BECOMING CITIZENS:

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN TIMOR LESTE

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Becoming Citizens: Civil Society Activism and Social Change

in Timor Leste

"YOUTH CENTRE
Raise Capacity, Enliven Ideas, Nurture Creativity,
Strengthen Unity"
(Reproduced with permission. Photo: Ann Wigglesworth August 2006)

<u>Doctor of Philosophy Declaration</u>

I, Ann Wigglesworth, declare that the PhD thesis entitled "*Becoming Citizens: Civil society activism and social change in Timor Leste*" is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on a generation of Timorese who were educated during the Indonesian occupation. Conceptual frameworks of community development, participation, civil society and citizenship, are drawn upon to analyse the processes of development taking place in the first years of nationhood of Timor Leste. Within this context, three themes are developed. First, a generational divide related to education and the language policy which leaves the Indonesian educated young people marginalised within the new national development framework; second, the limitations that customary practices place upon the ability of young women to participate in political and social activities; third, an analysis of the centralised processes of development that have resulted in young men leaving the rural areas for opportunities in the urban areas and consequent implications for social organisation. These three themes are analysed in the context of a civil society largely run by young Timorese. I investigate the roles of power holders in contemporary Timor Leste – the government, the traditional leaders and international development agencies and analyse the place that civil society has in this new nation. I argue that Timorese activists are able to bridge the traditional Timorese world with international values of development and human rights, but their roles and contributions have to date been inadequately supported.

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Glossary

Tetum or Portuguese	
Adat	Custom (Indonesian word now widely used in Timor)
Aldeia	Hamlet
Asimilados	Timorese accepted as assimilated into 'civilised' Portuguese society
Bairros	Suburb
Bahasa Indonesia	Indonesian language
Barlake	Ritual exchange of goods between families at marriage
Chefe (de Suco)	Village chief
Chega!	'Enough!' (title of CAVR report)
Dato	Nobility, aid to the *Liurai* through Council of Elders
Ema bo'ot	'Big people' – elders and seniors
Geração Foun	'New' or young generation
Geração Milênio	Millennium generation
Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru	The National Recovery Strategy in 2006 for the return and resettlement of the IDPs, stabilising security and strengthening communities
Juventude	Youth (plural) or young people in Tetum and Portuguese
Lia nain	A 'spokesperson' or 'judicial authority'. They play a ceremonial role through carrying the wisdom of the ancestors
Lisan	Traditional practices (law)
Liurai	King of socio-linguistic group
Loromuno	Timorese from western districts
Lorosa'e	Timorese from eastern districts
Malae	Foreigner
Maun bo'ot	'Big brother' (this term is also used to refer to Xanana Gusmão)
Maubere	Peasant (lit), used by FRETILIN to refer the Timorese people
Mesticos	Mixed blood
Pancasila (Indon)	Five guiding principles of the Indonesian constitution
Rede Feto	Women's network (name of women's NGO network)
Suco	Village
Tais	Traditional cloth woven in Timor Leste, worn by women as skirts and by men in ceremonial costume. Exchanged in *Barlake*
Tetum(n)	*'Tetum Praça'* is the co-official language with Portuguese. It is widely spoken and understood in Timor Leste. Derived from *Tetum Terik*, and creolised with Portuguese vocabulary over the centuries, it is sometimes spelt Tetun.
Timor Leste	East Timor from 2000
Timorese	The people of East Timor / Timor Leste
Uma lulik	Sacred house
Vergonha	Shame, embarrassment or shy

List of Acronyms

APODETI	*Associação Popular Democràtica Timorense* – Timorese Popular Democratic Association
ASDT	*Associação Social Democràtica Timorense* – Timorese Social Democratic Association
CAVR	*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação* – Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor Leste.
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CPD-RDTL	Council for the Defence of RDTL
CNRT/(CNRM)	*Conselho Nacional de Resistencia Timorense (Maubere)* - National Council of Timorese(Maubere) Resistance
CNRT	*Congresso Nacional para a Reconstrução de Timor* – National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor Leste
EFA	Education for All
ETSSC	East Timor Student Solidarity Council
FALINTIL	*Forças Armadas de Liberação Nacional de Timor Leste* – Armed forces for the Liberation of East Timor
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
F-FDTL	*FALINTIL Forças da Defensa de Timor Leste* – Defence Forces of Timor Leste
FITUN	*Frente Iha Timor Unidos Nafatin* - Always United Front of Timor
FRETILIN	*Frente Revolucionària de Timor Leste Independent*
FKSH	*Feto Ki'ik Servico Hamutuk* – Young Women Working Together
FOKUPERS	*Forum Kommunikasi Untuk Perempuan Timor Lorosa'e* - East Timor Women's Communication Forum
FONGTIL	NGO Forum
GDP	Gross domestic product
GFFTL	*Grupo Feto Foinsa'e Timor Lorosa'e* – Young Women's Group of Timor Leste
HASATIL	*Hadomi Sustentabilidade Agricutura Timor Lorosa'e* – Love Sustainable Agriculture Timor Leste
HDI	Human development index
IDPs	Internally displaced people
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
IFIs	International financial institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMPETTU	East Timor Students Association
INTERFET	International Force for East Timor (1999-2000)
KORK	*Klibur Oan Rai Klaren* martial arts group
KSI	*Kadalak Sulimutuk Institute* – Student Research Institute
INGO	International non-government organisation
MECYS	Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (to 2005)
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MDGs	Millennium development goals
NDP	National development plan

NGO	Non-government organisation
OBJLATIL	*Organização Popular da Juventude Loriku Aswa'in de Timor Leste* The Popular Organisation of Timorese Youth Lorikeet Warriors
OJECTIL	*Organisação da Juventude e Estudentes Católica de Timor Leste –* Catholic youth and students organisation of East Timor
OJETIL	*Organisação da Juventude e Estudentes de Timor Leste -* Organisation of East Timorese Youth and Students.
OJT	*Organisação de Juventude Timorense –* Organisation of Timorese Youth
OMT	*Organisação da Mulher Timorense –* Organisation of Timorese Women
OPMT	Organisação Popular da Mulher Timorense – Popular Organisation of Timorese Women
PD	*Partido Democrático -* Democratic Party
PSHT	*Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate* (Lotus Faithful Heart Brotherhood) martial arts group
PERMATIL	Permaculture Timor Lorosa'e
POSKO	Coalition of Timorese NGOs for emergency response in 1999
PNTL	*Polìcia Nacional de Timor Leste –* National Police Force
RENETIL	*Resistência Nacional dos Estudentes de Timor Leste –* National Resistance of Students of East Timor
RDTL	*República Democrática de Timor Leste -* Democratic Republic of Timor Leste
SAP	Structural adjustment program
SIP	Sectoral Investment Program
SSYS	Secretary of State for Youth and Sport
TFET	Trust Fund for East Timor
TNI	*Tentara Nasional Indonesia -* Indonesian Army
UDT	*União Democrática Timorense –* Timorese Democratic Union
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	UN Mission for East Timor
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTAET	UN Transitional Administration for East Timor
UNTIM	University of *Timor Timur* (East Timor Province, until 1999)
UNTL	*Universidade Nacional de Timor Leste -* National University of Timor Leste
WHO	World Health Organisation

MAP OF TIMOR LESTE
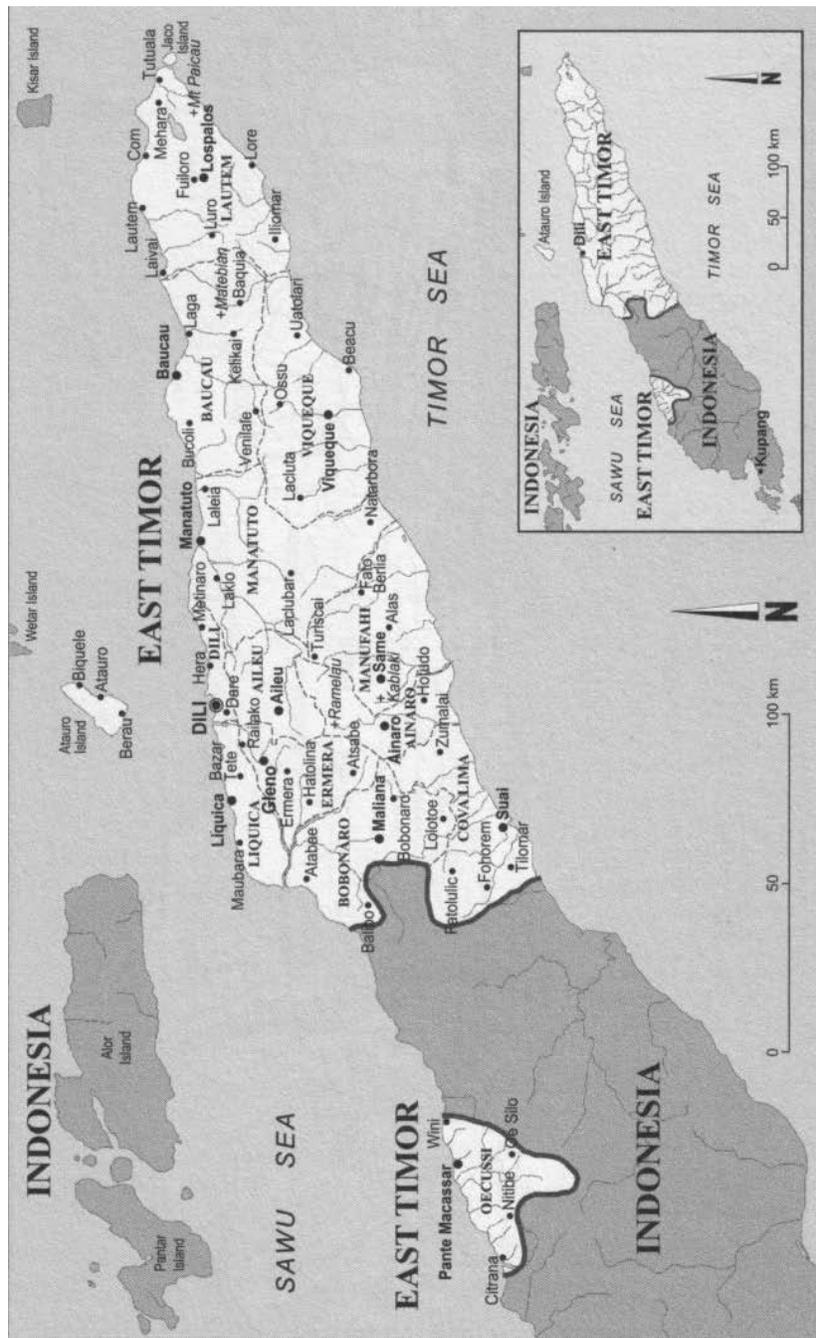
Introduction

At independence there was the expectation that people can enjoy independence – good education for all, access to health care, sufficient food, infrastructure, markets and economic opportunity. People would be free! What happened? It did not meet expectations. [Antonio]

Timor Leste[1], the first new nation of the twenty first century was born on 20th May 2002. It followed a bitter armed struggle after 450 years of Portuguese colonialism and 24 traumatic years of Indonesian occupation. The legitimacy of the Timorese claim to self rule was validated by the UN sponsored popular consultation in 1999 at which 78% of the population voted for independence.

This new nation arose from the ashes of violent and systematic killing, abduction, burning and looting by the departing Indonesian occupiers in 1999, which left a traumatised population and 75% of the infrastructure destroyed. The departure of most of the experienced civil servants, high rates of poverty and illiteracy contributed to the challenges facing the new nation. Two and a half years under the United Nations Transitional Authority of East Timor (UNTAET) preceded the declaration of independence on 20th May 2002[2]. The establishment of new political, judicial and administrative frameworks received massive international support from the international donor community. The World Bank and the UN had a substantial influence on the direction the development of the institutions of the new independent state would take.

My research focuses on the generation of Timorese who were educated during the period of occupation. Some were activists in the independence struggle. Others left school more recently and became involved with civil society organisations during the emergency and rehabilitation period or in relation to post-independence development activities. As a result of the profound changes which have taken place in Timor Leste, the lived experiences and dynamics of social and political change are distinctly different for each generation of

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[1] 'Timor Leste' means 'East Timor' in Portuguese. The official name, Democratic Republic of East Timor, is abbreviated as RDTL – *República Democrática de Timor Leste*. Many people also refer to it in the Tetum version *'Timor Loro Sa'e'* (literally, land of the rising sun). I use the term East Timor prior to 2000.

[2] This day is known as the 'Restoration of Independence Day', while the 28th November 1975 continues to be commemorated as Independence Day in Timor Leste (see chapter 3 for details).

Timorese. Many have lived their lives in customary rural society, and faced the horrors of the Indonesian occupation. This research seeks to understand: how participation in civil society can contribute to building citizenship identity and a sense of belonging among young Timorese; influences of tradition and education on the lives of young Timorese; and the life choices for young men and women in rural and urban areas. As a major political crisis took place in the midst of this research, I analyse some of the contributing factors to these events and its effect on the younger generation.

In this study I present a perspective about Timorese development formed from interviews with a range of young civil society activists, as well as some senior public figures. 'Development' in this context refers to processes which contribute to the population being able to achieve an adequate standard of living and access basic human rights. From this perspective I review the strategies and processes of national development taking place in the country.

My interest in this area derives from my experiences in East Timor during 1997 to 2000 which were profoundly disturbing and deeply moving. I accompanied my (then) Timorese colleagues through this period during regular visits to the country. As independence activists they were frequently in danger. They shared with me their hopes and fears. As a development worker working for an Australian non-government organisation (NGO) my very presence was to them as significant as the funds that I contributed to development projects. The political circumstances there created strong bonds between us. As violence escalated after the popular consultation, my colleagues fled Dili, some to the hills, others to West Timor or elsewhere in Indonesia. It took weeks and months before they could be traced, but all survived. This study was born of my desire to see their dream achieved – their dream of freedom, justice, human rights and equality. I wanted to trace the path that Timor Leste has taken, and in particular how young Timorese activists, such as those that I had known previously, have contributed to development of the new nation. How young activists perceive, and participate in, development processes taking place in their country is the theme of this research.

Finding place in the new nation: youth identity and citizenship

> *Development means change in life on the part of the nation and society. There are no cities in Timor Leste yet. If youth study more, our country can develop. If the situation is good in our country we can create many things – this is development. [Henrique]*

The agency of young people has a significant place in the process of social and political change within Timor-Leste. My specific focus is on those young Timorese who act as '*agents of change*' in the sense that they actively engage in activities with the intention of contributing to the change process. This focus takes me to the realm of civil society, for it is in social groups and organisations that many young people find a place and meaning in their lives. Involved in multi-faceted types of organisation, the civil society networks provide a place for young people to engage in development activities, arts and cultural activities, support for political parties, educational and sports activities. This thesis is not concerned with analysing the success or otherwise of particular programs, rather it aims to understand how young Timorese respond to the 'development forces' of national government policies and strategies, supported by international aid, in the changing cultural context of Timor Leste. How do young Timorese find a place within this fast changing environment?

I therefore ask the question **how have Timorese development strategies taken into account the needs of young people?** This question seeks to understand how young Timorese perceive current development strategies and moreover, the place that they are accorded in the development process. I further ask: **do young people see themselves as agents of change in Timor Leste?** In Timor Leste, young people in the post-Indonesian period have been influenced by rapid political change and the internationalisation of Timor Leste, shaping and framing their sense of belonging and place within the new nation. In this new context, young people sought new roles and sources of identity, often challenging the traditions views of their elders and acting as proponents of social change.

To define the term 'young people' required delving into both Timorese culture and academic literature. The different interpretation of the term 'youth' or 'young people' within Timor Leste and its use more generally in the literature, made this task a complex one. In Timor Leste, a surprising number of people who identify themselves as 'young

people' are older than one would normally categorise as such. My concern, however, was less with their age, than their self-perception and role. I thus sought out Timorese who identified as 'young people' and also as *agents of change*, that is, actively engaged in constructive activities within social organisations. To distinguish them from young people in general, I described these research participants as ***activists*** throughout the thesis.

For many of those who participated in this research the experience of struggle spans almost their entire lives. As I reveal, their stories are extraordinary, sometimes shockingly tragic. The experiences of activists in the clandestine movement during the liberation struggle had a profound effect on the motivations and future roles of today's activists.

Many of the clandestine youth activists, on whose views and knowledge this thesis draws, continue to hold positions as representatives of youth organisations even though most are now in their thirties. They are articulate and in touch with the youth issues within their communities. I use the term **young people** to include all people who define themselves as 'youth' or 'young people' (both terms are generally interpreted in both Portuguese and *Tetum*[3] as '***juventude***'). I use the term **youth** according to the internationally accepted meaning of people under twenty five. The term **activists** will be used to distinguish my research participants and others like them from other groups of young people.

At the outset of the research it was clear that all those who identify as 'young people' are Indonesian educated. There is a strong belief that the term relates to sociological understanding as much as to chronological age. In the paragraphs that follow I frame an understanding of the term 'young people' in Timor Leste.

Within Timor Leste marriage is a significant marker of adulthood. In Timorese society people are customarily no longer 'young' when they marry and gain status as responsible members of society entrusted with decision making. *'In Timor "youth" does not mean 13-25 years'* according to Francisco, a view typical of many of the activists that contributed to my research. This 32 year old Coordinator of a *Centro Juventude* (Youth Centre) announces programs to the *juventude* (youth) and accepts anyone who turns up – *'they*

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[3] 'Tetum Praça' is the co-official language with Portuguese. It is the most widely spoken and understood language in Timor Leste. It is derived from the ethnic language Tetum Terik, and has been creolised with Portuguese vocabulary over the centuries. It is also sometimes spelt Tetun.

may be married but they are mostly unemployed, people who hang around town'[4]. Another unmarried activist in his early thirties suggests that people who '*hang out with friends'* and '*socialise with the people'* may consider themselves as youth even if they are married, because they '*still have not made the transition*'[5]. A third explained that the meaning of 'youth' must be considered both from a biological (or age) perspective and a sociological perspective, because activism and involvement in social movements, in his opinion, is associated with the *transitional phase of youth*[6]. Social role and status is then equally as significant as chronological age to the Timorese concept of 'young' people. Given this understanding, an activist is necessarily defined as a 'young person'. For instance, a 'youth leader' in Baucau is thirty six years old and married. He nevertheless considers himself 'youth' because of the kind of activities he is involved in, and because, he explains he has the 'spirit of youth'[7]. Youth commonly elect older 'youth leaders' perceiving their greater experience and recognising their roles during the struggle. Trusted and respected former clandestine student leaders are consequently often spokespeople for youth in public arenas. The 'spirit of youth' was invoked by a number of research participants to explain their continued identification as young people.

In rural communities there is a significant gap between the age of marriage for girls and boys. Typically girls are married at puberty when they are sexually mature, while boys are likely to marry when they are economically productive or independent. Except amongst the middle class where education is more accessible, many young women may not experience a period of 'youth' as the majority move directly from childhood to marriage. In reflection of this, I have dedicated a chapter to the specific issues affecting young women in Timor Leste.

Within the liberation movement the term *geração foun*, or 'new generation' was used in the 1990s to refer to those who were not part of the 1975 leadership and were educated in the Indonesian not the Portuguese system (de Araujo, F 2000). This distinguished their different education and life experiences from that of the Portuguese speaking political elite that had been in political leadership since 1975 and retain power today. *Geração foun*

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[4] Francisco interview, Suai, 7/8/06
[5] Guilherme interview, Dili 11/8/06
[6] Pedro interview, Dili 14/8/06
[7] Sabastiao interview, Baucau, 19/8/06

activists played a key role in the clandestine youth movement during the independence struggle. They are now ten years older or more but, for reasons outlined above, many continue to self-identify as 'youth'.

Timorese activists that participated in this research were educated in the Indonesian education system and most reached tertiary level. Part of the *geração foun,* many of these former members of the clandestine youth movement describe how, following the liberation from Indonesian occupation, they refocussed their commitment to 'liberation from poverty'. Some work in youth or development organisations, others are in full time work in government or as teachers, but all continue to see their membership of the clandestine youth movement as a key part of their identity. Activism pertaining to issues of national development is thus an extension of their long standing struggle for national liberation.

Some of the research participants were younger, including university students and female school graduates, born in the early to mid 80s. They were less involved in the clandestine movement during the occupation and generally became involved in civil society after independence to engage positively in the development of their nation. Nevertheless they are older than the 1990s generation described by Soares (2007) as the *geração milênio* or 'millennium generation' or by Carey (2003) as the 'independence generation'[8], thus can broadly be considered *geração foun.*

At independence many young people, who due to their involvement in the clandestine or resistance movements had missed the opportunity to attend school, were identified as a group in need of specific attention by the 2002 National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP visualised training programs for these and other youth to impart productive skills for wages or self-employment. Developing programs for unemployed youth, and for school drop-outs to provide 'qualifications enabling them to re-enter the labour market' is an important focus of the NDP (Planning Commission 2002).

At the time of undertaking my field research in 2006 a serious political crisis occurred in which gangs of youth were engaged in street violence. From that time, discourses on youth shifted. A growing mass of unemployed teenagers became a major focus of concern, as

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[8] Soares describes the 'millennium generation' a Timorese born from 1990, whereas Carey suggests the 'independence generation' were born in the mid to late 1990s.

they increasingly congregated in the capital Dili in the futile hope of a job. Issues pertaining to young people became centre stage of the development debate. My study continued to focus on the *geração foun* and emerging young activists. I focus on social changes taking place and seek to identify how young people engage in social development in constructive ways.

The young activists who participated in this research express a strong desire to contribute to the development of the new nation. Citizenship of this new nation is a powerful motivating force for these activists. Active engagement as a citizen can provide a pathway to belonging and identity in the nation state. In current discourses, traditional notions of citizenship as simply the formal membership of a nation state are being re-defined as a social process. In this understanding, individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or, in some cases, losing rights (Isin & Turner 2002). The concept of 'active citizens' is being used to reflect the fact that rights and citizenship are attained through agency, and not simply bestowed by the state (Gaventa 2006b). Gaventa argues that active citizenship and development both contribute to the establishment of participation as a right. Concepts of people's participation and agency in affairs that affect their communities is thus closely linked to developing a sense of self-identity and of citizenship (Eyben & Ladbury 2006; Gaventa 2006b; Kabeer 2005). Activism then is also an important part of nation building.

In this research, activists in post-independent Timor Leste provide their perspectives about the governance and development processes unfolding in the new nation. The relationships of activists with the government, with customary community leaders and with international donors are analysed, and an understanding about how national development processes have impacted on the majority of the Timorese poor is explored. Development, as perceived by the Timorese activists and the population at large, is expected to provide a path out of poverty for the rural majority. Issues of identity and opportunity for young people, and questions of belonging and citizenship are investigated in the context of processes of rapid social and political change in the new nation.

Structure of the thesis

To work with young people is my vision. My spirit is very strong. [Teresinha]

Timorese of the younger generation who contributed to this research are active participants in development, but not power-holders. Their perspectives illuminate why the development strategies adopted by the Timorese political leadership and the international donor community failed to deliver the hopes and expectations of many Timorese in the first years of independence. I expose some of the critical failures in development strategy which precipitated social conflict in 2006 and caused the first government to fall just four years after independence. This study seeks to outline the crucial ingredients for effective development practice in Timor Leste. As such it represents a modest contribution to the emergent literature in this field.

In **chapter two** I explain why I embarked on this project and provide an outline of the conceptual framework for the research. I present the processes of data collection and analysis and indicate how the dramatic political events of 2006 influenced the research. This chapter also describes how, after embarking on a study topic about which little was written, substantial research concerning young people in Timor Leste was carried out by other entities during the research period. These subsequent reports have significantly informed this thesis.

Chapter three provides the background of the struggle for independence and the role of the youth movement, as well as the period of UN administration and the rise of civil society. I introduce many of the activists in my research sample through their roles and experiences in the history of the struggle for independence. After independence, many former clandestine student activists became absorbed into the United Nations (UN) programs in 1999-2002, often as English interpreters. They became acquainted with the world of international development assistance and established a multiplicity of civil society organisations that became involved in a wide range of development activities. This period brought new ideas, practices and 'western values' that contrasted sharply with the closed and often violent society that characterised East Timor during the Portuguese and Indonesian colonial periods.

At independence in May 2002 the new government built on the UN's legacy of a centralised system of government structures and the Timorese became citizens of a new nation. This chapter draws on the narratives of activists in order to illustrate how youth leaders in key clandestine youth organisations refocussed their commitment and ideas to contribute to national development.

Chapter four analyses the transition to independence and how new forms of governance were created and how they were perceived by the population. I analyse how early decisions made by the UN and the World Bank set in place the national structures and framed the development strategies of the new nation. I examine this development period from the perspective of theories of development studies[9]. Changing ideas of development theory up to the 21st century are illustrated, linking theory with development practice. I discuss models of economic development theory and those which encompass a broader understanding of development including social discourses of civil society and citizenship. Research and analysis into the practice of community development in the form of international donor funded activities has contributed to an enhanced theoretical understanding of processes of development. The changing reality for the impoverished citizens of Timor Leste is explored with respect to how development strategies and policies have taken into account the specific socio-political environment of Timor-Leste.

The language of education is the most significant generational marker in Timor Leste. In **chapter five,** I draw on the views of educated Timorese concerning the importance they place on education and the implications for social development of an educational system that has changed from Portuguese to Indonesian and then back to Portuguese. The legacies of the Indonesian education system and the under-resourced education system in independent Timor Leste are critically appraised. I explore how many young Timorese had their education disrupted by the Indonesian invasion, their clandestine activities, or the 1999 violence. I also discuss the notion that education is a mechanism that can enable women to move beyond traditional domestic roles towards more equal participation in the life of the nation. The chapter investigates the effect of language changes in the education

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[9] 'Development studies' encompasses the understanding of development processes in what has been termed 'developing countries' or the Third World. This discipline embraces sociology, political economy, economics, gender studies, natural resource management etc. in order to analyse and understand change processes in these countries.

system and its capacity to equip students in a fashion which might enable them to contribute effectively to the development of their society.

Chapter six examines the significance of customary practice within rural communities. I draw on the perspectives of young people about the place of customary society in the lives of rural young people, exploring how traditional social relations result in very different opportunities for young men and women. In particular young women are constrained by cultural expectations of their roles and are no longer considered as 'young people' after they marry. As rural women marry young, there are relatively fewer young women active in the civil society organisations. The importance of gender participation as an essential component of rural development is discussed. I examine the challenges for young male and female activists in embracing international values of human rights while also respecting the traditions of their communities.

Chapter seven develops the analysis of rural communities proffered in chapter six, investigating how the search for education and work opportunities inevitably draws young people from rural villages to urban towns. The social dynamics underpinning this movement of young Timorese has diverse consequences as they leave their family roots and move into the less predictable urban world where the influence of customary elders is overshadowed by that of political leaders. In the urban setting youth seek new forms of cultural identity and group involvement.

Of considerable importance are the youth cultures that have developed around new youth organisations, some of which have become notorious points of conflict between youth gangs. These had significant consequences during the crisis of 2006. I make an analysis of 'youth organisations' as understood in Timor Leste, developing a typology with reference to youth organisations and their leadership, and reflect on the kind of leadership which is required in the new context of independence and national development.

In **chapter eight** I trace the events of the 2006 crisis. I provide a brief analysis of the 2006 crisis and its causes, unpacking youth identity in the light of ethnicity, political allegiance and group identity. I analyse some of the factors which contributed to the crisis, in particular the growing divide between rural and urban areas as national development efforts are focussed in Dili. The roles of the younger generations in the crisis are analysed.

Chapter nine. This chapter identifies how young activists influence and support the development processes in the country. I analyse challenges faced by activists in their work and their relationships with government and international donors. I investigate the way that activists contribute to building community trust. Examples of new 'Timorese' models of development that recognise the values of custom, government relations and the new imperatives of rights-based and participatory development are presented. I suggest that the donor community has an important role in supporting the aspirations of Timorese activists to nurture a form of development that values Timorese culture while also shifting customs to embrace greater equality of participation by different social groups.

Finally in **chapter ten**, I draw together the threads of preceding chapters and analyse the overall position of young people in Timorese society. I identify strategies that can empower Timorese activists to better support and strengthen community based social networks and overcome traditional barriers to participation in rural areas. I argue that strategies of this kind could make a critical contribution to overcoming the rural-urban divide and enable young women and youth to contribute to community development as 'active citizens'.

Chapter Two

Research in times of Crisis

Introduction

This chapter outlines how my personal background has influenced my understanding of development issues and approach to research. Identifying the theme of the thesis and evolving plans for the research was in many respects a product of my previous experience in Timor Leste. The choice of Timor Leste as a focus for the study stemmed, in part, from my admiration of my colleagues during the period of occupation who I observed taking huge personal risks to deliver a better future for Timor Leste. There are relatively few development workers who experienced East Timor during the period of occupation. My long history of involvement with organisations and people within Timor Leste meant that I was able to engender the necessary trust that through my research I would tell 'their story'. This study aims to contribute to an understanding of processes of development and change from the perspective of young people active in civil society organisations within Timor Leste. In short, to tell their story.

The research is a qualitative study. Interpretive qualitative methods require entering research participants' worlds. Our respect for our research participants pervades how we collect data – and we demonstrate our respect by making concerted efforts to learn about their views and actions and by trying to understand life from their perspectives (Charmaz 2006:19). A reflexive stance on how a researcher conducts research is, therefore, important. I have sought to relate to the research participants and represent them in writing in a manner which gives their concerns voice within an analysis of development issues facing the country.

The Researcher and choice of topic

Coming from a background of twenty five years as a development practitioner in the NGO sector, I have extensive experience working in poor countries in cross-cultural environments. One of my early and formative development experiences was as a volunteer

working for two years in Nepal, supporting a local organisation to establish an adult literacy program using materials inspired by Paulo Freire's concept of popular education[10].

My experience in social research started in Mozambique where I lived for seven years, initially as Oxfam (GB) Provincial Coordinator for a community development program in the north of the country. Later, as a result of my knowledge of the communities I worked as a consultant on two investigative research projects related to changes brought about by the newly implemented structural adjustment program, involving socio-economic surveys, house-to-house data collection using questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with community leaders. Communication was in Portuguese with local languages translated by my Mozambican colleagues. I later used data from one of these surveys for my MA thesis studying the roles of women farmers in the economic survival of poor families[11].

My interest in inclusive development, particularly in gender issues, developed in Mozambique where gender roles were strongly defined and further strengthened during my work with International Women's Development Agency. Subsequently, as a Program Manager with Save the Children Australia, this interest broadened to consider age as an important factor in social analysis as I became familiar with methodologies for supporting children's right to participation. Prior to this I had learnt of the potential of young people in instigating change through a peer education project in Bolivia[12]. The enthusiasm with which these children demonstrated their acceptance of the need to change practices (such as waste management and cutting trees for fuelwood) was a stark contrast to the difficulty

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[10] Paulo Freire pioneered the concept of popular education, grounded in local context and involving *dialogue* rather than teacher-student transmission of information. In the Nepali adult literacy project was implemented with pictures of local environment and social issues, and building ideas through key words. Some of the discussions did lead to action, for instance cleaning up the neighbourhood, consistent with Freire's concept of *praxis* – linking ideas and action. In the evaluation of the classes, which were run separately for men and women by local facilitators, the men identified many practical benefits of literacy, whereas women described their own empowerment through comments such as 'no-one has ever asked my opinion before', and 'I didn't know I was capable of learning'. This experience taught me, at an early stage, that development is about opening up the potential of people, and not simply about practical benefits such as becoming literate.

[11] Published as 'Invisible Farmers and Economic Adjustment in Mozambique: A study of the survival of subsistence farmers' Occasional paper no 4, Development Studies Centre, Monash University 1994.

[12] Health and environmental messages were disseminated to leaders of young children working on the street and therefore unable to attend school. The leaders gave health messages to child workers who in turn passed it to their families. The methodology built on the belief that young people often have a greater potential to promote change than tradition bound elders. The project was developed with technical support from the London School of Tropical Medicine who had pioneered these peer education methods with children who would then take the health messages into their families, to overcome the low success rate of disseminating health education messages to illiterate parents.

I had observed in getting acceptance of new ideas from farmers who lacked access to knowledge beyond traditional practices.

Working in development practice, the pressures and timelines of project development and implementation are such that there is little time to adequately reflect and learn from local communities. Undertaking PhD research has offered me the opportunity to reflect on development issues in a way that is not constrained by the demands of international aid projects. What I attempt to convey in the pages which follow is, therefore, an analysis informed by the perspectives of local people actively involved in their own development.

Timor Leste was chosen as my research focus because, of the dozens of countries in which I have been involved in NGO development work, East Timor is the only one that has undergone such a total transformation. My first visit to East Timor was in 1997 as Program Manager of Caritas Australia. This, and subsequent visits in 1998 and 1999 was an experience of a country and people living in fear, under military occupation. During the increasingly tense and violent months of 1999, I visited the country five times and shared with my colleagues many of their hopes and fears. After the Liquiça massacre in April 1999 my colleagues asked me to bring Australian volunteers to 'witness' atrocities perpetrated by the pro-Indonesian militia[13]. Timor Leste has now won a 24 year struggle for liberation. Already in the early years of independence the term 'lost generation' was starting to be used by young Timorese. This reflected their sense of abandonment by the Timorese leadership once their contribution to the struggle was no longer needed. A generational divide was starting to emerge, and these determined young people wanted to tell the story of their generation.

Timor Leste's transformation was not only a political one. The cultural landscape also changed due to the arrival of hundreds of international development organisations and the establishment of dozens of local NGOs. As a distant and unfavoured outpost of Jakarta, Dili was isolated from international development assistance except for a few small NGO programs mostly focussed on human rights. In the emergency period of October 1999 to December 2001 it became the new Mecca for emergency specialists and UN professionals

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[13] The Liquica massacre is described in chapter three. At that time, the presence of foreigners gave protection from militia attacks. The 'witness' program run by Caritas Australia supported a dozen people, mostly religious sisters but also some health workers, to work along side Timorese in education and health programs between May and August 1999.

with hundreds of new international organisations arriving and setting up their operations in which English was the lingua franca. From a personal point of view I witnessed the devastating impact that the influx of 'emergency relief' mode of programming had on the traumatised Timorese in 1999-2000. From a research point of view the fact that so much aid had arrived within such a tight timeframe meant that there would be an unusually clear impact of the contribution of international aid. At the time I started my PhD I was preparing a paper for delivery at a conference on Aid and Conflict at the university where I was teaching International Development, in Melbourne in February 2005. Entitled *Partnership in Crisis – Lessons from Timor Leste*[14], the paper analysed the impact of emergency aid on existing development partnerships, using my Timor experience as a case study.

Following independence, many of my former Timorese colleagues set up or worked within various development organisations. Their commitment then and now is inspiring, as is the commitment of many other NGO workers. Many of the key figures in the Timorese civil society sector are the youth and students of the liberation struggle. Their organisational skills were honed in the organisations of the resistance. Their commitment to struggle was inspired by a desire for freedom.

When considering a topic in the context of development in Timor Leste, I consulted a Timorese friend who had been involved in the preparation and consultations of a national development planning process in 2002. She identified a big gap in knowledge about the situation of young people. Of particular concern to her was what she perceived to be a growing sense of alienation amongst former clandestine student activists, and a concomitant concern that youth unemployment was growing. This focus was consistent with my own interest in inclusive development. The result of these discussions led me to choose as my research focus young people's participation in development in Timor Leste. Since embarking on this study the contextual environment of Timor Leste has changed remarkably and my own plans for field research have evolved in a constantly changing context.

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[14] Entitled "Partnership in Crisis: Lessons from East Timor"; Wigglesworth (2006) in Clarke, M. (Ed) <u>Aid and Conflict</u>; Nova Publishing, New York.

Conceptual Perspectives

As my research aimed to tell a story informed by the perspective of young Timorese, an epistemological framework of social constructivism was chosen. A social constructivist approach recognises that meaning is constructed by the people who are engaged in the interpretation of their world (Crotty 1998). As a development worker, the concepts of listening and learning were fundamental to my engagement in diverse cultures. As a researcher, as in community development practice, I must learn from and draw out the knowledge and skills of the participants. The research was thus planned to explore different facets of Timorese 'reality' via an examination of their perceptions of place in traditional and post-traditional society and their contributions to a growing civil society.

Qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln, is a field of inquiry in its own right which has emerged from a complex field of successive waves of theorising across various historical moments. The method allows for a variety of empirical methods to be used, including case study, personal experience, life story, interview, cultural texts etc. that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:2-4).

Qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of social relations. Rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds are increasingly confronting social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives (Flick 2002:2). Empirical field research analysed from the perspective of quantitative 'objective' research has found that despite all the methodological controls, the research and its findings are unavoidably influenced by the interests and social and cultural backgrounds of those involved (ibid p4). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative methods take the researcher's communication with the field and its members as an explicit part of knowledge production instead of excluding it as far as possible as an intervening variable. The subjectivity of the researcher *and* of those being studied are thus part of the research process (ibid p6). Whereas in the world of physical science there is assumed to be one reality, in the social world there is the reality of the researched and the reality of the researcher, which is influenced by our own experiences and knowledge. Thus the world is socially constructed through different forms of knowledge, and we as researchers bring our understandings of their world into our research. A social constructionist approach can enable ideas to be unpacked in response to

the concerns of the local participants, such that power inequalities between researched and researcher are minimised (Maxwell 2005:80). In my research project I was interested in the perceptions of the Timorese young people from different backgrounds and locations, with respect to national and local change processes. I was concerned to make the research, to the extent possible, a process *with* rather than *about* the people.

Common methods for undertaking qualitative research include individual or group interviews, methods I chose as the major form of data collection. Semi structured interviews provide a framework for a range of questions, but this does not limit the researcher to a list of questions. In semi-structured or unstructured interviews the researcher can open up fields of inquiry according to the focus which the interviewee places on the subject matter, rather than follow a fixed set of questions in a routine manner. The interviewee can introduce new topics of his or her own in the interview, while the interviewer will lead the questioning back to topics which have yet to be covered, or have been covered in insufficient depth (Flick 2002:76). Thus responses may extend well beyond the original conception of the questions, and open up new areas of knowledge which are relevant to understanding the reality of the research participant.

Rich data, according to Charmaz, can be built with diverse kinds of data – field notes, interviews, information in records and reports. She suggests one can add new pieces to the research puzzle while we gather data, thus allowing the researcher to follow leads as they emerge (Charmaz 2006:14). In the context of a rapidly changing socio-political environment in Timor Leste this was a much used aspect of data collection in this study.

The Research Process

Victoria University accepted my PhD candidature application in late 2004. The university was planning to hold a major conference '*Cooperating with Timor Leste: Options for good development practice*' in June 2005 for which I volunteered to be on the steering committee, working on the conference theme 'governance and civil society'. In order to present the perspective of young people, I suggested that rather than bring a representative from an organisation in Timor, I would ask the Timorese students studying in Melbourne to make a presentation. I started to get to know the Timorese students in Melbourne and

their ideas and opinions about life in Timor Leste for young people. I worked with up to a dozen young Timorese over several months to identify the major concerns and issues which they wanted to present. In the end two young women made a very successful and professional presentation to the conference[15]. This exposure to Timorese youth views contributed to the development of my Candidature application. With the Candidature process complete I was able to start planning my first research visit. This 'scoping study' had the aim of familiarising myself with the range of activist organisations and identifying groups willing to participate in the research.

The scoping phase which took place in September 2005 involved preliminary interviews with leaders of young people's organisations and with the community leaders to outline the nature of the research and elicit their interest in being involved in the process. I identified a number of local NGOs established by young people and youth organisations which I intended to return to for the major research phase.

In my candidature application I had envisaged that the work of young people in civil society organisations would be substantially influenced by donor organisations, and that young people were subject to power influences of both traditional leaders and national leadership and policies. I stated that the research would seek to highlight the perspectives of young Timorese with respect to development, and analyse the agency exerted by young people in the framework of power structures operating both within the country. I provided a diagram (figure 1 below) to situate my hypothetical ideas of how young people can influence the development process.

Figure 1 identifies two avenues by which young people in civil society might influence development. Firstly through national processes of civil involvement in community organising and democratic process, and secondly through NGOs and project development drawing on the support of the international development agencies. It also shows two levels: national policy-making and the influence of the international community through technical support and aid provision; and the community level as the location where development outcomes are felt. Figure 1 also identifies two vertical channels of change,

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[15] The presentation was entitled "The Young People of Timor Leste – views from ETSA" (East Timor Students Association of Victoria). I wrote a paper for the conference proceedings publication entitled "Young People and Change". Wigglesworth (2005) published in *Cooperating with Timor Leste* Development Bulletin 68, October 2005, Canberra.

the national political structure, and the non-political NGOs and external aid (which have political influence but are not part of the political structure of the country). The two-way influence between National structures and civil society represents a functioning democratic society in which the people can have some influence on government through either representation or social movements.

Figure 1: *Diagram of hypothetical power framework showing how young people can influence the development process (from Research Proposal for Candidature)*
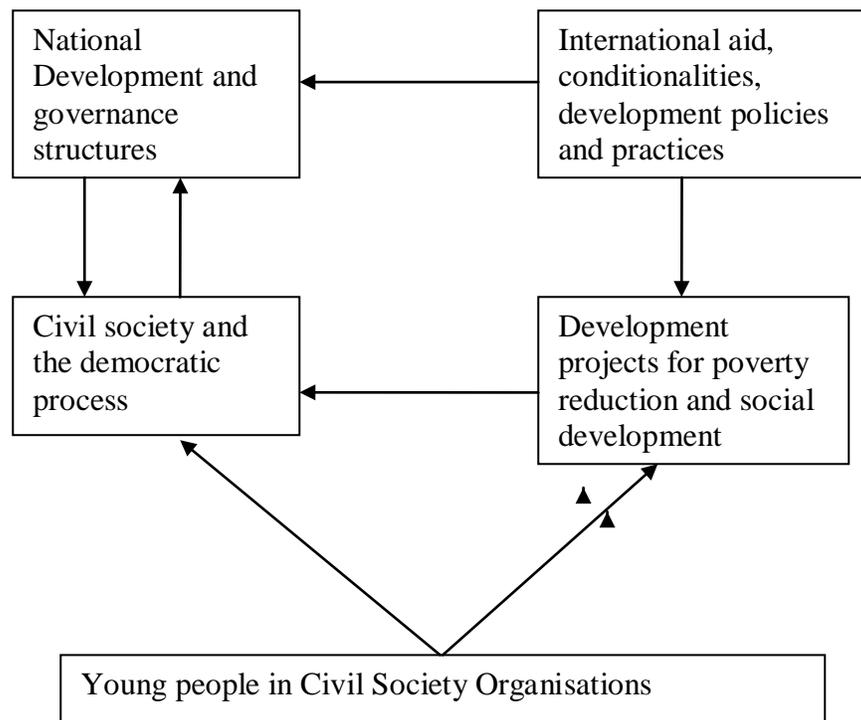
During my preparatory field research it became evident that the two-way relationship outlined in the figure between 'national development and governance structures' and 'civil society and the democratic process' was weak. This relationship, however, seemed of greater importance to informants compared to their relationship with international donors. Local civil society organisations were committed to their own objectives and while aid was sought, the major concern of participants was the development of democratic society in which they have voice.

My research plan entailed initial field work that would identify young people taking a leadership role in civil society groups, who were also willing to participate in the research. During the preliminary field work it became clear that many young Timorese were eager for their stories be told. There was, however, a low participation of women in civil society organisations outside of the capital Dili, eventuating in less than the fifty percent female participants which I had originally intended. The selection criteria for individuals involved in the research were:

- Representation includes the western region, eastern region and urban areas.

- The participants identify as young people and are leaders in their organisation.

- Participants are interested in telling their story for the research project.

In relation to using an interpreter for my research, enquiries had revealed that there was a dearth of officially registered interpreters in Timor Leste, and that in general the quality of interpretation was highly variable. Most of the tertiary educated young people I interviewed had relatively good English language skills, and certainly these young people could be offended at bringing in external interpreters. Having learned some Tetum, and worked with several Timorese friends in Melbourne on translating my key statements, it was clear to me that Tetum is not an easy language to translate, with many variations about how a word or phrase can be interpreted[16]. Consequently I preferred to work in English or Portuguese wherever possible. For those that could not speak either language, a local person was used as an interpreter, recommended by a local NGO.

The original research outline aimed to examine how young people within civil society organisations participate within the broader development context of customary practices and national development strategies. The crisis in 2006 raised a new element in the research, namely what was *not* happening in the national development strategies that resulted in widespread youth involvement in violence in Dili. Due to the constraints of working in a crisis environment, as well as the practical difficulties of interpretation outlined above, the planned in-depth research in rural communities was abandoned and

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[16] This view is corroborated by Janet Hunt in her PhD thesis. She experienced difficulties in the translation of English to Tetum 'as the translations had not all been correct as written Tetum was still being standardised and differences of interpretation emerged. These had to be resolved' (Hunt 2008:26).

with it the micro-level component of the analysis, resulting in a more national perspective of young people as agents of change.

The Crisis which started at the end of March 2006 escalated. The first major clash causing significant loss of life was on 28th April. Another on 23rd May occurred when the army and police turned on each other. Foreign troops were called in to restore order. These events made it impossible to undertake my research as planned from June to August 2006. Violence in the streets, mostly perpetrated by gangs of young men, escalated during June, and the Australian government issued a 'do not travel' warning. In July the situation started to ease, by which time half the population of Dili was living in refugee camps. All development agencies and NGOs had turned their attention to responding to the humanitarian crisis, and tertiary educational establishments in Dili had not opened since the start of the semester in March. Given the high profile of young people in the violence that had rocked the streets of Dili, it seemed important to consider the youth disturbances and record the views of some people working with youth at this time, even though this was not the main focus of my study. I finally arrived in Dili shortly after the 'do not travel' warning was lowered a level in late July, for a much shorter period than originally planned.

I undertook my field research in August-September 2006 shortly after the worst of the crisis. The security situation in Timor Leste was tense. I made some decisions about how to go about my data collection, based on knowledge I had from friends in Dili and Suai, and the fact that:

- Security was poor in Dili and western districts

- People were fearful

- More than 150,000 people were internally displaced people (IDPs), of whom half were in Dili IDP camps, including people I interviewed in 2005.

- Universities were not functioning; nor were students associations

- NGOs were not running their normal programs

I decided to focus on individual rather than group interviews as the former would pose the least difficulty to organise, although in a few cases interviews were undertaken with two

or more people. The research was re-planned recognising that people would have the crisis at the top of their mind. I needed to incorporate questions about their views on youth involvement in the violence and their own organisational role during the crisis. It was difficult to probe their current development work as almost all regular activities had been put on hold. I worked in the three locations of Dili, Suai and Baucau where I felt secure due to good local contacts, thus maintaining my original requirement for representation.

I undertook interviews with a range of informants, principally activists who had established or were key figures in local organisations. Further interviews were held with District Administrations, church and scout leaders involved with youth, and leaders and participants of martial arts groups, teachers and academics.

My key research question remained:

> ***How have Timorese development strategies taken into account the needs of young people, and do young people see themselves as agents of change in Timor Leste?***

Subsidiary questions were:

1. What are the sources of knowledge and personal experiences that enable young people to contribute to development?

2. How do youth organisations and youth-led civil society organisations respond to social and development needs?

3. How has the government responded to the activities of civil society organisations?

4. How do young people perceive their role with respect to traditional and political leadership, and international development agencies?

5. How do young people perceive their identity, and to whom do youth leaders see themselves accountable?

6. How have NGOs and youth organisations provided leadership in nation building and peacebuilding in the current crisis?

The interviews from the Scoping Phase were not originally intended to constitute part of the research data. However, subsequent events required that this be the case, as the

political upheavals which occurred in 2006 resulted in the major research phase being undertaken in a crisis situation when a number of organisations I had met in 2005 were not available for further interviews. The 2005 data also provided some very important material on opinions before the crisis. The material from this visit contributed to a paper I prepared for a book on post-independence Timor Leste which was published in 2007[17].

Data Collection

A semi-structured interview guide was devised. Interview questions were used only as a guide, questions were asked openly, and not read, and were followed up to gain more depth where appropriate. Questions were clustered in groups and the guide was used as a prompt to ensure that the main areas of questioning were covered.

I noted a changing use of the term 'youth' or 'young people'. One of the consequences of the 2006 crisis, was that the term 'youth' immediately made people think of the youth causing havoc in the streets of Dili. These were, according to news footage broadcast on television in Australia, mostly teenagers, even pre-teens, thus a very different group from the 'youth' of the liberation struggle that I had placed at the centre of my study. I thus devised a tactic of referring to the 'different generations of youth'. For example when activists referred to youth, I would question whether he/she was referring to 'youth of the resistance or youth who are recent school leavers'. In this way I was able to get a clear perspective on which generation of youth were being referred to.

I was interested in the history and motivation of young activists, as well as understanding the way they viewed development taking place in the new nation. There were nine 'primary' respondents with whom I held extensive interviews across the entire range of questions, recording the interviews digitally. I also interviewed a range of NGO and youth organisation leaders and also sought out some younger people who were involved in civil society activities but who were not necessarily in formal organisations. In total I interviewed forty two 'activists'. Martial arts organisations were so often mentioned in interviews that some members of these groups were sought out for interview. A further

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[17] "Young people in rural development in East Timor". Wigglesworth (2007) in (eds) D. Kingsbury and M. Leach; East Timor Beyond Independence, Monash University Press, Clayton.

twenty interviews were held with national or district government officials, church leaders, INGO staff and academics. All interviews were either digitally recorded or detailed notes were taken. Interviewees were informed of the purpose of the research and gave their consent for me to use their opinions in my thesis.

Unstructured interviews were undertaken with a range of other informants working with local NGOs, government and district administrations, church leaders and Timorese academics on similar areas of questioning. A few unstructured casual conversations also provided important insight into the subject area, and notes were taken after such meetings. During the scoping study in 2005, all interviews were completely unstructured. As mentioned previously, these now provide an important pre-crisis perspective. The 'identities' of informants sometimes embrace several roles, for example an individual may be leader of an organisation as well as having a formal teaching role. Others changed their work roles between my initial and subsequent meetings with them.

My major research visit was undertaken during crisis period when national government and international organisations were fully occupied in emergency programming to meet the needs of thousands of displaced people. It seemed inappropriate to expect national or international staff to make time for research interviews. Instead a further field trip was expected to be made to fill in gaps in the data in early 2007. A booking to Dili was made in March, but this also had to be cancelled due to renewed period of violence and another Australian government 'do not travel' warning. The subsequent period of national elections and my prior commitments resulted in the visit being abandoned. Instead I was able to interview five staff (or former staff) in Melbourne who had recently worked for international NGOs in Timor Leste. These included Australian NGO staff and Timorese who were undertaking study in Australia.

In summary, the original data which I have used for this study includes:

- Primary informants: Semi-structured interviews with young activists in 2006 (nine in-depth extended interviews recorded digitally)

- Secondary informants include another thirty three semi-structured interviews with activists. Nine interviews in 2006 were recorded digitally. For all 2005 and other 2006 interviews detailed notes were taken.

- Twenty semi-structured interviews were held with District officials, government officials, church leaders, academics, and donors.

- Follow up conversations with Timorese activists visiting Melbourne or during my consultancy visits to Timor Leste, and other informal conversations in Dili[18].

At the time of starting my research, there was no data available on young people in Timor Leste except for the national Census and other national records of a general nature. The Youth and Sports portfolio had been within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports up until mid 2005 when the recognition of growing youth issues resulted in a re-organisation and the creation of a separate Secretary of State of Youth and Sport (SSYS) overseeing the work of a Secretariat. The World Bank commissioned a youth research project *Timor Leste Youth Social Analysis Mapping and Youth Institutional Assessment* in 2005. I obtained this report during my September 2005 visit to Dili.

Further research into youth was undertaken by UNICEF at the end of 2005 in the form of the *National Youth Survey 2005* which undertook house to house surveys in selected districts (not including Dili) and focus group discussions in a number of educational establishments and youth organisations. This report was made available to me in early 2006.

In March 2006 I took a month's leave from study to work as a consultant on the evaluation team to review the effectiveness of the NGO Forum, the umbrella body of the NGOs in Timor Leste. The report *Evaluation of FONGTIL[19]* was the product of this four week consultation in Timor Leste. The work gave me additional insight into a range of issues in relation to civil society organisations. I was still in Dili as the first incidents of violence rocked the city in the aftermath to the sacking by the military of the 591 soldiers from the western part of Timor Leste, which marked the start of the 2006 crisis.

As youth involvement in the street violence in 2006 brought the issue of youth to centre stage, AusAID commissioned a researcher to undertake a study of youth gangs in Dili. This fieldwork was taking place at the time I was doing my own in August 2006, and I met

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[18] Many of these conversations were with primary or secondary informants at different points in time. There were also a couple informal encounters with specialists who provided information on significant national issues.

[19] Evaluation of FONGTIL by Ann Wigglesworth and Aderito de Jesus Soares, March 2006. FONGTIL is the acronym for the NGO Forum, the umbrella organisation of NGOs in Timor Leste.

James Scambary to share information about our work. Scambary's research on the growth of youth gangs was a topic in its own right. His research project included many youth under 18 years, thus outside the scope of my project, but it provided a useful additional source of knowledge for this study.

This study does not depend on the 2005-6 interviews alone. Indeed I was able to meet with some of my research participants on a number of occasions in addition to the main research period. Some of my research participants I met in Melbourne when they attended conferences or other activities. In 2007 I was fortunate to be involved in a Victoria University exchange program '*Engaging Young People in Decision Making*' through which seven Timorese 'youth leaders' were invited to participate in a three month Australian Leadership Award Program in Melbourne. By coincidence the participants included two of my primary interviewees, and another two were activists I had interviewed in 2005. The frequent contact with these seven Timorese 'youth leaders' over three months in 2007 proved fruitful in discussing and analysing the rapidly changing political and social environment.

During the third year of my studies I took three months leave, in January/February 2008 and again in June 2008 to undertake consultancy work in the NGO sector. Both consultancies focussed on capacity development of Timorese NGOs. These projects extended my insight into the changing environment for civil society organisations, and particularly as a result of the change in government in Timor Leste in mid 2007. When I was in Timor Leste for consultancy work, I also made met some of my research participants to discuss with them the changing political environment and how it was impacting on their work. During the last visit I also took the opportunity to share how I was using the material that I had received from them, particularly those who, in spite of the use of aliases, may be recognised by those who know well the NGO sector in Timor Leste.

Data Analysis

Reference in the text to interviewees is in the form of code names for activists and coded role descriptions in the case of other informants. In accordance with ethics requirements, it

was made clear to informants that their real names would not be used in the thesis, even though my research participants would, perhaps, have liked their own names to be used.

Once the data was collected the interviews were transcribed. The interviews were undertaken in either English or Portuguese with others being translated from local language into either English or Portuguese. The transcripts were coded and themes which emerged were then clustered together in the most significant and/or frequent codes to categorize the data. I found in my data a number of codes related to issues of *educational opportunities*, including their educational experience, the quality of education and its value to future prospects. Another cluster relates to *customary leadership and practice*, particularly in relation to the equality of women and the life choices available to women and girls. *Youth identity* was frequently mentioned including the roles of youth organisations and the transition to adulthood. A fourth cluster of responses was around young people's *expectations of development* at independence and their expectations of government. The positive roles that youth are playing in *civil society* organisations constitute a fifth thematic concept. There were also narratives of the personal history of research participants, which I have used to enrich the historical background presented in chapter three. These thematic clusters provide the themes for the chapters that follow.

Writing this thesis I have been concerned to present both the perspectives of my research participants and offer a scholarly analysis of the reality of their lives. I present the work as a narrative, interweaving the opinions of young activists with knowledge and analysis derived from other sources from the ever-expanding body of literature on Timor Leste. Narrative analysis is an approach to the analysis of qualitative data that emphasises the stories that people employ to account for events (Bryman 2004). Bryman suggests that narrative research brings into the analysis the stories that people tell which may have been fragmented and de-contextualised in the coding process. I present some of their poignant statements at the opening of each section to highlight in their own words some of the key issues presented in the chapters. This study aims to illuminate the world in which young activists live and to illustrate and analyse the diverse and complex processes which have contributed to and hindered development in Timor Leste.

Chapter Three

From Struggle to Independence

Introduction

This chapter provides a frame and contextualization to the lives of youth leaders who were drawn into new roles at independence. I begin by tracing the experience of Timorese youth during the years of the Indonesian occupation and the resistance struggle. For many of the people interviewed during the course of my research it was their experience in clandestine youth organisations that was formative in shaping their sense of self and political identity. These experiences, moreover, also provided the basis of a commitment and motivation to contribute, in a positive and meaningful way, to the development of Timor-Leste following independence. A significant number were present at seminal historical events such as the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991 and the Suai massacre in 1999[20]. By listening to such voices and narrating the history of the struggle against Indonesian military occupation and the subsequent arrival of the international community in the form of peacekeepers, the UN administration and development organisations, this chapter seeks to articulate the impact of these historic events on young Timorese activists.

History of the Struggle and role of Youth Movements

> *Then the concerns of youth were about the future of Timor Leste. All young people thought Timor Leste would be independent, and that they must do something to achieve the future. [Berta]*

The Portuguese arrived in the island of Timor in 1511. Initially their contact was limited to coastal trading missions, extracting sandalwood and other resources through treaty arrangements with local chiefs (Pinto & Jardine 1997). The Portuguese formed alliances with the customary chiefs of the coastal 'people of the sea' through whom they inserted themselves into the indigenous systems of exchange with the mountain dwelling 'people of the land' in order to pursue their political and economic interests (Traube 1995).

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[20] See later this chapter.

Overall, the Portuguese exerted little influence on Timorese society, establishing a permanent presence only in 1702, at the sandalwood port of Oecussi, now an enclave of Timor Leste surrounded by Indonesian West Timor. Only in the mid 19th century did Portugal move to consolidate its hold over the country, imposing a regime of forced coffee cultivation in the highland areas. Coffee soon became a lucrative export, replacing sandalwood which had declined in production due to overexploitation. Forced labour was also used for road construction, and a head tax was imposed to ensure agricultural production exceeded subsistence levels and surpluses were sold in the market (Pinto & Jardine 1997).

The introduction of forced labour generated rising opposition to colonial rule. Xanana Gusmão, hero of the resistance and first President of Timor Leste[21] has suggested that it was Portuguese domination that first generated the notion of common heritage between the diverse socio-linguistic groups[22] of Timor Leste (Gusmao 2000). Nationalism, however, was not evident until early in the twentieth century when a well organised rebellion of Dom Boaventura, the *Liurai* (king) of Manufahi, united almost all the of different Timorese kingdoms (Babo-Soares 2003a). In response the Portuguese brought in troops, including some from Mozambique, to put down the rebellion with a huge cost of life. This concluded the 'pacification' of East Timor in 1912 when for the first time Portugal gained effective control over the territory.

