opportunities** and **capacity** to undertake projects associated with sustainable development.*

Communities recognise natural resources as marine and land fauna and flora, water (rivers and ocean), water catchment areas, commercial crops, local food gardens and sites of cultural or ceremonial significance. Permission to use these resources were well structured for owned land but were less clear for marine sources which do not have traditional ownership boundaries. Cultural management strategies, where present, were perceived as becoming eroded and there was general concern about the current high level of resource usage being unsustainable given expanding populations.

Lack of whole community consultation and inexperience or mismanagement of money were perceived as prime causative factors of conflict. Several communities had experienced violent and destructive activities arising out of logging activity in the nearby surrounds. Over-harvesting, unexplained fish die-offs and sedimentation of marine areas were significant issues.

Timber milling, eco-tourism and support for small business initiatives were cited as opportunities. Finance management support was deemed an essential component of alternative income strategy development. Legislation, traditional or at government level, was a commonly voiced solution to natural resource based conflict.

Prior experience with development projects was minimal; however participants expressed leadership and active groups within their communities to be well equipped and willing to undertake programmes. Continuity of support from partner organisations or government departments was a point of concern and will be of paramount importance to any development initiatives.

Key recommendations were identified in five broad thematic areas;

1. Community consultation and leadership

- Community-wide consultation is essential
- Clear traditional leadership roles exist and should be utilised
- Inclusion of women and teachers will broaden and strengthen reach

2. Economic, planning and management skills

- Sustainable development needs to be linked to income generation
- Planning, management and financial skills should be included alongside natural resource conservation education

3. Target / Focus Groups

- Young married couples and women's groups should be targeted as likely active groups
- Consideration of gender issues must stand at the forefront of any development project initiatives and should also be included specifically in future consultations

4. Collaboration & Networking

- Continuity of support from partners, government or non-government is a priority
- Continue emphasis, encouragement and support for collaboration between established Choiseul NGO (Lauru Land Conference for Tribal Communities) conservation organisations and government

5. Environmental protection approach

- Consider using formal laws / environment acts to support customary laws to protect environmental destruction and community conservation programs



PASSIVE VOICE

19th of November 2015

1. CHURCH LEADER:
 - CHIEF
 - FAMILY LEADER
2. YES (WOMAN)
 - Why? → Culture
 - Education
3. - Because of Resources
 - Conflict
 - Poverty
4. CONFLICT
 - * Protect
 - * Move out
5. CHANGE OUR WE MANAGE OUR RESOURCES
6. Block our LAND for various development
 - USE SMALL SCALE DEVELOPMENT for sustainable
 - YES! BECAUSE:
 - EVERYONE own the Resource
 - NOT FUND AVAILABLE
 - 8. MANAGEMENT TRAINING (NGO, SFP)
 - 9. YES. E.g. COPRA SELLING
 - FISHING / TRADING
 - No more money - small business
 - RICE TRADING

Thursday



m/correction.
Making decision

Priority.
to Spoil our

ESS. E.g. Copra Export
fishing
trucks etc

Community Store.

Manager and Store Keeper

mission



BACKGROUND

Natural Resource Management in Solomon Islands

Eco-systems in the Solomon Islands are under immense stress from over fishing, sedimentation, marine harvesting and most importantly lack of collaborative management. Tribal conflicts are posing a significant risk to sustainable, community-based management of Solomon Island's rich natural resources. Much of the conflict derives from inability to build dialogue across communities, difficulties in reaching agreements on sustainable use, lack of knowledge on how to manage and sustain natural resources, cultural and historical constraints and indeed lack of good will. This loss of forests has a vast impact on local fauna, coral reefs and fisheries habitats. Such losses will have direct impact to subsistence living and quality of life for thousands of Solomon Islanders. Due to the mountainous terrain of the Solomon Islands most forests targeted for logging are in lowland areas and therefore pose the greatest threat to marine environments. During the past 12 months Live & Learn has engaged in consultations with government departments, community leaders, educators and youth to develop conservation-education approaches that have the capacity to manage community conflict and advance conservation and sustainable use of land-based and marine resources.

Natural resource managers and sustainable development planners around the world aspire to link biodiversity conservation with development needs. Creating approaches to community development that facilitate this connection is key to the prospects for sustainable resources use and is a top priority for sustainable development projects. Experience highlights the many benefits that can flow when communities participate meaningfully in local natural resource management opportunities and in developing their own livelihoods options. The direct link between the prospects for sustainable resource use and greater involvement by local communities in natural resource management is now widely accepted. In the context of the Solomon Islands we recognize that many communities lack the capability to appropriately manage the natural resources on which local livelihoods depend. Many communities also lack the know-how to assess the costs and benefits of economic development opportunities, or to make well-informed decisions about local development options. This lack of local, institutional and knowledge resources is a basic threat to biodiversity conservation.

To reach their full potential, interventions in biodiversity conservation must have the capacity to manage community conflict and put in place sustainable use plans that promote environmentally sound livelihood options for coastal communities.

For these reasons, there is an urgent need for local communities in the Solomon Islands to gain the ability to identify locally available, environmental and human resources, and to mobilize these more effectively in developing viable management and livelihoods options. The Solomon Islands is a good example of how conflict and unrest creates a barrier to this goal.

The sustained inter-tribal conflict in the Solomon Islands has provided a platform for illegal, extractive activities from multi-national logging and fishing companies. Community capacity is absorbed by conflict. This has led to poor decisions and environmental decline. Forests are being harvested 3.5 times above the sustainable threshold; dynamite fishing is very common as is illegal export of marine life. To reach their full potential, interventions in biodiversity conservation must have the capacity to manage community conflict and put in place sustainable use plans that promote environmentally sound livelihoods options for coastal communities.

Research Purpose and Rationale

Implementation of sustainable development projects in remote island communities is essentially an intervention that seeks to create change by re-orienting communities toward sustainable development. In order to create change, people from outside the community will invariably arrive with new ideas, and more than likely will have a different culture, established set of values, beliefs and perceptions. There is a danger in an uncritical acceptance of the *Sustainable Development* approach as the “ultimate goal of the “human-environment relationship” because of the diverse conceptions that can be called upon to define it. Conducting research into community attitude and perceptions (RAP) is an approach that acknowledges that there are many conceptions of what is sustainable development and that the conception of sustainable development held by a non-government organisation, both philosophically and practically, is not necessarily in agreement with the community. This may be particularly true when non-government organisations are working cross culturally or seeking to implement concepts developed in the west in the developing world.

The RAP seeks to understand the perceptions of the community and their conception of *what is sustainable development* from their perspective. The RAP tool is designed to inform the development of educational interventions in-order that they ‘*start from where the community is at*’ rather than from the outsiders perspective. There are innumerable examples of well meaning development programs that fail due to a disconnection between what development or aid workers believe is important, and the actual values, needs etc of communities. The RAP also seeks to provide an understanding of the perceptions held by community members regarding needs, problems, opportunities, and capacity to undertake projects associated with sustainable development. The intention is to use the results to design the *MAIA Model for Learning and Action*. The RAP also introduces communities to the concept of and engages people in the process of developing a project. The participatory approach of the RAP encourages participants to explore and share experiences, ideas and opinions, question and clarify environmental problems, their root causes and their links to people’s wellbeing.

