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KUP WOMEN FOR PEACE: WOMEN TAKING ACTION TO BUILD PEACE AND INFLUENCE COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

Women have played, and continue to play, a prominent and critical role in conflict resolution and peace-making processes in many different parts of the world. Women in the highlands of Papua New Guinea are no exception. Drawing on my experience as a founding member of Kup Women for Peace, I shall discuss the origins, character and progress of some recent women's initiatives in Simbu Province directed at stopping endemic tribal fighting and building the foundations of a just and sustainable peace. There are two overlapping dimensions: tribal fighting and violence directed against women and girls, which I call gendered violence.¹

INTRODUCTION

This is the story up to December 2003 of a women's group in the highlands of Papua New Guinea which has managed to break through the custom and practice of tribal fighting. These women work in a tribal fight conflict zone which over thirty years of sporadic clashes has gained the Kup Sub-District of Simbu Province the name 'cowboy country', a place where only the ruthless survive. After living in misery for too long the women decided they would have to take action about this 'custom' which continues to bring about destruction, death, and suffering.

Women stopping tribal fights is not a common sight, though women have intervened in some parts of the highlands in tribal fight situations, as described by Allan Rumsey in regard to the Nebilyer Valley of Western Highlands Province (Rumsey 2000: 142). He describes how a group of women, all wearing shirts bearing the national emblem of Papua New Guinea, marched in between the opposing armies and exhorted the men on both sides to lay down their arms and go home. They also carried with them the national flag, which they planted on the battlefield. They initiated peace by bringing food and cash for both parties. The men accepted their offer and did as they were told.

In a different scenario, in a matrilineal society, Bougainville women who had power over land negotiations protested against mining and the taking over of land in 1969 (Stent 1970: 11). Though they had power in traditional times, they were 'ordinary women' in the eyes of the colonial administration and therefore their protest was overlooked. Eventually the government took their land through the use of police force. The landownership issue remains explosive. As reported by Marilyn Taleo Havini, these women have not given up. They have formed forums, held meetings, attended formal meetings where the men are now negotiating over land rights; and even while living in situations where they

**SARAH
GARAP**

The contribution
of AusAID to
this series is
acknowledged
with appreciation.

felt 'less than human' they are still fighting for peace and normalcy. Such political activism by women in Melanesia receives very little recognition (Havini 1999: 43). No doubt there are other stories of women's heroic interventions elsewhere, both recorded and unrecorded.

These two women's groups, one from Bougainville Island and the other from Simbu Province in the highlands region, are examples of the diversity of traditional institutional structures active in Papua New Guinea. While the incident in Western Highlands Province as reported by Rumsey may be a one off event, Kup Women for Peace and Bougainville women's groups have been relentless in their effort to build peace. I will focus on Kup Women for Peace, which is less well known.

Kup Women for Peace (KWP) was built on the collective effort of leading women activists in Kup Sub-District to address the issues of tribal fighting and violence against women and children, and to build peace among the various clans and tribal groups. They used their tears as weapons for peace and through this brought about a process of re-thinking by the men who were involved in the fighting. They have worked with the local police, churches, the Tribal Watch Group, Village Courts and others for peace, to safeguard people's human rights, and to promote civic pride and self-employment opportunities. It is a big task in an area known not only for continual tribal fights, but also for violence against women and witch-hunts.

It is in the absence of a government presence, or the lack of the processes of law and justice, that these women mobilized their available resources, in particular 'their social roles as mothers and carers'. At great personal risk, they continue to work to prevent violence and to build peace.

CONTEXT

The Kup Sub-District is part of Simbu Province in the rugged PNG highlands. It is situated south of the Kerowagi District Administration Centre, from which it is separated by the Whagi River. To the west, it borders with Minj District in the Western Highlands Province and, to the east, Dom Sub-District in the Kundiawa District. According to the 2000 census, Kup has a population of 24,000 while the total population of Simbu Province is 260,000.²

The area close to the Wahgi River is swampy grassland while the hinterland is forested and very mountainous. Those who live close to the Wahgi River are blessed with plentiful vegetables

and garden produce due to the fertile land. Income earned from garden produce can bring approximately 50-100 Kina (US\$15-30) a month, which is considered a good income compared to other parts of the province where the land is not so fertile.

Kup is a comparatively undeveloped area in Simbu Province, due largely to the area being away from the main trunk roads. Government services in Kup previously comprised eight community schools, a health sub-centre, a police station and road linkages into most of these areas. However, the roads are not maintained and are impassable by vehicles and are therefore mostly unused. The major cash crop is coffee, but due to road problems and lack of proper market infrastructure the ability of people to get their produce to markets is restricted and the income level of the majority of people is low. Hold-ups by *raskols* (criminals) are sometimes a problem, and often involve the stealing of coffee bags.

Kup's under-development is also due to another major problem, tribal fighting. There has been a succession of major fights since 1971. Because of the high incidence of lawlessness the area is frequently referred to as the 'cowboy country' or 'outlaw country'.

The tribal fighting in 1999 was worse than other tribal fights people had experienced in the past. Many people were killed. Whole villages were burnt down and women were raped. Women and even children were killed and public servants ran away as they too were attacked. The Kup government station was closed and has since become overgrown. Government services such as schools, the health centre and police station were closed and roads were blocked to prevent people from entering enemy territory. People began to migrate out of Kup. Those who remained together built big villages (a new practice) either on mountain ridges or in deep gullies for safety purposes. As a result, large areas have become barren and empty. The village courts ceased operation due to the tribal fighting and also because the magistrates had not received their allowances since 1997.

In this context there was no process of law and justice so life became a matter of the survival of the strongest. Young men with guns replaced the authority of traditional leaders. Traditional *brukim suga* (breaking sugar cane) peace ceremonies have not been effective. It is now rare for offenders to be convicted for their crimes because no one dares to tell the law enforcement authorities about illegal and criminal activities.