As in their other colonies, the Portuguese did little to contribute to the infrastructural development of the country, or the well-being of their subjects. Formal education during the Portuguese colonial period was largely provided by missions of the Catholic Church. The colonial government established schools in the mid 19th century only for the sons of the traditional leaders who were allies of the Portuguese administration. Those that had access to education under Portuguese colonialism were known as *assimilados*, that is, Timorese accepted as assimilated into 'civilised' Portuguese society. Mostly they were sons of the *Liurai* (traditional leaders) and *mesticos* (mixed blood).

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[21] Xanana Gusmao was leader of FALINTIL from 1980 until he was captured by the Indonesian military in 1993 and jailed. He was freed in 1999 and became the first President of Timor Leste. In August 2007 he became Prime Minister.
[22] The linguist Geoffrey Hull (Hull 1998) determines that there are 19 languages in east and west Timor, although many scholars make mention of 28 or 30 languages in East Timor alone.

In response to popular protests about the poor education and social welfare in 1959, the colonial administration began to increase the provision of primary education. Over the next 10 years primary school student enrolment rose from 4,898 to 27,299 and secondary enrolments from 175 to 376 (Babo-Soares 2003b). It is estimated that at the end of Portuguese rule no more than 10% of the population were literate (Nicolai 2004).

In 1974 a bloodless military coup known as the 'Carnation Revolution' threw out the fascist dictatorship in Portugal. Heralding a new progressive era, it was announced that colonial policies would be abandoned and independence would be granted to all Portuguese colonies (Ramos Horta 1987). The new democratic government took power on 25th April 1975, and initiated a rapid process of decolonisation, in spite of the fact that no preparation had been made by the Portuguese towards local self-rule.

In East Timor in 1975 political parties began to be formed by students returning from Portugal with 'radical' new ideologies. Some of the beneficiaries of Portuguese education are today's political leaders, the intellectual elite who were able to attend university in Lusophone countries where they acquired knowledge of, and sympathy for, independence movements around the world particularly in Lusophone Africa. It was students of *Liurai* and elite families studying in Portugal who established political organisations, the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT)[23] which was the precursor of the Revolutionary Front for Independent East Timor (FRETILIN)[24] in 1974, as well as the National Democratic Union (UDT)[25] and the APODETI party[26] (Hill 2002). These three major political groupings were formed around different political aspirations. The nationalist anti-colonialist FRETILIN party wanted independence from Portugal. The UDT, representing the landowning and conservative elite, favoured remaining with Portugal with greater autonomy. The third minor party, the APODETI party, formed by people with vested interests or family linkages with Indonesia, favoured local autonomy under Indonesian rule.

The founders of FRETILIN were just in their twenties, largely young people from middle class families resident in the capital Dili. They did, however, represent different parts of

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[23] ASDT – Associação Social Democrática Timorense
[24] FRETILIN - *Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente*.
[25] UDT - União Democrática Timorense
[26] APODETI – *Associacão Popular Democratica Timorensa* - Timorese Popular Democratic Association

the country rather than any particular linguistic grouping (Hill 2002). They included the future first Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri[27] and Jose Ramos Horta the Minister of Foreign Affairs who later became second Prime Minister, then President[28]. Ramos Horta later wrote:

> I had been named Minister for External Affairs and Information in the new, and first ever, cabinet of an independent, free East Timor. I was 25 years old, probably the youngest and least experienced cabinet minister in the world! (Ramos Horta 1987:98).

Ramos Horta, together with Xanana Gusmão and Mari Alkatiri played a major political role in the country since independence[29].

Rumours of an Indonesian invasion put pressure on these young leaders to act. An early coalition between FRETILIN and UDT was formed but collapsed some months later, due in part to meddling by Indonesia. A brief but violent civil war was fought between the two opposing political parties which has left a legacy of bitterness to the present day.

The independence of East Timor was declared by FRETILIN on 28th November 1975. Just a few days later on 7th December 1975 Indonesia invaded East Timor with tacit support from Australia and the USA. It was claimed that East Timor was not a viable state due largely to cold war fears in Indonesia and Australia about having a left wing government on their doorstep. Australia did not oppose the Indonesian take over of East Timor.

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[27] Mari Alkatiri was born of Timorese mother and Yemeni father, a member of the small Muslim minority. He studied surveying in Angola, returning to Dili in 1975 to become co-founder of FRETILIN. Days before the invasion he was sent by FRETILIN to mobilise support for Timor abroad. He undertook a degree, graduating in law from University of Eduardo Mondelane in Mozambique. He remained in Mozambique as leader of the political front of the resistance throughout the occupation.

[28] Jose Ramos Horta was an independence activist and a founding member of FRETILIN. After the Indonesian invasion he was mandated as the diplomatic representative of East Timor, a role he served from 1975-1999. He was based in New York to lobby the UN during the eight years he was banned from entering Australia (1976-1984) where other family members lived (Scott 2005). At independence he became the first Minister for Foreign Affairs. As a result of the political crisis in 2006 he briefly became the second (but unelected) Prime Minister. He was elected as the second President in April 2007.

[29] The first government which formed in May 2002 fell in June 2006 at the time of the political-military crisis. Jose Ramos Horta ran for the Presidential elections on 9th April 2007. Xanana Gusmão had stepped down as President in order to form a separate party to contest FRETILIN in the national elections. During this period a third interim government was formed which ran from the April 2007 until the formation of a new government after the parliamentary elections on 30th June 2007. Fretilin received the largest vote but lacked a clear majority. Agreement could not be reached on the leadership resulting in a political deadlock until President Ramos Horta finally called on Xanana Gusmão to form government in a coalition with the minority parties. Gusmão became the Prime Minister of what is named the Fourth Constitutional Government in August 2007.

Indeed, on the strength of their tacit approval of the invasion, Australia negotiated a very favourable maritime boundary with Indonesia in which it obtained access to the majority of the oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea[30]. Australia gave *de jure* recognition to Indonesia's occupation of East Timor in 1978, becoming the only western country to formally recognise East Timor as a legitimate part of Indonesia (Scott 2005). In spite of Australia's diplomatic efforts to persuade other nations to support Indonesia's position, East Timor continued to be an unresolved issue at the UN Security Council until steps were taken to resolve the issue in 1999. During that long twenty four year period during which terrible atrocities took place, the members of the Security Council did not see it in their interests to take action on the Timorese right to self-determination. By the end of the Indonesian occupation 200,000 people, representing a third of the population, are estimated to have died (Pinto & Jardine 1997:106).

FRETILIN formed an armed resistance, FALINTIL (*Forças Armadas de Liberação Nacional de Timor Leste*), the National Liberation Forces of East Timor, which fought a bitter twenty four year struggle against the superior might of Indonesia. Initially establishing *zonas libertadas* (liberated zones) in the mountainous areas FRETILIN controlled over two-thirds of the population as many abandoned their homes and sought refuge behind FRETILIN lines (Cox & Carey 1995:29).

The Indonesian response in September 1977 was to launch air strikes across the FRETILIN held mountain areas including bombing and chemical and biological warfare. In the early years of the resistance (1976-79) FRETILIN controlled the interior of the country and much of the population lived under its rule. There were disagreements on political ideology and violent purges against people who disagreed with the Marxist tendencies that some FRETILIN leaders subscribed to and against people who wanted to surrender to the Indonesians to escape the hardship in the mountains (CAVR 2005).

The intensive bombing of the mountains by the Indonesian military in 1977-8 resulted in heavy losses such that the armed resistance forces FALINTIL appeared to have been beaten into submission by the brutal Indonesian campaign to gain control of the territory (Cox & Carey 1995). From 50,000 guerrillas in 1975, the numbers were reduced to 700 in

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[30] If current international standards of a maritime boundary had been applied, most of these resources would not have been in Australian waters.

six years (Rei 2007). A change of military strategy by FRETILIN was made, which resulted in sending the population down from the mountains to live in occupied East Timor. FALINTIL reorganised itself as a resistance movement consisting of small guerrilla units which spread throughout the mountains. In this new era of the resistance struggle, school students began to engage in clandestine activities in support of the resistance fighters in the mountains. The Catholic church also played an important part, caring for the wives, widows and children of the freedom fighters. They also provided a Lusophone education which served to strengthen Portuguese as the language of the resistance, and provided leadership skills to youth which contributed to their later involvement in human rights advocacy. Historian Peter Carey pointed out: 'It is a measure of the sheer stupidity and brutality of the Indonesian occupation that Jakarta managed to get nearly all Timor's 28 ethnic and linguistic groups unified against them' (Carey 2007).

Xanana Gusmão was nominated leader of FALINTIL by FRETILIN in 1981. The guerrilla force was unhappy with following directives from the exiled FRETILIN Central Committee. In 1986 Xanana Gusmao broke with the FRETILIN leadership, taking FALINTIL into a pro-independence front, the *Conselho Nacional de Resistência Maubere* (CNRM)[31] together with UDT. In doing so Gusmao was recognising the fact that many pro-independence supporters were not FRETILIN members. 'National unity' became an ideal of CNRM, in which the armed resistance, FALINTIL, were fighting for all Timorese, not only for the party.

Narratives from the struggle

All Timorese who lived through the occupation have experienced the death of a close family member, displacement, extreme hardship and suffering. Trauma and fear were faced at an early age by many Timorese. Many of the people I interviewed harboured painful memories that they chose to share with me. The suffering endured by the Timorese during years of struggle provided the motivation and commitment for an independent East

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[31] Conselho Nacional de Resistencia Maubere (CNRM). *Maubere* was a term of insult used by the Portuguese against the peasantry. It was adopted by FRETILIN as an endearing term for all Timorese people. In 1998 the name was changed to *Conselho Nacional de Resistencia Timorese* (National Council of Timorese Resistance).

Timor free from poverty and oppression. **Francisco**[32], now 33, first experienced personal tragedy at the age of four when his oldest brother was shot by the Indonesia military. Francisco was brought up with three brothers and two sisters in a farming family in a remote sub-district of Covalima. Shortly after they came down from the mountains in October 1978, the Indonesian military came to their house asking for his father, who was a member of FALINTIL. His father was not present but his mother, who was in the house, was shot dead. Francisco was only four years old. After this his father left FALINTIL and returned to farming to look after the children. These traumatic events and bitter experiences at the hands of the Indonesian regime were, according to Francisco, the reason he joined the clandestine struggle: '*That is why I had to get involved*' he explained. He, and other youth who lived through the occupation, became involved in the clandestine youth movement in response to the brutality of the Indonesian regime, which fuelled the desire for freedom from Indonesian tyranny.

Harsh years in the mountains were also a defining experience for **Guilherme**[33], now a 33 year old civil society activist. His father, a FRETILIN member, was killed. His sister died of hunger as a result of the lack of food in the mountains. His younger brother later became sick and was taken to Dili where he died in 1980. A family of five had been reduced to two - Guilherme and his mother. His mother returned to the Indonesian occupied territory working as a housemaid in order to support Guilherme through his education. As a high school student Guilherme joined National Scouts, while also supporting the resistance through *Escuteiros Catholicos* (Catholic Scouts)[34]

From the invasion in 1975 until 1979 there was no formal schooling. In the liberated areas, FRETILIN mobilised students to teach literacy to children and adults in their own languages using the methods of Paulo Freire (Ramos Horta 1987:39)[35]. FRETILIN had

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[32] Primary informants are identified by a pseudonym. Ages refer to 2006 interviews. Francisco interview 7/8/06.

[33] Guillerme interview, Dili, 11/08/06

[34] There were two scout movements in East Timor, the Catholic Scouts (*Escuteiros Catholicos*) based in the parishes and the Indonesian scout movement based in schools. After independence Berta became involved in the Task Force set up after independence to bring the two National and Catholic scouts groups together as the National Union of Scouts of Timor Leste.

[35] The ideas of Paulo Freire are further elaborated in chapter 5. In Timor Leste, the organisation Sahe Institute for Liberation was later set up in 1998 by Timorese activists to advance the work of popular education, strengthen civil society and disseminate the idea of democracy (Sahe Institute for Liberation 2005).

started developing literacy materials in early 1975 to introduce nationalist ideals and stress national unity (Hill 2002). Freire's teachings also had an influence on Xanana Gusmão when he was former resistance leader. Paulo Freire teaching methods were brought back from Portugal by FRETILIN member Vicente Reis, known as Sahe. Sahe's conversations with Gusmão contributed to Gusmão's decision to take the struggle out of the divisive party politics and under a banner of National struggle[36].

From 1976 to 1992 the Indonesian administration reportedly spent US$750 million on development in East Timor. Approximately half of this was for government expenses and security related road building, but a significant contribution was made to Timorese education. Throughout the province, the Indonesian program set up an estimated 652 primary schools and 103 pre-secondary and secondary schools by 1995 (Babo-Soares 2003b). By 1999 there were 788 primary schools, 114 junior high (pre-secondary) schools and 54 secondary schools (Nicolai 2004). Some 8,740 Timorese students were studying at tertiary level at Indonesian universities including UNTIM in Dili[37] and in other parts of Indonesia.

Almost all of the Timorese participating in this study faced significant disruption to their education due to political events and their roles in the clandestine movement. **Carlos**[38] for example, who is the oldest of my research participants but is leader of a key youth organisation, missed out on school during the four years his family lived in the mountains with FRETILIN (1975-9). Born in 1962, Carlos attended primary school in the Portuguese system in 1975. He finally completed his secondary education in the Indonesian system in 1985 at the age of 23 years[39]. Many others of his age group never returned to school.

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[36] During the period that ideological struggles were taking place over the adoption of Marxism-Leninism within the leadership of Fretilin. Gusmão said that Sahe 'offered to help me during the breaks to understand the concepts better. From then on I learnt a concept that would help me immensely during the rest of the struggle. It was a sure method of analysis and forecast of the situation, a way of seeing things objectively and of calming the conscience. It was the concept of analysis of the current state of affairs: the dialectic of reality' (Gusmao 2000:48).

[37] University of Timor Timur (East Timor in Bahasa Indonesia) was the only university in Dili, built in 1992.
[38] Carlos interview, Dili, 31/07/06.
[39] The language of tuition in all schools during the Indonesian period was *Bahasa* Indonesia, except for the Catholic Sao Jose Secondary Collage in Dili which was permitted to teach in Portuguese.

Berta[40] was however, one of the lucky few in her age group who did not have a four year gap in her education. Berta was one of seven siblings. Her mother died when she was young, but she had a father and older brother who supported her to progress to higher education. She obtained a place in São Jose Secondary College, the only school allowed to teach in Portuguese during the Indonesian occupation (it was closed down in the late 1980s). Berta went on to undertake tertiary study obtaining a degree from a university in Java in the medium of *Bahasa* Indonesia[41]. Berta has become a leading activist playing a major role in both the scouts and the development of the women's movement in Timor Leste.

A number of my research participants were part of the first wave of students to start and complete their education in the Indonesian system. Schools opened in most districts in 1980 and 1979 in Dili. For instance Guilherme remembers starting school in Dare in 1979 when there were no blackboards and no benches to sit on and where they had to write in the dirt on the ground. Of those that started school at that time and continued through to university most had completed the four year degree course but had not submitted their thesis by 1999. Thus the Indonesian education system closed, but they had not graduated. All young Timorese have experienced a pattern of interrupted or incomplete education.

The Indonesian focus on developing the education system was seen as a way of influencing young Timorese. Students were expected to learn the *Pancasila*, the five guiding principles of the Indonesian constitution and the national values in 'an educational system designed to inculcate in children respect and admiration for Indonesia's values, beliefs and practices' (Arenas 1998). Reports of school enrolments and literacy rates vary. That the Indonesian government pursued a policy of education for all is undisputed. By 1990 secondary school enrolment was fifty times that during the Portuguese era, and illiteracy rates fell from 90% to 52% of the population (Cox & Carey 1995:46). By the end of the Indonesian occupation the first year school enrolment rate reached 90% of the population, almost equal for girls and boys (Nicolai 2004:44). Nevertheless, rather than producing obedient Indonesian citizens the system succeeded in breeding a new generation of independence activists.

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[40] Berta interview, Dili, 30/07/06
[41] *Bahasa* means 'language' in Indonesian. Indonesian language is Bahasa Indonesia, often abbreviated simply as '*Bahasa*'.

Since the start of the occupation youth played an important role in supporting the resistance fighters in the mountains. For some dozen years, East Timor was closed, with Timorese living in complete isolation from the international community. Indonesia successfully denied reports of human rights abuses in the international arena. It was only in 1989 that Indonesia finally declared East Timor open again to tourists and investors (Pinto & Jardine 1997).

In the late 1980s, Xanana envisaged a new and distinct role for youth and students in the struggle. From this point on, the student movement had a pivotal role in the clandestine movement. The National Resistance of East Timorese Students (RENETIL) led by Fernando de Araujo, the Organisation of Catholic East Timorese Youth and Students (OJECTIL)[42] led by Gregorio Saldanha, and *Orgão Oito*, an underground organisation working directly with the guerrillas led by Constançio Pinto, were formed to participate in the struggle (Nicholson 2001; Pinto & Jardine 1997).

The first significant event organised by the clandestine youth movement was for the visit of Pope John Paul II in October 1989 to the largely Catholic East Timor. This visit was given great importance by the people, of whom over 90% were Catholic. This was a rise from a third of the population at the end of the colonial era. A rise in the adoption of the Catholic faith resulted from the requirement in Indonesian census of belonging to one of five official religions. The five religions are Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Protestantism and Catholicism. Animism, which was the main belief system in East Timor, was not included, thus Timorese were required to nominate another religion in the Indonesian census. Importantly for the history of struggle, the Timorese church was led by the Apostolic Administrator for East Timor. This reflects the Vatican's recognition of Timor Leste as independent from the Catholic Indonesian Bishop's Conference. Thus East Timor, in the eyes of the Catholic Church, continued to be a separate county. This position was held by Bishop Belo for much of the occupation. He was initially accepted by the Indonesians as a 'moderate', but became sympathetic and supportive to the Timorese struggle after he saw the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Indonesians.

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[42] RENETIL (*Resistencia Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste*) and OJECTIL (*Organização da Juventude e Estudante Catolica de Timor Leste)* were organisations of the clandestine movement.

According to Pinto, some priests joined the resistance fighters in the mountains, increasing their influence. Throughout the occupation the church provided sanctuary for activists being hunted by the Indonesian armed forces. Pinto understood the church role as integral to the Timorese struggle: 'The Church is helpful because the Church is the people. If there are no people, there is no church. And when the people suffer the Church also suffers. The Church is the only East Timorese institution that is outspoken about atrocities committed by Indonesian army in East Timor' (Pinto & Jardine 1997).

The Indonesian authorities hoped the visit of the Pope would result in the Vatican recognising East Timor as part of Indonesia. The first demonstration of the youth movement was an action organised by the Catholic scouts aimed at dismissing this possibility (Pinto & Jardine 1997:110). The presence of contingents of news and media reporters for the Pope's visit would ensure success in alerting the world to issues inside East Timor.

Another student demonstration took place during the visit in 1990 of US Ambassador, John Monjo. Students succeeded in entering Hotel Turismo where he was staying and presented flowers and a petition and talked directly to him. Many of the demonstrators were afterwards severely beaten by the Indonesian armed forces (Pinto & Jardine 1997:117). These student actions drew international attention to the situation prevailing in East Timor for the first time in more than a dozen years[43].

The following year a Portuguese parliamentary delegation was planning to visit the territory which, it was hoped, would resolve the status of East Timor. Student activists, led by the Organisation of Youth and Students of Timor Leste (OJETIL) [44], had been planning for the visit for a year, but the visit was cancelled. The military started hunting down the student activists. The church was a safe haven, and many students sought protection by hiding in the Motael church (Pinto & Jardine 1997). The Indonesians surrounded the church, shot and killed Sabastião Gomes and arrested 25 others. **Guilherme** was among those nearby who ran to help Gomes and was arrested and thrown in jail. According to Guilherme, Bishop Belo went to negotiate with the Indonesians for the release of the

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[43] Pinto suggests that outside the country, the term '*intifada*' started to be used to refer to the Timorese struggle following this event (Pinto & Jardine 1997:118).

[44] *Organização Juventude Estudante de Timor Leste* (OJETIL), was a major Fretilin youth organisation formed in the 1990s from the Catholic youth organisation OJECTIL.

young people. Belo's ministrations were successful and Guilherme and others were freed the next day.

Sabastião Gomes' funeral became a symbol of resistance. Several thousand, mostly young people, joined the procession to the cemetery. Fully armed Indonesian troops opened fire on the young mourners killing 271 students and youth and injuring hundreds more (Pinto 2001). This event in 1991 which famously became known as the Santa Cruz Massacre was a pivotal moment for the resistance struggle. The presence of western photographers and film makers at the event helped inform the world of the atrocities taking place in East Timor, until that time without witness[45].

This terrible event spurred new action by the resistance and reinforced the role of the clandestine youth:

> 'Now, after the massacre of November 12 1991, we see the resistance is more solid and more active than ever, even with the capture of Xanana. The resistance is in the hands of the new generation. The Indonesians have educated many more East Timorese than the Portuguese ever did. And many of the East Timorese who have gone to Indonesian universities are now fighting against the Indonesian occupation. Because they have gone to university, they better understand the political situation (Pinto & Jardine 1997:237-8).

Following the Santa Cruz massacre a new approach to the resistance was devised by the leadership giving new prominence to the student movement. Three resistance fronts were created: the Political Front led by Mari Alkatiri in Mozambique; the Diplomatic Front led by Jose Ramos Horta in Australia and the USA; and the Clandestine Front made up of the Central Committee and four youth/student organisations in East Timor and Indonesia. The youth played a crucial role in the pursuit of Timorese independence from this time with 'the resistance in the hands of the new generation' as mentioned by Pinto.

Activist accounts, particularly those of young leaders Constançio Pinto and Naldo Rei, demonstrate a high degree of intercommunication between Xanana Gusmao as the leader of FALINTIL and the clandestine youth movement. For example Rei received direct

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[45] These include photographer Peter Cox, who with writer Peter Carey, published a book 'Generations of Resistance in East Timor' on the youth movement, and film maker Max Stahl, a British television journalist who produced a documentary 'Cold Blood' on the Santa Cruz massacre.

communication from Xanana telling him to organise a demonstration in Dili to coincide with a meeting with non-aligned world leaders in Jakarta in 1992 (Rei 2007:60).

From 1992 the student movement broadened its scope on two fronts. Firstly, RENETIL, the clandestine organisation for Timorese students studying in Indonesia, began collaborating with Indonesian students' organisations to inform and engage Indonesian students in the Timorese struggle. Secondly, the movement expanded its focus from the liberation struggle to other issues of human rights and democracy within Indonesia. Significantly, this resulted in demonstrations being held within Jakarta for the Timorese struggle. For instance on 7th December 1995, the twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion, the Timorese student's scaled the fences of the Dutch and Russian embassies in Jakarta, demanding self-determination via a referendum (Rei 2007; Sword Gusmao 2003). Timorese students' involvement is said to have played no small part in the pro-democracy movement which eventually toppled Suharto from power on 21st May 1998 (Nicholson 2001).

The Catholic Church also played a role in organising youth and many churches and missions become safe havens for pro-independence youth that were being targeted. The Catholic youth groups such as Catholic Scouts became an important place for analysis and reflection about the violence that was taking place in the community. It was also one of the few youth organisations which encouraged girls' participation. **Berta**[46] who had joined the Indonesian scout movement at university in Java, was asked by the Parish of Motael to return to Dili to organise a Catholic Church scout movement in the mid 1990s.

Outside East Timor there was more freedom to discuss the issues facing Timor. Carlos[47] went to study in an Indonesian university, joining RENETIL in 1990. RENETIL members discussed the Timorese situation with students from other islands of Indonesia. When the RENETIL leader Fernando 'Lasama' Araujo[48] was jailed Carlos took over the leadership role. He too was subsequently arrested and detained for more than three years. On release from jail he resumed RENETIL activities and continues in the RENETIL leadership today.

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[46] Berta interview
[47] Carlos interview
[48] Known as Lasama in the resistance, Fernando de Araujo after independence formed the Democratic Party (PD) representing the views of the Indonesian speaking youth.

The official Indonesian East Timor Students Association, IMPETTU[49], was infiltrated by RENETIL members to convert it into a pro-independence organisation supporting the clandestine movement[50]. Attending university in Java, **Henrique[51]** was active in clandestine activities within IMPETTU. He believes that former clandestine students still have an important role to contribute to education and civil society to support the younger generation in the new nation.

Young people were engaged in the resistance movement through small clandestine groups which would be unknown to others for their own protection. The Organisation of Timorese Youth (*Organisação da Juventude Timorese* – OJT) which had its leaders appointed by FALINTIL was tasked with supplying FALINTIL in the mountains (Ospina & Hohe 2002). Pinto describes how different youth or women's cells were responsible for provided medical supplies and food to different groups of resistance fighters in the mountains (Pinto & Jardine 1997). Some cells sold goods to raise funds for the resistance, for instance **Domingos**[52] had the task of selling 'cartão' to raise funds. Students with knowledge of English played an important role in developing contacts to pass information from the resistance leadership out of the country. Students in Jakarta were also couriers and disseminators of documents from the resistance guerrillas (Sword Gusmao 2003). Each clandestine cell had a code name and would work without knowledge of what other cells were doing. Small cells of activity kept the identity of members of the clandestine secure (Pinto & Jardine 1997).

There were, however, also youth who joined the Indonesian intelligence organisations. Indonesia fuelled inter-communal conflict by promoting and funding youth gangs such as the *Ninjas, Gadapaksi* and pro-Indonesian militia in 1999, exploiting differences within the population. The *Ninjas* emerged in Dili in 1995 roaming the streets at night, intimidating and kidnapping independence supporters. The *Gadapaksi* (Youth Front for Upholding Pancasila) emerged a year later provoking disturbances among the Timorese. For instance *Gadapaksi.* acted as provocateurs to generate anger and instigate fights with

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[49] IMPETTU - *Ikatan Mahasiswa / Pelajar Timor Timur*
[50] The politicisation of IMPETTU had been a strategy of Renetil since its inception. In Denpasar, the birthplace of Renetil, all IMPETTU leaders after 1989 were Renetil members. student leaders were able to use IMPETTU to organize allowable student events which Renetil, as a clandestine organisation used as cover for more subversive activities (Nicholson 2001)
[51] Interview with Henrique, Baucau 18/8/06
[52] Domingos interview, Suai, 4/07/06

Catholic youth by insulting Bishops or priests and disrupting Catholic ceremonies[53]. Like the *Ninjas* they were drawn from unemployed East Timorese youth and linked to criminal networks and the Indonesian Special Forces[54]. The *Gadapaksi* youth also informed the military of pro-independence youth who would then kidnap these youth in night time raids. *Gadapaksi*, like the militia in 1999, were paid a monthly stipend. These tactics helped to create an impression that internal divisions were at the heart of the Timor problem.

Within Dili, the Indonesian oppression and intimidation prevented the population from speaking out. However UNTIM students found they were able to voice community concerns as a student body from within the university. **Eugenio**[55] records that every day people came from the community to complain of being intimidated by the Indonesian military and to ask the students to inform the authorities. Students would raise the issues with the government and if there was no response they would hold a demonstration. The first demonstration following the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre was in July 1994. After that, regular demonstrations were held by UNTIM students. According to Eugenio, their education suffered because the Indonesian lecturers became afraid to give lectures.

President Suharto's downfall in May 1998 was a turning point for East Timor. The East Timor Student Solidarity Council (ETSSC) was formed in June 1998 by students studying at UNTIM in Dili as a response to the new political environment. Political expression and organisation was permitted for the first time since 1975. The ETSSC deliberately did not align itself with any political party. Comprising youth and students the ETSSC had a new socio-political mission focussed on issues pertaining to peace, democracy, reconciliation, and the promotion of self-determination through a referendum. In June 1998 they carried out a series of demonstrations in Dili calling for an end to human rights violations and for greater freedoms. On one occasion up to 10,000 students attended a demonstration, a brave act of political expression that fortunately the Indonesian authorities did not respond to (ETAN 2000).

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[53] I heard these stories about the *Gadapaksi* from my Timorese colleagues when I was in East Timor in 1997 and 1998. Their role was again mentioned by Eugenio.
[54] James Scambary – personal communication 8th July 2008. The Special Forces are known as *Kopassus*.
[55] Eugenio interview, Suai, 7/08/06

Following the fall of President Suharto in 1998, it was possible to see groups of people congregating on the streets, discussing or socializing, something unheard of previously as it had been forbidden for more than four people to meet except at mass. In Jakarta, Indonesian students demonstrated and spoke openly to the press about the injustices that President Suharto had perpetrated against the people. The Timorese instantly recognised this was a new period of political openness, which gave rise to new hope within Timor[56]. On June 9th 1998 President Habibie suggested that he would be willing to grant East Timor 'special autonomy' in exchange for Timorese recognition of Indonesian sovereignty, an offer that was quickly rejected (Lloyd 2000). However, this offer of autonomy paved the way for the UN to initiate a transition plan (Smillie & Minear 2004:61).

Several of the young activists I interviewed were active in ETSSC at this critical time. **Antonio,** who continues in the organisation today, was one of the UNTIM students at the founding meeting for ETSSC in 1998. ETSSC was formed to promote dialogue between Timorese of different political orientations and to promote non-violence. ETSSC had members representing all 13 districts united by commitment to the goal of independence[57]. Antonio, Pedro, Francisco and Eugenio all participated in the founding meeting.

ETSSC started mobilising the population in anticipation of finally ending Indonesian occupation and establishing democracy in Timor-Leste. **Pedro[58]** played a formative role in the ETSSC 'dialogues' that were held within communities to raise awareness about possible political change. From the second half of 1998 students travelled to every district carrying out forums aimed at helping people to understand what a referendum would mean. People were invited to express their views on the future of the country and at many meetings they condemned human rights abuses and rejected Indonesian rule. Lansell Taudevin, a former Australian aid official, wrote of these dialogues at the time:

> If there is one characteristic that typifies the students' activities in East Timor it is maturity. Their actions and reactions have been deliberate and well thought out.

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[56] I was with my Timorese colleagues at the time, at a meeting held in Bali because Timorese colleagues said it would be unsafe to hold a meeting with foreigners in Dili. We watched the events on Indonesian television. Our colleagues were amazed and excited at the sight of interviews of Javanese youth being broadcast on TV. It was the first time to hear alternative opinions to the inevitable government line.
[57] Antonio interview, Dili, 28/07/06
[58] Pedro interview, Dili, 14/8/06

> They maintained a rational, calming influence throughout the period. There were many opportunities and calls for aggressive and confrontational action. They could have gone onto the streets as their counterparts did in Jakarta and created havoc. Instead, they exhibited great control and civil responsibility which went far beyond the norm. They spread out into the rural areas, forming teams to hold dialogues in every corner of East Timor. They brought these results back to Dili and tried to contribute a rational and widely based view of the aspirations of the East Timorese (Taudevin 1999:185-6).

In January 1999 President Habibie responded in an unexpected manner to a communication from the Australian Prime Minister[59], announcing that the East Timorese would be given the opportunity to decide on their future through popular consultation. He proceeded to discuss with the Secretary General of the UN about the option of independence as a possible solution for East Timor. Ominously, however, this period coincided with fuelling pro-Indonesian militia with arms by the Indonesian military (TNI). Timorese youth were recruited into a series of locally based militia groups and provided monthly stipends which guaranteed their willingness to carry out acts of violence on command.

Starting with killings in Alas in late 1998, there were increasingly frequent attacks against independence supporters across the country. Violence escalated. Sporadic unprovoked attacks on pro-independence communities involved vicious killings and widespread burning of houses. The trickle of people who fled their villages in January became a steady stream. The horrific events which led to this displacement are detailed in the account of journalist John Martinkus (Martinkus 2001). At end of January 1999 there were 5,000 internally displaced people (IDPs). The reign of terror in the countryside resulted in numbers of IDPs escalating to 60,000 by July (Smillie & Minear 2004).

Small amounts of relief aid were distributed in Dili through the Catholic Church and through POSKO[60], a coalition of local NGOs. Guilherme was one of those who worked with POSKO coordinating food distribution. **Francisco**, who had become involved with

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[59] This letter, dated 19th December 1998 from Australian PM John Howard to President Habibe, suggested that the Timorese should offer greater autonomy over a 10-15 year period, after which a referendum would allow the Timorese choose independence or autonomy with Indonesia.

[60] Post for the Coordination of Emergency Aid

the clandestine movement while at UNTIM in 1996 was the ETSSC coordinator for Covalima district. Francisco held meetings with the people in the sub-districts to help them understand their democratic rights. From late 1998 the political situation began to deteriorate further, militia started to carry out random attacks such that forums could no longer be held and ETSSC students were targeted. Francisco, for example, was targeted by the militia in Suai[61] in 1999, forcing him to flee to Kupang in West Timor in April 1999:

> Militia from Mahidi and Laxau tried to kill me many times. They came to my house in the day and in the night. Then one day the Commander (of TNI[62]) came to my house with weapons. I managed to escape[63].

In June, in spite of continuing threats of violence, CNRT asked Francisco to return with 300 Timorese refugees to organise and assist their registration for the popular consultation.

International concern rose dramatically after the Liquica massacre in April 1999 in which over 100 people were killed when militia opened fire on people in the Liquica church. Many Timorese activists were in Melbourne at the time for a conference to initiate development planning for East Timor. Dozens of the victims were personally known to many of the participants. The Australian government continued to claim that it was 'rogue elements' that were causing the violence rather than the Indonesian military[64].

On 5th May 1999 an agreement was signed in New York which was the culmination of 17 years of negotiations by the offices of the UN Secretary-General. The agreement, between Indonesia, Portugal and the UN (which had never recognised the Indonesian occupation) outlined the principles for a universal secret ballot by which the Timorese could vote for or against autonomy with Indonesia. If they rejected autonomy, there would be a transfer of authority through the UN to independence (Martin 2000). This paved the way for the UN Security Council resolution which established a UN Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to set in place conditions for a UN sponsored popular consultation on

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[61] Suai is the main town and administrative centre of Covalima District
[62] TNI – Indonesian Armed Forces
[63] Francisco interview, Suai, 7/8/06
[64] Following this terrible event, I took Fr. Barreto, Director of Caritas East Timor to Canberra in April 1999 to meet with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer. Fr. Barreto provided him with a first hand account of the campaign of violence by the Indonesian military and the militia which had caused thousands of internally displaced people who were being supported by the Catholic church. The Australian government continued to deny that the Indonesian government was responsible.

autonomy. A condition imposed by Indonesia was that they alone would be responsible for the security arrangements.

The arrival of the **Malae**[65]

> *I applied to the UN as a translator. I remembered the vocabulary each day then studied the dictionary every night to understand. I would interview people about the situation in villages and ask about their situation. I learned from interviewing villagers – it was like research. I learned how to talk to the people, how to know the leaders. I now know how to get ideas, strategies so that people can give their ideas and opinions. It is helpful for working in the community. [Eugenio]*

In late May, hundreds of UN personnel started arriving to prepare for the elections. The United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) recruited over 400 foreign UN volunteers making up the corps of electoral officers, assisted by 600 local Timorese staff (DFAT 2001:93). UN supervision would include only 275 unarmed police along with the UN volunteers who would be responsible for the electoral process (Smillie & Minear 2004:61).

The United Nations required educated young people in the early mission of UNAMET which opened up new avenues of experience and skills for young people as interpreters. As the language of the UN mission was English, young Timorese who had learned some English in school were recruited. As there were insufficient numbers of Timorese proficient in English many UN staff initially were unable to communicate effectively with their interpreters[66], and young Timorese have described how they struggled to understand[67]. In addition, large numbers of translators were needed as the agreement defined that all communications would be produced in four languages – Tetum, Portuguese, Indonesian and English. The employment of young educated Timorese to translate communiqués into Tetum proved to be difficult. Tetum had not been a written language, consequently the translators had never written the language and could not reach agreement on the correct spelling of Tetum words[68]. This sudden and massive requirement for interpreters and translators catapulted large numbers of young Timorese into a new

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[65] *Malae* is Tetum for foreigner.
[66] Personal communication with various UN staff, May-August 1999.
[67] Eugenio, Francisco interviews
[68] The Catholic church first started using written Tetum in 1994. UNAMET eventually called on a Timorese staff member of the Tetum literacy program of the Catholic Mary McKillop Institute in Sydney to oversee the Tetum translation team at UNAMET.

context of foreign values and an English language medium of communication, creating a steep learning curve. This also opened new opportunities for their futures.

Initially the presence of international witnesses provided some constraint on the criminal actions of the militia which was welcomed by the Timorese community. When *malae* were not present militia violence against pro-independence supporters continued unabated in the months before the ballot. Many university students studying in Indonesia at the time, particularly RENETIL members, had returned to East Timor to participate in the preparations, registration and enrolment for the ballot. Militia violence caused delays in ballot registration that forced a three week postponement of the ballot until the end of August, necessary to enrol the 60,000 IDPs who were required to register in their home villages. Students and young people worked to ensure people knew where, when and how to register, and subsequently to vote. The students were threatened and the RENETIL office had to be closed due to threats (de Araujo, F 2000). Some students were killed for their efforts (ETAN 1999). Women's organisations also played a crucial role in the campaign in the months leading up to the ballot (de Araujo, F 2000). Amidst continuing violence, the Indonesian government claimed innocence over the attacks and argued it was unable to stop them.

Gradually UN personnel started to be targeted by the militia who claimed the UN was 'pro-independence'. This was largely because the Timorese employed by the UN reflected the views of the general population and most were pro-independence (Martin 2000). Voter registration was achieved in spite of the threats and violence. The head of the UNAMET mission, Ian Martin, recognised that the peaceful implementation of the consultation process, an objective of the UNAMET mission, was not going to be achieved, but a further postponement would make it unlikely that the Ballot would proceed at all (Martin 2000). There was a determination that the Ballot should go ahead, thus it was postponed no further in spite of continuing security threats.

The UN sponsored ballot was held on 30th August 1999 with 98.5% of registered voters turning out on polling day in spite of the continuing threats of violence - a show of grim determination by the Timorese. A massive 78.5% voted against autonomy with Indonesia, that is, they voted *for* independence (Martin 2000).

The international presence in East Timor had given the people confidence to turn out, even though most Timorese expected retribution. Some voters reported that they 'were going into the mountains after the vote because they didn't know what was going to happen'[69]. Within hours of the ballot results being announced on 4th September the violence escalated.

In Suai, the militia were intimidating the population and many people were sheltering in Suai church. **Francisco** was nearby, noting the militia around the church. He slept out that night. In the morning at 9am of the 6th September he heard gunfire and saw smoke around the church. All 115 refugees sheltering in the church had been killed together with three priests, in one of the most horrific events of a terrible year.

Following the massacre the FALINTIL commander of the region tasked Francisco with protecting the youth:

> The FALINTIL Commander of region IV ordered me to take 40 young people into the forest because I was a student leader. Everyday I would walk from place to place, swim in the river. I didn't know if my father, brother or sister were alive[70].

They survived by eating only wild berries and roots and came down into the town only after the Australian International Forces for East Timor, INTERFET, arrived on 21st September.

FALINTIL forces had remained confined to barracks as they had since the arrival of the UN. According to Ian Martin, Head of UNAMET, FALINTIL 'displayed remarkable discipline and restraint, determined not be drawn into an open conflict that could be presented as "civil war"' (Martin 2000:142). Francisco, with a viewpoint perhaps common within the suffering community, was critical of the lack of action by FALINTIL in the face of such overt violence: 'I was very sad. Many people were dead. People had been feeding FALINTIL then they didn't come to protect the people. People sacrificed their lives' explained Francisco.

Across the country the brutal events of the post-ballot rampage by the militia and Indonesia security forces, resulted in almost 1500 people losing their lives. Dili was

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[69] These comments were recorded in an interview with me on the 7.30 Report on 31st August 1999 when I was Caritas Australia Program Manager for East Timor. www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s48233.htm
[70] Francisco interview

almost entirely destroyed, together with all Indonesian built structures including schools, health clinics and administration buildings across the country. As well, a third of the population was transported to West Timor. **Manuel**[71] recounted how on 9th September 1999 he was part of the well planned military operation which resulted in 250,000 East Timorese being herded at gunpoint onto trucks and transported across the border to West Timor. He had no choice but to stay in Kupang for months before he could return home.

The international community appeared to be unprepared for this outcome, although Fernandes suggests that Australia was deliberately turning a blind eye to what their intelligence agencies were telling them (Fernandes 2008) [72]. By 9th September most UN personnel and other expatriate staff had been evacuated to Darwin, Dili was destroyed and almost the entire population had fled Dili[73]. The first civilian mission visited a ghostly and smouldering Dili just two days after the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) arrived on 23rd September. Just a handful people had returned to Dili to observe the noisy Australian army vehicles in the silent streets - fearful faces peered around the corners of shattered buildings to see whether they were friend or foe[74].

In the Districts the population fled from the towns to the hills. **Tersasinha**[75]**,** a high school student, fled with her family from Baucau. 'We went to the forest on 3rd September and stayed in the forest until November 26th. It was very difficult, cold, no food, no rice, we only ate traditional forest foods. We had not soap for washing'. They returned to Baucau to find their house burned. 'We rebuilt our house that had been burnt. I started school again but it was difficult to get to school, no money for transport and no money for fees' Terasinha recalled. In Baucau the Catholic church resumed school classes in November 1999, in contrast to many places around the country where the schools had been burned and teachers fled.

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[71] Manuel interview, Suai, 6/8/06

[72] The Australian Government always insisted that 'rogue elements' of the Indonesian military (TNI) were behind the violence. The final report of the Commission for Truth and Friendship Indonesia - Timor Leste which was set up to investigate the events of 1999 has confirmed that the TNI was behind the atrocities and had backed the Timorese militia groups in the killing, rape and destruction that took place in 1999.

[73] More detailed accounts of the period prior to and following the ballot have been documented by McDowell (2002), Hunt (2002/2), Zambelli (2001).

[74] I was one of a handful of NGO representatives invited to participate in this visit.

[75] Terasinha interview, Baucau, 19/08/06

Over the weeks that followed the relief program brought in food and medical care, as the population started drifting back into Dili and other towns and villages. The emergency aid workers were largely unaware that this post-ballot rampage had come on top of twenty four years of intimidation and fear of the Indonesian military occupation. The trauma deeply influenced the Timorese and this lack of understanding on the part of many aid workers affected Timorese responses to participation in the rehabilitation program.

The emergency response planning process and coordination began in Darwin while Dili was abandoned and burning. International NGOs established operational bases together with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) which gave daily briefings for a two week period before effective action could take place (Zambelli 2001:39). The National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) was present at these coordination briefings. This was a logistically complex operation as Dili had been stripped of any facility or transport. The UN and development agencies, who had evaluated the previous month, returned to the devastated country in October 1999. The first relief workers to arrive in Dili set up in tents, in the toughest of conditions in the destroyed UNAMET compound, bringing everything they needed to survive and work. Supplies included significant quantities of food to be distributed to the large numbers of IDPs in Dili.

In October 1999 the UN took on the role of establishing a civil administration known as the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)[76]. A huge emergency relief effort was mounted which involved hundreds of foreign aid agencies. This influx of foreign funds brought opportunities in the emergency programs for the young Timorese, particularly those who had managed to develop their English skills during the UNAMET period.

UNTAET assumed all executive and legislative authority for the transitional state until formal independence was granted, operating with a $700m budget from UN member states (Smillie & Minear 2004). Initially a small advisory council of Timorese was established, but from the start, there was a reluctance to deal with CNRT, which was considered a political organisation even though it was the de-facto voice of the people. CNRT was left

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[76] It was the first time that the UN had taken over the administration of a country as part of their operations, and was according to Chopra (2002) the first act of UN sovereignty.

without a building to establish itself in Dili, instead having to locate themselves in Aileu District, ninety minutes away, without transport or any other support (Hunt, Bano & Patrick 2001).

In Timor Leste following the crisis in 1999, development agencies flooded into the country to provide emergency support and rehabilitation - 49 international NGOs (INGOs) arrived between September and December 1999. The number had grown to more than 250 within two years (Smillie & Minear 2004:69). To assist in the delivery of programs, INGOs were looking for sets of administrative skills amongst local NGOs that were largely unobtainable. Timorese had little experience of the forms or mechanisms of accountability required by INGO's. In Timor, during the period of Indonesian military rule, information was closely guarded within families and was never written down because of the risks involved. Civil society organisations flourished in Timor prior to 1999, but as Holloway suggests they were not the kind of civil society organisations that donors wanted to work with. Holloway identifies a range of religious, sporting cultural, community and mass organisations that existed during the Indonesian occupation. He claims, however, that these were not recognised by the international development agencies either because they had links to the clandestine civilian resistance movement, or were linked to the 'socialist' ideology of the independence parties (Holloway 2004).

The arrival of international agencies into East Timor precipitated a huge growth of local NGOs that set themselves up to contribute to the process of reconstruction and development. When the national NGO umbrella body, the NGO Forum, was established in 1998 there were just 14 members, yet in early 2002 there were 231 local NGOs registered (Hunt 2004). During the Indonesian occupation few NGOs existed and they were mainly involved in human rights work. In emergency response programs actions are often 'fund-driven' rather than 'needs driven' due to pressures being placed on field staff to spend and produce results within defined time lines (Porter 2002). Emergency funds attracted numerous INGOs which had no previous connection with the country. Their need to establish partnerships with local organisations resulted in this explosion of numbers of local NGOs.

Young Timorese who had developed sufficient English language skills to negotiate with international donors were able to get work in international agencies or set up their own

NGO. For instance, **Isabela**[77] studied English at school and later went on to take English at university. She then worked as an interpreter for the UN in 2000 before joining an international NGO. When the program closed at the end of the emergency program she set up her own NGO. Terasinha was another who was also employed by an international NGO as an English interpreter in 2000 and later became an activist in the church youth movement. Others such as Francisco and Eugenio got work within the UN as translators before becoming involved in civil society organisations.

The UN role in the transitional authority of the nation from 1999 to 2002 was seen by some Timorese as a new form of white colonialism. Xanana Gusmão accused UNTAET staff of cultivating neo-colonialist attitudes, which he and others believed resulted from UNTAET's unfettered political power and the economic inequality apparent between Timorese and UNTAET staff (Philpott 2006). UNTAET has been widely criticised for its failure to integrate Timorese nationals into political and administrative leadership functions at an early stage (Bugnion C et al. 2000; Hunt, Bano & Patrick 2001; Hurford & Wahlstom 2001). In spite of its shortcomings, the international relief program implemented in East Timor in 1999-2000 has been hailed internationally as a tremendous success (Smillie & Minear 2004).

Most international workers had no knowledge or understanding of the reality that the Timorese had been living prior to the events of 1999 and did not understand their reluctance to submit to the wishes of the newly arrived development agencies. Brunnstrom points out how Timorese NGO representatives were disappointed by the poor knowledge of and lack of interest in local history, culture and tradition on the part of international development personnel. This failure she contends stems from a seemingly Eurocentric orientation on the part of the international community and the assumption 'common among international organisations: namely that of assuming that the systems and institutions that function best are those created in the image of those dominant in Western countries'. This resulted in a gulf between the Timorese and western aid workers who appeared to them to act as the new colonisers or invaders (Brunnstrom 2003). The dual economy, in which shops and restaurants catered for the international community at prices that Timorese could not afford, served to reinforce this view.

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[77] Isabela interview, Dili 25/8/06

One report identifies the lack of Timorese participation in the humanitarian response as one of the major flaws in an otherwise very successful operation:

> One recurring issue within both the documentation and amongst interviewees was the lack of participation of East Timorese people in the early overall humanitarian aid response – either as individuals, or within NGOs, communities, churches, the CNRT and other groupings (Hurford & Wahlstom 2001:23).

Pre-existing skills, knowledge of local communities, specific community needs and local decision making processes and structures, were thus largely ignored. Indeed, a review of the humanitarian response in May 2000, noted there was no framework agreement established between UN agencies or INGOs working with local organisations to ensure East Timorese participation (Bugnion C et al. 2000). The obvious lack of technical skills of local NGOs, itself a product of the isolation and repression, resulted in the marginalisation of local NGOs and had a negative impact on recovery (Patrick 2001). The overall effect of this was to constrain the development of civil society.

Following the emergency period, some INGOs turned their attention to capacity building. According to Hunt (2004) some of the numerous organisations that had been formed during this period were assisted and significant efforts were made to help rebuild and mature the Timorese NGO community. Eugenio in his role as a UN translator not only improved his English, but also learnt a range of associated skills; how to consult with and interview villagers, how to know the leaders, engage with women and youth, and develop locally based strategies and programs. Thus he was one of the dozens of young people who, on the basis on their experience in these early years of relief and rehabilitation, sought a role in the emerging civil society. For Eugenio, and many others, there was a strong commitment and desire to continue serving local communities as part of an overall commitment to the development of Timor as a new nation. Sovereignty was obtained on 20th May 2002, a day which officially marks the Restitution of Independence, with 30th November continuing to be celebrated as Independence Day.

The transition of youth organisations at independence

> *The liberation of Timor Leste was the factor that united the people. Now the focus is on liberation of the people – how to free the people from poverty, illiteracy and disease. The constitution of RENETIL focussed on how to translate this into programs. [Carlos]*[78]

> *The Student Solidarity Council was established to struggle for independence, promote dialogue between Timorese and promote non-violence. To feel as Timorese we bring people with different political orientation together in dialogue. We have a moral responsibility to the country. [Antonio]*

Young people's participation in clandestine youth organisations was an important aspect of political agency for young people during the resistance. Membership of youth organisations in East Timor was intricately linked to political affiliation and the liberation struggle, and became a key part of the identity of many youth. A significant number of these clandestine student and youth organisations continue to exist today, adjusting their roles to the new environment. The above vignettes show the high degree of responsibility that young Timorese feel for the re-construction and development of their country.

Today there is no goal which binds youth together in the way that the liberation struggle generated unity and commitment to the goal of independence. The FRETILIN affiliated youth organisation OJETIL continues as the youth wing of the political party FRETILIN. Other major clandestine youth organisations such as the Organisation of Timorese Youth (OJT) lost their important role after independence and struggle to find a new one (Ostergaard 2005). RENETIL students studying in Indonesia considered themselves as the intellectual elite of their generation. Membership of RENETIL is lifelong and some 2000 members in RENETIL have sworn to remain faithful to the organisation[79], mostly students from the clandestine period. Their mandate as outlined, is to 'prepare professionals with a revolutionary conscience to continue the liberation struggle through national

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[78] Carlos interview, 2005
[79] Informal communication with Carlos 2007

reconstruction'[80]. One RENETIL member explained that they hold a non-party political position and will work with any political party in power.

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, RENETIL held a Congress at which members discussed what the future role of the organisation might be. Members at the Congress sought to redefine the aims and goals of RENETIL and in so doing recognised the importance of civil society organisations in carrying out the new mission of the organisation: '*to free the people from poverty, illiteracy and disease'*. At this time a decision was also made to establish the organisation *Haburas*, in recognition that Timor had suffered not only human rights abuses but also environmental abuses. *Haburas* is now a well known environmental NGO.

After 1999, several organisations were established by RENETIL members including the *Sahe Institute for Liberation*, an organisation which focussed on popular education and published a magazine to open public debate, a new concept at that time[81]. The community radio station *Lorico Lian* was also established in Dili, as were community radio stations in many district centres, run by local young people. The strategy adopted was to work through other organisations in the areas of civic education, development, environmental sustainability and advocacy.

The ETSSC also spawned new organisations to meet the demands of the new political environment. The ETSSC had a women's wing which had a large female student membership, but has separated into an active women's development NGO, *Grupo Feto Foinsa'e Timor Lorosa'e* (Young Women's Group – GFFTL) which now runs literacy and livelihood programs for women. Another organisation derived from the ETSSC is *Kadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI)* which initially formed in 2000 as a conflict management group, but is now an NGO involved in research and community participation activities, especially in the area of land conflict resolution. The 'membership' of both these organisations is now limited to those working for the NGO (Ostergaard 2005). According to the Coordinator, today ETSSC still has '*a dream to build the nation*' and sees its role as a '*social and moral force'* to promote peace, democracy and human rights in the country.

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[80] The Internal Statute of Renatil article 2º, nº3. 'A RENETIL se incumbe da preparação de profissionais elevados de consciência revolucionaria para continuar a Luta de Libertação do Povo Maubere através da Reconstrução Nacional de Timor Leste' (http://forum-haksesuk.blogspot.com/2007/04/pd-hetan-influencia-husi-kultura.html).
[81] Interview with CSO staff 5, Dili, 4/10/05

ETSCC has been involved in civic education from its inception: 'In the village we sit and talk together with young people' explains Antonio. He also believes that the English and computer classes provided by ETSSC to youth in Dili in recent years 'does not respond to the goal'[82]. The 2006 National Congress of ETSSC recruited a new generation of membership, planning to develop new programs of civic education, leadership, and project development as well as language training[83].

At the time of starting this study, no significant research had been carried out into the attitudes of young people in Timor Leste. Shortly after I started, the first study to be carried out on youth issues was undertaken by the World Bank in collaboration with the youth division of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MECYS). The *Timor-Leste Youth Social Analysis* study defined young people as 15–29 years (not the international definition of 15-24), consistent with other developing countries where the unemployment rate is high and the transitional period of youth prolonged. The study notes that commonly held ideas of 'youth' in Timor Leste encompass people up to the age of forty (Ostergaard 2005:3).

The *Timor-Leste Youth Social Analysis* included a 'Youth Institutional Assessment' component analysing 22 youth organisations with an aim to 'gain an understanding of the capacity of youth institutions' in Timor Leste. According to the study, RENETIL, ETSCC and other youth organisations of the resistance 'all confessed that what made their members interested in their organisation was the vision to struggle for the liberation of the country'. The report shows how, after independence, many youth organisations lost their central purpose and there was uncertainty about precisely what type of role they might play in the new environment. Overall the assessment found limitations in the capacity of the groups, with few being able to develop a mission and vision or a functioning structure. Consequently some have become inactive with no clear direction while others have affiliated with political parties as a way of realising their aspirations and maintaining financial support. Others, however, have become development organisations, often doing so in order to access donor funds (Ostergaard 2005).

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[82] Antonio interview

[83] The ETSCC Congress which was held on 28th April 2006 was interrupted by the terrible violence which rocked the city that day, so the program could not be advanced.

The report noted that youth organisations such as KSI, GFFTL and Covalima Youth Centre had to establish new roles for themselves as development organisations. They had divested themselves of their membership and now exist as organisations but with members limited to those working for the organisation, often as managers of development projects (Ostergaard 2005:40). The report provides a typology of youth organisations with four categories. These include political organisations associated with political parties, both those formed during the resistance such as OJETIL, and the youth wings of the various political parties; and development organisations reflecting youth organisations of the resistance that have adjusted their vision to start playing a role in development (RENETIL, ETSSC, OBJLATIL[84]). The third category is religious youth organisations, the largest national youth group being FOSKA, the Catholic church youth organisation. Protestant and Muslim communities also have youth organisations. Martial arts groups are Ostergaard's fourth category, which are membership groups trained in the discipline of martial arts according to different traditions. The total membership of these groups is estimated to be 20,000 attracting mostly younger people between 15-25 years, although the leadership is generally older (Ostergaard 2005).

Ostergaard's typology does not explain why development organisations are classified as youth organisations and what makes these different from other Timorese NGOs that have been established by young Timorese. I found local youth organisations engaging in a range of sports, music or arts activities which do not fit any of the categories identified by Ostergaard. The leadership of these four categories of youth organisation are predominantly former clandestine youth activists. This perhaps reflects the way that Timorese youth organisations are presented to the researcher (this also being my experience), leaving school leavers or current students with little voice. This issue is further developed in chapter seven.

An umbrella of youth organisations was established at the time of independence. The *Conselho Nacional de Juventude de Timor Leste* (CNJTL - National Youth Council) was

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[84] *Organisação Popular da Juventude Lorico Aswa'in de Timor Leste* (OBJLATIL) the Popular Organisation of Timorese Youth Lorikeet Warriors, was set up in April 1999 in Dili as an umbrella youth organisation under the auspices of CNRT (*Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorese*) to unify all youth movements in Timor Leste (de Araujo, F 2000). The term Lorikeet Warriors refers to the survivors of 12th November Santa Cruz massacre in 1991 and the new generation of activism they represented (Nicholson 2001).

formed by popular vote at the second Congress of the Lorikeet Warriors in May 2002[85]. In the public arena the representation of youth is still dominated by former clandestine youth activists of the late 1990s. CNJTL, although an independent body, is seen as a mechanism for government to communicate with the youth. The leadership of CNJTL includes *geração foun* activists now working in the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport (SSYS). The SSYS was formed to focus on youth issues which were previously located in MECYS[86].

District Youth Councils represent the youth organisations in each district on the CNJTL. For instance a Youth Congress was held in May 2005 to form the *Conselho da Juventude de Distrito* (CJD) in Covalima district with approximately ninety participants, representing seventeen youth organisations. The mission adopted underlines the fact that 'youth organisations' should have an important role in the development of the nation:

> The Conselho da Juventude de Distrito de Covalima strives to resolve and improve the capacity of the youth in order to participate actively in the development of Timor-Leste through the creation of a conducive environment (Covalima Youth Centre 2005).

A second major research project into the attitudes of Timorese youth, also commissioned by the youth division of the RDTL government, was the National Youth Survey (2005). This aimed to better understand and incorporate young people's views in the formulation of a planned national youth policy.

That youth wish to be engaged in community development is also confirmed by the National Youth Survey which found that nine out of ten rural youth believe they have an important role in their *Suco* (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). The National Youth Survey, commissioned by the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport (SSYS) and UNICEF extended the definition of youth to include 15-35 year olds. This timely study was produced just months prior to the crisis of 2006 and provided important evidence of the pre-crisis mood of youth. It collected significant qualitative and quantitative data on youth

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[85] The creation of this Council resulted from a popular vote at the second Congress of the *Presidium Juventude Lorico As'wain Timor Loro Sa'e*, (Young Lorikeet Warriors of Timor Leste) in May 2002.
[86] Youth issues were the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MECYS) until mid 2005. It was re-structured creating the Secretariat of State for Youth and Sport (SSYS), retaining the same key staff throughout the transition.

resident outside Dili in six of the thirteen districts of Timor Leste[87] as well high school and university students in Dili[88] (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). The National Youth Survey found, three and a half years after independence, that most under 35 year olds believed their access to education and economic prospects, as well as quality of home dwelling and environmental health, were better than was the case for their parents. There was a sense of security from violence and crime, and confidence that the government understood, and would act on, the problems facing youth. The report argues that in spite of the different circumstances of young people these views are consistent between literate and illiterate young people across different parts of the country (Curtain & Taylor 2005). The outbreak of youth violence which was to occur within a matter of months after the survey was undertaken indicates that the optimism expressed in this survey was fragile. Once confidence was lost in the government many youth willingly engaged in the violent events which unfolded. This will be the further analysed in chapters seven and eight.

