

**LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES IN
THE SOLOMON ISLANDS:
The Case of Shell Money and the
Wala Lagoon Communities of
Malaita**

David FARADATOLO

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the Degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies

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Faculty of Arts and Law

University of the South Pacific

12 August 2008

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my very own and where I have used the thoughts and works of others I have clearly indicated this.

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ABSTRACT

Accessing income opportunities and resources for livelihood is very difficult in the Wala lagoon of Malaita, Solomon Islands. There is limited land for agriculture and marine resources have been depleted.

Shell money has been a livelihood strategy for the people in the society for generations. Despite the forces of colonialism, Christianity and the introduction of the cash economy, Wala still produce shell money for trade in Malaita, Guadalcanal and Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.

The research examines if shell money will continue to be a viable livelihood strategy for households in the Wala Lagoon. The results show that shell money is still a livelihood strategy because of viable demands from institutions like bride price, compensation, government and the tourism industry. The study shows that about half of households in Wala participate in shell money production for their livelihood. Most of these households come from the Laulasi region while only a few are from the Aoke region. For the Wala households that participate in shell money production about half of their income is from shell money. Looking at the individual households that produce shell money, some households received a low proportion of their income from shell money while many others received almost all income from shell money. In comparison to other sources of household income, shell money came third after village based businesses and subsistence.

Shell money also contributes significantly to business and community development in the Wala region. Many small businesses owned by Wala people in Wala Lagoon, Auki

and Honiara obtained seed money from shell money. Community projects also received assistance from shell money.

To sustain the livelihood of households depending on shell money, it is important that the supply side of shell money production is secured. Management of the Wala Lagoon marine system has to revert back to tribes backed by a provincial or national legislation.

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ACRONYMS

CARE	Christian Action Research and Education
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CPRF	Community Peace and Restoration Fund
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations Panel
DFID	Department of Foreign And International Development
DWFN	Distant Water Fishing Nations
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GCCG	Grand Coalition for Change Government (Solomon Islands)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMM Ltd	Integrated Marine Management Ltd
MDA	Malaita Development Authority
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
MPGRD	Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NFD	National Fisheries Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDF	Provincial Development Fund
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
RCDF	Rural Constituency Development Fund
SICOPSA	Small Islands Communities Project Scheme
SIDDAP	Solomon Islands Development Administration and Participatory Planning Program
SIDT	Solomon Islands Development Trust
SIEA	Solomon Islands Electricity Authority
SINPF	Solomon Islands National Provident Fund
SIPL	Solomon Islands Plantations Limited
SIWA	Solomon Islands Water Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation

GLOSSARY

<i>Aeasi</i>	Overseas
<i>Agalo</i>	1. Literally; a devil. 2. a person who practice black magic. 3. Forefathers who died long ago
<i>Agia</i>	The corner stones of a <i>fau rara</i>
<i>Akalonimae</i>	(a <i>Kwara'ae</i> word) the god (devil) for war
<i>Akwala'afu</i>	Complete ten strings, referring to the <i>Tafuliae</i> shell money.
<i>Alufafi</i>	The initial deposit for the payment of a good
<i>Ara na</i>	Grinding the edges of stringed discs
<i>Aurara</i>	Building a community from co-opting skilled people
<i>Babae ai</i>	Timber planks for building a <i>baru</i>
<i>Baekwa</i>	Shark
<i>Bata</i>	Shell Money
<i>Bata Fofoloabisi</i>	A denomination of the <i>Tafuliae</i> with <i>firai</i> in the middle
<i>Bata mae</i>	Literally, Dead money. Money paid for a liability
<i>Bata maefuo</i>	A denomination of the <i>Tafuliae</i> with a net made of <i>firai</i> in the middle
<i>Bata mauri</i>	Literally, Live money. Money given to a debtor
<i>Bisi</i>	A menstrual hut on one side of the village. The hut is out of bound to all villagers. Women who give birth live in a separate <i>bisi</i> called <i>bisi li kale</i> .
<i>Dani</i>	Weather
<i>Didia fulo</i>	Rounding the edges of shell discs
<i>Du'una'a</i>	A part of the <i>kwatena</i> when the groom's people pay in double the value of goods and services they receive from the bride's people during the engagement period
<i>Baru</i>	A boat made of planked timber sewn together
<i>Etea</i>	A sacrificial ceremony where only male members of the clan will eat of the pig sacrificed
<i>Fata'abu</i>	A combination of two words; <i>fata</i> which means talk and <i>abu</i> meaning tambu. This is the person that does the tambu talks on behalf of the clan. The close equivalent is a high priest
<i>Faeleni</i>	A boys only house on the edge of the village
<i>Falua</i>	It can refer to a place or a group of people
<i>Fauli para</i>	Black flat and round river stones. These stones will be heated and the <i>ke'e</i> shell discs placed on top to change their colour from black to orange
<i>Fauli safa</i>	A stone, flat on the top for grinding shell discs using the <i>mae ai</i>
<i>Fau li ui</i>	A stone, flat on the top for breaking and rounding the edges of shell discs
<i>Fau rara</i>	A pile of coral stones build in the shallow part of the lagoon but high enough to withstand high tide that will be used as a foundation for the construction of houses
<i>Fera</i>	A tambu house. More than one tribe would share a tambu house but they were allocated different <i>ora</i> for sacrificing in the <i>fera</i> .
<i>Firai</i>	A string of red discs made from the <i>romu</i> shells– these are the most valuable and is normally used only at the middle of the <i>Tafuliae</i> shell money
<i>Foli</i>	To pay for something normally when using <i>bata</i> (cash)
<i>Foli geli</i>	Literally, pay girl/women. This is a corrupted translation for the English word 'bride price'

<i>Fulu</i>	Fruit of a shrub that may be used in place of black discs at the end of the <i>Tafuliae</i> shell money.
<i>Fura</i>	A denomination of the Wala currency, consisting of 4 strings of <i>galia</i> tied together
<i>Futa</i>	A traditional hand held drill
<i>Futa na</i>	The act of drilling shell discs
<i>Galae bata</i>	A single string of shell money
<i>Galia</i>	A denomination of the Wala currency consisting of two strings of <i>kakadu</i> discs from fingertip to elbow tied together
<i>Gali na</i>	The engagement of a bride
<i>Gurana'a</i>	Curing
<i>Ia la</i>	A fishing ground
<i>Ilala</i>	The act of consulting the divine world. A medium will be paid to do this
<i>Iola oto</i>	A fishing canoe designed especially for catching tuna
<i>Isae galia</i>	A denomination of the Wala currency consisting of 10 strings of <i>fura</i> tied together
<i>Kakadu</i>	A shell from which the white discs are made
<i>Kakama</i>	Swamp taro
<i>Ke'e</i>	A shell from which orangish yellow discs are made
<i>Kekete</i>	A fruit from the bush, used at the end of the <i>tafuliae</i> to indicate completeness
<i>Koa</i>	The fruit of a mangrove tree used as a staple diet
<i>Kurila</i>	A sea shell from which the black discs are made
<i>Kwai bata</i>	Breaking shells into small pieces. See also <i>kwai fulo</i>
<i>Kwai fulo</i>	Breaking shells into small pieces. See also <i>kwai bata</i>
<i>Kwalu tafana</i>	8 fathoms
<i>Kwatena</i>	Literally means Giving. Now it is equated with bride price
<i>Ladi</i>	Granite stones
<i>Lakisi</i>	The act of removing the bark from the bottom of mangrove trees to starve it of nutrients so that it can be used for firewood.
<i>Lige bata</i>	A section of the <i>tafuliae</i> shell money consisting of the same shells
<i>Lilifu</i>	Trading expeditions
<i>Luda'a</i>	Originally it refers to a thousand of a root crop, e.g. taro. Now a <i>luda'a</i> is less than a thousand
<i>Mae ai</i>	A 4x3x2 block of wood with spaces to hold discs for grinding the sides
<i>Mamamu</i>	Small baitfish
<i>Maoma</i>	A traditional feast
<i>Ooka</i>	A modern hand drill
<i>Ooka na</i>	The process of drilling a hole in the centre of shell discs
<i>Ora</i>	A sacrificial place.
<i>Para na</i>	The process of heating <i>ke'e</i> discs to change the colour
<i>Raku</i>	A food garden
<i>Ramo</i>	A warrior, a head hunter, a policeman and generally, a protector of the clan
<i>Romu</i>	A sea shell from which the red discs are made
<i>Ruana</i>	A trading partner
<i>Sabero na</i>	Trading expeditions
<i>Safa na</i>	grinding the sides of single discs

<i>Safi</i>	A form of money consisting of a single string of <i>ke'e</i> discs about 6 feet in length
<i>Sake lana</i>	A credit transaction
<i>Su'asia</i>	A sacrificial platform where priests offer sacrifices
<i>Susu</i>	Literally, breast or milk but referring to horticulture
<i>Tafuliae</i>	(A word from north Malaita languages) The ten string shell money of Malaita
<i>Tafurae</i>	A burial site
<i>Tofuna</i>	The art and skill of making canoes. <i>Tofu</i> means to cut (see also <i>torina</i>)
<i>Torina'a</i>	The art and skill of making canoe. <i>Tori</i> means to design
<i>Uru bata na</i>	Stringing shell discs
<i>U'uina</i>	The whole process of breaking and rounding shells into discs
<i>Wailuma</i>	Part of the <i>kwatena</i> given especially for the bride's mother

Chapter 1: Introduction: Setting the Study Scene

1.1. Introduction

This thesis is about assessing the potential of shell money as a future livelihood strategy for the Wala people of Malaita, Solomon Islands. Households in the Wala Lagoon of Malaita, Solomon Islands find it difficult to secure resources for their livelihood. Everyday is a struggle to meet the daily needs of their families. The production of shell money for the local and international market has helped some households in their livelihoods endeavours. This chapter outlines the motivation for this study, the premises of the study, the research question and objectives and an overview of the thesis.

1.2. Motivation

The people of Wala live in the Wala or Langalanga Lagoon on the west coast of Malaita Island. The Lagoon starts from Auki provincial town and extends westward to Buma station (see figure 4.3). The Lagoon is dotted with mangrove islands with no arable land. Rising sea level is threatening the habitable parts of the lagoon and the villages are vulnerable to cyclones. The population of the Lagoon is a little more than 10,000. Accessing resources, employment opportunities and income generation activities to create sustainable livelihoods in the Wala Lagoon is difficult. Access to resources for subsistence gardening and fishing is limited and employment opportunities are difficult to find or create. Land for agriculture in Wala Lagoon is very limited and access to the little land available under customary tenure is very restrictive. Customary tenure and land disputes also make access to neighbouring Kwara'ae and Kwaio lands for agriculture limited and difficult. Marine resources in terms of fish and shells are very scarce in the lagoon because of the break down of the customary marine tenure system, destructive fishing methods employed since the 1970s and increasing population. From observation, livelihood is difficult for communities in Wala Lagoon because of:

- a. The absence of formal mechanisms for land ownership so that access to land can be negotiated with identified landowning groups.
- b. The practical difficulty of venturing into other livelihood activities because of the limitations posed by the Wala environment, and
- c. Rural households simply do not know much about the cash economy nor have the capacity to be able to participate and facilitate their livelihood through the cash system.

Despite the difficulties outlined above, shell money has been a livelihood strategy for many households in the Wala Lagoon. However, the Wala Lagoon could no longer provide the shells necessary for making shell money because of over-harvesting. Households now have to buy the shells from other parts of the Solomons. The difficulty experienced in the supply of shells now threatens the viability of the shell money as a livelihood strategy for Wala households.

This study will assess the potential of shell money as a livelihood strategy by households in the Wala Lagoon. Livelihood strategies are activities that members of a household undertake to achieve their livelihood goals (DFID 1999). The study is necessary and relevant because shell money still plays an important role in the Wala's culture, identity and livelihood in the modern cash economy of Solomon Islands. The life of Wala people revolve around shell money, fishing, boat building and shipping and artificial islands. Shell money is important for socio-cultural practises like bride price and compensation, and for economic activities like the purchase of goods and services. It can also be saved as wealth to be used in the future. Shell money has been the basis of Wala existence, identity and livelihood.

This study is a pioneer in the examination of shell money as a livelihood strategy using livelihood frameworks developed outside the Wala Lagoon. Although

some inferences to local frameworks for analysing livelihoods will be used from time to time, the bulk of the analyses will use the sustainable livelihood framework developed by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Other studies have been conducted in Wala but on different aspects of the society that include references to the shell money culture. These include a PhD thesis by Cooper (1970) about the “Ethics of the Langalanga” and more recently, another PhD thesis by Pei-yi Guo (2001) about “Landscape, history and migration of the Langalanga People”.

The shell money, as a cultural and economic commodity, is not restricted to the Wala Lagoon communities alone. Rather, it is important throughout the Malaita Province, playing an important role in the lives of Malaitans, who, according to the 1999 population and household census, make up a third of the Solomon Islands population. On Malaita, customary practises like bride price payment and compensation are paid in shell money. Some Malaita farmers also accept shell money as payment for root crops like taro, pana, yam and potato alongside modern cash. A Malaita household is considered insecure if there is no shell money in the house, regardless of whether one has a lot of Solomon dollar, the currency of the modern cash economy. Shell money must be kept at all times to meet unexpected social events like compensation.

Apart from Malaita Island, the islands of Guadalcanal, Gela and Ulawa also use shell money in their social and economic transactions and livelihood endeavours. These societies also use shell money for bride price, compensations, and access to resources and for the purchase of goods and services.

After decades under British Protectorate and 30 years of using the Solomon dollar, when so many other forms of traditional money have disappeared, the shell money produced in Wala is still acceptable as a medium of exchange alongside the Solomon dollar for domestic transactions involving locals. The natives of Malaita, Gela and Guadalcanal still accept shell money in their economic and social payments.

Further, shell money is now traded as a commodity in Wala, Malaita, Solomon Islands and Bouganville in Papua New Guinea. The trade of shell money to Papua New Guinea is now been facilitated under the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) trade agreement.

1.3. Premises

Development as a concept advocating growth and transformation must include the development of the person (Esteva 1992). Where growth and transformation does not include the development of the person, then the growth cannot be considered as development (ibid). Livelihood has now become an important indicator of the development of a person (Scoones 1998). Livelihood is about capabilities, assets and activities to secure a living (Chambers and Conway, 1992). Where a persons' livelihood is secured and sustainable, then the person or household can be said to have developed. Livelihoods however, depend on a number of factors. This includes the context that the household is operating under, that is, social, political, economic, and historical conditions, livelihood resources available, livelihood strategies chosen, and the institutional processes that facilitate the livelihood strategies (Scoones 1998, DFID 1999).

This study used the household level to analyse livelihood based on shell money in the Wala Lagoon. The study assumes that the demand for shell money and its socio-cultural importance will persist into the future despite the growth of the modern cash economy. This assumption was derived since the inception of the Wala society in the 1200s (50 years per generation), shell money has been a source of livelihood despite the forces of colonialism, Christianity, and globalization. There are other livelihood strategies like fishing, gardening, and boat building/shipping that are important to a household in Wala Lagoon. The focus of this study is, however, limited to shell money

because of its historical and socio-cultural significance to Wala Lagoon, Malaita, Gela and Guadalcanal islands.

1.4. Research Question

The general research question is: What is the potential of shell money as a future livelihood strategy for the Wala people? From the main question, the following research questions may be asked:

- How did Wala people come to depend on shell money for their livelihood?
- How did the people maintain the standard and quality of the shell money production?
- Why is shell money still acceptable as a medium of exchange and a commodity for trade in the 21st century?
- What is the contribution of shell money to the livelihoods of Wala households?
- How does shell money contribute to small business development?
- What are the constraints to shell money as a livelihood strategy?