The goal of this research was to;

*Seek to provide an understanding of the perceptions held by community members regarding their **needs, problems, opportunities and capacity** to undertake projects associated with natural resources and sustainable development.*

In addition we want to know the causes, risks and impact of resource conflict, community conflict management approaches and perception of sustainable use of resources with consideration for economic opportunities.



Key research questions

Six key research questions were used to guide creation of questionnaires and discussion templates;

1. What is perceived to be a natural resource?
2. How are those resources used?
3. What issues (problems or conflicts) arise from the use or non-use of those resources
4. What are the perceived solutions to those conflicts?
5. What is the community experience with development project (good or bad)
6. What is the perceived community organization or capacity to undertake future projects?

This research is closely linked to an evaluation process using stories of “Most Significant Change” therefore an additional research question was included as;

What is perceived as the most important change required or desired?

2

FINDINGS

Participation

The RAP, conducted in six villages in Choiseul, Solomon Islands, comprised approximately 135 participants representing at least 10 communities (figure 1). Although equal representation by men and women was sought, overall male participants far exceeded females with the male:female ratio being 2.5:1. This was largely due to the number of predominantly male community and youth leaders participating. The age range of participants varied from 23 years to mid 70's (figure 2). There was considerable overlap in age between persons self-describing as 'youth' and other participants.

There was a definite perceived level of anxiety that their community resources needed to be protected so that they could continue to serve the needs of their increasing populations.

Figure 1: Participating communities

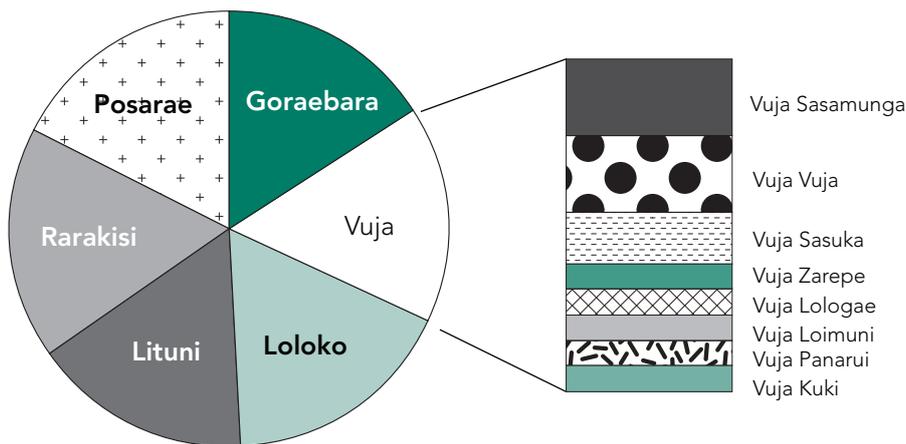
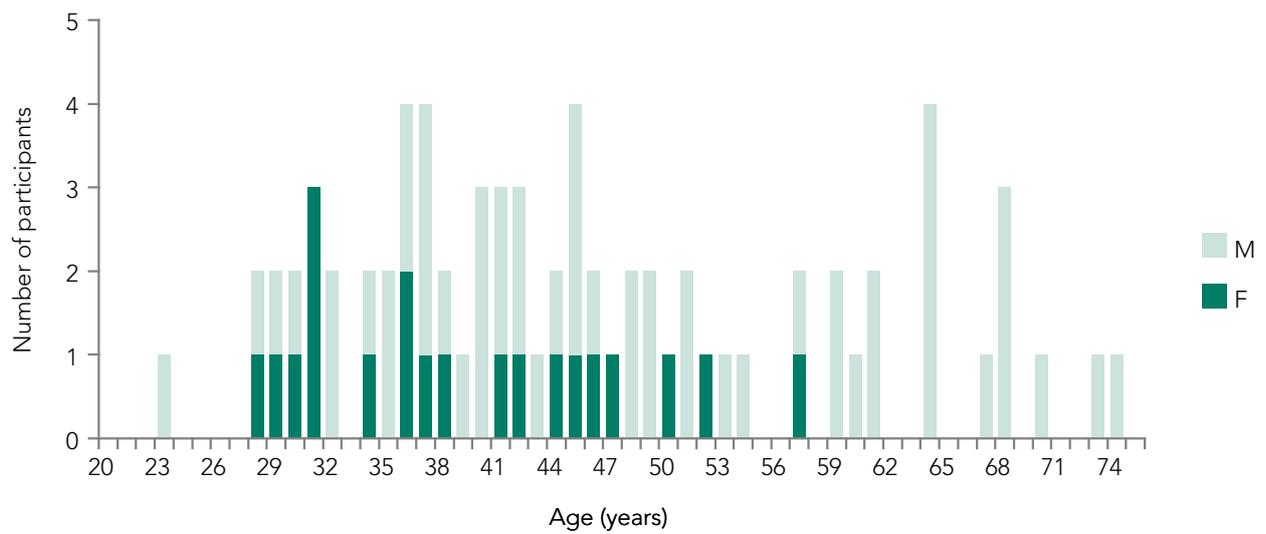
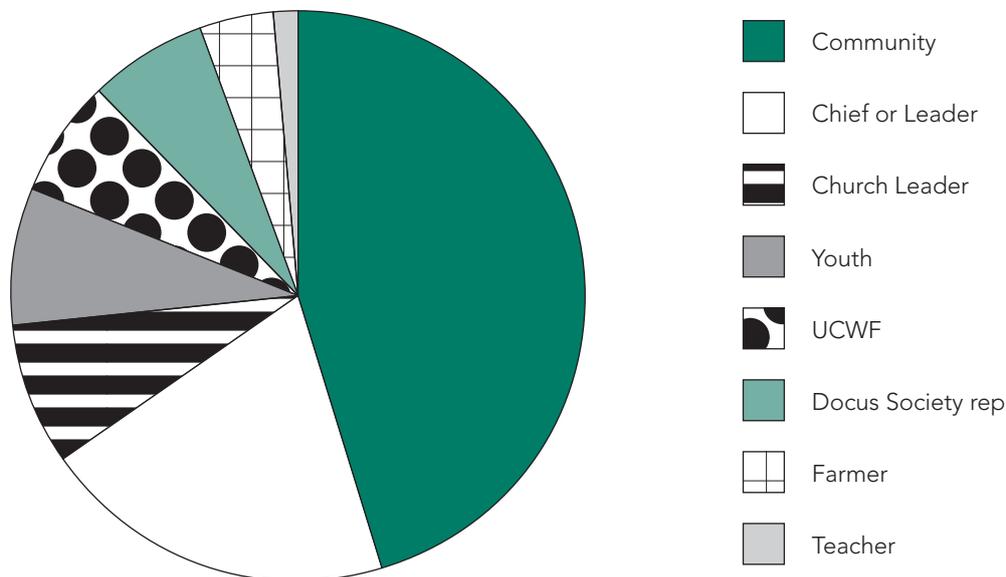


Figure 2: Age and gender of research participants



Whilst all participants were drawn from local communities, half self-identified as a Chief or community leader, a church leader or a representative of a community group. Whilst most leaders would be educated to grade 8 and above, literacy levels were variable.

