This PDA report is not the end, but the beginning of the conversation.

IN MEMORY ALSO OF PAUL CHUBE, MEMBER OF THE PDA TEAM IN THE NORTHERN REGION, WHO DROWNED JUST BEFORE NEW YEAR 2014, ON HIS WAY TO CARTERET ISLAND.
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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

I. THE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS.

A collaborative effort: This Peace and Development Analysis is a collaborative effort of the Autonomous Government of Bougainville, the UN in Papua New Guinea and in Bougainville, Interpeace and especially well over a thousand Bougainvilleans. The PDA draws on a good amount of literature review but especially on an extensive listening & conversation exercise with key people but also with Bougainvilleans from all walks of life and all over the island. One key group of Bougainvilleans that the PDA did not have the time to engage with however, were those living outside Bougainville.

Opinions and perceptions: The PDA explored how Bougainvilleans today look back on the violent past of the ‘crisis’, how they see the situation today, and what their views are for the near future, notably in light of the referendum. It has done this overwhelmingly as a qualitative exercise. As such it reveals opinions and perceptions, of a population at large but also of many influential people. Opinions and perceptions are not necessarily based on acute information and solid understanding and may reveal a lot of ‘ignorance’. But it are opinions, perceptions and emotions – and ignorance- that to a significant degree drive people’s social, political and economic behaviours. It is possible to explore this in a more rigorous quantitative manner, through opinion polls, perception and KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices) surveys. This has the advantage of producing more methodologically reliable ‘data’. But surveys do not engage people in the same potentially quite personal way as qualitative and interactive approaches, and are not typically used to stimulate debate and dialogue, as the PDA sought to do.

In the conversations, people often made ‘evaluative statements’ i.e. they expressed positive or negative views on a variety of issues, and sometimes allocated responsibilities for the perceived state of affairs. The PDA team is conscious that people’s evaluative statements are subjective and sometimes biased, and that human nature often tends to first see the glass as ‘half empty’ rather than ‘half full’. From a socio-political and peacebuilding point of view however, evaluative statements are highly relevant because they are shaped by often implicit ‘expectations’. ‘Expectation management’ is important in politics, in international cooperation and in peacebuilding.
A holistic perspective: The PDA exercise touches on many ‘issues’ such as reconciliation, weapons, central and local governance, the Panguna mine, district peace and development committees etc. Undoubtedly it will show at times lack of full and in-depth knowledge about any of these issues. But where it may be distinctive and add value, is in showing an underlying ‘logic’ or ‘coherence’ between how Bougainvilleans see the past, the present and the near future, and how these many different issues, often treated as separate, are actually interrelated in the ‘real world’ and need to be dealt with in a holistic manner.

Uses of the PDA: This formal purpose of this PDA is to provide a basis for a Peacebuilding Priority Plan, which will direct some new funding from the UN Peacebuilding Fund. But this PDA has other potential uses: It can provide an opportunity to review existing work in Bougainville, to assess whether right things are being done and being done right; whether there are things being done that are in practice counterproductive and have to be stopped, or that are done in ways that need to be amended; and whether there are things that should be done and are not yet done. Above all, this PDA highlights a lot of attention points and raises questions that merit wider and deeper discussion, among the people of Bougainville in the first place. It is not the end but the beginning of the conversation.

II. THE PDA’S PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE PEACE.

Conflict is inherent in society. Conflict is not exclusively negative, it also provides creative energy for transformation and innovation. Conflict becomes destructive when it degenerates into significant violence or heavy coercion (the threat of violence). Sustainable peace therefore is not an idealistic picture of a society without conflict, but of a society that has the capacities, at all levels, to manage conflict effectively and constructively. ‘Development’ in the sense of ‘economic development’ does not necessarily contribute to greater peace. In many countries economic development has led to increased socio-economic inequalities which, when not constructively addressed, lead to conflict. In the same sense, ‘security’ does not automatically contribute to greater peace – if it is brought about by excessive coercion and structural violence rather than grounded in a state of popular consent.

For some years now, the international community has been shaping its engagement in fragile situations in terms of ‘statebuilding and peacebuilding’. Often the emphasis is on strengthening the institutions of government where these are weak, so that the government develops the capacity to ‘govern’ (raising revenue, providing services, and protecting rights as well as enforcing obligations under the rule of law). The comparative experience however shows two things: a) when many actors in society – including the government – are relatively weak, no single actor alone can overcome the real challenges – collaborative action is required. Therefore the most critical ‘capacities’ exist in the interactions between entities and not within entities; and b) viable societies, that can manage the inevitable challenges and conflicts without resort to violence or heavy coercion, have both a strong state (or ‘authority’) and a strong ‘society’ (or ‘citizenry’ / ‘communities’).
III. INTERLOCKING CONFLICT DYNAMICS AND THE CENTER OF GRAVITY OF THIS PDA.

It is well recognized that the so-called Bougainville “crisis” (1987-1997) had two interlocking but also somewhat separate conflict dynamics: between Bougainville and “PNG”\(^1\), and among Bougainville armed groups fighting each other. The latter is sometimes misunderstood as in-fight between the pro-independence Bougainville Resistance Army (BRA), and a Bougainville Resistance Force (BRF) that received support from the PNG forces, as if they were two relatively organized armed groups that clashed as a result of opposing political positions with regard to the relationship between Bougainville and “PNG”.

It can be argued that today there are three interlocking but also somewhat separate conflict dynamics: One between Bougainville and “PNG”, one related to the legacy of the in-fighting during the conflict between “the BRA” and “the BRF”, and one between some remaining armed groups, notably the Meekamui factions and the ‘Papaala Kingdom’ of Noah Musingku who at present do not recognize the authority of the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG). In addition there are some significant local-level conflict dynamics: One such is situated in the Kuonno area of Buin district in the south (with fighting between 2006-2011 that did not spill over into the rest of Bougainville). The other one is situated in the Panguna mine area which, unlike the Kuonno conflict, has Bougainville-wide repercussions.

While these respective nodes of conflict are or can become interrelated, they also each have a dynamics somewhat of their own. Due to time constraints, not all of them could be researched equally well. The center of gravity of this Peace and Development Analysis (PDA) is on intra-Bougainville conflict dynamics. Attention is paid to the Bougainville-“PNG” relationship, but a comprehensive analysis of the latter would have required a much more extensive engagement with various actors on the “PNG” side.

\(^1\) “PNG” is put here between brackets, because it is a way of talking (among Bougainvilleans) and not of course a different political entity. Between 1975 and today Bougainville is and has remained part of the state of Papua New Guinea.
### IV. THE FRAMEWORK AND STRUCTURE OF THE PDA REPORT.

#### CORE DRIVERS OF CONFLICT
- Perceived threat from outsiders to Bougainville identity, culture and resources
- Unequal distribution of benefits and costs
- Internal jealousies and disputes
- Leadership rivalries and divisions

#### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO CONFLICT

**Tangible factors:**
- Heavy-handed actions
- Guns
- Alcohol and drug-abuse
- Poverty

**Intangible factors:**
- Trauma
- A sense of insecurity
- Weakened and changing custom and traditional norms and values
- Lack of relevant information and exposure to reasoning
- Inadequate quality of and distrust in the leadership
- Lack of direction and encouragement

#### CAPACITIES FOR PEACE

1. **Major Approaches.**
   - The BPA and its implementation
   - Reconciliation – and compensation
   - Dealing with and learning from the past
   - Weapons disposal
   - Effective governance
   - Conflict-sensitive and peace relevant economic development.

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#### Looking Forward
- The 2015 Bougainville elections
- The referendum

What is this picture telling us?
PART 2. EMERGING FINDINGS.

I. DRIVERS OF CONFLICT AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

FINDING 1: The charcoal is still glowing- Bougainville is not ‘post-conflict’: The ‘historical’ drivers of conflict in Bougainville are still there. There are probably more contributing factors to conflict today than in the 1960s-1980s.

1. The historical drivers of conflict in Bougainville are still there.

- **Perceived threat from outsiders.** There is a history of resentment though only modest resistance to ‘colonialism’. A political articulation of the perceived sense of ‘difference’ from the rest of Papua New Guinea started to find expression as of the early 1960s, from the very outset in terms of ‘referendum’ and possible ‘secession’. Already prior to Papua New Guinea becoming independent in 1975, the strand of ‘resistance to Australia’ – heightened by controversies over the Panguna mine, and the strand of ‘resistance to Papua New Guinea’ started coming together and feeding each other. Bougainville made a first bid for ‘independence’ shortly before the formal independence of Papua New Guinea. Talks between then Chief Minister Michael Somare and Bougainville leaders made the latter settle for ‘provincial government’ with the understanding that this implied a significant degree of autonomy. When the Bougainville ‘crisis’ escalated, ‘Independence’ was not the first objective but quickly became a major rallying cry. A number of Bougainvilleans continue to talk about ‘independence’ as their ‘political destiny’. Discomfort with outsiders continues today, and crops up in relationships with the National Government, foreign companies and traders (notably ‘Chinese’), and even some of Bougainville’s development partners, notably Australia. Yet outsiders, from missionaries to diplomats to aid personnel, have also played positive roles in and for Bougainville, which often get overlooked in the portrayals made. Given the strong assertion of a separate ‘Bougainville identity’, Bougainvilleans may need to articulate a contemporary ‘Bougainville identity’ in positive rather than defensive terms.

- **Unequal distribution of benefits and costs.** A perceived unequal sharing of the benefits of Bougainville resources and of the costs that come with their exploitation, is a second driver of conflict. The most salient example are the resentments and complaints about the sharing of benefits and costs of the Panguna mine while it was in operation. These tensions and disagreements are very much alive in today’s debate about re-opening the Panguna mine. Contrary to assertions made by some about majority support among Bougainvilleans in favour or against re-opening the mine, the PDA conversations identified four positions, each of which has their supporters and arguments:
  - The mine should be re-opened as soon as possible: The key argument is that the revenue from the mine is a necessary to give Bougainville the economic or fiscal basis to be ‘independent’;
  - The mine should never be re-opened again: The key argument is that it has done so much damage in the past, in its immediate social and environmental impacts but also in being the catalyst for a decade of war, that Bougainville should not risk such scenario again. Bougainville has other resources that can be developed with less negative impacts;
  - The mine can be re-opened but not now: The key argument is that the linking the mine and the independence question blurs both issues. Discussions about the mine should be
postponed until Bougainvilleans are in a position to fully ‘independently’ consider such critical
decision;

- The opening or not depends on the conditions: This perspective doesn’t focus on the timing
and is not radically pro or against, but wants great clarity and prior agreement about the
sharing of benefits and costs. It also want to wait until the Bougainville authorities have the
effective capacity to enforce such agreement, which at the moment it is not seen to have.

The Panguna mine is seen as the biggest potential flash-point related to the distribution of
benefits and costs, but the same issue applies to other economic propositions that touch on
Bougainvillean resources and invoke serious money – all the more so if there is also an ‘outsider’
dimension involved. The Torokina Palm Oil project is one example.