1.5. Objectives

The general objective of the research is to identify the potential of shell money as a future livelihood strategy for the Wala people.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- Review how shell money came to be used as a livelihood strategy in Wala Lagoon.
- Review how the standard and quality of shell money production was maintained.
- Investigate why shell money is still acceptable as a medium of exchange and a commodity for trade in the 21st century.
- Assess the contribution of shell money to the livelihoods of Wala households.
- Assess the contribution of shell money to small business development in Wala.
- Identify constraints to using shell money as a livelihood strategy in Wala.
- Outline possible strategies to secure livelihoods based on shell money in Wala.

This thesis will argue that:

- (i) There is potential for shell money to secure the livelihoods of Wala households.
- (ii) The constraint of shell resources was part and partial of shell money production in Wala since the days of the forefathers.
- (iii) Wala people need only to revive their traditional marine management systems, secure supplies from other provinces and explore new markets for shell money and their livelihoods will be secured.

1.6. Thesis Overview

This thesis has six chapters. Chapter 1 sets the problem and objectives for the study. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the main stages of the development discourse briefly as an economic concept to concerns of sustainable development and to the UNDP human development index. The concept of rural development and its relationship to livelihood was also covered here. An overview of development and livelihood in the Pacific, Solomon Islands and Malaita was also briefly highlighted. Two frameworks for analyzing household livelihood were also discussed in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in the study. This includes discussion about the qualitative and quantitative methods used for data collection. The methods discussed include a household questionnaire about livelihoods strategies, unstructured interviews with various people in the government and Wala Lagoon, research in the USP library and the Solomon Islands National Archive in Honiara.

Chapter 4 outlines the background to the study. It outlines the history of the Wala Lagoon, the history of shell money; the historical ‘trading ring’ used by the Wala

forefathers for their livelihood. The chapter ends with an outline of the livelihood resources in the Wala Lagoon.

Chapter 5 discusses shell money as a livelihood strategy in the Wala Lagoon. Discussions also centered on comparing livelihoods of households in Aoke against livelihoods of households in the Laulasi regions of the Wala Lagoon.

Finally, Chapter 6 makes some conclusions and suggests recommendations on how to enhance livelihood in the Wala Lagoon.

1.7. Summary

Accessing resources for livelihood in the Wala Lagoon is getting difficult by the day. More and more households are finding it difficult to put food on the table because of limited opportunities for subsistence and employment. This study considers the potential of using shell money as a livelihood strategy in the Wala Lagoon. This paper assesses whether or not shell money has the potential to sustain livelihoods in the Wala Lagoon. A household questionnaire was used to collect household data and unstructured interviews were used in Honiara and Wala Lagoon to collect other relevant data. Shell money is still significant as a livelihood strategy especially for households in the Laulasi region. There is need to secure the supply of shells to facilitate the production of shell money to ensure a sustainable livelihood based on shell money.

Chapter 2: Development and Rural Livelihood: A Theoretical Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the concept of development, rural development and livelihood with particular reference to the Pacific Islands, and more specifically Solomon Islands. The second part of this chapter outlines two frameworks for analysing livelihoods including tools or indicators for measuring livelihoods and a few experiences of using the livelihood framework by organizations.

2.2. The Concept of Development

Development is often viewed as an economic concept that embraces a positive change in the gross national product (GNP) of the national economy of a country at the rate of 5% to 7% per annum (Todaro 1994: 14). This growth rate is usually adjusted for inflation. Alternatively, a per capita income can be calculated from the GNP to enable a comparison to the population growth rate. Ideally, the GNP growth rate should be above the population growth rate so that there is a positive change in the quality of life. Despite many countries achieving positive increases in GNP they still experience inequality, unemployment and poverty. Poverty, unemployment and inequality are three evils that affect the quality of life (Seers 1977: 26). This reality demands that the definition of development must include growth in GNP and employment, and reduction in poverty and an equal distribution of income (ibid: 26).

Development encompasses many disciplines in the natural science and social sciences. The diverse nature of the subject reflects the complexity of human beings, the object and purpose for development. Whilst humans are the object and purpose, they are also the major stakeholder in the processes for achieving development. Experience in

countries has shown that there is no 'one size fits all in development'. The development policies that work in one country may not work in another country.

Development describes 'a process through which the potentialities of an object or organism are released, until it reaches natural, complete, full-fledged form' (Esteva 1992: 8). Esteva further states that development is a socio-economic endeavour that came into prominence after Truman declared in his 1949 inaugural speech the Southern Hemisphere as 'underdeveloped areas'. Sachs (2005: 4) added that concepts such as poverty, equality, production and the notion of state have since been central to the development discourse.

Development involves changes that cause growth that improves the quality of life of the individuals (Esteva 1992). The notion of growth or progress espoused by development has its roots in colonialism that view non-European areas as backward or trapped in their tradition (McMichael 2000: 6). From the coloniser's point of view, the backward areas need to emulate European social organisations to be able to graduate to modernity or development (ibid: 7). In the bigger picture, it also includes adopting neo-liberal development policies. However, according to Chang and Grabel (2004) the neo-liberal policies of development are only myths.

2.2.1. The Path of Development

The process and objectives of development have, over the years, been influenced by a number of theories. The two most prominent includes modernization and dependency theories. In the 1950s and 1960s the modernisation theory became popular. Modernisation theories advocate linear paths to growth. These theories are based on the European experience of development. The idea is to transform traditional societies into modern ones or for traditional societies to develop they must copy how the modern

societies in Europe developed. An example of modernisation theory is the Rostow stages of economic growth.

The unfavourable development experience in the 1960s by Latin America and Africa lead to the development of dependency theories. In essence, the Third World is not developed because the Developed countries exploited them through imperialism for their resources thus creating the dependency of the Third World on Europe. The dependency relationship is maintained through neo-colonialism like unequal trading relationships. Frank one of the prominent dependency writers believes that for Third World countries to develop, they have to de-link from the global system.

Although weaknesses of modernisation theory were highlighted by dependency writers, its major tenets influence development to the 1970s, 80s, 90s and 2000s. In the 1980s World Bank and IMF, promoted the concept of structural adjustment programs for the Third World countries after their dismal performance with aid money. The structural adjustment programs also include re-examining the role of government in economic development, thus the call for privatisation of most government run corporations. Esteva (1992) labelled the 1980s as the 'lost decade for development'. Apart from the Asian Tigers, he states that pessimism about the benefits from development prevailed.

In the 1990s development turned to people centred approaches. This includes the UNDP Human Development Report and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UNDP Human Development Reports compute a development index comprising of life expectancy, adult literacy and real GNP per capita. Each of the indices is assigned a value up to one. One is the highest possible attainment for a country. A higher index reflects good performance in the three variables and a low index reflects poor performance. While indexing development has been useful for comparative purposes,

Professor Talkens (CDROM) pointed out that creating composites from different indicators is like adding apples and oranges.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (<http://mdgasiapacific.org>) consist of eight strategic areas affecting the quality of life of individuals. These were identified and targets were set for a specified time period for countries to achieve these targets. The areas include: reducing poverty, reducing the spread of AIDS, reducing child mortality, improving health care, improving education, concerns with the environment and improving the status of women by year 2015. The degree and level that countries were able to achieve these goals will indicate their level of development. The adoption of the MDGs has increased the parameters of development to include economic, health, social and environmental issues. Whether or not the strategy of using targets will help achieve human development is yet to be seen.

The late 1990s also saw the prominence of globalisation and economic integration between and among nations. Globalisation and economic integration have internationalised development from the national front to the international front (McMichael 2000: xxxiii). National efforts for development must now take into account policies of other countries and international bodies such as IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The world is now a global economy where production is no longer restricted to specific local areas and consumers have a choice of goods from different parts of the globe.

2.2.2. The Concept of Rural Development

The Oxford Dictionary (2002) defines the 'rural area' as an area outside cities and towns. It is also about farming or agriculture. In the developed countries, rural areas refer to the countryside. The OECD countries for example, for statistical purposes use the following criteria for the designation of a rural area (OECD 1996):

- Size of the population (total or agglomerated, absolute or relative);
- Population density (in relation to total or usable area);
- Commuting intensity (either in employment or in value added).

The thresholds used by each OECD member country for the criteria above vary considerably. In the criterion population for example, Australia uses 1,000 persons while Italy uses 10,000 but the common threshold is 2,000 (United Nations 2005).

In the Pacific rural areas refer to areas outside the urban centre. Pacific households outside the urban centres live together in villages. A big portion of the Pacific population lives in villages. In the Solomon Islands rural areas refer to areas outside the urban centres. The size of the population, population density, or commuting intensity is yet to be used as criteria for defining rural areas in Solomon Islands.

From an economic perspective, rural areas in Solomon Islands are largely under-capitalised and poorly linked to the monetised sector. This limitation is responsible for the limited income and employment opportunities available to the rural household. Improving the linkages will improve opportunities for the rural people.

Rural development include initiatives that attempt to promote and upgrade the progress of rural areas by improving their access to basic services like water, electricity, communication and infrastructure, and providing access for income and job opportunities. The target is to improve the quality of life of the rural people. Where the rural people are able to access resources and have structures to facilitate and improve their livelihood, then development would seem to have occurred among the rural people.

Importantly, rural development may be 'induced' by the state, the donors, or come from the poor local experts themselves. Poor local experts know their place and people better but they are often overlooked for western induced development projects.

Examples of induced rural development initiatives in Solomon Islands are discussed below (section 2.6.1.4. and 2.6.2).

Managing rural development is important and requires special attention by the government or implementers. Chambers (1993:16) draws out seven important principles from his experience in Africa about managing rural development. These are:-

- *Empirical not perfectionist* - Rural development is a complex field and therefore the management of it will be difficult. The advice is to accept and learn from mistakes made in the process. One cannot be a perfectionist when managing rural development.
- *Systems thinking* - The use of systems thinking (e.g. use of diagrams) will aid the management of rural development.
- *Administrative capacity as a scarce resource* - As part of the management process, it is important to recognise that administration capacity is scarce and therefore must be used wisely.
- *Optimising, not maximising* - Optimising and not maximising resource uses for multiple outcomes in rural development and management must be emphasised.
- *Optimal ignorance* - Scarce administrative capacity requires that information that is not required and is not worth knowing should not be gathered.
- *Opportunity- versus problem-orientation* - Chambers noted that there is an overlap in using the words 'opportunity' and 'problem' in describing the same situation. The orientation should be towards using the word opportunity rather than problem as it opens up options.
- *Sophistication in simplicity* - Simple management procedures are favoured over sophisticated procedures in order to improve outcomes. Highly sophisticated procedures will only affect the outcome.

2.3. Rural Development and Livelihood in the Pacific

The sources of livelihood for people in rural areas are getting more difficult by the day because of the pressure of population on resources. Overexploitation of resources, poor management and bad governance has lead to less return on resources and in turn has lead to poverty. This vicious cycle continues year after year in many rural areas where the state apparatus is weak and the traditional systems cannot cope with the pressure.

Rural development in the Pacific is influenced by the natural endowments of each country, the economic system employed, human resources available and level of good governance practised in the country. The livelihood of the Pacific people is always at the forefront of national government development plans. Most national budgets have programs to address the livelihoods of citizens. At the regional level and through the Council of Regional Organizations Panel (CROP) agencies, a lot of initiatives have been canvassed to address the livelihood of rural communities across the Pacific. The Pacific Plan is an initiative that envisions addressing livelihoods through pooling resources in the Pacific (Forum Secretariat: 2006). The strategic areas under the Pacific Plan include governance, sustainable development and security. Issues of livelihood are addressed under sustainable development.

2.4. The Concept of Livelihood

The concept of sustainable rural livelihood is part of the debate about rural development, poverty reduction and environmental management (Scoones 1998: 3).

Livelihood according to Chambers and Conway means

“the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. It is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stress and shock, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation” (Chambers and Conway, 1992: 7).

For rural households, sustainability means where the household can absorb any shock that might affect the source of their livelihood like the natural environment or their

casual jobs. If the household can recover quickly from cyclones, floods or loss of income than the livelihood of the household is sustainable. Measures for ensuring that households do have a sustainable livelihood are thus central to the concept of rural development.

From the definition, capabilities include human skills and abilities (ibid: 7). These include traditional knowledge and skills and learned knowledge and skills through modern education and the schooling system. The word 'capability' according to Sen (1984) refers to 'what people can do or be with their entitlements'. These concepts goes beyond the human capital to include the intrinsic side such as self-esteem, security, happiness, stress, vulnerability, power, exclusion and material concerns (Chambers 1989).

Livelihood is also about assets. Another word for asset is capital. Capital for livelihood includes human capital, physical capital, social/political capital, financial/economic capital and natural capital (Scoones: 1998). The different types of capitals are discussed under livelihood resources in section 2.5.3 below.

Activities refer to the different kinds of action that the members of the household engage in to gain their means of survival. This may be divided into production activities and reproduction activities (Soussan et al: 2003). Production activities include the production of goods and services for an income. Reproduction activities are the household activities that are not tradable but are important for the survival of the family like childcare, cooking and cleaning (ibid).

Livelihood security is a related concept to livelihood sustainability. Frankenberger (1996) defined livelihood security as 'adequate and sustainable access to income and resources to meet basic needs'. Attributes of livelihood security include (1) possession of human capabilities, (2) access to other tangible and intangible assets and (3) the existence of economic activities. Secure ownership of or access to resources and

income generating activities to offset risks, ease shocks and meet contingencies will secure livelihoods (Chambers 1989; FAO 2001).

Livelihood promotion is long term in nature. It is defined as ‘improving the resilience of household livelihoods to meet basic needs on a sustainable basis’ (FAO 2001). The aim is to reduce the vulnerability of household livelihood by: (1) improving household production, (2) creating alternative income-generating activities, (3) reinforcing coping strategies that are economically and environmentally sustainable, (4) improving on-farm storage capacity and (5) improving common property management through community participation (ibid).

Livelihood protection is medium term in nature. It is defined as ‘*any kind of activity that prevents the erosion or destruction of assets in the face of an impending disaster or emergency*’ (FAO 2001). Livelihood protection is linked with early warning systems and emergency preparedness. Livelihood provisioning is short term in nature (ibid). It is defined as ‘any activity that saves human life and protects adequate health and nutritional status, addressing the immediate symptoms of livelihood insecurity’ (FAO 2001). These are usually carried out in natural or manmade emergency situations. This will take some form of food assessment with appropriate intervention.

Livelihood recovery is ‘the process of protecting and promoting the livelihoods of people enduring or recovering from emergencies’ (FAO 2001). This may include the provision of income, rebuilding of household and community assets and institutions to prepare households to the road to development.

Livelihood strategies mean the various types of production and income generating activities or a combination of the two which households use within the limits of their institutional contexts to pursue their livelihood (Frankenberger: 2001). Production may be monetised or for subsistence and income generation may be in the formal or informal sectors. The institutional context includes the social, cultural,

political, religious and economic structures prevailing in the country that affect livelihood decisions (ibid).

The livelihood strategies for households in the developing world are multi pronged and complex because they use a number of resources to craft their livelihood in a changing environment that does not always work for them. Some of their household members work for an income, other may work on a farm, others may do some fishing, and others may collect things from the forest. All these activities are seasonal and may also depend on accessibility and availability (Frankenberger 2001).

In rural Solomon Islands the main rural livelihood strategies are land and sea based. These include gardening, hunting and gathering, fishing and shell collection and occasional selling of their subsistence produce for cash to obtain things they can not produce themselves like salt, sugar, rice and school fees. Having access to land and sea resources is thus important to a functional livelihood.

Most land and sea resources in rural Solomon Islands are governed by customary tenure. Use of land and sea resources for subsistence is recognised under customary tenure for tribal members and their immediate neighbours. In areas where population pressure on resources is great, even access for subsistence will be restricted to close family members only. There is no clear provision under customary tenure for tribal members or outsiders to lease tribal land for subsistence or commercial activities.