In early 2002, the police returned to Kup with four staff. However, they provide only a minimal presence. Quite recently, at a meeting of a working committee on efforts to restore government services in February 2003, the Police Commander for Kup, Sergeant Major Kerenga, said that the police have yet to make one single arrest since their return. He challenged the elites and community leaders of Kup to assist in efforts to restore justice if they were serious about upholding law and order.

KUP TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND ALLIANCES

There are twelve tribal groups in Kup and they speak three different languages (see Appendix One). Each tribal group has its own clan groups. Traditionally, the clans of each tribe would consolidate as a fighting unit ready to oppose the neighbouring tribe, thereby maintaining tribal alliances internally. There also have been alliances between tribes. The Kumai tribe, for example, has been an ally of the Bandi (or Bari) tribe while the Endugla tribe was an ally to the Golukup and Tuimuikup people of Western Highlands Province and the Dom people of Kundiawa District to the east. These traditional alliances were established in the ancestral times but came to the fore in fights between 1971 and 1993.

After 1993 tribe and clan solidarity began to weaken and clan warfare erupted within tribal groupings. As fighting has broken out amongst smaller groupings, the older alliances are now only a memory. Today, alliances are formed to oppose other clans or sub-clans within the same tribe. This could be a major shift related to election competition between candidates belonging to different clans.

TRIBAL FIGHTS IN THE PNG HIGHLANDS: CAUSES AND IMPACTS

Tribal fighting in the highlands has become worse in recent decades and more deadly with guns replacing bows and arrows and man-to-man physical combat. In the stories collected by Mary Kini (the Coordinator for KWP), the older folks reflected that

It is so different now. Guns are used and anything that is alive is being attacked, causing so much pain and destruction and with no sense of remorse. We had rules

governing tribal fights which included the nature of 'wrong done' which warrants a fight to erupt.

Villagers were exasperated: 'So much for believing in Christianity! We still have so much hate for each other, let alone following government rules and regulations'.

In the Kup area, as in other parts of Simbu Province and the highlands, the male child is expected to learn the ways of his elders and he therefore joins the men folk in warfare and other activities. Men continue to treat fighting as a game between groups and increasing numbers of young men are participating.

This new kind of fighting has become more and more accepted as normal in several highlands provinces. Any small conflict can cause a fight because allied clans must support one another and the enemy clans must engage in the fight. Arguments and conflicts often arise when people die. For example, there may be a suspicion of sorcery or of an intent to murder, though evidence would show that the deaths were caused by road accidents, acts of God or misadventure. Avenging damaged pride is another common cause of fighting.

During a 'Law and Order' summit in Enga Province in August 2003, two school students from Highlands Lutheran International School presented papers on how tribal fighting has affected education in Enga.³ Their boarding school suffered when its main building, including five classrooms, a computer laboratory, a library, and the main office, was burnt down in 2001. One student, Irene Reto, said, 'These ignorant fighting tribes had nearly closed down a dedicated school that had given quality education to many Engan and Papua New Guineans for more than forty years. ... The school was innocent but we still got punished anyway' (Reto 2003). Another student, Ann Marie Potane, quoted the prominent anti-corruption campaigner, lawyer and diplomat, the late Sir Anthony Siaguru: 'The causes of crime are complex. A symptom of society in transition, crime proliferates where modern society cannot provide a positive role for all' (Potane 2003). She stated that the tribal way of life in most instances is not compatible with western ideals. However, in order to compete in this global community one must be flexible and adopt western values while clinging onto one's rich cultural heritage. She identified social inequalities as the root cause of law and order problems; 'have-nots' are jealous and dissatisfied and this problem is compounded by tribalism. She took the burning down of the school on Ambulini tribal ground as an example

stating that the enemies of the Ambulini tribe wanted to destroy what they did not have.

The general feeling at the time of the summit was that people have had enough of tribal fights, the killing of innocent people and the disruption to normal life. They are seeking solutions to stop fights and unnecessary acts of violence. Police Commissioner Sam Inguba at a ceremony in Wabag organised by the Enga provincial government for recruitment of police reservists commented that 'leaders were showing concerns about law and order problems and were finding solutions' (*The National*, 26 Aug. 2003).

The nature and level of violence varies widely across the highlands and different parts of Simbu Province. Community leaders in the Dinga No. 2 area of Sina Sina Yongomugl District stopped tribal fighting in 1974. Yet, the neighbouring tribe of Dinga No. 1 faces continual tribal fights, sometimes twice a year. Warfare is not an irresistible urge. The Ku people of Yongomugl constituency, within the same district, have strongly declared by (unwritten) community laws that everyone should work towards building permanent buildings and install electricity, water supplies, and development activities to promote better living standards. They further declared that they would neither demand nor accept compensation for any wrongdoing done or suffered by any member of the tribe. This Ku community is now referred to as the 'model modern village' in Simbu Province.

Peaceful development is possible. The Domil community in Western Highlands Province is a self-made community which has dealt with all its socio-economic problems. After twelve years (since 1991) of self-help programs on self-governance, social and economic activities, they now boast of having no law and order problems. People are fully employed on their own clan land, build semi-permanent western style houses, process and export their coffee overseas, and attend to their own health and education needs.

TRIBAL FIGHTS IN KUP

According to Thomas Tumun, twelve different substantial tribal fights were fought in Kup between 1971 and 2000 (Tumun 2001). He partly blamed the Kup people for their lawlessness, however he placed a lot of the blame on the Provincial Government for withdrawing its manpower, resources and normal government services in 1977 and neglecting Kup until 2000. Appendix Two includes Tumun's list of all the tribal fights that occurred within the Kup Sub-

District over the last thirty years and the causes of those fights.