Figure 3: Community role of participants



Ten individual community representatives were interviewed in order to gain more in-depth opinion on resource based conflict and capacity to change. Interviewees were aged from 28 to 68 years. Seven were men with occupations stated as bushrangers for a logging company (2), community leader (3) teacher and a chainsaw operator for a logging company. The

three women held positions as a primary school teacher (2) and Docus Society women's representative. All were married and had children.

It was not possible to interview representatives from commercial industry due to the high level of emotion and volatile situation ongoing in Choiseul at the time the research was conducted.



Natural resources

Local perceptions

All participants proudly and comprehensively related the extensive and varied natural resources to be found within their community areas both through the discussions and through drawing maps of their immediate village and surrounding area.

Natural resources were divided into two main sources; marine and land-based. Marine resources included beach-de-mer (sea cucumber), reefs, fishing grounds, trochus (shell) and the mangrove areas, which were a rich source of food but were also where fish lay their eggs. Land-based resources included traditional cultural and often restricted 'tabu' areas, food gardens, forests, water catchment areas, creeks, gold deposits and coconut plantations.

*These natural resources were unanimously recognised as **'very important'**, they support our needs and wants whenever we need them. They are free of charge, costless and we have the privilege to access them whenever we need them.'*
(Lituni community)

All persons involved in the discussion or interviews were in no doubt as to the importance of natural resources for the wellbeing, health and security not only of current generations but for the children and generations to come. There was a definite perceived level of anxiety that their community resources needed to be protected so that they could continue to serve the needs of their increasing populations.

It is through our natural resources where we earn our living and basically meet our needs e.g. school fees, clothes, shelter, with other basic needs. Without those God given natural resources we would die, because we depend entirely on these resources for our livelihood. (Goraebara community)

How resources are used

The utility of resources was widely and consistently recognised across all participating communities as being for income generation, building houses, food, medicines and for important occasions or traditional celebrations. There was little formal planning or structure around how resources were used with the majority usage being on an 'as needs' basis.

It depends on people in the community and when the need comes. When we need money we just look for the right resources to sell for money. When we need food then we collect them when they are ready. These resources are also used for special occasion in the community like marriage, cultural and religious activities like feasts.

Decisions around use of land resources were more clearly defined as land was generally recognised as owned or allocated to family groups or tribes. Persons who were not themselves landowners would request permission to use land or resources within owned areas. At the time of this research participants did not describe any conflict or restrictions when seeking such permissions. Marine resources were stated as more freely utilized when and however people wished to use them, as the sea was not owned by any particular tribe and so there were fewer / no requirements for gaining permission from landowners or group agreement. This was deemed as a problem by the communities highlighting this as an issue; they felt that it created a 'careless' attitude among some community members.

Rarakisi and Vuja community recognised that there had been a decrease in stock of river fish. They spoke of their local fish 'Buri', a freshwater mullet for which there were traditional guidelines around its use, but that these were being eroded.

The unique Buri – it can be caught using custom nets and spears. Once the egg seasons occur, they cannot be allowed to use these resources. Usually egg seasons occurs in June and July each year, the old men usually prevents people from killing the fish.

Our old men are not allowed to take the fish anyhow, anyway, as people might want - but can only be use during important ceremonies. Nowadays, anytime anybody can harvest and take the fish.

The decline in Buri fish has been identified for some time, at least since 2000, when the communities sought advice from World Wildlife Foundation (WWF).¹ Their recommendation was to cease harvesting of the fish for three years and increase awareness of biological control methods for water hyacinth overgrowth thought to be impacting on Buri breeding grounds. However it was noteworthy that participants made no specific mention of this consultation, of any actions taking place and /or impact of the advised intervention. This should provide warning for any proposed activities to ensure there is follow-through and wide-spread consultation to maximise ongoing activity and measure of effectiveness not only by researchers but by community members themselves.

Chief Vulumu

I want to raise few points about logging to all of us today. I don't want logging because of the following reasons:

1. Land exploitation. Logging operation spoils living things in the ground, animals and plants.
2. logging operation cause the lost of forest to ecological system because big trees are cut down.
3. Logging operation cause environmental damages and destructions
4. Rivers are source of water. Pollutions and muddying from logging operation destroys life in the environment
5. Rivers, fish, shell and lobsters destroyed due to pollution
6. company earn big money but we earn little from our own resources

The questions to ask is; why do foreigners are looking for somewhere to earn income? We have the land. The reason is because their resources must have been used up. If our land goes to the foreigners then where is our future generation going to get money? What will happen to our generation in the future? These questions will help us think about managing our land.

¹ Pacific Reefs hit by coral bleaching. WWF South Pacific Office. 2000. Available from <http://www.climateark.org/articles/2000/2nd/paccreez.htm> (accessed March 2008)

Issues arising from use (or non-use) of natural resources

Communities described issues as arising in two main themes: 1) direct conflict occurring in response to current or past activities and 2) consequences arising or perceived to be arising from current or potential future activities.

Lituni community had witnessed conflict arising from logging occurring in neighbouring communities; resource owners were arguing over ownership rights and cases had been taken to court. Loloko community was more directly affected by logging with two companies active in their area. Few benefits were reaching the community, most of the money was reportedly being held by the person who initiated the logging, and claimed to be the landowner, who lives in Honiara. Conflict was high.

'A lot of disagreement is going on between the land owners themselves and late evening yesterday at about 4:30 pm, some young group of masked men went to the camp and fired high powered gun believed to be SRL 88 to the logging machines. They are not happy with the logging operation' **(Leader, Loloko)**

Vuja community also witnessed violent responses and resentment over unequal distribution of monies arising through logging.

At another village, named Moli in 2005, a logging company re-logged the forest there. Only the tribal leaders got the money for their own benefits. This means no respect for the people. Other people from the tribe were angry about this. They cut down some trees near the road side and blocked the road. The company later left the place.

(community, Vuja)

In addition to direct conflict there were also clear perceptions of underhand or power-related activities being undertaken by some commercial companies that created further division and inequity amongst community members.

Sometimes when two tribes argue over land boundary or resources, those supported by the company have funding support whilst others do not. In such cases the rightful owners become victim of the process. In cases like this we need an Act to support both parties to present their case and have equal legal process during timber right hearing.

Communities reported occasionally seeing marine life dead and floating but they did not know why this happened. There was speculation that it was because of logging that was happening near their land and causing run-off into the water, but they had no means to find out.