- **Internal jealousies and disputes**: The historical and contemporary social dynamics of Bougainville
society is very complex and difficult to understand for outsiders. A strong tradition of ‘connection’,
through extended family, totem-clan belonging and intermarriage, reciprocity and egalitarian
values, combines with a no less prevalent tradition of disputes, jealousies, rivalries and internal
conflict, that in pre-colonial society often turned violent. A driving logic can be that of ‘pay back’
– revenge action, often revenge violence and revenge killing, setting in motion a cycle of violence
that is hard to end. Sorcery accusations and sorcery killings remain part of contemporary
Bougainville social life. People acquiring some wealth are expected to ‘share’ widely but also
become the object of jealousy. This of course feeds into the dynamics related to the sharing of
benefits of costs of capital-intensive economic investments or investment proposals. It also play
out in disputes over land. Contributing factors to the reported increase in land disputes are the
lack of clear boundary markers, but especially increasing pressure on arable land from a serious
population increase and the expansion of cash cropping that reduces the available land for
subsistence agriculture. Land disputes cause delays or even blockages for economic initiatives
small and large.

- **Leadership rivalries and divisions**: The ‘disunity’ that Bougainvilleans acknowledge can often be
traced back to leadership rivalries and –splits. Examples can be found in the splits within the BRA
with some engaging in the peace making process and others, around Francis Ona, refusing to; in
the factional splits among the Meekamui, and in the killings in Siwai that triggered a serious ‘Siwai’
crisis within the wider Bougainville crisis.

Each of these is a driver of conflict in each own right. But in many instances, they combine to form a more
inflammable mix.

2. **Gusts of wind that can fan the flames: Contributing factors.**

‘Contributing factors’ are not drivers of conflict as such, but make it easier for a situation to turn more
quickly or more seriously ‘conflictual’ and ‘violent’. We differentiate between ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’
factors. Whereas there is a tendency to focus on the ‘tangibles’, a peacebuilding perspective gives great
weight to and will work on the critical ‘intangibles’, because societal peacebuilding capacities rely very
much on the ability for collaborative action across divides.
Tangible factors contributing to conflict:

- **Heavy-handed actions**: Heavy-handed actions risk escalating a situation of tension or confrontation, rather than resolving it. Two prominent examples that emerged where the heavy-handed tactics of the PNG Police and then Defense Force in response to the acts of sabotage at the Panguna mine, and the supported armed attacks on the Meekamui Defense Force and the Tonu-base of the Papaala Kingdom in southern Bougainville in 2006. In neither case force was decisive, and typically led the situation to spin further out of control. This has implications for how certain challenges in Bougainville today are dealt with.

- **Guns**: Notwithstanding a reasonable effective programme of weapons disposal after the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement (2001), there remain too many guns in Bougainville today. These come from different sources including new ones such as smuggling and sale from the Solomon Islands. Even though most violent incidents in Bougainville today involve ‘tools’ (machetes, knives...), the continued presence of fire-arms is seen as a problem for two reasons: ‘Weapons disposal’ is a one of the pillars of the BPA and one of the pre-conditions to take into account in the setting of the referendum date. It is also experienced as the primary cause for a continued sense of ‘insecurity’ among the people of Bougainville. Guns remain in the hands of some commanders who did not hand them in during the earlier weapons disposal programme or took them back from the containers. Guns are also kept by factions that were not part of the BPA, notably the Meekamui (some associated now with the Papaala Kingdom). But there are also various other categories of people who have guns: business people and other individuals for the protection of personal property and family; youth that were not fighters during the ‘crisis’ but for whom a gun is a symbol of masculinity and source of power; and criminal elements. There are said to be some arms with the police (largely unarmed except for a small rapid response unit) and possibly some held by ‘private security companies’.

- **Alcohol- and drug abuse**: This concerns ‘homebrew/jungle juice’ and ‘marihuana’. It is said to be very much a ‘post-crisis’ phenomenon. While it is often associated with today’s youth, it is clear that it also affects many adults including parents. One of the reasons for the abuse mentioned is to numb the ongoing effects of traumatic experiences. It is certainly a contributing factor to public misbehavior and disturbances, gender-based violence and loss of respect for authorities.

- **Poverty**: Participants in the PDA exercise talked more about un- and under-employment than about poverty. Other research suggests that “Bougainvilleans conceive of poverty as the lack of economic opportunity and basic services, as opposed to a lack of money.” Given that many Bougainvilleans continue to produce at least part of their own food, it has been suggested that it is more appropriate to consider ‘food security’ rather than ‘income security’. This does relate to the issue of likely growing pressure on land.

Intangible factors contributing to conflict:

- **Trauma**: Bougainvilleans make regular reference to trauma that suggest that it is still widespread, and not just an individual but a wider societal problem. Other research indicates that significant percentages of men and women in Bougainville have committed and/or experienced violence, including sexual violence, during and after the ‘crisis’. Effects of this are depression with
sometimes suicidal tendencies, drinking problems, difficulties in trusting anyone, disturbed social relations, and difficulty controlling aggression. Traumatised parents transmit some of this onto their children.

- **A sense of insecurity:** Many Bougainvilleans feel insecure. The most cited reasons for this were public disturbances resulting from unruly behaviour, often associated with youth and fueled by alcohol- and drug abuse, and the presence of weapons, even if only as a ‘threat’. For women, the extent in Bougainville today of domestic and gender-based violence, continuing the regularity of rape (including of men) during the ‘crisis’, is a major source of insecurity. Further exploration may reveal other contributing factors to that sense of insecurity such as ‘outstanding reconciliations’, a general lack of respect for values and authority, and a weak state (in its ability to deliver services and uphold the rule of law).

- **Weakened and changing custom and traditional norms and values:** Custom and traditional culture are prized by Bougainvilleans: its protection has been a major source of resistance to outsiders, the main approach to dealing with the legacy of the crisis have been ‘reconciliation’ processes along traditional lines, and references to ‘culture’ and ‘customary authority’ are present in its Constitution and governance structure. Yet the ‘payback’ logic and its resulting cycles of violence, is also part of ‘traditional’ Bougainville culture(s). It diminished under Christian missionary influence, but reined free again during the ‘crisis’ years. Bougainvilleans recognize that traditional norms, values and authority today do not have the strength they had in the past. The change is attributed to two major forces: Longer-standing ‘Western’ influence and the social and normative breakdown during the crisis. The latter in particular is seen as responsible for the fact that many younger Bougainvilleans today are said not to know or not to respect ‘custom’ and ‘tradition’ as expected. This PDA exercise however draws attention to the impact of the ‘cash-economy’ on Bougainville social and cultural life. This pre-dates the crisis, and is present also in the non-mining sector (cash-cropping). Moreover, even if the source lies outside Bougainville, the reality today is also that Bougainvilleans have the “smell of money”, to such a degree that it has been called a ‘give me’ mentality or a ‘claims culture’.

- **Lack of relevant and trusted information, and of exposure to reasoning:** School attendance has been improving again after the ‘crisis’. Yet even educated people in Bougainville have a dramatic lack of access to relevant, timely, accurate information from sources they trust – even about critical issues for Bougainville, such as the BPA and the referendum. As a result distrust arises, misinformation (intentional or not) continues to circulate, and people are unable to develop informed opinions, partake in reasoned public debates and make informed choices. This is a significant factor in the criticism of the ABG, and also keeps sections of the population more vulnerable to deliberate manipulation by conflict- and other entrepreneurs. The success of the U-Vistract pyramid scheme in
Bougainville lies perhaps in its ability to effectively play on the attraction of ‘tradition’ and ‘grievances against outsiders’, and the lure of ‘money’.

- **Inadequate quality of and distrust in the leadership**: The issue here is not rivalries and confrontations between leaders that can pull their respective followers into confrontation, but the perceived failings of ‘leadership’ at all levels, central and local. Many leaders are seen as weak and incompetent, self-serving and even corrupt. Some are distrusted for the role they played in the ‘crisis’ and for not having reconciled with the people. Physical distance, lack of two-way communication, lack of information, transparency and accountability, about budgets and money in the first place, all contribute to these negative perceptions.

- **Lack of direction and encouragement**: In many places in ‘rural’ Bougainville, there is a palpable potential to do things at least at local level and with the resources people have available. In some areas, people have been taking initiative, but in others they seem to be waiting for a ‘green light’ and some direction and/or encouragement from a higher authority, notably the ABG or the UN. This of course relates to the issue of ‘leadership’.

**FINDING 2: There is a strong sense of stagnation on the issues that matter most**: Though it took a long time, the peace-making process in Bougainville tends to be portrayed as very successful, for two reasons: strong Bougainvillean ownership with outsiders sticking to an enabling and supporting role, and the quality of the BPA. When it comes to recovery and building sustainable peace however, Bougainvillean acknowledge that there has been some progress, albeit slow, on ‘tangibles’ (infrastructure, services...) but little meaningful progress on the deeper underlying issues that create or sustain tensions, divisions and conflict.
II. CAPACITIES FOR PEACE.

A. MAJOR APPROACHES.

1. The Bougainville Peace Agreement and Its Implementation.

**FINDING 3: Widespread lack of understanding of the BPA:** Although extensive consultations among Bougainvilleans took part during the peace-making process, there is today a widespread lack of understanding of often the basics and certainly of the intent of the BPA. The basics concern the three pillars, the weapons disposal and good governance conditions and the authority of the National Parliament to make the final decision about Bougainville’s political status. The intent relates to creation of a period within which both parties could try to make ‘autonomy’ work. This lack of knowledge and/or understanding is the case among significant sections of the Bougainville population, but also among political leaders, parliamentarians and senior public servants in Bougainville and Papua New Guinea. One reason for this are the changes in leadership and senior personnel, but there have also been years after the creation of the ABG when the implementation of the BPA was not high on many people’s radar screen. Not surprisingly, hardly any Bougainvilleans know about the Joint Supervisory Body or what it does, and the 5 yearly joint review that should have taken place in 2010, did not happen until 2013. The lack of proper understanding creates the space for dangerous misunderstanding: There are actors in Bougainville, including in the public sector, who talk about the referendum as ‘the referendum on independence’ – rather than a referendum on different options, only one of which is ‘independence’.

**Finding 4: Difficult implementation of sophisticated mechanisms.** The Organic Law established a sophisticated process of transfer of powers and functions, at a rhythm commensurate with the development of capacities and resources in the ABG. Lack of understanding and mastery of these sophisticated mechanisms has contributed to delays, misunderstandings and frustrations.

On the financial side, there is a complex mix of grants and evolving grant volumes that the National Government committed to provide to Bougainville, and some arrears have accumulated. Some of the tax collected in Bougainville and first submitted to the National Government also has to return to Bougainville. There may have been some problems in this, but a key issue is the ABG’s inability to collect much tax even where it has the authority. As the Review on Autonomy Arrangements also points out, there is significant misunderstanding about ‘fiscal self-reliance’. The formal agreements provide a technical definition that looks at Bougainville’s internal revenue in relation to certain grant levels provided by the National Government. In common parlance however, self-reliance is equated with the Bougainville authorities being able to completely cover all its costs from internal revenue.

With regard to the public administration, the people of Bougainville are generally unaware that the civil servants in Bougainville all these years have remained part of the system and procedures of the national public administration. That has left many people even in senior positions, ‘acting’ rather confirmed and meant that the ABG could not take drastic management action to improve the known weaknesses. That authority should come to it if the Bougainville House of Representatives accepts the draft Bills that would create a proper ‘Bougainville Public Service’.