The Kup Sub-District was established in 1960 and everything was reported to be peaceful until 1971 when the first tribal fight erupted between the Kumai and the Endugla tribes. From 1971 to 1990, the main cause for tribal fighting was adultery and drunken brawling (Tumun 2001). A 1989 fight between the Bandi and Endugla tribes branched out to include the Dom tribe. A Bandi woman who was seven months pregnant and her son were murdered while in their garden collecting food. The Doms killed them because they were from their enemy tribe. The Bandi retaliated and the fighting became full scale, causing much death and destruction.

The major fights between tribes ended in 1990. These were followed by fights between fragmented lineage groups. The main causes listed by Tumun include election-related fights and rape (Tumun 2001). A ban on alcohol by the Provincial Government in 1996 has helped to reduce the number of fights caused by drunken brawling. Though not listed as a cause for fights, thefts of garden food, assaults, intimidation, swearing and insults by rascals, *raskol pasin*, also erupt into major tribal fights.

Many of those who died in the 1993-94 fights died not from gun wounds but from not seeking medical treatment on time. The nearest Health Centre was situated on enemy land and therefore those fighting this tribe could not access medical help or facilities, for fear of being attacked in the hospitals.

The most recent fight between the Teminkup and Bonukup brother clans started in June 2002 as a result of the national election violence and lasted only three weeks. The other major clans and tribes appealed for peace and did not join in the fighting. The Kungai Graiku who were traditional enemies of the Teminkup showed brotherhood by offering them food and land to settle on when their village was burnt and four of their people were killed. The fight formally ended with a traditional *brukim suga* peace ceremony in November 2002. This was one of the fruits of the work of the KWP. The KWP was instrumental in settling the dispute and ensuring that the fight only lasted for a short time.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN CAUGHT IN THE CROSS FIRE

The old men and women in Kup say that fighting in the past was not like the fighting of recent years. Fighting in the past was more like a

rough game where people fought to wound each other but not to kill. They describe how conflicts were resolved in the past and how human lives were respected. In those days, women and children were not harmed or else the men who attacked women and children would be called 'women' for attacking those were unable to fight back. Traditional law demands that tribal fighting be done only on the battlefield by strong young men. Old men, women and children were not attacked. However, if anyone entered the battlefield while the fighting was going on, then he or she was considered to be involved and therefore could be wounded.

These rules have not been observed in the last twenty years or so. Women and young girls have become the target for vengeance to shame and provoke the enemy. People have used guns and killed with ease, without remorse. There has been mass destruction of property. This is also echoed in Allan Rumsey's story of women as peacemakers in Western Highlands Province, and in the presentations made by the students from Enga Province (see above).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Gender violence is an area most people find hard to address in Papua New Guinea (Garap 2000: 161). Even when there is no clan warfare, violence against women is an endemic problem. In the Kup area, and in Simbu Province as a whole, many people, particularly women, are not aware of their basic human and legal rights.

Women are often targets of revenge for tribal fights and rape is quite common in these situations. Two or three cases of rape are reported each week. The use of firearms and the damaging of property during tribal fighting also contribute to the silent suffering of women and children. Women suffer when their husbands and sons get killed. Women are raped, even girls as young as seven or ten years of age are raped. Women are the ones who have to run for fear of their lives, sometimes pregnant or with babies and taking what little property they are able to carry with them.

To provide just a few 'snapshots' of the situations women experience:

- In 2001, a man killed his wife after she had run away from him to her own village.
- In late September 2002, a seven-year old girl was pack raped. She was walking with her father when the incident happened. The father was threatened and therefore was powerless. She was later taken to the gang's village where

the elders admonished the gang members and sent the girl back to her father. This matter was not reported to any law enforcement authority though it was public knowledge. The injury done to the girl and the anguish and pain of her father were considered to be part of their suffering for belonging to the enemy tribe.

- Women are the main targets of witch hunts, being regularly accused of sorcery when someone falls ill or dies. Sorcery beliefs are strongly held and those suspected of practicing sorcery are put to the most terrifying pain to get them to confess to their evil deeds, whether true or not. They can be burnt or buried alive, thrown into the Wahgi River, or drowned or chopped to death. Sometimes family members of a suspected sorcerer are made to suffer the same pain or death. The whole household can also be made responsible for someone's death and therefore they all have to suffer. Even children are killed sometimes.

Polygamous marriages are quite common in Kup. Young girls between the ages of thirteen and sixteen are enticed into believing that they will have an easier life if they marry a person of wealth, power, and status. Women in these relationships are expected to be strong and capable enough to make their own gardens and look after their own children. Women and children in these relationships suffer more now than in the past owing to the impact that socio-economic changes have had on women and children in rural areas.

During the Human Rights Day celebration in December 2002 (see below), Michael Agua, a high school teacher and community leader, said that he did not want the gathering to be a waste of time. As he said,

there is no law and order or justice system here in Kup. Women are raped regularly, which is taken as seriously as school children stealing pencils, or stealing *kaukau* (food) from a garden. Women are accused of sorcery and killed. Widows are abused and forced to marry or have sex against their will. Moreover, these days, young girls are forced to marry businessmen or moneymen against their will. In addition, most of us men tend to practice polygamy. There are no women's human rights in Kup.

Agua appealed to community leaders to address this issue through policy directives and meaningful programs. His statement echoes that made by the judges of the Papua New Guinea Supreme Court in their 1990 *Annual Report*: 'There is no consideration in any breakdown of marriage for a the men's neglect or their desertion or their mistreatment.... Men treat

women clearly as property and when women wish to exercise their equal rights guaranteed under the Constitution, men create trouble' (Papua New Guinea Supreme Court, *Annual Report by the Judges* 1990, quoted in Zorn 1994/5: 174).