Reflective Conclusion

The stories of my research participants about their roles in the student movement and the struggle for independence demonstrate how these have been critical in their engagement in activism in independent Timor Leste. Many of these former clandestine youth activists suffered horrific violence and family loss during the occupation. The subsequent arrival of the various missions of the UN opened a new world of experience in international development assistance in the reconstruction of their country. Many youth organisations adapted to the new environment to engage in national development and former youth activists have formed new civil society organisations which have, in various ways, sought to contribute to the development of the country.

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[87] A random sample of 25 villages from a total of 498, selected in proportion to the population within each of the country's five regions. Within the villages households were randomly selected and household heads and young people within the scope of the survey were interviewed, resulting in a sample of 780 young people (Curtain & Taylor 2005:3)

[88] 300 young people from four high schools outside of Dili, four within Dili, and two universities, with 30 students from each institution incorporating equal numbers of males and females.

The focus for the next chapter is the conceptual underpinnings of debates surrounding international development. I situate Timorese experiences after 1999 in relation to theoretical concepts in relation to development aid, citizen's participation and empowerment, and concepts of democracy and civil society. The chapter seeks to demonstrate the varying perspectives of different stakeholders (national leaders, major donors, citizens) in the processes employed for the implementation of emergency, rehabilitation and state building in Timor Leste.

Chapter Four

Development Principles and Democracy in Practice

Introduction

> *Development is a process for the future, and includes education – free primary school for all, economic opportunity such as access to develop their own products, and justice for grassroots people, as well as participation of men and women in political leadership. [Berta]*

The term 'development' can mean different things to different people. The word is used to describe change in a multitude of sectors from infrastructural growth and urbanisation through to humanist disciplines of education and psychology. Concepts of 'third world development' arose in the post-colonial era strongly linked to economic development, the discipline from which international 'development studies' emerged. Mainstream theories of international development, which will be reviewed shortly, frequently assume economic growth in itself to be an unproblematic good. This approach to development often relies on broad national productivity indicators such as the gross domestic product (GDP) in order to illustrate that economic growth is taking place, with the assumption that development will follow.

This economistic approach to development is very far removed from the more socially inclusive understanding of development contained in Berta's words in the vignette above. Berta's comments gesture towards an understanding of development that embrace social, cultural and political relations as well as economic arrangements. Berta's remarks underline the importance she places on the social relations of development. That is, if development is to be worthwhile and sustainable it must have a positive impact on the lives of the ordinary people. This is consistent with the views of my other research participants such as Carlos who considers development refers to 'positive changes in people's lives including standard of living, community relations, education and health becoming better and better'. Similarly, Isabela believes: 'Development is to change in a meaningful and positive way and to do something for our nation…development is not just for people who sit in the government but for civil society to participate in the process'. For

Berta, Carlos and Isabela, development is therefore only meaningful to the extent that it is able to improve the lives of the poor within Timor-Leste. Importantly, each of them consider that the engagement and relationships between the government and the people are part of the development process.

In many ways their concerns parallel the views articulated within new development discourses since the 1990's, which emphasise new practices of social analysis, community participation, gender sensitivity, and empowerment of local people as crucial ingredients for effective development. The role of civil society organisations is seen as fundamental to this inclusive form of development. Development then, in the minds of these activists, is not something done by the government for the people, rather that the people should be active players in the process of combating poverty and ensuring access of poor people to basic human rights.

This chapter analyses how different perspectives with respect to development have played themselves out in Timor Leste. After the 1999 devastation the international development agencies, together with the Timorese leadership embarked on a process of reconstruction, and set in place the basic structures of the new state. The strategies put in place by the UN and other international donors for the reconstruction of national infrastructure and new structures of government, judiciary and administration are all informed by tacit assumptions concerning the nature of development. I investigate how development discourses have shifted from economic development models to a broader understanding encompassing the social and cultural implications of development and change. This, I argue, has lead to a whole new lexicon in the discourse of development linked to concepts of agency, participation, inclusion, democracy, transparency and rights.

Concepts of Development

> *We are working between two big expectations. One is the expectations of the people – always looking to have everything yesterday and not tomorrow, and second, the expectation of the international community that is always considering Timor-Leste a success story. It is not easy governing the country having these two expectations. (Alkatiri 2005a)*

Poverty in Timor Leste is widespread. It registers as the poorest country in Asia with poverty highest in rural areas where 85% of people live (Planning Commission 2002). In standard economic terms the GDP per capita in Timor Leste has declined since independence. There was a significant peak of GDP at $470 per capita in 2001 when international aid for emergency and rehabilitation programs was at its height, and a subsequent decline to $366 in 2004 when the UN and many other international organisations departed (UNDP 2006; World Bank 2005b). The poverty line, the minimum required to provide food, clothing and shelter, is globally set at US$2 a day, while US$1 a day is set as an indicator for 'extreme poverty' (Green 2008:8). In Timor Leste the poverty line is officially set at just 0.55 cents a day - Timorese with an income less than this are considered to be living in poverty[89]. On this basis 40% of the population fail to reach a minimum standard of living (UNDP 2006:13). Until the petroleum oil revenues came on stream in 2005, the economy was not growing quickly enough to keep pace with the rapid growth of the population.

It is the *Human Development Index* (HDI) rather than the GDP which gives a real picture as to whether the real living standards are improving. In 1990 the HDI was established by the UNDP as an alternative model to the more narrowly based economic indicators. Hence the HDI incorporates not only economic indicators but national indicators on health, education, longevity and gender differentials such that the impact of development on the population can be measured. The HDI indicate how government policy addresses issues of poverty. For example, Sri Lanka has 60% less income per capital than Kazakhstan, an oil rich country, but due to its effective public health care system, a Sri Lankan child is five times less likely to die in the first five years of life, more likely to go to school, have clean drinking water and have use of a latrine than a child in Kazakhstan (Green 2008).

Timor Leste's 'social development' ranking, as measured by the HDI, is extremely low. In 2006 Timor Leste ranked at 142 of 177 countries in the HDI, the lowest ranking Asian country. This ranking did, however, represent a rise from the 1999 ranking of 152 of 162 countries. Indicator values in 2006 show a stable life expectancy at 56 years; a positive increase in the literacy rate from 40 to 50% of adults (15 years and above); and an increase in school enrolments from 59% to 71% from 1999 (UNDP 2006). Timor Leste has a high

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[89] This poverty indicator was raised to 88 cents a day in 2008 according to the Minister of Finance, Emilia Pires' presentation at the VLGA offices, Melbourne, 27th February 2009.

level of morbidity from preventable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and childhood infections, but access to health care has increased. Only 58% of household have access to clean water and 36% to sanitation (UNDP 2006).

Before proceeding to the discussion on the impact of development strategies in Timor Leste, it is pertinent to consider the theories of 'development' that have been debated and disputed for at least the past half century. During the post-second world war phase of decolonisation, development aid was established as a means to fund infrastructural support in newly independent countries. Engineers and economists were contracted to provide the technical know-how that would 'kick start' economic progress. The stages theory of development from pre-capitalist to fully fledged capitalist economies was popularized. These ideas were encapsulated by Rostow's modernisation theory[90]. A number of Latin American economists challenged this view arguing that developed countries advanced economically through the extraction of cheap resources from their colonies. Underdevelopment, they claimed was a process not simply a condition. The wealth of the 'core' countries, they claimed, was the result of the exploitation of 'the periphery'. Moreover, it was argued that growing inequalities between the core and the periphery would deprive developing countries from achieving the levels of development seen in the west[91]. Both Rostow's theory of economic development and the dependency theory were firmly centred on a view of development based on economic growth.

Portugal clearly engaged in classical exploitative colonial practises, such as described in dependency theory, extracting from East Timor precious sandalwood and introducing coffee, as well as extracting a head tax and forced labour. These measures condemned the Timorese to poverty and severely impacted on family food production. In return the Portuguese contributed neither the health care nor education to the majority of the Timorese, such services provided only by the Catholic missions, and for the Timorese elite who were 'assimilated' into Portuguese society. While exploiting the Timorese for

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[90] Rostow developed a theory of 'Stages of Economic Growth' in 1960. This holds that underdevelopment is due to lack of capital and skills, thus with a transfer of capital and technology to underdeveloped countries they will become developed. This theory regarded the improvement of people's livelihoods and standards of living as a by-product and consequence of modernisation (Remenyi 2004:25).

[91] The 'Dependency Theory' was elaborated by the economists at the UN Economic Commission for Latin America. With major changes in the global environment, the debate between Moderisation theorists and Dependency theorists reached an impasse. The collapse of the 'second world' resulted in unchallenged dominance of the free market (Schuurman 1993).

economic purposes they were also promoting the adoption of Portuguese culture as being synonymous with development.

It is, however, the modes of international market de-regulation that developed throughout the 1980s and 1990s that have had the most significant impact on the trajectory of development within Timor Leste today. Adoption of the free market economic policies became development orthodoxy with the rise to power of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA. The free market approach espoused a strong economy as the driver of development, and a rising GDP as the means for governments to support delivery of social services.

Termed neo-liberalism by some, this model of development formulated and enacted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank has been influential over the past quarter of a century. These two Bretton Woods international financial institutions (IFIs) [92] provide finance through loans to poor countries in exchange for the implementation of agreed free market policy measures. Loans are defined as aid where the interest is set at concessional levels[93]. According to McKay, it bears a number of similarities to earlier 'modernisation' discourses. Indeed, McKay claims that 'some features have been redefined and reworked but the basic points about unequal power and the exploitation of the poor countries remain' (McKay 2004). This approach to development not only grants primacy to market forces but insists that developing nations deregulate their economies in order to be the recipients of global financial assistance.

Global institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank have been the principal institutional mechanisms driving neo-liberal policies, which have been widely introduced in the form of structural adjustment programs (SAPs). This approach was formalised in what is known as the 'Washington consensus' referring to economic reforms that donors subsequently uniformly imposed on countries around the world as a condition of eligibility

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[92] Key international financial institutions (IFIs), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), formed in 1944 at a conference in Bretton Woods to plan the finance for the rebuilding of Europe after the 2nd world war, have been at the centre of the major global economic strategy based on free market strategies over the last two decades (Stiglitz 2002:11).
[93] 'Official Development Assistance' (ODA) is defined by the OECD as being flows from official sources for the *promotion of economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective*; and it *is concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25%*. Thus concessional loans are defined as ODA while non-government organisation's grants are not.

for development loans. This leverage ensured a reduced role of governments and promotion of the private sector and market as the main vehicle for economic development.

Many countries that implemented SAPs have not risen out of poverty. Countries with low levels of human resource development and poor infrastructure have been shown to be at a disadvantage when competing in an open market, and there is empirical evidence to suggest that open market policies have not contributed to reducing poverty in less developed countries (Killick, Tony 1998; Mosley, Harrigan & Toye 1995; White 2001). The 1980s became known as the 'lost decade' in development, as the needs of populations were largely by-passed by the top down approach of development programs. As in the poorest countries the gap between the rich and poor has widened, a number of economists and social analysts argue that a uni-linear focus on 'economic growth' has led to rising inequality domestically and internationally. Some of these commentators have argued for a return to a greater investment in human capital in the form of education and health in order to sustain growth and stem inequality through more sustainable forms of development (Seligson 2003:468). Whilst the 'Asian Tigers' (Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan) are claimed as proof of success of the development model, they nonetheless had invested heavily in human resources (education and health) and public infrastructure for many years before they opened their doors to the free market. In contrast many least developed countries today are expected to weather exposure to the free market at a time when they have limited capacity to compete. In many cases poor countries lack the human capital to be able to engage in the economic activities required for domestic development let alone survive in the brutal world of international trade.

The power of the World Bank and IMF over the policies that affect most of the world's population is held by a handful of individuals who have little direct engagement with development challenges of poor countries. Joseph Stiglitz, former Chief Economist at the World Bank brought to an end the World Bank's single minded focus on free market strategies of the Washington consensus. He noted that these institutions are accountable to no-one, a fact partly responsible for the failure of twenty years of free market promotion to achieve the vital goal of social transformation:

> *Development is about transforming societies, improving the lives of the poor, enabling everyone to have a chance of success and access to health care and*

education. This sort of development won't happen if only a few people dictate the policies a country must follow (Stiglitz 2002:252).

Looking beyond microeconomic principles, a 'post-Washington consensus' acknowledges the existence of market imperfections and embraces the concept that strong social and institutional structures are crucial to growth and development. This has generated a view that social capital, in the form of social networks and civil institutions, are as important as other forms of capital to achieve these ends. Further, these social structures need to be supported by pluralistic forms of governance and decision making to develop social consensus over key reforms (Edwards 2001).

In recent years the World Bank has engaged the most innovative social researchers and also drawn extensively on work in the social sciences in order to articulate its own development agenda. In this way the World Bank has gained leverage over the subject of social capital and participatory practices by recruiting sociologists, while deflecting challenges from its own discipline of economics (Fine 2001). This, Fine argues, has enabled free market economic policy makers to continue their domination.

It is important to note that during the Indonesian occupation, key leaders of the first Timorese government were in Mozambique where the external headquarters of FRETILIN's Central Committee was situated[94]. There, they experienced the powerful influences of the IFIs after Mozambique was forced to adopt a structural adjustment program. Mozambique, like Timor Leste, became independent in 1975 as a result of the change of government in Portugal. The liberation movement, FRELIMO, became the first government. FRELIMO had forged links with the eastern bloc in order to obtain arms for the independence struggle against Portugal, and had adopted a Marxist-Leninist ideology. After independence, the country was shunned by western nations, while Rhodesia, and later South Africa, created and backed the militia army of RENAMO to destabilise the fledgling government. During a decade and a half of war, the militia carried out widespread atrocities against the people and destruction of infrastructure, which eventually brought Mozambique to economic collapse. The country was forced to negotiate with the

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[94] Key external members and their roles in the first government were Mari Alkatiri, Prime Minister; Jose Ramos Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Rogerio Lobato, Minister for Internal Affairs; Roque Rodrigues, Minister for Defence; Ana Pessoa, Minister for State Administration; Estanislão da Silva, Minister of Agriculture; Jose Luis Guterres was Ambassador to UN, then Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the second government (Scott 2005).

IMF and World Bank and accepted a SAP package in 1987 to obtain necessary finance. The FRELIMO government adjusted its policies to become a social democracy and has continued to hold power until the present day. However, the SAP resulted in Mozambique becoming one of the worlds' highly aid dependent and indebted countries, a status that Timor's political leaders were, upon assuming power, anxious to avoid.

Since 2000, a new consensus emerged to tackle world poverty. Leaders of the rich nations have signed on to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which set out defined targets on eight goals to be achieved by the year 2015. These include halving the incidence of extreme poverty, universal primary education, gender equality and the empowerment of women, reduced child mortality, improved maternal health, combat of endemic diseases and environmental sustainability. Achievements are monitored and published in the UNDP Human Development Report against targets for each country (Timor Leste figures in UNDP 2006). Since the MDGs became a measure of development progress, IFI policies that had been imposed, such as imposing user fees on primary education and health clinic attendance, are being revised. The World Bank no longer supports user fees in education, although its policy on health is more ambiguous (Green 2008). Human resource development through education for all and access to health care are increasingly recognised as fundamental human rights that are also the basis of poverty reduction.

Finally, it is useful to consider the expansive definition of development which has been coined by Amartya Sen, the architect of the UN human development indicators: 'freedom is both the means and the end of development' (Sen 1999). Sen speaks of 'unfreedoms' which he understands to be those structures and realities that 'limit people's reason to value their lives'. He blames neo-liberal strategies for generating inequalities which lead to social 'unfreedoms' which must be overcome by focussing on human capabilities and the enhancement of the human potential. He does not reject market driven development, considering the market as an essential component of freedom, but argues safeguards are required such that the state can protect and support vulnerable individuals (Sen 1999). Nussbaum similarly considers a focus on human capability is essential to create opportunities and choices for women. She suggests cultural assumptions of 'what women do' should be put aside to focus on 'what people are actually capable of doing' in support of empowerment and human dignity (Nussbaum 2000).

Aid and International relations

> *The government needs to make agriculture a priority, now they just rely on aid*
> *from outside and follow World Bank policy. World Bank is part of the problem –*
> *their policies do not reduce poverty. [Guilherme][95]*

The Timorese are fiercely independent. The independent spirit that enabled the liberation movement to overcome the overwhelming force of Indonesia is also evident today in the responses of activists such as Guilherme, and Timorese NGOs such as *La'o Hamutuk*[96], who are highly critical of international domination of national policy making. They do not welcome western development institutions taking the leading role in determining the future direction of the new country.

Many of the early policies for Timor Leste were established following a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) led by the World Bank in late 1999 (Patrick 2001). International agencies arriving in Timor Leste at this time found that the violence following the UN sponsored ballot in 1999 had resulted in near total destruction of its public records and wholesale destruction of infrastructure by the pro-autonomy militia. More than 8,000 civil servants, including most of the teachers, had fled the country (Freitas, JC 2005). A quarter of the population had been forcibly removed to West Timor by the Indonesian military, and much of the remaining population had fled to the mountains.

In Timor Leste the international donors played an integral role in decision making for the new country in the years after the occupation and prior to formal independence. JAM established the framework for the structures of government, setting public service staffing at half the levels they had been under the Indonesian administration. The policy framework environment established in Timor reflected the World Bank's promotion of the free market agenda with policies to reduce the size of the public service; remove minimum prices and subsidies; privatise services; deregulate the economy to encourage foreign investment; and promote agricultural production for export. Government subsidies and services were kept to a minimum while economic growth was to be nurtured through the private sector. That there was virtually no private sector business in the hands of Timorese

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[95] Interview with Guilherme in 2005
[96] *La'o Hamutuk* ('Walk Together') is the East Timor Institute for Reconstruction Monitoring and Analysis.

at the time of independence meant that Timorese were severely disadvantaged and poorly positioned in respect of such policies[97].

The JAM consultants witnessed the devastation of infrastructure and the dearth of people, and came to the somewhat hasty conclusion that development would have to start from scratch. The mission, in conjunction with Timorese counterparts, drew up a blueprint policy for the nation which included the establishment of the Trust Fund for East Timor (TFET), and the establishment of a model of local governance which became known as the Community Empowerment Program (CEP) (Gunn 2003). Through this local governance program a decision making structure was proposed which unfortunately failed to consider or take into account existing networks and traditional practices within Timor. They failed to recognise the ongoing significance of traditional Timorese structures of decision making and the important role that civil society organisations, such as those that had formed to support the liberation struggle, continued to play during this period of turmoil (Patrick 2001).

The United Nations led the process of setting up the organs of government from 1999 to full independence in 2002. The UN Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) believed it was important to get programs operational as quickly as possible. They initiated the processes of forming structures of government but were slow to co-opt Timorese to work along side them (Freitas, JC 2005). The UN processes thus sidelined the Timorese organisation *Conselho Nacionale de Resistencia Timorense* (CNRT) the political organisation under which different political parties had united in the lead up to the independence ballot[98]. For example CNRT had established clear policies with regard to the future education system, but the recruitment of teachers to replace the Indonesian teachers was directed to UNTAET education officers in English, and not to the CNRT Education Committee (Nicolai 2004:116). The World Bank's involvement in the health sector, meanwhile, resulted in the numbers of health workers being set at half of that during the Indonesian period due to budget restrictions (van Schoor 2005). Hasty,

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[97] In 1997 I questioned why the Timorese did not set up small businesses as all the restaurants and shops were run by Indonesians. I was told that there used to be Timorese restaurants, but Indonesian soldiers would come in and eat, then leave without paying. They would do this until the businesses closed down then Indonesian businesses moved in. Prior to 1975 most business enterprises were run by the ethnic Chinese Timorese most of whom fled after the invasion.

[98] The National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) included FRETILIN, UDT and some smaller parties.

sometimes unilateral decision-making about national structures had huge consequences for the future.

Timorese leaders criticised the UN mission for being established with 'imperial powers' more accountable to New York than to the Timorese people (Alkatiri 2005b). The system of local administration established was based on central government administrative requirements with little attention being paid to the political implications of the processes. For instance, the recruitment of the military and police forces was carried out according to entirely practical considerations, even though the members of these two forces were at the heart of political confrontation during the Indonesian occupation just months previously. The consequences of this were to be evident in the outbreak of rivalries between the police and military in the crisis of 2006 (further discussed in chapter eight).

International donors contributed to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Timor Leste through the Transitional Fund for East Timor (TFET) which was managed by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank[99]. This gave these two institutions considerable leverage in the country, particularly the World Bank which had established an office in Dili. The World Bank and the IMF, as previously noted, impose free market policies through loan agreements. Other multilateral and bi-lateral[100] donors often link their aid programs to these neo-liberal strategies. Economic development, it is claimed, is best spurred through an injection of loan capital to support international trade, while cost savings are made by cutting back on public expenditure and public investment in infrastructure. Donors thus have considerable power and are able to influence the direction of development in poor countries and shape the policy settings of governments. Unequal power relationships between donor and recipient are well established within the mechanism of international aid (Chambers & Pettit 2004:138). Analysts such as Munck argue that the definition of development as nationally managed economic growth has

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[99] TFET is a multi-donor trust fund that has supported reconstruction and development activities in Timor Leste since 2000. The Government of Timor-Leste in coordination with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), TFET donors, and other stakeholders, established TFET work program priorities, a process now facilitated by the Sector Investment Programs. All activities are implemented by Government agencies with support from the World Bank and the ADB (World Bank & ADB 2005).

[100] Bi-lateral aid is country to country aid by national government agencies. Multi-lateral donors include UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO etc.) as well as international banks such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank etc. The donor Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries support market based development programs both through their own bi-lateral programs and through their contribution to the multilateral agencies including the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the United Nations (UN) agencies.

shifted with 'development' becoming synonymous with the extent of participation in and integration with the world market (Munck 1999).

As the global economic system takes a more dominant role in national planning the power of national governments is generally being reduced. The neo-liberal model of development is closely linked to the ideology of freedom of the individual, one which envisages the emergence of self reliant entrepreneurs as the solution to poverty and unemployment. Rose argues that freedom and liberty are central to capitalist values in which citizens are expected to act in pursuit of their own self-interest and self-realisation (Rose 1999:145). Such an emphasis shifts the focus of development away from *social* well-being, which is the basis of traditional community life in Timor Leste, to individual entrepreneurship. Davis (2006) also points to how the global deregulation of agriculture leaves farmers to 'sink or swim' in an environment in which they cannot compete or even survive, resulting in an exodus of unskilled labour from the rural areas to burgeoning metropolises of urban poverty. Such processes are starting to occur in Timor Leste.

Agriculture provides the livelihood of 80% of the population, yet it received little support in the early years with the first annual budget of less than a million dollars for the entire Ministry of Agriculture. The majority of farmers practice subsistence cultivation, with 95% of families holding land of less than two hectares. Maize is grown by 81% of households while rice is grown by 23%, of which about two thirds of the crops are consumed by the household. Coffee is the major source of cash income in highland regions, benefiting about a quarter of farming families. Some 64% of the population suffer food insecurity for part of the year (UNDP 2006).

The World Bank discouraged the maintenance of a national agricultural subsidy system such as that implemented during the Indonesian period. During the Indonesian occupation there were large areas of land under rice cultivation by the transmigrant population brought in by the administration. Indonesian government agricultural services included provision of seeds, access to tractors for ploughing for a small fee, and a rice marketing system that guaranteed both sales of surplus production and provided subsidised seeds and fertilisers. The transmigrants have left, the tractors taken and the irrigation systems destroyed by the departing Indonesians. Timorese farmers have been left to cultivate using traditional hand tools, thus the area they can cultivate has been dramatically reduced.

Where production surpluses are achieved, market opportunities have shrunk, reducing an already small income. The sale of fresh fruit and vegetables has plummeted as the salaried public servants halved in number. The Indonesian administration and the substantial military presence had constituted a significant salaried population able to purchase locally produced foods. The consequent lack of circulation of cash in the districts has resulted in the value of produce being substantially lower than that paid in Dili[101]. The poor roads, long distances and limited transportation, mean that few producers are able to sell fresh produce outside their district.

When the Timorese took over the reins of government in 2002 many of the structures and processes of governance had started to be set in place. The first RDTL government had a huge task on its hands to set in place the appropriate structures for a liberal democratic government. These included establishing the 'Pillars of the State' (the Parliament, the Presidency and the Judiciary) and developing the administration and national planning instruments. The government established a Council of Ministers which was significantly dominated by Timorese who had lived in exile during the occupation, many of them in Mozambique. Timor Leste's meagre national budget was just $67.6 million in 2002-3, $74.6 million in 2003-4, and $75 million in 2004-5. From the start the government was dependent on donor aid hence donor views on development held sway. The lack of prior experience of most senior Timorese officials in any form of government service created a requirement for international technical assistance in all sectors of government. The influence of this is readily observable in the Sector Investment Programs (SIPs) developed by the government. These SIPs are detailed strategy plans for each government sector, setting out specific details for the implementation of the National Development Plan. They provide the basis for engagement between donors and national government as 'clear guidance to Development Partners regarding priorities for assistance' (RDTL 2006b). Such planning tools have been developed since the Paris Declaration at a major international donor's meeting on aid effectiveness in early 2005, which committed to the principles of ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability in aid delivery (AusAID 2008). Donors had recognised that the lack of national ownership of economic strategies superimposed by the IFIs had undermined local ownership, and have

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[101] Market stalls typically sell small piles of produce (rather than by weight) which in Dili typically cost a dollar each. In the districts similar piles are commonly 20 cents.

since sought the national governments' participation and commitment to national development programs. In Timor Leste, however, the role of foreign advisers continues to be important and they played major roles in developing the SIPs for different ministries.

The first FRETILIN government held strong principles and socialist ideals and did not lightly agree to the processes and policy settings proposed by the UN and the World Bank. Each brought their own set of presuppositions and views with respect to the question of the development of Timor Leste. Once in power the Timorese government spent much of its time negotiating development strategies with the international donor community. It soon became apparent that there were marked disagreements between the Timorese government and sections of the donor community concerning the most appropriate development strategies. This was complicated by the fact that the UN and World Bank were also in disagreement over lines of authority in the districts in relation to the CEP program. Key issues for the Timorese leadership were their unwillingness to take international loans, and their determination to develop economic self-sustainability through the oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea. These two issues will now be discussed in more detail.

The World Bank and other agencies encouraged Timor Leste to borrow money in order to invest in areas for export led development such as coffee, vanilla or palm oil (Moxham 2004a). The leadership in Timor Leste under the Prime Ministership of Mari Alkatiri was totally opposed to financing development through external borrowing and reliance on foreign loans. The Timorese government rejected loans on a principled basis because RDTL did not want to become indebted and wished to avoid the 'debt trap'. Globally, financial loans have created a net financial transfer from poor to rich countries, as more funds are transferred in debt repayments from poor countries than is received by them in the form of aid from the rich nations. The Timorese government was seeking to create autonomy with respect to policy options. It sought to deflate the financial influence of the World Bank such that there was no leverage over economic policy as a result of loan arrangements.

The World Bank is, nevertheless, influential with respect to the formulation and implementation of economic and social policy in Timor. This influence stems from its control over the management of the development funds in Timor Leste as a trustee for

TFET. Unlike the Consolidated Fund for East Timor (CFET) which was established under UNTAET to fund budget expenditures, TFET was established to mobilise bi-lateral and multi-lateral resources for reconstruction and development activities in health, education, agriculture, transport, power, and other key sectors (Rosser 2007). The World Bank approves TFET funds where proposals are in line with a policy focus based on the private sector and market as the main vehicle for economic development. In the first years of independence, proposals by the Timorese leadership for agricultural support in compensation for the loss of animals and agricultural equipment taken or destroyed in 1999 were denied. Their requests for the use of aid money to rehabilitate rice fields, build grain silos and public abattoirs were in conflict with the free market policies of the trustees, who were hostile to any public economic institutions (Anderson, T 2006). Most of the population of Timor Leste are subsistence farmers, the bulk of whose agricultural produce is for personal food consumption[102]. Family food production, however, falls outside the agricultural policy focus of the World Bank, which promotes production for the market. The main marketed food crop in Timor Leste is rice, yet the World Bank discouraged Timor Leste from rice production, arguing that rice can be produced more cheaply and imported from countries such as Indonesia and Thailand[103].

The risks of this strategy became clear when the 2008 global economic crisis caused food prices to escalate around the world. In the streets of Dili much of the population was reported to be in distress as they were forced to reduce food intake. The new Gusmão government[104] responded to the crisis by purchasing significant quantities of imported rice for sale at subsidised prices. The risks for poor people of agricultural policies that focus on supporting only production for export are now evident as rising food prices have led to hunger. In Timor Leste, however, the legacy of the market-driven model remains: the 2008 UN report 'Right to Food in Timor Leste' found that the agricultural sector, on which 80% of the population is dependent, receives little institutional support, especially

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[102] Subsistence farmers may market produce to variable degrees, depending on both the harvest and cash needs, for example to buy cooking oil, soap, clothing and to pay school fees. In a year of poor harvest a surplus may not exist. In my MA thesis I defined subsistence farmers as those where the family production was their primary means of suvival, with cash income being of secondary importance (Wigglesworth 1994).
[103] Interview with World Bank representative, Dili 12/9/05.
[104] The Fourth Constitutional Government of the AMP alliance led by Xanana Gusmao who became Prime Minister in August 2007.

in mountainous areas. The country is heavily dependent on imports to meet its food needs and nearly half the population is food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity[105].

Since 2002, the ability of the RDTL government to plan and implement the national budget has changed from one of total aid dependence to a high degree of fiscal autonomy as a result of petroleum revenues. Nevertheless, limited human resource capability within government remains a major constraint for effective implementation of policies and strategies and the full national budget has not been fully executed in any budget year. Petroleum oil revenues started coming on stream in 2005-6 when the state budget, set at US$112 million, almost doubled that of previous years. By 2008, funds derived from oil royalties allowed the Gusmão government to finance a range of programs in response to the political crisis which started in 2006 (see chapters eight and nine).

The history of Timor Leste's petroleum resources is closely linked to its relationship with Australia. The oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea have been at the heart of Australian foreign policy with respect to Indonesia and Timor Leste for several decades. Notwithstanding the fact that Australia is a major donor to Timor Leste, its relationship with the Timorese leadership, particularly the first Prime Minister, Dr Mari Alkatiri, has been fraught at times. Dr Alkatiri's focus on establishing a solid foundation for Timor Leste's economic independence was an important focus of foreign policy management in the first years of independence.

Australia's mobilisation of INTERFET forces, following the destruction unleashed by the departing Indonesian military in 1999, established a high regard for Australia as Timor Leste's saviour. This overshadowed its previous dubious reputation as the only nation to recognise Indonesian sovereignty, when in 1975 Australia sought to benefit from access to the Timor Sea oil and gas reserves through bi-lateral arrangements with Indonesia. Another unprincipled action twenty six years later saw Australia withdraw from the jurisdiction of the international courts in relation to the Law of the Sea. This was done immediately prior to Timor Leste's independence, specifically to impede any challenge by

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[105] UNMIT report 'The Right to Food in Timor Leste' December 2008, www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EGUA-7NBTER

Timor Leste over the maritime boundary that had been drawn up with Indonesia in Australia's favour in 1972[106].

Nevertheless, Timor Leste entered into negotiations with Australia to establish the basis for oil production in the Timor Sea. Dr. Alkatiri's tough negotiating style won Timor Leste a much bigger share of the oil royalties than Australia had intended, but at the cost of an agreement that Timor Leste would not press for a permanent solution of the maritime boundary for fifty years. The negotiations resulted in a sometimes fractious relationship with Australia. Commentators point to how the Timorese government's resources were absorbed by macro-economic issues as it was forced to fight Australia's grab for oil (Cleary 2007). This new struggle has been likened to David and Goliath by the media. These precious resources make the difference for Timor Leste between continuing poverty and economic sustainability.

Australia's development aid, meanwhile, is small offerings in contrast to the $1 million a day Australia is reputedly taking from the disputed territory of the Timor Sea. Australia's aid program controversially has the objective to 'reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia's national interest' (AusAID 2006)[107]. The 'national interest' objective was brought into play in response to Timorese activist's campaign for justice in the Timor Sea negotiations. Many Timorese activists were informing the people about the Timor Sea Treaty and the disputed claims of ownership over the reserves, thus mobilising the population behind the government on this issue (Durnan 2005). Timorese NGOs also petitioned Australia, appealing for justice on the Timor Sea issue. AusAID's response to this criticism from Timorese civil society was to cancel grants to organisations that had signed the petition (Ellis 2007)[108]. In so doing, Australia exhibited a blatant

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[106] A maritime border deal agreed between Australia and Indonesian in 1972 established the boundary line two thirds of the way towards East Timor resulting in vast oil and gas reserves falling in Australian-claimed territory. Timor Leste disputed this line claiming it was inconsistent with international law. If maritime law was applied this would given Timor Leste the oil and gas in the zone. This, and the subsequent battle over royalties, sent a clear message that Australia's economic interests would be protected even at the cost of denying Timor Leste economic sustainability.

[107] Australia's aid program's object of alleviating poverty in the national interest was criticised by an OECD Review. It claimed that Australia needed to demonstrate that the aid program contributed effectively to poverty reduction (OECD 2005). In particular, following the Al Qaeda attacks of September 11th 2001 Australia's reorientation of aid priorities redirected substantial amounts of aid away from poverty programs to governance and security programs, including in Timor Leste.

[108] The Dili based AusAID manager faced political pressure to give alternative justifications for the cancelation of grants other than 'criticising' the Australian government. This manager disagreed with the

disregard for democracy and free speech, the very principles which donors generally espouse.

The agreement that was finally reached for the Timor Sea Oil in 2005 has, irrespective of sacrificing a solution to the maritime border question, undoubtably changed the fortunes of Timor Leste. The Alkatiri government established a Petroleum Fund in 2005 by which oil and gas revenues are invested in US bonds as a means to manage oil and gas royalties to create an income stream 'for future generations'. The Fund was set up to avoid the 'resource curse', whereby resource rich countries embark on high and often corrupt spending patterns but fail to establish an economic foundation which can support the country beyond the lifetime of resource production (Drysdale 2007). The Timor Gap agreement between the Australian Government and UNTAET, taken over by RDTL in May 2002, realised an income over 4-5 years of $80m from the oil exploitation which was invested in the Petroleum Fund when it was established in September 2005. In the year to June 2006, oil revenues were received to the value of $438m, according to the NGO watchdog *La'o Hamutuk*. By 2007 the oil revenue had become substantially greater (due to increased production at Bayu Undan field and the rising price of oil), providing a total of $956m to the Fund in the twelve months to June 2007. At this time, the Fund value exceeded previous expectations at $3,758 million (La'o Hamutuk 2008).

The larger Greater Sunrise field, subject of the Timor Sea negotiations with Australia, are expected to come on line by 2015. Thus from frugal beginnings, RDTL set itself up to be able to support itself economically without dependence on foreign loans. The well resourced central government is able to make its own decisions on how to improve health, education and agricultural services, and to develop the economy. Reduced dependence on donor funds has provided positive outcomes for health due to increased control of the government over its spending. For example, the Ministry of Health (MoH) announced that the government was progressing with a plan to import generic drugs from countries such as Bangladesh at a fraction of the cost of the brand name drugs. Previously using donor funds, the MoH had been obliged to buy from the major drug companies[109]. The MoH will

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official position, and objected to being expected to lie about the reasons for withholding funds from certain NGOs. See article by Peter Ellis (Ellis 2007).

[109] Seminar presentation by Dr Nelson Martins, Victoria University on 8th November 2007.

benefit from a dramatic reduction in their drug bill, allowing greater expenditure in other areas.

The Timorese health program is an important example of effective, well planned aid. Amidst criticism from many western donors, Timor Leste accepted Cuban aid to support the health program. The Cuba government has provided some 230 Cuban doctors as well as scholarships for more than 600 Timorese to attend medical school in Cuba who will replace the Cuban health professional following their graduation (Leach 2008a). In a country where doctors were limited to the district towns, the Cuban health program, with a particular focus on preventative health, has assigned a doctor to every sub-District in the country. This is done at significantly reduced cost in comparison to health professionals obtained through other bi-lateral or multi-lateral donors. Cuban doctors received (in 2006) US$250 a month, more than ten times less that the UN contracted expatriate doctors they replaced. Health is one of the areas where real improvement has been seen in rural Timor Leste A program evaluation found that in the localities where Cuban doctors work child mortality is 50% lower than elsewhere, and maternal mortality has also declined (Leach 2008a).

The vision of decentralised government set out in the National Development Plan and the Sector Investment Programs, on the other hand, has made little progress. Tight central financial control proscribed the District Administrations from a development role in the rural areas. Even the World Bank encouraged the government to loosen up Ministry of Finance approval processes more, claiming that centralised control was causing a bottleneck for budgetary allocation and disbursement[110]. According to UNDP, 'at present the lion's share of CFET expenditures continues to go to Dili: only one third of the total public expenditure and one fifth of good and services are going to the districts' (UNDP 2006).

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[110] Interview with the representative of the World Bank, Dili. 12th September 2005

Concepts of Participation and Empowerment

> *During 6 years the government did many good things – the National Development Plan was good because it resulted from grassroots people with wide consultation with civil society, women's networks etc. [Berta]*

People's participation in social issues through which they engage with state structures can have a profound effect on people's sense of belonging. Citizenship involves more than the legal right of belonging to the nation state. It has been found that citizen's engagement in informal groups and community structures are an essential part of developing a sense of identity with the state (Eyben & Ladbury 2006). In Timor Leste there was no experience of constructive engagement with government during the Indonesian occupation and thus such processes are little developed. The concept of citizenship *as practiced* rather than as a given places an emphasis on inclusive participation as the very foundation of democratic practice (Gaventa 2004). To be active in this sense, citizenship requires that social processes be established as an ongoing and essential part of governance.

The principles of participatory development have become widely recognised in some development circles. According to these principles, people affected by development interventions should have the opportunity to participate in planning and decision making. Donors have recognised the importance of national governments being committed to national development programs through active participation in the SIP planning process, in contrast to the former superimposition of plans by IFIs. The requirement for national governments to facilitate the active participation of their populations is equally important.

The new paradigm of participatory development emerged in the 1990s to challenge the orthodox views of development emanating from top-down bureaucratic planning systems. Community participation in planning and implementation of development programs became a fundamental principle of good development planning (Fowler 2000). Even bilateral and multilateral development agencies have adopted participatory practices that have been shown to be successful in small scale NGO development projects (Cleaver 2002; Francis 2001). By the late 1990s the adoption of participatory practices by international development agencies was accompanied by new rhetoric reflected in their

terminologies. Participation became a 'right', rather than an 'opportunity' and 'beneficiaries' became 'participants' (Fowler 2002).

The Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University pioneered the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) a methodology of research which used a range of tools to listen to the views of the rural poor. The methodology is built on three 'pillars': the methods or tools used; sharing of information and ideas; and behaviour and attitudes (Chambers 2007). The use of PRA methodologies in participatory planning can allow practitioners to defer to local knowledge and thus provide local input and analysis into development discourses which empower the poor (Mosse 2001). The practice of PRA is highly dependent on the ability of the practitioner to learn from and listen to the poor and illiterate who make up the majority of the disadvantaged sections of communities. If development is about improving the lives of people, then local people need to be able to influence decisions which affect them. Development may be conceived as empowerment of people, or their potential to emancipate themselves (Kingsbury 2004). Empowerment involves redressing unequal power relations and has been described as 'the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them' (Kabeer 1999:437). The opportunity for the community to actively engage with government and donors in processes of development that affect them is a fundamental requirement for effective community development. For development interventions to be made relevant and effective, development practitioners also need knowledge of local realities.

Globally, many development projects have been shown to fail when the 'development expert' is the privileged source of knowledge; attention must be paid to the conditions and social processes which produce the social and economic marginalisation of the poor. It should be recognised that development does not take place in a linear way but is highly complex and requires a process of adaptation, built on the knowledge of local people and their capacity to organise (Chambers 1993). Properly implemented, participatory development processes not only enable community leaders to be involved but importantly create the means for the more vulnerable and silent sections of society to have a voice. PRA methods use visual tools which allow community members to be practically involved in telling their stories; to share and analyse their knowledge of life, plan and to act

(Chambers 1992). The development practitioner needs an intimate knowledge of the community and its power structures to be able to facilitate involvement of people across different ages, genders and social groupings.

PRA and other forms of participatory method have been widely adopted by development agencies around the world. With the institutionalisation of PRA, however, the principles behind the methods tend to have become lost. Critics point out that some development practitioners believe unquestioningly in 'participation' as 'a good thing', but implement it without using the techniques correctly, or being sensitive to the power structures (Cleaver 2002). Some practitioners may have received only a few days training in the methodology, others lack sufficient understanding of individual communities and specific community processes. The process in such circumstances may be reduced to a technical task to be simply ticked off when completed with an emphasis on method but little focus on behaviour and attitudes. In this context the range of interpretations of the word 'participation' has further impeded the understanding of its meaning[111]. Mosse (2001) suggests that power relationships are often evident in social planning processes between the community and the planners. These commonly result in local people learning to respond in such a manner that their preferences are compatible with the requirements of bureaucratic planning. Moreover, building on existing power structures and relationships typically results in the traditional male leadership becoming the key source of contact and dominating much of the proceedings. For participatory processes to facilitate social inclusiveness and embrace local knowledge, the skills and sensibilities of the practitioner must be attuned to existing inequalities and address them within the consultation process, such that marginalised community members are included and become empowered.

Institutions created as part of development projects, whether committees, user groups, or community action groups, can reproduce and exacerbate existing forms of exclusion. Such observations have led analysts to question whether participatory practices have the potential to benefit women. To be empowering for women, practitioners of participatory methods must first address gender power relations in the community (Crawley 1998). It will be a challenge for women, who often lack time and may not necessarily be accepted

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[111] For instance in the Indian context government agencies use 'participation' to reach expenditure targets through enlisting NGOs or community institutions in implementation, while for NGOs 'participation' may mean patronage and reputation building (Cooke & Kothari 2001:29).

in community decision making forums, to be represented. The question of who participates and who benefits are critical questions, as the voices of the more marginal may barely be raised, let alone heard in these spaces (Cornwall 2003). Women are sometimes said to have 'participated' simply because demands have been made on them to supply physical labour necessary for the implementation of a project, or they have sat quietly in a meeting without making their views heard.

Participatory approaches to development have been adopted by the World Bank through the Community Driven Development (CDD) methodology on which it spent $5.6 billion globally from 2000-2002 (Moxham 2004b). The establishment of the Community Empowerment Project (CEP)[112] in Timor Leste is an example of the World Bank's foray into participatory community development. The CEP established village, sub-district and district councils for oversight of grants and credits for local recovery and development activities that would 'empower' communities to tackle their own development. The CEP was, however, subject to conventional project time frames that did not allow a participatory development model to be implemented. It tried to deliver speedy material assistance and at the same time leave behind robust institutions of local governance (Moxham 2004b). To deliver a post-conflict reconstruction program, the governance system had to be established within a defined time frame, thus the consultations on governance options were inadequate. The CEP established governance structures that failed to satisfy the local mores for decision making of local people. For example they required the CEP Councils to be made up of literate members, thus young educated people who either had some kind of 'project experience' or had proven to be good leaders in the clandestine movement were elected to the Councils. According to one study, political and ritual authority are strongly connected to age thus 'the lack of seniority of their members means that most of the councils have not yet developed any real power' (Ospina & Hohe 2002). Effectively a dual structure of local authority was set up by which youth on the CEP Council referred matters to customary leaders to make decisions that were then ratified at the Council meeting. The World Banks' CEP Completion Report noted that the 'failure to create a sustainable institutional base for community development is a significant shortcoming in the project' (World Bank 2005a). It was found that the hurry to

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[112] The CEP project was contracted out to International Development Support Services (IDSS) based in Melbourne.

get the project going resulted in too little time for participatory processes to be developed to allow local views to be considered in its implementation. Instead the CEP project defined many of the parameters of the project, thus clearly establishing donor authority over the 'participatory' process.

The World Bank policy of encouraging private sector development and individual entrepreneurship has, moreover, led to a proliferation of competing forms of economic enterprise. Over half of the CEP micro-credit loans in Timor went to kiosks resulting in oversupply of this form of micro-enterprise (Moxham 2004b). In 70% of cases the kiosk holder was unable to make enough money to pay back the original loan, and the output of this component was subsequently categorised as unsatisfactory by the World Banks' own completion report (World Bank 2005a)[113]. An individual taking on a burden of debt with inadequate preparation or support has little chance of achieving increased income, empowerment or development.

Recent post-modern and post-development approaches have started to challenge 'western professional development' ideas, arguing that 'professionalism' itself is built of power, wealth and knowledge and requires some auto-reflection and analysis. Theorists argue that the dominance of the western paradigm of development gives rise to a production of development knowledge that reproduces the unequal relationship between the West and the Third World. Thus the powerful articulate their worldview such that other people become 'Others', no more than objects to be studied, described and developed in the image of the West (Munck 1999). Key amongst the concerns here are that a universalised consumer culture is assumed to be achievable and desirable for all peoples and cultures (Tucker 1999). The ongoing neo-liberal model of development moreover de-legitimatises the social, cultural, political and economic systems that pre-date development intervention. Heterogenic social structures within non-market forms of social organisation are overlooked as a homogenous development model is applied.

The desirability of the very notion of development itself is questioned by McGregor who argues that in Timor Leste, 'the legacy of the *malae*[114] period in which Timor Leste is still

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[113] Moxham writes that one credit recipient cynically expressed thanks for the one day of training in business tactics she had received from the project two years ago, which had confirmed her conclusions that her kiosk was miserable, as were other possible business options.

[114] A term used by the Timorese to denote foreigner.

partially embedded, is a local civil society landscape composed of institutions which have been trained to think and act as agents of development and are likely to pursue conventional development goals'. McGregor argues that despite talk of 'empowerment' 'community ownership' and 'bottom up decision making', western development has failed to deliver development to all but an elite majority which has had the effect of 'acculturating locals into western development culture' rather than strengthening the capacity of locals to fulfil their own. Thus, he concludes, 'the concept of development must be dissolved so that alternative futures can be imagined' (McGregor 2007).

In contrast to McGregor, the activists interviewed in this research clearly aspire to the concept of 'development'. Their understanding of the term development embodies the idea of a better future as demonstrated early in this chapter. However they distinguish between 'development' where they are the agents of change, and activities which are funded and implemented by donors, which they term 'projects'. Projects, in the minds of some Timorese activists, are linked with inequality where the beneficiaries may be selected groups within the community in a process divorced from local decision making and local knowledge. In the short period that foreign aid has played a role in Timor Leste, many activists have learnt that development projects must be built on local knowledge and practices. Thus their ideas largely concur with development theorists who promote greater social analysis, inclusive community participation, and empowerment of local people as principles for effective development. Although there is broad acceptance that development should be defined by those who are supposed to benefit from it, the forms and methods by which this is done remain highly contested.

Concepts of Democracy

> *Democracy is like a fruit tree which is forced to produce fruit early – it does not taste good. It has not had time to mature. Timor has not had time to mature with democracy. We need to build people's understanding of the world, especially traditional views of democratic process. Our tradition has democracy – elders come together to discuss issues. More respected people are listened to more. [Inacio][115]*

Notions of empowerment and human rights in western democratic culture are closely aligned to democratic processes. Democracy has thus become central to ideas of the fulfilment of human rights and to 'good governance' practices, both being supported by aid programs. 'Good governance' includes concepts such as sound public expenditure management, processes of democratic governance and freedom from corruption[116].

UN administered peace keeping programs in diverse societies have culminated in an electoral process being imported onto the 'host' country (Kumar 1998). In these circumstances, 'democracy' may be experienced as little more than an electoral process. Although the Timorese lack prior experience of western style democracy, they recorded high turnouts in the national ballot and election processes since the arrival of the UN in 1999. The word 'democracy', however, has been strongly linked to the process of election campaigns, adversarial politics and increased individualism. This is sometimes interpreted within the Timorese community as people being permitted to do what they want as individuals, rather act than in the interests of the community - nepotism and graft have been perceived to be linked to 'democracy' when these have coincided with the implementation of new democratic processes[117]. This change in social mores is brought about by capitalism, according to Rose, where 'citizens are expected to act in pursuit of

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[115] Inacio interview

[116] The shift towards this policy approach derives from the 1998 World Bank report 'Assessing Aid: What works, what doesn't and why', which concluded that to be effective, aid should only be given to countries with 'good policies'. These finding are, however, refuted by some economists who identify other factors such as poor targeting of the aid, existing low levels of development and infrastructure, and external economic effects as equally important (Beynon 2002; Killick, T & Healy 2000; Morrissey 2001). Nevertheless these World Bank findings are widely used to define donor policies for aid.

[117] This idea of 'democracy', as explained to me by Xavier, was identical to views expressed by rural Mozambicans at the time of their first elections in 1993. Mozambicans experienced powerful people being able to 'do what they want' in the sense of following individual (rather than collective) interests.

their own self-interest and self-realisation' in the name of 'freedom' (Rose 1999:145). The interests of the parties, and the individuals within them, thus become paramount.

Democratisation should, however, enable the people to participate in framing and making decisions that affect them. Preece & Mosweunyane suggest that establishing liberal democratic rule within customary society requires an understanding of interlinking worlds and power structures, such that new political forms do not clash with traditional ones. Democratisation is constrained because western forms of democracy which encourage opposition for its own sake may not align easily with traditional world view, thus democracy may be an ideology but not a complete reality where non-elected traditional chiefs hold power (Preece & Mosweunyane 2003:12).

Timorese maintain allegiance not just to a particular individual, but to a lineage through generations and this lineage determines successive allegiances (Kingsbury 2007). The idea of a multiparty system in which parties compete with each other is quite alien to Timorese culture according to Tania Hoje (2002): 'For the majority of the population the emerging multiparty scene remained a mystery. The idea that more than one party existed seemed shocking' states Hohe (2002b:73). Hohe further points out that an elected individual may not have political legitimacy. She argues that the understanding of opposition based on the idea of winner and loser is, within the dualistic concepts of the Timorese tradition, close to the idea of enemies. Traditionally, opposed elements must be in hostile relationship with one another or they must be reconciled in a blood or marriage tie.

The concept of an election based along party lines was thus a foreign creation and within Timor Leste was considered divisive. The *Chefe de Suco* was, in the past, a representative of the entire community but after the multi-party elections, the elected *Chefe de Suco* was regarded as representing only those that voted for them according to some activists. It was pointed out that in the past the *Chefe* was seen to represent all the people, but in the party system the *Chefe* is seen to represent their party fulfilling party responsibilities, rather than being a spokesperson for all the community[118]. Thus following multi-party elections the *Chefe* could only mobilise those that had voted for him/her. These activists expressed concern that the effect of party-based processes of representation at *Suco* and *Aldeia* level has been to undermine representative leadership of the community.

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[118] Xavier, personal communication, Dili, 15/8/06

The first Timorese elections for the *Suco* and *Aldeia*[119] council representatives took place in September 2005 at the time of my first research visit[120]. During the 2005 *Suco* elections symbols that had represented nationhood during the struggle for liberation were used to gain partisan support. FRETILIN, as the historic party that fought for independence, used its flag to symbolise nationhood. Xanana Gusmão established a new party *Congresso Nacional para a Reconstrução de Timor* (National Congress for Reconstruction of Timor) using the old acronym CNRT to draw popular support. The *Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorense* (CNRT) that had united different parties and political factions from 1987 was disbanded in 2001. Thus both these parties used former symbols of the resistance to gain support for their political base.

In societies in which individuals are classified in terms of their kinship relationships, collective interests outweigh individual interests, and social relationships require subordinates to obey and the superordinates to protect (Kabeer 2006:94-5). The change from such hereditary power to democratic governments has been described as a transformation from 'a divine right to power being owned by no-one, where control is exerted by regulating governmental bodies' (Foucault 1991). Foucault argues that in hereditary power systems the act of governing represents privilege. On the other hand, the purpose of government is to ensure the welfare of the population operating through subjugation and strategic apparatuses (Foucault 1980). These structures allow competing ideas to produce resistance which act as a check on absolute power (Danaher, Schirato & Webb 2000). In traditional societies responses are based on meanings that are part of a particular system of thought characterising the traditional world view. According to Haugaard (2003), the social order of the traditional world view will be challenged by outside perspectives. Power is maintained through the natural social order and disempowerment also can result from it. Thus the transformation away from customary leadership ('power over') can result in empowerment and the capacity for action ('power to'), empowering agents that were previously disempowered (Haugaard 2003). This can have both positive and negative consequences as demonstrated later in this thesis.

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[119] In Timor Leste an 'aldeia' is a hamlet, and a 'Suco' a village or cluster of hamlets.
[120] The older Timorese had also participated in elections campaigns in 1975 with FRETILIN, UDT and Apodeti competing for support (Hill 2002). There was, at that time, a deliberate focus on national unity (at least by FRETILIN) in an attempt to overcome regional divisions.

In Timor Leste following the 2005 elections the local *Suco* Council[121] was established as an elected body, usually made up of older men as well as two youth representatives, one male and one female, and another women's representative. This structure blends the traditional way of older men dominating decision making, with participative democratic concepts of representation of women and youth[122].

The roles of these councils were not clearly established. According to a Local Government Options Study commissioned in 2003 by the RDTL government, UNTAET recruited Administrators for the 13 districts and 65 sub-districts, but did not define the local government structure at the *Suco* level[123]. Many of the district and sub-district staff lacked an active role in local development and were patiently waiting for 'normal service to be resumed' and for local planning, management, budgeting and procurement to be introduced (Ministry of State Administration 2003:55). The Portuguese and Indonesian authorities had collaborated with traditional power structures to maintain authority. The Portuguese used the local *Liurai* as an intermediary between the people and the colonial state. The Indonesian administration also recognised the legitimacy of the *Liurai* and integrated local structures into the Indonesian governance system of direct rule. They delegated responsibilities and powers in planning, civil registry and conflict resolution tasks to the local level (Ministry of State Administration 2003)[124]. UNTAET, and later

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[121] The Suco committee. The smallest administrative units at the village level are the *Suco* (village) and the *aldeia* (hamlet). In the rural areas the Suco may be comprised of a number of dispersed hamlets. In Dili a Suco comprised of several *bairros* (suburbs).

[122] Customary power structures are made up of senior men in the community, but women and youth traditionally had no public face.

[123] A Local Government Options study was carried out in 2005 which presented alternative models for local governance. A proposal was made to create 5 regions and turn district/sub-district structures into municipalities. Region I is Baucau, Viqueque and Lautem, region II is Ainaro, Manufahi and Manatuto, region III is Ermera, Aileu and Dili and region IV is Covalima, Bobonaro and Liquica. The enclave of Oecussi is region V. Each region is to be represented by a Secretary of State, and have representatives from the various ministries. The Municipalities will be responsible for the implementation of programs (Ministry of State Administration 2003). Laws for decentralisation were passed in 2007 to allow budget management to take place at local level following a pilot study in Maliana (2005) and Los Palos (2006).

[124] Generally the *Suco* chiefs in formal positions were chosen due to being from the customary leadership families, many of whom were secretly sympathetic to the resistance movement (Mearns 2002:33). In spite of the disruptions to communal life as a result of forced population removal from traditional lands to curtail their support of FRETILIN, and the arrival of transmigrant settlers from other islands in Indonesia, the Suco system remained intact, only starting to break up in urban areas. Local leaders opened *Suco* membership beyond their marital alliance groups, thus by accommodating the new situation the *Suco* chiefs maintained their leadership role (Ministry of State Administration 2003).

RDTL, maintained centralised control, leaving the *Suco* councils with little ability to take any meaningful role in local development.

Community participation contributes to the democratic process as well as meeting developmental goals of improving communities and service delivery. Active participation has become the 'right' of citizenship in contrast to an 'opportunity' for development agencies seeking to better achieve their goals (Gaventa 2006b). For democracy to be a process in which people are able to participate in the issues that affect them requires two conditions to be met: Firstly, citizen participation must be strengthened so that poor people are given a voice. This requires new forms of inclusion, consultation and mobilisation in order that those most socially disadvantaged are able to be heard by institutions and policies. Secondly, it is also necessary to strengthen the accountability and responsiveness of national institutions and policies (Gaventa 2004). Where nation-building establishes avenues by which people can be actively engaged in decisions that affect them, this contributes to their dignity and self-respect, which are critical to a sense of citizenship (Eyben & Ladbury 2006). This requires effective and sustainable channels of communication between the people and their representatives.

Concepts of Civil Society

> *Development is not just for people who sit in the government but for civil society to participate in the process. [Isabela]*

The term civil society is used to embrace a range of organisations from informal community based organisations (CBOs) to formally constituted organisations such as NGOs. NGOs are often comprised of educated intermediaries acting on behalf of the poorest and most excluded people. In Timor Leste the growth of civil society organisations was rapid after the catastrophic events of 1999 when the arrival of hundreds of international development aid agencies heralded a new era of Timorese development. A tiny civil society sector which began with human rights and advocacy work during the Indonesian occupation grew rapidly as Timorese contributed to the nationwide response of emergency aid, reconstruction and development by the international community.

The importance of human rights and democracy in development discourses is evidenced by the 'rights based approach to development' within the NGO sector which developed in the 1990s. This approach shifts the emphasis from meeting 'needs' through the delivery of localised development projects to that of promoting 'rights' through advocacy and citizen's participation and engagement with government structures. It has emphasised wider avenues for civil society organisations to challenge governments to meet basic human rights as enshrined in nationally adopted UN conventions. Within rights based approach to development, the notion of citizenship is central because citizenship provides the context in which people can claim, expand and lose rights (Isin & Turner 2002).

In low-income or marginalised communities, research has identified four principal mechanisms that contribute to people's sense of citizenship, dignity and self-respect[125]. These mechanisms, according to Eyben & Ladbury, are social movements, civil society organisations, forums created by the state for citizenship participation and parallel governance structures. Participation in social movements, even when acting in opposition to the state, also contribute to a sense of citizenship (Eyben & Ladbury 2006). Indeed, in Timor Leste the uniting force of the resistance was the principal driver of national unity. It is noteworthy that the Timorese independence movement which acted in opposition to the Indonesian state played a crucial role in establishing a sense of nationalism, which enabled the population to unite in an organised and sustained campaign. After independence this contributed significantly to nation building.