2.5. Frameworks for Analysing Livelihood Strategies

Frameworks help in the analysis of livelihoods. Frameworks simplify complex processes affecting livelihood so that points of interventions can be identified and addressed. Frameworks also 'provide a checklist of important issues and sketches out the way these link to each other; draws attention to core influences and processes; and emphasizes the multiple interaction between the various factors which affect

livelihoods' (DFID 1999 Section 4.1). When using the frameworks for livelihood analysis, we must heed the warning of Seeley (2006: 2) for the 'need to be wary of the tendency to simplify the complexity of people's lives by using occupational labels as proxies'. With these in mind, we now consider two models/frameworks chosen for this research to analyze household livelihood.

2.5.1. The IDS Sustainable Livelihood Framework

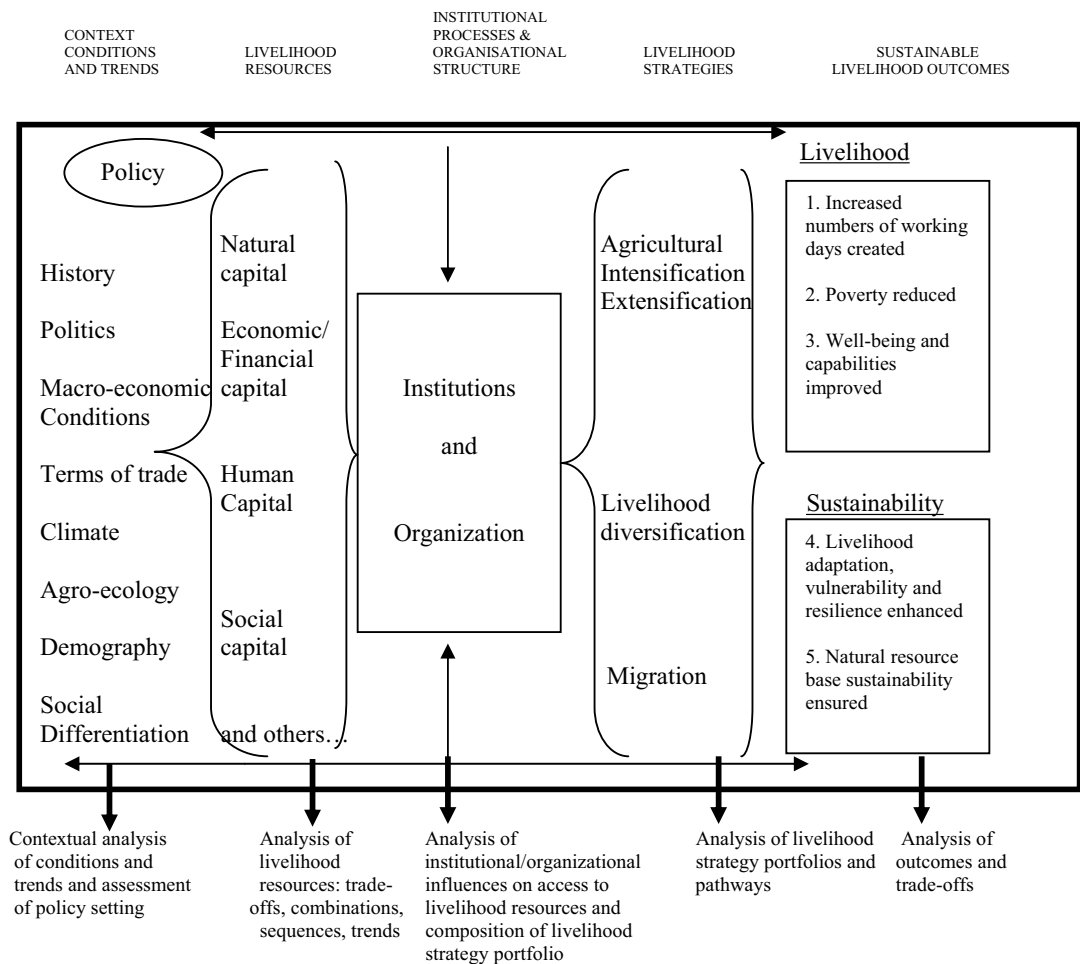
Since the concept of sustainable livelihoods became part of the rural development debate, various researchers and aid organizations have developed some framework to help in the analysis of the livelihoods. Organizations like the Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID) in UK, CARE, and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have developed frameworks to help them in the design of their livelihoods projects so that it could have the maximum impact on the rural poor. The first livelihood framework discussed here is known as the IDS sustainable livelihood framework (Scoones 1998) to help analyse sustainable livelihoods. This framework is chosen because it is relevant for the study especially in analysing household livelihoods. The IDS framework or model that is reproduced below as figure 2.1 is a general framework for analysing livelihoods. Reading from the left side of the model, the important components of the model include the following:

Context includes the social, economic, political, historical and demographic trends that influence livelihood. Livelihood resources include economic, natural, human and social capital that households and communities have access to and can use for their livelihood. Institutional processes and organizational structures include formal and informal institutions and organizations that affect sustainable livelihood strategies and outcomes. Livelihood strategies include the various combinations of assets used by

households to make a living. Livelihood outcome is a measure of how successful households are in their livelihood strategies.

The IDS framework provides a checklist of issues for researchers to explore by pursuing key connections and linkages between the various elements. The model has no predictive power but the proponent hopes it encourages the right questions to be asked.

Figure 2.1: Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: A Framework for Analysis



Source: Scoones (1998) Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, A Framework for Analysis.

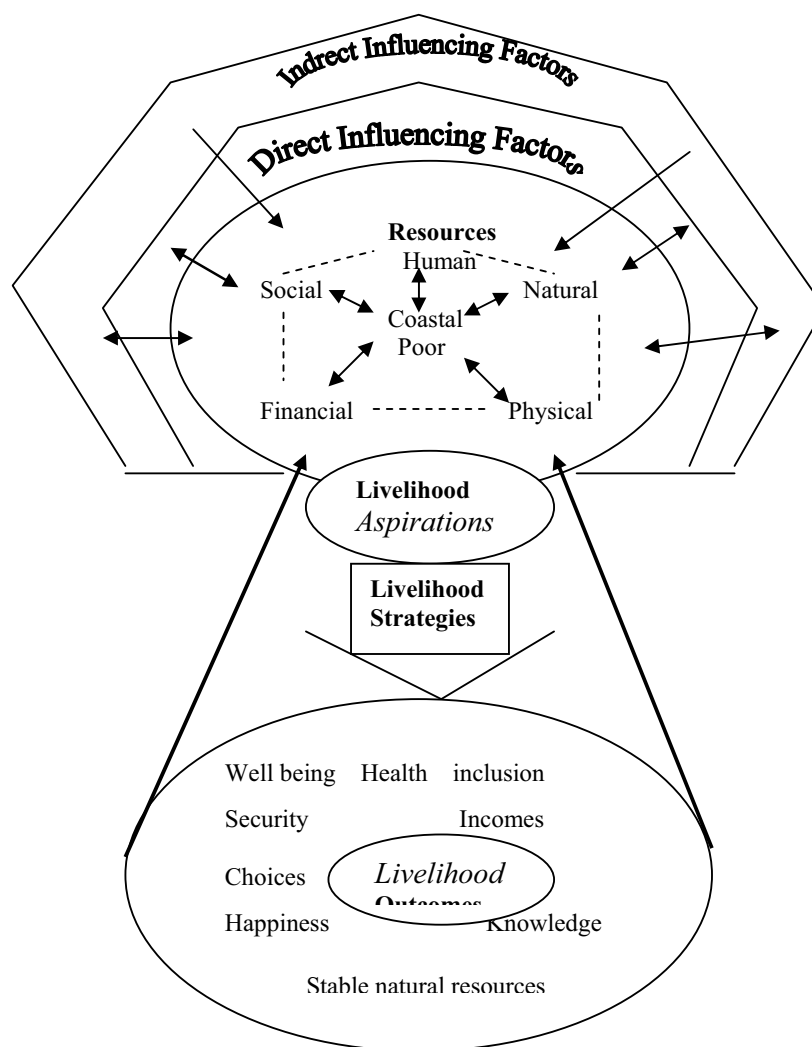
Scoones suggests that the key question to ask in any analysis of sustainable livelihoods is, given a particular context, what combination of livelihood resources result in the ability to follow what combination of livelihood strategies with what

outcomes. The second framework presented the same information but in a slightly different way (figure 2.2).

2.5.2. The IMM Coastal Livelihood Framework

The Coastal Livelihood Framework (figure 2.2) was developed by IMM Ltd during a coastal livelihood project funded by the UK government's Department of International Development (DFID) to study the livelihood of the coastal poor villagers in the Western Bay of Bengal - South Asia (IMM Ltd 2003).

Figure 2.2: Coastal Livelihoods Framework



Source: IMM Ltd 2003

This framework has all the main features of the SRL framework with only small variations in the way they present it. For example, the context and institutional factors under the IDS framework were presented as direct and indirect factors influencing livelihood under the IMM framework. The framework is a tool that tries to present the complexities of peoples' lives and the interactions that influence it.

The basic goal of the IMM framework is poverty eradication and the framework has the following guiding principles: poverty focused, people-centred, holistic, multi-levelled, partnerships, sustainable outcomes, dynamic, equitable and rights-based. The framework recognized the importance of poor people so they are placed at the centre of the model. The poor are then divided under age, gender and caste. Around the poor are the resources they can use for their livelihood. These resources include people's strengths, skills and capabilities (human resources), the natural resources around them (natural resources), the support they get from the communities and families they live in (social resources), the infrastructure they are able to use like road, water supply or port (physical resources) and money that they can use to get more of the other resources (financial resources). The double arrows between the poor and the resources reflect the reciprocal influence each have on each other.

Poor people's access to resources is influenced by the "Direct influencing factors" (DIFs). How these affect the poor depend on the location, the stakeholder group and the time being considered. These factors include institutions and organizations like government, NGOs or the police. These include access to resources, social norms, markets, religion, law, governance, knowledge, taboo, power, patronage, information, decision-making, policy, regulations and service delivery. The poor also have some influence over these factors. The next level affecting the lives of the poor are called "Indirect influencing factors" (IIFs). These are the general trends that in some ways affect poor people's access to resources. These include macro-economic trends,

technological change, drought, disease, population and globalisation. The poor do not have control over these factors – that is why the flow of the arrow is one directional for the poor. Livelihood strategies according to the IMM framework are the art of combining resources at one's disposal given the direct and indirect influencing factors to achieve livelihood aspirations. Livelihood aspirations are the kind of life people wants to have and livelihood outcomes are the output of livelihood strategies. Notice the arrows going back to the resources meaning that outcomes are not ends in themselves.

2.5.3. Livelihood Resources

Livelihoods resources include natural, physical, financial, human and social capital. Natural capital includes any “*stock or flow of energy and matter that yields valuable goods and services*” (Porritt 2005: 123). This includes renewable and non-renewable resources, *sinks* that recycle waste and *services* like climate regulation (ibid). Natural capital also refers to ‘natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived (DFID 1999). Natural capital has a close relationship with vulnerability of livelihoods especially those livelihoods of the poor (ibid). When assessing natural capital, it is also important to investigate the structures and processes that affect how natural capital is accessed and used (DFID 1999). To secure livelihoods based on natural resources, households use diversification as a strategy – having as many sources of survival as possible to reduce hunger when your only source is dried up (Ellis, 1998; Mbaiwa, 2004).

Human capital includes ‘the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual capacities of any individual’ (Porritt 2005: 137). The DFID define human capital as ‘the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. At the household level, it is a factor of the amount and quality of labour available’ (DFID

1999). Indicators include life expectancy, child mortality, quality of health care, level of education, literacy and local knowledge.

Physical capital includes ‘buildings, infrastructure (transport network, schools, hospitals, media and communications, energy; and sewerage systems) and technologies (Porritt 2005: 163). The DFID guidance sheets define physical capital as infrastructure that consists of changes to the physical environment that help people to meet their basic needs. It also includes producer goods, that is, tools and equipment that people use to function more productively (DFID 1999). For sustainable livelihoods, households need affordable transport, secure shelter and buildings, adequate water supply and sanitation, clean, affordable energy and access to information (communication) (ibid).

Financial resources are the ‘financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives’ (DFID 1999). Two important components of financial capital are available stocks (savings and access to credit) and regular inflows of money (earned income, remittance and other transfers) (ibid). It is important to find out whether or not individuals have knowledge about this resource and the financial structures and processes available to households in the area.

In livelihood, social capital is ‘the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. Networks and connectedness, membership of formal groups and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchanges help develop social capital’ (DFID 1999). Social capital requires an initial investment and regular maintenance like social interaction and building trust (Grootaert and Bastelaer 2002: 7). In livelihood, it is easier to look for trends in social capital than to try and measure the level of social capital. Secondly, look at the extent to which households use social capital as a coping strategy (DFID 1999).

2.5.4. Institutional Processes and Organizational Structures

In the livelihood framework, these include institutions, organisations, policies and legislation that shape livelihood (DFID 1999). These will determine access to capital, livelihood strategies, decision-making bodies and sources of influence. They also determine the terms of exchange between types of capital and finally, they determine the returns to any given livelihood strategy (ibid). DFID suggest looking at the relationship between the structures and processes and communities/individuals. Further, the following can be investigated: the roles (who does what), responsibilities (who is responsible for what), and rights (how aware are the different groups of their rights?), and relations (what is the state of relations between the different groups?).

2.5.5. Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies cover the ‘range and combination of activities and choices that people make/undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals (DFID 1999). There is an enormous diversity of livelihood strategies. Members of a household will normally engage in different livelihood strategies casually or permanently. Access to resources will undoubtedly affect the livelihood strategy chosen. In analysing strategies, it is important to consider the livelihood portfolio of different social groups and the trend over time, people’s outlook, the choices that people are making, the combination of activities that is working best and the livelihood objectives not currently met by the livelihood strategies (ibid).

Income may come from formal employment, part-time work or self-employment. Formal employment includes full time employment while part-time work includes employment for short terms periods and self-employment includes those working for themselves. Income also includes do-it-yourself activities for subsistence

that aid livelihood. This includes subsistence gardening and fishing, collecting firewood and reef gleaning.

Expenditures by households may be classified under the categories of social, consumed or as input to production. Social expenditure are expenditures to satisfy cultural obligations. These include bride price, contributions to clan meeting and contributions to death ceremonies. Consumed expenditures are money expended for household goods. These are mainly for food items. Expenditure classified as inputs include money used to further the production of other goods. Examples include money spent on farm or fishing implements.

2.5.6. Livelihood Outcomes, Constraints and Resilience

These are ‘achievements or outputs of livelihood strategies’ (DFID 1999). The advice to researcher is to recognise the richness of potential livelihood goals of households so that researchers really understand why people do what they do. Some of the common livelihood outcomes include more income, increased well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and more sustainable use of the natural resource base (ibid).

Constraints are the things that may affect the access of resources by the household. These include natural disasters like floods, cyclones or poor harvest or man made disasters like policy failures (DFID 1999).

Resilience refers to the ability of the household to stand against catastrophes as they arise. A household that has resilience will have the ability to cope with difficult times. On the other hand, a household with no resilience will not cope with livelihood hardship when confronted (DFID 1999).

2.6. Development and Livelihood in Solomon Islands

This section has two major parts: the first discusses the main paths of development pursued by successive governments in Solomon Islands since the colonial era to the present time. The second part looks at programmes initiated by the government, donors and NGOs to facilitate rural development and thus improve livelihood in the rural areas.

2.6.1. Major Phases of Development in Solomon Islands

The churches, Multinational Corporations, aid donors and the State influenced development in Solomon Islands before and after independence. The churches Christianised the islands and the Colonial government set up an administrative system; built some infrastructure and initiated some development projects. After independence, the state, assisted by aid donors was still instrumental in initiating development. Discussed below are some of the major development phases in Solomon Islands.