Loloko community was also experiencing a lot of soil wash off into their river and on to the reef which they linked directly to the advent of logging in their area and logging near to Lituni was believed to be the cause of wild pigs being forced to move into more populated land areas and destroying food gardens.

The concept of compensation for environmental damage was evident, but lack of official documentation had led to non-compliance when actual situations arose.

An agreement was made between the company and some educated people from the tribe negotiate with the company to log the forest, but this was not put in black and white. When the company operated, there were considerable damages done to the land, sea and river. The people claimed these damages but the company did not pay for them because they feel that they did not have any responsibility and no agreement was made to pay for damages. **(Community, Vuja)**

Residents of Rarakisi, a riverside community, had grave concerns over the potential for mining to occur on the inland mountain and how this might impact on the river and land downstream. They feared that there was little knowledge on the environmental impacts but the temptation for high income by the landowners of the mountain might see mining go ahead.

Less specific but of equal concern to participants was the reality that current usage practices were unsustainable in the light of their increasing populations. Generally little planning for resource conservation was felt to be occurring - largely because at the current time there was seemingly enough for everyone. However, this was perceived as short-sighted and a high priority issue for change.



Perceived solutions to conflicts

Open communication and use of traditional tribal consultations (Popoloto) to involve all within the community were perceived to be an essential path towards preventing conflict from arising or permitting acceptable resolutions to be reached. However, an equally common theme raised was the need to access accurate and or expert information regarding the situation faced by their individual communities. The Forestry Department and non-government organisations were cited as groups likely to be able to offer such assistance.

Change the decision making system. When it comes to development and how we can all benefit from our resources everyone should participate. Allow everyone to be part of the decision, like women, youths because if only chief make decisions that are not helpful then everyone will be suffering. One man's decision can spoil everything if it is not a good decision. **(Loloko community)**

All participating groups expressed a strong focus on imposed restrictions in the form of banning harvesting of resources for certain periods or creating a minimum size for harvesting, particularly for trochus and beach-mer. Participants consistently indicated that local customary laws were becoming ineffective as youth and people who did not care would just ignore them and that

leaders were now looking to formal laws being put into place. One suggestion was that local government should receive requests made by communities to shape their own laws, and once in place, assist communities with their enforcement. However, whilst the demand for bans and laws was high there was little forthcoming on how these laws would be policed or how breaches would be managed.

A more moderate view was that there should be an expansion of Environmental Acts, such as those in place to prevent turtles from being exploited: they propose such measures be expanded to protect river fish.

It was overwhelmingly evident throughout the community discussions that there was good understanding of the demand for and potential of destruction of their natural resources and the need to create change. However it was equally evident that any solution or alternative activity was closely related to an equal or improved ability to generate an income for the individuals or community. Expanding exposure and availability of consumer goods, coupled with ongoing economic cost of covering basic needs such as health services, medicines, school fees, local transport to reach facilities, including market places, has increased monetary dependence. Coupled with this however was a ready recognition that money was not always managed well nor were there strong skills for long-term forecasting and money management.

Our land might have already been destroyed from continue farming, logging etc, but what we can do to recover back these resources is reforestation of tress as an alternative for the community. Secondly is make good use of money gained from development. Thirdly wise use of money/benefits gained from logging should be properly managed. Fourthly, our attitude to how we use money should change and improve.

Community capacity and organisation

Four thematic commercial interests were spontaneously raised as potential areas communities would have interest in exploring: these were;

- Timber milling
- Eco-tourism / local resorts
- Conservation projects (linked to tourism for income)
- Local income generating schemes (generic)

This research did not focus on expanding on this list of potential opportunities but looked more towards community perception on their capacity to undertake development projects; in particular effective leadership, active participation and skills. These factors were elucidated through stories told of past project experiences, open discussion and a structured ranking exercise reviewing leadership skills within various traditional community roles.

Experience with development projects

Three of the participating communities reported having prior contact with projects focusing on natural resources: Vuja community with SWIFT timber milling (see below); Posarae with the MV Tanna shipping service and Rarakisi community with the Lauru Land Conference. Chiefs in Lituni had meet with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to discuss the Arnavon project,¹ which encouraged establishment of conservation areas, but there was no community participation, education or awareness and participants reported nothing had happened since for their community.

Some benefit was perceived with the Lauru Land Conference as it had provided education, however this was mainly limited to the area of geneology and

establishing fair decisions around land ownership as opposed to how to use or preserve natural resources.

Rarakisi community felt particularly hindered by their inland position; that this discouraged groups from coming to visit them. They reported no prior experience of income generation or conservation activities.

Positive comments were made about the Uniting Church SWIFT² initiative which had been active in the Vuja community and surrounding area in the past.

Solomon Western Islands Fair Trade

(SWIFT) has started a project which aims to give the inhabitants of the project area an opportunity for earning a good cash income based on forest resources, while securing the sustainability of timber production, also for future generations. SWIFT is open to everyone, but the condition of 'sustainability' determines whether a producer group benefit from the services within the project.

Perceived benefits were iterated in terms of self-directed work, fairness and income generation, coupled with regret that the project was not ongoing.

SWIFT program provided chain saw and work for milling for about four to five years. The project did help our community by paying for our timbers. SWIFT control us to do sustainable harvesting, prevention of over exploitation of trees, conservation, reservation, seedlings for reproduction. The good thing was that they provided us money during their time. Also the advice and plan on how to cut and preserve some trees. The bad side of it is they did not continue for long time. (Rarakisi Community)

The SWIFT project was designed to aid rural people to earn cash from sustainable timber extraction without signing with logging companies. Evaluations of SWIFT included consideration for gender equity and concluded that women were negatively affected by SWIFT due to their husbands' appropriation of their earnings, their peripheral role, and lack of representation in senior positions and use of women's forestry expertise.³ Accessing and ensuring that the relevant findings of past project evaluations such as this must form a key component in development of any future initiatives.

1. The Nature Conservancy. <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/asiapacific/solomonislands>

2. John Overton & Rachel Scheyvens. (1999) *Strategies for Sustainable Development: Experiences from the Pacific*. UNSW Pacific.

The MV Tanna small shipping vessel had opened up opportunities for small-scale commercial fishery activities. The boat allowed communities or fishermen to sell their produce, which would then be transported fresh to markets in Honiara. It was said to be a really good project because the quality and freshness of fish was highly sought after at market. However, the project was limited by lack of proper management and a limited capacity to cater for the huge amount of fish offered for sale.

The participation of everyone towards this industry created a good cash flow that circulated within the community at that time. The problem of insufficient transport system is an issue which has never been resolved as yet. Resources or peoples produces cannot be transported efficiently to the markets. (Posarae community)

Goraebara community reported a very positive experience with a community store whereby copra and timber could be bought or exchanged for goods. However, due to transport difficulties these activities have since ceased.

I have been involved and felt really proud and happy inside as these activities helped everyone to meet for their own needs in the village. The flow and circulation of cash has been really helpful in the community.