Still, a review of the state of affairs regarding 34 powers and functions whose transfer was requested by the ABG in 2006, shows that by and large they remain at the level of policy and drafting, and haven't moved much into implementation.
Finding 5: Public perception blames both the ABG and the National Government for a perceived lack of progress in implementing the BPA. The ABG is seen as not performing and the National Government as deliberately slowing things down and making it difficult for Bougainville to govern itself. There are Bougainvilleans who express a sense of entitlement towards the National Government: “we funded your independence, now we expect you to fund ours”.

Finding 6: As a result, there are Bougainvilleans believe that the BPA should be reviewed. Key areas pointed at are the grants transfer and fiscal arrangements, the reference to ‘weapons disposal’ (which is misunderstood as a precondition to hold the referendum rather than a consideration in setting the date for the referendum), and the clause that leaves the ultimate decision on Bougainville’s political status with the national parliament. The Review of Autonomy Arrangements also points out that the concrete benchmarks for the other ‘condition’ referring to ‘good governance’, need to be clarified.

Finding 7: The continued presence of armed groups outside the BPA and not under control of the ABG may or may not become a stumbling block for certain referendum options. Rather surprisingly there have not been vigorous international and national/ABG efforts to bring notably the Meekamui factions into the prevailing political framework, especially after the death of Francis Ona in 2005. The Meekamui maintain their arms with the justification that they were not part of the BPA and hence are under no formal obligation to disarm. It also means that the ABG can be said not to have ‘sovereignty’ over all of its territory. That point could be invoked to challenge Bougainvillian claims to fit the criteria to be recognized internationally as a sovereign state, although there are precedents of new states being recognized with still disputed borders or at best limited authority over parts of their territory.

2. Reconciliation – and Compensation.

Finding 8: The widely criticized commercialization of ‘reconciliation’ in Bougainville has corrupted customary practices, and brought reconciliation large to halt, as a result of which there is now a significant number of ‘outstanding reconciliations’. From early on, Bougainvilleans sought to bring about ‘reconciliation’ using their customary processes and rituals. These take time and are costly but deeply rooted in traditional culture. The ad hoc, uncontrolled and unequal offer of subsidies to fund reconciliation processes, by the ABG and development partners, corrupted the practice and led to much abuse. There is broad public criticism that large sums of money were spent on the reconciliation of prominent figures, which much less available for more ordinary people. This harmful funding largely declined towards late 2009, but left a situation in which certain people will not reconcile unless there are subsidies to be had. Reconciliation from the wallet rather than from the heart, is not seen as genuine. Notwithstanding, reconciliations among ordinary people tend to continue with local efforts and purely local resources.

Finding 9: ‘Missing people’ and the inability to conduct ‘proper burials’ also impede reconciliations. For reconciliations to bring full closure for victims and perpetrators, the dead need to have a culturally appropriate burial. That is not possible for a probably sizeable number of ‘missing people’. Bougainvilleans believe that in most cases someone knows where a person was killed and the bones can be found. A mechanism may have to be set up under which such information can be confidentially given, not therefore putting perpetrators at risk of compensation claims or acts of ‘pay back’. Bodies have also been found in mass graves that need to be identified. DNA testing will sometimes be required, which is possible in other parts of PNG.
Finding 10: Some Bougainvilleans observe that they haven’t reconciled yet with Papua New Guinea, Australia and the Bougainville Copper Limited company. The reconciliation visit in January 2014, by Prime Minister Peter O’Neill, was very significant and appreciated, though said not to have been in accordance with Bougainvillian reconciliation procedures. As there may be no ‘traditional’ precedent for reconciling with outsiders and with a foreign government or nation as a whole, the question is what shape ‘reconciliation’ in this case could take to be meaningful for Bougainvilleans, and not completely hijacked by compensation claims?

Finding 11: There appears to be a growing number of demands for ‘compensation’. The best known is the K 10-11 billion claim from BCL for the damages caused by the Panguna mine during its past operation. There are some claims or at least expectations of possible ‘compensation’ payments, from civilians (including business people) who lost much property and limb or life during the ‘crisis’, but also from former combatants now called ‘veterans’. Previous handouts to veterans and the largesse in subsidizing reconciliation processes, are seen to have contributed to this increase in compensation claims. There is however no broad and explicit public reflection how a poorly funded ABG would be able to provide significant compensation payments, nor how this could be done in a way that doesn’t again create or fuel internal jealousies and disputes.

3. Dealing with and Learning from the Past.

Finding 12: Bougainvilleans have chosen to deal with the past essentially through ‘reconciliation’. That choice comes at the expense of ‘justice’. A step towards the BPA was the 1998 Lincoln Agreement, which provided a general amnesty and a guaranteed pardon to anyone accused of having committed a crime during the ‘crisis’. Such amnesty and pardon has also been on offer for the Meekamui and Noah Musingku of U-Vistract/ the Papaala Kingdom. This would not be internationally acceptable today, but has also been criticized from a Bougainville ‘tradition’ perspective: “The amnesty silences the victim’s families and frees the perpetrators, which is against traditional custom for reconciliation. Bougainvilleans do not do blanket amnesty.”

Finding 13: There is a ‘truth’ telling aspect in traditional reconciliation processes. But there has been as yet no meaningful effort to document and verify what actually happened, so that Bougainvilleans can learn from the past. At the moment it seems there is no broader and verified historical narrative that the current generation can offer to the next ones, at home and in school. Without it mostly personal stories are shared, that may show only one perspective and remain silent on the bigger ‘why’. This makes it difficult to ‘learn from the past’, and avoid a similar situation happening again. One of the most critical questions that Bougainvilleans have to face is: If we took up arms to defend ourselves against intrusion and exploitation by outsiders, how is it that we ended up viciously fighting, raping and torturing each other? One common justification for this is: “We were manipulated by outsiders”. That then invites the question how will Bougainvilleans will avoid being manipulated again? Other Bougainvilleans are ready to look within, and to acknowledge where their own responsibilities lie: Uncontrolled fighters, often youth, that did not mind that basic government services and much economic activity collapsed and who with their new power went on a rampage locally, along the fault lines of local level disputes and quarrels. That in turn activated self-defense forces and the pay back logic. Most individuals and families were forced into positions not based on ideology or political choice, but by being tossed about on the waves of what was more a situation of anarchy than an organized independence struggle or a civil war between a fairly cohesive ‘BRA’ and ‘BRF’. That story of descent into chaos also needs to be complemented with the stories
of the many Bougainvilleans, often women and church leaders but sometimes also commanders who took steps, sometimes at great risk, to avoid atrocities, reduce the violence, and begin the slow process of peace-making.

4. Trauma Healing.

Finding 14: There are some trauma-healing programmes in Bougainville, run by ‘civil society’ organisations and/or the churches, but is it enough? The PDA has not been able to examine this, but notes the indications that trauma remains widespread and often unattended to. It would ask whether and how reconciliations, identifying missing people and proper burials are important for healing? While establishing the truth(s) of what happened evokes sad memories and disturbing feelings, is the absence of –broader- truth telling another contributing factor to continued widespread trauma? Mention was made of a possible reluctance of Bougainvilleans to engage with other Bougainvilleans about the trauma they experience, given that in a number of instances confidentiality was not respected. What then would be for Bougainvilleans appropriate approaches to dealing with trauma and what not?

5. Weapons disposal.

Finding 15: There is as yet not a convincing approach or menu of approaches, to remove the guns held by different actors for different reasons. Such approach has to answer the questions how, who, and when? As to the ‘how’ there are essentially three options: a) persuade people to hand over their weapons; b) buying back weapons and c) force (or threaten to force) people to do so. President Momis has ruled out ‘buy back schemes’. Enforcement may not be practically possible under the circumstances, and raises the question of who? The Bougainville Police Service does not have the capacity to do so. Though ‘veterans’ sometimes help the police and other local authorities with aspects of ‘law and order’, there is a broadly held position that it would be inappropriate for them to drive this (apart from the fact that some of them hold weapons themselves). The thinking is evolving towards ‘community-based approaches’ to weapons recovery. Some local communities have been reasonably effective in reducing the fire-arms locally, and approaching a ‘gun-free’ zone. Under community-approaches however, weapons can no longer be treated as a separate issue, but become part of a circumscribed environment where reconciliation, the restoration of services, economic initiative, the restoration of respect for authorities, the re-assertion of basic norms and values etc. are all interdependent and integrated objectives. All the responsibility cannot however be loaded on communities, as the experience of the Konnuo conflict shows. Communities can also not be expected to patrol the border with the Solomon Islands, from where new weapons are coming in. The planned operation ‘Render Safe’ should at least reduce the number of WWII weapons and ammunitions in Torokina district that have been an important source of supply. However, if communities and local authorities are asked or encouraged to play a stronger role, then it would seem that locating the formal responsibility for weapons disposal with the Division of Veterans’ Affairs is no longer the most appropriate.

Finding 16: There is a strong political incentive and rationale to reduce the number of weapons before the referendum, but expectations have to remain realistic. The presence of a significant number of fire-arms in Bougainville can compromise the ability of Bougainvilleans to vote freely, and become a contributing factor to escalation if the referendum outcome would be ‘contested’. Relating weapons disposal to the referendum – as the BPA does- has the potential to create a new momentum that so far has been lacking. But it can also create a political rationale to declare ‘success’ even if the reality is somewhat different. Community-driven approaches however do not necessarily follow the desired rhythm of politicians and
development partners. And the Meekamui’s position seems to be that they agree not to use their weapons (unless attacked), but will hold on to them until Bougainville is independent. Perhaps a certain focus is required: Whose weapons constitute a potential political threat, who is best placed to engage those actors, and how?

6. Effective governance.

Finding 17: There is a broad perception that governance in Bougainville is not working, because the ABG has been too internally fragmented and the approach has been far too much ‘top-down’. The most critical issues at central level are the lack of a realistic but also inspiring, and widely supported, vision for where Bougainville wants to go (even irrespective of its political status); and the disconnects between the executive and the administrative components of government, and within the public administration. This has been courageously acknowledged in a comprehensive review a few years ago, and a roadmap towards ‘whole-of-government’ functioning is outlined in the ABG’s Capacity Development Strategy (2012). There is however a strongly expressed demand of people in Bougainville for much more ‘bottom-up governance’.

Finding 18: The weak ‘performance legitimacy’ of the ABG in the eyes of the population, is aggravated by the absence of an effective, two-way, communication strategy of the government. The word ‘awareness raising’ as currently often used, implies a wrong diagnosis of the problem and therefore prescribes inadequate treatment. People in Bougainville certainly demand relevant and accurate information. They also want that information to be timely and coming from a trusted source – and have clear ideas about what sources they do not trust. But they also want their voices to be heard and responded to. ‘Awareness’ raising and communication therefore have to be a two-way exchange, not another top-down flow. The authorities need a listening strategy as much as a communications’ strategy.

Finding 19: Most people of Bougainville have no effective political representation through the formal structures. With some exceptions members of the House of Representatives are criticizing in their constituencies for their absence, lack of information sharing and lack of transparency around the K 25,000 they receive per quarter. A constitutional ‘recall clause’ during the mandate period, does not work in practice. It may not be a bad thing that Bougainville doesn’t have political parties, but it also means there is no formal ‘political opposition’ that people can turn to.