2.6.1.1. Development through Plantations

Multinational corporations recruited Solomon Islands labour for work in the plantations of Fiji, Samoa and Queensland during the Black Birding period of 1863 to 1906 (Moore 1990). Labourers brought back material and new ideas to their various communities. Of great importance were tools like knife and axes that helped greatly in making food gardens thus improving production. A disadvantage though was the introduction of rifles that facilitated bounty killing especially on the island of Malaita (Keesing and Corris 1980: 18). At the end of the overseas labour recruiting, coconut plantations were set up to make use of the returning labour force overseas. Able males worked in these plantations for at least two years to secure cash for their head tax and goods for distribution to their relatives on their return (Bennett 1987). By the 1970s, plantations as

a source of development, was limited to those owned by Levers Brother on Guadalcanal and Russell Islands. Levers eventually withdrew in the 1980s.

2.6.1.2. Development through National Corporations

Solomon Islands was not prepared for independence in terms of the infrastructure, the economy and human resources to man the administration system (per. com. Ulufa'alu 2006). When the country attained independence in 1978, the government made it a policy to develop the economy by establishing national industries. Industries established includes the Solomon Islands Plantations limited, The Solomon Taiyo limited, The National Fisheries Development Company, The Sasape Mariner Company, The Solomon Airlines and the National Shipping Service. It was believed then that the national industries would earn income for the government and will have a 'trickle down' effect to other sectors of the economy. The assumed positive 'spin offs' did not happen. Apart from creating employment, most of the national industries did not create good financial returns or the intended economic diffusion into the economy.

Provincial governments also jumped into this 'big business' bandwagon by establishing Provincial Development Authorities to coordinate the establishment of provincial government businesses or joint ventures. Malaita Province, for example, established the Malaita Development Authority (MDA), which saw the formation of the Malaita Shipping Company. The Makira Provincial Government entered into a joint venture agreement with a foreign company and created the Makira Bell. The Makira Provincial government also established the Maewo Coconut Products Limited for copra milling. These and other provincial undertakings were not able to make money for the provinces (Nanau 1995:116). Instead the provincial development authorities and the companies they created have cost the national government dearly when the government

as guarantor had to repay their loans from the Solomon Islands National Provident Funds (Solomon Star, June 2007).

2.6.1.3. Development through the Extraction Industry

By the 1980s, the logging industry had become a big foreign earner. The logging industry involved the customary landowners directly in access and royalty negotiations. In the rural areas where most landowners are illiterate about the commercial world, let alone contract negotiations, the logging agreements always favoured the logging companies. Generally, in Malaita, the logging industry caused more damage than benefit to the landowners and the surrounding communities because of the damage it did to the environment and the small fees they paid for access and royalty to the landowners.

In the sea front, the fishing industry has been a major contributor to government foreign earnings. This included two locally based fishing companies. One exported whole fish and the other processed its catch and sold to the European market. The government also sold access to its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFNs).

Corruption in the logging and fishing industry denied the people their rightful benefits to these resources. Only the copra and cocoa industries had a sustained effect on the people in terms of helping them to earn an income.

2.6.1.4. Development through Funding Assistance

The availability of credit or funding is important for rural development or development to happen for that matter. While the establishment of funding schemes by the government in the 1980s and the 1990s had noble intentions, it created a perception among the rural people that for development to happen, it had to come from writing a

project proposal. This perception was so engrained that in community meetings for improving village facilities, the talk usually concluded with someone to prepare a project proposal to facilitate their village development idea. Both the government and aid donors reinforced this message through the various assistance programmes they administered. Examples of these assistance programmes are discussed below.

The Provincial Development Fund (PDF)

The PDF was a funding scheme set up under the Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development (MPGRD) in 1980 to facilitate rural development to the provinces. This fund ceased operation in the early 1990s. The concept was for the MPGRD (a unit) to coordinate and disburse bilateral aid assistance to rural areas (Nanau 1995: 88). Projects included both social and income generating. Project proposals were screened at the provincial, ministry and donor levels. Only successful projects received funding from donors through the Ministry of Finance in kind. Most funded projects did not continue after the initial funding, and reasons for the unsustainability of projects include doings of the recipients and the administrators of the fund.

The Small Islands Communities Project Scheme (SICOPSA)

The SICOPSA was established in 1989 as a funding assistance for provincial governments especially intended to meet the needs of small isolated communities in the provinces with a maximum assistance of \$5,000 per project (Nanau 1995: 95). Proposals for funding were assessed and disbursed at the provincial level utilising funding assistance from the national government. Provincial members did have some influence over the distribution of the funding. Some recipients of this fund in Wala Lagoon indicated that

they benefited from SICOPSA despite the small threshold. Recipient and administration problems saw the demise of the SICOPSA fund.

Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

The introduction of the Constituency Development Fund by the government in the early 1990s under the discretion of the Member of Parliament shifted the perception of development further from the people to proposal writing to the parliament members. Proposals for funding were assessed and disbursed by the Member of Parliament for the constituency from national government funding. The annual fund available to the MP for disbursement was SBD\$1,000,000.00. The various components of the fund include SBD\$400,000 for constituency development, another SBD\$400,000 for micro projects and SBD\$200,000 for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Solomon Star May 2007).

Accusation of corruption arising from use of the fund by the MP was ubiquitous. Leonard Paia in studying the use of the fund in the West Makira constituency for the 1992 to 1997 period concluded that the fund was more a political tool used by the constituency Member of Parliament to stay in power (Paia 2003).

Donor Programmes

Some donor governments and funding agencies administered their own aid programmes to the country's rural people. This among others includes the Japanese Grassroots Programme, the EU Micro-Project Scheme and the AusAid Community Peace and Restoration Fund (CPRF) project. The Japanese Grassroots programme was mainly involved in funding school building projects in the rural areas. The EU micro project was funding income-generating projects at rural areas. The AusAid CPRF project was initially a 'community peace and restoration fund' initiated immediately after the

conflict to provide rural infrastructure and social services. The fund later included income-generating projects. Project proposals went directly to the donor offices in Honiara for assessment and funding in kind. The donors worked independently of the government.

2.6.1.5. Development in the Conflict Years

The social unrest in Solomon Islands occurred from 1998 to 2003 (Liloqula and Pollard 2000; Bennett 2002; Dinnen 2004). These were difficult years for development in Solomon Islands. Socially and economically, development was set back during this period. The displacement of people has negative social implications. The open conflict and threat of violence impacted negatively on business and investment causing GDP to retract between 1999 and 2002. Hardest hit were economic activities like mining, fishing, forestry and agriculture (CBSI 2002: 7). The contraction in the economy badly affected government revenue thus affecting government services to the people. In terms of real GDP, it contracted by 14.2 percent in 2000, 8.2 percent in 2001 and 2.6 percent in 2002 (ibid: 7).

2.6.1.6. Post-Conflict Development

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) began operations on 24 July 2003 (Hegarty, et. al: 2004). The initiative taken so far by the government and RAMSI is only about putting government systems back in order. It will be some time yet before the country sees a conscious return in terms of development from these functioning systems. In economic terms there are already modest returns shown by growth in real GDP of 3.8 percent in 2003, 4 percent in 2004, 5 percent in 2005 and 6 percent in 2006 (CBSI 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006). However, the question of development in Solomon Islands is yet to be settled. Different views about how development should

be approached are important. The NGOs are promoting people development towards the UNDP Human Development approach. The government is using a fork approach to development. On one hand it is promoting a neo-liberal approach by promoting private sector lead growth and on the other hand it is favoring a human approach to development through the provision of services to reduce poverty by improving access to these services.

2.6.1.7. The Proposed Bottom-Up Approach for Development

The new Grand Coalition for Change (GCC) government of Manasseh Sogavare in 2006 announced that government would approach development using the bottom up approach (SIG 2006a and SIG 2006b). Contradicting views about the approach have been expressed in the local newspapers and implementing the bottom up policy is yet unclear. This however, is a major policy approach announced by any government since independence. The government believe that the top down model of development planning used since independence was responsible for the social unrest. To suppress any similar social unrest in the future, the government has to approach development using the bottom up approach because 85 percent of the people live and own 90 percent of the land. The government believe it is now time to get the active participation of landowners in the development of their resources rather than treating them as spectators to development. The government intends to provide the necessary frameworks for the bottom up approach to be successful. This is a difficult plan to implement because its success depends on the political support of all parliament members, the public service, NGOs, resource owners and donor agencies.

2.6.2. Rural Development and Livelihood Initiatives in Solomon Islands

Since independence, successive governments with the assistance of donor government and NGOs have targeted the development of rural areas as part of their programmes. The objective in this section is to show that substantive initiatives were undertaken by responsible authorities to facilitate rural development in Solomon Islands apart from the funding schemes discussed above. On this note, only some of the initiatives targeting rural development and livelihood will be discussed here.

One of the major administrative initiatives after independence to harness rural development was the decentralisation of power to provincial governments¹ under the 1981 Provincial Government Act. Ironically, after 26 years of provincial government experience, rural people are still asking for decentralisation in the hope that it will give them rural development. Nanau (1995: 173) in a study of decentralisation in Guadalcanal and Makira provinces reported that the devolution of power among other things has not resulted in the development of rural areas in these provinces.

In the 1990s the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the government implemented the Solomon Islands Development Administration and Participatory Planning Programme (SIDDAP) project. The project intends to improve the capacity of the Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development so that they are able to coordinate rural development. Further, the project worked with the provinces of Isabel, Malaita and Rennell and Bellona and developed 'constituency development profiles' and 'plans' and from these constituency plans to develop 'provincial development frameworks'. After the initial funding the project stopped and therefore was not replicated in the other provinces.

1. Other objectives for decentralising power was to encourage participation, development from below, unity of the diverse country, upholding democratic principles and efficiency in decision making Nanau 1995:51

Another attempt by UNDP to improve development in rural areas was their 2001 project, aimed at improving the capacity of institutions at the village. The pilot project was conducted at Isabel province and attempted to improve the capacity of chiefs, churches and sustainable livelihood. These were considered the most important components of a village person's life in rural Solomon Islands. Improving these components will improve the rural villager. Anecdotal results so far suggest that the project was successful (per.com. David Topue 2007).

The Solomon Islands Rural Services Project has various components addressing different aspects of livelihood in the rural areas including fisheries, sanitation and the establishment of rural growth centres. A component of the rural Services Project is the building of Rural Development Centres that intends to set up demonstration farms and training facilities for rural people (Kabutaulaka 1993). Most of the growth centers were set up but was not use for their intended purpose. Kabutaulaka (1993: 149) attributed the failure to too much bureaucracy by the centres thus divorcing the rural people from their use.

The establishment of Rural Fisheries Centres was yet another attempt by the government and the European Union to help the rural people develop. The intention was to help rural coastal communities by building fisheries centres in strategic locations in the provinces. These fisheries centres were be equipped with ice making machines, fishing gear, outboard motor and boats for hire by rural angler. The project was also responsible for collecting the catch from the centres to a company in Honiara for export or for sale at the local Honiara fish market. In 1997 the researcher had the privilege of training the managers of these fisheries centres in simple aspects of financial management. The center managers testified that the fisheries centres really helped the rural fishers earn an income for their families. The project ceased after the funding

period ended. The respective provincial governments were supposed to take over the management of the fisheries centres once funding stopped.

No discussion about rural development in Solomon Islands is complete without mentioning the non-government organizations. A lot of national and international NGOs are currently active in promoting rural development in the country. Most NGOs in Solomon Islands operate with international funding. The Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) has a rural focus and over the last twenty years has implemented programmes on livelihood, environment, health and sanitation, civil awareness and political awareness. Hou (1999) thought SIDT has not been very successful.

2.7. Summary

Development as a concept was originally defined in economic terms to mean an increase in the gross national product (GNP) of a country. An increase GNP will lead to an improved quality of life for an individual. The unfavourable experience of South America with GNP made development thinkers recognize that increasing GNP alone is not enough to improve the quality of life of an individual. Other factors like social, cultural and physical factors also influence this quality of life. The UNDP moved into the development debate to include life expectancy, adult literacy and GNP per capita as components for calculating a development index. Development was thus defined as a socio-economic factor that involves change to cause an improvement in the quality of life.

For third world countries, big portions of their population live in rural areas. These are isolated areas that are poorly linked to the monetised sector or the formal economy. Development to these countries means improving their rural areas. This gives

rise to the word rural development, meaning the struggle to improve access to basic services like water, electricity, communication and infrastructure for the rural areas.

Development also means an improvement to ones quality of life. Improved quality of life comes from improved livelihood of the family or household. Livelihood consists of the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. These include human skills, physical assets, social networks and financial means that may be used to secure a living. The different assets thus call for different livelihood strategies to be employed in different contexts.

This thesis uses the IDS sustainable livelihood framework and the IMM coastal livelihood framework for analyzing livelihood in the Wala Lagoon. These frameworks include tools that can be used to measure livelihood resources, institutional processes and organizational structures, livelihood strategies, livelihood outcomes, livelihood constraints and the resilience of households against threats to their livelihood.

Rural areas in the Melanesian part of the Pacific are underdeveloped so people are moving to the cities to have a better life. Attempts by governments and donors to develop the rural areas have been difficult because of socio-economic factors. Regional organizations like the Forum are forging regional approaches to addressing rural development and livelihood through initiatives like the Pacific Plan. National governments also continue to address the issue of rural development in their national budgets.

The state and donors drive development in Solomon Islands. This came in the form of establishing plantations, devolving the powers of the government to the provincial level, setting up national companies for the extraction of natural resources, improving capacity of government institutions responsible for rural development and the development of business through availing credit from donors and the government.

Development and livelihood in Wala depend on fishing, boat building and shipping, shell money and the occasional selling of labour in the urban areas of Auki and Honiara. The environment in Wala Lagoon determines the livelihood strategies practiced. Though agriculture land is scarce, a few households depend on food gardens for their livelihood.

Chapter 3: Methodology of the Study

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology used in this research. The chapter outlines the research methods used in the collection of data, the sampling used for a household questionnaire, an outline of the validity and reliability of data, how the interview data was recorded, limitations experienced during data collection and an outline of the analysis of the qualitative data.

3.2. Research Methodology

The design of the research employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection. *'Qualitative research is inductive ... where one observes reality, the particular and extrapolates to the general'* (Lancy 1993: ix). Bogdan and Biklen (1982: 27) highlighted the following characteristics about qualitative research:

1. the natural setting is the direct source of data,
2. the researcher is the key instrument of data collection
3. it is descriptive
4. concerned with processes rather than simply with outcomes or products
5. analyze data inductively, and
6. 'meaning' is of essential concern to the qualitative approach

By contrast, quantitative research is deductive and follows a linear sequence (Burns 1997: 41). Quantitative research therefore is measurable and often transferable to other situations, while qualitative research is generally not measurable or immediately transferable to other situations (Walsh 2005: 100). David and Sutton (2004: 42) remind us however, that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is not simply between the use of numbers and the use of meaning or between the use of measures and the use of qualities. The distinction is not absolute but blurred. All researches involve the construction and recording of qualities and quantities.

Data collection for the study was done between July and September 2006 in Honiara and Wala Lagoon. Different data collection methods were employed in an attempt to collect relevant data to answer the objectives of this study set out in chapter 1. The different methods also reflect the qualitative and quantitative nature of the study. The methods employed include: a household questionnaire administered to 30 households, interviews, observations, and library, archival and Internet search. I will now discuss each method.

3.3 Research Methods

3.3.1. Questionnaire

One of the major sources of data was a questionnaire administered to 30 households in the Wala Lagoon. Walker (1985: 91) defined questionnaires as... ‘a formalized and stylized interview, or interview by proxy’. The design of a questionnaire according to Verma and Mallick (1999: 117) may be designed for self-completion or for assisted completion. The questionnaire used in this study was designed for assisted completion, that is, an enumerator asked the questions and fill-in the responses. This approach was used because of the low level of literacy in the population who may be unfamiliar with some of the questions asked. Secondly, because the questionnaire was written in English, it was important that an enumerator who was familiar with the questions translated them into the local dialect when asking the respondents.