Capacity to undertake future projects

Leadership

Each community had a variety of clearly defined leaders. Chiefs were unanimously recognised as good decision makers, problem solvers and with good ability to speak out. However, whilst chiefs and community leaders were readily identifiable, a common theme expressed throughout the discussion was dissatisfaction of decisions made by leaders alone and not involving wider community consultation. Strong comments such as leaders being 'selfish', 'dishonest' and caring only for their own needs were not uncommon.

The chiefs or trustees are just thinking of themselves and not their tribal group. The trustees do not bother about agreements, whether or not the logging company comply with the rules. All they do worry about is how they could get quick money to meet their needs or even to get rich over night. This is why royalties always and never being shared equally to tribes. (Community, Goraebara)

Whilst the role of traditional leaders should not be undervalued, it is also imperative that future projects honour the demand for community consultation and use broad knowledge of agreements to ensure fairness, transparency and equity if sharing of benefits. Posarae community shared wise words about leadership capabilities;

It does not matter who to makes decisions whether, youths, women, elders or chiefs, but as long as the decision is "fair" and everyone respects each other with the decisions they make and work together along with it. That would be good.

Women and elders were well recognised for their decision-making ability but were also noted as less likely to speak out. The role of teachers and church leaders was recognised but equally tempered by them often not being local.

'The teachers and ministers aren't involved much in decision making, resolving conflicts and speaking out as some of these people have just come from different communities. They are from the outside and we think sometimes they might not have good ideas for our communities.' (Lituni community)

However, the value of their opinion, as educated persons, was also recognised and some communities felt that although these persons were sometimes excluded as they were not local, that including them in discussions would bring valuable insight. This was especially so for teachers as they could provide guidance to the children and future generations.

Participation

Young married couples and youth were frequently mentioned as groups likely to participate actively in projects. In addition, involving these groups was deemed beneficial as it kept them out of trouble and also would keep the skills and knowledge in the community for longer as they would pass it on to their children.

3. Scheyvens R. "Engendering" environmental projects: the case of eco-timber production in the Solomon Islands. *Development in Practice*. 1998 Nov;8(4):439-53.



Limiting factors

Money was identified as an issue; the need for money to pay school fees, purchase desired items, medicines and contributions for cultural events is ever increasing. All communities recognised that they had skills and a desire to make change but requested small grants or alternative income generating training in order to get started. The National and Provincial governments were identified as a good source for promoting and supporting income generating activities such as furniture making and sewing.

Organise a money management awareness program: this could be from a business advisor or experts.

Most desired change

Responses to the 'most important change' a community would like to see most often related to changes in personal behavior and attitude rather than a tangible change in use of / or access to natural resources. This is an encouraging demonstration of communities' willingness and desire to be instigators of change for their own environment.

Unity is what we would like to see happen in our village. More people in the community to support the few who struggle to do things for our community.

[We need to change] peoples attitudes towards how they see, use and think of their resources

Improved resource management and planning attitude: if we start to adopt this type of thinking then our resources can be used by generation by generations

Information and education about the methods that we [should] use to harvest our resources now, so that future generation are not affected but can still benefit and get things that will provide their needs.

The need for income generating activities, and services to support such activities, was also highlighted

We want to see change in activities that encourage income generation while conserving our resources, we want to see our members benefit from our land resources.

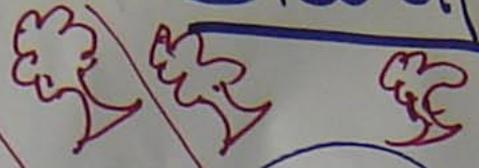
This province needs better transport services to help community businesses

Requests for education, community awareness and ongoing support from NGO's and relevant government departments would link in well to community driven initiatives and should form a priority focus of project designs.

MAP GROUP 3

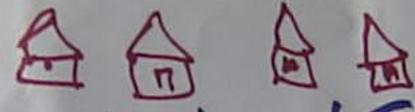
FOREST AREAS

GARDEN AREAS



Logging Camp

Lolok VGE



WATER

MANGROVE AREAS

SEA

Fishing Ground

REEF

SHELL



3

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

Community consultation and leadership

- Community-wide consultation is essential
- Clear traditional leadership roles exist and should be utilised
- Inclusion of women and teachers will broaden and strengthen reach.

Economic, planning and management skills

- Sustainable development needs to be linked to income generation.
- Planning, management and financial skills should be included alongside natural resource conservation education

Target / Focus Groups

- Young married couples and women's groups should be targeted as likely active groups.
- Consideration of gender issues must stand at the forefront of any development project initiatives and should also be included specifically in future consultations