Finding 20: There is significant distrust among the population of the Bougainville leadership. The perceived ‘distance’ of the Bougainville leadership– including most members of the House of Representatives - from the population, absenteeism of civil servants in the district administration; the slow progress at recovery, the persistence of the really difficult issues, the lack of funding for the local authorities combined with no information of what budgets were available and how they were spent, and an experience of ‘broken promises’ all combine to create significant distrust in the senior leadership. That can be a contributing factor to increased conflict.

Finding 21: There is an urgent need to stimulate a ‘public sphere’ in Bougainville so that the people of Bougainville can develop informed and reasoned opinions and make informed choices. Over the past eight years, the attempts at ‘state-building’ have not been matched by similar efforts at building a ‘strong society’ of capable and informed citizenry that can not only criticize but also support and work with the governmental authorities. There are people with information in Bougainville, but it is usually not shared because there is little spontaneous conversation about the challenges and achievements in contemporary
Bougainville. Part of the problem is incomplete media coverage: there are no Bougainville newspapers, radio coverage at the moment does not reach all parts of the island, nor does even the mobile phone network. Steps are underway to start up suitcase radios. The question then becomes what substance the radio(s) will offer and how? People need to receive relevant information, but also need to understand it. Some informations may have to be further explained, and questions answered. There will also be different views about critical issues, and it is important that people get exposed to the different views, and the arguments that are being used in support. Such exposure to reasoned public debate (of which the PDA conversations at times offered a taste) will eventually enable Bougainvilleans to develop informed and reasoned opinions about the critical issues in their society, and make informed and thoughtful choices – something that at the moment they are not able to do.

**Finding 22:** The Councils of Elders, the lowest tier of the formal governance system, as well as the Chiefs, seem generally closer to the population than the district administrations. But they are confused about their roles and responsibilities, receive no funding beyond what covers their running costs, and need to have their management but also mediation and facilitation skills strengthened. Even where Councils of Elders exercise dynamism and authority, it seems mostly due to the individual personalities of the members than because the structure is enabling and empowering. There are conflicting perceptions and ‘anecdotes’ about Chiefs. In some areas they are said to be still a source of respected authority and an important actor, in other areas they appear to be contested or not respected. Some Chiefs have accepted to be part of the COEs and even hold positions at the ABG level, while others have chosen to stay away from the ‘modern’ governance structures so as not to have their legitimacy contaminated by association. (The PDA could not inquire into the Village Assemblies and Village Courts.)

**Finding 23:** The ‘disconnect’ between the Bougainville authorities and the population is a major impediment to raising more internal revenue. Currently most Bougainvilleans consciously do not pay taxes. Taxation is a quintessential expression of the ‘contract’ between authorities and those they govern: nobody wants to pay taxes, but will accept to do so, if they perceive the tax burden to be spread fairly, and their tax money to be used responsibly and spent in ways that provide current and future benefits for the population at large. Given the problematic fiscal situation of the ABG, this should be an issue of priority concern. Without building sufficient trust however, the costs of tax enforcement will always outweigh the benefits.

**Finding 24:** There is both demand and ‘advise’ for more participatory governance and policy making. This will require however changes in attitudes and collaborative leadership at many levels, but also new ways of working. Top-down technocratic planning makes sense in terms of an administrative-bureaucratic logic. But it is not easily compatible with more participatory ways of governing and policy-
making, which require more patience, more process, and less immediate certainty about which results will be delivered by when. The circumstances of Bougainville provide however a strong incentive for participatory governance: it will help rebuild relationships and trust in the leadership, enable the authorities to tap into the energies and ideas of its citizens, and encourages the collaborative action without which none of the difficult issues in Bougainville can be overcome. Moreover, decisions that have gained broad consensus because many were involved in the process that led up to the decision, are more likely to get implemented.

7. Conflict-Sensitive and Peace Relevant Economic Development

Finding 25: ‘Coconut or copper’ – what society does Bougainville want to become? There is a urgent but non-existent public debate to be had about the development model that Bougainville wants to follow. This is not a purely economic debate; the choices, as Bougainvilleans have already experienced, have major social and cultural consequences. The end-of-spectrum options are on the one hand the fast track, capital intensive, larger scale, development model that is well represented by the Panguna mine but also by e.g. the Torokina Palm Oil project, and on the other hand, the slower, smaller scale, less capital intensive model. This is less profitable in absolute numbers but offers more equitable opportunities and benefits. The first approach implies a stronger engagement with and presence of ‘outsiders’, the latter has more opportunities to remain Bougainville driven and –owned. Bougainvilleans need to not that also the latter approach still relies on a cash economy, and will have social, cultural and political impacts.

Finding 26: The ABG’s Medium-Term Development Plan 2011-2015 (possibly only concluded in 2013?) doesn’t raise the question of development model options, but the 2010 Economic Development Policy wants to pursue both at the same time: “large scale industrial enterprises such as mining and broad-based economic development based on natural resources such as cash crops.” Nobody among the Bougainville population seems to know much about these policies and plans. Some countries in the world of have been able to combine both relatively well, others not so well. But combining both is easier in a large country than in the small geographical, demographic and social ‘pond’ that is Bougainville. As the Panguna mine shows, a big stone in a small pond has big ripple effects everywhere.
Finding 27: Can we afford ‘independence’? The BPA refers explicitly to ‘weapons disposal’ and ‘good governance’ as considerations – not for holding a referendum but for setting the date of the referendum. According to the Review of Autonomy Arrangements, its references to ‘fiscal self-reliance’ have a technical meaning and are not to be taken as another ‘condition’ that the Bougainville government has to be able to cover all its costs from internal resources. Nobody of course is enthusiastic about a government with no money, but the debate about the ‘economic’ or the ‘fiscal’ basis for ‘independence’, needs to be pursued in more precise terms and with reference to solid data and reliable projections.

Finding 28: The main driver for a capital-intensive model, and notably the issue of re-opening the Panguna mine, is not a considered longer-term development model, but the acute fiscal weakness of the successive ABG governments, which keeps it very dependent on grants from the National Government and development partners. The question is whether other ways of raising revenue (carbon trading was one option mentioned) have been fully explored, and whether the revenue available is used in the most efficient and effective manner? Governments that rely mostly on the extraction of natural resources to provide their income, have less incentive to build the governance relationship with their citizens, that enables the raising of revenue via taxation without extensive and expensive enforcement.

Finding 29: The people of Bougainville have different perspectives on the question of re-opening the Panguna mine (see Finding 1). But they do not have the relevant information to come to an informed opinion. An attempted ‘consultation’ process in the form of ‘Mining Forums’, is perceived as an attempt to convince people to be favourable to the re-opening of the Panguna mine rather than a genuine consultation. In that sense it increased the distrust. The most comprehensive, detailed and articulate criticism of how the issue is currently handled, and demand for what would make it possible for people – including women - to be able to make a decision based on free, prior and informed consent, is to be found in the ‘Women-in-Mining’ submission. Importantly, this submission also challenges the prevailing law, dating back to Australian Mandate-days, that gives ownership of the mineral resources underground to the state.

Finding 30: The people and possibly even the policy-makers in Bougainville, are not able to draw on relevant experiences of other countries, to assess political precedents regarding independence aspirations, or the different outcomes of different ways of managing one or a few major natural resources. Much of this could however be fairly easily made available with the help of the development partners.

Finding 31: There is a broad popular perception that the ABG in its focus on the Panguna mine has largely neglected other sectors, such as tourism or alluvial mining, but especially agriculture which provides the livelihood for most Bougainvilleans. Not surprisingly, there is considerable interest among Bougainvilleans for the smaller scale, slower development path. This not only because that is where their livelihoods lie, but also because they see it as less controversial and conflict-triggering, and more environmentally friendly. The years under blockade showed the remarkable resilience but also creativity and inventiveness of the people of Bougainville, vital capacities that are undermined by approaches that offer too much money too easily.
Finding 32: A strong demand for robust action on downstream processing and other enabling factors. Cash crops are well established in Bougainville agriculture, which at one point produced one third of PNG’s overall production of cocoa. There is widespread awareness that Bougainville only produces primary products and a strong demand for ‘downstream processing’. This could provide new jobs and skills, leave more value added in Bougainville, and improve its terms of trade. But rural Bougainvilleans acknowledge they also need access to credit (most can’t meet the terms and conditions of the Bank South Pacific), and need to develop technical, managerial and marketing skills, need more well organized local markets, access to timely and reliable (regional and global) market information, and revitalized agricultural extension services.

Finding 33: Disputes over land ownership and land use continue to delay or block large and small scale economic initiatives. Reportedly the ABG is still in the process of obtain the full powers and functions related to land. But even if it has, the challenge will remain. An attempt to open up some land for economic initiative has been the introduction of Integrated Land Groups. But this will still require that Bougainvilleans can minimize internal disputes, rivalries and jealousies and the pull of greed. Most importantly, the issue of ownership of resources beneath the soil remains contentious. Under current circumstances, more serious investors may hesitate about engaging in Bougainville, although more opportunistic entrepreneurs will exploit the ambiguities and controversies to seek to make a profit.

Finding 34: It is not particularly difficult – for Bougainvilleans – to set up a small scale ‘business’, but government support or protection (from crime) should not be expected. Entrepreneurs need to be prepared for the ‘wantok’ system under which family and friends behave as if they co-own the business, and have to avoid showing their wealth if they are successful. Research however suggests that it is very difficult for foreigners to set up a business in Bougainville, and that resentment can turn violent if they turn out to be too competitive.
B. SOME ACTORS.

1. Women

Finding 35: Women were active participants in opposition to how the benefits and costs of the Panguna mine were shared, and today demand recognition as key stakeholders in the debate about its possible re-opening. The ‘Rorovana incident’ in 1969 or the so-called 1974 ‘Panguna Riots’ were some of the high profile moments of women active in opposition. By and large, the discussions and negotiations related to the Panguna mine, in the past and again today, have been one of ‘men doing business with men’. The ‘Women in Mining’ submission is a strong and thoughtful demand for full participation.

Finding 36: Women played very important roles during the crisis, sometimes as supporters of the mobilisation and fighting efforts of the men, as victims of the violence and of the blockade, and in the peacemaking efforts to end the violence locally and reach a political agreement. Women participated in the preparations of their men to fight and at times provided information to them, though in Bougainville women did not themselves take up arms. They tended the new gardens in the hills and tried to manage the impact of lack of medicine during the blockade, suffered beatings, rape and forced marriage. As is well documented, women also became very active in reducing the violence, acting as connectors notably among Bougainvilleans fighting each other, often putting themselves at great risk. They were also prominently involved in the negotiations that led to the BPA.