After the household questionnaire was finalized, it was pre-tested with households in one of the settlements around Honiara. A total of 10 interviews were conducted with the heads of households. After the pre-test, some questions were re-arranged and reworded and others omitted to ease the flow of the questionnaire and to

avoid ambiguity. The general physical layout of the questionnaire was improved to facilitate the recording of the data.

Using the questionnaire might have intimidated some respondents so they did not respond effectively. This may also have to do with the researcher being one of them. This point is discussed in the limitations in section 3.6. Sensing this difficulty, the researcher had to memorize the main sections of the questionnaire and conduct an interview instead using the questionnaire as a framework. The interviews were not structured but revolved around the main themes/sections of the questionnaire. Respondents were given the freedom to talk and were recorded on tape. The questionnaire for each household is filled in immediately after each interview or at the end of the day. Missing data in the questionnaire were filled the next day or when the respondent is available. The researcher hired two local research assistants to help with the questionnaire/interviews.

3.3.1.1. Sampling for the Household Questionnaire

Nisbet and Entwistle (1970: 25) highlighted three important aspects of sampling: the definition of the population, the size of the sample, and the need to obtain a representative sample. Defining the population involves correctly identifying the population to be sampled. Further, deciding the optimum size of the sample is important so that results fall within the significance level. If the sample is too small, findings will fail to show significance levels, or if the sample is too big, the findings go beyond the significance level and effort is wasted in confirming results that would have come out clearly from a much smaller sample. Finally, the sample must be representative of the population so that it gives a true measure of the whole population. A representative sample is important to be able to make generalizations about the sample results to the

population. Below is Burn's (1997:78) outline of how a representative sample is selected:

Random sampling is where all members of the population have an equal chance of selection. Systematic sampling is where the sample is selected using a systematic method from the population. Where the population is all adult males in a village, selecting one in every three adult male at this village for the sample is an example of systematic sampling. Stratified sampling is where the different stratum in the population is recognized and each stratum (group) is sampled randomly. This ensures that each stratum within the population is represented in the sample in the same proportion as in the population. Cluster sampling is a good technique to use where the population is spread across a wide geographic area. Cluster sampling is the sampling of entire natural groups rather than individuals, as was the focus of the above methods. For example, the population may be all the primary schools in a region. A cluster sample involves choosing a primary school or two in the region as the sample and not individual students in the schools. Stage sampling lies between simple random sampling of individuals and cluster sampling of entire schools or classes. Stage sampling in the example of schools, would involve random sampling of schools and within each school, random sampling of individual students. Nation wide studies may involve multi-stage designs – where the nation is divided into provinces, and provinces are divided into constituencies and constituencies are divided into area councils or villages. Stage sampling may also be called multi-stage sampling.

To assess the potential of shell money as a livelihood strategy for the Wala people, the population for this study has to be all the households in the coastal communities of the Wala Lagoon of Malaita. Households of Kwara'ae, Kwaio or other ethnic communities in the Lagoon however, are not part of the population. The sample for the study was selected using multi-stage sampling. The sampling process starts with

first dividing the Wala Lagoon into 5 distinct regions, namely: *Aoke*, *Rarata*, *Laulasi*, *Alite* and *Gwa'ata* regions (see figure 4.3). From the five regions, the two regions of Aoke and Laulasi were chosen as the second stage of the sampling. Aoke region was chosen for its semi-urban nature and Laulasi region for its rural nature. The contrasting nature of the regions will be helpful for a comparative analysis of their level of livelihood dependence on shell money. Thirty households were selected from Aoke and Laulasi regions as the final sample.

The regions of Aoke and Laulasi have approximately the same number of households, so the sample of thirty households was equally divided between Aoke and Laulasi regions. Under each region, a general cluster of common livelihood strategies can be identified from the outset. The selection of sample households was done, as much as possible, so that it is representative of the common livelihood strategies in that region. This is done by first, establishing and identifying the main livelihood strategies used by households in the particular region. Second, noting the number of households in general using the strategies and then selecting the sample households in proportion to the different livelihood strategies in that region. It is not all clear because most households use a combination of livelihood strategies for their survival. However, for the purpose of selecting the sample, only the main livelihood strategies of households were considered. Table 3.1 below outlines the sample households by region. Aoke region has 15 households and Laulasi region another 15 households making a total sample of 30 households. The average household size in Aoke and Laulasi was 6 and 6.8 respectively.

Table 3.1: Sample Households by Region

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Household</i>
Aoke	15
Laulasi	15
Total	30

Source: Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Household Livelihood Survey

Table 3.2: Percentage distribution of sample population in age group by region and sex

Age Group	Aoke			Laulasi			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<15	16	18	34	17	21	38	33	39	72
15-19	9	5	14	9	8	17	18	13	31
20-24	4	3	7	2	5	7	6	8	14
25-29	2	4	6	0	0	0	2	4	6
30-34	2	3	5	0	0	0	2	3	5
35-39	3	4	7	2	6	8	5	10	15
40-44	3	1	4	4	3	7	7	4	11
45-49	2	1	3	3	1	4	5	2	7
50-54	1	1	2	2	2	4	3	3	6
55-59	3	1	4	2	3	5	5	2	7
60-64	0	1	1	0	5	5	0	6	6
65-69	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	3
70-74	0	0	0	4	2	6	4	2	6
>75	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	2
Total	48	42	90	46	57	103	94	97	191

Source: Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Household Livelihood Survey

Table 3.2 outlines the percentage distribution of the sample population in age group by region and sex. Thirty percent of the sample population is under the age of 15 years. The second largest age group is the 15 to 19 years that make up 16 percent of the sample population. Those under 19 years therefore make up 46% of the sample population. The only other significant age groups are the 20 to 24 years (7.3%), 35 to 35 years (7.8%) and 40 to 44 years (5.7%). All other age groups were below 4 percent of the sample population.

3.3.1.2. Structure of the Household Questionnaire

The main sections of the household questionnaire included background information about the household, livelihood resources available to the household, institutions and processes that affect the livelihood of households, livelihood strategies employed by the households, constraints facing the households and the level of household resilience in the faced of catastrophes that affect their livelihood.

Most of the questions were closed-ended questions with few open-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed to ease the recording of data from respondent during the interviews. The researcher was mindful that this might reduce or limit the respondent's views. However, to reduce this limitation, the questionnaire was combined with the interview method and the respondent was allowed to talk beyond the options.

Data collected from the questionnaire include: background information about the head of household, household composition, resources accessible to the household, sources of income and expenditure by the households, institutions influencing the livelihood strategies of households, constraints faced by households and the resilience of households in the face of constraints.

3.3.2. Interviews

Verma and Mallick (1999: 122) define an interview as 'a conversation between two or more people where one or more of the participants takes the responsibility for reporting the substance of what is said'. Interviews they say may be structured, unstructured, or semi-structured. Structured interviews are interviews where the interviewer has a list of prepared questions from which she/he cannot deviate. The advantage of structured interviews according to Nisbet and Entwistle (1970: 42) is that data can be easily collated and analyzed. A major disadvantage of structured interviews is that it restricts the freedom of the individual (respondent) to develop his own reasoned arguments. For unstructured interviews on the other hand, Verma and Mallick (1999: 123) defined it as situations where the interviewer only has some broadly defined objectives and allows the interviewee great freedom to respond along these objectives. The interviewer will often probe the interviewee to explore at depth issues along the broadly defined objectives. While the unstructured approach has the advantage of allowing the

interviewer to probe deep into a problem, the major disadvantage is the difficulty of coding responses or making a quantitative assessment of attitudes and opinions to allow comparisons to be made (Nisbet and Entwistle 1970: 43). Finally, semi-structured interviews lie between the two ends of the continuum. Semi-structured interview in the continuum varies from case to case but most would have an interview schedule (Verma and Mallick 1999: 123).

This study used unstructured and semi-structured methods of interview. See Table 3.3 below for a summary of the interviews done. When collecting data on households in the sample, the semi-structured method of interview was used where the household questionnaire became the interview framework but the respondents were given the freedom to respond as they wished along this framework. In some cases, the researcher knew the head of household in the sample. After the preliminaries, the researcher probed into the main themes of the questionnaire. The respondent was allowed to explain and discussed freely with the researcher who occasionally returned the discussion to the theme in question. When the researcher was satisfied that enough data on the theme was gathered then they move to the next theme. At other times, the respondents overlap information and address two or more themes. Interviews with heads of households were conducted in private and spouses were allowed to observe and comment. This was to ensure that the respondent was able to speak freely about the household livelihood strategies. It can be difficult to ask personal details when others are present because this is not acceptable.

Table 3.3 Types of Interviews by Regions

<i>Interview Type</i>	<i>Wala Lagoon</i>		<i>Honiara</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>		
Questionnaire	15	15		30
Indepth	5	5	2	12
Unstructured	12	12	6	30

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

All other interviews conducted with government officers, knowledgeable people in Wala, and people from other ethnic groups were unstructured. The researcher only had the broadly defined objectives as the guideline for the interviews and asked questions along these objectives. For example, when interviewing government officers, the general objective was to know apart from written documents, what was government's position with regards to rural livelihoods. Questioning revolved around this objective was used to obtain data from these sources.

Informal interviews that sought the views of non Wala people about shell money was conducted in Honiara and Auki on the availability of respondents. Monette et. al (1986: 127) called this 'availability sampling'. This method was used because it will be difficult and expensive to get a representative sample. These were mostly one-to-one interviews but at other times more than one person was present so all of their individual views were sought. All of these 'other people' were from other areas in the Solomon that also used shell money.

Interviews about Wala trading voyages were done with knowledgeable people from Wala only. Often one respondent would refer the researcher to another knowledgeable person about certain aspects of the trading ring and this was basically how data was collected so with good networking the key informants and some stakeholders were identified. This method of sampling is called snowball sampling (Monette et al (1986: 129).

3.3.2.1. Recording of Interview Data

The interviews for the household sample were recorded with a tape recorder and transferred immediately to the household questionnaire after each interview or at the end of the day. A notebook was also used occasionally for important points or for areas that required further information and therefore questioning. All other interviews, questions were either asked in Solomon pidgin or the Wala dialect. Responses were

recorded on tape and or noted. The recorded responses were transcribed into English and a hard copy of the interview was made.

3.3.3. Observation

Burns (1997: 316) stated that observation as a method of data collection has the advantage of the behaviour been “*purposive and expressive of deeper values and beliefs*” and does not depend on “*people’s retrospective or anticipatory reports of their behaviour*”. Data from observation will depend on how the researcher participates in the setting. Burns (1997:309) identified four possible research stances: the complete participant; the participant-as-observer; the observer-as-participant; and the complete observer. The complete participant participates fully but observes secretly. The complete observer does not interact with those under observation. The observer-as-participant is known to the hosts but remains a relative stranger. The participant-as-observer is where the researcher is more closely involved and identified with the hosts. In this study, the researcher was *a participant-as-observer*. The researcher was born and raised in the area of study. After tertiary studies, the researcher, for twelve years, while working in Honiara, was interacting with the community through village meetings, development seminars, training programs and political rallies. These experiences were useful in the observation and collection of data for this study.

While an insider can be helpful in collecting data through observation, the researcher is also mindful that such data will be subjective. To minimize the degree of subjectivity, the researcher consulted other knowledgeable Wala people during the study period to clarify and substantiate his observations. These consultations resulted in some fine-tuning of the researcher’s observations and at other times no changes were made. Differing views with other local knowledgeable Wala people were based on the different frameworks that we used to observe the happenings.

3.3.4. Library, Archival and Internet Research

Secondary data about Solomon Islands, Malaita and shell money was collected from different sources including the library at the University of the South Pacific, Laucala campus, the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, Kukum campus Library and from the internet. Data on government programs for rural areas were collected from the Government Policy Evaluation Unit in the Prime Ministers Office. Some specific historical data about shell money was collected from the National Archive in Honiara. Data on livelihood framework and strategies from other parts of the world sourced from the Internet and the USP Laucala campus library.

3.4. Validity and Reliability of Data

According to Burns (1997: 323) validity requires that researchers actually observe or measure what they think they are observing and measuring and secondly, “*to what extent are the abstract constructs and postulates generated, refined or tested by scientific researchers applicable across groups?*” The validity for this study was ensured by the methods used for data collection and analysis. The researcher was a native of Wala, which made observation conducted in natural settings that reflect the life experiences of the sample. As an insider this made it possible to refine, constructs and continuously analyse data when received.

A method often used to improve validity of data collection is triangulation. Burns (1997: 324) define triangulation as “*the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour*”. This study used a number of data collection methods including in-depth interviews, unstructured interviews, participatory observations and archival research. Data were cross checked with at least two other people to confirm its validity. For example, data on income of fisherman were cross checked with the sales people and the researcher was actually on site on a number

of occasions to count and record the price and catch of the fisherman. This was possible only because they publicly displayed their catch for sale. Data on other incomes like wages of shopkeepers were difficult to confirm with other people because of its sensitivity.

Burns (1997: 319) pointed out that data collected using qualitative methods might be bias because of the prejudices and attitudes of the researcher. There is the possibility that the researcher records only what they want to see rather than what actually occurs. This was a difficulty that the researcher faced as people in the Wala Lagoon had preconceived ideas about the livelihood strategies of certain region in the Lagoon and these were often the subjects of jokes between the regions. The researcher remains detached from the stereotypes and records the responses as they are in the context they were related by the respondents. The use of the recorder helped a lot in ensuring that good and correct information is recorded.

Burns (1997: 322) outlines two assumptions for reliability. They are, firstly that the study can be repeated and secondly, that two or more persons can have similar interpretations by using the same categories and procedures. The reliability of this study therefore may be difficult to meet. One area that will be difficult to repeat and come up with the same results is the monthly Income and Expenditure Statements. A lot of households did not disclose all their incomes for personal reasons. Thus one will see that all the households have deficit balances, some more, some less. Secondly, as an insider, there was some subjectivity in my judgments of events and happening that was observed. This subjectivity would influence the analysis so someone else doing the same study would most probably come up with a different conclusion.

3.5. Limitations

Collecting data in the rural Solomon Islands is not without its limitations. The following limitations were experienced during the data collection stage and should be taken into account when reading the findings of this study.

3.5.1. Time

Data was collected in five weeks between July and August 2006. This unfortunately was not long enough especially when using qualitative methods like observation to collect data. About half of this time was spent in Honiara and the other half in Wala, Malaita. Data collection in Honiara took more than expected because of delayed and postponed appointments and government officers absence from the offices. Due to the urgency of time, the author had to hire two research assistants to assist in the data collection in the Wala Lagoon. One research assistant was from the Aoke region and the other was from the Laulasi region. The researcher had to travel frequently between the two regions to check on their progress and to administer some questionnaire himself.

3.5.2. Finance

Collecting accurate and detail data required a lot of money because transport around the lagoon was expensive, as transportation between the villages in the lagoon required the use of a vehicle or outboard motor. The reasons are outlined below. There was no reliable public transport system on land or in the lagoon during the data collection period and this was a major issue. Secondly, the ideal times for household interviews would be in the evenings when villagers were at home, therefore, hiring the service was the only option as public transport ends at 3.00pm everyday. Transport around the

lagoon was therefore very expensive. Due to this limitation, the researcher had to rely on the hired research assistants to help in facilitating data collection.

3.5.3. Incomplete responses

One of the great difficulties in the data collection from households was obtaining partial responses when asked about monthly income and expenditures. Some respondents were reluctant to give information because they were not comfortable with having a local as a researcher. The hired research assistants also experienced this problem. As noted by Walsh (2005: 209) ... it is often easier to pass on personal information to a total outsider than to someone you know or will meet again.

3.6. Analysis of Data

Analysis of qualitative data involve ...working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what you will tell others (Bogdan and Biklen 1982: 145). The researcher used content analysis for the qualitative data. For the quantitative data, simple statistical calculations were made with the data presented in tables and graphs.