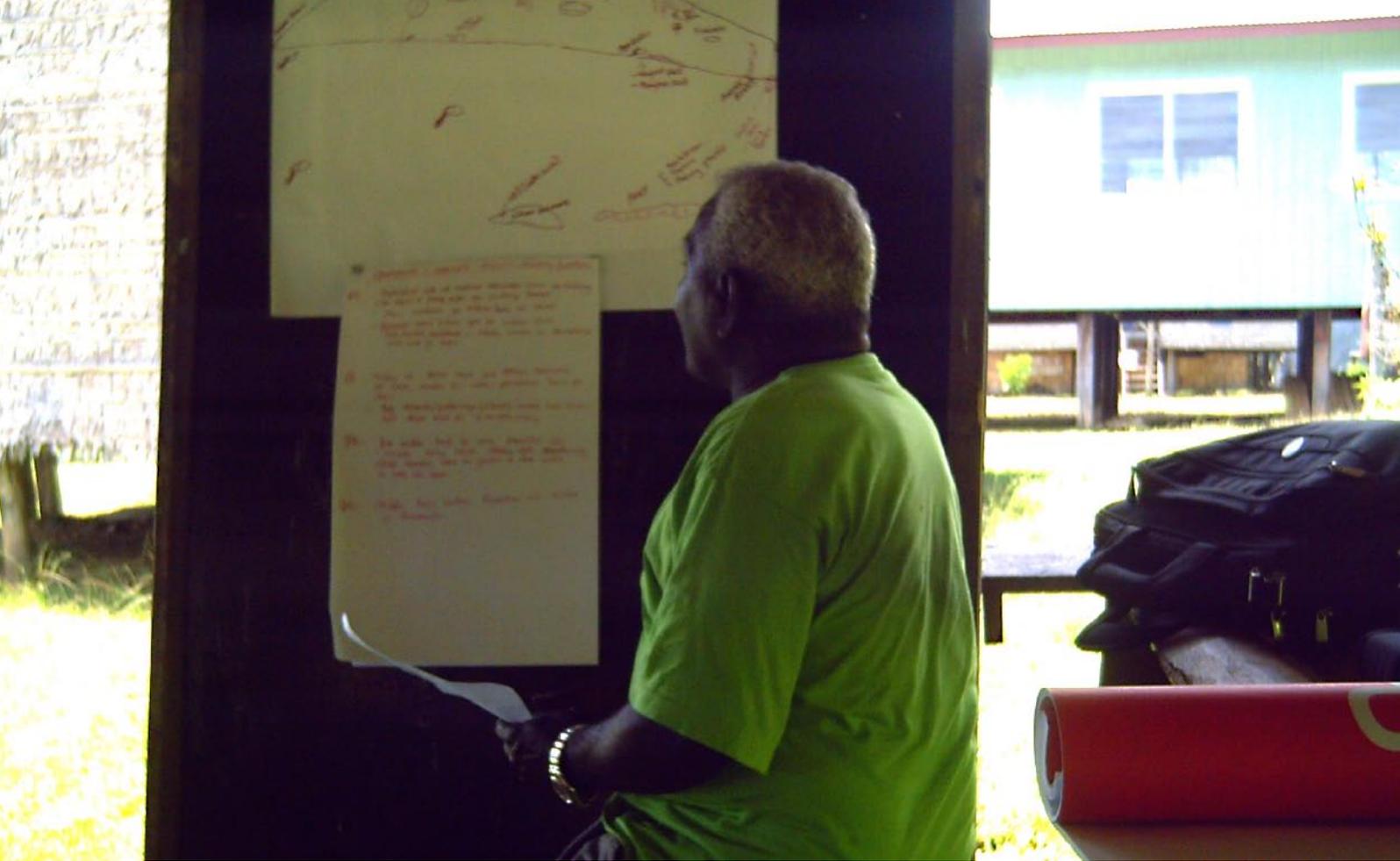
Collaboration & Networking

- Continuity of support from partners, government or non-government is a priority
- Continue emphasis, encouragement and support for collaboration between established Choiseul NGO (Lauru Land Conference for Tribal Communities) conservation organisations and government

Environmental protection approach

- Consider using formal laws / environment acts to support customary laws to protect environmental destruction and community conservation programs

Continuity will be of paramount importance, not only to the success of any project but also to show respect for the communities' time and effort given to this research.



Conclusion

Natural resources is a broad phrase encompassing marine and land fauna and flora, water (rivers and ocean), water catchment areas, commercial crops, local food gardens and sites of cultural or ceremonial significance. Use of resources, while well defined for owned land was less clear for marine sources without traditional ownership boundaries. Cultural management strategies, where present, were perceived as becoming eroded and general concern evident about the current utilisation of resources being sustainable given expanding populations.

Conflict was widely recognised and several communities had personal experience of violent and destructive activities arising out of logging in the nearby surrounds. Lack of whole community consultation and inexperience or mismanagement of money were perceived as prime causative factors. Legislation, traditional or at government level, was a commonly perceived solution to natural resource based conflict.

Prior experience with development projects was minimal, however participants expressed leadership and active groups within their communities to be well equipped and willing to undertake programmes. Continuity of support from organisations was frequently concern raised by all communities. Continuity will be of paramount importance, not only to the success of any project but also to show respect for the communities' time and effort given to this research. Live & Learn aims to maintain a high presence in these communities and ensure sustained project activity to ensure communities can reach their aspirations.

4

APPENDIX 1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research of attitudes and perceptions uses an approach similar to that of Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA), where research involves community members exploring issues through highly participatory activities. In PRA and the RAP, the activities provide researchers with information and understanding about issues, while participants also gain new insights by sharing information and opinions. PRA has been used as a process to achieve research, learning and action outcomes for a variety of purposes including agriculture, health, gender equity and natural resource management.¹

The RAP comprised two main components; participatory workshops involving facilitated focus group Discussions & activities and interviews with community leaders. Focus group dialogue, interview and questionnaires were conducted in Solomon Islands Pidgin.

The RAP methodology and detailed research guide, including standardised questionnaires was detailed in the *Research Facilitator's Guide* which included;

- explanation of the research approach,
- key themes and research questions,
- guidelines for the facilitator,
- participatory tools – including facilitation directions & background information,
- survey forms, and
- guidance and instructions regarding interviews.

Key Themes and Research Questions

Activities focused on facilitating dialogue and feedback centred on the issues of natural resources, their use and issues arising from their use (or non-use). The facilitated dialogue was constructed in such a way that it would lead participants into a deep exploration of issues and hence reveal concepts and connections between factors that previously may have not been considered.

Six key research questions were;

1. What is perceived to be a natural resource?
2. How are those resources used?
3. What issues (problems or conflicts) arise from the use or non-use of those resources
4. What are the perceived solutions to those conflicts?
5. What is the community experience with development project (good or bad)
6. What is the perceived community organization or capacity to undertake future projects?

To support future evaluation the following question was asked;

7. What is perceived as the most important change required or desired?

¹ Doyle, R. & Kransy, M. (2003) *Participatory rural appraisal as an approach to environmental education in the urban community gardens*, *Environmental Education Research*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp.91-115

Appendix 1: Research Approach

Participation

Participating communities were selected locally with consideration of the practical constraints of the project such as accessibility and transport costs, and issues such as community need and the occurrence of environmental and development issues.

Of the six communities involved, three were coastal and three were inland alongside major river courses.

Ideally each focus group was attended by 15 persons with two representatives for any neighbouring community attending: the exact composition of attending participants was determined by the communities themselves and so did not necessarily conform.

Participatory Tools

Participatory resource methods or “tools” are many and varied, each intended as a means to encourage open and reflective discussion. The time available, location and blend of participants, in addition to the skills and familiarity of the researchers with particular tools, should guide which methods are used. Tools were selected that would encourage people to identify, critically consider

and discuss issues, while being considerate of barriers to involvement such as poor literacy. It is also useful to vary methods used to keep participants interested and also to attract interest through differing formats.

With this in mind activities were divided into two main areas: community group discussions and individual interviews. The activities incorporated the following methodologies and were documented in detail in a facilitators guide:

- Focus group discussion (guided)
- Telling a story
- Resource mapping
- Appreciative enquiry
- Individual interview (semi-structured)

Discussion and interview guides are detailed in appropriate sections that follow.

Data Collection and Note Taking

Demographic information (age, gender, village and community role) were recorded on participant attending templates. Standard profile information was recorded for each community.

Location of Participating Villages





Data collected were both qualitative and quantitative. Two designated note takers who were observing and not involved in facilitation took notes for each discussion or presentation. Notes were initially taken in the language being spoken, and later translated by the note taker into English. Note-takers recorded the main points of conversations, and although numerous quotations were recorded, note takers did not attempt to transcribe whole conversations. Visual representations of natural resources were recorded via the hand-drawn maps.

Quantitative data were recorded from statements made on the importance of natural resources and from tick box matrixes drawn around leadership roles.

Analyses aimed to group responses into themes and assess across research activities for linkages between the perceptions and attitudes expressed. Where possible, confirmation was sought via comparisons to the results of other activities (triangulation). Individual quotes were predominantly in local language - they were translated to English for the purpose of this report.