KUP WOMEN FOR PEACE: HOW THE WORK FOR PEACE BEGAN

In early 2000, at a women's meeting in Kerowagi, women from Kup met for the first time after a devastating tribal fight in 1998, which according to them was the 'worst ever experienced'. Many had lost loved ones, houses and properties were destroyed, and villages around Kup government station became a total desert as trees and vegetation were also destroyed. People migrated out of Kup and their traditional land to live with relatives in other parts of Simbu Province, and elsewhere in PNG. Everyone suffered, but particularly women, children, and the elderly. Having met after so much loss and suffering, women from four different 'enemy tribes' had to hug each other and cry. The rest of the women there also shed tears and openly cried with them. Three women declared, 'we are already victims of warfare. It cannot get any worse. Let us give our lives to work for peace.'

KWP started with four women (the fourth person was not a local person, but she had a role in guiding the process). The group now has ten women and seven men who are the key people in its work and progress. The women, in particular, have been greatly empowered by their involvement in the KWP.

The mission of the KWP is to create a peaceful society and promote sustainable livelihoods. Their three goals are to:

- stop tribal fights and ensure respect for law and order;
- protect women's rights and increase women's role in decision making; and
- promote sustainable livelihoods.

The KWP logo is 'Tears and Love Heals, Cleans and Builds' (Figure One). The design has a rainbow in the background signifying love, a crying woman who is trying to overcome the custom of tribal fighting, a man with bows and arrows and a young man looking on, a sugar cane plant and a bundle of sugarcane signifying the numerous *brukim suga* ceremonies that have been an ineffective 'band aid' in past efforts to negotiate peace in Kup.



Figure One: The KWP Logo

The objectives and strategies of the KWP are to:

- increase public understanding of the dangers of tribal fights and all forms of violence against women and children by collecting stories, providing awareness and education programs, conflict resolution training and developing a proper complaints referral system;
- empower women to become more active in decision making and develop women leaders;
- mobilize community support and advocate for legal and policy reform at local, sub-district and provincial levels (this includes promoting a Surrender and Amnesty Program); and
- assist in the education and provision of appropriate technology resources to promote self-reliant activities and rural employment.

The group has established contacts in twelve major villages of Kup. The KWP collective (previously called the Management Committee) is comprised of members from:

- the Tribal Watch Group (strong men from major clans whose role is to watch out for trouble—their role is similar to that of the Auxiliary Police);
- the Village Courts (which hope to revive their functions);
- the Churches (all members attend a local church);

- the Catholic Family Life Team (a group within the Catholic Church which carries out a number of family enrichment courses—this includes conflict prevention, HIV/AIDS education, youth character and personality training);

- and leading women activists (including the founders of the KWP and other women who strongly support the cause).

Since its foundation, the group has received two grants: US\$6,000 (K20,000) from the Global Fund for Women in United States of America (which lasted two half years); and a one-off grant from UNICEF to organise activities during the internationally declared sixteen-day Campaign Against Violence Against Women in November and December 2002. For most of 2003, KWP had no more funds to carry out their activities, except small contributions (in kind and financial) from its members.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES AND COLLECTING STORIES

In a hostile situation, it was nearly impossible to think about how the women could walk from village to village through enemy land. However, because of what they themselves had suffered from the tribal fights and the needs of the people, these women began walking, passing through tribal enemy territory and villages at great personal risk.

Four women dared to cross into enemy territory and went from village to village collecting stories. At each village they were welcomed, though with suspicion. They collected stories from women and community leaders and they also told their own stories of suffering experienced from tribal fights. They asked:

Do we want to keep living like this? Scattered, being killed, have our hard-earned labour and properties destroyed, have our daughters, mothers and wives raped and killed, and constantly on the move and living in fear? What of the lives of our children and the future generation? Do we pass on the legacy of fighting and hatred so that they continue the killing and plundering and eventually become nomads and migrants living on other people's land?

The stories they collected were recorded and transcribed. People on both sides of the warring tribes had been hurt. They all expressed the need to stop fighting, to resettle on their own land

and to live peaceful lives. They said, 'There is no justice. We feel a sense of hopelessness'. It was through the recording of stories that women leaders, men and youths expressed the need to build peace among the tribes.

KWP then conducted discussions on peace and development. They visited trouble spots to mediate peace agreements. In all these meetings they brought forward the needs of women and children. They spoke against the production of homebrew alcohol and marijuana, which were becoming larger problems. They encouraged communities to work at building peace and to stop falling back into war. They taught women their health needs and worked with village birth attendants to deliver babies. They conducted workshops where they taught about improved food production—fishponds, rice and improved gardening practices.

During tribal fights properties had been destroyed. KWP has mobilised local resources such as building materials, food and clothes to assist those in need. Recipients are normally the old, those living with physical disability, pregnant women and babies. They have taught communities to stand together to help themselves and each other.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CELEBRATION, 2002

KWP has successfully carried out awareness and educational programs, drawing on external funding for support and using the internationally declared sixteen-day Campaign Against Violence Against Women. The sixteen-day campaign is a yearly event that has been carried out by the Simbu Women's Resource Centre since 1994 and which KWP now continues. The 2002 campaign began on 25 November and culminated in a major rally on 10 December, the international Human Rights Day. The theme for the 2002 was: 'creating a culture that says NO to violence against women'. Approximately 4,000 people, involving twelve tribal groups, attended the celebration. Simbu provincial government officials, including the Deputy Governor, Hon. Kelaga Eremuge, and police personnel were also present.

The Kup Women for Peace could not help the tears flowing down their cheeks while listening to statements of commitment to peace-building coming from community leaders and the youth. The various statements were about putting a stop to tribal fights and human rights abuses, such as rapes and violence against women, killing and general lawlessness. During this event, an elderly

man spoke of being a woman if peace was to be achieved. Community leaders also challenged each clan to start cleaning up the roads and repairing broken down bridges to show they were genuine about peace and bringing back normalcy to people's lives. People have been cleaning the roads every Monday since the human rights day, and vehicles are now able to pass through these roads.

A FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

A flag raising ceremony was also an important part of the 10 December rally. In October 2002, at one of the earlier workshop discussions on peace conducted by KWP, the younger men responded by telling the women to make a flag for peace and to leave that flag hanging at the Kup Government Station. They said the flag would help them to remember their pledge to work with the women for peace-building. The KWP made a flag, which stated in their local Kumai language, *Ope Min Mak Ma*— 'Enough fighting, No more fighting'. On 10 December, this peace banner was raised alongside the PNG flag during the Human Rights Day celebration while the Kup Youth Brass Band played the National Anthem. The youth members who requested for the flag are now encouraging other youth to become responsible members of the community.

A TREE PLANTING CEREMONY

A tree planting ceremony was also held to symbolize an agreement by the people to remember 10 December 2002 as an historical event more important than all the *brukim suga* ceremonies of the past. Each tribal group took a box of tree seedlings donated by the National Forest Authority. (A ceremony for youths to surrender firearms, drugs, homebrew equipment and to set them alight was deferred to a later date when there would be enough time allocated for this activity specifically.) KWP are working with the National Forest Authority to continue the distribution of tree seedlings to people in Kup. Planting trees gives hope for the future.

10 December 2002 was truly a significant moment for Kup. The level of interest and commitment shown by the people to reorganise and to live meaningful and peaceful lives is the beginning of a movement which, KWP believes, will promote true community development.

THE SURRENDER AND AMNESTY PROGRAM

During one of KWP's earlier workshops on peace-building, a number of young men who had been running away from the police because of crimes committed said that they would like a Surrender and Amnesty Program to be organised so that they could go through a rehabilitation program. Women from the KWP then held meetings between community leaders and law enforcement authorities. The women's group worked with 26 known criminals, encouraging them to give up their bad habits and to rehabilitate as good citizens of the community. The list then grew to 36 interested people. However, on the day appointed for the surrender, 7 August 2003, only ten people (nine men and one woman) gave themselves up to the law enforcement authorities.

The amnesty was about handing in guns and finding solutions or penalties befitting the 'associated' crime activities such as gang murder and gang rape outside of the formal courts. The people were hoping that the government would agree to buy back the guns and to the burning of the homemade ones. Those confessing to bad habits were hoping to do community-based corrections (as opposed to continually running away from official law authorities). They said that their families had accounted for their crimes by way of compensation payments. However, because there was no feedback from the law enforcement authorities, the guns were not handed in. A few members who took part in gang crimes surrendered and made public apologies to the families of victims and assured the public they would not be involved in any bad habits and criminal behaviour again. These public statements pointed to the need for others also to take a stand against continuous involvement in crime activities.

Two surrender programs were planned. One in 2002 did not eventuate because the lawyer (a local person) who was tasked the job did not coordinate the activity properly with the law enforcement authorities and those who wished to surrender. The successful event in 2003 was due to the KWP's perseverance and their tireless efforts which involved a long process of discussions between community leaders and members, and between law enforcement authorities and the community. The event also involved people from government departments and representatives from AusAID (the Australian Agency for International Development) in Port Moresby.

These people got involved through the National Law and Justice Sector Program and were invited as guests to witness the ceremony.

It was during this event that the Deputy Governor for Simbu Province, Eremuge Kelaga, verbally appointed the KWP President, Angela Apa, to be the women's representative to the Provincial Peace and Good Order Committee of which he is the chairman. Kelaga said that 'This appointment is made by merit and you women should be the key figures in building peace at the provincial level'.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE WHO SURRENDERED?

Nine of the ten people who surrendered voluntarily went to the District Police station in Kerowagi to be 'officially arrested' for the crimes they had committed. The crimes of murder and rape had been mostly committed in groups or as 'associates' as they call it. Seven of the nine people did not have their names recorded in the police records so they were released. The other two were arrested and were kept in custody.

Seeing what had happened to the other seven, and knowing what could happen to him if his name was in the police records, an elected ward councillor decided to give himself up for a crime he had committed some years ago. The act of giving oneself up to law enforcement authorities is not common and this surprised the policeman who was on duty at the time. After consulting with his boss who had attended the surrender program in Kup, they both decided to caution the ward councillor and told him that as an elected leader he should start setting an example to his people by staying clear from criminal activities. Those who surrendered now consider themselves free and are encouraging others to also give up their bad habits and to stop running from the police and lawful authorities.

The Surrender Program was a giant step forward. The people involved are now probably thinking, 'Why did I take that bold step? It is now no longer my own life, but those of my immediate family I have put at risk'. The consequences that may follow, such as scapegoating, lie in the hands of the KWP. However, the KWP themselves risk being called '*as trabel*', the ones who brought about these consequences.

EXTENDING PEACE ACROSS BORDERS

In early December 2003, the KWP stopped a tribal fight from developing within their own boundaries and in the same month twelve members of the group crossed the border to Western Highlands Province to stop a tribal fight which had erupted not far from their Sub-District. On 6 December a conflict started over a brawl from a village rugby league match between youth groups. One of the youths was badly wounded. In order to stop the trouble from getting bigger, KWP members who were present during the rugby match quickly initiated a truce and got both parties to agree on a small compensation payment in order to keep the peace. KWP members had also just facilitated a compensation payment ceremony on 4 December.

On 13 December, fighting erupted between two brother clans within the Minj District of Western Highlands Province. (When we say 'brother clans' it means that traditionally there was no inter-marriage between the two clans.) The fighting in Western Highlands Province was very close to villages along the border with Simbu Province where two members of KWP resided. KWP members heard that Simbu people had taken advantage of the fighting to start looting and chopping down coffee trees, remembering a tribal fight which happened years ago when people from Western Highlands came across to Simbu and did similar things. KWP members knew fighting would start again, this time against the Simbu people along the border, once the two 'brother clans' had sorted out their own dispute.