Civil society organisations are often the first means of engagement for citizens in issues which extend beyond their immediate family interests. It is often described as the 'third sector' comprising that which is neither government nor the market. In Timor Leste civil society includes development NGOs, youth organisations, women's organisations, community groups and associations. The term 'civil society' is also used in different ways and indeed, it is difficult to find a single agreed definition. For Kilby, 'Civil society describes the non-governmental institutional arrangements of society in governance' (Kilby 2002). Kilby argues that the terms civil society and social capital are often used

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[125] This research project on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability by the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, carried out field studies in Brazilian shanty towns, the Niger Delta, rural and urban Bangladesh, nomads in India and the Chiapas in Mexico. It sought to look at citizenship as a process, and how people understand their roles and responsibilities in the wider community.

interchangeably. However social capital is a term which encompasses civil society but describes all non-monetary forms of social interaction and connections between individuals and groups (Kilby 1999). Social capital is seen to enhance interpersonal trust and social cohesion, thus being of particular value in areas affected by conflict for peace building and conflict resolution processes. The World Bank, whose embrace of social sciences was discussed earlier, describes social capital as valuable in improving project effectiveness and sustainability 'by building the community's capacity to work together to address their common needs, fostering greater inclusion and cohesion, and increasing transparency and accountability' (World Bank 2008). Civil society is an important aspect of the formation of social capital, and the role of civil society as an actor in the development has become increasingly recognised (Fowler 2002).

The concept of civil society is closely associated with democratic governance and associational forms through the work of de Tocqueville in 19th century USA and Putnam in 20th century Italy[126]. The World Alliance for Citizen Participation, known as CIVICUS, defines civil society in such a way as to support a broader definition *'the space outside the government and market'* which includes organisations, individuals and corporations[127]. Edwards, an analyst specialising in the civil society sector, argues that profit making firms cannot be included in the definition (Edwards 2001). The International NGO Training and Research Centre, INTRAC, highlights features of civil society organisations as 'a key to establishing democratic societies' and 'playing a key role in sustainable development in a just society'. Civil society organisations (CSOs) also 'maintain a degree of autonomy and have the potential to provide alternative views, policies and actions to those promoted by the state and market'. Civil society is often seen to be distinguished by the value base of organisations. They are commonly understood to be a repository of social values, insofar as they may seek to promote social equality or protect social and environmental capital

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[126] In its origins it has a strong association with the study of democracy. In the 19th century Alexis de Tocqueville observed the importance of free human association in a society which claims to be democratic not only in theory but also in practice (Howell & Pearce 2001:43). More recently Robert Putnam concluded from his studies in southern Italy that local associations and active engagement in community affairs was a precondition for democracy. Howell and Pearce suggest this concept is not necessarily transferable to developing countries.

[127] This CIVICUS definition was given by Clare Doube, CIVICUS Civil Society Watch Program Manager at a meeting with civil society actors in Melbourne 22nd October 2007. CIVICUS is an international civil society umbrella organisation. The CIVICUS definition would in practice include youth gangs in Dili involved in violence,

from exploitation. Indeed Australian NGOs have found that it is this value base which is seen to be critical to playing an effective development role[128].

A robust civil society is an important ingredient of the democratic process for it is through citizen participation and social actions that both corporate and state power may be checked and held accountable. Howell and Pearce describe a 'mainstream perspective' in which the most immediate roles for civil society are service delivery and holding the government accountable. In this view the social solidarity role of civil society organisations is an integral component of capitalist development, whereby donor concerns about corruption and misuse of aid can be tempered by a strong civil society. Government aid and development agencies have tended to support this role as part of a process of modernisation and to assist the transition from traditional forms of production (Howell & Pearce 2001). An 'alternative' view of civil society put forward by Howell and Pearce places civil society in a role of challenging dominant policies and development strategies, and putting forward alternative approaches (Howell & Pearce 2001). It is this alternate view that has shaped the development of civil society in Timor Leste during the Indonesian occupation. International donors have, on the other hand, predominantly supported the mainstream approach in the emergency, rehabilitation and development phases of international assistance. These different views have perhaps given rise to different expectations of donor and Timorese NGOs, an issue which is further explored later in this study.

Active and participatory forms of citizenship are now understood as an important part of the development process. Forums created by the state are important mechanisms through which people develop a sense of citizenship (Eyben & Ladbury 2006). For instance a broad consultation with the Timorese people was used to establish the National Development Plan (NDP) in the lead up to independence. This participatory process involved almost 36,000 people through public consultation with communities, members of the church, civil society, national and international NGOs, the private sector and public

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[128] In 2002, ACFID, working with Australian NGOs (ANGOs) embarked on research into NGO aid effectiveness, finding the existence of organisational values is critical if organisations are to play an effective development role. Effective program outcomes were found to require program activities to be congruent with the values that the organisation represents. Also, effective funding partnerships are contingent on long term relationships where partners work together in trust and mutual learning to resolve issues and problems (Chapman & Kelly 2007).

interest groups setting out national goals and objectives (Planning Commission 2002:xvii). In 2002 the UNDP held RDTL government in high regard for the participatory process put in place for the NDP:

> Timor Leste has been in the vanguard of popular participation. From the period of resistance onward, its national institutions have maintained a strong working partnership with the people- evident, for example, in the process of mass consultation that led to the National Vision in preparation for the National Development Plan (UNDP 2006:5).

Since the preparation of the NDP, central control of decision making and budget management resulted in the rural people and their representatives having little opportunity to participate development planning and implementation in the districts. The early years of independence saw progress in establishing the institutions of state, the judicial and security systems, but these developments had little benefit for the rural poor. The rising fear among the rural population that they had been overlooked by 'development' was not evident in the UNDP address to the Development Partners Meeting in Dili on 3rd April 2006, just days before a major political crisis broke out:

> In these four years as an independent nation, Timor-Leste has been successful in maintaining peace and stability, a remarkable achievement, and an unusual one among post-conflict countries. This accomplishment is a tribute to the strength and commitment of Timor-Leste's leadership and the wisdom of its people [Zhu Xian][129].

In a matter of days after Zhu Xian's speech, a public demonstration turned to violence. A political-military crisis unfolded, continuing throughout 2006 and into 2007. Dozens of people were killed and mob violence unleashed tit-for-tat burning and looting of houses, causing 150,000 people to flee their homes. These events are further elaborated in chapter eight. They were the climax to failings in a development process which left the majority of the Timorese poor unsupported.

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[129] Opening statement of World Bank Country Director Zhu Xian at Timor Leste and development partners meeting April 3-4 2006, Dili.

Figure two demonstrates the opportunities for participation and consultation between the national government; community leaders and civil society. These mechanisms are starting to be established in Timor Leste, although effective communication and relationships between these different groups have constrained their effective implementation. These issues will be further discussed in the chapters that follow.

Figure 2: Spheres of leadership and mechanisms for democratic engagement
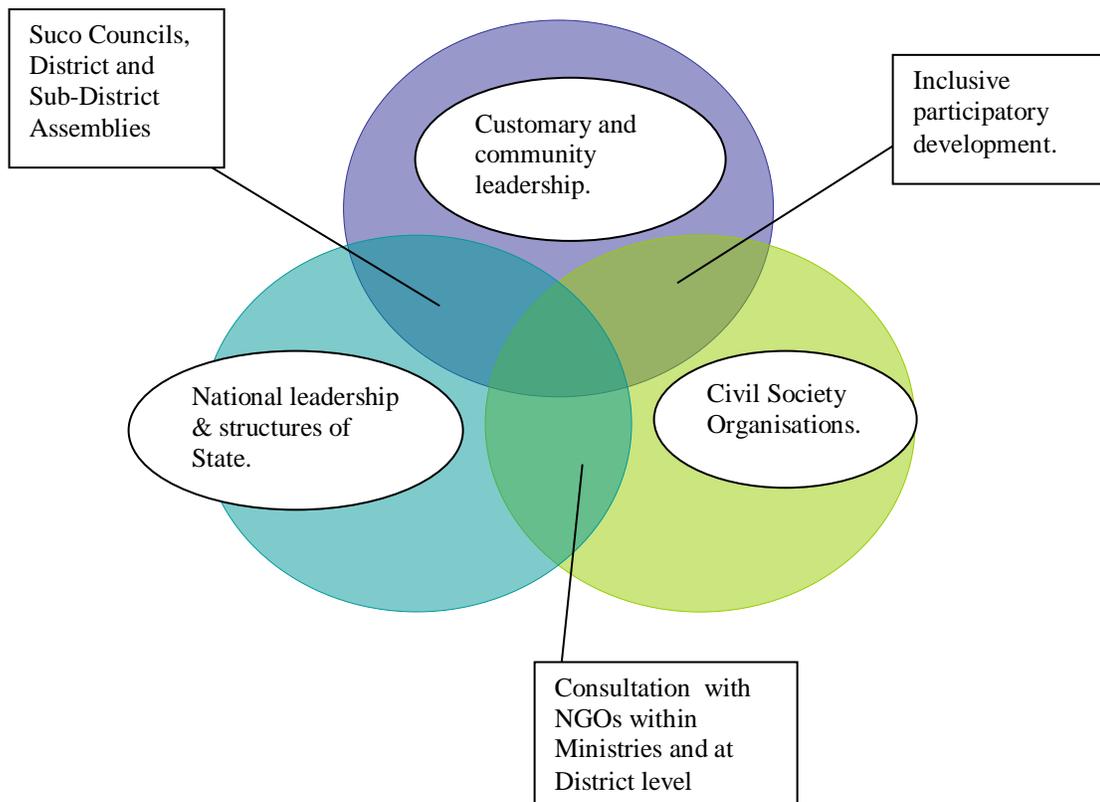
Reflective conclusion

The imposition of western concepts of development and democracy by the UN, the World Bank and other aid donors did not sit comfortably with either the Timorese leadership or the Timorese people in many ways. The contestation for the supremacy of ideas for

effective development exhibited differences between the leftist orientated Timorese leadership and the market oriented donors. This resulted in the RDTL government fighting to maintain central control. Neither the Portuguese speaking Timorese returning from the diaspora, nor the donors, have embraced customary power structures and perspectives in their strategies. I have investigated how in Timor Leste, in the struggle between the donors and government for establishing their own ideas of development the participation of the population were overlooked.

The UN administered process to establish democracy through multi-party elections had several failings. In the rush to get the elections in place little work was put into building an understanding of democracy and a concept of elected leaders. Thus the elected leader may lack the representative status of traditional leader and be seen to represent only a political party outside of the community. As well, the process of putting in place the *Suco* Council and local administrative structures without delineating a clear role or resources has undermined their authority and ability to represent the population. The failure to establish community engagement contributed to an alienation from the new state, particularly by those who made personal sacrifices in contributing to the liberation struggle to achieve independence.

The next three chapters set out the perspectives of young activists on issues that are of importance to them: education and language, traditional mores and gender relations, and the roles of young people in youth organisations. In the next chapter, an examination of different generational perspectives with respect to issues of literacy, language and learning in Timor Leste provides an understanding of how these *Bahasa* educated Timorese regard education as a foundation for development in Timor Leste.

Chapter Five

Literacy, Language and Learning across Generations

Introduction

Having set out the development context in Timor Leste, this chapter analyses how the diverse colonial educational experiences shaped the social identity and roles of successive generations of Timorese. The majority of literate Timorese, *Bahasa Indonesia* speakers, were significantly impacted by the decision to re-instate Portuguese as an official language as they have felt left at the margins of nation building. As educated citizens they believed they had a key role in contributing to social development, in contrast to their parents' generation most of which did not have the opportunity to attend school.

A particular focus of this chapter is the recent adoption of Portuguese as the principal language of education and government administration. This, I argue, has resulted in many *Bahasa* educated Timorese feeling marginalised. I investigate the obstacles to delivering an effective education in the medium of Portuguese where most educated Timorese do not speak the language, and why some young Timorese are hesitant to learn Portuguese. I further focus on the question of education for rural development, arguing that education needs to be made relevant to rural life by using a curriculum which builds on the lived experiences of young people within rural communities.

Educational eras in Timor Leste

> *In Indonesian times youth in the Clandestine did not focus on education. We were victims of the struggle. This generation will be victims of the system. [Orlando]*

Education is highly valued in Timor Leste and is seen as a source of status. The Portuguese educated elite, described by Soares (2007) as the '1975 generation' are power holders in the new Timorese government. They believe their education is superior to those educated in the Indonesian system. The majority of their generation, however, remained illiterate. The Indonesian-educated generation, born from the 1960s to 1980s, also believe their education to be superior to that which is being delivered in independent Timor Leste

are known as the *geração foun* (new or young generation)[130]. Youth born since 1990, referred to by Soares as the '*geração milênio*' or the millennium generation (Soares 2007), are graduates of the Timorese education system although they may have had some primary schooling during the Indonesian occupation.

In contrast to Portuguese education which was largely confined to elite families, ordinary rural families had access to education for the first time under the Indonesian regime. The Indonesian-educated generation are making an important contribution to change and development, both as civil society activists and as teachers. Some are working as school teachers or university lecturers concurrently with their civil society work, or are still studying to complete their own degrees. Most of the Indonesian educated-Timorese who participated in this research consider education will enable young people to participate in the development of the country. Development can be promoted where people access new knowledge which influences how they engage in daily activities. Schooling can provide an important point of departure from following tradition and adopting new ways, as can non-formal and informal education provided by civil society organisations[131]. Many activists believe that by teaching, they can make an important contribution to the future of the younger generation. Francisco, for instance, is the Coordinator of a Youth Centre but also teaches in a secondary school. Similarly, Henrique teaches at university in addition to his NGO work. Various Dili activists contribute to learning by sometimes lecturing in their discipline area at one of the universities. The continued use of *Bahasa* Indonesia as the medium of education in higher education in independent Timor Leste has enabled the *geração foun* to work as teachers within the education sector[132].

In the Portuguese colonial period only a minority of the population, who were considered '*assimilados*' (assimilated into Portuguese society) had access to formal education (chapter three). Illiterate Timorese had experienced the disadvantage of illiteracy, and according to Rei, strongly value education:

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[130] Statistics produced in 2003 show a dramatic decline in the proportion of the population in the age group 20-29 years (born 1974-83), probably a reflection of the high numbers of youth killed during the independence struggle (Ministry of Health 2003).

[131] Non-formal education refers to organised learning outside formal educational establishments, such as adult literacy programs or training workshops run by NGOs. Informal education is the unstructured learning that takes place through participating in new life experiences.

[132] Bahasa Indonesia and English have been designated as 'working languages'.

'[My parents] understood that being illiterate meant you had no access to another perspective apart from what the colonialist told you. My father saw many examples of the Portuguese manipulating *Maubere* people. Then under the Indonesians, a common tactic was to kill *Maubere* people who had signed a false confession that they could not read.'(Rei 2007:58).

The Indonesians made education available to the majority of the people. Young people who attended school in the early 1980s were often the first members of their family to have any education. As such they had high expectations that their education would lead to a government job or status within the structures of political leadership. Their school experiences, however, were marked by disruptions due to the political environment and their roles in the clandestine movement. Consequently many completed their studies only recently or are still struggling to do so.

As a result of the various disruptions that most young Timorese faced in their education both during and after the Indonesian occupation, it is not unusual for adults to still be attending school, or returning to complete their schooling. A recent education report found the age range in any grade was typically 10-12 years, with the majority of students often several years older than the normal age for their grade, including 18 year olds in classes from grade three upwards (World Bank 2003).

In Timor Leste only 50% of the adult population is literate. There is a strong age and gender bias in this statistic – only 44% of women are literate compared to 56% of men, and overall 73% of under 35 year olds are literate compared to only 19% of over fifty year olds. Between 10-30% of primary school aged children are not in school, and only 55% of seven year olds were in school partly due to late enrolment, a factor which most affects children from the poorest households. In spite of these dire statistics, advances are being made with the literacy rate rising from only 40% in 1999 since the end of the Indonesian occupation (UNDP 2006).

On completing primary school, rural children often have to leave home to attend pre-secondary school. For families who do not have relatives near the school other arrangements must be made. Eugenio and Francisco both started living independently at the tender age of thirteen. Eugenio set up house in the district town with four students (two girls and two boys) from his village. They built a house, and received money each week

when their parents came to market each Saturday to sell farm produce. At this early age they looked after themselves including doing cooking and firewood collection[133]. Francisco did the same thing as one of seven boys from his sub-district[134].

Of my primary research participants, those who entered primary school shortly after Indonesia established schools around the country in 1980-81 were Eugenio, Francisco, Henrique, Antonio and Guilherme. Many students dropped out of school as a result of their primary commitment to the liberation struggle, but these students continued their education up to university level. It was considered a great privilege for boys from rural villages to attend university. Antonio, Eugenio, Francisco and Guilherme studied at the University of Timor Timur (UNTIM) in Dili and reached their final year of study in the tumultuous year of 1999. Their theses were not complete, thus they could not graduate. Eugenio was able submit his thesis in 2003 having managed to save the draft from destruction in 1999. Guilherme did not return to complete his degree, while Francisco finally completed his thesis and graduated in 2007, more than twelve years after he started. Henrique studied in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, returning to Timor for the ballot registration in mid 1999. He was then unable to return to Indonesia as a national student. Having attended a Catholic school in Baucau, Henrique was able to obtain a scholarship from the Catholic Church to return to study in Java to complete his studies in 2002. The donor community assisted some 2000 of these students to complete their studies through the Timor Lorosa'e Scholarship Program established under the auspices of UNTAET. Another 200 chose to continue their education in UNTL due to fears about returning to Indonesia (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006:11).

Indonesia established universal education in Timor Leste as a tool for instilling a sense of Indonesian citizenship amongst the Timorese youth. The strategy failed, however, as students became engaged in clandestine activities which disrupted their education. The use of rote learning, where students learn by heart what the teacher writes on the blackboard and replicate class materials to get a good mark, was the main method of teaching. It is a system of education in which knowledge of the teacher is valued and that of the students remains largely unrecognised.

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[133] Interview with Eugenio
[134] Interview with Francisco

Within the formal education system most teachers have learnt within the hierarchical Indonesian education system which discourages critical thinking and initiative[135]. A number of my research participants, however, described how they gained leadership, organisations skills and training skills from Catholic youth groups and scouts groups outside their formal education. Nevertheless, most activists believe that their tertiary education was a key factor in enabling them to make a contribution to society.

The belief that simple transfer of knowledge does not facilitate true learning was pioneered by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator in the 1970s. His critique of conventional schooling led him to reject the passive education model which he termed 'banking education', an education system in which students are not encouraged to question (Freire 1972). Freire & Faundez regarded asking questions as the source of knowledge and criticise teachers for 'giving answers and not asking questions' which they term 'castration of curiosity'. These educationalists point to two critical issues in education. First, that knowledge needs curiosity, and second, that teachers cannot teach without learning at the same time (Freire & Faundez 1989:35). Freire believed that structures of domination and oppression have resulted in the legitimacy of the 'wisdom' of the dominant groups, while the alternative wisdoms of oppressed groups are unrecognised (Ife 1995:96). A movement for 'popular education' has evolved from Freire's early work. Popular education is based on the concept that the starting point of learning for change is the existing knowledge of the participants and their environment. Freire's work paved the way not only for progressive curriculum development but his work was also influential in development theory and practice. FRETILIN started a literacy campaign using Freirean methods prior to the Indonesian invasion, and literacy schools were subsequently established in the liberated areas soon after the occupation. *Dai Popular*, a 'popular education' network of NGOs in Timor Leste was later formed to promote Freirean principles (Durnan 2005).

When the Indonesians withdrew in September 1999, an estimated 95% of all schools and other educational buildings had been destroyed by the Indonesian military and militia. The majority of the 5000 teachers were from different parts of Indonesia and an estimated 70-80% of senior administrative staff and secondary school teachers departed permanently. Primary schools had a higher proportion of Timorese teachers, with less than 25% from

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[135] Interview with Academic 1, Dili, 6/9/05

outside Timor but few Timorese teachers had minimum qualifications in education (Nicolai 2004). In Baucau the Catholic Church supported both their own and government schools to resume late in 1999[136], but in much of the country it was many months before classes could resume again. UNTAET embarked on the task of school construction immediately with US$45 million allocated to education during the emergency phase. There were 535 schools restored by April 2002. The replacement of essential infrastructure and 'getting children into school' became the primary focus of education of UNTAET. CNRT and UNTAET decided to continue using the Indonesian curriculum with new Timorese covers and an introduction by the President for the Timorese context. Thus schools resumed using Indonesian texts, except for first and second grade for which Portuguese texts were purchased (Nicolai 2004). The opportunity for the transformation of the curriculum as conceived by CNRT was not taken forward[137] (Millo & Barnett 2004).

Secondary school teachers Francisco and Orlando face a range of difficulties. In their district high school there are only 30 teachers where 50 are required, and of these only four have teaching qualifications[138]. According to Millo and Barnett (2004) the majority of secondary school teachers are university students who had not completed their bachelor degrees due to the violence in 1999, and lack any pedagogical training. Each year the classes get bigger but there are already shortages of classrooms, desks and chairs[139]. In October 2000, secondary schools had an average of eighty nine students per teacher in government high schools compared to just eight students per teacher in Catholic high schools (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006).

Establishing quality education remains a challenge. Basic facilities such as laboratories and libraries are lacking. Francisco, who attended a well regarded district based agricultural technical school during the Indonesian period, reported that he received 70% of teaching through practical classes, and the 30% theory. For the three years in independent Timor Leste, the same agricultural school has taught all theory and no

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[136] Henrique interview, Baucau 18/6/06
[137] At a CNRT conference on the development of Timor Leste in Melbourne in April 1999 plans for transforming the teaching-learning process and modernising the curriculum were made.
[138] Orlando is one of these. Interview with Francisco and Orlando, secondary teachers in Suai. 8/8/06
[139] In Covalima a high school has 15 classrooms but not enough blackboards and only enough desks for 9 classrooms. Some students sit on the ground for the whole day. At the time of the research teachers were also anticipating an expected increase in enrolments as the government plan to abolish school fees from the start of the school year in September 2006.

practice due to lack of equipment and skills at the school[140]. Leach has found that teachers consider their major challenges to be lack of formal curriculum and teaching materials such as teaching manuals, textbooks or reference materials (Leach 2007).

Portuguese and Tetum are used as the language of instruction in primary schools, with Portuguese being increased each year from grades one to six. From the year 2000 one new grade has been included in the new Portuguese/Tetum curriculum each year as students rise through the school system. In the new curriculum, Tetum is used largely as a means of helping students understand the Portuguese curriculum. According to local teachers: 'We are being told in the workshops or training to use other languages such as the local language to help the children understand the concepts' (Quinn 2007). By 2006 all six years of primary education were being undertaken in the Portuguese/ Tetum curriculum. The first children graduating from Timorese primary school were entering junior high, even though there was only the Indonesian curriculum to teach them[141].

Portuguese language training for teachers has been the major focus of education policy. *Bahasa* speaking teachers, however, consider the Ministry of Education's prioritisation of language skills over technical skills is a problem which affects the quality of teaching particularly in maths and science. The Sectoral Investment Program (SIP) for Education and Training[142] recognises that the failure to develop language proficiency to a level needed for technical subjects carries risks of 'undue deterioration in the quality of instruction and student learning'[143] (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006:25). It has, however, proved difficult to recruit Portuguese speakers even to teach within primary schools[144]. Meanwhile, many primary school teachers, now teaching in Portuguese, have

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[140] Francisco interview

[141] Informal communication with Francisco and Orlando, Dili June 2008.

[142] The SIP for Education and Training was developed jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Secretariat of State of Youth and Sport (SSYS) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Re-insertion, (responsible for the vocational training sector and issues of social equality such as disability).

[143] The SIP states 'A major challenge to be addressed in the medium term is how to effectively bridge the language transition in pre-secondary school for this cohort of primary school graduates who are no longer proficient in the Indonesian language as it has been dropped as a subject. This challenge is real as the current batch of teachers in pre-secondary schools is still largely proficient only in teaching in the Indonesian language and continue to use textbooks in this language. Since teachers in secondary education are largely subject specialized, they will need effective training for proficiency in teaching in Portuguese in their subject specialization. Otherwise, this could result in undue deterioration on the quality of instruction and student learning'(Ministry of Education and Culture 2006:25).

[144] An announcement in 2001 to recruit 700 primary school teachers for grades 1 to 3 resulted in the selection of only 300 out of 3000 applicants due to their unsatisfactory proficiency in Portuguese. The

no opportunity to develop their Portuguese skills within their communities. Some have never spoken Portuguese outside the classroom[145]. In mid 2008, children were deprived of education while the secondary schools were closed for three months to provide intensive Portuguese language training to teachers.

Students that started school in the Indonesian system continue their learning through the Indonesian language curriculum. *Bahasa Indonesia,* however, is no longer taught as a language subject even though there are many teachers able to fulfil this role. According to Tomas, students are arriving at university without adequate competence in the language which is making teaching at tertiary level difficult[146]. Students, expected to write their theses in *Bahasa,* are 'all but illiterate' in the language according to the Ministry of Education and Culture[147].

Indonesian curriculum subjects such as history and geography have been removed from the national curriculum, but not replaced with Timorese equivalent subjects. A school teacher is permitted to develop and teach these subjects, but the course is examined through a local exam, not the national examination system[148]. Complex political issues in establishing a mutually accepted history of Timor Leste are pointed out by Leach (2007), who suggests that fostering national identity and citizenship through a shared history, commonly a goal of a national education system, will be a politically challenging task in Timor Leste.

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selection for secondary school teachers was not based on language proficiency but on subject area qualifications, but there are few teachers with teaching qualifications (Nicolai 2004).

[145] I met with a teacher in Baucau in 2008, who had learned Portuguese as part of the teacher training program. She told me that until our conversation, she had never actually spoken Portuguese outside of her school.

[146] Informal communication with Tomas, October 2007, Melbourne.

[147] According to the Education SIP. 'Portuguese is to become the standard of instruction in less than ten years' time when the current cohort of fifth-year primary school students reaches university age. At the present time, most university students use Bahasa Indonesia as the main language and nearly all are still expected to write their theses in that language, even though Indonesian has been dropped from the school and university curriculum since 1999. With no formal teaching in over four years, many university students are now all but illiterate in academic Indonesian, with adverse consequences for reporting on their research programs' *(Ministry of Education and Culture 2006).*

[148] Interview with school teachers Francisco and Orlando, Suai, 8/8/06

Timorese identity and language

> *Our members are from the liberation struggle – they feel they are the 'lost generation' because of the choice of language. The government doesn't give any special attention for students who left education to be involved in the struggle and they feel abandoned. Even though Tetum is an official language it is not used in the administration. The Government announcements say that Portuguese is the identity of Timor Leste – this is the wrong story for Timor Leste. [Antonio]*

Bahasa Indonesia was the language of education for almost twenty years, thus all those under forty years, the vast majority of the literate population, speak and write *Bahasa* Indonesia. Guilherme argues that the use of Portuguese as the language of administration makes his generation into 'outsiders'. Most young people, like Antonio and Guilherme, reject the opinion of the Timorese political leadership that Portuguese heritage is part of the Timorese identity.

Language plays an important role in identity and belonging. In Timor Leste just one in twenty people speak Portuguese while more than four in five speak Tetum[149] (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006:33). A study of language, heritage and national identity undertaken in 2002 found that the younger generation of Timorese conceive of national identity in ways which contest the official view that Portuguese is part of the identity and culture of the Timorese (Leach 2003). The study, which surveyed 320 young people, found that the ability of people to speak Tetum was considered 'very important' by 83% of the respondents, but the ability to speak Portuguese was seen as 'very important' by only 24%[150]. Leach repeated this survey five years later in 2007. The importance of language in relation to national identity for young people was shown to have increased for Tetum (83% to 88.5%), but had doubled for Portuguese (24% to 52%) (Leach 2008b). This indicates a growing acceptance of, or resignation to, the Portuguese language policy[151].

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[149] Tetum (also written Tetun) is widely spoken in Timor Leste. It is a language based on Tetum Terik, spoken in the south and west of Timor Leste, but incorporating much Portuguese vocabulary. Known as "Tetum praca" or market Tetum, it became a creolised trading language under colonial rule.

[150] The study was undertaken in August 2002 to determine what factors were important for Timorese identity. Other markers of national identity were found to be either being born in Timor Leste or being a citizen of Timor Leste (90% of respondents), being Catholic (81%), and respecting the laws (89.5%) believing these to be 'very important'.

[151] I know activists who had earlier been critical of the policy but have decided that they will learn Portuguese, because their careers in teaching depend on it.

The RDTL Constitution of 2002 declared Portuguese and Tetum co-official languages. It included a commitment to develop and value Tetum as well as the vernacular languages and declared English and Indonesian as working languages. The choice of Portuguese as the official language of Timor Leste, which was made at the first CNRT [152] conference in Perniche, Portugal in 1998 and restated at the CNRT Congress in 2000, was not well received by the younger Indonesian educated generation. The inclusion of Tetum as an official language was made a year later as a result of intense lobbying by two of the younger members of the Constituent Assembly, representing a generation which felt alienated by the adoption of Portuguese as the official language (Leach 2003).

The younger generation consider Portuguese a colonial language. For Timorese leaders it is part of their culture and identity. Due to the common ethnic and linguistic roots with the people of West Timor, Timorese leaders were keen to define the unique identity of the East Timorese. They therefore, stressed the Portuguese heritage in order to distinguish themselves from the people of West Timor, part of Indonesia. Portuguese had been used as a language of the resistance and the right of children to learn Portuguese was one of the rights that the resistance were fighting for after the Indonesians forcibly closed down Portuguese schools (Hill 2002). For this generation the decision to reinstate Portuguese as official language was the fulfilment of long held aspirations. Jose Ramos Horta claimed the choice of language had to do with '*the history, culture and identity of the country .... It was a strategic decision to strengthen the uniqueness of East Timor, the national identity of East Timor*' (Ramos Horta 2002). This concept of national identity, however, differs significantly from ideas of identity held by the younger generations. Aspects of national identity which find resonance amongst the older and younger generations alike are the Tetum language, Catholicism and the history of struggle of the Timorese against the Portuguese and Indonesian occupiers (Leach 2003). The Timorese Constitution recognises the symbolic importance of the resistance movement as a symbol of national identity[153].

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[152] *Conselho Nacional de Resistencia Timorese* – the National Council of Timorese Resistance created as an umbrella to unite FRETILIN and UDT in the lead up to independence. At this meeting the *Magna Carta* was drawn up which outlined the principles on which an independent state of Timor Leste would be based.
[153] 'RDTL *acknowledges and values the secular resistance of the Maubere people against foreign domination and the contribution of all those who fought for national independence (RDTL 2002 :section 11(1)).* According to Ramos Horta, the term Maubere proved to be the single most successful political symbol of the independence campaign as a symbol of identity, pride and belonging (Ramos Horta 1987:37).

The declaration that Portuguese language and culture was part of the identity of the Timorese, when at independence only some 5% of the population understood the language, marginalised the majority of Timorese from 'official' Timorese culture (Leach 2008b). Most of the population turned to Catholisicm during the Indonesian occupation (see chapter three) resulting in 98% of people identifying as Catholic (Ministry of Health 2003). At that time much of the population turned to the Catholic Church for protection during the Indonesian occupation. Tetum was popularised as a national language through its use in mass during the occupation after the speaking of Portuguese was banned. Catholism and Tetum have thus become symbols of Timorese identity. The Constitution acknowledges that Timor-Leste is a multilingual society (Taylor-Leech 2006), however the government does not implement a bi-lingual policy. Tetum language, although an official language, is not used in official documentation.

The political leadership believe Portuguese education and language to be superior. Indeed, many of their generation had internalised the official Portuguese ideology that being civilised (*civilisado*) was defined by their language and culture (Hill 2002). Concepts of cultural superiority instilled by the Portuguese education system extend beyond language. Crockfords' research which took place in the Timorese diaspora in Australia records Portuguese educated Timorese in referring to the 'etiquette of Portuguese culture' and looking down on traditional practices such as 'sitting on the floor and eating with our fingers when the Portuguese taught us to eat with knives and forks' (Crockford 2007:183). For the Portuguese educated Timorese, the language is a source of identity which carries prestige and status.

The value of language from the perspective of young Timorese is altogether different from that of the Portuguese educated elite. The Indonesian speaking Timorese were forced by their experiences to disconnect emotionally from *Bahasa* Indonesia and value languages exclusively for practical purposes (Dibley 2004). Dibley claims that the younger generation are unable to accept Portuguese both as a language and a cultural symbol. Indeed their understanding of language as a practical tool is supported by the fact that many Timorese activists express a preference to learn English because it provides a window to the world, rather than Portuguese which only opens communication with the

small number of Lusophone countries most in distant Africa[154]. As well, the replacement of Indonesian with Portuguese, in the eyes of *Bahasa* speaking Timorese is simply replacing the language of one coloniser with another.

Young Timorese say they do not like Portuguese because it is a difficult language. A less mentioned reason for not wanting to learn it stems from the attitudes of Portuguese speakers, who looked down on people who have poor Portuguese language skills. Several of my research participants who claimed to not speak Portuguese admitted that they could 'understand but not speak' Portuguese. I questioned why Timorese generally will use any opportunity to practice their English, even if they speak poorly, but not Portuguese? It became clear that fear of being ridiculed for speaking poor Portuguese results in a preference to speak English which carries no stigma for making an error[155]. Another activist explained:

> 'If you speak badly you are laughed at. In English you can make mistakes without a problem – the focus is on understanding. It is the colonial mentality in which somebody would be judged by their standard of Portuguese'[156].

That Portuguese education is associated with superiority is also demonstrated in Crockford's research. An Indonesian educated Timorese explained that when he spoke Portuguese other Timorese participants would laugh at him because he mixed it with Tetum words. He subsequently shifted to speaking English where the incorporation of Tetum words was received positively (Crockford 2007:188).

The merits or otherwise of the choice of Portuguese as the official international language is outside the scope of this thesis[157]. Of concern here is a sense of disenfranchisement among young Timorese due to the unequal implementation of the official language policy

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[154] Lusophone countries are Portugal, Brazil (the largest), Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Cabo Verde. In Asia, Portuguese is spoken in Macau only, a Portuguese enclave in China.

[155] This conversation came about because as a Portuguese speaker it became evident to me that many people could understand Portuguese but refused to speak it. The conversation was with Eugenio and Orlando. The use of the Portuguese language as a marker of class in Brazil is discussed by Paulo Freire & Antonio Faundez (1989) in 'Learning to Question: a Pedagogy of Liberation'.

[156] Conversation with INGO local staff 1 25/3/06

[157] There has been much discussion about the merits of Portuguese, English or Indonesian as the official language. *Bahasa* Indonesia was a rejected due to fears of Indonesianisation and Indonesian economic and social domination. English similarly carried fears of domination by its southern neighbour, Australia. It should be noted that similar concerns about the economic domination by its large northern and southern neighbours can be seen with the adoption of the US dollar as Timorese currency, rather than either the Indonesian Rupiah or Australian dollar, both of which were in circulation in the UNTAET period.

with respect to the two official languages. Tetum is increasingly being used in the print media and for documentation within the NGO sector. Although a familiar oral language, neither Timorese journalists nor NGO staff have had the opportunity to learn to write Tetum according to the official orthography. In the absence of opportunities to learn 'correct' written Tetum, people simply write Tetum Praça according to the writers' best guesswork. Yet linguists of the National Institute of Linguistics are critical of journalists and others who use Tetum incorrectly[158]. Even school children who started their education during the Indonesian occupation are not offered Tetum classes in school. For instance Lydia, a 19 year old girl who attended one year of post-independence primary school and four years of junior high and secondary school has never learnt to write Tetum[159]. The Catholic church, however, has developed a Tetum literacy program and there is a greater focus on Tetum teaching in Catholic schools [160].

Education experts agree that the most effective primary education is that provided in the language spoken at home, a fact recognised by FRETILIN and outlined as a strategy in the government newspaper in November 1975 (Hull 1998). Use of vernacular languages enables more effective transfer of literacy and cognitive skills to the second language, validating the language that is used at home. With appropriately skilled teachers parents can then support their children by being involved in the life of the school (Taylor-Leech 2006). The use of the colonial language as the medium of instruction carries with it a risk of failing to be relevant to the rural population. In Mozambique all literate people were educated in Portuguese language, thus it was a natural choice that Portuguese became the language of instruction. Nevertheless it was found that after twenty eight years of post-independence education only 8.8% of the population used Portuguese regularly at home, and a minority of the population were able to speak or write the Portuguese language. Consequently in 2003 the Mozambican Education Minister announced a new bi-lingual education policy which would enable children would be taught in their mother tongues (Mozambique News Agency 14/3/2006).

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[158] Personal communication with the Director of the National Institute of Linguistics. Often Indonesian speakers tend to use loan words from Indonesian, which is not officially correct - loan words are generally Portuguese

[159] Lydia interview 6/8/06

[160] The Mary Mackillop Institute in Sydney had developed a Tetum curriculum for the first three years of primary school by 1999.

Tetum has been referred to as a 'rudimentary language' still in need of development by Ramos Horta (2002). The view of Tetum as insufficiently evolved for use as a national language can be traced back to FRETILIN's policy statements in 1974 (Hill 2002). The Director of the National Institute of Linguistics, responsible for implementing the language policy and developing Tetum orthography, argued in 2005 that it will take at least ten years for Tetum to be evolved for use as the medium of education and administration[161]. The importance of developing the language does not appear to hold a high priority however. An activist formerly working with an NGO Tetum education project with the Ministry believed Ministry staff looked down on Tetum, their low opinion of Tetum as a language of education was demonstrated by the lack of any budget for developing Tetum[162]. Teaching staff have observed that opinions prevail within the Ministry of Education that the use of Tetum would result in a 'dumbing down' of the standard of education[163]. Tetum then, although an official language, is treated as a poor relation to the 'superior' Portuguese language. This view inhibited the promotion of a bi-lingual policy.

Activists have been angered when government officials call meetings with civil society in which they insist on using Portuguese knowing that few people understand it[164]. This compounds a sense of alienation. Francisco explains:

> If someone tries to speak Portuguese with me I am unhappy – I feel they are looking down at me. The older generation occupied government. Even if we have good knowledge we cannot get a position. They marginalised the young generation. Arrogant decisions [were made] by the diaspora Timorese who kicked out people who stayed during the occupation [Francisco].

There is a deep concern amongst activists that employment opportunities are not open to non-Portuguese speakers[165]. It is argued by government officials that the process of recruitment for a government job is open to any of the three languages, Portuguese, Indonesian and Tetum. In practice applicants have been faced with interview questions in

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[161] Personal communication with Director of the National Institute of Linguistics, 1st October 2005.
[162] Interview with Inacio 7/4/07. He referred to the period up to 2004.
[163] This was mentioned by an academic at DIT (Academic 4) and an educator at the Baucau Teachers' Training College (CC2) amongst others.
[164] Marta, Orlando amongst others.
[165] For example Antonio, Francisco, Orlando.

Portuguese which they cannot understand and were therefore unable to answer in any language[166]. Although some observers point to the fact that non-Portuguese speakers do in fact work within the government, the lack of language proficiency is generally believed by young people to be the major constraint to entering the labour market (Ostergaard 2005:18). Carey suggests that the *geração foun* schooled during the occupation felt that their educational experience was being 'set at naught' and fear the new Portuguese educated generation will leap-frog them, taking on key political and administrative posts as the 1975 elite move on. Thus the *Bahasa* speaking generation could well become a 'lost' generation (Carey 2003).

President Jose Ramos Horta defended the language policy stating that 'the effort must continue, a long term effort, at least two generations for Portuguese to take root'[167]. This policy decision leaves the two generations, between approximately fifteen and forty years old, in linguistic limbo. The new Vice-Minister of Education started to convey more inclusive messages 'the Portuguese language should not discriminate against our citizens that do not know Portuguese'[168], although a sense of exclusion is already well established. Askland's research with young Timorese refugees in Australia has shown that socialisation, education and language skills acquired in school can enable students to obtain cultural, social and symbolic capital in relation to the dominant culture. Askland illustrates how the older children who miss out on language and socialisation at school are more likely to experience frustration, isolation and exclusion (Askland 2007). In Timor Leste activists have suggested that the choice of Portuguese language was a mechanism to hold on to power by the older generation, to deny their own generation power. According to Taylor-Leech, language policies, practices, and instructional strategies can be effective tools for gaining and sustaining power (Taylor-Leech 2007).

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[166] Antonio interview

[167] In Lisbon at a meeting in Lisbon in November 2007, Ramos Horta responded to the question about the progress of teaching Portuguese in Timor Leste: "*Quem participou, como eu participei desde 2000/1 na defesa desta opcao pode ver melhoria na introducao mas o esforco tem de continuar, e um esforco a long prazo, sao necessarias pelo menos duas geracoes para que o portugues se enraize*". He also talked of the controversy of the Portuguese language, which made it necessary to explain the need to introduce Portuguese "*esclarecer o povo sobre a necessidade de introducao da lingua portuguesa lado-a-lado com o tetum*".

[168] Paulo Assis Belo, Vice-Minister of Education, made this presentation to Timorese students at Coimbra University in Portugal on 17th November 2007 (http:wwwl.ci.uc.pt/atc/entrevista_vministro_educação.html) (accessed 22/11/2007)

When former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri referred to young people educated in Indonesian universities as '*supa mie*' or 'instant noodles', he insulted them by suggesting that their Indonesian education had little value[169]. This comment made shortly after independence still generates anger amongst Timorese activists, conveying as it did a cultural superiority of the Portuguese educated generation. The diverse language environment is impacting on Timorese society. Official communications cannot be understood by most of the population. Figure 3 below illustrates the main usages of different languages in Timorese society, showing how the Tetum language is an important common language amongst diverse leadership groups.

Fig 3: **Key spheres of leadership and their principal languages**
for (i) Written documentation ; (ii) Verbal communication

Most NGOs, which during the early period of independence used Indonesian for writing reports and using Indonesian produced training materials, have now started to write reports in Tetum even though they have not had any formal training in the orthography. NGOs report that they can no longer undertake community training activities in Indonesian because rural people are starting to forget their Indonesian language skills. FONGTIL, the umbrella organisation of NGOs based in Dili, is concerned that Timorese civil society is being denied the opportunity to review and contribute to national policy development due to the use of Portuguese. Even a new law concerning the registration of NGOs developed by the Ministry of Justice was provided to the NGOs in Portuguese in spite of the fact few NGO staff can understand the language[170]. A greater valorisation of Tetum as an equal official language would give validity and respect to the knowledge and capabilities of the non-Portuguese speaking Timorese majority.

The educational rural –urban[171] divide

> We need to study theory in school but also need to use proactive 'learning culture'. Now in school agriculture and environment are taught without any practical activity. [Antonio]

In a mountain sub-district in Covalima district, a *Chefe de Suco* lamented that there were *no* young people living in his village - all had gone to town to look for work. His concern was that as farm labour is traditionally drawn from the family there will be no-one to help with family agricultural production[172]. In Timor Leste young people leave the rural areas to attend high schools which are only available in the urban centres. That young people do not return to their communities leaves rural areas short of labour and, importantly, skills.

The relationship between the educational level of the agricultural workforce and agricultural productivity is well established. Educated farmers can produce more and choose more effective means of production by adopting new techniques (Atchoarena & Gasperini 2003:56). For education to improve standards of living of amongst the rural

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[170] Director of FONGTIL, personal communication March 2006

[171] In Timor Leste there are 442 *sucos*, of which 38 are considered 'urban'. The majority of these are in Dili. The Districts of Baucau, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Ermera and Manufahi each have two urban *sucos*, and Aileu, Covalima, Liquica and Lautem have one urban *suco* each (National Directorate of Statistics 2007:8)

[172] Visit to Covalima September 2005

poor, UNESCO states that learning must enable people to make decisions that consider the long-term future of the economy, ecology and social well being of their communities[173]. The Freirean concept of education linked to the local environment and local knowledge has been put into practice through 'contextualised learning' which involves an understanding of the home, the school and the community environments (Taylor, P 2003:178). School gardens are an example of how learning at school can be directly related to the experience of the learner. Educationalists now believe that the school curriculum should be adapted to take account of the agricultural cycle, to allow children to help their families at times of peak labour. Active learning, using locally available materials and based on the local environment, can break down the divide between school and home and overcome the perceived irrelevance of education to rural life.

In Timor Leste, a tide of youth is heading to the towns is in search of an alternative life to that of subsistence farming. In the villages there is no communication or means of hearing about the possibility of a job. Once having been to school most young people have aspirations for a different life from that of their parents because traditional agriculture brings in little income, according to Carlos[174]. Large numbers of young people leaving school each year seek ways of earning some cash, but there are few opportunities to earn cash from agricultural labouring in Timor Leste.

As junior and senior high school schools are mostly located in the towns children first leave their village to attend school. Nearly half of all secondary school students are in Dili (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006:8). Secondary education is seen as a passport to a job. Their expectation of employment is, however, unrealistic because many children leave school with low skill levels, and the number of jobs available, even in Dili, are very few. According to the Youth Survey, although 75% of youth have attended nine years of

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[173] UNESCO cites three key lessons about approaches to education that are locally relevant and culturally appropriate. These are first that education for sustainable development must explore the economic, political and social implications of sustainability, taking into account experiences and circumstances of the people. Second, ethical values are shaped through education, by which people are enabled to make informed and ethical choices. Thirdly the effectiveness of education for sustainable development must ultimately be measured by the degree to which it changes the attitudes and behaviours of people, in relation to both individual roles and collective responsibilities (UNESCO 2002).

[174] Carlos interview

schooling, only 66% are functionally literate[175] (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). That Portuguese language is not used in rural communities, market places, or by the *Bahasa* educated elite within civil society is likely to further de-link ideas of education as relevant to rural life. In 2003 an estimated 23.5% of the population of Dili is comprised of youth compared to 18-19% in rural areas (Ostergaard 2005:16). By 2006 it was estimated that youth make up a third of the population of Dili including job seekers and school and university students (Curtain 2006).

In Timor Leste fewer young women leave home to attend secondary education. The participation rates of girls in the early years of school are equal to boys, but as children move toward adolescence the gap increases. The low school participation rates among females result from traditional and stereotyped view of women and girls' role in the family and the community (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006:15). Traditional societies sometimes perceive education, where young people are exposed to external values, as a threat to culture. This can result in a reluctance to send girls to school (Harris 2006). My research participants identified early arranged marriage or pregnancy as major causes of school dropout for rural girls (see next chapter). To travel away from the home to attend secondary schools which may be long distances from the villages is not acceptable to girl's parents[176]. Education of girls is more common amongst the urban born where the schools are close by and the parents themselves have an education. Typically as girls reach puberty their parents are likely to make marriage arrangements and after marriage they will no longer be permitted to study.

Isabela was born and educated in Dili, but through her NGO work in the districts is aware of the difficulties facing young women. She has observed that illiterate mothers often prefer to give education to their sons[177]. Culturally, educating boys is seen as more important because married men, except in the few matrilineal areas, stay on their cultural lands. Women on the other hand move to their husbands land and as such the value of education is seen to be lost by her family. One of the single most important contributors to

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[175] The National Youth Survey (2005) test for functional literacy found that amongst students and youth only 66% could read without difficulty, while 12% could read with difficulty and 22% could not read at all. Some of those who could not read had completed six years of primary school, and a number that could read only with difficulty had studied in junior high and even secondary school

[176] Interview with CSO staff 3, Suai 16/9/05

[177] Isabela interview

the well-being of children is the education of their mother. An educated mother is likely to have better nourished and more healthy children, yet only a third of Timorese 'young' women (15–34 years) have had some secondary education (Ministry of Health 2003:48).

A public consultation which took place during the planning of the National Development Plan in 2002 revealed that access to education is the major development priority of the population in every district (RDTL 2006a). A commitment to Education for All (EFA) has been incorporated into the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by the year 2015. These include the commitment to ensure that all girls and boys complete a full course of primary schooling, and to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2015. The global commitment to EFA and the Dakar Framework for Action[178] set out six educational goals, including free and compulsory education; early childhood care and education; acquisition of life skills by adolescents and youth; increase in adult literacy by 50%; elimination of gender disparities and enhanced educational quality. Timor Leste's SIP for Education and Training incorporates human rights goals for formal and informal education in the country, translated into four national objectives[179].

Timor Leste faces food shortages every year. If hunger is to become a thing of the past, the quality and quantity of family agricultural production must be raised. If more educated young people return to the rural areas they could, perhaps, help to raise the level of family productivity. Educated offspring are in a better position to improve food security than their illiterate parents (Atchoarena & Gasperini 2003). Food security issues include not only agricultural productivity but also the environmental impact of agriculture.

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[178] At a meeting of the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000 the EFA initiative was adopted. It was subsequently launched by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2002.

[179] The Government of RDTL has incorporated the provisions of the Constitution and international covenants and agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Education For All (EFA) as a 'guiding principle in the formulation and implementation of educational policies'. The four objectives in the Education SIP are:
- Achieve universal primary education in line with the mandate of the Constitution, and international covenants that have been signed, particularly the Millennium Development Goals for education.
- Develop post-primary education including secondary, technical/vocational and tertiary education and training to prepare citizens to be productive, and to meet the needs of the economy and society.
- Promote adult literacy to meet the basic learning needs of the adult population.
- Ensure that access and participation in education, both formal and non-formal, is equitable and able to reach the disadvantaged and the underserved groups, notably the rural poor and women and girls (Ministry of Education and Culture 2006) .

Currently agricultural graduates are ill equipped to support traditional agriculture. A study on the quality of university education has shown that information presented in UNTL's agricultural degree is disconnected from an understanding of the local environment, resources and farming systems in Timor Leste. This curriculum does not enable students to use their newly acquired knowledge because it is unrelated to the local environment[180] (Janes, da Costa & Dryden 2003). Thus there is little government capacity to support improved food security in farming communities.

According to the National Youth Survey, education is not just valued for its own sake, but for how it assists people make improvements in their lives. Where education is divorced from the reality of daily life, it is common for parents to believe that the education is 'wasted' when school students return home to the farm. If a students' prior knowledge of traditions and practices is not brought into the classroom, a learner will compartmentalise new knowledge, rather than integrate the new with prior knowledge. This has been referred to as 'cognitive apartheid' and inhibits students from utilising their new knowledge in their existing world (Cleghorn 2005:108). For example, a member of a youth organisation in Lautem studied at Fuiloro Catholic agricultural school in Los Palos where he learned animal husbandry, including feed, medicines and breeding. He said he could not use the skills learnt because his family does not have the large land area and equipment that exists at the school. The young man argued that animals are free in Timor Leste and find their own food, because to keep them like in Fuiloro, food and medicine must be obtained for them[181].

A dairy project was established at Fuiloro transferring methods and standards used in Australian dairy farming to Timor Leste. Research into its impact found that Australian volunteers carried out training with a dual purpose 'of teaching workers what they did not know…. and encouraging them to forget what they did know'. The volunteers thus assumed the role of the 'knowers' and placed the locals in the position of 'not-knowers' (Shepherd & Gibbs 2006). The dairy encountered problems due to the different environmental conditions at Fuiloro which could have been overcome with greater

[180] Studies have analysed what learning in terms of content and meaning. Where the basic facts of the text can be recalled this is a low level outcome while being able to convey the intent of the author is a high level outcome (Marton & Saljo 1976). Where education systems evaluate students on ability to reproduce what the teacher has said, the education system is only able to achieve low level outcomes.
[181] Interview with CSO group 3, Los Palos, 28/9/05

incorporation of the knowledge and practices of the local farmers. The young man I met from Fuiloro school had not used any of the skills he had learnt, but grazes cattle and grows corn, pumpkin and potatoes in the traditional method. His response was to resist the new methods, just as the Australians had resisted accepting the existing skills of the locals. In fact the knowledge of both was needed to make the dairy a success, and enable local youth to learn new skills in farming.

This example highlights the issue of power in learning. Power is a crucial issue in pedagogy (Harris 2007). Harris uses pedagogical methods for transformative learning, the goal of which is to create a process to support participants in developing tools for critical reflective thinking, and ultimately to produce social change. She finds that effective learning needs to be culturally sensitive and to respond to learning patterns of that group. She also notes that differences within the group, such as gender or age may require different learning strategies. Strategies are needed to bring people to decide that they need to make changes even when this might contravene longstanding customs (Harris 2007).

The incorporation of traditional values into development activities is important to incorporate change gradually into local practices. Guilherme works with rural communities to implement sustainable agriculture techniques using the permaculture method[182] building upon traditional composting techniques. He also introduces new ideas in land conservation and planting techniques. He finds that older people are slow at making changes to their work patterns to which they have become accustomed, but young people have a greater potential to transform agriculture. Guilherme set out to challenge the normative view that agriculture is undesirable for school leavers by making agriculture more acceptable to young people. He developed an innovative technique for sustainable agriculture, blending art, music and permaculture:

> Young people were not interested in agriculture. Once they had some education they assume agriculture is not a good source of employment. Mostly older people, women and men, would join the groups, so I started a new approach – not only to

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[182] Guilherme learnt organic farming as a school student from an international volunteer who was working in the scout movement. He then went to the agricultural faculty of UNTIM in Hera but didn't complete his degree due the 1999 crisis. He was taught permaculture by international volunteer and they set up a sustainable agricultural organisation in Dili which he runs, now holding a diploma in permaculture from the Permaculture Institute in Tasmania.

introduce agricultural techniques. I also used music to introduce agriculture to young people to combine art and agriculture[183].

To attract young men and women into agriculture, his permaculture sessions were a location of socialisation and enjoyment: 'They work not only physically but have fun and enjoy it - that is my approach. Now I have an increased number of young people joining training'. Music before and after the work session attracts them because it is strongly linked to the culture of young people and can act as a bridge to engage them in work. There is no fixed work structure, rather the organisation is adapted to meet the preferences of the community. Guilherme explained: 'In some areas they join the older group, in some areas they form separate group for youth, depending what is appropriate for them. A lot are young women'. This activity thus provides a local activity for young people without leaving the rural area.

In Timor Leste, change is taking place. The power of the traditional elders is beginning to be shared. Activists have explained how older people now value the work of educated young activists who have returned to rural areas to contribute the benefit of their knowledge. Importantly, where young people show respect for local values the older generation also show increasing acceptance of young educated people in leadership roles. Guilherme, for example, described the changing attitudes of community elders which demonstrates how elders are beginning to change their attitudes towards young people:

> They consider me as a young person but in terms of my education they have some respect and will listen to me. Old people in the rural areas have a better understanding and consideration about other people and are respectful, it doesn't matter how old they are. For example some older people call me *'maun'* (big brother) as a sign of respect. I tell them "how can you call me this? I should call you *'tio'* (uncle)". They should be calling me *'alin'* (younger brother) or *'oan'* (child) - that is the proper level [Guilherme].

The elders were using a name which denotes respect, not normally used by an elder to a younger person. Activists such as Guilherme who are educated but also show respect for the elders and their culture can win influence in the rural areas.

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[183] Guilherme interview

Reflective conclusion

The *geração foun* are Indonesian educated Timorese who lived their childhood years under Indonesian occupation. As such their experiences are radically different from the '1975 generation' that leads the country, as are their perspectives on Timorese cultural heritage and identity. The change in the medium of language of education from Portuguese to Indonesian and back to Portuguese again has created a generational divide that is considered in this chapter from a development perspective. I have argued that in Timor Leste many Indonesian educated young people express a sense of marginalisation by official views of Timorese culture, language and identity. This is exacerbated by the failure to give equal status to the other official language, Tetum.

For any developing country, its human resources are a major asset, but Timor Leste's ability to deliver an effective education is limited by adopting a language which is not spoken by the majority of the literate population. Access to education is the priority of the majority of the population in every district (RDTL 2006a). Education is valued for the practical changes it allows young people to make in their lives. I have sought to show that learning experiences need to be relevant to the lives of the rural people in order to support change in communities. As Portuguese is not spoken in rural communities the new Portuguese curriculum may continue to encourage youth to see education as of value only for urban work and lifestyle.

As a consequence, there are two worlds forming in Timor Leste: the growing hub of the capital Dili attracting the educated and skilled, and the rural areas where the majority of the population live in poverty. I use two examples of agricultural projects to illustrate that building on the existing knowledge of the people best promotes learning for change. I have argued that education for development requires a new approach wherein local language, mores and traditions are respectfully incorporated into the education process.

In the next chapter I will further consider the world of rural subsistence agriculture where customary practices are strongly adhered to, a fact which places particular limitations on young Timorese women. In the subsequent chapter I will trace the mobility and aspirations of young people (mostly men) who partake of the rural exodus from traditional agricultural communities for the bright city lights.

Chapter Six

A gendered perspective of tradition and change

Introduction

> *Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, or to reduce infant and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health -- including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation. And I would venture that no policy is more important in preventing conflict, or in achieving reconciliation after a conflict has ended. [Kofi Annan]*[184]

This quote from Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the UN, highlights the importance of promoting women's participation in economic, social and community development. Internationally it is well documented that education for girls can make an important contribution to national development. A mother's education, for example, has been shown to be one of the most important factors in promoting change to positively affect poverty and health outcomes for families. In this chapter I take up the issue of low participation of girls in school discussed previously to investigate the influences of customary norms on the lives of young women. The position of young women in customary society and the constraints that customary practices place on women's participation in activities outside the home are analysed. I discuss how traditional practices may conflict with 'modern'[185] concepts of equal rights and participatory development and how some female activists in Timor challenge traditional expectations and have sought to attain a greater measure of control over their lives. I further explore the extent to which male Timorese activists participate in challenging traditional gender views.

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[184] Kofi Annan The Secretary General of the UN, gave this message about educating women on International Women's Day, 8th March 2005 accessed on http://www.un.org/News/ossg/sg/stories/AnnanKeySpeeches.asp
[185] The term 'modern' as a counterpoint to traditional is widely used in the literature. I prefer not to use the term 'modern' which conjures up ideas of superiority and an inevitability of adopting western values. The term 'traditional' on the other hand often denotes practises that are in customary use but may be relatively recent (Mearns 2002). Societies are in a process of continuous change. Some changes may be incorporated into the culture, for instance Catholicism has been incorporated into an animist world view rather than replacing it as a cultural norm. In this thesis the concept of 'customary' denotes current values of traditional belief. In contrast individualistic 'modern' values are taking root in urban areas.

Tradition and Marriage in Timor Leste

> *People spend more money on traditional ceremonies rather than on education. Marriage has a negative effect on education for children. There is no improvement in your life because money is spent on dowry. Women are not involved in development partly due to politics and partly culture: parties do not choose women candidates for good positions, and people consider that once women are married they should stay home [Henrique].*

Over 80% of the total population of Timor Leste continue to live in the traditional way in rural communities. Traditional social structures have survived in Timor Leste due to being used by the Portuguese and Indonesian administrations as a direct line of command into the communities. Also, in the face of colonial domination, allegiance to tradition has been a mechanism of resistance and a demonstration of 'Timoreseness'.