Constraints & Limitations

This research was conducted in six communities with the aim of gaining a representative view of communities across Choiseul. Whilst the comments forthcoming showed good consistency between these six communities caution must be taken when extrapolating findings to the whole of Choiseul or Solomon Islands.

The facilitators involved in this research had prior experience in the methodologies used and were fluent in local languages; however note-taking is necessarily not a complete transcript and additional translation to English may inadvertently change the exact interpretation of discussions. In addition, despite the skill of the facilitators to reduce overt influence from dominant members, this is an ever-present constraint to qualitative research.

A summary evaluation form was completed for each session held in order to capture any particular difficulties arising; however all sessions were considered to have gone smoothly with only minimal constraint over limited time available for extended discussions.

Whilst gender balance was desirable the exact composition of participants was determined by the community itself. In this instance gender balance was not achieved; this was largely due to the unequal gender distribution within communities amongst leadership roles. Future research will need to consider the compromise between gathering representatives with leadership roles together and maintaining gender balance amongst participants.

The findings from this research should be seen as a starting point to stimulate further, more specific discussion, as relevant to the main theme of any future program initiatives.

Appendix 1: Research Approach

Activity 1: Telling a Story

Telling a story about someone or an event that has happened elsewhere, and inviting discussion on the situation and events that occurred, helps to introduce a topic in a non-confrontational manner. It helps the facilitator to gauge the sensitivity of the issue for the participants who are present and gain insight into possible similar scenarios occurring locally without having to make a direct question. Telling a story is therefore often used as an introduction to further activities

Objective:

- Introduce the concept of natural resource use and conflict
- Use a non-confrontational and impersonal third party example
- Enable participants to begin to explore the issue at their community level

The story is told with good expression (without having to refer to the note guide if possible!) and a discussion led firstly in relation to the story and then gently moving the participants to talk about their own situation. Observe for possible areas of controversy or sensitivity. Do not push too hard for local examples but allow the participants to open up slowly.

Story Outline

There is a community in Guadalcanal which Live and Learn has been working with. This community has a lot of problem with their forest as the tribal leaders have agreed with a logging company, signed an agreement and logged part of the community forest. The people of the community have taken royalty payment from the logging company and have shared the money among members of the tribe.

During the process of cutting down the trees, the youths of the village were not so satisfied with the development and began to protest to the community chiefs and leaders. The youths disagreed with the leaders and chiefs of the community and approached the company for compensation. They became aggressive and continued to pressurise the company management who eventually left the community land.

Though the company left, they took some of the trees cut already and shipped them overseas. One of the community leaders whose village was close to the logging operation and all alone disagree with the development, have continue to experience the environmental impacts of the operation. The river that runs close to his village have been milky with soil, he has no good drinking water. The sils washed down from the land have made the water dirty, runs down to the sea and also destroy the mangrove area. Areas which the community use to collect shells, and other important coastal resources have been affected and the people experiences difficulty in getting the resources.

Now the company has gone for almost two years, but the people experiences the effects of the logging operation. There hasn't been any change or development for the community which allows the logging operation in their land. Now the money from the operations has all gone, some of the people who have disagree with the development have been angry with the development and blame the chiefs and leaders who have sign the agreement. Sometimes arguments occur between the different groups of people.

Discussion questions / prompts:

- What do you think about this situation?
- Why do situations like these happen?
- How do you think communities should deal with situations like this?
- Have you heard of anything similar happening here in Solomon's?
- What would you do?
- Could something like this ever happen in your community?



Activity 2: Resource Mapping

Mapping can be done from memory (and therefore held inside) or involve a physical walk-around the local area. It is designed to get participants to visually represent an area as they see it. Mapping may not necessarily be about accuracy as it is based on perception. Mapping can serve to highlight group dynamics and perceptions as people discuss the way they see an area. Drawing on the map encourages people to think more about a particular issue and offers another way of expressing their views visually. This tool can be used to promote increased thought and discussion on the issues and help to gain several layers of information in a very useable format.

- Participants create a visual representation of and have an improved understanding of the resources available in their community
- Enables participants to consider issue that are important or create conflict within the context of their community

Participants were divided into two groups and provided a written copy of the task and some marker pens and paper. Approximately 20 minutes were given for mapping and then the two groups were brought back to the circle and asked to explain what they had drawn, using the question guide for prompts.

Activity 2:

Resource Mapping Question Guide

Resources

1. What natural resources (e.g forests, fishing) does your community have?
2. How important are these resources to your community?

VERY important	Moderately important	Not important
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Why do you say that?

.....

How resources are used

3. How are these natural resources used?
 4. How does the community manage / share the use of these natural resources?
 5. Are you happy with the way natural resources are used in your community?
 6. If not, what should be done differently, why and how? Why isn't it happening now?
-

Resources and Problems

7. What problems/issues/conflicts occur around natural resources (e.g forests, fishing)?
 8. Why are these problems happening?
 9. What will happen in the long term if these problems are not solved?
-

Finding Solutions to the problems

10. How could the situation be changed?
11. What help your community has had to help you manage these resources and who/where did this help come from?

Note:

(You can ask one group to present first. If the other groups map looks similar ask them to present the DIFFERENCES in their map and responses, rather than just a repeat of the first map)

Activity 3: Group discussions

Discussion questions / prompts

- What do you think about this situation?
- Why do situations like these happen?
- How do you think communities should deal with situations like this?
- Have you heard of anything similar happening here in Solomon's?
- What would you do?
- Could something like this ever happen in your community?

Group discussions are not simply a way of interviewing several people at one time. They are intended to stimulate discussion within the group, independent of the facilitator, with the facilitator using guiding questions or prompts to keep the discussion to topic of interest, to tease out detail, and to ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate. The role of note-takers cannot be over-emphasised as they must be able to keep up with the flow of conversation while also being as accurate as possible.

Objectives

- Identify important needs and concerns in the context of their community
- Critically discuss the issues, needs and concerns that are important in the context of their community
- Explore previous community experiences with development projects and gain understanding in what is perceived as successful and / or sustainable

As one group, participants were seated where they could all easily join in the discussion. The facilitator led the discussion using the guide to keep on track and to probe for detailed information.

It was recognised that this research might raise strong feelings; it was important that the facilitators avoided conflict arising within the participant groups and that they were left with a positive and empowered outlook on their local situation.

Avoid conflict when discussing conflict:

It is important to stress to the participants that there is no right or wrong answer. Some groups may hesitate to present their map in case they get it wrong or offend. There is no wrong answer – just the perceptions of the participants!

Be aware that participants are to have an open-minded dialogue or conversation about the reasons for their statements. This is an activity that can easily turn into a debate where one group tries to beat another or where sensitive issues are raised. Encourage each group be honest but considerate in their description of conflicts – praise acknowledgement of a difficult situation as a positive thing.

As a facilitator, ask questions but be careful not to seem judgemental. Divert any comment or discussion that may end in an attack against an individual, even if the individual is not present.