Finding 37: Post-BPA, women have lost the prominence they had during the crisis and in the peacemaking. Some of the contributing factors to this seem to be the quick shift of attention to the ex-combatants; their exclusion from the first weapons disposal programme, the reassertion of traditional gender roles that orient women more towards subsistence farming (generating only modest cash incomes from sale in local markets) rather than cash-cropping, cultural bias against education for women (especially in south Bougainville); a climate of threat from guns but also other weapons; high levels of domestic and gender-based violence, lack of support for crisis-widows, teenage pregnancies and marriages, and very limited political representation at all levels (in the COEs, the House of Representatives, the Bougainville Executive Council, top jobs in the public service...). Though the matrilineal nature of Bougainville society (with the exception of parts of south Bougainville) is often mentioned, the actual respect for and influence of women, even in ‘matrilineal’ areas, seems to be diminishing. Outside actors have sometimes unwittingly contributed to this, but so too has the de facto exclusion of women from critical policy and legal discussions and negotiations, such as those regarding the Panguna mine, the Mine Bill, Land Policy etc.

Finding 38: Rivalries and disputes are affecting the strength of the Bougainville women’s movement, which does not seem a major vehicle for information exchange. The Bougainville Women’s Federation’s strength is weakened by leadership rivalries. International recognition of and learning and networking opportunities for some women leaders and organisations, to the neglect of others, have not helped in this regard. The lack of information and understanding among many women in Bougainville, and the absence of their voice at all level where governance decisions are being taken, suggests that the Bougainville women’s movement is currently not an effective channel for two-way information and communication.

Finding 39: The low participation of women in governance at local and central level, and the high level of gender-based violence in Bougainville, demand concerted action. A comprehensive framework for such exists in the 2013 Bougainville Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. It is a strong action-plan on women but does not address the equally important issue of engaging men on images of ‘gender’ and
‘masculinity’ in particular. As with other strategies and plans, the challenge will be dissemination, proper understanding and (collaborative) implementation.

Finding 40: When community mobilisation is inclusive or women are given a leading role for community development activities, women quickly demonstrate their potential and competencies. In Ramu constituency in Siwai district for example, collaborative action among all social groups is good, and women in the constituency were found to be knowledgeable about the essentials of the BPA. The ongoing monitoring and review of the IDIB projects, initiated by the World Bank with and through the Division of Community Development, shows the cost-effectiveness of women-led small scale community development projects, in which men are typically included. Training for women on financial management has been identified as one key contributing factor.

2. Churches

Finding 41: The churches of Bougainville have also been divided and can be dividers: The ‘crisis’ created internal divisions also within the respective denominations. Whether this is because clergy men followed or led their parishioners is not always clear, presumably both instances occurred. Sometimes reconciliations also had to take place among church leaders within the same denomination. Prior to and again after the ‘crisis’ however, different church denominations also ‘compete’ with each other for ‘followers’. That is why people in Bougainville see them as a ‘dividing’ factor. There is some movement to create more positive relationships and collaboration among the churches, through e.g. the Bougainville Christian Churches Association and the recent Bougainville Churches Conference.

Finding 42: The churches also act as connectors and healers. During the crisis, several church-leaders or church-inspired people contributed to the peacemaking efforts. The crisis presented them of course with a difficult situation. On the one hand people sought more ‘refuge’ and ‘support’ in the church, yet at the same time the influence of the church was diminished by the prevailing dynamics of family or clan infighting, and by the power of those with the guns. Post-crisis, church leaders and volunteers have been promoting and helping to facilitate local level reconciliations. They also try to provide healing, by engaging individuals as a whole, as a being with various dimensions including a strong spiritual one. It does not appear however that the churches are able to provide much welfare and practical-material assistance to e.g. widows with many children, due to lack of funding. The churches feel somewhat undermined by being bypassed by other actors, by their lack of financial resources, and by not getting strong recognition of the ABG and National Government.

3. Youth

Finding 43: Youth are a neglected, not a ‘lost generation’. The constant portrayal of youth in negative terms, as ignorant of custom and tradition, as disrespectful, troublemakers, abusers of alcohol and drugs, perhaps illiterate, is unhelpful and counterproductive. It is also not fair to the many youth who do not
exhibit such behaviour. Moreover, youth also see and experience the effects of trauma, violence and alcohol abuse among their parents and wider family, who are their primary role models. Teachers feel that often parents are not taking their responsibilities. And many youth see little prospects, even if they do well at school. Some youth have taken over the attitude of adults, that nothing can be made to happen without it being funded through grants and subsidies, or without their ‘labour’ being paid. But others are engaged in local initiatives such as the Peace and Integrated Skills and Research Institute or the Flexible Open Learning Education in Bana district.

**Finding 44:** Youth make up more than half the population. Yet their participation is not actively sought and their voices are not heard. Youth are not actively engaged in e.g. Village Assemblies, Councils of Elders, and their views are not heard and represented in the House of Representatives. Youth inclusion and participation in wider ABG governance cannot be left only to the Division of Community Development.

**Finding 45:** Youth initiative, ideas and creativity merit stronger support. There is some sponsoring of sports, but other youth initiatives and expressions, such as music, also merit attention and support. But youth also wants information and platforms to explore and express their ideas: youth debates, more youth forums, a Youth Parliament, young journalists and radio by and for youth, are all promising ideas. English is not the language of choice to maximize youth participation. Young people can also be supported by the Bougainville Business Association and others, to learn about how to set up a small business. Young people respect ‘tradition’, but also observe how e.g. reconciliation has been commercialized. They do want to explore new ideas and opportunities, and the spread of technology will make it impossible to stop that. But global research shows that people use the internet and new social media to join up with ‘like-minded’ groups. While this is positive in one way, it also creates new forms of ‘group-think’, so youth too need to be exposed to reasoned public debate.

4. **Veterans**

**Finding 46:** Whereto the Veterans’ Associations? Between ‘what society owes the veterans’ and ‘what the veterans can do for society?’ Three regional Veteran’s Associations were created at the time of the formation of the ABG, initially as the platform for credible selection of ‘candidates’ for the three seats reserved for ‘veterans’ in the Bougainville House of Representatives. Subsequently, attention shifted to the issue of social and economic ‘reintegration’ of the ex-combatants, hence the framing of the Division as that of ‘Veterans’ Affairs’. There certainly remain expectations among a number of ‘veterans’ of further financial benefits, an expectation also grounded in the experience of the BETA (Bougainville Ex-Combatants’ Trust Account) programme, which provided cash for former combatants to start up a livelihood, though mostly failed. Veterans, through the associations, in many places also provide local authorities a helping hand with maintaining some law and order. But the veterans’ associations have also been and are likely to remain platforms for political voice, with veterans for example expressing dissatisfaction with the implementation of the BPA in the form of petitions, street marches and open letters in the press.
Finding 47: What’s in a name: ‘veteran’ as a newly created social identity: The change from ‘ex-combatant’ to ‘veteran’ has been intentional, motivated by a recognition that ‘ex-combatant’ holds negative connotations of violence and brutality. But use of the label of ‘veteran’ reframes reality in deeper ways than just for the individuals concerned: it suggests that all fighters fought and risked their lives for the same, noble cause (independence?), which is a distortion of the truth, and diverts attention from those acts that could raise demands for justice. It allows the portrayal of all the suffering of the unarmed Bougainvilleans at the hands of their own fighters as “small things”, unavoidable side-effects of any struggle for freedom.

Finding 48: The existence of Veterans’ Associations may unintentionally crowd out other voices: Making former combatants ‘part of the solution’ is in principle a good move. But not all former combatants are (active) members of Veterans’ Associations and do not continue to present themselves in public as ‘ex combatants’ or ‘veteran’. They have taken on their former or new social identities and in that sense ‘moved on’. That new voice and perspective may not be well expressed through the Veterans’ Associations. The Division of Veterans’ Affairs is supposed to be dissolved by the time of the referendum – which leaves the question how long former combatants will continue to frame their primary social identity as such, and how long ‘Veterans’ Associations’ will persist? Equally important, compared to other societies that have gone through large scale violence, Bougainville seems to pay very little focused attention to the ‘victims’ of the ‘crisis’ – those who never armed and sometimes experienced threat, intimidation or violence from the PNGDF but also from one or more Bougainville armed factions. Many of them are also struggling with the psychological, social and economic impacts of what they experienced, but there are no ‘Victims’ Associations’ to express their plight – and pride.

5. Development Partners

Finding 49: Aid coordination can be improved. Reportedly some of the aid flows do not show up in the ABGs budgeting process. It also appears that the ABG’s Division of Planning doesn’t have a comprehensive and detailed overview of what aid-supported activities are being undertaken where, and what amounts of money are allocated for what. Such situation obviously does not enhance the ABG’s capacity to most effectively manage its financial resources and plan strategically. The ABG’s ‘Capacity Development Strategy’ also sends a clear message that it wants to retain ownership: “Please use our front door... and please take a seat in the living room and wait to be invited to enter the kitchen.” The office of the Chief Administrator is currently being strengthened, so that it can be an effective coordinating axis for the development partners.

Finding 50: In the eyes of Bougainvilleans, Australia and the UN generally have a broader ‘image’. New Zealand, Japan and the World Bank are only known or mentioned in association with ‘projects’ or ‘programmes’. These are in particular the ‘Healthy Communities’ programmes and support to the Community Auxiliary Police by New Zealand, the ‘Japanese bridges’ on the main road between Buka and Buin, and the World Bank’s IDIB (Inclusive Development in Post-Conflict Bougainville) programme. New Zealand’s enabling and supportive approach tends to be much appreciated, the World Bank’s application
process for the IDIB programme was roundly criticized as too technically demanding for most of Bougainville’s women’s groups.

Finding 51: Many Bougainvilleans, at all levels of society, express discomfort and suspicion about Australia, based on historical and contemporary grievances. The main historical grievances relate to Australia’s land laws, transplanted to PNG during the Mandate period, that gave ownership of all mineral resources to the state with is seen as in contradiction with Bougainville customary tradition; the Australian Mandate administration giving the green light for Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia and Bougainville Copper Limited to open up the Panguna mine without Bougainvillean consent, which is seen as something Australia was not allowed to do under the terms of the Mandate; the insensitive behaviour of Minister Charles Barnes during a rapid visit to Arawa in 1966 dismissing out of hand an increased share of the Panguna mine revenue for the local stakeholders. Already in 1962, Bougainvilleans presented grievances about Australia to a visiting UN mission and requested that the Mandate be transferred to the United States. Subsequent historical grievances relate to the material support (such patrol boats, helicopters) that Australia provided the PNGDF and that increased its attack and blockade capabilities during the ‘crisis; as well as the belief that Australian pilots flew some of the helicopters. Contemporary irritations refer to the excessively complex and demanding visum application procedures Australia imposes on citizens of PNG, while Australian citizens are given easy access to PNG. More important however is the widespread suspicion that Australia’s engagement with Bougainville today is largely driven by self-interest in the Panguna mine. Several Australian programmes are –rightly or wrongly- perceived through that lens. These include the Panguna Peacebuilding Strategy (which received support from a then AusAid programme and now from the ‘Strongim Pipol, Strongim Nesen’ Australia-supported programme) and even the ‘Render Safe’ operation in Torokina. Here again the popular historical narrative may be somewhat one sided: it tends to neglect for example the strong objection also of the Australian government against Julius Chan’s attempts to bring in Sandline, or the positive role of then Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Alexander Downer, in getting the negotiating parties to agree on the compromise regarding the referendum. That compromise unblocked a major obstacle to the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. The picture also overlooks that a significant number of (better-off Bougainvilleans) goes to Australia for further studies, advanced medical treatment etc.