3.7. Summary

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection. For the collection of primary data, the methods include a household questionnaire to gather information about household livelihood strategies, unstructured interviews and observation by the researcher. For secondary data, research was done at the University of the South Pacific library and the Solomon Islands National Archives in Honiara. The household questionnaire was conducted on a sample of 30 households equally

distributed between households in Aoke and Laulasi regions of the Wala Lagoon. The selection of the sample was generally random with some predetermined portion of representation about the main livelihood strategies prevailing at the time of the survey. Every effort was made to validate the data collected. This included asking more than one knowledgeable person to confirm the data. Data collection though was hindered by time available, lack of money for transport and other expenses and the lack of complete responses by some households especially about their sources of income.

Chapter 4: The Wala Society

4.1. Introduction

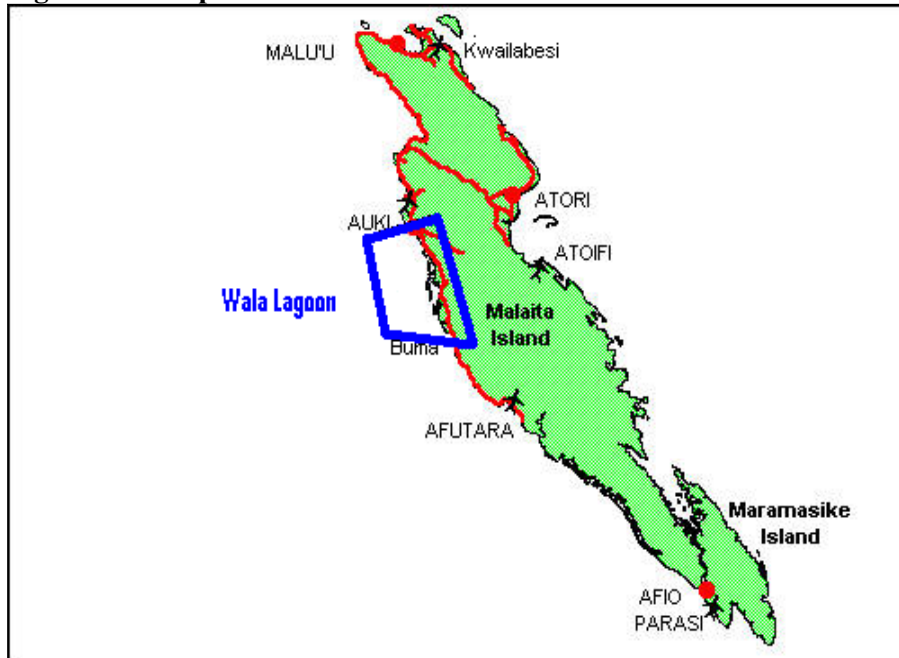
To understand the livelihood strategies of a society, it is important to be knowledgeable of the socio-economic, geographical and physical structure of the society. This chapter discusses the location and population of the Wala Lagoon, institutions that affect the livelihood of the people, and the resources available for the livelihood strategies of the people.

4.2. Location, Geography and Population

Wala or Langalanga lagoon is located on the western side of Malaita Island, Solomon Islands (Figure 4.1). The lagoon settlements start from Lilisiana village – near the provincial capital Auki and stretches southwards for 30 kilometres along the western coast of Malaita to Buma village (Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3). The width of the lagoon varies between 200 to 900 meters.

Figure 4.1: Map of Solomon Islands

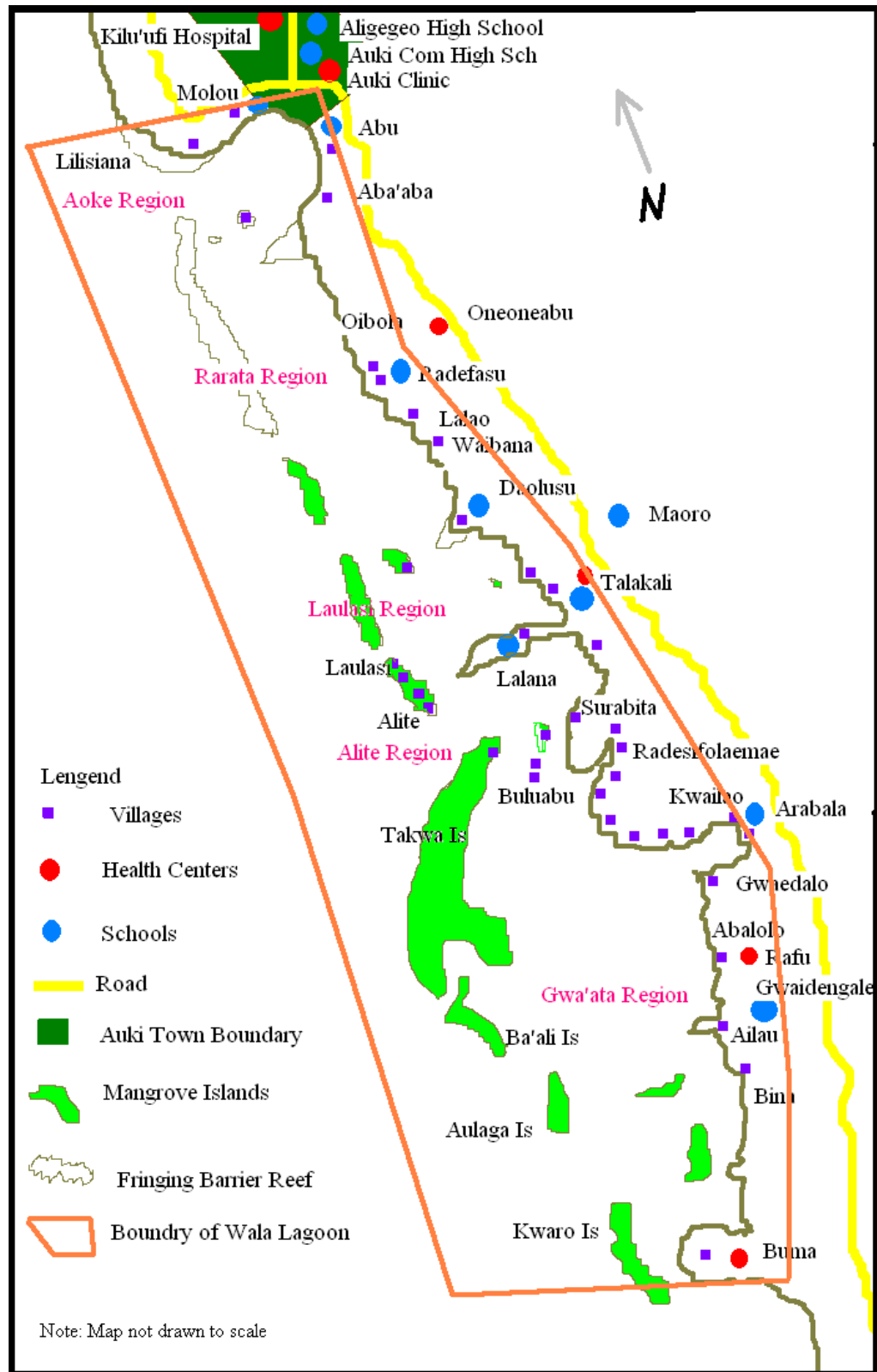


Figure 4.2: Map of Malaita Island

Source: Bob Vincent, Eddie Kakai and Mick Saunders, Census Office, Honiara

The outer barrier that forms the lagoon is made up of reefs and mangrove islands with some coconut trees. Inside the lagoon, pockets of mangrove islands and reefs dot the lagoon. All the islands in the lagoon have no fresh water. In the past, the fringing barrier and its mangrove islands were the sites for habitation. Artificial islands were built on the fringing barrier reefs or around the mangrove islands to form villages. Most villages on the fringing barrier have now been abandoned either from the threat of cyclone or to be near as possible to basic needs like food and water on the mainland. Most lagoon settlements are now on the coast of the Malaita Island. Only a few settlements remain on the outer barrier of the lagoon. The lagoon settlements are accessible by a gravel road and sea transport from Auki Provincial Town.

Figure 4.3: Map of Wala Lagoon



The lagoon area is commonly known as the Langalanga Lagoon. To the people of Langalanga, the area is known as “*Wala*”, and its people are known as “*falua i Wala*” literally ‘people from Wala’. As a native of Wala the researcher prefer to call the area ‘Wala Lagoon’ to maintain its traditional identity.

The 1999 national census established the population of Solomon Islands at 409,000. Malaita province made up 124,000 of this population or 1/3 of the Solomon population. In 2003, an Apex survey established the population of Aoke Langalanga Constituency² at 10,800 (ALCCAA 2003 survey). For every 100 females, there are 105 males. Of this population, 60 percent are under the age of 25 years. This 2003 population of Wala makes up less than 10 percent of the 1999 population of Malaita.

4.3. Rural Development and Livelihoods in Malaita and Wala Lagoon

Malaita is the most populated province in the Solomon Islands. The population density on the island is higher compared to other provinces of the Solomon Islands (1999 census). The topography of Malaita is mountainous and therefore has limited opportunities for large-scale farming. Land in Malaita is generally not fertile, so people have to work extra hard for their livelihood. Malaita has very few natural forests left.

Malaita has a road access from Auki to north, east and south. The road is very helpful for smallholder copra and cocoa producers and subsistence farmers who often bring their surplus produce to the Auki and or the Honiara markets.

Malaita has three functioning airfields around the island. Telephone service is limited to Auki, Malu’u, Atoifi and a few other places. The Auki telephone service extends to the Wala Lagoon. Likewise, electricity is limited to Auki and Malu’u. Electricity from Hydro is limited to a village in Malu’u and two villages in the East Are’are constituency.

2. Aoke Langalanga Constituency is made up of Auki Town, some Kwara’ae villages around Auki Town and Wala Lagoon.

ANZ and the National Bank (now Bank South Pacific) provide banking services to Malaita from the provincial capital Auki. ANZ is experimenting with a mobile banking service to Malu'u and the South road. The limited banking service is affecting a lot of employees (teachers and nurses) and entrepreneurs in the rural areas. Diau from north Malaita said "*coming to Auki to access your salary is becoming an expensive exercise. Having to spend \$100 for transport to access a salary of \$300 fortnight is unimaginable*". The opening of the ANZ mobile rural banking unit is a relief to the northern teachers.

Livelihood in Malaita is from subsistence and the export of labour to Honiara and other provinces. The staple crops are sweet potato, taro, yam, pana and cassava. Employment opportunities are limited so people often migrate and settle in other parts of the Solomon to secure their livelihood.

During the pre-contact period, the Wala Lagoon had a thriving economy based on trade fueled by the shell money. The trading ring included the islands of Malaita, Bugotu in Isabel, Gela, Guadalcanal, Part of Makira, and Ulawa. Apart from the occasional war and bad weather that sometimes hampered trade, the livelihood of the people was generally secure. Contact with the Western world affected the trading system and thus the livelihood of the people through the induction of modern currency, foreign goods and value systems.

When the shell money trade was disrupted, the Wala people sought their livelihood from other areas. They improve their canoe building skills to building small carter boats (like schooners) that was powered by sails. They then used the carter boats for the trading of copra between the islands. Fosala of Talakali village said this was an idea seen from the Chinese traders. Fosala further explained that his late father, Faraege Mafaepapasa, an ex-indentured labourer that had been to Fiji and Queensland, used his

contacts to secured stevedore contracts for Wala people with the colonial government at Tulagi.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, fishing and shell collection (especially trochus) was a popular activity for a cash income. As fishing efforts and volume increased fish stocks began to decrease. Apart from conventional fishing methods, the 1970s also saw an increase in the use of environmentally destructive fishing methods. The use of dynamite for example, accelerated the depletion of fish stock and destroyed reefs and breeding grounds for fish in the lagoon. The depleting fish stocks forced the Wala people to use other fishing grounds around other islands, especially Gela and Guadalcanal, most of the time without permission.

By the 1970s and 1980s, the Boat Building industry was adapted further to building more bigger and modern wooden boats. This was made possible through a boat building school set up in Auki in the early 1960s by the government. Families pooled resources and began erecting shipyards around the lagoon. The main route serviced by the boats is the Honiara - Auki route for cargo and passenger. This service greatly improved the retailing and the movement of goods and people between Honiara and Auki greatly. The livelihood of those who owned the boats improved as they began to receive a steady income and diversify into other areas of business like retailing. Furthermore, it improved the general population of Malaita in general, and more specifically the Wala Lagoon's access to Honiara thus improving their livelihood opportunities – it improved the opportunities to diversify sources of livelihood.

4.4. Institutions that affect Livelihood in Wala

Many institutions contribute to livelihood in the Wala Lagoon. These include government institutions, civil societies, religious and traditional institutions. This

section discusses these institutions and their contribution to household livelihood in Wala.

4.4.1. Government Influence

Government institutions affecting livelihood in Wala include the national government, Statutory Authorities and Government Shareholding companies. The first section discusses the national governments' influence as an institution.

The national government delivered its services through ministries and departments. Currently, the central government influences livelihood in Wala through include the provision of law and order, education, health services, infrastructure and the CDF direct funding assistance.

The national government provides police and prison services to Malaita Province through the Provincial Police Commander and the Prison Service in Auki. Although not effective at times, police attendance to community disputes had helped control disputes and helped avert violent conflicts. This ensures law and order in the community.

Government run schools serve students from Wala include the Aligegeo High School, Auki Community High School and Auki Primary School in the Auki area, Laulana Community High School and Busu Primary School in the lagoon area. Through education, the community is accessible to greater communities.

The health facilities available to the community summarized in Table 4.1 below include one government run hospital, three clinics, and two health centers. From Auki to Buma (refer to Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3) at the southern end of the lagoon, the health facilities are distributed as follows: Kilu'ufi Hospital and Auki Clinic are in Auki town serving the Aoke region of the lagoon. Oneone'abu Health Center is located between Radefasu and Oibola villages and serves the Rarata region. Talakali Clinic is in

Talakali village and serves the Laulasi region. Rafu Health Center is near Gwaedalo village and serves part of the Gwa'ata region and Buma Clinic at the end of the lagoon serves the Gwa'ata and Kwaio regions. The government runs all the health facilities. This, by Solomon Islands standards, is a very good distribution of health centers per population in a rural area – a health center for every 2000 people.

Table 4.1 Health Centers Accessible to Wala Residents

<i>Health Center</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Region Serve</i>	<i>Provider</i>
Kilu'ufi Hospital	Auki	Malaita	Government
Auki	Auki	Aoke/Kwara'ae	Government
Oneone'abu	Radefasu	Rarata/Kwara'ae	Government
Talakali	Talakali	Laulasi/Kwara'ae	Government
Rafu	Gwaedalo	Gwa'ata	Government
Buma	Buma	Gwa'ata/Kwaio	Government

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

The most commonly reported illness in the Wala area is malaria. This is a nation-wide problem that affects the whole country. More recently, life style diseases like diabetics, high blood, gout, kidney, cancer and heart diseases have increasingly been present among the population. The health centers unfortunately are not equipped to deal with these life style diseases. This is a problem that may get worse in the future if preventative measures are not implemented.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the national government build three roads in Malaita from the provincial town of Auki. A north road serves the northern region, an east road serves east Malaita and a south road serves the Wala Lagoon up to Su'u (Figure 4.3). From these main roads, a number of feeder roads were built to villages. Maintaining the roads had always been difficult financially for the government. Private individuals provide public transport as and when they have the means. The provision of this service is expensive and a lot of people cannot afford it. When the roads were in good working condition, it serves the people well but when the conditions of the roads were bad, the movement of people and transportation of goods were affected.

The main seaport of Malaita province is in Auki, in the northern end of the Wala Lagoon. The seaport caters for cargo and passenger. Market produce is shipped from Auki to Honiara and retail goods are shipped from Honiara to Auki. The sea passage between Honiara Auki is one of the busiest routes in the country. Gwaunaru Airstrip, 8 kilometres north of Auki also provides air service to residents in Wala Lagoon.