In traditional times women never stopped tribal fights in Simbu society. Now, for the first time in the history of KWP movement, and for the very first time in Simbu Province, members of the KWP decided to walk onto the battlefield and stop the fighting.

The KWP members, seven women and five men, spent two weeks camping on the battlefield, using their printed t-shirts to identify themselves and their loudhailer (recently bought by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre) to call for a truce. It rained heavily in the afternoons, but the peace workers put up with the bad weather. Each night, they stayed in one of the villages belonging to the warring clans. They talked peace, using their tears to cry about the bloodshed and destruction of properties.

This was a new phenomenon for the men who were fighting. They had never seen or heard strangers, especially women, talk about peace

in this way. This was a 'new message they were hearing' and both parties decided to stop fighting. Both parties agreed that the women would initiate peace and facilitate the compensation payments. In their words, 'The police and the government have forgotten us. But these women cared for us enough to be with us for two weeks'. The peace workers then walked for many hours to Minj, the district's government station to organise the signing of declaration forms normally recognised by the formal courts. The District Court clerk told them that they would have to pay for the forms. In reply, the peace workers said:

We are peace workers from Simbu Province. We spent two weeks in your province, camping out in the sun and rain, where there has been fighting going on across our border for the past three weeks, trying to stop the fighting. We had just stopped the fighting and we walked many hours here to this government office, to seek your assistance for a mere government form, to facilitate the peace process and you want us to pay for this piece of paper?

The District Court magistrate heard their remark and told the clerk to give the forms without charging them and to assist them in filling in the required information.

The peace workers took into account demands from both parties and went back and forth to negotiate and to confirm agreements. They then invited the official government bodies, such as the Peace and Good Order Committee and the Police, and community leaders, to attend and witness the signing of the peace agreement between the two warring clans. On 26 December, KWP facilitated the payment of compensation. This was done on the other side of the border, not in their traditional and official territory. The Kerowagi District Police Officers and government officials and community leaders from Simbu Province also witnessed the ceremony.

As a way of thanking the peace workers, the Minj District Manager gave them K200.00 (about A\$70) 'to buy soap and to clean yourselves up before you go back to your families'. The community leaders, women and youth leaders also expressed interest in what the peace workers did and invited them to come again and visit them. The process of peace-building which the KWP members had used in their immediate communities has been taken over the border to help people from another province.

ACHIEVEMENTS: MARCH 2000— DECEMBER 2003

From the struggle and work of four women to build peace, KWP has now become a community-based peace-building effort and members of the whole Kup community are participating as agents and beneficiaries. After three years of operation, KWP has achieved many positive results:

- People can move freely through enemy tribal land and into towns, schools and other places without any restrictions and need for wariness.
- People are taking into account both their potential to destroy, and to change things positively and live a better life.
- Aggressive men and known hardcore criminals have begun to support the women, first by settling down and, second, by actively supporting and participating in the work of the women.
- Men are now discussing the dangers of keeping guns and are getting rid of their weapons.
- Women approached all the candidates in the 2002 national and local level government elections and obtained a promise not to go to war over the results. Nine out of eleven candidates kept their promise.
- A lawyer has been engaged to draw up rules of acceptable behaviour in the community (these rules would include penalties for wrong doing, limits on bride-price, limits on compensation payments, a ban on fighting, etc.).
- After the success of the 2002 Human Rights Day celebration, the educated elites of Kup were moved to assist in the restoration of development work. They have formed a working group, eventually to be called the Kup Restoration and Development Authority. KWP have a key role in this decision-making group and have been publicly commended for their courageous work in the mobilization of people to say 'no' to all forms of violence, particularly tribal fights.
- When the KWP women speak in community meetings the people now listen.
- Discussions on tribal fights have been introduced to children in schools.
- People are talking about peace and are beginning to develop processes to achieve peace.
- In 2003 Government Officers began a fact-finding mission to determine whether normal government services can be restored.

Men have begun to change their ways. During this time, men (husbands and sons) did women's work while the women did peace work; men

in the peace team allowed women to take the lead; men listened to women; and young men are reforming by doing community work. They have also declared they will no longer take up the arms (weapons) to fight. These men need to be supported to keep the momentum of peace-building going.

The capacities of the leaders of KWP have been further developed by their participation in provincial, national and regional workshops:

- in November 2002, three KWP leaders participated in an Asia South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education (ASPBAE) Melanesia-wide workshop held in Port Moresby;

- in April 2003 they participated in a on 'Women and Governance in the PNG Highlands' organised by the ASPBAE and MERI I KIRAP (Women Arise), a newly formed NGO for women from the highlands;

- in September 2003, six members and supporters of KWP participated in a Simbu Province workshop organised by ASPBAE and MERI I KIRAP on the theme of increasing women's role in decision-making.

- Two members of KWP have spent six weeks training on violence against women and crisis management with the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in October 2003.

- At an organisational development workshop held by MERI I KIRAP in January 2004, the MERI I KIRAP general assembly appointed the KWP coordinator to become a member of the MERI I KIRAP Interim Executive Council.

In support of the achievements, Thomas Tumun has said that the patriots of the Sub-District, especially the middle to the older generation that has been deeply saddened in recent years, now want to see the Sub-District restored to its former beauty (Tumun 2001). People from across the area, from Naregaima in Bandi to Gamar in Kumai, are now determined to make amends, reconcile and resurrect the Sub-District. Tumun has identified other positive indicators of change dating from 2001:

- In mid-February 2001, people from the Kumai, Endugla and Bandi tribes put their differences aside to come together and witness the ordination and first mass of Father William Au from Kup. There was no enmity but a sense of loving regret.

- These three groups also put aside their differences to host the re-opening of the Kup Police station, which is now being maintained.