Finding 52: A very sensitive issue for Bougainvilleans is Australia’s current position on the possibility of independence. There is a suspicion that Australia today prefers not to see Bougainville become independent. Some Bougainvilleans who read a recent report by the Australian Strategy Policy Institute (which should not be taken as official government policy) interpret it as such, and even as discreetly preparing the way for a possible Australia-led intervention as in the Solomon Islands. There are also Bougainvilleans who believe that at the time of the final negotiations of the BPA, when Bougainville leaders objected to the clause that leaves the final decision authority with the National Parliament, Australian diplomats convinced them with verbal assurances that the international community would use its diplomatic influence to have the National Parliament accept a clear vote pro-independence. PNG negotiators at the time may have understood the ‘diplomatic signals’ differently.

Finding 53: There is also significant discomfort with how Australia implements its aid to Bougainville. These relate essentially to the perceived cost of the Australian or Australia contracted advisors, their perceived way of operating, and suspicions about whose interests they are actually serving. The perception of Bougainvilleans is that too much of Australia’s aid goes to the cost of Australian or Australia-contracted advisors (from DFAT, the Civilian Corps or through private service providers such as Coffey International).
In telling terms, Bougainvillians refer to this as ‘boomerang aid’, meaning that much of it ‘returns to Australia’. What they want is ‘slingshot aid’, i.e. aid that really goes out of the sender’s hands. When it comes to the perceived ways of operating of the advisors, the main points are that a) they are seen as assuming that Bougainvillians have ‘no capacities’; b) as coming in therefore with pre-determined and not necessarily contextually appropriate solutions, rather than support the emergence and strengthening of Bougainville capacities and solutions that are the ‘best fit’ to the particular circumstances of Bougainville; c) as ‘doing’ too much rather than ‘advising’; d) as contributing to or at least not reducing the silo-fragmentation in the ABG administration; and e) as mostly also staying in Buka, unwittingly contributing to a too ‘top down’ approach and to the ‘gap’ between the ABG central political and administrative level, and the local authorities and local capacities and initiatives. Adding to the resentment is the almost total absence of Bougainvillean advisors. In light of the broader historical and political sensitivities about Australia among Bougainvillians, it is not surprising then that there are perceptions or allegations that Australian advisors are actually ‘spies for Canberra’ and/or might be serving the interest of CRA and BCL. People do not necessarily know or acknowledge that the ABG actually requested advisory support. Such criticisms are not unique to Bougainville and have cropped up in other countries where the critical importance of foreign aid and the number of advisors add up to a no longer so ‘light’ foreign footprint.

**Finding 54:** What are constructive ways to build greater trust between ‘Australia’ and the people of Bougainville and who can or has to do what? The discomfort with and suspicions of Australia’s ‘agenda’ create an unhealthy situation for everyone, not only for Australia but also for the ABG who is fairly dependent on foreign aid, and through them, for the people on Bougainville. As one Bougainvillean put it during the PDA conversations: “if we keep on having these suspicions, we don’t get anywhere.”

**Finding 55:** The UN does not come with major financial resources, but has a very good image in Bougainville. Much of that good image presumably relates to the constructive role also played by senior UN individuals during the negotiations that led to the BPA, and in particular through the UN Observer Mission (which ended in 2005). But UN staff in Bougainville have also played similar impartial, enabling, encouraging and supporting roles during more recent crises, notably in southern Bougainville. This is a role that Bougainvillians needed and appreciated during the peace-making process in the 1990s. The demand for ‘neutral third party’ support remains alive in Bougainville today.

**Finding 56:** A constructive collaboration of the UN and Australia in Bougainville, in which each plays to their strength, could bring significant benefits for all. Australia has the resources but an image-problem, the UN benefits from a positive image, but doesn’t have the same level of resources. Smart and constructive collaboration between both could enhance each’ effectiveness to the benefit of Bougainville.

**Finding 57:** Development partners are not making available to the Bougainville authorities and people, relevant experiences and approaches from other countries. Such ‘information’ and ‘learn’ could again help make better informed decisions and especially think more concretely about what they would like Bougainville to be in 20-30 years from now. To illustrate the point: Bougainvillians agreed that it would be highly relevant for them to be able to hear from people in Aceh and in Timor Leste, two parts of Indonesia that chose for continued autonomy and independence respectively, what drove their choices and in particular what have been their experiences since those choice were made. Along the same lines they might be interested to look at the experiences of Timor Leste and South Sudan, two newly independent countries that shortly after gaining their ‘freedom’, had to face up to serious internal
violence. Bougainvilleans can also learn from other countries with one or more very significant natural resources such as oil and/or gas, copper, bauxite, gold, and/or diamonds and how they have managed this. In several, these resources have been a significant driver of political violence or large-scale conflict (e.g. Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, South Sudan). A few are trying to manage these ‘national’ resources for the current and future well-being of the population (Norway, Chile, Qatar). In several others the ‘national wealth’ tends to be accumulated largely by a politico-economic-military elite (Angola, Russia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Nigeria) creating growing socio-economic inequalities. People in Bougainville are also not aware of global movements and approaches such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil Standard and the Palm Oil Buyers Scorecard, or the Open Budget and participatory budgeting movements. There is much learning to be had from these and other experiences, and the development partners are best placed to make it available and understandable.

**Finding 58:** Development partners (and national authorities) need to practice ‘Do No Harm’. ‘Do No Harm’ for several years now has been a widely recognized imperative, adopted and promoted also by the grouping of donors in the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. Its importance is explicitly confirmed for assistance being provided in ‘fragile situations’. Development partners (and national authorities) have ‘done harm’ by how they provided funding for reconciliation, paid Bougainvilleans allowances to participate in meetings, provided a possibly inflated number of ‘ex-combatants’ too easily with money to start livelihood activities as an ‘incentive’ to dispose of their arms, introduced the language of ‘peace dividends’ etc. This has sent the implicit message that there can be no peacemaking or peacebuilding without money, has commercialized reconciliation in Bougainville, created inappropriate and unsustainable expectations and demands, and privileged Bougainvilleans with better connections to the international actors.

**Finding 59:** Framework funding, with flexible responsive allocations within it, is preferable to ‘project-funding’. Certain actions, such as related to infrastructure, lend themselves well to ‘project’ design, with pre-set objectives and timeframes and budget allocations. But peacebuilding in essence is about changing perceptions, relations, mindsets and behaviours: that takes time and requires a sustained process-approach that adapts to the local circumstances. Similarly, participatory governance, without which no trust and effective collaboration between authorities and citizens can emerge, cannot be planned into the last detail and with predetermined ‘deliverables’. Bougainville society does not operate at the speed or rhythm that donor administrations want to see, real participation cannot be authoritatively orchestrated, and the nature of the ‘results’ or ‘solutions’ that Bougainvilleans will eventually come up with may not be what the development partners might have wished or anticipated. ‘Local ownership’ necessitates some relinquishing of ‘control’. These dilemmas can be overcome by framework funding: the provision of an only lightly-earmarked enveloppe, whose budget allocations are not heavily pre-determined in advance, but decided iteratively, as the action unfolds, based on regular review, learning and adaptive management. This can be framed within a ‘project-format’ but the planning will put more emphasis on intermediary and process-results, and implementation will require very adaptive process ‘management’.
C. PEACEBUILDING UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS.

Finding 60: There is potential and actual capacity in Bougainville. Even though ‘peacebuilders’ in Bougainville today feel that many people have become ‘bystanders’, and that the capacities of notably women and churches have weakened compared to their roles during the ‘crisis’, there are committed people that will and do mobilise to deal with new tensions, incidents, or the aftermath of earlier confrontations. They are often insufficiently recognized, encouraged and supported. Notwithstanding, the indications are that the legacy of the crisis is still fairly alive. The relative peacefulness today is not deeply consolidated, but partially the result of general ‘war-weariness’ (things have not been resolved but we don’t want to return to the ‘crisis’ situation again’) and perhaps, for part of the population, because they are patiently ‘waiting for independence’ as an expected ‘solution’.

Finding 61: Compared to peacemaking in times of crisis, peacebuilding years after the violence ended. In times of crisis and confrontation, the objective is clear: stop the violence, if possible disarm, and have the parties reconcile. Today, several Bougainvilleans still mobilise when there is an emerging crisis or work on the legacies of specific confrontations and crises. But ‘crisis intervention’ and ‘crisis management’ are only a prelude and aspect of ‘peacebuilding’. The goal of ‘peacebuilding’ is to nurture a viable society, that has the capacities at all levels to deal with the inevitable conflicts and disputes that will arise, but that also has strong capacities for collaboration across social, economic, and political divides. Most of that plays out at the level of ‘intangibles’, personal wellbeing in the heart and mind, interiorized values and norms that enable positive social life; restoration of broken relationships, a minimum of trust, positive thinking and positive actions.

Finding 62: The most critical structural role to be strengthened is that of ‘connector’. Bougainville needs more people and structures willing and able to act as ‘connectors’, among different individuals and groups at the local level, among different individuals and ‘divisions’ or organisations at the central level, and between the local and central level. Continued ‘separation’ (even if there is physical proximity) leads to or confirms distrust, misunderstandings, competition and potentially hostility.

Finding 63: Effective peacebuilding requires collaborative leadership rather than ‘coordination’. Peacebuilding is done first and foremost with and by real people, it is not a technical exercise of ‘project coordination’ or ‘integrated planning’ or ‘strategy development’. No plan or strategy will make people work together if their relationships are such that they are not willing or able to. This requires collaborative leadership: getting people to work together by making them see the interconnectedness of their actions, by modelling collaborative approaches and by providing incentives for collaboration and disincentives for fragmented and competitive behaviours.

Finding 64: There is a demand for learning, but training manuals will not be sufficient to learn the most critical skills. There seems a need for ‘training’ in conflict sensitivity, to at least reduce the instances where
harm is done unintentionally or unthinkingly. But mere intellectually understanding of ‘conflict sensitivity’ is not enough. The skill is in its application, and any application minimally requires a deep understanding of the ‘context’ and the dynamics among the key actors (context and dynamics will often vary from local area to local area). Manuals and classroom training typically cannot provide that essential component of insight. Other critical skills for peacebuilding can only be learned through practice and personal development. A first set of critical skills for effective peacebuilding relates to the ability to establish yourself as ‘trustworthy’: this includes for example the ability to reach out to and establish a basic relationship with people that one may feel initially uncomfortable with (e.g. members of a cult movement, former combatants, commanders of armed gangs, aggressive uneducated youth etc.) and to approach them with basic respect; to listen attentively and deeply; to ask relevant and ‘powerful’ questions – questions that take people to the heart of the matter and make them think; to address sensitive issues but in a careful and constructive way. A second set of critical peacebuilding skills relates to the facilitation skills that allow a connector to bring people across divides into conversation with each other. That implies the ability to deal with hostility and suspicion and other strong emotions such as pain, anger and hate; gradually moving the encounter to a more depersonalized and calmer consideration of the issues and problems, to eventually jointly develop a workable compromise that all can live with, even if it is not (yet) a ‘solution’. The third set of critical skills relates to the personal competencies and maturity required to play such roles: self-awareness about your own spontaneous emotional reflexes and how you are likely to be perceived, strong personal values, a healthy level of self-confidence and self-motivation, self-discipline, great patience and perseverance also in the face of inevitable set-backs etc. These are some of the skills that the PDA team has been practicing. These skills can be developed and strengthened through practice and with the help of mentoring and coaching. Some of this can be exercised in the safe space of a classroom. It is hard to convey however in a training manual.