The majority of the population live in rural areas in scattered hamlets (*aldeias*) or villages (*Sucos*) where customary leadership and links to ancestral lands remains important aspects of family life, even for those young men and women who migrate to the urban centres. Historically the country was divided into a number of different kingdoms with political authority resting with *liurai*, or king, who presided over their land. The social structure includes clans which make up a hamlet organised around the clan's *uma lulik* (sacred house). The oldest settlers have the higher status; a class structure stratifies the house members with the *dato* class (nobility) under the *liurai* (king). The majority were the commoners or landowning class while the lowest class were designated as 'slaves', sometimes captured from other clans (Cristalis & Scott 2005). The local power system is hereditary. Members of a *uma lulik* trace their blood relations back to a common ancestor. Kinship extends through blood or marital relations within a lineage or extended family, perceived and defined by the formation of a *uma lulik*[186]. The hierarchical structure places

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[186] These structures exist across Timor Leste although there are differences in social customs amongst different ethnic groups. As researchers were not permitted to visit East Timor through much of the Indonesian occupation, there have been few anthropological writings on different ethnicities. Studies on the two largest ethno-linguistic groups include a study of the Mambai people of the western districts (Traube 1986) and a study of the Tetum Terik in Viqueque in the east of the country (Hicks 1976). Mambai predominates in the highlands south of Dili while Tetum Terik is spoken in both the southeast and the southwest of East Timor.

ritual authority with the highest house and other tasks, including political authority with other houses. McWilliams describes the notion of a 'house' as 'a social construction and a ritualised focus for the articulation of social relations and exchange among sacred house members' (McWilliam 2005). While the rigid class structure has now dissipated, many *aldeia* and *suco* chiefs[187] continue to be selected from the *liurai* or *dato*[188] families that carry political authority.

Traditional structures emphasise community well-being over individual self interest. This stands in contrast to the individualism predominant in many 'western' societies. Social structures and customs vary between different ethno-linguistic groups, but all sacred houses play a pivotal role in establishing alliances between houses. The goal of these alliances is to extend the family into the future through offspring and to generate a peaceful bond via marriage exchanges (Trinidade & Bryant 2007:20). An asymmetrical system of marriages connects Houses with each other such that no reciprocity between two houses is possible – one cannot give a woman to the same House that has given a women. Houses are identified as Wife Giver or Wife Taker houses (Hohe 2002a). A match is arranged by the *lia nain*[189] of the two houses and this represents a contract between the two clans in which fertility is seen to be handed over (Cristalis & Scott 2005). Once a marriage relation between two Houses is established it is expected to continue over the following generations. The marriage partners themselves are not the central consideration here, rather, what the two families bring to the partnership is viewed as being of greater importance (Victorino-Soriano 2004). There is a strong demand on young people to comply with the demands laid down by customary practice.

Customary social relations are marked by collective decision making of the clans. Indigenous justice systems are set up to maintain *lisan*, or custom, which defines the 'do's and don'ts' of the community inherited from the ancestors (Hohe 2003). The socio-cosmic structure based around the *uma lulik* determines the social and ritual life of the people - any transgression or wrongdoing is believed to upset the socio-cosmic balance. As

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[187] The political structure since Portuguese times has the hamlet or *aldeia* as the lowest level of authority, and the village or *Suco* as the next level. Elections for Suco and Aldeia chiefs were held for the first time in 2005 along party lines, in contrast to the traditional system concerned with blood lines.
[188] *Dato* refers to the elders who advise the *liurai* on matters of *lisan*, or customary law.
[189] The role of *lia nain* is sometimes described as a 'spokesperson' or 'judicial authority' in either case they play a ceremonial role through carrying the wisdom of the ancestors.

ancestral rules are not written, elders in the community must 'be in contact' or 'know the word' of the ancestors. The ancestors then act as legislators and their living representatives, the *lia nain*, become the judiciary (Hohe 2003:340).

Customary values remain important to the Timorese and even urbanised families continue to have strong links with their ancestral lands in the rural communities (Grenfell 2007). Most rural families live by subsistence agriculture based on the extended family and involving extensive co-operation in the use of labour. Production is characterised by sexual divisions and governed by ritual, with goods being exchanged for the access to agricultural lands and in marriage ceremonies (Taylor, JG 1999). Such customary economic systems have value systems based in the family and community. Traditionally, upon marriage, rural youth set up a separate house and become accepted into the decision making community of men from which an older but unmarried sibling are generally excluded. According to Francisco, there are different customs in different parts of Timor Leste particularly between the patrilineal and matrilineal societies, however customarily married men are always the decision makers[190].

The young men and women interviewed for this research consistently argued that tradition demands that married girls stay at home. From this point on a woman is expected to be primarily involved in domestic activities. The parents normally choose the partner in the rural areas thereby transferring responsibility for a young bride from parents to the family of the groom (except in matrilineal areas where the groom will join the bride's household). One activist described the age of marriage for girls as typically during junior high school years in rural areas[191]. Another young woman, Ofelia, suggested '*Girls marry at 14-18 years either because they are pregnant or their parents arrange it*'[192]. The actual age of marriage has dropped since independence, with more married women under twenty than in previous generations (Ministry of Health 2003). At the age of twenty five, more than twice as many women than men are married, many having been forced to leave school once they reach puberty (Ostergaard 2005). The Secretary of State for Youth and Sport (SSYS 2005) places the average age of marriage for girls at about twenty years, while the 2004 census

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[190] Interview with Francisco.
[191] Junior high, or pre-secondary school follows six years of primary school, thus it is years 7 to 9, generally in the early to mid-teens.
[192] Interview with Ofelia, Dili, 1/10/05. Similar ages were given by others.

gives the mean age of marriage as 22.8 years for women and 27 years for men. The stated age of marriage is complicated by the multiple process involving both traditional and religious ceremonies which may take place several years apart. The church ceremony that results in the official registration of the marriage, is however, sometimes undertaken several years after the customary acceptance of marriage. At the traditional *adat*[193] marriage the settlement of the *barlake*[194] will bind the bride to the husband's family. *Barlake* is a proscribed exchange of gifts between the family of the groom and the family of the bride. The *barlake* often involves an exchange of livestock, typically buffalo, ranging from several buffalo to as many as eighty buffalo in elite families in the district of Lautem. The brides' family in return give *tais*[195] and other gifts of their production.

It is the *Adat* commitment after which the couple cohabit which is being referred to by my research participants. The official registration of marriage, for which data is available, is referred to by official studies. The government relies on the church to identify who is getting married – the church provides the legal process, as there are no civil celebrants in Timor[196]. The Catholic Church marry a couple after the traditional negotiations are settled. The Church has been known to refuse to marry a couple if the *adat* ceremony and *barlake* is not agreed first[197].

Several male activists consider the *barlake* system a major constraint on both educational and family development opportunity. They argue that limited and precious family resources are siphoned away because so much family wealth is tied up in customary obligations of exchange[198]. These resources they argue would be better used if they were directed at sustaining livelihoods or providing educational opportunity for family members.

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[193] *Adat* means custom or tradition, the term being derived from Indonesian.
[194] *Barlake* is the term used for the ritual exchange of goods between the bride's family and the groom's family. In Timor several informants referred to *barlake* as 'dowry' or 'brideprice' in English which is technically incorrect. The terms Dowry refers to the payment by the bride's family to the groom, such as takes place in Hindu society, and brideprice denotes a payment from the groom's family to the bride's family. *Barlake* includes payment in both directions where the grooms family gives the means of wealth creation, typically animal stock, and the bride's family give an exchange gift of home production such as *tais* and foodstuffs.
[195] Traditional Timorese woven cloth, worn as a skirt and by both men and women in traditional ceremonies.
[196] Interview CC 2, Baucau 18/8/06. A legal framework for civil marriages is in process. Protestant and Muslim religions also have their own recognised process.
[197] Informal communication with Xavier, Dili, 1/10/05
[198] Interviews with Henrique and Carlos

The custom of maintaining tight social control over girls and arranging an early marriage is still very prevalent. According to Isabela, who works in rural communities through her NGO, young women are likely to be married to a man 7-10 years older than herself[199]. In a culture where age is a source of status, this difference in age and experience further reinforces the superior status of the husband. Girls will often marry the man of their parents' choice. Customarily young women have sometimes been married off to men decades senior to them. Among poor families a daughter may be given in marriage to a creditor as a means of repaying a pre-existing debt, although the practice is now less common.

The custom of arranged marriages is starting to change in urban areas[200]. Nevertheless, the role of the elders in decision making remains strong. In Dili, for example, a professional married couple claimed that they did not have total control over the marriage arrangements of their own children. An outstanding *barlake* debt from their own marriage, meant, they said, the debt would be inherited by their children thus creating obligations within the family. Consequently the *lia nain* will have influence over the outcome. Even though they do not agree with the system, this couple will have no control over it[201].

In spite of the social conservatism in this predominantly Catholic country, it is not uncommon for women to be pregnant or have children with their marriage partner before an official church ceremony takes place. Although there are different opinions on this, one explanation that was proffered to me implied that getting pregnant was a means by which young women might seek to exert some agency over choice of a marriage partner. Young women sometimes get pregnant to the man she loves in order that they can marry quickly. Her family may not otherwise accept the marriage and *barlake* offered but once she is pregnant it will be accepted and go ahead quickly [202]. Such strategies may be localised as customary practices vary from region to region and it is difficult to generalise. For instance, in the matrilineal system in Covalima a *barlake* is paid, for example, but it is much less than in patrilineal societies of the east. In Covalima it was suggested that the *barlake* would not be paid if the girl was pregnant. In Baucau however, it was suggested

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[199] Interview with Isabela
[200] Interview with Carlos
[201] Interview with Antonio & his wife, Dili, 29/7/06
[202] Informal communication with Xavier, Dili 1/10/05

that men may pay double, once for the woman and once for the child.[203]. The outcome will depend on local judgements concerning the marriage.

Gender divisions and inequalities in Timor-Leste are reproduced in a number of ways. The different standards that are applied to girls and boys are highlighted by a young woman staff member of a rural youth centre. She maintains that parents exerted a higher degree of control over girls due to fears of pregnancy: 'Girls before marriage belong to the parents, thus have less right to decide. Boys belong to parents but have more rights if they go out, but not to bring back problems. But a girl might get pregnant'[204]. Familial concerns with the purity of girls, risks of pregnancy outside of marriage and potential loss of *barlake* are important issues for poor rural families. Patriarchal control of girls to maintain family honour is common in many Asian societies, marriage being in the interests of the family rather than for individual fulfilment. In customary societies a strong sense of obligation and reciprocal and mutual support places the community's interests at the apex of the moral order (Harris 2006). Typically, individual rights are not considered, rather the wellbeing of the extended family is the principle which defines decision making in the family. This is found by Thatcher (1988:77) to be the case in Timor Leste: 'There was no evidence of a woman being allowed individuality. She was regarded as the essence of the family'. She notes that men and women are believed to be fundamentally different thus marriage is seen in terms of mutual dependency between two complementary realms.

The issue of how much *barlake* a girl might attract is an important consideration for parents. It is also important with respect to how a man might perceive his 'rights' within a marriage and how he treats his partner. A male colleague of the young female NGO worker quoted above contributed to the discussion saying that some men interpret the practice of *barlake* as giving them total rights over their wife: 'Parents control girls so they will keep a good name in society and will get a lot of barlake if she is "good". Then men can beat the wife because he paid and he can do what he likes – it is part of our culture'[205]. Domestic violence has a long history in Timor Leste, and although it may be incorrect to claim that it is an integral part of Timorese culture, it is clear that men do beat their wives in Timor because they believe they have paid for such rights. This is one of the reasons

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[203] Interview with Ofelia
[204] Interview with CSO staff 3, Suai, 16/9/05
[205] Interview with CSO staff 4, Suai, 16/9/05

that many women are opposed to the system of *barlake*. However, this is not a universal perspective and young women's views about *barlake* are mixed, with some respecting the tradition whilst others believe it devalues women.

Thatcher's research into traditions of Timorese society of the pre-Indonesian period suggests that domestic violence has commonly been accepted as a norm in Timor Leste. Thatcher asserts that 'in traditional marriage all respondents claimed the relationship is unequal because usually the wife belongs to her husband and his family and must always remain submissive to them' (Thatcher 1988:73). Her research with Timorese women was undertaken amongst the Timorese refugees who arrived in Australia after the Indonesian invasion, reflecting the pre-1975 traditional mores. The division of responsibilities was such that the husband provides the house, food and money, and a wife was expected to do their domestic duties (which include food production). Her failure to do so was believed to justify the husband disciplining her: 'a wife would be dealt with severely if she did not carry out her domestic chores satisfactorily' (ibid:76). Thatcher also claims that *barlake* was differential in its effects. She argues that where *barlake* was not paid in full the husband had rights only over his wife's sexuality. When paid in full, spousal control is further enhanced and the wife becomes the property of the man to do with her as he pleases (ibid:84)[206]. While such rigid gender roles are no longer practices by all Timorese families, these practices remain the foundation of what is considered to be customary practice. Husbands' control over their wives, whether accompanied by domestic violence or not, is commonly linked to notions of *barlake* rights.

Violence against women has become one of the most pressing social issues in Timor Leste. Most women and girls will experience some form of mental or physical abuse according to the UN[207]. A study by the NGO AMKV[208] reported that forty three percent of Timorese women interviewed had experienced at least one incident of violence by their partner in the previous year (de Araujo, M 2004). Exploring the reasons why people use

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[206] It is also a common custom for part of the *barlake* payment to be held over and paid on death, according to Thatcher (personal communication, January 2009).

[207] UNMIT Weekly no.69, 1st December 2008, announcing the launch of '16 days of Activism against Gender Violence'. 336 cases of domestic violence were reported in the first six months of 2008, but many cases go unreported.

[208] An NGO *Men's Association against Violence* (AMKV) was established by Timorese men to address the ongoing problem of domestic violence. AMKV was founded by twenty men who had participated in an international exchange on gender-based violence with a similar group from Nicaragua in 2002, supported by Oxfam.

violence to solve problems, the study found that many participants appeared to have little knowledge of alternatives to using violence (de Araujo, M 2004:145). Zara contends that domestic violence is becoming more widespread in Timor Leste and is equally as common among the young couples of today as it was in previous generations. She blames the cultural norms in which 'men resolve problems with authority (including violence) while women are expected to remain silent and stay at home'[209]. Stability within the household is customarily seen to be maintained where the wife is subordinate to the husband who is chief of the house and the key decision maker (Victorino-Soriano 2004). Women are supposed to listen to their husbands and accept and follow men's decisions; a woman who talks too much is likely to get the ire of her husband. Oxfam's research into the participation of women in Covalima found it to be difficult for a woman to participate actively in decision making without risking her husband's anger or possibly a beating (Victorino-Soriano 2004).

The young age of marriage and responsibility for children, together with the fact that young fathers have not established any mechanism for economic support, is blamed by one activist for heightened tensions between a couple that often lead to domestic violence. He suggested that children are beaten as a matter of habit, following values that young Timorese learnt in their own family life [210]. Research has shown that women who marry young are at significant greater risk of violence by their partner. Low levels of education of the woman or her partner are also risk factors (Hynes et al. 2004).

Violence against children is just as common as violence against women. A high level of corporal punishment in both the home and at school has been documented by research by UNICEF. The research found that sixty seven percent of children in school had experienced the teacher beating them with a stick, while thirty eight percent had been slapped on the face. More than half of all children also had experienced being beaten with a stick and shouted at by their parents. The report condemns the use of sticks to beat children and harsh language used at school and in the home (UNICEF 2006). At the launch of the report '*Speak nicely to me*' by UNICEF in Dili in August 2006, the Deputy Minister of Education and Culture appealed to audience members to focus on the needs of the child, rather than teachers and parents exerting power to coerce the child to obey,

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[209] Interview with Zara, Dili 23/8/06
[210] Xavier personal communication 15/8/06

while discouraging independence of mind[211]. The Deputy Minister spoke of how, during the liberation struggle, people became accustomed to living with violence resulting in a 'culture of violence' in Timor Leste. This, he suggested, is perpetrated by young people who repeat the behaviour of their parents when they have families of their own.

Young women are encouraged to have children because their status is determined by the number of children they have. A Timorese woman with a large number of children is viewed as senior to another with only one or two children (Thatcher 1988). In 2007, Timor Leste had the highest rate of child birth in the world with an average of seven children per woman. About one third of young married women will have a child each year, with little variance according to level of education (Ministry of Health 2003:72). The high birth rate is matched by a high maternal mortality rate, attributable to the young age of motherhood and the poor health and nutrition of many mothers. The high infant mortality rate is largely as a result of the prevalence of malnutrition in forty three percent of children in the first five years of life[212] (UNDP 2006). The extremely short spacing between pregnancies contributes to these dire statistics. A young married woman who does not get pregnant every year may be seen as being abnormal, creating doubts about her fidelity or fertility. Consequently there is little expressed desire to have fewer children compounded by the fact that knowledge of contraception is also extremely poor (Ministry of Health 2003:24). Sixty percent of Timorese women are not aware of any form of birth control and the figure is in fact higher (seventy percent) for women under twenty years old (Ministry of Health 2003:81). According to the national health policy, contraceptives should be freely available. The reality is that contraceptives are difficult to obtain outside of Dili[213].

For a number of reasons the concept of family planning is quite foreign for the majority of Timorese. First, children are highly valued and are, as previously noted, viewed as a source of status for women. Second most Timorese have lost family members during the occupation. During this time an estimated 200,000 Timorese died. Unsurprisingly there is

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[211] Report 'Speak nicely to me – a study on practices and attitudes about discipline of children in Timor Leste' by UNICEF, launched in Dili, 11th August 2006.

[212] Mortality of under one year olds is 90 out of 1,000 births. In the highlands 15% of children die before their fifth birthday, compared to 7% in the urban centres. 43% of under 5's are underweight, 47% stunted and 12% wasted (UNDP 2006:8).

[213] In one district an NGO worker said that condoms were not available from the health centres. A non-Timorese resident told me that they could be bought at the expensive hotel in town for a dollar each, a price quite outside the reach of most Timorese.

a desire to establish big families. Third, the Indonesian clinics ran a 'family planning program' based on forced sterilisation and forced use of injected contraceptives[214]. This was strongly condemned by the Catholic Church. The Church's objection to contraceptives and the Indonesian occupation served to forge a dual link between the use of contraception and notions of oppression and sin. The church promotes 'natural rhythm method' of birth control, which requires acceptance and a degree of self-control by men, although it does permit condoms to be promoted in HIV/AIDS education projects[215]. As a result of all these factors, women have limited control over their fertility.

The struggle for gender equality

> *Timorese culture is patriarchal. Women are treated as second class citizens, so they may be young but as soon as they are married society considers they must stay at home to do housework, cooking and looking after children. [Guilherme]*

Timorese women have shown remarkable resilience and fortitude in the face of a turbulent and often violent history. A geographer wrote during a visit to East Timor in 1869 that Timorese women, unlike the Malay, had 'loud voices and laughter, and general character of self-assertion' (Wallace reported in Cristalis and Scott, 2005). Portuguese colonisation and the arrival of the Catholic Church saw sustained attempts to impose specific values and roles onto Timorese women. Women's important roles as farmers and food producers went virtually unnoticed, rather Catholic education emphasised women's roles as mothers and homemakers. A wife was expected to put her own needs behind those of husband and family (Cristalis & Scott 2005:24). At a school for girls at the start of the twentieth century, nuns taught girls Portuguese and catechism as well as the virtues of cleaning, sewing, embroidery and weaving (Cristalis & Scott 2005). As in many colonised countries, the Christian missions bestowed the influence of European cultural norms, that of confining women to the domestic sphere under male authority.

The Indonesian military occupation impacted on gender relations and customary practices in a number of ways. Women played a crucial role in the clandestine movement at the

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[214] In the late 1990's I heard that many women were administered with Depro-provera, the injectable contraceptive, without their knowledge, when they attended a government clinic or hospital. Consequently many Timorese were fearful of government clinics and would only attend Catholic clinics.

[215] Francisco interview

organisational, political and logistical level. The liberation struggle transformed the roles of women and challenged traditional gender roles as women began to organise in opposition to Indonesian occupation. Prior to the founding of the *Organisação Popular da Mulher de Timor* (Popular Women's Organisation of Timor - OPTM) in 1975 women had not played a significant role within the political leadership of Fretilin. Rosa Bonaparte Soares (known as Muki) who started the women's movement within FRETILIN was one of a handful of women from elite families who attained higher education in Portugal (Alves, Abrantes & Reis).

The OPMT was open to women of all ages, but recruited mainly amongst young women who joined the ranks as barefoot teachers, health workers and political educators (Cristalis & Scott 2005). The OPMT initially saw its tasks as caring for large numbers of children whose parents had been killed. It also played an important role with regard to care for the health and welfare of families living in Fretilin zones. Women became deeply involved in underground work, including cooking and transporting food to the guerrillas on the front line. Although formal representation of women in political structures of the struggle was limited, there was a constant presence of women in all aspects of the struggle in the armed front, the clandestine front and the diplomatic front (Alves, Abrantes & Reis). FRETILIN's Central Committee of 50 members included only three women. These, like Rosa Muki, were of the very few Timorese women who had studied overseas to graduate at a higher education level. FRETILIN set up mass organisations, sending high school students to the countryside to organise villagers for the liberation struggle. OPMT established education commissions to raise the political consciousness of women, raising awareness about the values of liberation, democracy and equality (Alves, Abrantes & Reis). These women challenged the Timorese traditions of polygamy and *barlake* which became outlawed by FRETILIN in the *Manual Político* (political manual) (Aditjondro 2000:130).

The clandestine movement was made up of more than 60% women. Women also took up arms and died fighting in the front lines (Cristalis & Scott 2005:39). F-FDTL Commander, Brigadier-General Taur Matak Ruak, recognised that there has been inadequate attention to the efforts of collecting data and information of the contribution of Timorese women to

independence (Alves, Abrantes & Reis 2003). He publicly recognised the important role that women played, stating:

> 'Women's participation in the resistance movement was indeed very fundamental… any educated individual must not overlook the roles women have played' (Alves, Abrantes & Reis:43).

Despite women's high level of involvement in the resistance movement, and the systematic repression of OPMT, their contribution remains undervalued. OPMT leader Rosa Muki, executed by the Indonesian military on the day of the invasion, has not been officially recognised along with the male heroes of the struggle (Aditjondro 2000). The predominant image remains one of a struggle fought only by men.

During the resistance women suffered extraordinary hardship, and were subjected to systematic sexual violence and rape by Indonesian soldiers. Systematic rape of women by the Indonesians resulted in many children who were then abandoned to the orphanages set up by the church. Women were sometimes rejected by their families and their suffering not recognised as a consequence of the war. An unwanted pregnancy could moreover, result in ostracism from the community and divorce for the mother[216]. Today, in spite of the significant contribution made by women in the struggle and the outlawing of polygamy and *barlake* by FRETILIN, men continue to dominate most aspects of social, economic and political life within Timor. De Araujo argues men remain the unchallenged decision makers in affairs relating to tradition, law and custom (de Araujo, M 2004). In customary practice, any dispute between two families is still dealt with by the elders of the two families. In cases of a sexual assault or domestic violence, for example, the victim receives no recompense, rather, a payment may be made to her father (Mearns 2002:39-40). The treatment of women within traditional custom in Timor-Leste is, therefore, a significant challenge with regard to achieving universal standards of human rights.

It is relevant here to briefly review the principal arguments and sources of knowledge about gender and development. Development economic theory has generally placed the family as the basic unit of the household economy with a male head of household. This

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[216] Timorese consider the responsibility for a daughter lies principally with the mother, thus if a daughter became pregnant before marriage, even in the case of rape, the mother is held responsible: 'The girl should not have been in a position where rape is possible' (Thatcher 1988:69)

resulted in women's interest often being overlooked in development programming until Ester Boserup first drew attention to the fact that women were often disadvantaged by development interventions (Boserup 1970). Only after exposing the reality that women in most poor countries around the world play a major role in agricultural production did women start to be considered as contributors to the household economy. The participation of women in development projects was promoted to increase the efficiency of production, and the term 'integrating women into development' was coined. The participation of women thus sought to make economic development more efficient, rather than giving attention to gender inequities (Ostergaard 1992; Parpart 1995).

Within development circles feminists argued that the key issue for women was not one of 'integrating women' in development but rather of recognising inequalities between men and women. Changing the balance of power between men and women requires not only meeting women's practical needs such as food security and health, it also requires wider ranging strategies aimed at changing women's existing roles and subordinate position (Moser 1991). Moser argues that women face a 'triple burden', being responsible for the productive role of food production; the domestic reproductive activities of cooking, washing, caring for the children and child bearing and are required to fulfil roles and obligations with respect to community activities. Moser argues that unpaid domestic labour and the varied community activities that comprise a large part of women's social obligations are not valued. Men's work on the other hand is valued because it is generally remunerated and carries with it some measure of social status or political power (Moser 1991). Moreover, the impact of neo-liberal policies impact differently on men and women. Economic policies of privatisation and reduced public service often lead to greater burdens being placed on women in rural communities. As principal providers for their families they are left with the task of putting food on the table as well as selling their produce to raise cash for school fees and health service expenses for their children. Woman are thus faced with an increased burden as they are called upon to fill the gap left by the diminution or withdrawal of services, particularly in such gender specific areas as health and welfare (Kabeer 1994).

Women are intensively involved in agriculture in Timor Leste. Guilherme explained that women are more commonly seen in the fields because women commonly plant, weed and harvest. Men, on the other hand, prepare the land and carry produce home [217].

Timorese farmer using traditional methods

Farming is, however, seen as a male activity with agricultural officers being generally men and agricultural services directed toward men. A District Agricultural Officer suggested that government support for modern farming equipment was needed in order to increase production and rural incomes and to encourage youth to return to farming[218]. The idea that modern equipment will alleviate onerous agricultural labour is not supported by international experience. Research has shown that in fact women often face increased workloads due to mechanisation within an unchanged and unequal sexual division of labour. Whereas male tasks, such as land preparation, are assisted by mechanisation, it is women who have to weed and harvest the larger plots made possible through mechanisation. It is therefore important that the development of agricultural policy be

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[217] Guilherme interview.
[218] Interview with DA 3 Suai, 23/9/05

informed by a gender analysis that determines the gender specific responsibilities for fields, crops and production tasks (Feldstein & Poats 1990). A gendered approach to agricultural support is needed to avoid increasing the work burden on women.

As a result of the influence of UNTAET in Timor Leste, progressive policies for gender equality and gender mainstreaming have been adopted. Many of these ideas are new to the people of Timor Leste accustomed to traditional gender roles. Gender mainstreaming, adopted by the RDTL government, is a policy that requires gender analysis to be incorporated into all policies and programs[219]. In Timor Leste the numbers of women with knowledge of gender theory and practice is relatively few - even some key female activists admitted they have little knowledge of available gender analysis tools[220]. Gender issues need to be well articulated for gender mainstreaming to be successful. Gender policies and programs internationally have built on expertise in gender and development around the world established over many decades[221]. In spite of a long history of gender equality as a principle of policy, the Australian government development agency AusAID has found that its mainstreaming approach to gender equality often does not translate into action due to a lack of commitment by management, or male staff seeing it as irrelevant to their work (AusAID 2002). A gender focus in development programming, as Moser points out, may be constrained when government institutions employ mostly male staff (Moser 1993). The challenges may be formidable, but a significant women's lobby has been established in Timor Leste which promotes women's political representation and women's equal rights.

The Timorese Constitution recognises equal rights for women and men. Globally it has been found that Constitutional rights alone will not change social practices where societies hold taboos on the social, economic and political participation of women. For women to

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[219] Gender Mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm)

[220] Informal communication with Isabela and Josefina at a seminar on Gender and Development, Melbourne, 19/9/07.

[221] In the 1980s & 90s, many development agencies set up gender units. These units developed knowledge and expertise in local gender issues and developed strategies to support their practical implementation to enhance gender equality. These interventions were aimed at addressing women's disadvantage and support of women's empowerment. Accepting the importance of gender issues, but recognising that gender units often became marginalised in relation to major development intervention, these units have been largely abandoned in favour of a 'mainstreaming' approach in recent years.

realise their rights requires a significant shift in social attitudes. The first Timorese government had just a small Office for the Promotion of Equality in order to provide direct gender advice to the Prime Minister. The fourth government that came to power in August 2007 has given increased attention to issues of gender equality though a Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Equality, which, as a member of the Council of Ministers, is expected to give greater voice to gender issues. There are various NGO initiatives that are aiming to contribute to obtaining gender equality, including the Women's Caucus, an organisation that leads efforts to encourage and support women to run for political office.

Women's right to participation

> *Going back to the rural areas they will never change the culture – they will only care for the children and husband and do farming. Even if they want to do development in rural areas they will not be able to make any change. [Ofelia]*[222]

Ofelia clearly believes that the choices for women and prospects for a cultural shift in gender relations in rural areas is limited. Indeed, the choices for young women appear to be radically constrained. Age and customary gender roles and practices mean that very few young women engage in either youth or women's organisations. In rural areas the church is often seen as a safe place for girls and hence is the main location for extra-domestic activity by young women. The 2005 National Youth Survey found that 47% of girls were involved in church related activities compared to only 24% for boys who favoured sports and martial arts activities (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). Ursula, involved in a drama group in Baucau, pointed out that of all her female friends she was the only one involved in activities outside of the church[223].

In Dili a local church youth worker conceded that the Catholic Church does not play an active role in encouraging greater participation of girls in social networks. A Priest will not talk directly to girls but delegates Sisters to work with them separately[224]. According to a church youth worker, the Church does not adequately distinguish between traditional culture and church culture rather, it tends to reinforce the customary place of women[225].

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[222] Interview with Ofelia, Dili 1/10/05
[223] Interview with Ursula, Baucau 18/8/06
[224] Interview with CC 1, Dili 25/8/06
[225] Interview with Roberto, Dili 15/8/06

The scout movement (including the Catholic Scouts), according to Berta, does seek to instil the value of gender equality. Berta explained that scout regulations stipulate equality of the sexes and that gender roles be equal. Girls and boys are encouraged to do the same work and undertake the same activities. Scout camps within Timor Leste are a vehicle for actively raising awareness with respect to gender relations. While scouting may seek to change attitudes to gender roles, once returning home they must once again face the gender inequalities perpetuated by family and traditional leaders[226].

Enabling women's voices to be heard is a challenge where social norms mitigate against it in general society, including in 'progressive' development organisations. In the first wave of NGOs to form in the late 1990s women activists responded to the male domination of development organisations by setting up separate women's NGOs based in Dili. There are several NGOs in Timor Leste which focus on gender issues with a female leadership and a predominantly female staff. FOKUPERS[227] was the first independent women's NGO to form in 1997. Other significant women's organisations are the Popular Organisation of Timorese Women (OPMT[228] - the women's wing of FRETILIN) and the Organisation of Timorese Women (OMT[229], the women's wing of CNRT formed in 1998) both of which have strong grassroots representation. A network of women's organisations *Rede Feto* formed in 2001 to promote women's issues. It now supports its 17 member organisations through training, facilitation, coordination and empowerment activities.

Women like Berta who have been in the women's movement since the Indonesian period, are challenging traditional norms and empowering women to take greater control over their lives. In 1997 Berta was one of the founding members of FOKUPERS, initially established as an advocacy organisation for women who were rape victims of the Indonesian military. Much of FOKUPERS current work is now focussed on issues of domestic violence. Berta's work with young people in the scout movement is informed by a commitment to promoting more equal and democratic relations between the sexes. Some older Timorese seek to deflect consideration of gender issues by implying it is a

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[226] Interview with Berta
[227] FOKUPERS is the acronym of the Indonesian name for East Timor Women's Communication Forum
[228] *Organisação Popular da Mulher Timorense*
[229] *Organisação da Mulher Timorense*

Western concept, but women like Berta show this is not the case - her commitment to gender equality started well before the arrival of the international community.

This same commitment is readily observable among other young Timorese women. The younger Isabela, for example, believes that as an educated woman she has a responsibility to encourage and give courage to other women. Isabela, like Berta, sought to support women in activities that can enable them to make practical improvements in their lives. Isabela set up an NGO, Young Women Work Together (FKSH)[230], to develop business skills together with production of *tais*, school uniforms and crochet products in Dili and Same. FKSH uses the local OMT representatives, generally senior women from the community as a contact point for their activities. The FKSH groups are predominantly attended by older women although some younger women also attend. They work together in groups, but young women, according to Isabela, are '*shy and only start to speak out after a long time*'[231]. It is common in Timor for younger women to defer to their older, superior, sisters. She recognises that women are not involved in decision making or sharing opinions and that time is needed for change to take place.

Isabela believes that development of the nation requires not just governmental programs but an active and inclusive civil society for the process of change to be meaningful and positive. Young women like Isabela have seized the opportunity to take up ideas of universal rights and equality which correspond with their understanding of development and justice. Both Berta and Isabela provide leadership based on global principals because they believe that Timorese culture must evolve to embrace equal rights.

Education is basic to empowering women because of the way it is connected to women's self-esteem, to their access to knowledge and employment, as well as greater power within the family (Blackburn 2004). Women who have had the advantage of education are engaging in political processes to raise gender issues, but they are not necessarily representative of all women. In Indonesia, for example, education and suffrage were considered by women's organisations to be the keys to combat the perceived evils of early marriage, polygamy and economic exploitation. Lesser prominence was given, however, to other issues such as reproductive rights and violence against women (Blackburn

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[230] *Feto Ki'ik Servico Hamutuk*

[231] I found that the word 'shy' was repeatedly used to describe young women's lack of participation. The way in which 'shyness' is understood in Timor Leste will be discussed later in this chapter section.

2004:6). Blackburn found that women's organisations consulted by the State were able to advance some concerns of women, but the Indonesian State was reluctant to tackle others. Thus women's organisations needed to work at both national and grassroots levels to effectively promote change.

In Timor Leste the first Timorese Women's Congress was held in June 2000 at which women activists demanded resources for the advancement and empowerment of women, and requested that UNTAET fulfil the UN commitment for gender equality. A major campaign was run by the women's network *Rede Feto* in 2001. The campaign sought a mandatory 30% quota for women in elections to the Constituent Assembly in 2002. Their campaign was not supported by FRETILIN and some smaller parties which put pressure on their women members to reject the quota (Cristalis & Scott 2005). Nevertheless, following strenuous efforts to lobby and promote women into leadership positions women were elected for 25% of the elected Constituent Assembly seats.

The process of empowerment is an important element of social transformation and for achieving a greater participation of women in development activities. Empowerment, the process by which women are able to exert more power over their lives, can be supported by removing obstacles from their path and being given encouragement to take charge of their lives (Blackburn 2004:220). Kabeer notes that unequal power relations between men and women are the product of institutional practice, and a measure of empowerment is the increased ability of the poor to make political, social or economic choices (Kabeer 1999)[232]. Women are as likely as men to accept gender inequalities as being 'divinely ordained'. Greater gender equality is only likely to emerge through struggle 'against the grain' and through conscientisation[233] by which women start to define and analyse their subordination in order to construct a vision of the kind of world they want, and to act in pursuit of that vision (Kabeer 1994:299). The concept of *self-empowerment* [234] emerged as a fundamental requirement for improving the situation of women. Participation is one of

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[232] Kabeer identifies the ability to achieve this is related to three inter-related, indivisible but culturally determined dimensions: access to resources, agency to define one's goals and act on them, and self-assessed achievements in the process of empowerment.

[233] Conscientisation, a term first used by Paulo Freire, refers to raising people's consciousness in order to have the power to transform reality (Freire 1972). The term has been commonly used in development circles.

[234] Empowerment, through participation and rights, is about challenging and transforming power relations and creating new relationships based on values of solidarity and equality. Empowerment is not something that can be done to people but results from a participatory process that engages people in reflection, inquiry and action.

the principal mechanisms to enable people to exert agency and to have voice, and ultimately become empowered (Miller, VeneKlasen & Clark 2005).

One such group that has systematically worked towards these aims is an NGO set up specifically to support young women - the Young Women's Group of Timor Leste (GFFTL). The GFFTL was originally the women's wing of the Student Solidarity Council that broke away to form an NGO in the post-independence period. The organisation supports community women's activities such as literacy classes and income generation activities[235]. This organisation does not exclusively focus on young women, according to a GFFTL district coordinator. Projects are undertaken in collaboration with OMT and most women in the group are over forty years old and all are over thirty. She has found that young women do not want to attend a literacy class run through the OMT because they consider this the domain of older women [236]. More popular activities for young women, as well as young men, are English and computer classes. These are provided by various NGOs in most district towns in order to give school leavers an opportunity to gain skills and assist in getting a job. Even though in some cases they do not have the literacy skills required to participate such activities are perceived by young women to be more relevant than OMT literacy and income generation activities[237].

These attitudes reflect both the aspirations and the inhibitions of young women when seniors are present. The complex array of socio–cultural and socio-economic relations and arrangements mitigate against the wider social inclusion of young women. These constraints can be understood by not only referring to overt power structures, but also to those hidden forms of power and exclusion that constitute the traditional world view. Degrees of exclusion are, as I have attempted to show, perpetuated through social divisions of age, gender and ethnicity. VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) have identified the concepts of 'hidden power' and 'invisible power' in addition to the overt visible power. Through hidden power, social control is exerted using customary practices, powerful people or institutions to prescribe socially restricted roles and responsibilities of a group. Invisible power is described as the psychological and ideological boundaries to participation by which the internalised feeling of subordination results from social

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[235] Ofelia interview
[236] Interviews with CSO staff 1, Los Palos 28/9/05
[237] Interview with CSO staff 1.

exclusion and inequality (Gaventa 2006a; VeneKlasen & Miller 2002). Invisible power has the effect of devaluing the concerns of such groups. These diverse aspects of power, which operate in Timor Leste, have the effect of reducing young women's participation in both youth and women's organisations in rural Timor Leste.

At a Youth Centre that runs English and computing classes for young people, Francisco commented that the low participation rate of women was due to the 'influence of culture'. Parents are reluctant to allow daughters to mix with young men at the classes. He comments that cultural norms dictate the gender attitudes of the people 'except where women can access enough knowledge to continue their studies in Dili'. There is a concern that parents often do not financially support the studies of young women, either being unwilling or unable to pay[238]. Eugenio, running a similar program, found that girls are very interested in English and computer classes, but they tend to drop out when the facilitator asks for the class fee. Girls are reluctant to explain their problems in class in front of their peers. According to Eugenio girls are never absent from class except when they have family problems. 'Girls are shy to explain their problems to the trainer. When asked why they don't go to class they will not tell this in class but only if you meet them in the street[239]. He suggested that in order to gain access and benefit from women's ideas and experience, a separate space must be provided. This would enable women to feel comfortable about speaking out on issues of concern to them. This practice is common amongst international development NGOs as it provides a means for young women to remove themselves from the 'hidden power' frequently exerted by men and older women.

The National Youth Council encourages both men and women to attend short training courses for which District Youth Councils select candidates. Domingos explained that he was able to recruit only four girls out of twelve participants for a training course in spite of encouraging them because of their 'vergonha'[240] or shyness which inhibits women from participating. 'Vergonha' is evidence of the 'invisible power' of internalised feelings of subordination that constrains women's social participation. Women are brought up to not

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[238] Interview with Eugenio. As this computer centre operated using a generator, the costs passed onto the students were considerably higher than for English classes, for which only the staff had to be paid.
[239] Interview with Eugenio.
[240] Interview with Domingos. The Portuguese word 'vergonha' is used to refer to women's shyness, but it literally means to be ashamed. Most girls in Timor Leste are socialised to be submissive resulting in a sense of shame, or shyness if they speak out.

voice opinions, but to listen, obey and to 'be silent and stay home'. The perception that males have more to contribute creates a vicious circle of low confidence and low participation of women.

In Timor Leste the holding of a community meeting is often described as a participatory process even when the only people to speak are the male leadership. NGO staff may claim that women have 'participated' even though they their views have not been sought or heard.

Bento, like Eugenio above, recognises the need to include women in decision making processes and the need to make different social spaces available to women to achieve this:

> Traditionally in our society they have participatory processes but mostly it is only men. For example to build a water project they will gather people, normally men, representing a family. After independence people started to talk about gender equality so NGOs put emphasis on participation of women. But we cannot bring them into the meeting and ask their opinions – they will be confused. We need to give them a chance, they are the ones fetching water and we need to ask them where the water should be placed[241].

The majority of Timorese NGOs are dominated by men, reflecting the gender imbalance in society in general. Women are often confined to financial roles, an area traditionally ascribed to women, and in training roles related to health or gender issues. Eugenio suggests that most NGO staff are male because 'it is the habit of Timorese to recruit men', they have more freedom to travel. In spite of his gender supportive attitudes, Eugenio comments that childbearing is frequently used as a reason for not employing women:

> 'When women have children they are absent for a long period of time that is why they don't recruit women. Oxfam recruits a temporary person but local NGOs cannot do this for lack of funds[242].

Insensitivity towards women's needs by some male activists is demonstrated by an NGO worker who explained that it was difficult to take on women for project activity because much of the office work was done between 6pm and midnight when the town generator

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[241] Interview with Bento, Melbourne 5/4/07. By 'confused' I believe Bento means that they are unable respond in a public setting due to social mores.
[242] Eugenio interview

was operating[243]. This NGO did meet and work in the daytime and typically recruited a woman to manage their finances.

Young men working in NGOs are often challenged by the gender issue. Eugenio clearly felt some difficulty in establishing gender equality within his organisation when he commented that in Timorese culture *'if men want something the women can't deny it'*. Male Timorese NGO staff may not possess the requisite understanding necessary to challenge the cultural norms which put women at such a disadvantage. As a result there are low numbers of women working in Timorese NGOs in the districts, while in Dili many have preferred to set up their own NGOs.

Detraditionalisation and gender

> *'Girls who have been to Europe do not want to be exchanged for buffalo'.*
> *[Timorese academic]*

A Timorese academic said that in his village ten years ago Timorese girls would not leave rural areas to study in the town. Now girls go to Europe or Australia and get different ideas – they reject the idea of *barlake* claiming they do not want to be exchanged for buffalo[244]. Some young women who complete tertiary level education may succeed in achieving a job and a level of independence. 'Jobs will help girls become confident and independent and contribute to the family. A job will increase their status' suggested a rural NGO worker[245]. Further, 'parents start to trust girls when they show they can take care of themselves', she explained. It was noted when girls are living away from home, their parents have no control over their movement and start to trust them more.

The term detraditionalisation is perhaps more useful than modernisation to describe a situation where people have had the opportunity to stand back from or critically reflect on notions of traditional and customary practice (Heelas 1996). Whilst there are many aspects of tradition and customary practice which support and sustain communities, it is equally

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[243] Interview with CSO group 3, Los Palos 28/9/05

[244] Interview with Academic 2, referring to young women who have returned from study in Australia or Portugal with new attitudes in which they seek greater equality to that of their forbearers.

[245] Local CSO staff 3, Suai 16/9/05

true that there are other elements which are demeaning and exploitative. Unequal and oppressive gender relations form part of the latter. I suggest that the concept of detraditionalisation better reflects the environment where people have critically reflected on traditional practices and challenge autocratic and demeaning aspects of customs to influence the evolution of cultural norms.

According to Ofelia, some young women seek to escape the hold of tradition by remaining in urban centres after completing high school or university education. Girls who seek to study, get a job and try to marry someone of their choice thus allowing them to remain in town. Many educated young women prefer to marry a man who has prospects for an urban job and income, and a lifestyle that offers greater opportunities than customary rural life and farming does. Josefina pointed out that young women who are educated but then return to the rural areas are more likely to become head of the Organisation of Timorese Women (OMT) in their rural communities[246]. This role affords women some social recognition and status although it does not fundamentally challenge existing gendered local power structures of power.

Lucia Guterres is unusual in that as a young woman of just 25 years she has been elected as a *Chefe de Suco,* the youngest in the country. Married with children, she was elected from a field of five candidates in the remote *Suco* of Fatululik in Covalima district[247]. Lucia was respected due to her active contribution to the clandestine movement which she joined at the age of 16 years. Many of the women who were elected to the Constituent Assembly and the later Suco elections in 2005 had played an important role in the resistance; a role that led them to be elected as leaders within their communities.

Women in Timor Leste are found in a range of influential public positions, and opportunities for women have undoubtedly expanded since the end of the occupation. These opportunities, however, are largely contained in the urban areas. Education has been, and continues to be a vehicle for expanding political, social and economic opportunity for women. Globally, educated women are more likely to have a smaller family, seek education for their children and contribute to the family economy in a manner that can assist the family rise out of poverty (UN 2005).

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[246] Informal communication with Josefina, Melbourne 19/9/07. OMT Presidents are typically the wives of senior men in the community.

[247] A film was made about Lucia's life by a student film maker from Melbourne University, entitled 'Lucia'.

Educated young Timorese women are actively seeking careers. The teaching profession is an example of an area that is beginning to attract more women. Previously teachers were predominately men, but in 2006 women made up an impressive 76 out of 113 applicants to the Catholic Teachers College[248]. This suggests a significant change in expectations among some members of the younger generation. Similarly, in civil society organisations, young women high school graduates such as Ursula and Veronica are becoming more visible as leaders within mixed groups than has been evident in the recent past. Ursula, for instance, was elected from among her predominantly male peers as coordinator of their youth theatre group in Baucau; Veronica was similarly chosen as the coordinator of the youth in her *bairro* in Dili. Both are playing an important role in mobilising youth in support of peace initiatives. Among this younger generation the idea that young women should have opportunities in life outside the domestic realm appears to be becoming more prevalent.

A local NGO set up by some students organised a workshop in a village in Baucau district on domestic violence. In my meeting with the group each member introduced themselves. However, when it came to the turn of the older woman to introduce herself she was passed by. I was told that she was a representative of the village community who had come to Dili to assist in the documentation of the workshop but was unable to express herself. Only after I questioned this was she allowed to speak[249]. In doing so she was able to lucidly express herself and as the citation below reveals, make the important distinction between culture and custom in gender discrimination:

> Culture is the regulation of communities. Domestic violence is custom but not part of our culture, and should be banned. Leaders of the community will sit together and mediate, so the workshop will bring about change. We will respect each other, men and women are the image of God and partners to help each other- we need gender equality [Older woman, workshop participant[250]].

The exchange is noteworthy for what it reveals about the hidden values and assumptions underpinning the right to speak. Support for gender equality tends to focus on educated

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[248] Interview with CC 2, Baucau 18/8/06
[249] It was evident to me that if she was to help them document the outcomes of the workshop she had something worthwhile to contribute.
[250] Translated from local dialect by a group member.

women. This was obviously the case in this encounter where the less educated woman was simply passed by. An educated group of young people were exerting 'hidden power' over an uneducated older woman. Amongst these seemingly progressive youth the assumption was that an uneducated village woman had nothing meaningful to contribute. The stated objective of the NGO was: 'to develop our country and to know the role of women and how to organise women. For men to recognise the need for dignity of women and to give opportunity to women'[251]. The gender equality internalised by the group clearly did not extend to this older, illiterate woman, who nevertheless was brought to Dili to assist them to recall the community contributions for documentation of the Baucau workshop.

This particular example drives home the importance of the need for self reflection on the part of the educated elite who typically run development organisations. They too need to be aware of how they are influenced by prevailing normative attitudes and practices. In this chapter, the gender challenges faced by male activists have, at various times, been linked explicitly to cultural values. It is perhaps of importance to reflect on whether these perspectives truly reflect Timorese culture or whether they reflect normative customary practices which need to be changed.

Reflective Conclusion

Entrenched gender roles within Timorese society in which women are subject to male authority are still widely adhered to in the rural areas. Within a strong traditional culture in which women are seen as inferior to and dependent on men, women's empowerment represents a significant challenge to social norms even when gender equality has been constitutionally adopted. However this is starting to change particularly amongst the educated women as well as some men. I have contested the common perception among the Timorese that empowerment of women is westernisation and have introduced the notion of detraditionalisation to describe the perspectives of young women and men who are striving for greater gender equality while in other ways continuing to value their cultural roots.

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[251] Interview with CSO group 1, Dili 13/9/05

Education to secondary or tertiary level is an important enabler for women to challenge traditional constraints, and consequently women in urban areas are more evident in taking up leadership roles. Mechanisms by which traditional power structures constrain women's social participation can be understood through concepts of the 'hidden power' of social control and adherence to customary values and 'invisible power' representing the women's internalised feeling of subordination created from the existing social structures.

Civil society organisations can provide avenues for young people to challenge customary gender roles. However, many Timorese NGOs continue to reflect the norms of a society dominated by men. Male activists are often unaware, or resistant, to strategies to engage with women in a more egalitarian way. Indeed, one of the main concerns of male activists about the current status quo is not the question of equality but the high costs involved in customary marriages and other ceremonies which is seen as an obstacle to the social development of Timor Leste.

As a consequence Timorese female activists have often set up their own NGOs to address gender issues. Strong female role models, although limited in number do appear to be influencing opportunities for young women. Among the more recent female school leavers it appears there is now a greater confidence to take on leadership within mixed civil society groups.

I will now turn from the rural context to the urban and to the changes and challenges that face youth (predominantly male) when they leave their communities for the urban centres in which the norms of custom are moderated by a more political culture.

Chapter Seven

Youth engagement and the Rural-urban divide

Introduction

The last chapter sought to analyse the influence of customary practice on gender roles in rural Timor Leste and constraints to women's participation in society. This chapter looks to the youth who, due to lack of resources in rural areas, leave for the bright city lights. The period of youth is understood to be the transition period from childhood, marked by dependence on parents, to adulthood in which a sense of individual identity is developed with a role or vocation that provides a sense of personal attainment (Ansell 2005). I review both the push factors – the lack of opportunity in the rural areas, and the pull factors – the hope for a job and an urban lifestyle behind the rural-urban drift in Timor Leste. I explore how young people seek belonging and identity through engagement with different types of social organisation and leadership. Drawing on previous typologies of Timorese 'youth' organisations I present an analysis of the different types of youth organisations. My analysis reflects on why youth became engaged in communal violence in the 2006 crisis, and considers ways in which youth may be better supported to engage in socially constructive activities.

Resourcing activities in the rural areas

> *A democratic nation depends on each citizen. In the Indonesian period we were together to fulfil our objective. Now if we think it is the same we will not be able to do anything. There is low education about politics and development. They can only think in a line. We have to be accountable, talk and give information. I am President of the District Youth Council – I have a strong desire to do development but I don't have any resources. [Domingos]*

From the perspective of the rural communities and in particular the young people living in those communities, the centralisation of government planning and implementation of programs has left the rural areas devoid of opportunity. Decentralisation of decision making, planning and financial management of district activities has been anticipated

since the 2002 National Development Plan. Up until 2008, control of district planning and implementation of activities lay with the Ministry of State Administration, while the Ministries of different sectors directed their work through their district departments[252]. District Administrations lacked any decision making powers or the means of implementing any local activities. The flow on effect was that local level governance structures, such as the *Suco* Councils, lacked support, training and resources from the District and Sub-District Administrations to which they were responsible.

In Covalima, activists generally had good relations with the District Administration, but criticised the fact that the districts were unable to take any action. For instance Eugenio said: 'The problem of centralisation is they can't design a program. The local employees want to work but just wait for the national government – they are not allowed to develop programs'[253]. Covalima District Administration officials explained that a District Plan had been developed in 2002 but had never been implemented because all decisions were made in Dili[254]. The District budget includes only petty cash for materials for the functioning of the office, for stationery and the organisation of meetings. Credit stamps are provided to buy fuel for the district generator but vehicles must be taken to Dili for repair. Put simply there is no money to pay for any activities carried out in the district. Another official explained that their role is to '*form a bridge from the community to national government but we have no power to make decisions*'[255]. Proposals submitted to the District Administration by the community are sent to Dili, but the District administration rarely, if ever, receives a reply regarding these requests.

In rural areas the *Conselho de Suco* (Suco Council), on which the elected *Chefes de Aldeia* and *Chefe de Suco* sit, are the established mechanisms for local governance. In addition to these elected 'chiefs', two young people, one male and one female, as well as a women's representative are nominated to these councils. These councils are set up to enable government to hear from local communities and they are meant to meet regularly with the Sub-District Administrator who then reports to the District Administration. However, as

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[252] The Local Development Program of the Ministry of State Administration will provide funds for community projects managed at District level. At the time of research there was a pilot project in one sub-district in each district of Bobonaro and Lautem. In 2008 administrators in four participating districts were being trained to manage the program, including Baucau, Covalima, Ainaro and Manufahi.
[253] Eugenio interview
[254] Interview with DA1, Suai, 8/8/06
[255] Interview with DA4, Suai, 23/9/05

the District Administration lacks any resources or decision making ability, the sub-district and local Councils lack any practical means of responding to the communities concerns. The *Chefes de Suco* and youth and women representatives on these structures have no means of fulfilling their representative functions, as noted by Antonio:

> The *Conselho de Suco* was supposed to involve a youth and a young woman, but after the elections there was no implementation process, no funding from central level. So it has no function due to lack of funding – if they want to build a school, clinic or road it does not happen due to lack of funds[256].

Resources for youth initiatives at national government level also are not allocated to local youth initiatives. Substantial donor funding that was available for district projects during the emergency period has dried up. For instance the large USAID funded 'Children, Youth and Development Program' which was responsible for the establishment of Youth Centres in 2000-2001 in the districts simply closed. The majority of the youth centres set up then are no longer functioning, except for the Covalima Youth Centre which was kept running due to the commitment of local staff (Ostergaard 2005). Now the District Youth Council Co-ordinator has no resources, no equipment and no space to carry out activities with the local youth. Domingos lamented:

> Our mission is to raise the capacity of youth in the development of Timor Leste. What can youth do? There are many proposals – youth want to be involved in agricultural projects, focus on our culture and music, want training to increase capacity and want to do sport. I have presented these proposals to the national level. What can I give when I don't have a thing? [257]

Domingos has sought support for the proposals he received from village youth councils from the CNJTL (National Youth Council). The CNJTL Coordinator explained that he had no funds for supporting local activities. One of the programs of the CNJTL is the World Bank's 'Leadership, Capacity Building and Economic Development Project' (LED)[258] that provides training workshops for selected District youth delegates. District youth leaders

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[256] Antonio interview
[257] Domingos interview
[258] LED – Leadership for Economic Development – a youth leadership program supported by the post-conflict fund of the World Bank. The program coordinator is staff of the Secretariat of Youth and Sport. The LED project has funded a very limited number of youth groups with just $1,500 budget.

select members to participate in the training activities planned and implemented by the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport (SSYS). However, the development of locally initiated activities by district youth councils is not supported by SSYS.

Frustration is evident because of the lack of resources for youth activities. Several youth activists I spoke to had been consulted by SSYS to develop a youth policy several years previously. Francisco, for example, had attended three different workshops in Covalima to provide input into discussions about issues confronting young people, with the explicit aim of contributing to the development of national policy[259]. Berta attended similar workshops in Dili to provide ideas from civil society about how to support youth. Activists lamented the lack of activity or progress since that time: 'We need a national work plan for youth. We already created one but nothing happened' said Francisco. Several years had gone by without support for youth being forthcoming. In Dili, Antonio argued: 'The government has not given any funds to youth groups to develop their own capacity. Only talk, no implementation, so young people feel marginalised'[260]. The National Youth Policy was finally approved in November 2007[261]. It included proposals for a National Youth Fund to be established to support youth initiatives such as sports, arts and literacy classes.

In the interim, financial support is dependent on international donors. Youth organisations have difficulty getting funds from donors because they do not meet the criteria demanded by international development agencies. A youth researcher explained:

> Youth developed a proposal and gave it to an international organisation for funding. It was refused so they will never try again. They find it hard to get the information they need. Young people complain that donor organisations expect them to have a western style structure with a President, Secretary and Treasurer - they don't want to do that[262].

Community based youth groups, like other community based organisations (CBOs) are typically made up of a people in the community, often age and gender specific, who have

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[259] These were the meetings with the researchers working on behalf on SSYS, Ostergaard (2005), the National Youth Survey (2006) and, I believe, a direct SSYS consultation.

[260] . Francisco and Antonio interviews.

[261] The National Youth Policy places responsibility for the implementation of the Policy with the SSYS, working in coordination with sectoral structures of government and the CNJTL for the implementation of youth programs. The CNJTL and its district counterparts will be partners in implementation if they have the capacity (SSYS 2007).

[262] Interview with Victor, 31/7/06

a common interest. Their interests may be sports activities, engaging in public works like repairing roads, joint agricultural activities, or any other communal work or activity. CBOs are locally and informally formed, they generally have no formal registration or designation of office bearers. Engel describes CBOs in Timor Leste as 'often geographically isolated and structurally more isolated than NGOs and may not even consider themselves an organisation per se. Rather they may work to fill a need within society and often lack any form of communication with the international community concentrated in Dili' (Engel 2003:5). The level of literacy among the groups may be quite low. Consequently, as Victor points out, these groups often fail to meet the criteria for receiving and managing international donor funds[263].

Youth proposals shown to me by Domingos included village agricultural projects, music groups and sporting activities. He was not able to obtain funding for any of these initiatives and programs. Only following the outbreak of violence in 2006 did donors start to give more support to youth activities. For example, in 2006 the District Administration of Covalima received support for the Association of Football to hold a championship between villages and for running some training activities[264]. Communities generally lack basic sporting equipment such as footballs or volleyballs, one of the reasons that martial arts, which does not require equipment, has become so widespread.

Even without resources, the Baucau District Administrator, a former school teacher, made a significant effort to encourage youth activities through the *bairro* structures[265]. With the donation of two guitars and a few balls from SSYS, music and sports groups have been formed in some of the *bairros* to bring youth together. The boys have football practice every weekend, while the girls play volleyball and basket ball. The guitars form the basis of a music group that also uses locally available materials to make percussion instruments. Music practice prepares for the celebration of Mass each week[266]. The Baucau administration has no means to offer financial support but its encouragement has mobilised the *Chefes* and youth leaders in the *bairro* councils.

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[263] Interview with Victor, Dili 31/7/06
[264] Interview with DA1, Suai 8/8/06
[265] Interviews with DA2, Baucau, 17/8/06
[266] Sabastiao interview, Baucau, 19/8/06

District based NGOs that offer English language and computer courses to school leavers are a source of engagement for young people. Several of my research participants were involved in running such training centres, which exist in most district towns. English and computer skills are widely believed to provide an opportunity to gain skills for office based employment. They also provide young people with purposeful activity, a sense of place and the opportunity to meet other people outside of their family, village and church (Ostergaard 2005). Youth congregate around these centres, keen to learn, or meet up with other young people.

Youth pass the days gambling at Suai market Suai, August 2006.

Timorese youth are often seen playing the guitar in the streets. Baucau, August 2006

As there are limited opportunities for young people in rural towns, youth can be seen 'hanging around' playing the guitar, drinking or gambling. 'Young people are just sitting in the road with no job'[267] laments 24 year old Ursula from Baucau. Likewise, 25 year old Ze argues:

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[267] Ursula interview, Baucau, 18/8/06

> Since independence the situation has been very bad for youth … even youth who have skills do nothing so their skills will be lost. The government has waited too long to solve this problem[268].

Groups of young men with no gainful employment, or any other defined social role, wasting time in the streets engenders a sense of abandonment and anger that their education is being wasted. A young Baucau woman upon observing an increase in drinking, gambling and fighting by youth contended that this resulted from a sense of loss and alienation:

> When I work with young people more people say they have lost their future. They do not know how they can live for the future. The situation has reduced the human ability. They don't know what is their vision. The public education is very low quality – when young people leave school they are not doing anything, only stay around the house and gather food from the farm. If they don't go to the field they only stay drinking. It is a problem when they drink sometimes they start fighting and become violent [Terasinha].