- All groups within Kup have taken up the task of road maintenance, working on the feeder and trunk roads every Monday (thereby reviving the colonial pattern).

- As a final settlement on the latest tribal fight, between the Kumgai and the Graiku and other members of the Kumai tribe in 2001, the Graiku agreed to pay compensation for the shooting of a young teacher that sparked the fight. Further compensation was agreed to for the killing of a woman. These compensation payments were made in November 2002.

BEYOND TRIBAL FIGHTS AND WAR: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The KWP will persevere with those who have expressed interest in surrendering. One of the men who surrendered is now an active and vocal supporter of KWP and is undertaking compensatory community work. For the first time in ten years he has dared to show his face in Kundiawa, the provincial capital.

The more important challenge for the KWP in 2004 and onwards is gender violence. A committee has been formed to address problems of violence against women. The peace workers have reviewed their work and feel strongly that their next task is to concentrate on gender issues and to allow the men and the community at large to keep the momentum going in stopping tribal fights. Their new direction involves working with the Village Courts and community leaders to help set up a local justice system where lawlessness, particularly violence against women, is controlled.

The KWP have started their own process of peace-building, using their tears as weapons for peace. What they did was done to the very best of their ability.

The Bougainville women in 1990 also had to use strategies, which were unique to their immediate surroundings and needs at the time, and they continue to work while the peace process is still being discussed. They are heard as participants in the various sub-committees for peace negotiation. In 2000, the PNG government and the United Nations awarded the UNIFEM Millennium Peace Prize to Mrs. Helen Hakena of the Leitana Women's Development Agency in recognition of the efforts of the Bougainville women in 'holding things together' in an hostile environment while negotiation for peace went on between the various factions. However, as Marilyn Havini points out (Havini 1999: 42), a reconciliation process between families through the cleansing of the battlefields would be necessary to heal the fabric of society. This, she has said, would take a lengthily traditional communication process.

In relation to the situation on Bougainville, Anthony Regan has noted that Bougainville women are no longer actively taking part in the official meetings. He has also said that women are their worst enemies at times and that there are too many conflicts going on between the many women's groups (Regan 2004). Outside observers should by now know that people in Bougainville are divided because of the conflict. The women also belong to different groups and therefore it is logical that they should have differences of opinion.

External factors, such as the 'aid game', have also affected their attitudes. Isn't this all the more reason why women should be in the formal meetings and continue to plead for peace-building? Why do people have the view that women should always have the same view? Women want peace, security, and stability in their lives and community. Yet, their voices and attempts continue to be drowned out.

The approaches used as models for progress can only be classified as unique and suitable to each local environment. How, then, can development workers relate to their situation and assist in the process of rebuilding lives? In delivering aid one must consider if it will help or hinder transformation. People in the social structures currently in place, including the government courts and the police force, also need to ask, 'Am I doing what I am required to do in the best interest of my people for a just society?'

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are no quick fix solutions to the many socio-economic and political problems of Papua New Guinea. After all, we are a nation of many languages, diverse culture and traditional values. Even within each province, some practices are quite different.

A new style of warfare has developed in the highlands, with new methods of destruction and high-powered guns. Research on the gun culture in the highlands shows that firearms are now becoming objects of pride. As Governor Luther Wenge of Morobe Province said when addressing a peace ceremony in West Taraka, Lae, 'the country may one day find itself being ruled under the barrel of a gun' unless the people themselves admit to tribal fighting, acknowledge the use of guns as a problem, and begin developing programs to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development (*The National*, 21 July 2003).

There are many ideas about how to address violence and other development problems. Regardless of the established formal systems which are supposed to be 'delivering services', it is important to recognize that the local communities know their own needs and environment best, and therefore that they know the approaches most suitable for dealing with their problems. One such approach has been highlighted by Justice Ambeng Kandakasi of the PNG Supreme Court, who suggested, at the Pacific Judiciary Conference in Madang in June 2003, that Papua New Guinea needs to create its own law and justice system by 'blending customs and traditions into respective systems of justice' to suit Papua New Guinea and Melanesian way of life (*Post-Courier*, 26 June 2003).

A recurring theme in discussions of law and order in PNG is the tension, sometimes conflict, that exists between the formal and informal justice systems. If long term and sustainable solutions are to be developed, it is necessary to find a way to diminish the gap between these two systems. The solutions must help strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights.

In the 'good old days', or pre-colonial times, there were some rules which worked in favour of women, as in places like Sina Sina constituency of Simbu Province. Women were protected and valued, and remained virgins until they married around the ages of 18 to 22 years. This culture has eroded and the abuse of human rights for women and girls has gone from bad to worse. This may be due to the rapid pace of socio-economic change in PNG. Many people feel excluded from involvement with economic development. The economic and social essentials for survival and well-being are no longer available to the rural people, particularly women, children and the youth. Economic development and social change have led to new attitudes and behaviour. The fact that most families still manage to survive is due in no small measure to the energy, initiative and fearlessness of their women members, who do not spare themselves in seeking to ensure the survival of their children and other dependents.

Until there are major changes in the public acceptance of women's rights as citizens being equal to those of men, appeals to customary justice will necessarily entail the acceptance of ideas of the lower status of women in respect of judicial processes.

Even in recommending the 'blending' of traditional Melanesian practices with the formal law and justice systems we also need to be mindful of power structures that are male gender-biased. Martha Macintyre rightly warns that

Village Courts are dominated by men and their views of crimes by or against women are usually formed by deeply held ideas about the subordination of women to the interests of men in their group. ... Until there are major changes in the public acceptance of women's rights as citizens being equal to those of men, appeals to customary justice will necessarily entail the acceptance of ideas of the lower status of women in respect of judicial processes (Macintyre 2003).

Peace workers such as the Kup Women for Peace still have a long way to go before they can achieve social justice for women.