The government provides direct funding assistance known as CDF (Constituency Development Fund). Each Member of Parliament has access to a \$400,000 per annum Constituency Development Fund, a \$200,000 for Micro Projects, and \$400,000 for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), – making a total of \$1million per annum per constituency. Communication during the research indicated the funds were used mostly for social projects and a few income generating projects. The use and allocation of these funds has caused a lot of controversy and ill feelings between constituents and regions in the constituents. Constituents in the Aoke region for example felt that constituency sitting Member of Parliament only use the funds for the Laulasi region, while constituents in Laulasi region felt the funds were used only by Wala people living in Honiara. The general public opinion gathered during the research is that the funds have not been used effectively to address the livelihood of the people.

The Aoke Langalanga Constituency through their member of parliament recently registered an association called the Aoke Langalanga Constituency Apex Association (ALLCAA or commonly referred to as Apex by the constituents) to coordinate constituency development. Under Apex, the constituency is divided into seven regions for administration. Six of the regions are in the constituency and the seventh in Honiara to cater for Wala residents there. The seven regional reps, the two provincial ward members of ward 30 and ward 1, and the constituency Member of Parliament make up the board of Apex. Relevant development sectors were identified and a board member is assigned to chair the identified sectors. The elites of Wala

working in Honiara were assigned to play an advisory role to Apex through the identified sectors. Apex is set up to act as the conduit between the government, aid donor and the constituents.

Apex has been administering the \$400,000 CDF with the MP since 2002. Apex facilitated some help to affect livelihood, but not everyone is happy. Most people accept Apex as a vehicle for development in the constituency, but they blame the people who managed Apex for the ineffectiveness of Apex. There is a real need to improve capacity within and without Apex. It will be sometime yet before Apex has the capacity to effectively facilitate development and thus livelihood in the constituency.

4.4.2. Statutory Authorities

Two statutory bodies provide services affecting the livelihood of the people. This includes the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA) and the Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA).

Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA)

The Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA) provides electricity to Auki town and the surrounding villages of *Molou*, *Lilisiana* and *Ambu*. In the study, 47 percent of the sample households around Auki town are connected to the SIEA grid. The other 53 percent of households use kerosene for their lighting needs. See Table 4.2 below for details. Other Wala villages in the lagoon do not have access to electricity. These households use kerosene, diesel or coconut oil for lighting. Currently, a small 285ml bottle of kerosene sells at \$2.50, hardly enough to light a lantern for a night. Not all households could afford kerosene because of its high cost.

Table 4.2: Source of Household Energy for Lighting by Region

<i>Source of energy</i>	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Electricity	6	40	0	0	6	20
Kerosene	9	60	15	100	24	80
	15	100	15		30	100

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Wood for use in open fire is the preferred energy for cooking (see Table 4.3). The choice of wood is based on the availability of wood and the relative cost involved in securing wood for cooking. The preferred wood for cooking is mangrove and this is impacting on livelihood because mangrove is also a source of food and spawning ground for fish. The other options including kerosene and gas are expensive.

Table 4.3: Source of Household Energy for Cooking by Region

<i>Source of energy</i>	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Wood (open fire)	15	100	15	100	30	100
Kerosene	0		0		0	
Gas	1	5	0		1	2

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA)

The Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA) provides piped water for Auki town and the villages immediately around it. This service has been very unreliable lately because of low water levels at the dam behind Auki town. The national government through a Rural Water Supply Project provides piped water to most villages in the lagoon during the 1980s. Most of these water supply projects are no longer working because of poor maintenance by the communities and differences between the “Bush” and “Sea” people.

Table 4.4 outlines the main source of cooking and drinking water for the households in the study. In the Aoke region, all households have access to the Auki water supply system with 26 percent (4/15) of households have the water connected to their houses and 74 percent of households obtain it from stand pipes in the village. In the Laulasi region, 86 percent of the sample households have access to some form of a water supply system either in their village or at a nearby village. These supplies rely on gravitational feed from water sources. The system needs a lot of improvement and is far from hygienic especially in the wet seasons as can be seen from the increased number of diarrhoea cases after a wet season at Talakali clinic. Further, about 73

percent of sample households in Laulasi region have access to tanks that are used mainly for drinking. In both regions, the main source for cooking and drinking water is from piped water supply (63 percent) and water tanks (40 percent).

Table 4.4: Main Source of Cooking and Drinking Water by Region

Region	Piped water			Well	Stream	Tank	Total
	House	Village	Nearby				
Aoke	4	11	-	-	-	1	16
Laulasi	-	8	5	2	-	11	26
Total	4	19	5	2	-	12	
Percent %	13.3	63.3	16.6	6.6	-	40	

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

There is no sewerage system for the disposal or treatment of human waste. Table 4.5 below details the distribution of household toilets in the study. Some 43 percent of the sample households still use the mangrove and the beach as a waste disposal, while 23 percent use stone pit toilets, 27 percent use slab toilets and some 6 percent use flush toilets with stand-alone septic tanks. The fact that a high percentage of households still using ‘open’ methods for waste disposal is a health concern. This is a possible source of disease to the communities concerned. People are slowly accepting the culture of males and females using the same latrine at the household level.

Table 4.5: Type of Household Toilet by Region

<i>Type of toilet</i>	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Flush	1	1	2	6.7
Slab	2	6	8	26.7
Stone pit	7	0	7	23.3
Open	5	8	13	43.3
Total	15	15	30	100

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

4.4.3. Government Shareholding Companies

Our Telekom

Our Telekom, partly owned by the government provides telecommunication facilities to Auki and a few villages in the lagoon like Radefasu, Talakali and Arabala. The Wala

Lagoon is now covered by the breeze mobile service. Additionally, some villages have access to radio wireless.

Postal services

The Solomon Islands Postal Corporation is providing postal services to Auki and Wala. Very few people use this service in Wala because they have access to other means of communication like their local boats.

4.4.4. Civil Institutions

The only organization that the researcher discusses under civil institutions is schools. Schools play an important role in the development of the people even if it means just teaching them to read and write.

Schools

Churches like the Roman Catholic, South Sea Evangelical and Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) were the pioneers of formal education building schools in the Wala Lagoon in the early 1900s. From the 980s onward the government, community and development partners became active participants in school infrastructure development. After the social unrest between 1998 and 2003, development partners started helping the government and communities rehabilitate the infrastructure of the schools. Most schools now are of reasonable standard with iron roofing, timber walling and some with cement flooring.

Most households have access to primary and community high schools in or near the Wala Lagoon. As part of the national recovery program after the social unrest, primary and community high schools in Solomon Islands received grant aid for the operations of these schools. The donors include New Zealand, Taiwan and European

Union. This assistance is welcome by most households as it reduce their burden of fees and building contributions.

Primary education is from classes 1 to 6 and the current Community High Schools provide education from forms 1 to 3. Most students and parents prefer national secondary schools than community high schools because they are generally better resourced. The curriculum in the primary and secondary schools lean more towards academia than vocational training.

The literacy level for rural Solomon Islands is 50 percent and in rural Malaita the literacy level is 40 percent (Solomon Islands Statistics Office 2006: 3). In the study, the literacy level for the sample population in Wala lagoon is 60 percent. Males make up 60 percent of those literate and females 40 percent. This imbalance in gender literacy rate could be explained financially and culturally because boys are favoured over girls to continue school if finances are limited. Motivation for boys to stay in school is becoming a concern in some households so this statistics might change in the future. For Wala, education presents the alternative for livelihood. Education will open up livelihood opportunities.

4.4.5. Religious Institutions

The different Christian church denominations in the Lagoon include the Roman Catholics, South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC), the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), Church of Melanesia, the Bahai Faith and Paganism or traditional religion. Table 4.1 below shows the sample distribution of the different denominations by population. Forty percent of the sample was Catholics followed by pagans/others (29.8%), Seventh Day Adventists (14.6%) and South Sea Evangelical (12.9%). The South Seas Evangelicals is lowly represented because the sample does not include their villages in the Laulasi region.

Table 4.6 Distribution of Religious Groups by Sample Population

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Roman Catholic	48	69.6	21	30.4	69	40.4
Pagan/others	1	2	50	98	51	29.8
Seventh Day Adventists	7	28	18	72	25	14.6
South Seas Evangelical	22	100	0	-	22	12.9
Bahai	0	-	4	100	4	2.3
					171	100

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon livelihood strategies survey

South Seas Evangelical and Seventh Day Adventists also provide schools for the educational needs of their adherents like the Talakali Primary and Community High School operated by the SDA. Communities in Wala sometimes receive development assistance from international representative of these religious groups. Welfare groups from some denominations also help with the livelihood of some Wala people. These groups are voluntary and they reach out with food and other ways to help the poor and needy. The members are taught house keeping skills and are expected to help non-members with these skills. All the churches have demonstrated that they could mobilize their members to participate in community projects like cleaning the village, building a wharf, digging village drains and providing labour for school and church days. The churches have also been instrumental in keeping the anger at bay during the ‘tension’ period. The Wala people during the later period of the tension were targeted by some elements in the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF). Councils of church elders in the communities were instrumental in preventing any confrontation.

4.4.6. Traditional Institutions

Traditionally the indigenous institutions of the family unit, the tribe/clan, the *Ramo* (warrior/protector), the *fera* (tambu house), the *faeleni* (boys house), and the *bisi* (menstrual and maternity hut) are important for livelihood. The family unit was where basic economic and social decisions for livelihood were made. The resources in the lagoon like fishing grounds, reefs, and mangrove forests have been divided between the

different tribe/clans to manage. These tribe/clans had the priority in accessing the resources under their stewardship for their livelihood. The *Ramo* was the protector of the tribe/clan. In the general Malaita, each major land owning tribe had a *Ramo*. In the Wala area because there was not much land to protect, not all clans have *Ramos*. As late as the 19th century when guns were prevalent in Malaita, it was really difficult for the Wala people to make gardens on the main land. Sanalu was a *Ramo* known for providing security for the people while they do their gardens in the Laulasi region (per. Com. Steven Walelanemua 2004).

The *fera* was a ‘male only’ area where social issues were discussed and sacrifices took place. A *fata’abu* heads each *fera* and he was the one titled to offer sacrifices. Several clans may come under one *fera*. Maintaining a good relationship with the spiritual world through the offering of sacrifices will ensure a prosperous livelihood. The *faeleni* on the other hand was a ‘boys only’ house where they slept and ate after a days’ work. Their food was prepared from their family’s house and brought for them. Boys may also sleep in the *fera* but man were not known to sleep in the *faeleni*. The *bisi* caters for the livelihood of women during their menstrual periods or at childbirth. This was a secluded part from the village where women stay, talk, and eat for the duration of their confinement. At no time should they visit the residential area of the village when they were in the *bisi*.

In contemporary Wala, there is no more *Ramo*, *fera*, *faeleni* and *bisi* in the villages. The *Ramo* disappeared first in the late 19th century after the pacification of the islands followed by the *fera*, *faeleni* and *bisi* during the late 1960s because of the rapid social changes brought about by modernity and Christianity. The family unit and tribe/clan however, remain integral parts of the Wala society. The family unit is still the basic decision making unit for household livelihood strategies. A worrying trend, however, is where newly married couples are depending entirely on their parents for

their livelihoods. They no longer feel responsible to make their own houses or potato gardens when they got married. Plain laziness and lack of gardening space or job opportunities are fuelling this trend. Belonging to a tribe or clan still determines your household's access to land and other resources. In the sample, heads of households who come from the Laulasi region but married and lived in Aoke found it difficult to access land for gardening in Aoke. This impinges heavily on their livelihood.

Indigenous technical knowledge and skills in fishing, gardening, boat building and navigation have been adapted and are still practiced in the Wala Lagoon today. The research shows that fishing is supporting 73 percent of the sample households both commercially and at the subsistence level, subsistence gardening supports 70 percent of households and boat building supports about 60 percent of the households in the sample for part of their livelihood. Each household used more than one livelihood strategy for their livelihood. These livelihood strategies are discussed in Chapter 5.

4.5. Social Networks

4.5.1. Households

A household is defined as *'a small group of persons who share the same living condition, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food'* (United Nations 2005: 33). The Solomon Islands 2005/6 Household Income and Expenditure Survey by Solomon Islands Statistics Office, (2006) made a distinction between public and private households. Public households include hotels and rest houses while private households refer to lodgings of family settings. In this study a household is made up of the family unit. Family units that stay in the same house are treated as separate households. The average household size in the sample area was 6.7. The Malaita provincial average household size is 6.36 and the national household size is 6 (Solomon Islands Statistics

Office 2006: pp.3 & 20). Households in Wala were more crowded because of limited access to land, financial difficulty to extend or build new houses and the desire to live together socially.

There are three categories of houses in Wala; these are permanent, semi-permanent and traditional houses. A permanent house has iron roofing, timber or fibro walling with cement post or flooring. A traditional house has a thatched roof, thatched walling and palm or ground flooring. A semi-permanent house has a combination of permanent and traditional materials. A house with iron roofing with thatched walling would be classified a semi-permanent house. The type of house reflects the earning capacity and determination of the household. Table 4.7 shows the type of houses in the regions. From the table, 36.7 percent of the houses surveyed were permanent, 30 percent were semi-permanent and 33.3 percent traditional houses.

Table 4.7: Type of House by Region

<i>Type of house</i>	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Permanent	5	6	11	36.7
Semi- permanent	4	5	9	30
Leaf	6	4	10	33.3
	15	15	30	100

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

The study showed that 80 percent (22) of the households surveyed owned the houses they lived in, while 20 percent (8) did not own the house but shared with relatives. This relative in most cases was their parent. Ninety percent of those sharing houses share with two other families. Only one percent of households share with one family. This means one family per room in the three bedroom houses. With an average family size of 6.7 the rooms will be over crowded which is not good culturally and for health reasons.

4.5.2. Family Relations and Safety Nets

The basic family unit in Wala consists of the father, mother and children. The wider family unit consists of extended family members who live in one household or in other households. There is a wide family interaction between households of the same clan or tribe strengthening relationship. Belonging to a clan or tribe allows one to access resources belonging to the clan. The right to use resources is determined by whether or not one can trace linkage (either through male or female) to the original resource owner (who may be an individual, clan or tribe). Almost all the households in this study acknowledge accessing resources through the family, clan or tribe. On a daily survival basis, the extended family members or clan members who stay together in one community are more helpful to each other than members who stay in different communities. Family help is dependent also on available resources. If a member does not have the needed resources then he cannot help his family member who is in need. Family relations work best during occasions of married and the death of a member. Relatives are traditionally obliged to help with bride price and to contribute to funeral expenses.

In Western societies, cash is the social safety net for most people – one saves money to ensure there is enough for “rainy” days. In the society of Wala, the safety net of the households lies in the network of relationships that they manage to weave through their families (and tribe), church membership, political affiliation and social relationships. All households surveyed acknowledge these networks as important for their livelihood. There is no better insurance to better livelihood than to have a web of relationships that one can draw on in difficult times. The seasonality of fishing, gardening and employment meant that households will experience difficult times with their livelihood strategies at some time. A lot of households cope because of help from their families, relatives and friends that they have associations with.

4.5.3. Social Groups and Changes in Social Relations

The term social group may refer to the different social classes like middle class, the working class or some socio-economic group classification or ethnicity (Verma and Mallick 1999: 28). In Wala there are no distinct social classes or socio-economic grouping but one can see a distinction of clan identity and what we might call the ‘*well off*’ and ‘*not so well off*’. The ‘*well off*’ refers to those that have businesses, whether formal or informal, that enable them to have access to money and other resources that are useful to their livelihood strategies. The ‘*not so well off*’ are those people whose livelihood depends on hunting and gathering and doing odd jobs very minimum income. Some individuals in this group are often blamed for being lazy, although they have genuine difficulties in accessing resources for livelihood.