Finding 65: Deep understanding of the context and culture, and of the current dynamics among key actors is essential. This definitely relates to outsiders who want to assist, but may also apply to Bougainvilleans who have been away for some years, or who operate in regions or districts that they know less well.

D. PEACEBUILDING ARCHITECTURES AND STRATEGIES.

1. Peacebuilding Architecture at the Central Level

Finding 66: Evolving architecture – evolving thinking about peacebuilding? Towards a whole-of-government approach to ‘peacebuilding’. The Bougainville Transitional Government, prior to the creation of the ABG, had a Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation, that recognized the many local initiatives ongoing and saw itself as supporting and complementing them. This disappeared in the first ABG administration under President Kabui, when ‘peace and reconciliation’ were absorbed into the President’s office. A Ministry and Division of Peace, Reconciliation and Weapons Disposal were then reintroduced by President Tanis in 2009. The Momis administration in 2010 then created the Division of Veterans’ Affairs, and relocated the mandate for ‘weapons disposal’ to it.

The advantage, in general, of formalizing the responsibility for a particular issue under a particular part of an organisation, is that it creates clarity about who is expected to drive the task, and allocates dedicated resources to it. The well-known risk is that it then becomes seen by the rest of the organisation/administration as ‘not their responsibility’. While the Mid-Term Development Plan 2011-
2015 elaborated the pillar of ‘peace and security’ in terms of the three Divisions: Law and justice, Peace and Reconciliation, Veterans’ Affairs and Weapons Disposal, it seems that in practice ‘peacebuilding’ in Bougainville became perceived as the responsibility of the latter two.

What this PDA reveals is that peacebuilding in Bougainville, as elsewhere, is not only about ‘reconciliation’ and ‘weapons disposal’. Looking at the drivers of conflict and the actual or potential roles of various actors, it becomes clear that other divisions, such as Law and Justice, Natural Resources and mining (which is very much involved in the Panguna Peacebuilding Strategy), Land Policy and Planning, Local Level Government, Community Development and Autonomy, are equally key. All of them also need to work with and be supported by the Divisions of Planning, Finance and Human Resources. The approval then by the Bougainville Executive Council, in late 2012, of the establishment of a ‘Peace and Security Management and Coordination Mechanism’, which is now moving forward as the Bougainville Peace and Security Council, is a potentially critical step towards a whole-of-government approach to peacebuilding – especially if overcomes the separation between ‘peace and security’ and ‘development’. Everything however will depend on the caliber of people that will be driving this: ‘architecture’, however well designed, is brought alive or not by the people inhabiting it. Members of this new Bougainville Peace and Security Council will have to be eminent ‘connectors’, model ‘collaborative leadership’, encourage inclusion and real participation, and base their advice on knowledge and learning.

2. Peacebuilding Architecture at the Local Level.

Finding 67: District and lower level Peace and Security Committees can do well, if they are grounded in local commitment and mobilisation, and nurtured rather than imposed upon. Local level initiatives for peace and security originated spontaneously already during the crisis. In more recent years, when the ABG sought to establish District Planning Committees, it was realized that little development could take place if there were significant peace and security problems. Currently, the best performing District and Security Committee is probably in Siwai district, where only some UN encouragement was needed to further build on the local initiative already underway to deal with the impact of the ‘Siwai crisis’. There are other District Peace and Security Committees, such as in Buin, Panguna, Torokina, with so far varying levels of capacity and effectiveness. The existence of District Peace and Security Committees also facilitates more effective inter-district dialogue and collaboration. There have also been more local mobilisations to address the many issues that people experience: a good example of this occurred in Bolave in Bana District, which led to the creation of an inclusive ‘Bolave Peace and Governance Committee’.

One key factor for success seems to be inclusiveness of all social forces: women, youth, churches, veterans, business people, administration etc. Presumably another key factor of success is collaborative leadership – people working as ‘connectors’, capable of promoting inclusion, convergence if not consensus, and collaborative action. District Peace and Security Committees can be an expression of ‘bottom-up governance’, where the ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ components of Bougainville’s hybrid governance structure work together. Experience of other countries shows that top-down attempts to replicate a locally created and locally successful initiative tend to fail. It is better to nurture the potential of more District Peace and Security Committees through inter-district exchanges where people can discuss, learn and find inspiration from each other.

Finding 68: The relationship of ‘money’ to the effectiveness of local Peace and Security Committees needs to be very carefully handled. This PDA encourages an integrated perspective on peace, security and
development. At the same time, Bougainville shows many examples where too much, too quick, too easy money corrupts, and effectively undermines peacebuilding or even fuels tensions and conflict. While they voice are allegations of corruption at the higher levels, Bougainvilleans also need to look at the temptations of money at the local level. The challenge therefore is to find the right balance between a holistic and integrated approach to the overall improvement of districts, which will require the handling of project and programme funds, and protecting the integrity of the mediation and peacebuilding efforts, by keeping (the promise of) money (other than some basic running costs) out of them. A separation may be needed between people that develop the role and competencies to be ‘connectors’, and those that develop the management skills to handle project and programme funds. The former direct the latter to ensure that money, projects and programmes are managed with great conflict-sensitivity and in ways that make them peace-relevant.

3. Managing the Konnuo Conflict.

Finding 69: The Konnuo conflict which flared in parts of southern Bougainville from 2006-2011 is an example of the multilayered nature that conflict in Bougainville can easily acquire. Local tensions and disputes in in Buin and Siwai districts pre-date the ‘crisis’ and contributed to vicious, localized, infighting during the ‘crisis’. Following the reduction in violence in 1997, there had been limited progress on reconciliation in these parts of southern Bougainville. The south also experiences population pressures, that increase land disputes, and there has been less investment in re-launching the cocoa industry there than in northern Bougainville. That renewed violent conflict broke out in 2006 is no coincidence. It has been associated with the establishment of the Noah Musingku’s Papaala Kingdom in Tonu (Siwai) in 2005, and the departure of the UN Observer Mission that same year. The latter had been a credible ‘3th party’ to whom armed groups had at least shown some respect, even if they were not part of the weapons disposal effort, such as the Meekamui Defense Force. It is said that the new situation on the ground enabled the Meekamui factions of the south to extend their influence (they also associated with Noah Musingku), which was seen as a threat by some former BRA in Buin district, but also by elements within the ABG. Influenced also by others in Buin who wanted to counter the Meekamui, the ABG gave the green light for a re-arming of some of the former BRA, as well as the police. They also got more arms from Torokina. Youth with already criminal records or with nothing to do, joined what became a diverse group of militia opposing the Meekamui. Violent confrontations for many years followed, including an attack on Musingku’s headquarters in November 2006, in which he was injured. The fuller story has additional strands to it, including intra-‘family’ disputes and a killing of one BRA commander by another one. Internal disputes, competition over scarce resources, pay back logic, leadership rivalries and resulting factionalism, as well as the availability of weapons and the risks of heavy-handed approaches are some of the ingredients in this story.

Finding 70: The Konnuo conflict is also an example of the potential of locally driven but carefully supported conflict management capacities - and its limitations. A number of factors contributed to achieving the cease-fire that, for the time being, ended the violence: as during the main Bougainville crisis itself, some commanders started exercising some restraint and explore ways to end the fighting; local Chiefs started coming forward as ‘mediators’ and were encouraged to do so; women and youth – including from across the divides- were brought together and included in the peacemaking process; different ‘peacebuilding actors’ came together to agree on a coordinated and coherent approach rather than a fragmented ad hoc one; the UN occasionally created the spaces and acted as the neutral third party convener and facilitator, and personal connections were used to engage all actors, including the Meekamui. But the situation has
not been sustainably ‘resolved’: the armed groups agreed to put their weapons under the responsibility of their respective commanders, and the Meekamui in the south so far are not brought into a political dialogue. This is beyond the area of influence of the local actors.

4. The Panguna Peacebuilding Strategy

Finding 71: A strategic approach to peacebuilding in and around Panguna is highly relevant and very challenging. As we have seen the past grievances and internal disputes over the Panguna mine became a major catalyst for what developed into a decade of violent ‘crisis’ in Bougainville. Controversy around the Panguna mine is alive today with regard to the question of its re-opening. Given that ‘Panguna’ was and is a core driver of conflict, a peacebuilding approach to it is inevitable and highly relevant. It is also very challenging as there are today even more overlapping and criss-crossing dimensions to the ‘Panguna conflict’: intra-family and possibly inter-clan conflicts; dynamics among owners of mine lease land and others whose environment has been affected by pollution from the mine; gender dynamics with women demanding proper representation; factional rivalries among the Meekamui in Central Region; dynamics between former BRA and Meekamui; long-standing demands for compensation from BCL; and competition over the current spoils from the scrap metal business. Everything therefore will depend on how peacebuilding is pursued here and who drives it.

Finding 72: A risky shift in focus? What is the primary objective of the Panguna peacebuilding strategy? The Panguna Peacebuilding Strategy document articulates three objectives: a) promoting ‘unity’, referring in the first place to the Meekamui factions in the Central Region; b) creating a peaceful and democratic environment under which the referendum can be conducted; and c) “create an environment that is conducive to conducting a dialogue on the eventual reopening of the Panguna mine which is so central to achieving all of the above MTDP policy and development priorities in Bougainville.” The Panguna Peacebuilding Strategy built on the rapprochement that had been taking place between the ABG and the Meekamui factions in the Central Region, and that had already found expression in the 2007 Panguna Communiqué and the 2010 Memorandum of Understanding. The origin of this rapprochement is said to have been the desire of the people within the ‘No Go Zone’ to see basic services re-established. The question of the mine came up later, first in the context of the review of the Bougainville Cooper Agreement. The – legitimate – concern of the ABG about its fiscal situation then seems to have imbued the issue of the re-opening of the mine with a sense of urgency. A sense of urgency however does not combine easily with the patient and painstaking work that may be required to make some sustained progress on so many, different but interwoven, strands of conflict. The fact that the Division of Natural Resources seems to be one of the ‘leads’ of the Panguna Peacebuilding Strategy, rather than Peace and Reconciliation where it might be expected to be located, may give the impression that the third objective might be a ‘last but not least’. For all the reasons highlighted in this PDA (the difficult issue of equitable sharing of benefits and costs; the fueling of internal rivalries and disputes among ordinary people and between ‘leaders’ by the prospect of significant amounts of money; and the issue of ‘foreigners’), the mine tends to be a ‘divider’, that is difficult to combine with the ‘connector’ objective of ‘unity’. The fact that Meekamui leaders are dealing directly with ‘representatives’ of mining companies, bypassing the ABG, underscores the point.