As O-Shen, one of PNG's song writers and singers, says in his songs,

PNG becomes a Nation of Confusion: The bright future seems like just an illusion on the horizon. We are a simple people and we must stay strong. The wisdom is better than silver and gold. Money don't make the world go round. Dollar bills got you running down. Most people never are rich as long as they live. It's not what you got, greedy man – it's what you give.

Our educated so-called 'elites' and political leaders have contributed, either directly or indirectly, to the disharmony among our people. After all, where do the guns come from? The elites must play a pivotal role in the rebuilding process. They are the greedy ones who are out to acquire resources for themselves, while their people have to live with little or nothing. They must come back to the people and genuinely be a part of the rebuilding process. This can only be done if they go back to their roots and work upwards, rather than by trying to deliver from 'the top' to the 'bottom'.

The peace process must continue, and it needs support from members of the community and the government, as well as a sympathetic ear from aid donors. As responsible citizens we need to echo Martin Luther King's idea that 'Peace is about socio-economic justice. It is not the opposite of war'. Every social actor needs to re-think and readjust their behaviour and attitudes towards social justice issues.

Donors such as AusAID spend a lot of time and money 'fixing' broken systems. Fixing systems is not easy. Emphasis should be placed in going back to the community and reconstructing community life where people live, using the resources and skills that are already available. In their book *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, John Kretzmann and John McKnight argue that people

mobilising and using the knowledge, skills, and resources available to them, is the way forward for development. By using associating tools, rather than institutions, people can share talents and skills to help each other build (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993).

An emphasis on strong and equitable partnership between men and women is also required for the advancement of women, to reduce violence and discrimination against women, to alleviate poverty, and to promote sustainable development.

The efforts made by the Kup Women for Peace and by Bougainville women in building peace have provided opportunities and challenges to discuss viable options for conflict prevention and transformation. Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men. In recognizing the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to include women in peace initiatives, Chris Gallus, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, has said that

While war tends to be men's business—more often than not, peace is women's business.

Women also tend to be excluded in the post-conflict phase.

Formal systems of government often leave women out of reconstruction and peace-building activities (Gallus 2002).

Not being responsive to the voices of women involved in peace-building is total negligence on the part of the government and should not be accepted.

It is an opportune time for the National Law and Justice Sector Program, funded by AusAID and the government of PNG under the theme of restorative justice, as well as the Provincial Peace and Good Order Committees, local leaders like the KWP, and the wider society, to begin developing a policy for surrender programs. This should involve working with the solutions and practices that the people themselves have come up with—and not with the so-called 'practical solutions' developed in Port Moresby, or outside of Papua New Guinea.

Sarah Garap, Feb. 2004, Goroka, PNG

AUTHOR NOTE

Sarah Garap is a prominent community development worker and human rights activist who has worked in a number of non-government organisations and community programs in different parts of Papua New Guinea. Her work has been aimed at promoting the rights of women and children in the highlands of PNG. She is currently the director of MERI I KIRAP SAPOTIM, a group she formed in the aftermath of the 2002 national elections. She has written on the topics of women, elections, and the gun culture in PNG.

ENDNOTES

- 1 This is a case study of work still in progress, supported by the Asia South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education (ASPBAE).
- 2 Such figures can be unreliable. The number of names on the Common Roll kept by the Electoral Commission is nearly double the census figures. The actual figures could be less as a lot of people have migrated.
- 3 The seminar was organised by a group called Enga Masemana (Peace in Enga) Inc., whose members are drawn from different church groups. About seven thousand people, including Members of Parliament and a National Court judge, attended.

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APPENDICES

The tables below are adapted from the report by Tumun (2001).

Appendix One: Kup Tribal Groupings and Alliances

These tables show the many groups who live in Kup.

NB. The Endugla Nauros (from Kundiawa District, north of the Wahgi) are not included in these tables. However, they share a border with Kup and are sometimes involved in the fighting.

Table 1: The Kumai Tribe

Tribe	Population	No. of clans
Dingaku	5, 000	4
Bonmaku	2, 000	2
Teminku	1, 000	3
Koban *	1, 000	5
Kulna	500	2
Aglimka	200	1
Kumga	2, 000	5
Graiku *	500	3

* Migrant groups who have joined the tribe.

Table 2: The Endugla Tribe

Tribe	Population	No. of Clans
Kunaneku	4, 000	7
Nagenku	2, 000	4

Table 3: The Bandi (Bari) Tribe

Tribe	Population	No. of Clans
Bandi No.1	2, 000	3
Bandi No.2	4, 000	8

Appendix Two: Tribal Fights in Kup Sub-District

Table 4: Tribal Fights

Year	Tribes involved	Cause
1971–93	Endugla vs. Kumai	Adultery case
1975	Endugla vs. Kumai	Broken marriage—court case ended with disagreement over the decision
1977	Golekup/Tuimuikup vs. Kumai	Suspected adultery
1988	Endugla vs. Kumai	Murder of a Kumai teacher by Enduglas
1989	Bandi vs. Endugla	Adultery and rape case
	Bandi vs. Dom	Murder of a pregnant woman and her son
1990	Golekup/Tuimuikup vs. Kumai	Drunken brawl

Table 5: Lineage Group Fights

Year	Lineages involved	Cause
1993–94	Kumai Tambuno vs. Drekukakup (and 3 Nagenku clans)	Rape case
1994	5 clans of Bandi No.2 vs. 3 clans of Bandi No. 2	Brawl over card game
1996	Same group as above engaged again	Rape case
1997	Bandi No.1 vs. Dom	Election related
1997	3 clans of Endugla vs. 3 other Endugla clans	Election related
1997	1 sub-clan of a clan in Dingaku Tribe vs. another sub-clan in the same clan	Election related
1999	Kumgai Graiku vs. Dingaku Bonmaku	Killing of a teacher
2002	Bonukup vs. Teminkup (brother clans)	Election related