Drinking and drug use were indicated as increasing social problems, often attributed to the fact that in the rural areas there is not only unemployment, but few alternative activities for youth. An additional problem identified by Domingos is the expectation by both youth and their parents that education will result in the youth having a different life than their parents. School students have had their school fees paid by their family. Some parents who have not experienced school also expect that their child will recompense this cost by bringing an income into the family. Consequently many parents insult their children, pushing them to go and seek work, demanding that they bring money into the family, according to Domingos[269]. In the context of the lack of available job opportunities, such attitudes and behaviour leave youth without support or understanding of the challenges they face.

Timorese young people say that the Indonesians used to encourage children to go to school with the promise that it would lead to an office job. Now the idea of employment has become closely linked to an office job. Agricultural work and other forms of paid

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[268] Ze interview, Dili, 22/8/06
[269] Domingos interview

work are often excluded from young peoples' concept of being employed (Ostergaard 2005:28). According to a student leader, driving taxis or running minibuses is a major income generation activity for young Timorese with few skills. It is not, however, considered 'employment' by youth. Rather, it is considered temporary work and a transitional form of employment whilst awaiting the desired office job[270].

While concepts of 'employment' are strongly linked to expectations of work in a government office, there is no possibility of meeting such expectations. The government service employs half the numbers of the previous Indonesian administration but the number of graduates seeking these jobs has escalated. Each year about 14,000 young people enter the labour force (UNDP 2006). Dili acts as a magnet for young people due to its large number of educational establishments and job opportunities. Although the numbers of job seekers far outweigh available jobs, the prospects of employment are still higher in the capital than in the districts.

Seeking identity within urban culture

> *Urban drift is because they want a better life. Land does not generate regular income. There are no secondary schools in the village so they move to the district or Dili. Others come for fun life in the city. Their expectation is that the city has opportunities to get money. [Carlos]*

Youth who make the trip to Dili looking for work have often left junior or senior high school with limited skills. As discussed in chapter five the independence of youth can start early when they leave home to attend pre-secondary school. The estrangement of youth from their family roots at an early age has been said to lead to a weakening of family authority and roots in the community[271]. A church youth worker suggested that independence during high school often resulted in undisciplined behaviour when they return to their parents' home. In his view, youth had become used to having no authority. A District official in Baucau reflected this concern, suggesting also that the culture of

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[270] Interview with student group leader, Sept 2005. This experience is not unique to Timor Leste. Elsewhere studies have shown that secondary level graduates have aspirations for white collar work which does not match the reality. For instance this was a significant cause of conflict amongst youth in the Solomon Islands (AusAID 2003) and Sri Lanka (Gunawardena 2002).

[271] Interview with CC1, a priest who had worked many years with youth in the western districts.

violence in which many youth grew up led to a lack of nurturing and youth 'learnt to burn houses' and engage in anti-social behaviour[272]. In addition to the background of violence in their lives, the culture encourages a manly response. For example Berta reflects 'Back home, parents give '*carinho*' (affection) to girls but not to boys'. The lived experiences of many youth may have contributed to social dislocation and the willingness of youth to engage in violence.

In urban centres young people experience a very different environment to that in the rural areas. Within rural communities young people largely accept traditional roles and leadership in the context of close family relationships that require them to act according to group interest. In urban areas there is less oversight from traditional elders, as local *chefes* appointed in the *bairros* do not have the authority over youth that traditional *chefes* in their home districts hold. Carlos described the changing social relationships in the following manner:

> *Traditional leaders are important in decision making and cultural activities. Young people have a closer relation to traditional leaders, whereas political leaders are respected but distant. In urban areas political leaders become important and traditional practices are reduced[273].*

In Dili youth are also exposed to foreign influences and have some access to previously unobtainable choices and lifestyles offered by the market economy, particularly fashions and mobile phones.

The shifting nature of social affiliation and points of identification is played out in a number of ways within urban settings. In Dili, for example, youth typically either live with extended family or find accommodation with others from the same district. Young men have significant freedom from the traditional social obligations and arrangements that young women face. The extended family, however, provides an important point of reference. In Dili many rural youth end up dependent on their extended families or friends from the same district. Within this relationship it is expected that they will make some

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[272] Interview with DA2. This comment refers to the training given to militia recruited by the Indonesian army.
[273] Interview with Carlos

economic contribution to the new family unit. Given the undeveloped nature of the formal economy in Dili this is often extremely difficult and most turn to the informal sector.

In contrast to the sense of place and belonging present in rural areas, urban unemployment can result in a loss of self-identity. Identity may thus be sought within peer groups, drawing on kinship, political, martial arts or other affiliations. Such groups have provided a fertile environment for recruitment into youth gangs. In the absence of close kinship relations these new connections and points of identification with other young people become important bonds. Carlos observes:

> Youth look for identity – they join a group to create direction around what they like to do. Some groups are language based - Fatuluku and Makassae strongly link with their own language group. Some meet around drinking or sports. Also martial arts, music, the arts, or sometime follow a hairstyle, or they dress the same[274].

Guilherme also contends that within the urban setting many youth seek to break away from customary life and embrace the symbols and lifestyle of contemporary modernity: 'most youth try to move far away from tradition - they like fashion, to follow trends for clothes and haircuts, street life and an office job'. Youth may aspire to urban life, but the empirical reality of life in Dili all too often confounds such aspirations when a source of income is absent.

Many youth arrive in Dili as secondary school students, or to attend university. Students in Dili sometimes have difficulty getting enough to eat observed Pedro. This observation is corroborated by the National Youth Survey which points out that tertiary level students make up the highest proportion of youth who consider their food consumption 'only just adequate' (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). The need for cash for food can lead to criminality and involvement in criminal gangs. Pedro explained that middle class youth typically do not get involved in conflict because they have more to lose. Youth from poor families are more vulnerable and can be led to join youth gangs of criminals and pick pockets[275].

There is a global pattern in relation to youth in urban areas. Where the streets may be the only meeting places for young people they seek new forms of social interaction through the formation of gangs, especially in poor neighbourhoods. A study of youth gangs in

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[274] Carlos interview
[275] Pedro interview, Dili, 14/8/06

Colombia revealed that where youth had no access to recreational space they used street based interaction with their peers as a central part of their daily lives. In Columbia two kinds of gangs emerged – non-violent groups who identified with the territory of their neighbourhood streets and those that identified with violence and crime, often where participation in crime would be part of an initiation process for acceptance and respect in a gang (ASOARTE et al. 2002).

In Timor Leste there have been sporadic outbursts of gang violence linked to martial arts groups since 2001. Gangs were also used as a tool of repression throughout both the Portuguese and Indonesian periods. Martial arts became popular during the Indonesian occupation and membership of these groups is strongly linked to the resistance (Scambary 2006). Martial arts groups, involving physical training and discipline, are a major attraction for youth. These activity based groups are widely available throughout the country. The age of participants is generally 15-25 years, although most of the leaders are older. There are 15-20 different martial arts groups some of which developed within the resistance movement, while others have existed only since independence. Approximately one in five young men, and one in twenty young women are in training for self-defence according to government sources (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). Ostergaard estimates an even higher level of involvement suggesting that up to 70% of all young males may engage in martial arts, with about 5% of young girls participating. The official membership is estimated at 20,000, although there are possibly as many as 90,000 non-registered participants (Ostergaard 2005). The popularity of martial arts is attested to by Berta who reports that most boys leave scout groups by the age of fifteen in search of greater action available through martial arts[276]. Often, martial arts represent the only form of activity available to youth in rural areas.

Youth and government policy

> *Our generation want employment to support the family and nation. Younger ones want to work but expect mother and father to look after them and the government to give them a job. [Henrique]*

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[276] Berta interview

Civic engagement is a vital part of youth activities. According to the World Bank, 'without opportunities for productive civic engagement, young people's frustrations may boil over into violent behaviour and lead to economic and social instability' (World Bank 2006) [277]. Youth unemployment has been a perennial concern of governments worldwide in relation to issues of social control. This concern pivots on a fear that if a sense of achievement is absent for youth, they may seek self validation through criminality or violence (Ansell 2005). Often, and arguably this is the case in Timor Leste, it is only when youth become a 'problem' that are they are given due attention. Indeed much of the literature on youth is about youth violence and crime with the study of youth being linked to the field of criminology, in contrast to the study of children which emerged from developmental psychology (Ansell 2005:15). Recent research indicates that post-conflict countries with a high share of youth in their population are most likely to experience renewed conflict (Curtain 2006).

With a rapidly growing population in Timor Leste youth issues are changing. Youth who missed out on education due to their involvement in the clandestine movement were identified in the National Development Plan as a major concern. Some six years later, the cohort of 'youth' looked significantly different, as some 60,000 young people have left school since then. A 'youth bulge', a demographic profile with a high youth population, is evident in Timor Leste. These typically place pressure on the social order, particularly when higher-educated youth face limited opportunities (Curtain 2006:7).

In Timor Leste youth, can then be seen as two distinct sub-generational groups. First there are the *geração foun*, Timorese educated during the Indonesian occupation who are the focus of this study. Second, there is an ever expanding group of unemployed school leavers who were young children during the occupation and not actively engaged in the clandestine movement. These recent school leavers named by Soares (2007) as the *geração milênio* had their formative years in post-occupation Timor Leste. Activists working with today's youth have noted that these youth tend to lack the sense of purpose

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[277] *The World Development Report 2007* entitled *Development and the Next Generation* identifies five areas in youth's lives to be considered in relation to the transition from childhood to adulthood. These are their education, work, lifestyle and health (including sex and drugs), starting a family and exercising citizenship.

that exists among the *geração foun*, as expressed in the vignette above by Henrique[278]. A similar view was proffered by Guilherme, whose focus on rural development has made him critically aware of the growing rural-urban divide and the lure of the consumer lifestyle, arguing 'this young generation do not want to motivate themselves. They only want to follow the trend'[279]. As Guilherme and others critically point out, the youth desire to 'follow the trend' is a move towards the consumer society as a source of identity.

In spite of the apparent differences in outlook, it is largely the *geração foun* that act as youth representatives in formal government and non-government consultations. For instance in September 2005, at a National Youth Council (CNJTL) forum in Dili, twenty Timorese district 'youth representatives' included eight of fourteen male participants over thirty years old, and only two below twenty five years. Of the six female representatives three were below twenty five years old[280]. The CNJTL and its district counterparts is a network of youth groups aimed to facilitate the voices of youth to be heard and for the government to use the network to channel funds for constructive youth programs. At this meeting, the President of the CNJTL, speaking on behalf of Timorese youth, declared 'youth have lost their future'. He drew attention to the threefold problems of youth unemployment, increasing conflict between youth groups and the loss of direction of the national youth organisations. The CNJTL leadership stressed the lack of formal employment and the loss of a youth role within national youth organisations[281]. An expectation that the government should provide jobs for youth overshadowed any potential leadership to mobilise youth into productive or creative activities.

The large numbers of youth seeking opportunities in the urban areas is illustrated in figure 4 below. The concentration of youth in Dili is particularly marked in the 20-24 age group, but strongly evident from 15 to 34 years. According to Curtain, 60% of 20-24 year olds males in Dili were 'out of work, out of school' in 2004 and 77% of females. For 25-29 year olds, 40% of males and 66% of females were 'out of work, out of school' (Curtain 2008).

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[278] Henrique interview
[279] Guilherme interview
[280] The Youth Peace and Conflict video conference at the World Bank, Dili on 9th September 2005.
[281] President of CNJTL interview 8/9/2005

Figure 4: showing percentage of Timorese people by age and urban or rural residency.
Source: Data from Timor Leste Standard of Living Survey (National Directorate of Statistics 2007)
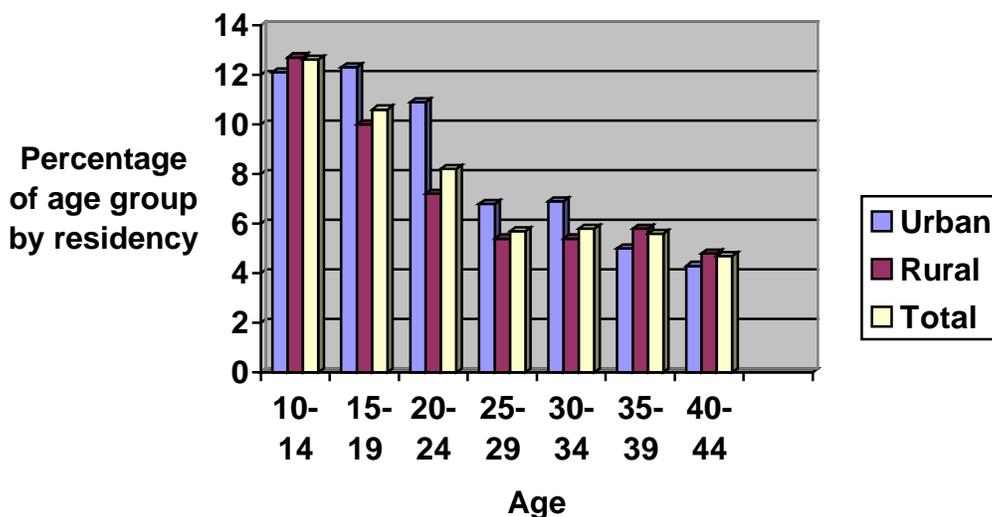
The government's Sectoral Investment Program (SIP) identifies a twofold challenge with respect to youth unemployment. Firstly, even though three quarters of the labour force is employed in agriculture, there is little capacity to expand farm employment. Secondly, it identifies the potential for the growth of the non-farm sector which has higher productivity. However, the SIP cautions 'if the government's economic development strategy does not succeed in creating sufficient employment opportunities in rural areas, there is likely to be even higher rates of rural-urban migration, especially among young people' (RDTL 2006b). Low-skilled jobs in construction and road maintenance programs in rural areas is expected to be a growing source of youth employment in the short term.

The government's labour market strategies include temporary low skilled labour in construction, the expansion of vocational training and a labour export involving sending up to a thousand 'educated' youth to South Korea for employment in factories and construction work (RDTL 2006a). Agricultural 'niche products' are identified by the World Bank as having great potential for job creation in the rural areas (World Bank 2005b:39). Although in Dili much of the agricultural produce sold in the markets and supermarkets is imported, a more general approach to developing agricultural production to meet local needs rather than export is not articulated. The official focus, then, is on formal employment and the international market through centralised employment

programs, rather than promoting work and skills that might contribute to the development of the rural economy.

Clearly the vast numbers of school leavers coming onto the streets each year will not all be able to get formal employment in short term construction activities and Timor Leste's fledgling private sector. The mismatch between expectations and reality lead to the 'problem' of youth on the streets without any gainful activity. As Guilherme and others point out, the youth desire to 'follow the trend' indicates an attraction to the consumer society as a source of identity; a fact which further makes the urban centre an attractive place to be. The Dili-centric development that is taking place in Timor Leste follows the trend set by many of the small Pacific nations. A concentration of development aid to support the capacity of the central government has sometimes left the countryside depleted of energetic, skilled and innovative individuals. The absence of those who could enable development activities to prosper leaves rural areas further impoverished (Connell 2002:53). For example in the Solomon Islands 7,500 young people annually seek employment in a market which offers only 3,800 jobs. The lack of youth opportunity in rural areas contributed to violent armed conflict in 2000/1 (AusAID 2003). It is well established that young people, arriving in the capital, can become protagonists of crime and violence where the social and economic structures have rendered them powerless and undervalued. In Papua New Guinea a similar problem of youth disengagement is leading to violent crime known as 'raskolism'. There the law and order responses to crime and violence is said to be contributing to the problem of violence. In PNG, traditional customs and community organisations are being promoted as a way to find solutions (Howley 2005; Regan 2005). In Timor Leste, escalation of the political-military crisis into widespread community violence in 2006 was fuelled by the existence of large numbers of bored, unemployed young men. The evolution of the crisis will be investigated in the next chapter. It is important to note here, however, that the crisis marked a distinct change in the discourse and action with respect to youth issues.

Following the 2006 crisis there was a flurry of proposals for job creation opportunities within the country. A number of projects have been supported including a range of smaller programs proposed by other government and non-government donors. There have been

major initiatives by USAID[282] and AusAID[283] providing all important skills training and job preparation for young people (Curtain 2008). These programs, however, can support only a limited number of young Timorese.

Curtain, who has undertaken research on expanding work opportunities for young people in Timor Leste, believes that the government and donor focus on vocational training, short term unskilled work and promoting self-employment is inadequate. He suggests that the creation of longer term jobs and sustained means of generating an income are missing from the policy direction. Curtain argues youth placements in social programs of the government and development agencies such as malaria prevention, literacy classes, agricultural production and management of rural water systems must be promoted. Programs, of this nature he contends are necessary to improve conditions within communities, build useful skills and provide income to young people (Curtain 2008). Such targeting of young people as participants in all major rural development activities could make significant inroads into the issue of youth unemployment. The concept of engaging youth in the rural areas, as volunteers or interns, would shift the focus away from urban employment and potentially reach a much larger proportion of young people.

Broadly based initiatives to engage young people in constructive activities are essential. It has been found elsewhere that young people who have lived through conflict often slip back into violent behaviour, especially where they have, as a result of peace, lost their former roles (Marks 2001). As in Timor Leste, youth in South Africa were on the frontline of the liberation struggle. A study of youth in one township traces how their roles changed, from disciplined violent struggle in the 1980s to crime in the 1990s, because they failed to be supported once the objective of a free South Africa was achieved. After the ban on the ANC was lifted, the failure of political leadership to engage the youth movements in the new political environment led to an increasing incidence of unorganised violence and crime (Marks 2001). Similarly, insufficient attention was given to integrating young

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[282]The US Agency for International Development (USAID) supports a three year US$5m Job Opportunity program for off-the-job and on-the-job learning for young Timorese aged 18-30 years (Juventude iha ba Servisu). USAID's Small Grant's Program supports the Hospitality Industry Internship Program, which trains 50 interns through the Timorese NGO East Timor Development Agency (ETDA) before their placements.

[283] From late 2008, AusAID's US$6.5m Youth Employment Promotion (YEP) program was initiated to provide short term employment opportunities at low wages in rural infrastructural works for unskilled and semi-skilled youth and 'vulnerable groups' (Richard Curtain's *Youth Employment Programs Database* 10th July 2008). There are a number of other smaller initiatives also listed.

people from the armed struggle into society in Mozambique, where it is claimed their engagement in violent crime resulted from the high incidence of depression and aggressiveness of former young soldiers (Aird, Etraime & Errante 2001). The media is quick to highlight youth violence and crime, creating a negative image of youth. In South Africa, Seekings (1996) blames the media for focussing on youth as a 'lost generation' while failing to highlight the cause of the issues. A moral panic was stirred up by the terminology used in media reports wherein youth were seen as 'the problem' rather than the social environment that created social divisions in the first instance (Seekings 1996). In Timor Leste during the 2006 crisis, senior government officials were describing young men in strong language such as 'hooligans', 'rampaging youth', 'thugs', and 'vandals'. They were using language that tends to demonise all youth even though only the minority become involved in such activities (Walsh 2006). The discourse about youth in Timor Leste has, since 2006, become one in which youth is viewed as a 'problem', a view that fails to see the potential role youth can play in developing social programs and activities. No attention has been given to engaging and supporting youth within their communities. Support for community based organisations may provide opportunities for positive youth actions in rural areas and could help stem the tide of youth leaving for the urban areas.

Young People in Civil Society

> *Young people need to be seen as actors in development and in the process of developing themselves. They are seeking identity, and have potential but there are risks if their potential is not channelled into a positive direction. Then they will become seen as a vulnerable group. They must be considered as actors of development. If we do not provide these conditions they become a threat to the community. [Carlos]*

Youth organisations are a vehicle for youth engagement in social, political and sports activities. Ostergaard's *Youth Institutional Assessment* was undertaken as part of the larger Youth Social Analysis project. As mentioned previously, Ostergaard (2005) classifies youth organisations into four categories: political organisations, development organisations, religious youth organisations and martial arts groups(Ostergaard 2005). The research was undertaken amongst clandestine groups (i.e: RENETIL, FITUN, OBJLATIL,

Student Solidarity Council under its Indonesian name *Dewan Solidaritas Manasiswa*), as well as youth councils and youth centres. However, also included were the Organisation of Timorese Women (OMT), a national women's organisation, and *Arte Moris* which defines itself as a 'Free art school and cultural centre' set up and run by a Swiss artist. Another group, *Sagrada Familia,* is listed as a youth group that transitioned to development work. Scambary refers to this particular group as a quasi religious sect with a reputation for its involvement in violent conflict in 2002 and 2006 (Scambary 2006). The definition of 'Youth Organisation' remains unclear in Ostergaard's report, perhaps a reflection of the fluid understanding of the meaning of 'youth' in general, and the way that individuals within different organisations subscribe to the label of 'youth'. There is not a clear distinction between 'youth organisations' and other forms of civil society in Timor Leste, as most NGOs are set up and led by Timorese who consider themselves as young people.

The involvement of youth in gang violence in the political crisis in 2006 led to a greatly increased interest in youth issues within Timor Leste. A study was commissioned by AusAID in order to better understand the formation of youth groups. The study, conducted by James Scambary, interviewed leaders from over a hundred youth groups and gangs in July-August 2006. The report, entitled *Survey of Gangs and Youth Groups in Dili* has a typology of youth groups and gangs in Dili summarised in Table 1:

Table 1- Gangs and Youth Groups in Dili – summarised from Scambary (2006)

	Typology of Gangs and Youth Groups in Dili 2006
1	Large disaffected resistance organisations with a grievance towards the ruling party such as Colimau 2000, CPD-RDTL, Sagrada Familia and Orsnaco. Membership is drawn from the rural unemployed male youth.
2	Martial arts groups, hierarchically organised with branches at village and hamlet levels. Ethnically and gender mixed, with high participation of young males.
3	'Kakalok' or 'wound groups' believed to have magic powers. Identified by scars on their arms, these groups also have an older leadership and younger members.
4	Large *bairro* based ethnically distinct gangs involved in organised crime. Exclusively male membership of hundreds, and involved in 2006 violence. The leadership is often former resistance leaders.
5	Youth Groups. These, 'youth groups' are sub-divided into three: (1) large bairro based youth groups of mixed ethnicity and gender, often involved in sports and social services. Some of these became involved in community security;

	(2) Large bairro based groups of mixed gender with older leaders, often former resistance figures. Some operate like small NGOs, sometimes running language or computer training activities, sports competitions and music. In others the status of resistance leaders allowed them to 'manipulate local youth into crime or violence' through providing alcohol and cigarettes.
	(3) Bairro based male groups, in the 16-24 age range, lacking structure, whose main activity is playing guitar, drinking and sometimes arts activities. They may also act as informal security for shopkeepers to access cigarettes, alcohol and artistic materials or a small fee, which may not necessarily be willingly paid.
6	Small groups of young males living in close proximity, gathering at night, often drunk looking for trouble. Blamed for much of the 2006 trouble, they sometimes live off extortion and stand over rackets.
7	Church run groups, most 10-13 age group of mixed gender. Activities include playing music, singing, dancing and listening to stories.

Scambary's typology helps illuminate the high degree of linkage between youth and disaffected resistance leaders. It is these groups that became embroiled in the 2006 crisis. In this context he identifies groups that are arguably not youth organisations, because they are neither led by youth nor have objectives in relation to youth, but have nevertheless attracted a large youth membership.

Scambary, whose research focus was on Dili during the crisis, indentified seven types of youth groups of which only two coincided with Ostergaards' typology (martial arts groups and church based groups). In an attempt to rationalise these issues I have developed my own typology incorporating the main categories identified by Ostergaard and Scambary. Considering the range of youth groups in these earlier studies, I have identified the type of leadership as a critical distinction between types of organisations. I have therefore distinguished between 'youth organisations' run *for youth*, run *by youth* and *peer youth* groups. The typology is presented in Table 2 on the following page.

Table 2: Typology of groups in Timor Leste identified with Youth

Type of group	Identity and role	Leadership	Membership
National youth organisations	Former clandestine organisations (RENETIL, ETSSC) or new youth representative structures (CNJTL)	Former clandestine activists *[By youth]*	CNJTL membership is all youth organisations. RENETIL and other clandestine organisations retain their original membership
Youth wing of political parties *	Former clandestine youth organisations transformed to political youth wings (OJT, OJETIL)	Former clandestine activists. *[By youth]*	Membership has grown older but continues to represent 'youth'.
NGOs & CBOs involved in development*	Activist organisations promoting development and peace (FEC, Permatil, GFFTL, KSI, Feto Ki'ik, Haburas, Suai Youth Centre)	Tertiary educated activists *[By youth]*	Both clandestine activists and younger generation students.
Martial arts (MA)*#	Self –defence physical and mental training. Strong group identity (PSHT, KORK).	Older martial arts practitioners. *[For youth]*	Most boys from 15 years join martial arts. About 5% women.
Church youth groups*#	Catholic. Some involve youth in religious activities, other in sports, music and leadership skills (FOSKA, youth groups of religious orders or parishes).	Parish priests or diocesan youth workers *[For youth]*	Most girls participate. Young boys participate until they leave for more activity based groups.
Scouts	National scout movement part of international movement provides leadership skills and promotes gender equality.	Former scouts – mixed age and gender. *[For youth]*	School aged youth both genders. Boys from 15 years tend to leave to join martial arts.
Locally based cultural & sports youth groups and student groups	Locally initiated music, art, drama, sports, advocacy or development activities (Sangar Masin, Baucau Buka Hatene Theatre group, JID).	Youth leaders *[Peer group]*	Small groups of young men and women, mostly with good educational achievement.
Local youth gangs in urban areas#	Common identity via bairro, language or distinguishing group features. Music, drinking, social service or possibly local extortion (see Scambary).	Youth leaders *[Peer group]*	Male and some female youth, mostly unemployed in Dili
Politically or ethnically motivated groups and gangs #	Political or ethnic groups that consider themselves unrepresented by government and seek power (see Scambary).	Former resistance leaders, heroes of the struggle and former militia leaders. *[Not youth group]*	Urban and rural unemployed youth who identify with ethnic or political identity of the leadership

*In typology of Ostergaard (2005); # In typology of Scambary (2006)

i. Groups For Youth

Organisations that are established *for youth* are those led by people senior to the membership such as the church youth groups, martial arts and scouts organisations. Organised groups for youth include church youth groups such as FOSKA and other organisations set up by different parishes and religious orders. Some of these are orientated to involving youth in devotional activities but many have a social role or support skills development.

Scouts groups also play an important part in the formation of young people in Timor Leste. These are often the first organisations with which children become involved and may provide an important source of youth activities including leadership skills development. A number of my research participants noted that their own motivation and skills development resulted from their early involvement in church or scouts groups.

Martial arts groups have become an important source of engagement for the majority of male youth. They have clearly been sites of violence between rival groups. According to Domingos, these groups provide physical training to the youth and offer a needed measure of sociality for youth. Domingos is critical of martial arts groups for failing to provide a positive orientation for youth, claiming martial arts leaders seldom talk with them in order to know their problems. He considers that these leaders have what he calls a 'good ideology'; but feels that members break the rules and transgressed martial arts principles. Thus, he contends, conflicts take place between youth due to lack of good leadership[284].

Reports of violence between martial arts groups have been commonplace and have increased in recent years. It has been most often attributed to the two largest groups, PSHT[285] and KORK[286]. The violence is said to result from personal or family issues, rather than intrinsic differences between the parties. It is suggested that fighting was often over girls. If a male group member insults the sister of a member of another group for example, then a fight will break out between the groups. Conflicts are blamed on the 'code' of defending fellow members. This is said to be practiced most within PSHT. Victor, who has undertaken research on youth issues, believes that while martial arts aim

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[284] Interview with Domingos
[285] *Persaudaraan Setio Hati Terate* (PSHT - often shortened to SH). Lotus Faithful Heart Brotherhood.
[286] *Klibur Oan Rai Klaren*, or the Association of people from the Centre. The group was formed in Ainaro, perceived centre of Timor Leste where Mount Ramelau is situated.

to develop self-defence practices young people use it to attack others to defend their 'brothers' in the group[287].

Martial arts leaders from both KORK and PSHT, who were interviewed for this study, claim that their organisations demand discipline and ethical conduct[288]. They maintain there are rules to abide by and that violence only occurs because the members break the rules. These provincial leaders claim that they promote national unity and deny any responsibility for the violence within their ranks. The view that the martial arts are good in principle but poorly practised is supported by the fact that the leaders appear to take no responsibility for violence perpetrated by their members. Young people are attracted to martial arts groups for the friendship bonds and sense of belonging associated with such groups. Lydia, a young female member of PSHT believes that if any member has problems other members will come to help[289].

Commonly violence takes place after drinking[290]. Manuel, a KORK member, accused PSHT of deliberately provoking conflict with KORK members during training by throwing stones at them[291]. A church youth worker observed that before the 2006 crisis the clear identities of martial arts groups had dispersed. Conflict that occurred between groups during the crisis was sometimes linked to east-west rivalries. New groups had also been observed to form to participate in the violence[292]. During the 2006 crisis, martial arts groups were instigators of, and participants in, many of the violent incidents that occurred.

KORK was one of five youth organisations that publicly affiliated to FRETILIN in March 2006 in advance of the 2007 elections. The leaders of these groups (including FITUN, OJETIL, Sagrada Familia and KORK) were interviewed on national television for RTTL[293] news. Subsequently it was revealed that the KORK leader had affiliated with FRETILIN without prior consultation with members. It is alleged he was seeking status within FRETILIN on the basis of representing many members. KORK members affiliated with other political parties were angry and demanded that he withdraw the affiliation. This

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[287] Victor interview, Dili, 31/7/06
[288] Interview with Joao. Suai 6/8/06 and with Nicolao, Suai, 6/8/06
[289] Lydia interview, Suai 6/8/06
[290] Interview with Victor,
[291] Manuel interview, Suai 6/8/06
[292] Interview with Roberto, Dili, 15/8/06
[293] Radio Television of Timor Leste (RTTL) is the national broadcasting service. At the time of the research the television channel only has coverage in Dili.

event illustrates the weak leadership capability and personality driven approach to organisational leadership.

Another example is that PSHT is widely believed to be linked to the *Partido Democràtico* (Democratic Party - PD). PD, known as the 'young people's party' was set up by former RENETIL leader Fernando de Araujo 'Lasama' in 2001[294]. RENETIL is consequently perceived to be aligned with PD even though the current leadership deny any affiliation[295]. Violence by PSHT members is similarly perceived to be aligned with PD interests. Such perceptions, whether formally correct or the product of the affiliations of the leader, is believed in the community to be a certain fact. The political allegiance of martial arts groups had significant consequences for the unrolling of events during the 2006 crisis.

ii. Peer Youth Groups

There are growing numbers of *peer youth* groups that are involved in cultural or sporting activities. This type of group was not identified in Ostergaard's typology. These groups are involved in local initiatives in art, music, and sports within their own peer group; or they may be set up by university students to undertake development activities in their home districts. Scambary identified *bairro* based groups that engage in social service activities (Scambary 2006). Such groups often lack any formal structure, but others, such as most of those mentioned below, may have sought NGO registration in order to be able to access donor funds.

Peer youth groups give youth a means to voice their ideas and engage in constructive activities. This is an important new area of development, which is providing engagement and activity at the local level, particularly in music and sport. These types of small youth groups are important in giving youth a voice just as national level organisations did in the clandestine period.

Tertiary educated students in particular have become involved in a range of different organisations which contribute to development. Student's associations form around

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[294] Fernando de Araujo became President of the Parliament as a coalition party leader in the AMP parliamentary coalition in 2007. PD largely attracted Indonesian speaking voters opposed to the Portuguese language policy. PD now claims it will retain the current official languages.
[295] Interview Local INGO staff 1, 25/3/06 (also a PD official).

different districts, such as the *Associação de Estudantes de Ermera*, with the explicit aim of engaging with issues from their districts. In Ermera, for example, where some powerful families are pitted against local farmers in coffee producing areas, students have engaged in advocacy around land ownership. Student run NGOs such as *Juventude Interesse Desenvolimento* have conducted community activities on the theme of domestic violence.

New forms of cultural expression are evident around the country, engaging young people in arts, music or drama activities. Ze, for example, set up *Sangar Matin*, an arts group in order to involve young people in constructive activity in order to address the negative attitudes towards youth held by their seniors. Bento formed the *Fitun* music group in Dili to provide a space for young men sitting in the streets playing a guitar to develop their skills and talents. Ursula in Baucau coordinates the *Buka Hatene* youth drama group, originally set up with the support of an international volunteer and now run by the youth themselves[296].

Buka Hatene drama group, with female coordinator, Baucau August 2006

Groups such as these serve two important roles. First, they provide a focus for youth and an opportunity to engage with their peers, and second they are a means for youth to become engaged in broader societal issues. For example Ursula's drama group has

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[296] Baucau Learning Centre set up by an Australian Friendship City relationship.

developed drama portraying issues of domestic violence, early marriage and HIV/AIDS. They perform these in community venues to engage the community in discussion. New dramas, in response to the 2006 crisis, were developed to encourage unity between different social groups.

The formation of these new peer youth groups, in contrast with the youth organisations of the clandestine period, are focussed around local or thematic issues. Such youth initiatives provide a space for youth to contribute to the development of their society, itself an expression of their belonging and citizenship.

iii. Groups By Youth

Groups run *by youth* but not necessarily *for youth* include development NGOs that have been set up by former youth activists. They include those referred to in Ostergaard's report as development organisations 'whose youth membership is the staff' (chapter three). A youth organisation is typically understood as one that is either made up of youth or one that has activities for the social benefit of youth but are run by people of an older generation. In Timor Leste, as I have demonstrated earlier, youth activists refocused their vision to concentrate upon development activities and became highly engaged in the development of civil society. Some leaders of these organisations have argued that their organisations are 'youth organisations' *because they (the leaders) are youth*[297]. The definitions of 'youth organisation' and 'NGO' have thus become blurred.

 The older and best known NGOs were set up in the mid to late 1990s and early 2000-1 by *geração foun* activists who have established significant credibility in their fields of NGO work. They contribute a vibrancy to the NGO sector, engaging in advocacy in relation to government policy, and participating in the delivery of development programs with the support of international donors. The work of *geração foun* activists has been at the core of civil society development in Timor Leste, extending well beyond 'youth organisations'. The role of civil society organisations in development will be considered further in chapter nine.

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[297] Isabela interview

Youth Leadership in Civil Society

> *Youth can contribute something and not only hang around, so the local Chiefs know what they are doing. Youth want to show that they can contribute to development. (Ze)*

The typology presented above shows clearly the significant role of older generations in leading young people in groups and gangs. The traditions of hierarchy of age are deep seated and generally young people continue to look up to 'senior' people. Great significance is accorded to the words of their elders or others who are perceived to have higher status. Bento described this in a way that is not dissimilar to the attitudes of young women who are 'shy' and reticent to speak out described in chapter six:

> We respect people, have high consideration to people, for instance as an ordinary guy I will give respect to an educated man or someone from royal family. I will keep quiet because I believe they have more ideas, I prefer not to talk'[298].

This Timorese activist has worked for international organisations in Timor Leste as well as lived in Australia for several years. In spite of his familiarity with the less hierarchical Australian values in relationships, traditional norms of showing 'respect' were strongly engrained and influenced his relations with Australians[299]. According to Hohe, traditional decision making processes are characterised by the notion of discussion and agreement in which no-one loses face. Thus powerless people accept the result and do not question it (Hohe 2002b:82). The corollary of this is the difficulty of establishing more equal relations with the least powerful sections of the population such as women and lower status members of society.

The qualities that Timorese seek in their leaders do, however, appear to be changing. In chapter six, I pointed out how Lucia, a 25 year old woman, was elected as *Suco* chief

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[298] Interview with Bento.

[299] This young man was awarded a scholarship to my university and started teaching Tetum to Australians including myself. We both attended a dinner where I introduced him as my teacher. This introduction as 'teacher' was a great embarrassment to him because he perceives me as senior, rather than his student. I am white, older than him and 'from' an Australian university, thus my thirty year old research participant, in spite of having spent some years working in international organisations, felt this was an inappropriate introduction.

because she was respected as an active youth leader in the liberation struggle. Xavier also spoke of a young man who was elected *Chefe de Aldeia,* although he was just in his 20s, because he had an education and had chosen to return to live in his community[300]. Another example was given in Lautem where a young man was selected as *Chefe de Aldeia* because he was educated and from a *Liurai* family[301]. In independent Timor Leste, traditional leadership heritage continues to be an important leadership quality but other qualities are now also valued. Resistance leaders hold great respect and are often favoured as leaders; education is also valued as a leadership quality as shown in chapter five. These three diverse qualities appear to be instrumental in the selection of new leaders, allowing younger educated Timorese to have greater influence today than at any time in the past.

In community development qualities such as listening to others and respecting all members of the community, irrespective of class, gender or age are important. Organisations promoting social change are commonly led by educated, middle class people who have the opportunity to learn about, understand and offer leadership in the struggles against racism, colonialism and women's oppression (Ruth 2006:176-7). Such 'middle class' activists must hear the diverse perspectives existing within the community, analyse and bring ideas to a conclusion in collaboration with others. Top down leadership style does not free up the talents of people that were long constrained during the Indonesian occupation. Ruth suggests that experiences of oppression limit people's capability: 'Key identities represent areas of our lives where we have experienced some degree of hurt or oppression… coming to terms with these core identities and our experiences within them, particularly where they have interfered with our intelligence, our self-esteem, our power and our flexibility, will be a key part of the liberation process' (Ruth 2006:199).

During the occupation people's engagement in society remained strongly linked to customary affiliations and to the liberation struggle. Indeed, the two were linked because the clandestine work required a level of trust typically established through familial ties. Most Timorese lived in fear, and an astonishing 97% of Timorese had experienced at least one traumatic event during the Indonesian occupation. As many as three out of five

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[300] Personal communication with Xavier, Dili 1/10/05
[301] CSO group 3, 28/9/05

experienced some form of torture according to survey undertaken in 1999 (Curtain 2006). Fear was fuelled by the Indonesians military strategy of paying certain Timorese as spies in the community. The culture of secrecy, of keeping information tightly guarded and trusting only the family networks and those who are known to be sympathetic, remains strong in Timor Leste today as it was throughout colonial history. These experiences result in huge challenges to the practice of inclusive community development.

Community development requires a leadership style very different from that which has been present in Timor Leste in recent decades. In a liberation struggle, leadership is a source of status where discipline demands the unquestioned acceptance of the leader. Manuel, for instance, saw his leadership role in the KORK martial arts group as a source of status. His ambition is:

> To train other people and organise them … this is important because they will become trainers also and I will then be recognised by many people as their trainer and become an important person with many people under me[302].

Leadership in civil society requires more that this. Truly effective leadership requires 'a vision of liberation, a picture of what is possible when people's talents and abilities are freed up and the relationships cease to be oppressive' according to Ruth (2006). Community development requires the leader to hear from and facilitate group members, resolve differences and enable the group to work effectively.

In a remote village in Manufahi district there is an example of a youth group that formed and initiated voluntary activities. These included an environmental clean-up day in the village, repairs to the access road and commemoration of the International Day of Human Rights[303]. The young leader explained that the group formed with the objective of 'uniting youth and actively participating in development'. It is not registered as an NGO and has received no funding. Their actions, however, demonstrate that they have the capacity to provide leadership for community development initiatives in their village.

The level of support required to enable community based groups to play a useful role is often very small, yet there is little financial or technical support to these type of emerging

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[302] Manuel interview

[303] Contribution of *Unidade Juventude de Bubususu* youth leader at a consultation with local CSOs in Same on 31st January 2008. This was part of the East Timor Civil Society Strengthening Program (ETCSSP) consultation by Ann Wigglesworth and Jose da Costa Magno.

groups. Domingos previously commented about project proposals he had received from various youth representatives on village councils, but had been unable to access funding through the CNJTL. International donors usually require a formal structure and a written project proposal that is beyond the means of such emerging groups. Such CBOs need to be supported by an engaged Timorese civil society which has the financial and technical resources to reach into the communities.

Curtain found in 2005 that three quarters of youth surveyed believed that they have an important role in their own community (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). Support to peer youth groups such as the one in Manufahi could nurture a range of development activities in the village and at the same time provide constructive roles for youth within their communities. Leadership of the type demonstrated by the Manufahi group is fundamental to community development. By bringing together local people to work for the village good, these youth are acting as 'active citizens'. Social capital can be built around such activities which potentially provide a positive focus for people to come together, even if they have different political persuasions or martial arts affiliations. A common objective can create a common bond, and the evidence suggests that local communities want the opportunity to participate in development activities. Positive youth leadership can, if it is not nurtured, easily be lost. Young people's capacity to be active in their communities, if supported, could provide a viable alternative to the drift to the urban areas.

Reflective conclusion

This chapter has shown how the Dili-centric development strategies in place in Timor Leste have led many young people in Timor Leste to leave their homes for the city lights. The under-resourced rural areas offer few opportunities for young people, and education, employment and training opportunities are concentrated in the urban areas. Employment nevertheless remains attainable to only a minority, leaving the expectations of many youth unmet.

My typology of groups identified with youth demonstrates a complex array of groups some of which have changed their objectives over time and others have maintained their *geração foun* leadership for over a decade. In the absence of formal employment, the civil

society sector has become a major source of social and economic engagement for the tertiary educated members of the *geração foun*. I have investigated the changing nature of youth organisations as clandestine youth activists started to establish development orientated NGOs, and peer youth groups became a vehicle for positive engagement by young people. I point to the importance of youth organisations in giving voice to youth and have shown how new forms of youth leadership are starting to emerge with greater attention to shared participation and leadership than arose during the liberation struggle.

While many new organisations have formed to engage young people in development activities, activists are highly critical of the lack of official support available for community development activities, particularly youth activities within rural or urban settings. Centralised government decision making provides little support for community based youth groups. This left rural youth without practical activities or the means to nurture a sense of unity with their peers in communities. Consequences of this became clear as a result of the 2006 crisis.

In the next chapter I investigate some of the major elements of the 2006 crisis: causes of the social unrest and the motivation for youth involvement in violence. Analysing the relationship of these events with the perspectives of young people I question the meaning and values embedded in their citizenship.

Chapter Eight

The 2006 Crisis and responses of the younger generations

Introduction

The images of rampaging violent young men splashed across the media during the 2006 crisis changed the discourse on youth issues in Timor Leste. In this chapter I investigate some key moments of the 2006 crisis, drawing attention to the links between the much reported political and military aspects and the social and cultural factors which contributed to it. I review evidence of the increasing disillusionment of a population who had made sacrifices during the struggle for independence, investigating specifically the perspectives of young people and their positive and negative roles in the crisis.

The positive roles that Timorese activists played in the crisis in promoting national unity and peace building has received little attention by the media or national government. This chapter reviews their contributions and perspectives on the crisis, offering a deeper understanding of the issues of building a sense of identity and belonging in communities.

Genealogy of the Crisis

> *Timor Leste is our nation. In a democratic nation we have the right to do what we want but it doesn't mean we have the right to make conflict. People who have leadership capacity should not be involved in conflict. [Domingos]*

In February 2006, 591 soldiers from the western districts deserted their barracks in protest at discrimination against Westerners by senior military officers from the eastern districts. Controversially these soldiers, representing almost the entire contingent of westerner soldiers, were sacked. President Xanana Gusmão, who was out of the country at the time of the sackings returned shortly. He made a televised address in which he acknowledged the injustice of the decision and the existence of East-West discrimination in the military[304], yet he declared that he would not reverse the decision[305]. That night the first

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[304] It was claimed that promotions were only given to *Lorosa'e.* Also disciplinary measures had been used against *Loromuno* who returned late from leave, although this was a result of the location of the barracks in

acts of communal violence broke out resulting from clashes between *Lorosa'e* (eastern) and *Loromuno* (western) youth gangs. Within days, male youths were involved in widespread looting and burning of houses in Dili. By legitimising the grievances of 'westerners' the President's speech had provoked attacks on 'easterners'. Within a few days, seventeen homes had been burned and easterners were fleeing the city (International Crisis Group 2006:8)

The hostilities between east and west are worth examining here, as they created real fears of the disintegration of Timor Leste as a united country[306]. There is no single ethnic divide between the east and west, rather there are multiple linguistic groups with some distinct characteristics. The Timorese languages are largely of Austro-Malay roots, although three language groups are of Papuan roots (Makassae and Fataluku in the east, and Bunak in the west). The Portuguese colonisers played on the differences between language groups, naming those in the longer pacified western districts the *kaladi* or 'quiet ones', while the more distant and warrior like easterners were termed *firaku* or 'those that turn their back on you' (Carey 2007). The empirical histories of struggle by the Timorese against Portuguese rule, however suggest these namings did not always correspond to the reality. According to Freitas, during the colonial period most revolts against the Portuguese authorities took place in the west of East Timor, while people from the eastern kingdoms that had accepted Portuguese rule were recruited to fight alongside Portuguese troops to put down uprisings in the west (Freitas, S 1994:10). Nevertheless, the common perception of these characteristics is highlighted by a comments by a 'western' Timorese activist who explained that as school students they were encouraged to choose an easterner (a fighter) when they had to select their sports team captain[307].

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the far east of the country (Lautem) making it impossible for to make visits home to be made by many *Loromuno* within allocated timeframes. (*Loromuno* (from the land of the setting sun) and *LoroSa'e* (from the land of the rising sun) is the Tetum version of east and west). Senior military officials had dismissed the grievances they had been presented with without a military tribunal claiming that political opposition parties were behind the protest.

[305] Speech of President Xanana Gusmao on 23rd March 06 at the Palace of Ashes, Dili. http:/en.wikisource.org/wiki/Palace_of_Ashes,_Speech_Xanana_Gusm%C3%A3o,_23th_March_2006 (viewed 13th February 2007).

[306] For instance a Ten District Movement formed under the leadership of Major Tara. This ten out of thirteen districts represent the westerners, excluded the eastern districts Baucau, Viqueque and Los Palos (International Crisis Group 2006).

[307] Personal communication with Xavier, August 2006.

Some Timorese say that prior to 2006, the term *Loromuno* was generally used to refer to West Timorese[308]. However back in 1975, Hill made reference to these terms as 'one of the variations of tribalism is the division of the population in *Loro Muno* and *Loro Sa'e*, into *Kladis* and *Firakus* … and the belief that some groups are superior to others' (Hill 2002:77). The senior officers of FALINTIL, and more recently F-FDTL[309], are from the east. As the majority of the militia groups were based in the west, close to the border with Indonesia, senior officers have indiscriminately accused *Loromuno* members of being pro-integrationist. The sense of superiority of senior *Lorosa'e* military officers is evidenced by their claim that the *Lorosa'e* alone were responsible for winning the liberation struggle.

Additionally there has been, and continues to be, historic rivalry between the Makassae from the east and the Bunak from the west, over market supremacy in Dili. Babo Soares dates commercial rivalry between the Bunak and the Makassae back to an influx of easterners into the capital after the World War Two[310]. Tensions over market domination in Dili resumed again after further population displacement caused an influx into Dili in 1999 (Babo-Soares 2003b). The Bunak are a relatively small language group, but the Makassae[311], who have become major players in Dili markets are one of the largest language groups. They are perceived as a threat by some Dili dwellers. In 2006 I observed that much of the hostility towards 'easterners' is directed specifically to the Makassae in particular, rather than to easterners in general.

The armed forces, FALINTIL-FDTL are historically linked with FRETILIN while the PNTL, directed by the Ministry of the Interior, has many police officers from the western districts who had previously served the Indonesian administration. The new head of the police force, PNTL, was an ex-officer in the Indonesian administration. During the UNTAET administration only 650 of the former resistance fighters were recruited into the 1500 strong F-FDTL, thereby excluding 1300 former guerrillas, heroes of the liberation struggle. The disarming of FALINTIL by INTERFET, despite its clear moral legitimacy,

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[308] Pedro interview

[309] The army, *FALINTIL Forca Defensa deTimor Leste is* known as F-FDTL

[310] Ranck's thesis 'Recent rural-urban migration to Dili, Portuguese Timor'. MA Thesis, 1977, Macquarie University suggests the influx into Dili took place in 1959.

[311] The Makassae are principally from the Baucau district, and the Bunak are one of the two principle language groups in Covalima and also from Bobonaro district. According to the Timor Leste Survey of Living Standards 2007, Mambae make up 24.6%, Tetum Praca 17.4%, Tetum Terik 6.3%, Makassae 11.7% and Bunak are 5.7% of the population (National Directorate of Statistics 2007). Interestingly Bunak is the only language of the Papuan group found in the west of the country.

was an error, observed Rees (2003). Military assistance is excluded from the OECD definition of development assistance, thus international donors were not able to provide 'development aid' to F-FDTL. Donor support for the new police force was not constrained by definitions of development aid. UNTAET vetted and rehired any police who had worked for the Indonesian government even though they were locally perceived as pro-integrationists. Significant donor resources were concentrated on the police force, including training of police officers provided by the Australian Federal Police and Australian aid[312].

The appointment of Rogerio Lobato[313] as Minister of the Interior gave him the power to build up several highly armed special police units, the Rapid Response Unit (UIR) and the special Police Reserve Unit (URP)[314] (International Crisis Group 2006). While the F-FDTL was confined to the eastern districts with limited resources, the URP was given responsibility for border security with Indonesia. That donors supported capacity building of the police force while the F-FDTL was largely marginalised created the context for the hostilities that broke out between F-FDTL and PNTL in the 2006 crisis. This exacerbated existing resentments and was a key factor when the two forces attacked each other during the crisis of 2006 (Rosser 2008). In spite of significant resources being put into the development of the new national security forces, the armed forces were marginalised (Rees 2003). Inherent injustices perceived in the formation of the F-FDTL and PNTL were to have serious implications for the stability of the nation.

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[312] The Australia-East Timor Police Development Program, worth A\$32 million, has trained over 800 staff within East Timor's police service (www.ausaid.gov.au/country/cbrief.cfm?DCon=5901_3683_7838_3843_6784&CountryID=911&Region=EastAsia accessed 27/11/08)

[313] Rogerio Lobato, brother of FRETILIN hero Nicolas Lobato, was one of the key players in the 2006 crisis. He assisted FRETILIN to acquire weapons when he was a member of the Portuguese army, and later he held the position of Minister of Defence in exile at the start of the occupation. He had expected to get this position in the new government. He was not offered the position, and responded by mobilising veterans who were not recruited into the F-FDTL to hold demonstrations against the government in 2002. Fretilin hoped to neutralise Lobato by offering him the Ministry of the Interior (Simonsen 2006). As head of the police force he built up special police units under his command. Rees suggests that the formation of paramilitary security groups coincided with the establishment of the F-FDTL, when many FALINTIL resistance fighters were set aside (Rees 2003).
314 Unidade de Reserva da Polícia (URP - Police Reserve Unit), UIR Unidade Intervenção Rápida (Rapid Response Unit).

The sacking of 591 western soldiers, who became known as the 'petitioners'[315] was the spark which inflamed other underlying issues, notably the rivalry within the national leadership and between the pro-Gusmão F-FDTL military and pro-Alkatiri PNTL police force[316]. The key events of the conflict are highly complex and have been described in detail in several official reports (Brady & Timberman 2006; International Crisis Group 2006; UN Special Commission of Inquiry 2006). The brief account below draws on these documents.

The major events of the crisis occurred after the petitioners sought and received permission to hold a four day demonstration starting on 24th April in front of the *Palacio do Governo*, an old Portuguese edifice in the centre of Dili. Prime Minister Alkatiri announced that a Commission of Notables would be set up to look into the issues of discrimination in the military but refused to address the petitioners at the demonstration (UN Special Commission of Inquiry 2006). Hundreds of male youths and gang members participated. On 28th April 2006 violence erupted in front of the government buildings killing two civilians. The Rapid Response Unit (UIR), specialising in riot control, was deployed but failed to bring the violence under control. The Prime Minister controversially arranged deployment of the F-FDTL to quell the riots (International Crisis Group 2006). As the petitioners moved back towards their base in Taci Tolu on the outskirts of Dili, fighting broke out in Comoro market and about 100 houses, mostly of easterners, were burned. The UIR used tear gas and shots were fired by and at the police, injuring a dozen and killing one. As they moved on to Taci Tolu, the F-FDTL were deployed. Much of the violence had been carried out by gangs of *Loromuno* youth targeting easterners. The arrival of the F-FDTL with *Loros'ae* leadership responsible for the perceived unfair handling of the *Loromuno* petitioners, resulted in open hostility between the army and the demonstrators. This resulted in further injuries (UN Special Commission of Inquiry 2006).

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315 'Petitioners' is the term used to refer to the sacked soldiers, as they had become civilians following their dismissal. There were 159 soldiers who signed the original petition which was presented to President Gusmao in January 2006. By the time they were sacked 591 soldiers were involved. At the time of the resolution of the 'petitioners' problem in early 2008, there were '700 petitioners and former military assembled in Aitak Laran, patiently awaiting a process for reintegration into military and civilian life'(RDTL 2008).

316 The semi-Presidential system of governance put the President (Gusmão) as Commander in Chief of the military, while the police came under the Ministry of the Interior, and therefore the government

Following these events, FRETILIN authorised F-FDTL arms to be distributed to civilian 'reserves' of former FALINTIL fighters including the rebellious L7[317]. The Minister of the Interior meanwhile distributed police weapons to civilians in a specially formed security team known as the 'Railos group'[318]. By late May the distrust and hostility had reached a point where F-FDTL soldiers opened fire on unarmed police killing nine and injuring thirty. The security situation was out of control and the Alkatiri government called on Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and Malaysia for international security forces to come to quell the chaos.

A few days after the Taci Tolu event, Alfredo Reinado, commander of the military police, deserted together with seventeen of his men and four members of the UIR police unit. Expressing his opposition to the deployment of the F-FDTL against civilians, he headed to the hills to give his support to the petitioners. From this time, until he was shot dead at the house of President Ramos Horta on 11th February 2008, Afredo Reinado became a central figure in the crisis. Reinado was elevated into a cult figure symbolising a heroic rebel fighting against an unjust state and became a hero for young people from the west of the country. When Reinado, a westerner from Aileu, fled to the hills outside Dili, he became the subject of an Australian television documentary in which he clashed with PNTL and F-FDTL, killing a number of men[319]. He evaded the authorities and escaped capture by Australian forces over the ensuing months. This contributed to his status as a hero amongst many youths who had started to dress like him (Niner 2008). Many believed that he had been endowed with the spirit of the 'warrior king' *Dom Boaventura*[320]. Parallels are drawn

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[317] Elle Sete (L7) is an ex-FALINTIL commander, who rejects the legitimacy of the government, and has grievances in relation to the exclusion of former FALINTIL from the new security forces.

[318] Vicente da Conceição, known as Railos, was western FALINTIL fighter during the resistance. He was dismissed in 2003, and harboured grievances of unfair dismissal.

[319] SBS reporter David O'Shea was attempting to get an interview with Reinado on 23rd May, the day the fighting broke out. This clash was thus captured on film, but he had no anticipation that he would become witness to a shoot out (Personal communication with David O'Shea, Hotel Dili, August 2006). Details on http://news.sbs.com.au/dateline/four_days_in_dili_130664

[320] Reinado had only spent a few years of his childhood within the Timorese community. His traumatic childhood experiences at the hands of the Indonesian military have been described elsewhere (Niner 2008). Reinado sought to strengthen his credentials with Timorese sources of cultural power. Dom Boaventura had been the *liurai* of Manufahi region, who united several kingdoms to participate in the last major uprising against the Portuguese in 1912. Boaventura is revered as a hero, particularly among the Mambai speaking westerners. In a ritual ceremony presided over by Manufahi elders in 2007 Reinado was endowed with the late Boaventura's supernatural powers. Shortly after, he escaped an assault by the Australian International Stablilisation Force on his hideout in Same, district capital of Manufahi.

with Boaventura's many heroic escapes from the heavy hand of Portuguese authorities in earlier times, due to the limited reach or influence of the Portuguese into the mountain rugged areas (Sengstock 2008).

By the middle of the year, with fighting, looting and burning of houses continuing in Dili, some 150,000 people had fled their homes seeking security in internally displaced people (IDP) camps. Others returned to their rural area of origin to seek refuge with family members. The population knew that armed and angry groups were at large in the country. Fear has played a large role in the lives of most Timorese. Historically they have fled to safety in the mountains within their extended family networks, found shelter in the Church, or sought international protection. This pattern was repeated, as national security institutions became the major source of that fear.

The congregation of large numbers of unemployed male youth in Dili was part of the explosive mix that created the environment for conflict in 2006. No young women were reported to have participated. The engagement by male youth in the violence can be attributed in part to their sense of disenfranchisement. The ability of factional leaders to draw youth into their realm contributed significantly to the volatile environment. Disaffected fighters excluded from recruitment to the PNTL or F-FDTL, ex-militia and pro-autonomy activists had all been recognised as potentially seeking to undermine the authority of the state prior to the outbreak of violence (Knezevic 2005).

The groups which are said to be most involved in the 2006 violence include: Colimau 2000 a sect with animist beliefs that claim fallen independence fighters will come alive again to lead them. Based in the west of the country, they reject the authority of the government. They had been implicated in violence in the districts (Covalima and Bobonaro) as well as in Dili in 2006. CPD-RDTL (Council for the Defence of RDTL) rejects the legitimacy of the government, the Constitution and other symbols of independence, because it believes in the validity of the proclamation of independence by FRETILIN in 1975. Therefore it sees itself as the true FRETILIN. It split from the main resistance movement in the 1980s and has been in conflict with FRETILIN and CNRM/CNRT since then. It draws support from FALINTIL veterans groups and unemployed youth. Sagrada Familia is run by ex-commander Cornelio Gama, known as L7 (see footnote 317). Like CDP-RDTL it has its roots in the FRETILIN split in the mid

1980s (International Crisis Group 2006). Sagrada Familia is based in the east of the country, finding its support from ex-combatants and unemployed youth (Scambary 2006).

Scambary suggests that the conflict followed three broad phases. The first involved clashes between security forces and anti-government demonstrators; the second involved clashes between groups from the east and west of the country; and the third in which former clandestine cells and the martial arts group KORK aligned themselves against PSHT[321]. By mid 2006 the original East-West grievances were overshadowed by the call for Mari Alkatiri's resignation, which was achieved through Presidential action. By that time it was evident that conflict was significantly linked to disputes over land ownership and unresolved grievances between family groups stemming back to 1999, 1975 and earlier. Pay-back attacks became commonplace. Burnt properties were predominantly those over which an ownership dispute existed. Acts of violence continued throughout 2006 and into 2007.

With the ousting of the FRETILIN leadership, Presidential elections were set for April 2007 followed by National Parliamentary elections in June. An interim government was led by the FRELITIN deputy leader[322]. In the lead up to the elections Xanana Gusmão resigned as President in order to lead a new political party into the elections. As mentioned in chapter four, he named it *Congresso Nacional para a Reconstrução de Timor* using the acronym CNRT of the older independence coalition to draw popular support in the competition against FRETILIN. These two major parties came to symbolise the divisions of the country, with other opposing groups coalescing around these political parties.