Finding 73: The Panguna Peacebuilding Strategy is potentially a good example of a participatory multi-stakeholder approach, but who are the ‘stakeholders’ for what, who represents them and whose interest counts most? There is some confusion about what ‘Panguna’ refers to: is it the district, its inhabitants and
the question of their social and economic development opportunities and what vision they have for their
district? Or is it the ‘mine’, in which case there is a wider set of stakeholders, that have been fairly directly
affected by the past operations of the mine, and that are more geographically disbursed (they include for
example people living in parts of Siawai, Bana and Torokina)? There are however also those who argue that
because the mine was the catalyst for a war that affected everyone in Bougainville, the whole of
Bougainville are ‘stakeholders’. That argument is further bolstered by those who believe that if BCL would
pay ‘compensation’, it needs to benefit the whole of Bougainville, and/or that if the mine is re-opened,
the revenue it generates should also benefit the population as a whole. There are in any case today also
new actors e.g. in the scrap metal trade, whose area of origin was never affected by the mine and who
therefore cannot claim stakeholder status based on ‘land’. What is their relative influence in the Panguna
process, compared to the landowners? Finally, as the Women in Mining submission makes very clear, the
women of Panguna do not feel represented at the moment, and demand all relevant and reliable
information so they can come to an informed opinion. They also challenge the current legal framework
that gives ownership of mineral resources to the state.

Finding 74: ‘Grievance’ and ‘greed’ but where is the ‘vision’? The dynamics and debates around the
Panguna mine often seem driven by ‘grievance’ (the damages done in its past operation, for which
compensation is demanded) or ‘greed’ (grabbing a share of the more immediate or longer-term profits to
be made, be it from the scrap metal trade or a re-starting of mining operations). As mentioned before,
there has not yet been a broad public debate about what Bougainville wants to be in 20-30 years from
now, what sort of society Bougainvilleans want their children to grow up in, and what economic
development model it wants or needs to adopt to achieve it. But the same applies to the districts and
regions of Bougainville: what vision do the people of Panguna district and of the Central Region have for
their areas in 20-30 years from now?

5. The Peace and Security Strategy Framework

Finding 75: The Peace and Security Strategy Framework offers great potential, if it can be realized. It is too
early to say how the new ‘Peace and Security Strategy Framework’ will turn out in practice and reframe
how the difficult issues Bougainville is struggling with, will be approached. It must emphasise the deep
connection of ‘development’ with ‘peace and security’. It has the potential to be a catalyst for more
decentralized and bottom-up, conflict- and gender-sensitive programming, that provides the ‘best fit’ to
the variable conditions at local level. It can be a driver of more participatory planning, review and
evaluation, which works with existing strengths and commitments rather than emphasise the evident gaps
and weaknesses. It can do so if it does not rely on money as the major ‘incentive’. It can open up the
spaces for information exchange, and facilitated debate. But its effective implementation will require the
flexible framework planning and budgeting mentioned above. All of which may require some changes in
the prevailing ways of working of the ABG and the development partners. Admittedly, change is painful,
but so is the status quo.
III. LOOKING FORWARD.

A. THE 2015 ELECTIONS.

Finding 76: The people of Bougainville are not now able to make an informed choice in what may be the most critical elections in their contemporary history. The 2015 elections in Bougainville are going to be among the most important in Bougainville’s recent history. The government and parliamentarians (in the House of Representatives and the National Parliament) who will emerge from these elections, will have the responsibility to deal with the referendum, its outcome and aftermath. All the evidence from the PDA exercise signals that Bougainvillians today are not in a position to make a well-informed choices about whom they want to lead them through the critical five years after. They don’t have and haven’t been helped to correctly understand the relevant information on the issues, and seem generally disenchanted with the quality of leadership of the ABG. This will not be remedied just by the election campaigning – other action with and for the Bougainville population is urgently needed to ensure that voters are able to ask the right questions of the candidates, and properly assess the answers they hear.

B. THE REFERENDUM.

Finding 77: Most people of Bougainville are confused about essential facts related to the referendum. Most of them are not aware that there is five year ‘window’ period, don’t know who decides on the date, and don’t know or correctly understand the BPA references to ‘weapons disposal’ and ‘good governance’ as factors to take into account in deciding the date. More importantly, some are led to believe that that it will be a ‘referendum on independence’, rather than independence being one of the perhaps more than two options. Many Bougainvillians are also not aware that the ultimate decision authority resides with the National Parliament, some think it is entirely up to them or to e.g. ‘the UN’. Notwithstanding the experience of twice having found no response to a unilateral declaration of independence, they are not now paying attention to the fact that a ‘sovereign Bougainville’ would have to be recognized by other states. Some do not know what a ‘referendum’ is.

Finding 78: ‘Sooner rather than later’ and ‘We are not ready yet’: two current strands of opinion about the timing of the referendum.

a) ‘Sooner rather than later’: Those who feel that the referendum/independence should take place as soon as possible, argue that the current situation is one of stagnation and will not improve with further delay; that currently Bougainville is unable to actually manage its own affairs including its relations with aid donors and possible investors and trading partners as everything has to go through PNG which is stalling, and that no country that opted for independence was fully prepared at all levels and in all sectors. PNG itself did not have ideal conditions in place before it became independent in 1975. Only independence and the full ability to manage its own affairs, in their view, will allow Bougainville to strengthen its economic development and governance. One interlocutor also felt that if the referendum continued to be delayed, the new generation of Bougainvillians who did not fight and die for ‘independence’, might lack the passion for it. With regard to the specific pre-condition of ‘weapons disposal’ in the BPA, the supporters of this view hold that weapons disposal has been officially certified some years ago and that the current weapons still around are to be considered a law and order problem but not a political obstacle.
b) ‘We are not ready yet’: Those who feel that ‘we are not ready’ for the referendum/independence, feel that improvements are first required. With varying emphasis they point at: outstanding reconciliations need to be concluded; weapons need to be disposed of; unity needs to be established; infrastructure needs to be further rebuilt; economic investment and development especially in the non-mining sector needs to have increased; governance in Bougainville needs to improve and the capacities for governance strengthened, before a referendum should be held. Supporters of this view argue that Bougainville should not ‘rush to independence’ as PNG did in 1975. This perspective should not however be interpreted as a call to postpone the referendum even beyond 2020.

There is meanwhile no public awareness of the possible political complications of organizing the referendum in the 2015-2017 period, which will see elections in Bougainville (2015), campaigning (2016) and then and elections PNG-wide (2017). These will be years of already heightened political temperatures, and likely some changes in the political leadership and membership of the respective parliaments. The Review of Autonomy Arrangements also points at some important ‘technical’ issues such as who is eligible to vote and who will manage the referendum that have hardly advanced.

Finding 79: There is little public awareness and thought given to the possible dilemmas for Bougainvilleans whose primary centre of interest is in other parts of PNG – some of whom are part of the executive or legislative branches of national government, or hold positions in the public service there. This is a sizeable population with significant political, economic and intellectual capital, and an at times uneasy relationship with the ABG leadership. Should Bougainville become independent, would they be able to hold dual citizenship or have to choose? If they can have dual citizenship, where do they have to pay taxes? If they are business people, what are the practical implications of switching from national to ‘international’ business? And will independence turn children of ‘Bougainvilleans’ who are being sent to other parts of PNG for continued education, into ‘foreign students’, for whom different rules and regulations and perhaps fees, apply?

Finding 80: There is no public awareness and thinking about possible risk scenarios around the referendum itself, and how to prevent and proactively manage them. Some possible risk scenarios are: the referendum takes place in a manner that is not free and fair or alleged to have seen too much voter intimidation; the referendum is free and fair but voter turnout is low (admittedly an unlikely scenario); the referendum results in a significantly divided vote – there is not a large majority in favour of one option, but say a split of 63% for and 37% against. The risk of such latter scenario would increase if the split coincides more or less with former BRA-BRF divides or regional divides. When presented with such possible scenario, Bougainvilleans felt that it would lead to violence. Another possible risk scenario is that of a fair but not overwhelming majority pro-independence, which contributes to hesitation within the National Parliament. That would raise the political temperature and much could then depend on what position the influential international actors then take – or not. In a problematic scenario, some would recognize Bougainville’s independence and other not. This latter scenario is no fiction but the reality e.g. for Kosovo, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Finding 81: What are the options and what do they imply in practice? Less than a year before the referendum window opens, there are Bougainvilleans who believe it is a ‘referendum on independence’, most others believe that there will be two choices: independence or remaining part of PNG with (effective) ‘autonomy’. If there are other possible options, there is no public awareness of them as yet. Some Bougainvilleans wonder what the practical implications are of the choices. The technical answer that it
means that Bougainville will then also have responsibility over its own currency, defense and international relations, is not enough. ‘Sovereignty’ is not only ‘freedom’ but carries with it great responsibilities and obligations, and will still present significant challenges.

Finding 82: There is little public awareness let alone reflection on possible risk scenarios irrespective of the political status of Bougainville. The fact that Timor Leste and South Sudan descended into serious internal violence, not too long after independence should underscore that even independence doesn’t make all internal fault lines disappear. Some of the possible risk scenarios, irrespective of whether Bougainville remains an autonomous region of PNG or is independent, could be: continued factional standoff that periodically escalates into fighting; large scale capital-intensive but conflict-insensitive investment projects that create new or fuel old resentments about the sharing of benefits and costs, increased socio-economic inequalities among Bougainvilleans, and the erosion of Bougainville ‘custom’ and ‘tradition’; persistent fiscal weakness of the Bougainville government, maintaining a vicious circle of discontent and disconnect between government and population; or many people losing significant amounts of money if the U-Vistract system collapses or is forced to close. Precedents in e.g. Albania and Russia signal this latter situation can generate quite some social and political turmoil.

WHAT DOES THIS PICTURE TELL US?

Section for open discussion

Thinking about Priorities: The PDA is expected to feed into a Peacebuilding Priority Plan. But everything mentioned can be considered important and a ‘priority’. Yet it is not possible to do everything at the same time, especially if resources and capacities are limited. So ‘priorities’ need to be established. In doing so, it might be helpful to reflect why something might become a ‘priority’. There are various possible reasons e.g. because it

- is ‘urgent’ (‘urgency’ only has meaning in a context)
- is a necessary prior step in a sequence (i.e. it must be done first before we can tackle the next step)
- affects a large number of people
- affect a smaller group of people, but that smaller group is important in the wider dynamics of a particular context
- is likely to have a ‘calming’ effect on a tense situation / may slow down a negative trend / may ‘prevent’ a negative scenario from arising
- is it a central/fundamental issue (such issues however tend to be deep-seated, very complex and interconnected with many other issues, which makes them very hard to tackle head on – and if you do, a long-term approach will be required, because there are no ‘quick solutions’)
- it is ‘manageable’ and something that we can hope to have a positive influence on in the not too distant future (the ‘low hanging fruit’ approach: it enable us to have some ‘relative success’ that generates positive momentum we then can further build on, though by itself it does not ‘resolve’ the bigger challenge)
- no one else is working on this (i.e. other issues can be recognised as a priority in a given context, but because other actors are already working on it, this group or programme may decide to focus on something; alternatively this group can still decide to work on something that others are already working on, if it has become clear that the approach by others has some important limitations or short comings)
- what else?

The What, the How and the Who: Peacebuilding is a lot about the ‘how’ and the ‘who’ (by whom, with whom). Peacebuilding planning therefore cannot limit itself to identifying the ‘what’. Several of the key issues (the ‘what’) highlighted by the PDA are well known. But more often than not, progress on them so far has been limited. The reasons for that may have to do with the ‘how’ and the ‘who’. So these merit focused attention in further strategizing.