Appendix 1: Research Approach

Group Discussion Question Guide

1. Who in your community is good at making decisions / resolving conflict / speaking out to people?
Note: (Try to get the group to make a list and then rank them to who has the most say within the community.)
2. Is there any person or group within your community who SHOULD be more involved in making decisions? If yes, why aren't they currently involved? How could they be involved better?
3. What do you think might be the situation for community natural resources in five years time if things continue as they are?
4. What do you think might be the situation for your children when they grow up if things continue as they are?
5. If you could, what would you change about how the community uses its natural resources?
Probe: What is the MOST important / urgent change needed?

(If there are lots of responses ask the group to try to decide to put all the changes into a list, most important one first)
6. Any ideas on how YOU might go about making that happen?
7. Are there any reasons / barriers that stop you from managing its resources in the way you would like to?
8. What help does the community need to manage its resources better?
9. Have there been any activities / projects happening in the past relating to this communities use of natural resources?

List, and where possible gain as much information as possible
10. How did you feel about those activities / projects
 - Did they work well?
 - What was good and what was not good and why?
 - What are some of the difficulties getting things done in the community?
11. Which groups are most active in gaining community participation?
12. If you could decide what activities / projects should go ahead in your community
 - What would you want?
 - Who should be involved?
 - How should it happen?
 - What problems do you think might occur?
 - What would be the biggest change that you would like to see happen?

Thank the group for their time and energy in working with Live & Learn and ask them if there is anything else they think Live & Learn should know about their community, natural resources or situation.

Also ask the group who / how they would like Live & Learn to communicate with them in the future.. i.e a key contact person.

NOTE: *It is VERY important that you gain some idea about the biggest or most important changes the community would like to see happen as this will link onto the monitoring and evaluation phase of the project where you will be using the MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE methodology.*

Activity 4: Individual Interviews

Individual interviews enable a more in depth discussion with one person. It may enable information to be gathered on a topic or issue that is controversial, confidential or otherwise not appropriate for group / public discussion. Interviews also offer a means of showing respect for certain individuals within the community as, by singling them out for interview, it implies that their opinion is of particular importance.

Care must be taken during analysis that it is remembered that information gathered via interview is the perspective of only one person, and that their comments were not available for challenge or confirmation by other community members. For this reason it is particularly important that good information is recorded about the individual, such as their role within the community and association with any influencing organization or other self-interest in the topic under discussion.

Objective:

- Enable key stakeholders to freely express their opinion
- To clarify, expand or gain in-depth information on specific topics
- Include alternative viewpoints from persons not in the group discussions

A stakeholder for this research might include a landowner, a person who lives in an area of conflict or a person who is an instigator of conflict or who is thought to be good at helping to resolve conflict within the community. It is important to remain flexible on who to ask for interview; a key identity may come out of the focus group discussions.

The interviews should be conducted on a one to one basis.

Depending on the literacy level of the persons, they may prefer for you to record their comments or to take the interview guide and write their own notes.

Two interview guides were provided:

1. for an individual from a community who was NOT part of the discussion group (Questions are the same as the community discussion groups)
2. for a representative of a commercial company involved in using natural resources (this is a guide only)

Appendix 1: Research Approach

Individual Interview Guide (Community person)

Name _____ Age _____ M/ F Village _____

Community role & responsibilities _____

Current employment or commercial interest _____

1. Community Resources

- What natural resources (e.g forests, fishing) does your community have?
- How important are these resources to your community?

VERY important	Moderately important	Not important
----------------	----------------------	---------------

- Why do you say that?
- How are these natural resources used?
- How does the community manage / share the use of these natural resources?
- Are you happy with the way natural resources are used in your community?
- If not, what should be done differently, why and how? Why isn't it happening now?

2. Resources and Problems

- What problems/issues/conflicts occur around natural resources (e.g forests, fishing)?
- Why are these problems happening?
- What will happen in the long term if these problems are not solved?

3. Finding Solutions to the problems

- How could the situation be changed?
- What help your community has had to help you manage these resources and who/where did this help come from?
- Who in your community is good at making decisions / resolving conflict / speaking out to people?
- Is there any person or group within your community who SHOULD be more involved in making decisions? If yes, why aren't they currently involved? How could they be involved better?

4. Appreciative Enquiry

- What do you think might be the situation for community natural resources in five years time if things continue as they are?
- What do you think might be the situation for your children when they grow up if things continue as they are?
- If you could, what would you change about how the community uses its natural resources?

5. Creating Change

- What is the MOST important / urgent change needed?
- Any ideas on how YOU might go about making that happen?
- Are there any reasons / barriers that stop you from managing its resources in the way you would like to?
- What help does the community need to manage its resources better?

6. Sustainable Development

- Have there been any activities / projects happening in the past relating to this communities use of natural resources?
- How did you feel about those activities / projects
- Did they work well?
- What was good and what was not good and why?
- What are some of the difficulties getting things done in the community?

7. Capacity to Undertake Projects

- Which groups are most active in gaining community participation?
- If you could decide what activities / projects should go ahead in your community
- What would you want?
- Who should be involved?
- How should it happen?
- What problems do you think might occur?
- What would be the biggest change that you would like to see happen?

8. Personal contribution

- Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

THANK YOU

Appendix 2: Community Profiles

Village Name	Population (approx)	Description of location	Main occupation of population	Industry or commercial companies working in the area	Comments or notes of interest
Vuja (Sasamunga)	1,080	Located central south of Choiseul. Most populated area.	Mostly local farmers, some own small retail business	Currently none	Vuja community is part of Sasamunga. It is located 15 km inland up a river close to a Rural Training Centre. Virgin forest still intact and is ideal for model forest conservation project. Home of a unique local bird (Kuwojo), not found elsewhere in other parts of the world.
Rarakisi	263	Located central south of Choiseul inland 3 km up the river.	Mostly local farmers	Currently none	Ideal place for commercial or demonstration agricultural activities. Contains huge amount of un-exploited forest
Posarae	430	Located south of Choiseul. A costal community but villages mostly scattered to Islands	Mostly local farmers	Two logging companies operating in the area near the village.	A marine rich resource area with lots of beautiful untouched small Islands Ideal for eco-tourism project and activities.
Lituni	320	Located south of Choiseul. Coastal community. Villages located mainly on small Islands.	Mostly local farmers	A logging company has started operating nearby.	A marine rich resource area with lots of beautiful untouched small Islands Ideal for eco-tourism project and activities.
Loloko	380	Located south of Choiseul. Coastal community	Mostly local farmers	Three logging companies operating in the village surrounds.	A marine rich resource area with lots of beautiful untouched small Islands Ideal for eco-tourism project and activities.
Goraebara	190	Located central south of Choiseul on coastal area. Close to Loloko villages	Mostly local farmers	Currently one logging company operating there, however finished in 2007, due to violent activity by unknown mask man.	Ideal place for small resort activities, rich in marine products and also have some heritage cultural places.





*We do not inherit the earth from our
ancestors, we borrow it from our children*