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[321] Scambary personal communication on draft report 'Disaffected Groups and Social Movements in East Timor, January 2007'.

[322] Jose Ramos Horta took over the Prime Ministership when Alkatiri stepped down in mid 2006. The Presidential elections were held in April 2007 followed by the parliamentary elections in July. Xanana Gusmão stepped down as President to run in the Parliamentary elections. Jose Ramos Horta stood down as interim Prime Minister to run for the Presidency, thus ending the Second Constitutional government. In the lead up to the parliamentary elections, the Third Constitutional government was headed by the FRETILIN deputy leader, Estanislão da Silva. The CNRT government which formed in August 2007 was the Fourth Constitutional Government.

The 'Independence Dividend'

> *Most of our generation are farmers now. They did not get a good education. The youth think government should create a job suitable for their level, at least labour work. We involved in the clandestine movement expect something from government. [Orlando]*

A consistent narrative post-independence is that people's lives were expected to improve because of the existence of a sympathetic Timorese State, which would deliver the freedom and development that they had been fighting for. In the early years of independence people's experience was contrary to their expectation. Poverty and chronic deprivation continue to be the plight of more than forty percent of all households and the numbers of those in absolute poverty had risen (Brady & Timberman 2006).

At the end of the independence struggle, many young people who had taken up arms in the resistance were demobilised and they returned to subsistence farming in order to survive. Some may not have farmed before. An ex-FALINTIL guerrilla from the east of the country had received just three years of Portuguese primary schooling before he joined the freedom fighters in 1976 (he was allowed to carry arms once he reached fifteen years). He fought until 1999, dedicating twenty three years of his life to the armed struggle to achieve independence. On demobilisation he received just US$350 from an aid program[323] after which he was on his own looking for the means to survive[324]. That the government had not given recognition to the contribution and suffering of the resistance fighters nor delivered material improvement to their lives became a major source of bitterness.

A former FALINTIL guerrilla leader, from the west of the country, complained:

> 'The government is not looking to the people, especially veterans. Many people died and much suffering but the government doesn't have any program to support them'[325].

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[323] Personal communication, September 2005. He could not name the organisation but it is likely to have been the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) which had a veterans program in the eastern districts of the country where he was from.

[324] In contrast, the peace process in Mozambique included a monthly payment (according to rank) for demobilised soldiers for a period of two years (Hanlon 2005).

[325] Interview with a former regional leader of FALINTIL, Suai, August 2006. According to the Commission of the Combatants in the Resistance '*Veteranos*' (veterans) refers to those who served in FALINTIL for the whole period 1975-1999, of whom there are only 75 persons. Other former freedom fighters are technically

There have been targeted programs to support ex-freedom fighters, for instance the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) had a substantial program of support for the veterans but it only operated in the eastern districts. Other programs have also been selective in their targets leaving many veterans unable to access support[326].

There was widespread discontent amongst the population. This has been described by (Traube 2007) in relation to the *Mambai* people, Timor Leste's largest ethno-linguistic group living predominantly in the central highlands, site of the highest levels of poverty. She argues that individuals and families made sacrifices in the struggle for independence that were not been formally recognised or compensated following the establishment of the state. There was a pervasive sentiment amongst the *Mambai* that justice should result in some redistribution of material and symbolic assets on the basis of contribution to the liberation struggle, such that:

> 'those who pursued their own selfish interests and prospered under the occupation should be made to pay, while those who suffered and sacrificed for independence should be recompensed. There was mounting apprehension, however, that just the reverse was happening in the early days of nationhood. Rather than reward its purchasers, many people observed, the nation seemed to favour those who had been hostile or indifferent to it, such as former collaborators and returned diaspora' (Traube 2007).

The presence of disenchanted former resistance leaders, many forced to return to their communities and begin a new occupation as subsistence farmers served to vocalise their concerns. A former military adviser to Timor Leste writes 'the role of veterans in the country dominates the community's political equation from the village to the capital' (Rees 2003). Some observers have described the belief that veterans should receive recompense for their service to the struggle as a 'peace dividend' or 'independence

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known as the '*Antigos combatants*' (former combatants) who fought with arms during some of that period. The '*Quadros de resistencia*' (members of resistance organisations) are civilians who supported the resistance, notably the youth organisations OJETIL, RENETIL, FITUN, OBJLATIL etc.

[326] Another was Project RESPECT set up by UNDP to target ex-combatants, widows and unemployed youth. A critique by La'o Hamutuk indicates that this multi-million dollar program succeeded in allocating only just over $1 million to district level projects due to the centralisation of decision making, poor communications with the districts, lack of consultation with local people and a failure to involve women (La'o Hamutuk 2004).

dividend'[327]. Simonsen observed that having sacrificed their education and career for their country, many veterans were then denied their share of the 'peace dividend' (Simonsen 2006). Many resistance leaders did not benefit from paid positions within the military or administrative apparatus. An independent government was expected to deliver benefits to the population in the form of improved health, education and support to farmers. It was expected that this would result from the government working on their behalf, unlike the former Indonesian and Portuguese regimes. Development assistance resources were clearly visible in the capital, but little evident in rural areas. People perceived government actions as inimical to their interests when the effects of reduced support in agriculture and declining opportunities for marketing of agricultural produce started to be felt.

A report by the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank launched in November 2008 showed poverty had increased from 2001 to 2007. The Finance minister stated 'the significant increase in poverty can be explained by the fact of existing a reduction in the non oil economy between 2001 and 2007', and 'the non oil income per capita fell 12%'[328]. Declining standards of living has contributed to increased alienation of many rural communities.

Previous experience of living in a democracy is the privilege of the Timorese diaspora who have returned from living in exile in democratic countries. The experience of the emerging democracy in Mozambique was one of a centrist approach to national development[329]. Centralised control exerted by the state in Mozambique resulted in a people unwilling to engage with the state. Consequently many Mozambicans responded through 'exit' options, or non-engagement with the state, rather than exerting their own

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[327] The terms 'peace dividend' and 'independence dividend are used by different writers for the same purpose. I use the term 'independence dividend' as it is the winning of the struggle for independence that marks the transitional moment for Timor Leste, whereas peace was not so cleanly achieved.

[328] Press release on 'Timor-Leste: Poverty in a Young Nation' report launched 26/11/2008. The report is based on the Timor Leste Standard of Living Study (National Directorate of Statistics 2007).

[329] In Mozambique the President Chissano came to power as a Marxist Leninist and continued as leader of the FRELIMO party for some 12-15 years throughout a transition to social democracy and capitalist development. It should be noted that the centralisation in Mozambique was partly due to the very low level of education and human resource capability of the country compared to Timor Leste. There were reported to be only four Mozambican graduates at independence, compared to about 700 senior school leavers and university graduates in Timor Leste, a country with a population about twenty times smaller. Many Timorese resented returnees taking positions of power. In Timor Leste's 2007 electoral campaign, the FRETILIN leadership became known as the Maputo faction (Maputo being the capital of Mozambique). A breakaway faction formed as 'Mudanca' (meaning Change) in the party.

'voice' by participation and advocacy (Lubkemann 2001)[330]. In Timor Leste the centralised government system was informed by both the socialist ideology[331] of the political leadership and the sense of superiority that Portuguese culture instilled (chapter five). Limited formal channels for the expression of public opinion resulted both from the reluctance of state institutions to share information and the lack of effective communications mechanisms (Brady & Timberman 2006). The centralised decision making structure that did not require, nor benefit from, effective dialogue and consultation within the government or with the public, led to a perception that the FRETILIN dominated government represented the will of the party, not the will of the people (Brady & Timberman 2006). The existing *Suco* structures, which had expected to continue in the role they had been playing under both colonial administrations, became marginalised.

In spite of decentralisation plans being outlined within the NDP and the Constitution, there were no local governance structures in place by 2006. Processes for establishing decentralised local governance included a pilot project for budget decentralisation in one Bobonaro sub-district in 2005, extended to Los Palos in 2006. Nevertheless, five years after independence the absence of functioning structures of local government have resulted in a sense of disempowerment and disadvantage. Power and resources were concentrated in Dili generating few work opportunities and resulting in a scarcity of capital in the district or demand for local products. This scenario offers little motive for young people to remain in the rural areas.

Within a relatively short period of time after independence, the Timorese government was criticised by civil society organisations for non-consultative decision making and lack of responsiveness to the concerns and needs of Timorese citizens. Within just six months, in December 2002, riots broke out in Dili against the use of force against a student by the police. Following this incident the Prime Minister commenced a process of 'open governance' in 2003. This national consultation involved government ministers travelling around the country visiting each sub-district. The government ministers each presented

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[330] In this health study, Lubkemann found that the political culture of Mozambique in the colonial period favoured the exit option to protect local interests from the intrusive hand of the state. After independence the centralised control exercised by FRELIMO alienated much of the population, which largely reverted to historically effective strategies of 'exit'.

[331] Fretilin's political formation was in the mid 1970's in the hey-day of socialism and Marxist idealism which influenced the development of their political ideology. It was not until the 1990s that participatory democracy and consultative forms of leadership had major influence on the mainstream of political thought.

their program, but the concept of getting closer to the people was undermined by the lavish scale of the operation with an entourage of twelve vehicles carrying government ministers and support staff. The people still did not feel listened to, according to Eugenio, at the time a UN translator[332]. According to Engel, government Ministers, particularly those that returned to East Timor from exile abroad, failed to understand the people. She claims that the perception of many throughout East Timor was of a widening gap between local community and the government. Ostensibly the government officials came to listen, but left before informing locals of priorities and plans for the future of each area. 'In this sense, frustrations are high and the perceived distance between government and the people is widening' (Engel 2003). Her perceptions are supported by the account given by Eugenio who recounted that in one village people made demands for improved services such as electricity, better houses, roads and infrastructure in order to get produce to market. He said there was an angry response from the Prime Minister who declared that they do not need light to live and they should get on with their farming. This, according to Eugenio, turned people against the government, which was seen as distant and uncaring and the Prime Minister as 'arrogant'.

Many of the Council of Ministers lived outside the country during the occupation, and are commonly known as the 'Mozambique clique'[333]. As the educated elite of the Portuguese educated generation they returned to take positions of power and privilege. Their lives have been remote from the lived experiences of the rural poor in the interior of the country. The former Prime Minister, confronting the huge task of putting in place the structures of government and legislation for all aspects of governance, thought that people were unrealistic in 'looking to have everything yesterday and not tomorrow' (Alkatiri 2005a). His reluctance to recognise the legitimacy of local feelings and the hopes and aspirations of the people contributed to the impression of arrogance and lack of concern for the rural poor in the eyes of the communities.

Youth blamed the government for the lack of opportunities. Venting their frustrations, in one incident in mid 2006, youth took over the Secretariat of Youth and Sport office and said they would only give it back in exchange for jobs. A 2006 study of Dili based youth

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[332] Interview with Eugenio 7/8/06
[333] This is a term I heard frequently during my visits to Timor Leste in 2005 and 2006

groups and gangs, many of whose members were involved in the violence, reveals the alienation felt by youth due to the government development approach:

> 'the government does not listen either to youth or to the community, that they rather keep their distance, never going to the grassroots' (Grove N et al. 2007:20).

Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, during his time in office, had been dismissive of any criticism[334]. Nevertheless, during FRETILIN's 2007 election campaign an unusual apology was made which recognised the failure of the government to give attention to the people:

> 'We admit that the first five years of government was absorbed by the bureaucratic works to establish the necessary instruments that could serve as the basis for administering the country democratically and to seek for resources. As a result the FRETILIN government did not have sufficient time to go to the districts to meet with the people to explain government policies. We also did not focus enough on the youth who are the inspiring and creative force of society and we have taken for granted the support of the people of Timor-Leste We apologize for these mistakes and we will learn from them' (FRETILIN Q&A Media Kit for the parliamentary elections 2007).

Youth in Conflict

> *Young people do not understand politics. Political leaders are behind young people's actions. [Antonio]*

The dearth of resources in the rural communities, together with the expectation of work, caused youth to seek jobs in the urban areas. Without the mass of unemployed young people in Dili the crisis would arguably never have become so entrenched. The involvement of large numbers of male youth in the crisis had the effect of catapulting the issue of youth to centre stage; a significant change from having had little attention in previous years. The 2006 report *Survey of Gangs and Youth Groups in Dili* found that

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[334] Former Prime Minister D Mari Alkatiri continued in his role as Secretary General of FRETILIN. My own observation from watching RTTL television, particularly in March 2006, was the unwillingness of the political leadership to respond to community concerns in any positive way, instead attacking both the criticism and the bearer of criticism as being against the government.

youth blame the political leaders for the crisis. Interestingly, few will admit to being involved in the violence[335]. A young man blamed the speech of President Xanana Gusmão for the start of the crisis:

> The careless words of leaders incited violence; that accusations of not having fought for independence forced people to fight and defend their name and their self-worth (Grove N et al. 2007:3).

Many others claim they were manipulated, with leaders distributing weapons and stirring up hatred with divisive words about East and West. The lack of direction and orientation of youth was a factor in the crisis according to Carlos: 'Youth became involved only after things had happened because there had been no direction to guide them, they are looking for identity and not thinking of the impact on the community'[336]. Isabela also points to the poor standard of education contributing to youth's willingness to engage in violent behaviour: 'Youth with low education cannot analyse well the positive and negative side. It is easy to manipulate them. They easily follow people who want to make violence'[337]. With lack of education or guidance youths are easily influenced. Anecdotal evidence from other INGO staff working with youth in the IDP camps indicates that youth blames the violence on *'ema bo'ot'* (big people) even though they themselves committed the violent acts. Some were enticed with money: 'Leaders gave money to young people. For money people will do anything, even kill' said one youth (Grove N et al. 2007:9). Gang members gained courage and reputedly money to undertake acts of violence that they had not done of their own volition before. On the other hand, Roberto's experience is that many youths engaged in violence without financial reward due to their frustration of being unemployed:

> Young people are concerned about what Ema Bo'ot are saying. They are only involved in violence because they are made to. They are not paid. They are involved in violence to express their frustration and disappointment[338].

Roberto's comment 'they are made to' can be understood in the context that young people are brought up not to question their seniors. The explosive mix of poorly educated unemployed male youth within a highly volatile politicised environment resulted in youth

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[335] Personal communication with James Scambary
[336] Carlos interview
[337] Isabela interview
[338] Roberto interview

gangs responding to senior men whom they perceived as their leader. Scambary identifies former leaders of the resistance movement leading many gangs (Scambary 2006). Many youth were persuaded to engage in violence with alcohol according to Victor:

> Youth admitted they had been used by other organisations, some political parties. It is the culture of '*Maun Bo'ot*' (big brother). If '*Maun Bo'ot*' said to do something, after a few beers they can do anything [339].

Drinking and drug use has been increasingly evident among young people. Victor noted that at the time of the Youth Social Analysis study in 2005 there had been little mention of drugs, but by 2006 there was much greater use of drugs. It was also believed within the community that drugs had been brought into the country to fuel the violence[340].

There are consistent reports that the leadership of youth gangs that engaged in looting and burning across Dili did not arise from within their own peer groups. Too often leadership has been imposed and the gang became foot soldiers in the battles of others. This can, perhaps, be explained by youth's subservient role in society: '*the culture of youth is to respect a leader even if they are wrong*' were the words of a Timorese academic in 2005[341].

Youth have consistently denied responsibility for the violence. Scambary's report on Dili based youth groups and gangs claims that many gangs are led by former resistance figures loyal to different factions in the security forces and political parties, with loyalties and enmities dating back to resistance times (chapter seven). Some groups are involved in extortion rackets and criminal gangs, others have affiliations to former militia groups while others are linked to senior members of government (Scambary 2006). Much of the 2006 violence resulted from family disputes that date back as far as 1975 often including land ownership or political differences. Disaffected leaders drew on the resentment and disappointment of youth to carry out their family battles and political aspirations[342].

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[339] Interview with Victor, a former youth researcher.
[340] During the Indonesian occupation, the violence of the Ninja's was also fuelled by drugs. The use of this strategy in 2006 was perhaps a copy of what had worked before, using existing cross-border linkages.
[341] Interview with Academic 4
[342] A struggle for power is common in post-conflict situations, in which an open field for political aspirations by contenders for power, seeking to establish new systems and structures, chose to identify with and appeal for support from sub-groups within the society (Anderson, MB 1999).

The violence was not contained in Dili, it extended into the western districts during 2006 and to the eastern districts in 2007. The complexity of the socio-political landscape in which youth were embroiled is demonstrated by this account of violence in Suai in June 2006:

> My neighbour, a martial arts member, was involved in a fight. A KORK member beat an SH[343] member because he is from the east, married to a Suai girl. They got drunk and fought. The KORK person went to SH house to resolve the issue but SH friends were there and they started to fight. He was bashed in the head and taken to hospital. Next day a PD man came and told the woman (wife) and children they should leave or their houses would be burnt' [A Suai activist].

The event is presented as fight between martial arts groups PSHT and KORK. However reference is made to three separate sets of social divisions, the east-west, the martial arts groups and political affiliations, making it impossible to disentangle the actual issue as the source of the conflict. What is clear is that identity and honour is bound up creating a sense of 'them' and 'us'. A young man was killed later that night.

Kinship connections are important in Timor Leste (chapter six). Of the 'petitioners' sacked from F-FDTL several were from Covalima District. In addition a PNTL police officer from Covalima was shot by F-FDTL at the PNTL headquarters in Dili in May. Feelings were running high as many families were related to men killed during these key events of the crisis.

The previous month, the arrival in Suai of rebel leader *Railos*[344] with his armed men had created deep fear in the community. Railos claimed to be there to unite the *Loromuno* people, and to 'protect them' from F-FDTL[345]. This transported the east-west tensions from Dili to Suai, polarising the community. Violence broke out between martial arts groups and easterners were run out of town. PD leaders promoted anti-government demonstrations and tried to take over the Administration building. The community is almost evenly divided along political lines and Covalima is the only western district in

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[343] KORK and PSHT (abbreviated to SH) are two major martial arts groups (see previous chapter)
[344] Railos led a group of 31 others which was armed with PNTL weapons by the Minister of Interior Rogerio Lobato and made an attack on F-FDTL soldiers in Dili on 24th May (UN Special Commission of Inquiry 2006). His visit to Suai preceded this event.
[345] After the sacking of the 591 western soldiers, F-FDTL was almost entirely made up of *Loros'ae* (eastern) soldiers. Political agitators claimed that the F-FDTL would come to kill *Loromuno* (westerners).

which Fretilin got a majority of votes. The presence of Railos fuelled east-west tensions which were exploited by political parties and martial arts groups that had instigated much of the violence. During the crisis Reinado also came to Suai, the home of one of his wives, further heightening tensions within the population.

The depth of the schisms between different groups in the community was shocking, both for the Timorese and for international observers. The issue of justice played a major role in the snowballing of the crisis. It is not immediately apparent why an initial political-military crisis should cause such major social dislocation. It appeared that the collapse of the national security forces was a trigger for people to revert to pre-national forms of retributive justice to resolve outstanding disputes. It was also clear that political forces could manipulate social divisions to their own ends.

Cry for Justice

> *We need to create a society that feels safe in daily interaction. Victims and perpetrators are here together – victims and perpetrators meet in the market. [Carlos]*

There are deep concerns in Timor Leste about justice given the aftermath of the 1999 violence and the years of occupation. Deep divisions have resulted between pro-independence and pro-autonomy families and between adherents to different political parties and factions. The failure to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes and injustices has been blamed for the population reverting to traditional systems of retribution. It has also been seen as one of the motives for violence in the 2006 crisis[346].

The report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor Leste (CAVR) entitled '*Chega!*'[347] compiled testimonies from thousands of victims and

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[346] I spoke to several people whose houses had been burnt, and who knew the perpetrators. In one case the house of a Fretilin family was burnt by a distant relative who is said to be currently on the pay role of TNI based in West Timor. In a second case, a Fretilin family's house was burnt as a pay back in an old family dispute between UDT and Fretilin sympathisers. There were many other reports of attacks being carried out as retribution for grievances that had occurred earlier. In Timor Leste retribution sometimes responds to grievances several generations earlier.

[347] The CAVR report title means Enough! captures the main message given by the victims to the CAVR commissioners that the human rights violations experienced over 25 years from 1975 to 1999, during which

witnesses at public hearings around the country. Hundreds of interviews with East Timorese on all sides of the political conflict and within Indonesia were undertaken. The report recommends that the National Parliament take primary responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of its recommendations. The 2004 recommendations offer ways to prevent a repetition of the violations documented in the Report and to appropriately respond to the needs of victims of these violations. These recommendations emphasise that 'members of the military, police, intelligence services, judiciary and government agencies must at all times remain strictly accountable to the people, the law and to internationally agreed standards' (CAVR 2005:156).

At the time of the publication of *Chega!,* President Xanana Gusmão publicly expressed his preference for forgiveness of crimes rather than seeking judicial process against senior Indonesian military figures and Timorese perpetrators of violence. The report, published in October 2005, still has not been debated by parliament three years later. Successive governments' reticence to act has contributed to a belief in the community that crimes can be committed with impunity.

One of the core functions of the Commission was promoting reconciliation in Timor Leste. The CAVR held hearings using a strategy to draw on processes used in customary practice, thus gaining considerable acceptance in the community[348]. The CAVR process facilitated the resolution of conflict, particularly where violent acts had been committed under duress or were afterwards regretted. In particular, refugees who had collaborated with the pro-integration groups and were transported to West Timor in 1999 were eager to participate in the CAVR process to reintegrate with their communities. Victims sought legal recognition for crimes committed and wanted to hold those responsible for violence

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up to 183,000 civilians died, should never be allowed to recur. The report, 2500 pages long, documents these violations and makes 204 recommendations.

[348] The Community Reconciliation Process (CRP) was based on the philosophy that community reconciliation could best be achieved through a facilitated, village based, participatory mechanism. This mechanism combined practices of traditional justice, arbitration, mediation and aspects of both criminal and civil law (CAVR 2005:22). The CRP was a voluntary process. In the hearings a panel of local leaders was chaired by a Regional Commissioner. Perpetrators of violence were required to admit fully to their crimes. Victims and other members of the public were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. The perpetrator would have to consent to undertake community service or payment and reparations to the victims to be reaccepted into the community. The *lisan* (traditional practices) incorporated into the procedure vary according to local custom.

accountable to the rule of law[349] (Knezevic 2005). In the aftermath, the unwillingness of the political leadership to pursue the recommendations of the CAVR and bring to justice the perpetrators of serious crimes meant that the perpetrators of the most violent crimes remained free to live in communities without even notional punishment. Those who were the victims of violence have unhappily been forced to accept this situation. They have been left without any means of redress or hope that justice is possible. Only a few cases of human rights abuses were brought to trial after 1999. This includes an attack on a car carrying three Catholic sisters and a priest in Los Palos that resulted in their deaths. The perpetrator of this atrocity, former militia leader Joni Marques, was pardoned after serving only eight years of his jail term in an amnesty authorised by President Jose Ramos Horta in 2008. The pardon was given against the advice of the Minister of Justice and without any parliamentary debate. At the same time, Former Minister of the Interior, Rogerio Lobato, convicted for distributing arms to civilians during the 2006 crisis was given amnesty along with dozens of other perpetrators of violent crime. Meanwhile, former militia have been welcomed back and are free to live in communities. For example, people were shocked when Hercules Rozario Marcal, another notorious former militia leader now known as a gangster in Indonesia, was warmly embraced by Prime Minister Gusmao[350]. He returned to Timor as part of an Indonesian business delegation looking to invest in Timorese tourism. This visit may well lead to a lucrative business deal. Such largesse is bitterly resented by the poor majority, as reflected in the observations that 'the nation seemed to favour those who had been hostile or indifferent to it' (Traube 2007).

Not only are historic injustices of great concern but current crime in the community is not being adequately dealt with. The institutional weakness of the justice system is 'highly overburdened and severely dysfunctional' (Brady & Timberman 2006). According to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace there have been 1,000 reported rape cases since 2000 and not one of them has been solved[351]. Criminal cases have priority and the system is slow. The capacity of the national justice system is constrained by laws written in Portuguese while most Timorese lawyers were educated in Indonesian. In 2006 all

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[349] Crimes deemed extremely serious were not part of these hearings as these were recommended for criminal charges.
[350] http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/gangsters-role-queried-in-timor-attacks/2008/03/15/ 1205472159766.html (accessed 27/11/08)
[351] Interview – CC 1, August 2006. By late 2008 there were 6 national judges and one foreign judge.

Timorese judges failed their competency tests in the Portuguese language, resulting in the courts sitting with foreign judges. Lawyers and police responsible for bringing a fair trial and gathering evidence are dependent on scarce translators. Blockages in the court system result from the fact that police, lawyers and defendants cannot understand penal codes, statutes and other legal instruments, written in Portuguese[352]. Worse, there is the perception that familial and clan relationships affect all aspects of the justice sector, reinforcing the pervasive view that there is no real recourse to justice through formal channels (Brady & Timberman 2006). It is reported that none of the police, local leaders or community members see much point in reporting crimes or disputes to the court due to the long time it takes for anything to be resolved (Mearns 2002). By early 2009 there were an estimated 5,000 cases waiting to be heard[353].

A primary cause of violence in both Dili and the districts has been directly related to family land and property disputes, many of them dating back to overlapping claims from Portuguese or Indonesian times (Brady & Timberman 2006). Unresolved land ownership disputes sometimes arise from pro and anti integration sentiment and population movements in 1999 or link to political divisions which started in 1975. Within Timor Leste successive waves of people have been displaced and forced to move as a result of armed conflict and policies of occupation. Historically this was the case during the Indonesia occupation due to the forcible removal of villages away from FRETILIN occupied mountains and the allocation of lands in the coastal plains to Indonesian transmigrants. The 1999 community violence also precipitated massive displacement. Land ownership is therefore, a highly contentious issue in Timor Leste and titles from both Portuguese and Indonesian periods are recognised. Thousands of land and property ownership claims are pending. Some landowners who fled after 1975 have returned to claim their property, now home to other families. Many families arrived in Dili to escape violence in 1999 and did not leave again. Houses vacated by the departing Indonesians were re-occupied. Numerous ownership claims have been lodged, but the judicial system has as yet not responded to these claims.

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[352] Personal communication with a Brazilian lawyer, August 2006.
[353] Talk by Fernanda Borges, MP, leader of the *Partido Unidade Nacional* (PUN), VLGA, Melbourne 6/3/09.

Research following the worst of the crisis found that most property destruction was aimed at those who had moved into homes of others in the post-1999 era. Lists of properties occupied since 1999 were sometimes obtained from hamlet heads to target them more efficiently (McWilliam 2007:41). The media reported there were youth found with wads of money after being paid to burn specific houses[354]. In the 2006 crisis the burning of houses, to dislodge the occupants, appears to have been a specific action designed to forcibly resolve property issues.

The failure of the national system to deliver justice has allowed social divisions to emerge. This has weakened national identity in favour of the re-assertion of belonging and identity based on loyalties related to socio-linguistic group or political allegiance. The 2006 crisis saw a re-kindling of local forms of identity, leadership and patronage that challenged the national government which had failed to deliver the 'independence dividend'. During the 2006 crisis people fled at the first outbreak of violence, just as they had fled their homes for the mountains after the Indonesian invasion and again after the ballot of 1999. National liberation achieved in 2002 has not delivered liberation from fear for the majority of the population, nor a sense of national unity.

Kabeer (2005) identifies four 'values' of citizenship, values which, in the context of Timor Leste provide a useful framework to analyse some of the tensions that contributed to the crisis. Kabeer argues that for citizens to have a sense of belonging as citizens a number of conditions must be present. The first value of citizenship is the right to exercise some degree of control over one's life. In Timor Leste, deteriorating material circumstances have left the poor majority having the means for nothing more than minimalist survival. In particular, young people in Timor find themselves in a situation of declining opportunity. In rural areas subsistence farming provides a meagre livelihood and there have been no resources available for other activities. In urban settings there is a deficit of employment opportunities.

Recognition of the intrinsic worth of all human beings and recognition and respect for their differences is another value of citizenship identified by Kabeer (2005). Following independence, the lack of any formal recognition of their suffering and sacrifice as a

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[354] A Catholic priest has stated that youth claim to receive $20 for throwing stones; $50 for burning a house and $100 for killing a person. He received this information in confessions of dozens of youths (Marianne Kearney, Courier Mail 9/10/2007).

consequence of their roles in the independence struggle was evidenced by lack of any material improvement in the lives of the rural majority. That people in the rural areas had reached the limits of their endurance was compounded by the apparent unwillingness of the government to hear the concerns of the people.

A third value identified by Kabeer, which has particular saliency within the context of Timor-Leste, is that of solidarity. This is the capacity to identify with others and act in unity with them in their claims for justice and recognition (Kabeer 2005). The solidarity that existed during the struggle enabled the diverse Timorese peoples to unite and win the struggle for independence, a unity that fractured soon after independence. Solidarity has not been evident as the government and different political parties vie for support from diverse generational and ethnic groups.

The grievance of many Timorese concerning the failure to bring to justice the perpetrators of violence remains a festering wound. Justice, according to Kabeer, is the fourth value of citizenship. For justice to prevail the state must act fairly and impartially toward all people (Kabeer 2005). The unwillingness of the political elite to pursue justice in relation to crimes from 1975 to 1999, and the inability of the new national justice system to deliver, has denied the opportunity for justice through the organs of state. In the absence of a functioning national justice system, customary justice mechanisms were drawn upon. In some cases where land claims were not progressing, claimants burnt the house in question, thus forcing the resident family out. The aggrieved family then often observed the customary practices of retributive justice, in which a punishment given out is proportionate to the crime. Thus in the 2006 crisis attacks on another's property or person were repaid in kind, leading to a spiral of communal violence.

Nasaun Ida Deit – ' We are One Nation'

> After the crisis the local organisations did not get much opportunity to be involved directly to prevent further violence and help the victims in terms of access to resources. It was a repeat of 1999-2000, in terms of distribution it was under INGOs. [Guilherme]

'*Nasaun ida deit*' was one of the many calls for unity put up around Dili by activists during the 2006 crisis. Timorese activists began meeting to discuss responses to the crisis immediately after the first outbreak of violence in March 2006. Timorese civil society was actively involved, as much as it could be, but as Guilherme indicates the opportunities were limited because funding was concentrated in the international agencies.

A peace concert was held in April 2006 prior to the PNTL-F-FDTL clash, with NGOs contributing their own funds to the activity[355]. Activities promoting national unity were organised by FONGTIL[356], the umbrella organisation for civil society organisations, and its members early in the crisis. A Campaign for National Unity was set up using the media, national radio and TV. National Unity pamphlets were produced and distributed. Creative banners were hung across streets and at gate-ways to refugee camps which presented a powerful call to people to think of themselves as Timorese – '*One People, One Nation*'. Such messages counteracted the daily discourse of the *Lorosa'e-Loromuno* divisions that dominated the media and society. Arts and drama organisations took the message of national unity into the IDP camps, providing a counterpoint to the violence that was taking place in the streets. In the midst of the ethnic tensions and political divisions, civil society activists from east and west worked together to promote peace and reconciliation.

The National Unity Committee organised an activity program, initially bringing different groups of youth together for organised sports (soccer, basketball and volleyball) to occupy the youth in the eleven IDP camps. A second phase was planned to support reintegration in *bairros* and *aldeias*, including encouraging the use of sports to bring youth together when they return home[357]. Another key activity undertaken by FONGTIL members in Dili was the monitoring of the emergency distribution program implemented by international agencies in the IDP camps.

An important initiative promoted by civil society activists in response to the crisis was '*segurança popular',* or community policing. It was initiated in some *bairros* in Dili to fill the void left in policing after the PNTL was taken off the streets. Youth gangs had started to act with impunity as Australian security patrols in Dili were not mandated to make

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[355] Personal communication with Guilherme, Melbourne 30/5/ 08
[356] *Forum das Organisacoes Nao Governmentais de Timor Leste*, in English the 'NGO Forum'.
[357] Antonio interview.

arrests. Some *bairros* had 6-7 posts manned by youth throughout the night who could be called upon in the event of violence or threats. When youths threatened to burn a house the *segurança popular* would threaten to expel them from living in the *bairro*[358]. The community provided the youth guards with food each night. In some communities easterners and westerners worked together as they had in the past.

Promotion of women in peace building and community leadership has been seen as an important new area of activist engagement. 'Girls are sympathetic and can reach out to everyone, but boys are compromised by violence' according to Pedro[359]. He pointed to the role of Veronica, who was elected the coordinator of the Humanitarian Study Club in her *bairro* this year. At just 20 years old she held a community meeting where many people came to discuss the problem of discrimination between *Lorosa'e* and *Loromuno* people. Such forums are important for airing views and play a valuable role in promoting reconciliation between opposing groups[360].

There is global recognition that women must be involved in peace building activities, as enshrined in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 which urges all governments and peace missions to take gender into account in their peace and security programs[361]. Timorese NGO 'Foundation for Peace and Democracy' (FPD) hosted the first international Women Peacemakers conference held in Timor Leste in 2004 with participants from the Pacific nations[362]. FPD has supported communities living on the

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[358] In some bairros families have lived together for decades, they know and trust each other. Most of the conflict involved those who fled to Dili during 1999 and stayed, or arrived in the independence period. Many returnees claimed property that was being lived in by another family. Intensification of competition in marketing of agricultural produce also caused resentments to be harboured.

[359] Pedro interview. Pedro, a former student activist now academic, set up the Conflict Prevention Centre at UNTL. As a peace activist involved in the Timorese branch of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), experiences from peace work internationally were able to be built into strategies for conflict resolution and peace building in Timor Leste.

[360] In this bairro a number of houses had been burnt, many related to historical grievances between two families. *Loromuno* admitted their mistake in burning a house of someone from Viqueque, perpetrating east-west violence. The *chefe de aldeia* and *chefe de suco,* who had participated in dialogues organised at the national level but had not followed up with meetings within the communities, didn't want to participate in the youth initiative without receiving payment.

[361] Security Council resolution 1325 was unanimously adopted by the Security Council on 31 October 2000. It is a watershed political framework that makes women – and a gender perspective – relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning refugee camps and peacekeeping operations and reconstructing war-torn societies.

[362] Globally women have played a critical part in the promotion of peace, particularly in Solomon Islands and Bougainville in the Pacific region. PDF, founded by Jose Ramos Horta with a goal to make Timor Leste 'an island of peace', runs conflict mediation programs and leadership development programs. In the districts

border in Covalima and Bobonaro to come peacefully together with those in West Timor. In 2006, FPD was active in promoting the 'Women for Peace' demonstration demanding a resolution of the conflict. There were 500 women and children who turned out to demand peace on 20th May 2006, the anniversary of the restitution of independence. However, this action received little media attention.[363].

District based youth groups were also active in promoting the national unity message. For instance Ursula's theatre group developed a new street theatre piece that spoke out against east-west divisions[364]. Young people became engaged with organisations such as the theatre group *Bibi Bulak* in Dili and the *Arte Moris* art school, both of which were engaged in spreading the peace message to youth in the IDP camps.

Nevertheless there was a sense that NGO initiatives in promoting peace and reconciliation was little recognised or supported by government. A peace rally organised by the clandestine youth group 'Survivors of 12th November' to commemorate the Santa Cruz massacre received a pledge from the government for funding of activities. The funds failed to arrive in time and the activities, including a seminar and sports competitions, were only able to proceed with borrowed money [365].

Peace activists from the UNTL Peace & Conflict Centre organised a National Youth Dialogue in Oecussi from 24 to 27 September 2006. This enclave, surrounded by Indonesian territory, was chosen as a neutral venue because it had no experience of east-west antagonism. With financial support from international agencies, more than one hundred participants representing all thirteen districts attended. They produced a joint declaration, the '*Lifão Declaration of National Youth Unity*' committing the youth to national unity, non-discrimination and justice[366]. The submissions for funding for ongoing

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35 young people have been trained in conflict transformation to be able to run conflict transformation workshops in the districts. Since 2006 they have focussed on training young people in Dili. A Youth Peace program involves youth in tree planting, dialogue, learning to nurture, understanding the future economic reward and sharing experiences (Personal communication with Josephina, Melbourne October 2007).

[363] Personal communication with Josephina, Melbourne, October 2007.

[364] Ursula interview, Baucau 18/806

[365] Personal communication with Guilherme, Melbourne 30/5/08

[366] The youth representative of Ermera read the 'Support the Role of East Timorese Youth in Seeking the Immediate Solution to the East Timor Crisis' statement:

1. We, East Timorese Youth are committed to safeguard and firmly maintain the integrity of RDTL as a nation and its territory and sovereignty

2. We, East Timorese Youth firmly defend the constitution of RDTL and its symbols.

activities to UNDP and the government were, however, unsuccessful. This created another occasion in which activists felt that the government was not interested in their contribution, or their work being duly recognised: 'The government wants to centralise the peace process. They are not interested in the NGO contribution to peace'[367].

During the crisis period, various international organisations such as the World Bank and UNICEF supported youth dialogues in Dili to bring youth together from different communities[368]. Some activists criticised the focus on short term, high profile events, arguing that local organisations must work in a sustained manner if they are to build trust in communities.

Timorese activists raised concerns that short term solutions had the potential to further divide the community because they benefited only certain people. For instance all IDPs received rice handouts but families that remained in their houses received nothing even though they were perhaps just as needy[369]. Ongoing and sustainable programs, they contend, are more important than handouts and large consultations which have little follow up[370].

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3. We, East Timorese Youth declare that there is only one nation called 'Timor-Leste' and one people only called 'Povo Maubere'

4. We, East Timorese Youth loathe the divisionism and regionalism

5. We, East Timorese Youth loathe and are disgusted by discrimination in whatever institutions, in whatever manner and for whatever matter.

6. We, East Timorese Youth are committed to promote our culture and religion

7. We, East Timorese Youth defend rights and justice. Justice must be applied to every one without exception.

[367] Discussion with Tomas, Melbourne 2007

[368] For instance a hundred and twenty young people participated in a Youth Open Space was held from 24-25th August 2006. This joint initiative of the government SSYS, local NGOs and the World Bank had the objective of strengthening national unity, and to enable youth to take the lead to carry out dialogue and reconciliation. Pledges of intent to go back to the community to carry out a Plan of Action were made although there were no resources for this (I attended this forum on 25th August 2006).
The young women's organisation *Feto Kiik Servico Hamutuk* (FKSH) and the women's network *Rede Feto* were involved in another dialogue focussing on two villages and two refugee camps in Vila Verde and Motael funded by UNFPA. 'Forum Discussion' was held for youth in Dare to reflect on how to promote peace through conflict resolution and skills, working with youth and women from villages and IDP camps. They also integrated skills to deal with gender based violence in the communities (Isabela interview).

[369] Discussion with Guilherme, Melbourne 2008.

[370] Informal communication with Josefina, Melbourne 26/10/2007
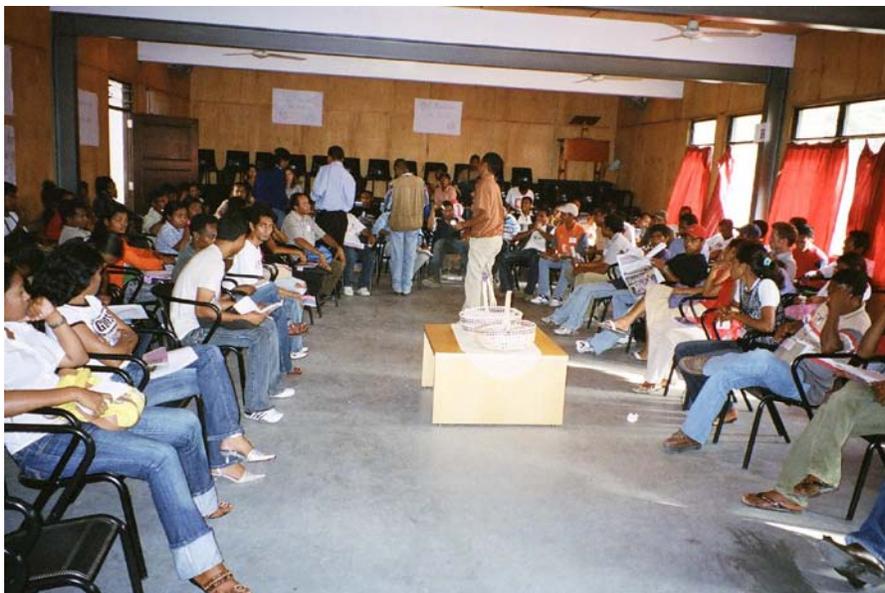
Youth 'Open House' Consultation supported by the World Bank and civil society groups in Dili, with participation of youth representatives from Dili bairros, 24-25th August 2006.

INGOs started to implement emergency projects directly in the IDP camps rather than enlist the support of their local NGO partners[371]. There was anger at this apparent return to a marginalised role for Timorese NGOs which appeared to repeat the marginalisation of local organisations that had occurred during 1999-2001. In spite of their increased experience by 2006, local NGOs were only permitted to work as subcontractors under the INGO's name[372]. IDP camps were set up for the escalating numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs), reaching 150,000 in mid 2006. Management committees were appointed for each camp, coordinated by INGO representatives. Camps for IDPs were supported with tents provided by the UN and INGO emergency programs which also provided food, water and sanitation. Dili was particularly affected, home to half the IDPs, with the others returning to their districts of origin. Many IDP camps were still operating two years after the start of the crisis. This renewed 'emergency' funding, enabled INGOs to set up programs in communities where they had not previously worked. Josefina claimed that these often ran parallel to existing programs of local NGOs, particularly in the area of peace building and conflict resolution.

Thus Timorese activists were not only feeling unsupported by the RDTL government they also felt international donors were doing little to support their initiatives. The security

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[371] Conversation with Josefina, Melbourne 26/10/07
[372] Local NGOs were contracted to work under the INGOs, but no emergency funding was made directly available to local CSOs.

situation moreover, made it impossible for many local NGOs to continue their development programs. Most regular NGO activities were brought to a halt, either because staff were directly affected by the crisis, or because the movement of people disrupted communities. Local NGO staff were recruited by INGOs or sub-contracted to support the emergency program. Some were told that their grants were being suspended because normal program work could not proceed. Timorese managers had an obligation to pay their staff who through no fault of their own could not work and had children to feed. 'Staff worked, they have family and children. Now they are living in an IDP camp so they are already a victim. It we don't pay them it makes them a victim again' argued Guilherme. INGO power over funding forced local NGOs to submit to donor demands made it difficult for local organisations to make any decision for themselves[373].

The crisis also brought about a sense of seeking solutions for unfathomable community divisions and dissent. The importance of the local knowledge that Timorese activists brought to international emergency, peace building and development programs began to be valued. Local knowledge, which had previously been given little attention in national development strategies, started to be given greater value. Activists were able to interpret the cultural realities, traditions and customs to help find solutions to communal hostilities.

Reflective Conclusion

This chapter has traced the way the 2006 crisis involved young men in conflict and changed the discourse on youth in Timor Leste. Young men involved in the violence claim to have been pawns, not acting on their own initiative but at the instigation of leaders, predominantly disaffected former resistance leaders.

The crisis thus brought to light how, in the early years of independence, the population perceived the process of nation building as inimical to their expectations and interests. As resentment started to fester the gap widened between the rural population and urban national leadership. In particular justice was perceived to be lacking when Timorese, who were absent during the occupation or hostile to independence, benefited more from independence than those who fought in the struggle. I have argued that the 'values of

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[373] Guilherme interview. He negotiated a solution that the salary costs would be split between the INGO donor and his NGO for the crisis period.

citizenship' as presented by Kabeer (2005) offer a basis for assessing how the Timorese perceived their place in the new nation. Of some significance in this regard is the ability of the government to establish mechanisms that can work with the population to resolve outstanding sources of conflict. Despite attaining independence, fundamental requisites for citizens' primary allegiance with the nation state have not been established in Timor Leste.

Young activists, on the other hand, have shown an unwavering commitment to nationhood though civil society campaigns for national unity and peace building. Further, the crisis brought to light issues of cultural values and understandings that had not previously been taken into account. In the next chapter I will further investigate how Timorese activists became an important resource in interpreting and engaging with the world of customary practice. I will also further examine the civic engagement of young people and the value of social action in generating a sense of unity as well as promoting social change.

Chapter Nine

Activism and Social Change in Timor Leste

Introduction

In the light of the processes of alienation which have been elaborated in the previous chapters, this chapter I seek to identify how young men and women become what Gaventa terms 'active citizens' and engage in positive processes of change (Gaventa 2006b).

The theme of participation in community development is explored through an examination of leadership and activism among young Timorese men and women. The important role of 'senior' leadership highlighted in previous chapters is further discussed through an analysis of the relationships between young activists and the 'senior' power holders, namely traditional leaders, the Timorese government and international development agencies. By focussing on the growth of civil society and young people's involvement in it, I study the experiences of activists, providing some illuminating lessons concerning the potential constructive engagement within Timorese civil society for the younger generation.

Incorporating tradition in community development

> *Timor Leste is laboratory of democracy. Enter modern system: Timor is rich in traditional ways of solving conflict but no-one paid attention. The Constitution recognises the existence of traditional rights, but national recognition of traditional practices is needed. [Tomas]*

Most Timorese activists were brought up within traditional societal norms and have respect for the local knowledge and practices of their elders. As the majority of rural Timorese continue to live according to traditional practice, the way Timorese values are integrated into change processes is important. Tomas, for example, recognises the value of traditional practices and laments that more attention is not paid to the pre-existing structures. The early international interventions seeking to 'start from scratch' (chapter

four) and the subsequent introduction of foreign processes and procedures left Tomas with the impression that Timor Leste is being used as a 'laboratory of democracy'[374].

Change is a process which must happen naturally, *within* tradition, not *from* tradition according to Guilherme[375]. Timorese activists are promoting culturally appropriate development. They are acting on the true meaning of the word itself – development in Portuguese (and similarly in Tetum) is *'desenvolvimento'* meaning unravelling, the opening up like a bud unfurling into a flower in full bloom. Development starts from the potential that already exists at the core, a process which absorbs new knowledge and resources to grow bigger, stronger, or in a new form. Where development interventions are devised and brought in from outside without due consideration for local views, typically they will sit along side existing forms, rather than nurture and develop existing knowledge and resources.

Timorese structures of state have largely ignored traditional systems; instead they have been established along lines favoured by the UN, Portugal and other major donors. Due to the identification of the Timorese leadership with Portuguese culture the Lusophone influence is strong in education and all other processes of government, including the justice system. The focus on the 'modern' European models, as discussed in chapter five, has overshadowed traditional ways and understandings within governance frameworks. A disconnect, which appears to exist between the people and the state systems, contributes to a lack of mutual respect and understanding between leaders and population.

Within the justice system, as an example, there has been little attempt to find ways of linking customary justice practices with the national system. Communities have depended on customary law for the resolution of inter-familial disputes for generations. The concept of traditional justice is very different from the western justice systems which are based on individual rights. Local justice emphasises the re-establishment of the flow of values embodied in marriage exchange and goods (Hohe 2003). During the Indonesian occupation, Timorese did not trust the justice system and continued to follow traditional practice as much as they could. People preferred to seek justice from the traditional *adat* system for minor offences such as theft or civil issues such as divorce. According to a

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[374] Tomas interview, Melbourne 2/11/07
[375] Personal communication with Guilherme, Melbourne, 21/5/08.

study on community opinions the formal court system is seen as important for disputes that fail to be resolved within *adat* systems and for crimes of violence. The formal legal system of courts and police was seen as less fair, less accessible and more complex than the local *adat* system involving only the *Liurai* or *Chefe de Suco*. At independence, only 14% of people believed that primary responsibility for law and order in the community lay with the police in comparison with 81% who believed that community leaders were responsible (Asia Foundation 2002). With the national justice system's poor record of bringing cases to completion this is unlikely to have changed.

The formal justice system is inaccessible, due both to the need for fluency in the Portuguese language in order to access it effectively and the fact that the courts are clogged with unresolved cases[376]. There are effective models elsewhere which demonstrate that links can effectively be made between traditional and national justice models. Such models cannot be replicated from one community to another: they must be established based on local culture. The 'Koori courts' in Australia are one example and other models exist elsewhere[377]. The Koori court enables Aboriginal elders to sit side by side with magistrates to hear cases against indigenous Australians. The 'shame' factor of admitting guilt in front of respected elders and community service orders for offenders has proven to be a greater deterrent to recommit crime than gaol sentences based on 'western' Australian justice[378]. In Timor Leste local punishment also emphasises the shaming of the perpetrator (Hohe 2003). A system of national law blended with respect for local systems of justice and cultural practices could provide a form of justice that is accessible and holds legitimacy with local communities.

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[376] Interview with CC1 25/8/06

[377] Another is the *Gabinete das Direitos da Mulher* (Women's Legal Rights Office) in Pemba Mozambique, which I was closely involved in establishing. A female Counsellor with knowledge of Constitutional rights and local customary law would resolve family disputes, often making a court hearing unnecessary. Although this project had no formal legal status, the Provincial judge would demand that couples would attend the *Gabinete das direitos da mulher* counselling prior to seeking a court hearing.

[378] The Koori Court is a division of the Magistrates' Court, which sentences defendants who have pleaded guilty. The Koori Court provides an informal atmosphere and allows greater participation by the Aboriginal (Koori) community in the court process. A Koori Elder or Respected Person, the Aboriginal Justice worker, Koori defendants and their families can contribute during the Court hearing.
It reduces perceptions of cultural alienation and tailors sentencing orders to the cultural needs of Koori offenders. The Koori Court is currently located at Bairnsdale, Broadmeadows, Latrobe Valley, Mildura, Shepparton and Warrnambool Magistrates' Courts (www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au/ CA256CD30010D864/page/Specialist+Court+Jurisdictions-Koori+Court).

Traditional forms of conflict resolution were found to have value in responding to the 2006 crisis. Civil society drew on the traditional practice of *nahe biti* (spreading the mat) ceremony, which gained considerable credibility in conflict resolution efforts. The Peace and Democracy Foundation, along with various other NGOs, have embraced the use of this traditional system of conflict resolution. *Nahe biti,* sometimes referred to as 'Timorese democracy', depends on the judgements of the *lian nain* and the council of elders made up of male members of local elites. Elders sit together and discuss problems before coming to a common decision about the outcome (Trinidade & Bryant 2007). *Nahe biti* is 'an evolving process that ultimately seeks to achieve a stable social order within society' (Babo-Soares 2004). Babo-Soares believes that the customary form of reconciliation is a more complete process compared to contemporary political reconciliation processes. While the latter seek an agreement between opposing parties, the customary practice seeks to mediate between opposing factions until they reach an ultimate goal of achieving continuing harmony and peace in society.

Traditional processes are respected by the community thus overcome the legitimacy problems of elected representatives. Josh Trinidade proposed a solution to the 2006 crisis which involved the traditional practice of *juramento* (binding oath) at national level and the construction of *uma lulik* (sacred houses) at national and district levels. In this, Trinidade was proposing not only the need to use the traditional Timorese belief systems at community level, but also the requirement for Timorese political leaders to be brought into those belief systems in order to resolve political conflicts at the topmost level of government[379].

In the development context the revival of customary practices is also being supported by Timorese NGOs such as the environmental group *Haburas*. This NGO promotes the cultural revitalisation of *tara bandu*, a Timorese resource management system that imposes ritual prohibitions on the use of natural resources[380]. According to *Haburas, tara bandu* protects the environment from activities which exploit natural resources or threaten endangered plant and animal life[381]. The Director of *Haburas* describes *tara bandu* as

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[379] Email from Josh Trinidade sent 17/10/06 as an open letter to the Prime Minister and to the East Timorese people, entitled 'An oath for the People of Timor: Strengthening unity, ending violence and cherishing culture through customary Timorese belief structures'. The proposal was not taken forward.
[380] Interview with CSO staff 2, Dili 4/10/05.
[381] Haburas brochure on Tara Bandu.

'traditional ecological wisdom'[382]. The organisation supports communities to enact traditional processes in resource management, re-establish the people's voice in national and regional politics and planning and to enable 'outside' concepts to be reformulated through the power of local customs and traditions (Palmer & de Carvalho 2008). For instance, in the district of Lautem where there are plans for the creation of a National Park, *Haburas* is working with the affected communities. The process of national government 'consultation' has in practice meant that officials present top down plans that stress national benefits but fail to recognise local interests. Planning documents have identified the need for 'local capacity building' but have not made any assessment of the land and sea management capacities or practices that existed within the community (Palmer & de Carvalho 2008). This type of approach reflects an assumption that all relevant knowledge lies with the planners and not with the local people.

The integration of traditional practices such as customary law, *nahe biti* and *tara bandu* into national planning is important for change processes to have meaning for people who are affected by them. I have argued throughout this thesis that development cannot be externally conceived, it must be locally vocalised (chapter four). Development processes must enable the capacities of the affected communities if they are to be effective. Thus local ownership and grassroots participation are essential components of effective community development. These practices are now promoted by most of the major development agencies, although they are not always effectively implemented as illustrated with the World Bank's CEP project outlined in chapter four. The Fuiloro dairy farm project discussed in chapter five is an example of a group of Australian volunteers who assumed the role of 'knowers' and placed the local people in the role of 'not-knowers' (Shepherd & Gibbs 2006). These volunteers set out to replace traditional practices, a strategy that almost caused the dairy project to fail because of different ecological conditions from those they were accustomed to in Australia. Had they treated the Timorese as equals and their knowledge as of equal importance, the Australian staff would have found solutions for the environmental problems they faced.

The power hierarchy between communities, NGOs, government and donors is complex. Where the powerful dictate development strategy, grassroots participation is unlikely to be

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[382] Quote of Demitrio do Amaral de Carvalho, founder and Director of *Haburas*, the first and only environmental NGO in Timor Leste, winner of the Goldman prize 2006 (www.goldmanprize.org/node/95).

achieved even where consultation is included in the agenda. Effective community development activities need to be accountable both to the donor (upwards) and to the community which they intend to serve (downwards). Where reporting to the donor is considered the only form of accountability necessary, effective outcomes in community development will be of secondary importance.

When activists respect customary practices and leadership the basis for effective mutual openness and exchange exists. This provides the seeds of change. Change within communities is starting to take place according to Tomas, unlike in the 1980s and 90s when the elders dominated in the traditional way thereby excluding the views of younger members of society[383]. Some elders now realise they need to moderate discussions and have started to ask the audience for their views, including women and youth. Women and young people are starting to demand a role in society – signalling a change in attitudes and expectations of the younger generation.

United in struggle, divided in peace – relations with government

> *The government sees civil society as the opposition and the opposition as the enemy[384].*

Cultural identity is based on both place of origin and lived experiences. Many Timorese activists come from the Indonesian-educated elite, just as the political leadership come from the Portuguese-educated elite. The identity of the political elite with Portuguese culture is far removed from the cultural norms of much of the population (chapter five). A significant number of activists are from poor rural families whose ethno-linguistic culture is their formative culture. For them, their experiences in the clandestine youth movement, and more recently working within western development organisations, have provided new opportunities and alternative understandings of the potential for change. In seeking change, activists are nevertheless grounded within the context of traditional society. Thus, they can potentially be important interlocutors between the rural people and aid funded national development interventions.

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[383] Interview with Tomas, 2/11/07.
[384] Interview with Academic 1, 6/9/05

The relationship between government and civil society activists has not been an easy one. At independence, neither the emerging NGO sector nor the government had extensive experience of the role of civil society organisations in a democracy. Prior to this, only a handful of NGOs existed and these had limited contact with the Indonesian authorities. When UNTAET became the governing authority, it looked to NGOs to play a role in the emergency and rehabilitation work taking place in the country.

The peak body for NGOs, FONGTIL[385], lost its Director to the new government at the end of the UNTAET period. The new Director appointed at this time was a supporter of the political opposition. This established a rocky start to government-civil society relations at the outset. An international development worker noted that the tension between the government and civil society was similar to that which existed in the Indonesian period: '*the Timorese government has the Indonesian idea of distrust of NGOs*'[386]. The space that civil society organisations had in this new country was thus at times constrained by poor relations with the government.

During the emergency period, FONGTIL played an important role collaborating with the UN coordination of emergency and rehabilitation programs. FONGTIL was given responsibility for the registration of local NGOs, requiring evidence of a number of criteria to determine basic capacities. Without registration, a local NGO would not receive donor funding.

After independence little attempt was made by either FONGTIL or the government to redefine the relationship in terms of a consultation and collaboration around national development priorities[387]. After independence, the government set up an NGO Liaison Unit in the Ministry of Planning and Finance to make preparations for NGO registration and to compile a data base on NGOs. In 2005, the Ministry of Justice took over the process of legislation concerning the registration of NGOs. Their lack of consultation with FONGTIL or other NGOs over the process and the failure to give time to the NGOs to comment on the draft NGO laws, produced only in Portuguese, dismayed many activists.

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[385] In English it is the NGO Forum. It was first established in 1998 with 14 members, with the assistance of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) at that time known as ACFOA (Australian Council for Overseas Development) the peak body of development NGOs in Australia.
[386] INGO staff 2
[387] Informal communication with Marta, Dili January 2008.

Within the NGO sector there continued to be a strong advocacy approach, critiquing government activities. The presence of some high profile opposition supporters engaged in NGO work led to a view by some government officials that NGOs were 'oppositional' as described by a Timorese academic above. An uneasy relationship between government and civil society is not uncommon in countries of rapid change, particularly where there has been major political change such as in Timor Leste. Whether acting as individuals or in groups, governments do not want citizens to be active against them (Preece & Mosweunyane 2003:6). In the resistance, Timorese defined their citizenship identity in the context of occupation by another nation.

Civil society organisations can contribute to the process of state building even where these groups may appear to be in opposition to the state (Eyben & Ladbury 2006). Following independence, the formation of diverse political parties contributed to the emergence of distrust. For example, when young people defected from FRETILIN to the Democracy Party (PD) and other parties the civil society organisations they were associated with sometimes became seen as 'oppositional' rather than a potential source of skilled people to be engaged in development processes. It must be noted, however, that government relations with civil society are highly variable and personality dependent, with stronger collaboration within some ministries and districts than in others.

The international community saw an indispensable role for civil society in service delivery and in keeping the government accountable (chapter four). The World Bank notes that NGOs developed useful 'watch dog' roles in different sectoral areas, providing 'useful monitoring, advocacy, education and advisory services in the areas of human rights (*Associação HAK*) justice (*JSMP*-Judicial System Monitoring Program*), gender awareness (*Fokupers, Rede Feto*), the environment (*Haburas)* and international assistance (*La'o Hamutuk*) (World Bank 2005b:3). It also argues that there is a fragile relationship between government and civil society: '*the Government is hesitant to collaborate with civil society and maintains a statist style. It has not yet succeeded in engaging constructive critics or in maintaining an effective dialogue with communitie*s' (World Bank 2005b:4).

FONGTIL, together with some of the NGOs, have engaged in high profile advocacy campaigns, such as a campaign for justice on the Timor Sea Oil negotiations with Australia and a campaign for an International Tribunal for justice in relation to the CAVR

report recommendations. They have also drawn attention to issues of land ownership and fiscal transparency. These are key issues that the NGO sector has been collectively concerned about.

The RDTL government has, partly in response to international donor pressure, accepted the incorporation of civil society representatives into some national bodies. During the UNTAET administration NGOs were invited as delegates to the annual Donors Meetings with the Timorese government (Meden 2002). This continued after independence. Initially there was a FONGTIL representative and a second selected from amongst its members. In 2004 with an opposition supporter as Director, the government stopped inviting FONGTIL and sent invitations directly to two of the more established NGOs (Wigglesworth & Soares 2006). Ideally citizens can influence the practice of resource allocation and identification of national priorities. The extent to which civil society has the capacity and means to hold governments accountable for the expenditure of public funds is said to be an indicator of the strength of democratic process (Groves & Hinton 2004). It was therefore of great significance that the Petroleum Fund Committee included five civil society representatives, including two nominated by parliament, two NGO representatives selected through FONGTIL and a representative of religious organisations[388].

In Timor Leste the level and form of engagement between civil society activists and the government has varied across ministries and districts. In Covalima there has been a significant level of collaboration as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. In Baucau, in contrast, there has been a degree of distrust and hostility between the administration and NGOs. The Baucau District Administration prohibited an NGO going to the community where it was working, claiming they were engaged in political campaigns[389]. Friction between the administration and NGOs has been exacerbated by the lack of role and resources of district administrations whereby officials are unable to implement development activities from within their departments. Small projects undertaken by civil society are often the only community development activity taking place in rural areas. This situation will change, as the processes of decentralisation take effect through the

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[388] La'o Hamutuk Bulletin Vol 7, No 1 April 2006.
[389] The Administrator sent police to the sub-district to stop the NGO from entering the village. I visited Baucau in March and August 2006, and Suai in September 2005 and August 2006 and found significant differences in the district approaches to NGOs. See (Wigglesworth & Soares 2006).

Local Development Program (LDP). In 2009, eight districts will benefit from the LDP to the tune of US$3.50 per head of population[390]. The funds will be allocated by the District Assembly. Up to 30% of this can be expended by the District Assembly, and the remaining 70% is for projects in the sub-districts[391].

Relations between civil society activists and the government strengthened after the installation of the Gusmão government in 2007 which had more *geração foun* in its leadership team. In the previous government, Arsenio Bano, former Director of FONGTIL who became Minster for Labour and Solidarity, was a notable exception to the older generation that predominated. The Gusmao government's leadership team for the AMP coalition includes several former RENETIL and NGO activists[392]. Senior government officials thus now have greater links with and respect for the work of civil society.

Civil society organisations typically play a role in representing the views of local communities in their engagement with government. The sustainable agriculture NGO network, *HASATIL*[393] has been particularly effective in establishing a good working relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Initially the MoA set up consultative meetings with NGOs in the Ministry offices in Dili. The NGO proposal that these monthly meetings be rotated around the districts to involve more of the NGOs was taken up and the next meeting was held in the offices of the German aid program in Baucau in March 2006. NGOs from the eastern districts attended, presenting information about their agricultural projects and discussing their policies and programs with Ministry officials. The thirty two member NGOs of *HASATIL* promote permaculture as a solution for food security, and animal traction as an appropriate form of technology for ploughing in rural communities.

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[390] A Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management Press Release 2/2/09 stated that district capital investment allocations for 2009 will be (in USD) Baucau $366,000; Bobonaro $289,000; Lautem $202,000; Covalima 196,000; Ainaro $187,000; Manufahi $155,000; Manututo $135,000; Aileu $130,000.

[391] Two members from each Suco Council participate in a Sub-District Assembly, and representatives from the Sub Districts Assembly attend the District Assembly. Projects identified at *Suco* level are considered at the Sub-District Assembly. Prioritised projects will be forwarded to the District Assembly, where sub-district representatives must defend the project for it to be supported. Once funded, approved contractors will bid to implement the work. At the time of the consultation preparations were being made for the training of district administration staff and *Suco* leaders to engage in this process (Wigglesworth 2008)

[392] The Parliamentary Majority Alliance (AMP) coalition was formed by CNRT leader, Xanana Gusmão with the Democratic Party (PD), the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT) and the Social Democratic Party (PSD). PD and RENETIL leader Fernando 'Lasama' de Araujo became President of the Parliament, former RENETIL member Marino Sabino is Minister of Agriculture, and former NGO staff Dr Nelson Martins and Bendito Freitas are Minister of Health and Secretary of State for Vocational Education respectively.

[393] *HASATIL – Hadomi Sustentabilidade Agricutura Timor Lorosa'e*

The MoA was prepared to consider these forms of low intensive farming methods favourably in addition to the government policy focus on rice production and other cash crops[394]. When compared to other ministries, the MoA stands out as a good example of opening up debate and collaboration with civil society.

Activists promoted the value of traditional food crops during these meetings. The serving of Nescafe, coca-cola and cakes in meetings by the Ministry was criticised. Activists encouraged the government to serve Timorese organic coffee and taro or sweet potato to eat, ideas that were accepted in spite of the fact these foods are generally not preferred by the elite. The NGOs challenged the government to support local farming systems and traditional food production, rather than focus only on crop production for export promoted by international donors. By being open to the value of both tradition and 'modern' systems the MoA is likely to be able to support improved production for poor farmers.

Local NGOs are also showing leadership in strengthening their development strategies at a district level in Covalima District. The 'Taroman Development Partnership' formed as a voluntary association of local NGOs, CBOs and youth organisations, set out to build the capacity of its members through mutual learning[395]. It holds monthly meetings with the District Administration to share their ideas and programs. In 2005 the Partnership planned and organised a three week capacity building activity for its district members, bringing a trainer from Indonesia with financial support from Oxfam. The Taroman Development Partnership also holds regular joint NGO meetings to share skills and learning. Described as 'project evaluations', NGO staff present their individual project activities for discussion by the participants for mutual 'learning and action'[396]. These reflective learning activities enable NGO staff to identify and discuss strengths and weaknesses of various development programs to provide an opportunity for learning through each others work.

In Covalima, reports of food shortages and hunger, even starvation, hit the headlines in 2004. The next year, the Development Partnership decided to carry out a food security survey in response to the impending 'hungry season' with the aim of ensuring food would be supplied to those that needed it. The group identified the need for a food security

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[394] Interview with Guilherme

[395] This network defines itself as 'a working group whose shared aspiration is to attain prosperity and well-being for the people of Covalima, with feet firmly planted in the local knowledge and wisdom of the people of Covalima in particular and of Timor Leste in general' (Taroman Development Partnership Report) .

[396] Interview with Francisco

survey. All member NGOs volunteered to survey the different sub-districts to collect data on family size and their food supplies. A report of their findings was presented to the district administration to inform the government of district food security needs and argue for a response. The Partnership was also an important resource when hundreds of IDPs arrived in Covalima having fled Dili to escape from violence in 2006. Member organisations were ready to collaborate with the District Administration to take on the practical demands of rice distribution to the IDPs.

Women queue for IDP rice in Suai, August 2006

Taroman Development Partnership members distribute rice, August 2006

The Taroman Development Partnership provides a good model for the coordination and collaboration of district NGOs because of their collaborative processes, their good relations with District Administration and the ongoing support from Oxfam (the only international NGO member). This partnership and that of the *HASATIL* sustainable agriculture network led by Francisco and Guilherme respectively, have both promoted effective means of collaboration with specific sections of government, and worked to establish alternative 'Timorese' models of development.

International development agency support to Civil Society

> *INGOs can make change but they have to come through the right way. This is based on the way of life of the people. If something is very new it should be introduced through the way of life of the people so it is easy to adapt [Francisco].*

There is a large number of international NGOs (INGOs) in Dili. Many run their own programs directly with the community, by-passing local NGOs. Some INGOs provide funding to local organisations and a few have deliberate programs aimed at strengthening the capacity of local NGOs. The access to resources by INGOs enables them to attract the best Timorese workers, specifically those who have gained development experience in local NGOs. INGO staff receive much better salaries than local NGOs can afford to pay. Local organisations thus often lose their best trained staff to international programs. Nevertheless, many activists choose to continue to work within Timorese NGOs because they believe in the importance of Timorese-led development.

INGOs often work with funds from bi-lateral or multilateral donors, their staff are thus intermediaries who face similar pressures to those of local NGOs in the implementation and reporting of project activities. In these circumstances there are often pressures placed on INGO field staff to spend funds and produce tangible results within defined time lines. Inclusive processes with local communities are often notoriously slow and the timelines may not allow participative processes to take their course (chapter four). As well, the rise of global NGO networks has led to a greater incidence of strategic planning at global level, with increasing 'corporate' demands on staff in the field to comply with corporate

goals for programming and finance (Wigglesworth 2006). When this occurs the internal accountability within the NGO is usually given precedence over partnerships at the local level.

The formation of local NGOs has similarly been influenced by funding availability. Although many Timorese NGOs were formed to respond to an ideological commitment to development, others have emerged in response to donor partnership needs. This continues a trend which was evident during the emergency period (Hunt 2008). Plan Timor Leste, for example, found itself working with local NGOs set up for commercial gain rather than ones established upon a value-based ideology. Some NGOs were established to work with AusAID's CWSSP project, which had a deliberate strategy to support and develop local NGOs[397]. At the end of the project some of these NGOs continued to work with other water and sanitation programs, but very few succeeded in extending their work into different sectoral areas. A Plan staff member, working with one of these NGOs, described these as '*opportunistic small enterprises rather than NGOs*' because they lack the broader vision and community base of an NGO that develops from locally identified needs and a local constituency[398].

The values base of NGOs is generally understood to be fundamental for the effective delivery of development programs (Chapman & Kelly 2007). Many organisations that became registered as NGOs did not develop a mission and vision, nor skills in community engagement. Where an NGO sets up simply to deliver services on behalf of a donor agency, it can be described as a 'contractor'. Capacity development is required to establish the skills and values needed for an organisation to survive. In my consultations with local NGOs it became clear that most of the newer NGOs viewed their ability to obtain funding

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[397] The Community Water Supply and Sanitation Program (CWSSP) funded by AusAID (2002-2006) the project design mission report recommended that NGOs should be contracted to undertake the work in the communities. The project design was done at the height of the emergency boom when there were over 300 local NGOs in existence. At the time of implementation, emergency funding had dried up and many local NGOs collapsed. Where there were inadequate local NGOs to participate in CWSSP implementation, new groups were formed to take up aid contracts for water and sanitation activities. According to the Project Director, the project 'ended up underwriting these organisations almost from scratch. We chose to put these agencies on core contracts so that we could properly train them and mentor them through a process which we considered would most leade to community engagement and management of the WSS services provided through the project' (Chris Dureau, Working Paper 'The function and management of PPs in the implementation of CWSSP' 9/2/2004). Many of the trained staff from NGOs that collapsed were subsequently able to find similar work in other INGOs and local NGOs.
[398] Interview with INGO staff 3

as a top priority[399]. Some NGO leaders set up their organisations as a personal income generating activity. Others, however, have a clear vision and mission and demonstrate the values and commitment required of an effective civil society organisation (Chapman & Kelly 2007). To be effective, NGOs must extend beyond the delivery of services for donors or government and build a constituency with communities and a constructive relationship with government. Without such a basis for ongoing development, community development activities are likely to end when the funding ceases.

Capacity development[400] or capacity building refers to strengthening the capacities of individuals or organisations to undertake defined tasks and activities. Learning new skills is a natural part of the process of change. Where changes have taken place in the context in which people operate, such as in Timor Leste, there will be a need for capacity development to adjust to a changing external environment (James 2001:6). The need for strengthening local NGOs is undisputed, although the focus of this strengthening is sometimes a cause of disagreement between local and international actors. Numerous training programs have been carried out for local NGO staff, particularly in project proposal writing, reporting and financial accountability. Many Timorese NGOs report having received training for direct project implementation requirements, but had little opportunity for support and institutional strengthening beyond project needs (Wigglesworth & Soares 2006). In Timor Leste, participative community engagement processes, as well as internal organisational development (strategic planning, managing staff and developing work plans, forming and managing a Board) had been overlooked in favour of project proposal writing, reporting and financial management - skills required for donor accountability[401].

The term 'partnership' has come into common usage to describe the relationship between international donors and their local counterparts. Fowler considers 'authentic partnerships' are those where the donor is held accountable by the local NGO for what is said and done

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[399] During two of my consultancies: the Evaluation of FONGTIL (Wigglesworth & Soares 2006), and the East Timor Civil Society Strengthening Program (January-February 2008) for the Australian Council of International Development.
[400] Capacity development, more commonly known in Australia as capacity building, refers to funded activities aimed at strengthening the work of the CSO rather than supporting program activities. Josefina, a Timorese NGO leader objected to the term 'capacity building' because it implied starting from nothing. She preferred the term 'capacity development'.
[401] Interview with Director of FONGTIL.

(Fowler 2002). Most partnerships by contrast are based on a power relationship of donor over recipient. For effective capacity strengthening, authentic partnership can best support dialogue and mutual understanding about what the basis of 'capacity development' should be. For example, in the Irish NGO Concern's capacity strengthening program INGO staff work with local NGO staff to pass on new development skills and knowledge. Partner organisations are invited to INGO meetings, where Concern's internal issues are exposed to the scrutiny of local NGOs as part of a mechanism to break down hierarchy and develop a mutually supportive exchange on effective practices[402].

Two civil society strengthening projects established in Timor Leste soon after independence provide important lessons in regard to the identification of skill needs. These multi-year, multi million dollar projects were undertaken by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) respectively. The UNDP project 'Strengthening capacity of CSOs in local and national development processes for the achievement of millennium development goals (MDGs) in Timor Leste 2003-6', aimed to 'enhance the capacity of CSOs in monitoring and advocacy with regard to national development goals, MDGs and NDP'[403]. Clearly, the agenda of achieving the MDGs was that of the UNDP and not the civil society organisations (CSOs) in the program. It is not surprising that the evaluators found that the project had underachieved due to its unrealistic goals. It suggested that this could have been avoided by a more participatory approach to project design, and the recognition that CSOs have their own agendas and want support to achieve them (Methven 2006). The evaluation thus reinforced well established principles for good project design.

The second civil society capacity strengthening project was the CRS Engaging Civil Society Project. This used a two tier process with national NGOs as core partners to support 'satellite' CSOs in a 'cascade' model. It aimed to increase capacities of core and satellite groups, through building networks and coalitions aimed at developing advocacy capacities amongst CSOs (Kinghorn et al. 2005). The final evaluation report found a number of assumptions made in the design were incorrect and that 'capabilities, priorities and commitments of the partners were often a mismatch for the expectations of the

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[402] See Wigglesworth (2008).

[403] NDP- National Development Plan. In the first years the project had a broader aim but changed its approach mid-stream due to UNDP funding constraints.

project'. The organisations were at a formative stage of development, most CSOs needing to develop mission and vision statements and to put in place basic operational structures, thus neither networking nor advocacy were CSO priorities. As well, the lack of decentralisation of government structures meant that district government representatives lacked decision making authority. Therefore there was no responsible local authority as a focus for local CSOs advocacy (Kinghorn et al. 2005). These two 'civil society strengthening' projects demonstrate the propensity for donors to design projects around their own ideas of what is needed rather than seek out the priorities of the organisations they aim to support.

Among Timorese NGOs there is demand for skills development in donor-related project management because most civil society organisations have been able to attract only short term intermittent funding. Different accountability requirements by each donor organisation can make huge and unfair demands on NGO staff struggling to write in English according to diverse reporting formats[404]. The result is a preoccupation among emerging NGOs with seeking donor funds and fulfilling donor reporting requirements, which often overshadows their concern to develop a relationship with the communities with which they work.

Henrique's NGO *Fundação Educação Comunidade,* for example, is typical of small NGOs trying to survive in a difficult funding environment. He argued that the time required for preparing project proposals for funding, reporting and accounting for funds is very high where funding periods are short. Henrique received funds for a civic education program from USAID for just two months and received another INGO grant that was for only 10 months. In order to survive a precarious funding environment, NGOs have established different means of survival. For example Dili activists in mature NGOs such as *PERMATIL, HAK* and *FOKUPERS* undertake training and consultancy work as a source of independent funding in order to provide a financial buffer in between project funding[405]. Many NGO staff work voluntarily during the periods they are without funding.

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[404] Most NGOs and other donors have their own formats. Others have specific requirements, for example, an INGO staff member noted that for AusAID small grant funding there is a requirement that the CSO employ a Finance Officer. Each three months an advance of funds is only provided on the basis of a documented expenditure plan and an audited of receipts for the previous period (Interview with INGO staff 3).
[405] Guilherme interview

In spite of the huge international donor presence in Dili, there is little security of funding for local organisations. One of the indicators of the value base of an organisation is its willingness to work without funding. Voluntary work by young people has made an important contribution to civil society in Timor Leste, enabling organisations to survive where they would not have otherwise. Youth organisations such as the Student Solidarity Council survive on the fees and the assistance of small personal donations from individuals overseas while the ongoing work is largely done by unpaid staff[406]. Many activists have established their organisations through non-renumerated work before successfully attracting funding for their organisation. For instance Isabela set up her NGO *Feto Ki'ik Servico Hamutuk* (FKSH)[407] working as a volunteer and Guilherme did the same with his permaculture NGO, PERMATIL. Both activists are well respected for their work in their respective fields and now receive salaries from multi-year project funding. Activists can often be seen working through their commitment and determination in spite of limited financial support.

Short term voluntary work can also be a means of gaining new skills and experience for younger Timorese. It is particularly valued as a means of advancement by younger women. For example, Terasinha volunteered at a local radio station and later was able to participate in a project to develop a church newsletter for youth on the basis of this experience[408]. Veronica volunteered with several NGOs to build up her skills and confidence which enabled her to take up her current role as a volunteer youth leader in her community[409]. Volunteering is evidence of community spirit and commitment to a cause, as well as a means of gaining new skills.

Amongst more mature activists their memory of the international domination during the emergency program continues to influence their views. For instance Francisco criticises INGO staff for being insufficiently familiar with the customs of the people. Many Timorese activists believe that there has been insufficient opportunity to build capacity to do the work *they* want to do. Some activists prefer to do the work they prioritise without funding, rather than to undertake programs designed and managed by INGOs.

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[406] Antonio, Berta interviews
[407] Young Women Working Together
[408] Terasinha interview
[409] Veronica interview

Following the emergency and rehabilitation periods, when funding levels fell and many post-1999 NGOs closed down, a number of INGOs turned their attention to provide greater capacity development support to local NGOs (Hunt 2008). The transformation from clandestine activist to development practitioner required new skills which were scarce, as commented by the Coordinator of the NGO Sahe Insitute of Liberation:

> To be frank, we didn't have the experience to do this… In terms of skills and capacity, we have to transform ourselves, we have to learn to work with the community to solve our problems, our economic problems, our literacy issues. Now is totally different and we have to transform ourselves, based on our knowledge and experience gained in the occupation' (Sahe Coordinator quoted in Durnan (2005) p103).

The more mature NGOs such as *HAK, FOKUPERS, Haburas, La'o Hamutuk*, Sahe Institute of Liberation and networks *HASATIL* and *Rede Feto*, recognised that they were going have to adjust to the changing context.

NGO staff from *Liurai* families have been observed to experience difficulties in talking as equals to local people, for example, carrying out community participation processes such that everyone is involved. One INGO representative gave an example of university agricultural students who formed an NGO then simply told the farmers what to do. She suggested that the more mature NGOs have some understanding of participatory processes but many newer CSOs have no idea about such methods[410]. Another INGO staff person suggested that there is a tendency not to identify community needs and problems before planning a project in part because local NGOs do not have the resources to pay staff for participatory project planning processes until funding has been secured[411]. Inclusive participatory processes are critical to effective community development (Fowler 2002; Mosse 2001). Knowledge of effective techniques for supporting an equal participation of the community including women and the poorest families is often lacking by local NGOs, who thus face constraints in implementing participatory development strategies.

Durnan provides an example of a process of six action-reflection workshops with the NGO Sahe Insitute of Liberation in which activist participants actively engage with the

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[410] Interview with INGO staff 2
[411] Interview with INGO staff 3

community as part of the training (Durnan 2005). Oxfam is an INGO that has brought trainers and facilitators from their experienced NGOs partners in Indonesia to train Timorese NGOs. These examples of strategies for capacity strengthening in participatory community engagement need more widespread dissemination. Local organisations will need to develop internationally known techniques and methods for the Timorese context. Unless activists have exposure to effective techniques for inclusive community consultation, they have little likelihood of overcoming the influences of hierarchical approaches that have been part of their lived experiences.

Civil society and empowerment

> *This culture is not a modern culture. That is why we need education. In the villages they think traditionally which limits their activities. For young people there is positive and negative. The positive is that they have culture. The negative is that the culture is closed, it does not support change. [Henrique]*

In Timor Leste established power relations within communities can cause barriers to effective development. The Timorese people refer to *povo ki'ik*, the 'little people', to describe the ordinary people who are not power holders. Empowerment, the process by which people are able to exert more power over their lives (Blackburn 2004), requires recognition of sources of 'power over' and action to support the disempowered. For this to occur community development practice must embrace mutually respectful relationships between local and international NGOs, traditional leaders and government and be inclusive of all community members. Only such relationships enable both the powerful and powerless to have their voices heard in community development planning.

The same is true of power relationships with donors. The expression that Timorese 'lack capacity' has become so widespread that Timorese activists frequently refer to their own 'lack of capacity' without defining what they lack capacity to do. The relationship between donor and local NGO is, in this sense, instilling a sense of inferiority[412]. It can be

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[412] I had a conversation with a qualified Timorese lawyer, in which he said he lacked capacity because he could not drive, pointing to the fact that I am both able to drive and am a professional worker. I responded to this surprising comment explaining that in Australia we have to multi task because we cannot afford the high salaries to employ drivers, office assistants etc. – it is question of *need* for different skills in a particular context, *not capacity*.

observed that young Timorese consistently accord to INGO staff senior status through their 'respectful' attitudes (chapter seven). How do we change preconceived notions of power and authority and support notions of mutuality both between donors and NGOs, or NGOs and the community? Changes such as these do not come easily, but they can be encouraged by providing alternative strategies and tools.

Mutual learning occurs in NGO-INGO partnerships when international staff recognise their own need for learning about local culture and customs. For instance activists observe that many donor projects are set up in such a way that they are separated from the existing community structures and may be associated with salaries for a few privileged Timorese staff, large cars and donors visits[413]. Activities planned and devised by a donor agency, rather than in consultation with local people, may be seen as imposed on the community rather than nurtured from within the community. Timorese often do not view this as 'development' at all, rather they tend see it as a donor's project. Given the seniority accorded to donors, Timorese may be reluctant to criticise. Thus they simply accept the activity and abandon it when the donor leaves.

Existing development knowledge, theory and practice clearly point to how development failures can be avoided. Too often, as shown in the examples of the CRS and UNDP capacity building projects and the CEP, these theories do not underpin the work of the donors themselves. A two way learning process is needed between INGO and local NGO. A focus on the technical inputs and timelines tends to overshadow the building of social capital, and upward accountability can overshadow the need for mutual learning between INGO and the Timorese NGO personnel.

In the context of Timor Leste, processes of empowerment are needed to support fledgling community youth groups or women's groups, and provide resources (finance and skills) to local people to support their strengths and abilities to take positive action. The youth group in *Unidade Juventude de Bubususu* in Manufahi District (chapter seven) is an example of a CBO that can make an important contribution to civil society activity. The various youth groups which unsuccessfully sought funds from the CNJTL through Domingos (chapter seven) also fit this description.

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[413] Guilherme – personnal communication. Melbourne 21/5/08

The National Youth Survey carried out in 2005 found that nine out of ten youth believe they have an important role in their *Suco*. It was found there was a 'huge potential' to involve youth in local associations (SSYS & UNICEF 2005). Active engagement in the affairs that affect them contributes to a persons' dignity, self-respect and sense of citizenship (Eyben & Ladbury 2006). Community based youth groups as a source of youth engagement and civic action appear to have been overlooked. Given access to resources Timorese NGOs could play an important role in building up peer youth groups in rural communities.

Strategies for supporting young women are particularly important. Timorese society is patriarchal, and even within the NGO sector gender sensitivity remains scarce. Without greater opportunities for gender analysis and developing locally appropriate gender sensitive strategies, ideas of gender equality as a foreign concept imposed by donors are likely to persist. In the context of the hierarchical social structures that exist in Timor Leste, ways of working which promote equality and inclusiveness are important methods to promote effective development. Change is brought about when strategies respect customary leadership and practices allowing new perspectives to have influence. Young activists are engaged in these types of change making role, for example the agricultural work of Guilherme (chapter 5) and the gender work of Berta and Isabela (chapter 6). Nevertheless the disadvantage of rural women and girls, confined to domestic duties while young men are free to seek a modern lifestyle in the urban areas, requires more analysis and pro-active strategies by male activists.

The response to change where it affects young women is often conservative, even within the leadership of civil society organisations. The customary constraints on women, often justified by young men as 'Timorese culture', are constraints that are not faced by young men who are able to redefine their own cultural norms. Timorese NGO staff should be able to draw on knowledge and conceptual tools related to gender equality from international development knowledge and practice. Strategies to support greater equality based on Timorese cultural knowledge will require mutual collaboration in local NGO - INGO partnerships. Mutual respect and learning between local NGO and INGOs can also set an example of effective relationships for NGOs to model their relationships with the communities in which they work.

Activism in Nation-building

> *Most Timorese NGOs are run by activists. People who want to change the world and want to improve the lives of people[414].*

This thesis has demonstrated that civil society activists play an important role in national development, a role that could be much greater if given better targeted support by the government and the international donor community. Activists pursue a development model focused on poverty reduction and greater access of Timor Leste's citizens to their basic human rights, including adequate food, access to adequate housing, clean water, health, education, to be treated equally and to live in peace. These activists are 'active citizens' in which the notion of citizenship recognises citizens as 'makers and shapers' and is more socially inclusive than the neo-liberal notion which simply views citizens as consumers (Cornwall & Gaventa 2000).

The political crisis described in the previous chapter demonstrates that much of the population have not reached a clear sense of belonging to this new nation. Historic and familiar divisions have re-emerged and in the absence of effective state systems people have reverted to traditional systems of retribution for past wrongs. Clan, socio-linguistic affinities and political allegiances have gained ascendency over concepts of nationhood and citizenship. Babo-Soares evokes an understanding of nationalism as a uniting force represented as *hun* (trunk) of a tree representing the origin and the *rohan* (tips) symbolise the end or future (Babo-Soares 2003a). After independence, political groups and differences are represented as new branches sprouting from the trunk that stretch opinions or ideology at the tips far away from the trunk of national unity.

Nation building requires respect and recognition of differences among citizens, so that citizens have the opportunity to participate in their own development within a national framework of basic human rights, including justice and freedom from fear, and equality (Kabeer 2005). In Timor Leste the majority of the population have been largely untouched by state structures and national programs. As Grenfell (2007:11) expressed it: 'When travelling out of Dili the state often seems to barely touch down within communities…. In

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[414] Interview with INGO staff 2

these communities tribal-traditional forms tend to regulate the world in a way that the state has yet to come even close to achieving'.

After the Gusmão government took office in 2007, it took a high spending approach to resolve the problems of the country. According to Lindsay Murdoch, an Australian journalist, Prime Minister Gusmão claimed 'we had to make policies to buy peace'[415]. Benefitting from the substantial oil revenues which began flowing in 2005 the national budget rose massively as significant resources were put into programs to resolve social problems created by the crisis.

Thus in 2008, the initial national budget plan of $347.8 million was raised to $773.3 million. The government's controversial plan to withdraw down on the Petroleum Fund to boost the budget was challenged in court. The Court of Appeal ruled US$290 million of the proposed budget would be illegal because the government had not given adequate justification for the Fund withdrawal to an 'unsustainable level', thus failing to comply with the Petroleum Fund law. Prime Minister Gusmão publicly claimed he would not comply with the court ruling thus showing a complete lack of respect for the rule of law[416].

The large government budget is being used to solve problems arising from the 2006 crisis. More than 10,300 IDP families will have received a recovery or reintegration package under the *Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru* National Recovery Strategy achieving the closure of forty one IDP camps[417]. Most of the 100,000 IDPs have taken the Government's money, up to US$4,500 per family. Cash payouts to the petitioners (now numbering over 600) are US$8,000 each (including back pay). As well, all people aged fifty five or older are eligible for a pension of US$20 a month and rice and fuel is subsidised in response to the 2008 global price hikes in an attempt to maintain the peace[418].

This hand-out approach to spending has generated criticism of lack of transparency. There is also a growing concern about corruption[419], an issue which will demand the attention of

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[415] Lindsay Murdoch 'Timor Collides with its future' The Age, Melbourne 22nd November 2008.

[416] At the time of writing the withdrawal has not taken place for technical procedural reasons.

[417] Ministry of Social Solidarity - Press Release, 26th November 2008. *Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru* means together we build the future. 16 camps remain, to be closed in early 2009.

[418] Lindsay Murdoch 'Timor Collides with its future' The Age, Melbourne 22nd November 2008

[419] The Transparency International 'Corruption Perception Index" showed Timor Leste has dropped from 111th place in 2006 to 145th place in 2008.

advocacy NGOs in coming years. Justice and transparency in governance are critical to nation building. As Josephina pointed out, many of the poorest people remained in their homes after 2006 violence and consequently received no support. These bairro-based poor observe free rice distributions to IDPs, some of whom retain a tent home in the camps to be eligible for rice, while they have salaried jobs and live most of the time in their *bairros*. The *Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru* strategy has resolved the IDP problems but has brought a new form of inequality between the 'haves' and 'have nots'[420]. For example Murdoch reports that convicted murderer Joni Marques has received such benefits while many poor families receive nothing. Funds destined for rebuilding homes are sometimes seen to have been used to buy imported status items resulting in motor bikes and cars jamming pot-holed streets and DVDs and televisions emptying out of stores[421]. The distribution of cash opens the way for recipients to use the funds for purposes other than constructing their houses. The issue also has a gender dimension. Globally it is found that family income in the hands of women is generally used for the wellbeing of their children, whereas the same funds in the hands of their husbands is often squandered on high prestige goods as apparently occurred in Dili.

In December 2008 FONGTIL wrote an Open Letter to its members to distance themselves from the government spending spree, in particular the distribution of cash to youth and students at the Government Palace. The Open Letter stated:

> 'FONGTIL accepts no responsibility for the mechanism adopted by Mr Prime Minister in the name of Xanana Foundation to distribute money at the Government Palace…. This type of mechanism of distributing money arbitrarily will kill our people's initiative and creativity, and will stimulate heavy dependence[422].

The distribution of funds to individuals, without first establishing community-based organisations and mutually agreed priorities, is unlikely to contribute to community development. Meanwhile, rural youth groups' initiatives and proposals have been have been unable to access funding to support their ideas for community projects.

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[420]For instance Murdoch compares the lot of Joni Marques, former militia convicted for murder in 1999 with Rosa, who earns $6 a day from selling salt to feed a family of eight children. Marques was pardoned from his 33 year jail term by President Ramos Horta, and went to live with his wife in an IDP camp becoming eligible for free rice and the *Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru* $4,500 payout. Rosa has received nothing.
[421] Murdoch, ibid.
[422] FONGTIL Open Letter to its members, 21/12/2008.

Timorese activists have made a considered response on the national development processes and structures, noting that the existing strategies do not correspond to the core problem issues identified by activists. At the Development Partners Meeting in March 2008 civil society activists[423] presented their analysis of core problems that have contributed to conflict and impeded the nation's development[424].

Justice is at the top of the list, with the failure to prosecute past crimes resulting in a cycle of impunity. It was noted that in the absence of a juvenile justice system there is no legal mechanism to deal with the crimes perpetrated by juveniles in 2006. The implementation of the CAVR recommendations was seen by activists as fundamental to restoring a sense of justice in the nation.

The second concern is the need to establish transparency of governance.: 'Participation is critical to the development of democracy and, as members of civil society we have a right and duty to be involved'. The NGOs called for clear consistent and broad based processes for consultation on pending legislation. The lateness and limited nature of consultation and the availability of information only in Portuguese and English, has constrained NGO participation. Activists requested the parliament and Council of Ministers to publish a regular newsletter, in 'accessible languages', that inform on pending items and explain new laws.

Thirdly, decentralisation of government and decision making was put forward as a key development issue. Speaking from '*direct experience of rural realities*' activists called for greater public consultation on local governance processes and laws. Also raised was the need for gender equality especially in agricultural support with the need to support food production and food security as a priority.

The final concern related to security. Activists called for a '*whole of community*' approach rather than an 'IDP centred' approach. The activists believe that the problems of unemployment, poverty, alienation, trauma, inconsistent law enforcement, weak judicial system, unclear land rights and people feeling excluded from government contribute to insecurity. The security sector reform, according to the activists, should involve

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[423] Concern, La'o Hamutuk and FONGTIL were representatives at the Development Partners Meeting held on 28th March 2008 in Dili.
[424] FONGTIL Statement by NGOs to Development Partners Meeting 28/3/2008

consultation with Timorese people, recognising that armed security forces alone are not the solution to the nation's security problems.

This presentation by NGO activists highlighted the crucial importance of community participation in governance and the need for public faith in the law and in justice. These fundamental issues are pre-requisites for the attainment of human rights and social development.

Reflective Conclusion

Civil society activists play an important role in national development, particularly in the case of Timor Leste where government has little ability to form a 'bridge from the community to the national government'[425]. Importantly Timorese activists have engaged with traditional Timorese values to integrate new ideas with traditional practices. These activists, whether knowingly or not, have embarked on an approach to development which builds on internationally accepted practices of inclusive participatory development. Although activists' relations with government have sometimes been constrained by political rivalry there is enormous potential for furthering the role of civil society in the development of Timor Leste.

Civil society, however, must be seen in the light of various power relations. Activists, almost all of whom identify themselves as 'young people' are not in positions of power. Power to decide forms of development lie with the government and the donors. While activists can alert the government to community concerns and seek ways of engaging with government at different levels, these approaches are not always welcomed.

Not all civil society actors can said to be activists. There is also a significant self interest in NGO work. Many young people have established NGOs as a means to access an income either through project grants with a salary component or as a stepping stone to lucrative INGO or UN salaries. The NGO sector is the major source of employment of young people apart from teaching.

The ability of NGOs to further extend their development work into the communities is limited by lack of support. It is apparent that the basis of INGO capacity building support

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[425] Interview with DA1, Suai.

is overly focussed on project accountability, rather than building NGO skills for appropriate inclusive, gender sensitive development approaches. Long-term partnerships between INGOs and local NGOs, with a flexible approach and shared process of review of the organisation's self-recognised priorities, provide the best conditions for strengthening local civil society. Only a few INGOs are supporting this kind of partnership and embracing greater mutuality in partnership relations. As mutuality in local NGO-INGO partners develop, so too will these values become more evident between local NGOs and their partners in the communities.

Social change, according to activists, is beginning to take place. Timorese-led development linked to traditional values and structures while articulating the right to equality enshrined in the constitution, can enable the participation of all social groups. There has to date been inadequate support to assist rural youth groups to play a constructive role in their communities, or to identify appropriate strategies to achieve greater gender participation in rural areas.

Chapter Ten

Becoming Citizens

A generation of activists

> *I am a* hama *tree[426] and my father and ancestors give me strength. Their roots are deep in the land, penetrating rock to find water of life. A tree can be cut down but it will regenerate, just as the* Maubere *people are regenerating all over Timor Lorosa'e. (Rei 2007:276)*

This thesis has focussed on a generation of Timorese activists and has explored their hopes and fears regarding the development processes taking place in their country. Throughout these pages I have endeavoured to structure a narrative that allows their voices to be heard. I have considered their stories from a mutually shared understanding of 'development' as a social process that seeks to improve living standards and access to basic human rights. In the process I have drawn on 'new' development discourses of civil society, participation and citizenship (chapter four) in order to analyse the roles that young activists are playing in their new country.

Early in my research a disparity emerged between the ages of Timorese who responded to the label 'young people' and the literature about youth and young people. Many youth leaders in Timor Leste are activists whose formative years were spent as students in the clandestine youth movement during the Indonesian occupation. 'Youth' they told me, extends to those still engaged in social movements, regardless of their age. It was also explained that traditionally youth were those who were not married. Married men however, were not necessarily impeded in their involvement in youth organisations. They invoked 'the spirit of youth' as a reason for their continued identity as 'young people'. In contrast, a significant gender bias was evident as most women marry very young and from then on do not participate in youth groups or other civil society activities (chapter six).

Diverse educational experiences have led to different cultural perspectives between the Portuguese speaking political elite and the Indonesian speaking generation. As well, the

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[426] A fig tree, common in Lautem district where Rei was brought up.

geração milênio (millennium generation), who completed most of their education in independent Timor Leste have different experiences and perspectives from the *geração foun* although they were also educated in Indonesian language (chapter five). All Timorese educated in the Indonesian system have had their educational experiences invalidated to some extent by the decision to adopt Portuguese as the official language of administration and education. This has been an important factor in their continued work as civil society activists and contributed to their self-identification as 'young people'.

My research participants spoke of the elitism of the Portuguese speaking leaders as a source of their anxiety. Not only do these leaders value Portuguese as part of the national identity, but the Timorese language, Tetum, has been de-valued. There is no bi-lingual policy. After six years of independence, high school students continue to learn in the Indonesian curriculum, with no tuition in Tetum grammar. As well little government attention has been given to the dissemination of the 'official' Tetum orthography to Indonesian-educated journalists and others of the *geração foun* (chapter five). Thus a vital national resource of educated citizens has been placed on the periphery of nation building.

The de-valuing of Tetum is consistent with the promotion of western models of development as superior. The government has adopted international systems of representation and justice with little or no consideration of either Timorese customary practices or Timorese lawyers and police who have been educated in Indonesian (chapters four, eight). The political elite has identified Portuguese as part of Timorese cultural identity, in contrast to the younger generations' understanding of national identity as related to the Tetum language, Catholicism and participation in the resistance (Leach 2008b). Customary practices have been all but ignored in the 'official' understanding of national identity and have been replaced by a different set of values that most of the population views as foreign. The result is the marginalisation of the rural majority (chapters four, six, eight) and the *geração foun* (chapters five and seven). Elitist attitudes of the Portuguese speaking minority, meanwhile, have been presented as the reason that young Timorese do not wish to learn Portuguese – the risk of speaking badly and being laughed at is too great (chapter five).

The Timorese activists who contributed to this research have different perspectives and understandings of how to institute social change than either their traditional elders or their

political leaders. Unlike many diaspora political leaders many of the *geração foun* activists have lived their lives within the customary traditions of their culture. Their understanding of the development process pays due respect and value to the cultural conditions which define 'Timoreseness'. In this sense they are ideologically (knowingly or not) aligned with the basic principles of community development, which emphasises that local abilities and knowledges must be built upon (Chambers 1993). Development literature surveyed in this study illustrates that traditional customs and social structures ought to be given due consideration when embarking on strategies for change. I have argued that such processes have not been present in the visible national development processes established by the UN, the World Bank and others in Timor Leste (Moxham 2004b; Ospina & Hohe 2002). Indeed, market-led strategies ignored subsistence agricultural producers and denied support which could have offset the stark conditions that resulted from the abrupt and violent departure of the Indonesians.

Historical experiences in Timor Leste have not been conducive to building inclusive and open processes of engagement. Historically, the Timorese have not accepted domination by others, including the recent western domination of national development processes (chapter three). Change, however does not take place in a vacuum. It occurs when people have had the opportunity to stand back from, or critically reflect on, notions of tradition and customary practice (Heelas 1996). Timorese activists have learnt much from the international development programs they have been involved with. Although the first Timorese experiences of western development support gave little space to local actors, they have been eager to learn from international development practitioners (chapter 3). As this thesis has sought to demonstrate Timorese activists are trying to promote a distinctly Timorese path to development.

Civil society, tradition and development

> *Timor Leste needs to bring back the tradition and culture of respect for nature and respect for each other. Otherwise we are flying in the air but never landing. We need to revitalise local knowledge not just depend on the outside world [Guilherme].*

Active citizens are people empowered to practice participative democracy. They play a critical role in social development through active and vocal agency on issues of social justice and development. Timorese activists criticise western models of the 'outside world' being implemented without due consideration for the traditions and culture of the Timorese people. In Timor Leste the elders are the roots of the tree, keepers of history, tellers of stories and the dispensers of wisdom. Young people are said to be the branches and twigs representing the future. As Guilherme observes in the comment above, the development of the 'outside world' does not touch local understandings of the traditional world. Development projects which are designed and implemented in parallel to local structures are '*flying in the air but never landing'*, disconnected to the roots of society. The strong influence of western models of development in Timor Leste has created a lack of connection between the lived experiences of the majority of rural Timorese and the processes of development being planned and implemented by the government and international agencies.

Typically, civil society associations are led by the middle class, or in the case of Timor Leste by the *Bahasa* educated elite. Civil society refers to associations that maintain a degree of autonomy and have the potential to provide alternative views, policies and actions to those promoted by the state and market (INTRAC 2009). The roles ascribed to civil society organisations can differ: a 'mainstream perspective' views local NGOs as deliverers of services, and as a watchdog on government accountability (Howell & Pearce 2001). This approach is evident among the NGOs that formed and modelled their roles on the programming needs of international donors. It is also evident in the small grants and project management approach of international donors to civil society support (chapter nine). An 'alternative perspective' holds that civil society tries to establish new and alternative ideas and strategies for development (Howell & Pearce 2001). This form of civil society activity is evident amongst Timorese activists who seek to introduce new

ideas and influence the process of development in a way sympathetic to the social and cultural reality of Timorese communities (chapters five and nine).

International development agencies provide both financial support and capacity development support. Some INGOs support the 'alternative' activist approach through long term partnerships providing capacity development such that local NGOs can meet emerging challenges as they arise. Many Timorese NGOs are, however, struggling to get capacity development support to achieve Timorese defined priorities. Support to strengthen the capacity of local civil society, rather than for project implementation and accountability to donors, has been scarce (chapter nine). Local NGO activists need access to new development methods and strategies to effectively strengthen the social base of communities. International development experience can provide useful approaches for inclusive development, for example to deal with gender inequalities described in chapter six, and tools which can assist the powerless and give them a voice (chapter four).

Timorese activists do not subscribe to the view that 'development' takes place in the form of projects (chapter nine), but instead emphasise the need for Timorese to define and develop programs that build on knowledge of both traditional customs and progressive understandings of individual and democratic rights. Culturally appropriate processes that position local people as experts by integrating their knowledge into new learning is crucial to assist people make changes, especially when this challenges local traditions (Harris 2007). For this, a greater knowledge of Timorese customs and culture is also needed by international development practitioners. True partnership is needed that encompasses mutual learning between international and local organisations so that the knowledge that each brings to the process is valued equally.

Since independence, economic resources have been largely concentrated in Dili with few programs positively contributing to the lives of the rural majority. Individuals who had made sacrifices during the independence struggle felt abandoned by the government in the early years of independence (chapter eight). I have argued that Timor Leste's institution-centred approach to state building, focussing on functions of governance, administration and law making, overlooked other, equally important, nation building processes (chapters four & eight). The task of state building eclipsed the process of nation building that would enable people to belong and to be heard.

For much of the population there was an absence of any means of engagement in governance structures or development processes by which any positive change could be felt (chapters four, seven, eight). Consequently 'belonging' to kinship groups, socio-linguistic groups, political parties or martial arts groups came to represent 'belongings' of greater significance than that of nationhood. The independence dream '*to build a good nation*'[427] remains unrealised for most rural communities.

The 2006 crisis served to expose divisions within communities. These divisions arose in response to perceived injustices, in part a result of the technocratic approach to state building of the UN and World Bank (chapter four). The importance of traditional values was reaffirmed when the 'rebel hero', Alfredo Reinado (who had lived four years in Australia and briefly trained at the Australian Defence College as part of F-FDTL) sought the power of the warrior king *Dom Boaventura* and the *lisan* of the ancestors to draw influence through harmonising traditional beliefs with modern day reality (chapter eight).

The inability or unwillingness of the national government to deal with pressing justice issues resulted in many people reverting to traditional form of retributive justice during the 2006 crisis (chapter eight). Social tensions resulting from an imbalance in rural-urban development and a significant movement of rural youth to urban centres provided a context for male youth gangs to become embroiled in conflict which erupted in 2006. The self-positioning of these young men as followers rather than instigators of violence demonstrates the continuing influence of hierarchical relations in the lives of Timorese youth (chapter seven).

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[427] Antonio interview

Young people in development

> *This young generation are not motivated themselves into any activity. They live in a halfway house of liberation, they depend on their parent and on the government to provide everything. It is creating dependence for other people to do work. After independence it is worse. [Guilherme]*

Many 'youth leaders' of the *geração foun* are critical of today's youth claiming they lack the 'spirit' and initiative that typified their own youthdom. The *geração milênio* that have grown up in independent Timor Leste are said to lack the motivating force that membership of the clandestine movement gave to their seniors. These young people seek to escape the rural subsistence lifestyle for the urbanised world of work and consumerism. I have indicated that youth unemployment has been addressed with centralised solutions through the efforts of various aid funded job training and creation programs (chapter seven). While these are important initiatives, the few available places will mean that thousands of current and future school leavers will find themselves with unmet expectations given the undeveloped nature of Timor Leste's formal economy.

The government's decentralisation program may help fill this gap in the coming years, but local community groups will also need to be nurtured and supported with new skills if they are to establish and run successful programs and activities. Education must build on existing knowledges and be relevant to social contexts in order to contribute to rural develoment (Atchoarena & Gasperini 2003; Taylor, P 2003). For the majority of school leavers education is assumed (quiet often wrongly) to open the door to office employment. As a result, the rural areas are depleted of young men, energy and skills.

Young women are more likely to be confined to the rural areas where traditional views of women's roles limit them to purely domestic roles. Young women often leave school and marry at a young age and from then on are deprived of participation in education or youth activities. Women are not expected to play a role in decision making, or to make their opinions heard, their status sometimes described as second class citizens (chapter six). Traditional hierarchical structures and practices that reinforce subservient roles for women present a major challenge to the achievement of universal education of women. The Timorese constitution recognises equal rights for men and women and the government is

striving to meet the Millennium Development Goals. However, even within the NGO community, particularly in the districts, the limited representation of women reflects a continued adherence to traditional gender norms that deny women active citizenship.

I have sought to show how the widespread view believed that the values of justice, solidarity, recognition and respect of difference, and the right to have some control over one's life, were in many ways absent in these early years of nationhood. The 'values of citizenship' presented by Kabeer (2005) offer a basis for understanding how, despite attaining independence, fundamental requisites for a sense of citizenship and identity with the nation state have not been established in Timor Leste. Official consultation is lacking and development benefits have been absent for the poor majority.

The *geração foun* have played a vital civil society role in engaging in government policy debates, community engagement and as intermediaries for the delivery of international aid. The commitment of Timorese activists to promote 'national unity' in response to the 2006 crisis contrasted with the divisiveness that enveloped Timorese society in this period. These activists point to their experiences in the clandestine youth movement as the source of their commitment and motivation to work for their nation within the civil society sector. This clearly reflects how active participation is a source of developing a sense of nationhood and citizenship (Eyben & Ladbury 2006; Gaventa 2004). Nevertheless, these activists received disappointing levels of support from both the Timorese government and the international agencies (chapter eight).

The young Timorese who have spoken throughout the pages possess the cultural, linguistic and intellectual capacities to assist in bridging the gap between 'westernised' national development strategies and traditional cultural norms. Development does not take place from outside but occurs through local people acting as advocates for change. Young women striving for a change to the tradition of being 'exchanged for buffalo' need to be supported. Without change to current traditional practices it is unlikely that women will be able to fulfil their potential and contribute to the social development of communities or the nation. I have, therefore, drawn attention to the ways in which NGOs can play a greater role in challenging the hidden power of customary practice and the invisible power of subordination that inhibit women's full participation in society.

Activists have an important role to play as role models and mentors for the formation of youth groups in rural communities. A key desire of young people, to move beyond subsistence farming, can, I argue, be supported within their communities through income generation projects or community development activities. Local youth need support to seek the technical, financial or marketing assistance they require through local NGOs, government or donors. The untapped potential for young men and women to move out of subsistence livelihood is indicated in figure five below:

Figure 5: Organisational pyramid showing hierarchy of key societal groupings
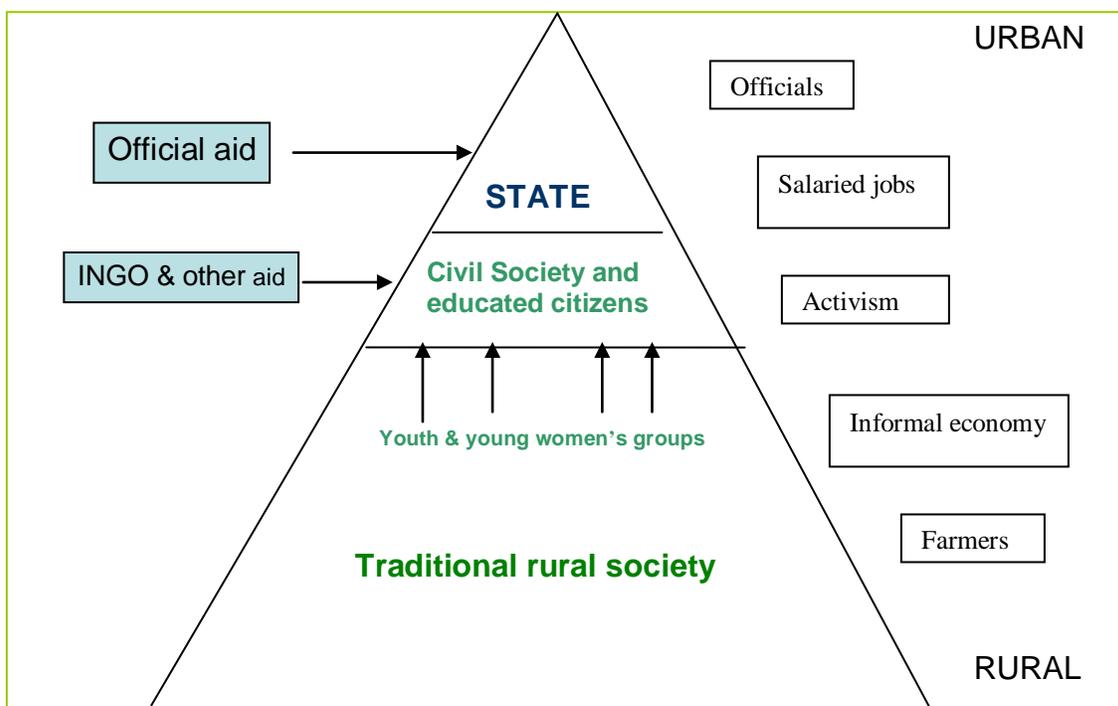
My analysis of youth organisations has shown that peer youth groups are an emerging form of activity or young men and women. I have shown that some male youth groups have formed to play negative roles, but others act as a focus to bring together youth around positive activities. Empowerment of women is evident through the growth of women's NGOs in urban areas and even in rural towns some young women appear to have the confidence and support to take up leadership roles.

To better support the capacities of young men and women economic and social development activities in their communities, a greater recognition, understanding and

resourcing from the government and international development agencies of civil society is needed. More research is necessary to deepen the understanding of the aspirations and perceptions of young rural men and women of the *geração milênio*. Such knowledge is a prerequisite to understand the constraints faced by both males and females which may limit their active participation in community based organisations. Greater incorporation of knowledge from international development practice into local strategies, and local knowledge in program planning by international agencies, is called for.

Youth groups offer a place where the 'spirit of youth' can be positively engaged in social activities of their own choosing. More work in rural areas is needed such that the young women and youth of the *geração milênio* can participate and be heard as valued members of society, joining the *geração foun* in the ranks of 'active citizens'.

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Appendix 1:   **INTERVIEW LIST**

Primary Interviews

		Code name	*Age 2006*	*Role*	*Place + Date*	*Rec?*	*Other details*
1		Antonio	36	Coordinator of ETSSC	Dili 29/7/06	Yes	+ Dili 30/9/05
2		Berta	39	Scouts leader	Dili 30/7/06	Yes	
3		Carlos	44	Sec. Youth & Sport, Leader of Renetil;	Dili 31/7/06	Yes	+ Melbourne 14/9/07
4		Domingos	30s	Leader of District Youth Council	Suai, 4/8/06	Yes	In Portuguese
5		Eugenio	32	Coordinator Suai Community Centre	Suai 7/8/06	Yes	
6		Francisco	32	Coordinator Suai Youth Centre	Suai 7/8/06	Yes	+ Melbourne 15/6/05
7		Guilherme	33	Coordinator, Permaculture TL	Dili 11/8/06	Yes	+ Melbourne 21/5/08
8		Henrique	32	Founding member, Community Education Foundation, Baucau	Baucau 18/8/06	Yes	Translator- Tito Ximenes
9		Isabela	24	Founding member, Feto Ki'ik Servico Hamutuk (FKSH)	Dili 25/8/06	Yes	+ Dili 3/10/05 Melbourne 19/9/07

Secondary Activist Interviews

		Code name	*Age*	*Role*	*Place + Date*	*Rec?*	*Other details*
1		João	30	Leader, KORK	Suai, 6/8/06	Yes	Translation to Portuguese by Augosto
2		Lydia	19	Member PSHT	Suai 6/8/06	Yes	Translation- Alberto
3		Manuel	24	Member KORK	Suai 6/8/06	Yes	Translation- Alberto
4		Nicolão	30s	Leader, PSHT	Suai 6/8/06	Yes	Translation to Portuguese by Augosto
5		Pedro	30s	Founder of SSC, Humanitarian study club, GPPAC	Dili 14/8/06	No	+ Mar06, Melbourne 14/6//06
6		Roberto	26	FOSKA coordinator	Dili 15/8/06	No	
7		Sabastião	36	Bairro Lases music and sports group	Baucau 19/8/06	No	Translator- Tito Ximenes
8		Terasinha	24	Leader, Catholic youth	Baucau 19/8/06	Yes	
9		Ursula	24	Facilitator, Buka Hatene Theatre Group	Baucau 18/8/06	No	Translator- Tito Ximenes
10		Veronica	20	Humanity Study Club, Bairro Becora	Dili, 21/8/06	Yes	Translator- Zelia Fernandes

11	Ze	20s	Founding member, Sangar Matin, Manututo	Dili, 22/8/06	Yes	Translator-David da Silva
12	Josefina	30s	Co-Director, Peace and Democracy Foundation	Dili 12/9/05	No	+ Melbourne 19/9/07, 26/10/07
13	Leandro	30s	Program Coordinator for Civil society program CRS	Suai 4/10/05	No	+ 14/9/05
14	Marta	30s	Director, NGO Forum	Dili 4/10/05	No	4/10/05, Mar06
15	Ofelia	20s	Coordinator GFFTL Dili	Dili 1/10/05	No	
16	Orlando	37	Teacher at Suai Secondary School	Suai 8/8/06	Yes	With Francisco
17	Tomas	30s	Member KSI & UNTL lecturer (later Dean)	Dili 8/9/05	No	+Melbourne 2/11/07
18	Victor	30s	Youth Researcher, later NGO project officer	Dili 31/7/06	No	
19	Xavier	30s	Co-Director, Peace and Democracy Foundation	Dili 1/10/05, & 15/8/06	No	+ Dili 22/3/06
20	Zara	30s	Director, Rede Feto	Dili 23/8/06	No	+ Dili Mar 06
21	Bento	30s	Founder, Fitun music centre & former Project Officer, CIDA	Dili 3/9/05, Melbourne 5/4/07	Yes	+ Melbourne 22/3/07
22	Inacio	30s	Project Officer, later Director, Timor Aid	Melbourne 7/4/07,	No	
23	Local UN staff		Project Officer, UNICEF, Dili	Melbourne 5/4/07	Yes	
24	Student leader	20s	President, DIT Students Assoc.	Dili 8/9/05	No	
25	CSO group 1	20s	Juventude Interesse Desenvolvimento	Dili 13/9/05	No	
26	CSO group 2	30s	Cobha	Suai 23/9/05	No	
27	CSO group 3	20s	Verapupuk	Los Palos 27-28/9/05	No	
28	Renetil member	30s	Renetil member	Dili 25/9/05	No	
29	CSO staff 1	30s	Coordinator GFFTL Lautem	Los Palos 28/9/05	No	
30	CSO staff 2	30s	Haburas	Dili 4/10/05	No	
31	CSO staff 3	20s	Covalima Youth Centre – female staff member	Suai 16/9/05	No	
32	CSO staff 4	30s	Covalima Youth Centre – male staff member	Suai 16/9/05	No	
33	CSO staff 5	30s	Sahe Insitute of Liberation	Dili 4/10/05	No	

Secondary interviews with Timorese senior public figures and international agency staff

		Code	Age	Role	Place + Date		Interview Details
1		DA 1		Deputy District Administrator, Suai	Suai 14/9/05 8/8/06		In Portuguese
2		DA 2		Baucau District Administrator	Baucau 17/8/06		In Portuguese
3		CC 1		Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace	Dili 25/8/06		
4		Academic 1		Director, Dili Institute Tech –DIT	Dili 6/9/05		
5		Youth leader		President CNJTL	Dili 8/9/05		Translation by Agostino Barreto
6		SSYS		Secretary of State, Youth and Sports.	Dili 9/9/05		In Portuguese
7		WB		World Bank representative	Dili 12/9/05		
8		INGO staff 1		Coordinator, Oxfam Suai	Suai 15/9/05		
9		DA 3		Agricultural officer, Covalima	Suai 23/9/05		Translation by Alberto Barros
10		DA 4		District Developent officer, Covalima	Suai 23/9/05		
11		DA 5		Los Palos Sub-district Administrator,	Los Palos 28/9/05		In Portuguese
12		DA 6		Deputy District Administrator, Lautem	Los Palos 28/9/05		In Portuguese
13		CC 2		Director of Baucau teacher training college	Baucau 18/8/06		
14		Academic 2		Consultant and Director of UNDIL university	Dili 25/9/05		
15		Academic 3		Head of Physics Dept, UNTL	Dili 30/9/05		
16		Academic 5		Director of National Institute of Linguistics	Dili 1/10/05		Informal conversation
17		Local INGO staff 1		Austcare National staff, PD leader	Dili, 25/3/06		
18		Academic 4		Language teacher at Dili Institute of Technology	Dili, 12/8/06		
19		INGO staff 2		Former Country Director, Oxfam	Melbourne 27/3/07		
20		INGO staff 3		Program Manger for TL for Plan Australia	Melbourne, 20/3/07		