There is a general decline in the respect shown in family relations because of the ‘backsliding’ in many Christian churches and the absence of traditional institutions like the *fera* and the *faeleni* that once promoted respect and good conduct. Other social problems like substance abuse including alcohol (and home brew) and marijuana is also present in Wala. Some communities are trying their best to address these social problems through the creation of by-laws; however, all too often they fail because of the lack of enforcement.

4.6. Economic Aspects for Livelihood in Wala

The main sources of income in the Wala are from shell money, fishing, boat building/shipping, village businesses and employment. Income from these sources unfortunately is not consistent, so the flow of income to households is irregular. Household income is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

4.6.1. Employment

Employment figures for the studied area are shown in Tables 4.8 and 4.9. In the survey employment is classified under formal, casual and self-employed. Formal employment

(0.9%) includes full time permanent workers like teachers while casual employment (11.3%) includes part-time workers with no permanent jobs. This includes workers on local trading boats, stevedores, and those who do part-time jobs in urban Auki and Honiara. The self-employed (87.9%) include those involved in shell money, small business, fishing and food gardening sectors.

Table 4.8: Form of Employment by Region

Form of Employment	Number Employed		Total Employed	Percent
	Aoke	Laulasi		
Formal		2	2	0.9
Casual	15	11	26	11.3
Self-employed	61	142	203	87.9
	76	155	231	100.0

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 4.9 also shows the sectoral distribution of the different forms of employment available to the Wala community. The four most important sectors in terms of the number of people employed are gardening (food gardens) (29.4%), shell money sector (25.5%), the small business sector (18.6%), and the fishing sector (14.3%).

Table 4.9: Employment by Sector and Region

Sector	Number Employed		Total Employed	Percent
	Aoke	Laulasi		
<i>Formal:</i>				
Teach/Admin	-	2	2	0.9
<i>Casual:</i>				
Boat building	-	6	6	2.6
Stevedore	-	3	3	1.3
Urban labour	15	2	17	7.4
<i>Self-employed:</i>				
Shell money	8	51	59	25.5
Small business	21	22	43	18.6
Fishing	18	15	33	14.3
Gardening	14	54	68	29.4
	76	155	231	100.0

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 4.10 shows the number of households involved in the sectors. Each household was involved in more than one form of employment. Although gardening employed more people, only 53.3% of households were involved. The sector where most households were involved was fishing (70%), followed by shell money (56.7%) and gardening (53.3%). Sectors where less than 50 percent of the households were involved included small business (43.3%), urban labour (36.7%), boat building (20%), stevedore (10%) and teaching administration (6.7%).

Table 4.10: Employment by Households, Sector and Region

Sector	Number of Households		Total Households	Percent
	Aoke	Laulasi		
<i>Formal:</i>				
Teach/Admin	-	2	2	6.7
<i>Casual:</i>				
Boat building	-	6	6	20.0
Stevedore	-	3	3	10.0
Urban labour	10	1	11	36.7
<i>Self-employed:</i>				
Shell money	2	15	17	56.7
Small business	8	5	13	43.3
Fishing	13	8	21	70.0
Gardening	4	11	16	53.3

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 4.11 outlines employment by sector, region and income. Households in self-employment receive the highest average income per household, while households engaged in formal and casual employment receive a lower average income per household. The study also showed that 93 percent of households depended on the informal sector for household income. Notice also that households in Aoke region were not employed in boat building or stevedore. This may do with the fact that people from the Laulasi region owned the businesses.

Table 4.11: Employment by Households, Sector, Region and Income

Sector	Number of Households		Total Household in percent	Average Income per Household \$	Yearly Sectoral Income \$
	Aoke	Laulasi			
<i>Formal:</i>					
Teach/Admin	-	2	6.7	6400	12,800
<i>Casual:</i>					
Boat building	-	6	20	3483	20,900
Stevedore	-	3	10	2000	6,000
Urban labour	10	1	36.7	3665	40,320
<i>Self-employed:</i>					
Shell money	2	15	56.7	5335	90,700
Small business	8	5	43.3	15466	201,060
Fishing	13	8	70	1234	25,920
Gardening	4	11	53	2847	99,000
<i>Others</i>					
Remittance	1	3	13.3	2310	9,240
Rent	1	-	3.3	12000	12,000
<i>Total Income</i>					<i>517,940</i>

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

4.6.2. Small Business

As shown in table 4.11, 43 percent of the households were involved in small business. Small businesses included unregistered village based businesses that families operate to raise income mainly for their livelihood. This included trade stores, betel nut stalls, fish and chips, selling buns, selling fish, selling vegetables and shell money.

Table 4.12 on page 76 outlines the type of small business by region and turnover. Two households in Aoke participated in more than one business activity making the total households to 10 instead of 8 as in Table 4.11. The business where most households participated in was bakery and fishing with an annual return per household of \$4,185 and \$21,120 respectively. The fishing business has an unusually high return because one of the businesses was involved in fishing for tuna using an outboard motor and a fiberglass canoe. All the other fishing businesses fish in the surrounding areas and sell their surpluses in the market. The vegetables business has the highest annual return per household of \$48,000. This was a retailer of vegetables in the Honiara market. This household was part of a group that bought vegetables from

farmers and sell to consumers. The families involved would move to Honiara, sell the vegetables on certain months of the year before returning home. While the family was in Honiara, a family member would travel to Auki, in the Wala owned boats, buy vegetables and ship them to Honiara. In a week, two such trips will be made.

Table 4.12: Type of Business by Households, Region and Turnover

Type of Small Business	Number of Households		Total Household in percent	Monthly turnover per household \$	Annual turnover per household \$	Total yearly turnover \$
	Aoke	Laulasi				
Firewood	1	-	6.7	200	2,400	2,400
Trade Store	-	1	6.7	500	6,000	6,000
Betel nut/roll	1	-	6.7	720	8,640	8,640
Fish n Chips	2	-	13.3	2400	14,400	28,800
Bakery	1	3	26.7	1395	4,185	16,740
Fishing	4	-	26.7	7040	21,120	84,480
Hire of canoe	1	-	6.7	500	6,000	6,000
Vegetables	-	1	6.7	4000	48,000	48,000
<i>Total</i>	10	5				<i>201,060</i>

Source: D Faradatolo Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 4.13 presents an amalgamated income and expenditure statement for the small businesses. The total expenditure figures are subtracted from the total income figures (the last column of Table 4.12) to determine the profit or loss of the businesses. All the small businesses have made a profit during the 2005/6 financial period as total income is more than total expenditure. The return on income (Return/Income), calculates the profit as a percentage of the income. A higher percent is considered helpful for the business and a lower percentage is financially risky for the small business. The business of firewood has the highest return (90%), followed by bakery (50%) and the trading of vegetables (44%). Return on income of 20 percent or more is considered normal. Any return on income below 20 percent is considered risky like the fishing business that has a return of 19 percent. This return is hardly enough to cover any sustained period of bad catches. All the profits are used for the livelihood of the households.

Table 4.13: Amalgamated Income and Expenditure Statement for Wala Small Businesses for the 2005/6 Financial Period

	<i>Wood</i>	<i>Store</i>	<i>Betel</i>	<i>F C</i>	<i>Bakery</i>	<i>Fish</i>	<i>Hire</i>	<i>Veg</i>	<i>Total</i>
Income	2400	6000	8640	28800	16740	84480	6000	48000	201060
<i>Expenditure</i>	240	3600	5184	18360	8400	68520	3600	26880	134784
<i>Profit/Loss</i>	2160	2400	3456	10440	8340	15960	2400	21120	66276
<i>Return/Inc</i>	90	40	40	36	50	19	40	44	33

Source: D Faradatolo Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

4.6.3. Savings

Very few households have bank accounts let alone savings accounts. Most households operate in the informal sector with irregular and inconsistent flow of income and a general lack of thriftiness among the people. People however, do keep some cash with them for bride price, school fee, house improvement or for some miscellaneous commercial undertaking but since these are not put in the bank, they could not be strictly called savings.

To encourage savings and to create local credit for small village business undertakings, the constituency Member of Parliament established a credit union with a substantial cash injection from the constituency development fund (CDF) for the constituents in the late 1990s. The idea was for the constituents to build the seed money to a level that could be sustainable for lending before they started lending to viable undertakings. The experience so was that members are only interested in borrowing than saving. People need to be taught the concept of a credit union so that the culture of savings is recognized as a necessary ingredient of a credit union. The management needs to build capacity in terms in terms of administration and financial prudence.

4.6.4. Remittance

Those who have relatives working in Honiara or other parts of the country receive cash or goods occasionally from their employed relatives. It is a common practice among Wala people (and other Solomon Islanders) in Honiara to send something home to their

relatives when boats leave for home. Remittance contributes greatly to the village livelihood, especially the elderly who are physically limited in their livelihood endeavours. In the study, 13 percent of households acknowledge receiving cash and goods from their relatives in Honiara. The amounts range from \$50 to \$400 over the three months up to July 2006.

4.6.5. Insurance

Building reserves against risk is a strategy used by Wala households to cope with calamities that may come their way. Livelihood diversification at the household level is a form of building reserves against risk. Livelihood diversification is the *'process by which households construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities for survival and in order to improve their standard of living'* (Ellis 1999). This involves having more than one livelihood strategy. The study showed that only 3 percent of households depend on two livelihood strategies while 97 percent depend on more than two livelihood strategies. In Wala where land is scarce, building relationships with influential people inside and outside Wala is important for securing access to resources. The practice of having more children can also be seen as an insurance policy used by parents. They will invest in their children knowledge and skill to be able to acquire wealth and thereby able to look after their parents when they get old.

4.7. Land Resources for Livelihood

4.7.1. Subsistence

In this study, the subsistence sector includes food gardens (*raku*), swamp taro (*kakama*) patches, fruits from mangrove trees (*koa*), firewood for energy and fishing. All the subsistence activities will be discussed below except for firewood and fishing that will be discussed separately.

There is very little land suitable for food gardens in the Wala Lagoon. Most of the islands are wetlands, sandy, stony or are normally submerged during high tides with overgrowths of mangroves. Land immediately on the coast is limited and infertile. The land available is barely enough for everyone thus disputes between family members for gardening rights is common. Land on the coast and inland areas belongs to the *Kwara'ae* or *Kwaio* people. Only those Wala people who are related to the *Kwara'ae* and *Kwaio* landowners will have the confidence of accessing coastal land for gardening and collecting other resources. To date there are no clearly identified landowning groups for the coastal lands in the lagoon. This is a nation-wide problem.

The study showed that 46.7 percent of the households in Aoke have food gardens while a significant 93.3 percent of Laulasi households have food gardens. The low percentage in Aoke is attributed to the difficulty in accessing gardening land. Some households in Aoke gave up the idea of working food gardens because of the problem of others stealing from their food gardens. An average food garden size is 50m x 20m and is mostly planted with sweet potatoes with some local cabbages on the edges. The potato plots are harvested every 4 months and replanted again. During the time of survey 90 percent of the potato gardens were not producing because of unusually continuous wet weather that prevented them from replanting.

The swampy part of the lagoon away from the salt water is planted with *Kakama* (swamp taro). There are no more new areas for new *kakama* gardens so the present households are using the plots their grand parents had planted before. In some cases this means between 5 to 10 families depending on a patch of *kakama* garden the size of a hockey field or even less.

Koa (*propagules*), the fruit of a particular mangrove tree (*bruguiera gymnorrhiza*) is a staple diet in the Wala lagoon. The *koa* bearing trees grow wild in the mangrove and children especially go every morning or after school to pick the fruits.

This is a public access resource but recently some households are planting *koa* trees near to their homes so they are restricting the access to these planted *koa* trees. There was an increasing shortage of *koa* bearing trees because of deforestation from the demand for firewood.

4.7.2. Forest Areas

The forest areas may be under two broad classifications: forest on dry land and forest on wetland. The forest on dry land is really secondary growth that is subject to subsistence gardening. Forested timber is very limited so Wala people today buy all their logs for their housing and boat building from their *Kwara'ae* and *Kwaio* neighbours and even as far as Gela and Guadalcanal. Local house building materials like sago palm for thatching traditional housing is also declining due to increasing demand and the clearing of bush areas for food gardens and housing.

The forest on wetland consists of the swamp areas and mangroves. The swamp areas are where the *kakama* gardens are located and the mangroves are for picking *koa* fruits (mangrove pods), collecting mud crab, collecting shells, house building material and firewood. The mangrove forests fringing the outer layer of the lagoon are allocated to clans for their management and control. These mangroves were traditionally used for firewood. Preparing the mangrove for firewood involves removing the bottom bark so that it starves the tree of nutrients and therefore withers and dies. This is locally known as *lakisi*. As a control measure, mangrove trees at the edge of the forest to the lagoon side or to the open seaside must not be used for any *lakisi* so that they act as barriers to protect the growth of young mangrove seedlings.

4.8. Marine Resources

4.8.1. Traditional Management System

Traditionally, the people of Wala had a maritime tenure system that is very effective in meeting their daily needs and helping to sustain the environment. The lagoon including reefs, islands and open passages was divided between the different clans for their sustenance. Each clan controls and manages the *ia la* (fishing ground) under their custody. The control and management is only for the access but members of all other clans benefit from the fishing ground. Observing taboos is an important component of the marine tenure system. Fishing grounds have fallow periods. Fishing methods were also restricted for certain places and times. The traditional marine tenure system is no longer in place and it is now '*a everyone for himself*' situation. Fishing grounds and reefs are now accessible to anyone for fishing or shell collection using whatever method and at whatever time. This has resulted in the use of destructive fishing methods like dynamites for fishing that accelerated the depletion of the fish resource and the destruction of reefs and spawning grounds. When combined with the uncontrolled cutting of mangroves, the spawning places for fish breeding, the fish stock is now depleted.

4.8.2. Fisheries

Fishing as a livelihood strategy is as old as the Wala society. Fish was used in the barter for root crops and vegetables with the *Kwara'ae* and *Kwaio* neighbours. Outside the lagoon the Wala fish for tuna in specially designed planked canoes called *iola oto*. In the lagoon numerous fishing methods can be used during the day or night. Cooper (1970: 54) described some of these methods to include kite fishing, using lines, nets, seines, spear fishing, diving and using torch in night.

In the contemporary Wala fish resources have been greatly depleted because of the indiscriminate use of dynamite for fishing since the 1970s and increasing population. Households that depend on fishing for their livelihood reported declining fish catch from their fishing trips inside the lagoon and immediately outside the lagoon. Jack Aru (per.com: 2006) of Molou village in Aoke report the use of smaller and smaller size fishing lines in their fishing efforts because of the difficulty in catching fish with big lines. In other words the size of the fish caught is smaller than used to be. Residents also reported the late arrival and or absence of the *mamamu* fish (small baitfish) that comes around the Auki wharf area and other places of the lagoon. Anecdotal evidence from fisherman suggest that the fish stock in the lagoon or immediately near the fringing reef up to the *Alite* reef could no longer support any small commercial fishing project that can catch up to 800 kg of fish a week. Commercial fishing for tuna outside the lagoon is a major activity by households in the Aoke region. Their fishing grounds include the waters of Guadalcanal and Isabel.

4.8.3. Reefs

Reefs are an important part of the Lagoon ecosystem. A major reef runs parallel to the mainland coast to form the principle fringing barrier reef for the lagoon. In the Lagoon, numerous other reefs are visible and these are ideal for fishing and shell picking. Coral stones in most shallow reefs have been carried away to build artificial islands thus denuding the reefs of valuable shelters for fish and shells. The desertification of reefs also contributed to the declining fish stock now experienced in the Lagoon. Since the collapse of the Wala traditional marine tenure system, coupled with the increasing production of shell money, the reefs could no longer meet the demand for the shells required for the production of shell money.

4.9. Shell Money

The Wala people produce shell money today for the tourist market, the socio-cultural demands of the local market, and for use as a medium of exchange in the traditional economy. Shell money is produced in different currencies and denominations for the different communities in Malaita and other islands. The income from shell money varies between households because of the access to shells, other livelihood opportunities available and access to the shell money markets. The history, production and use of shell money as a livelihood strategy is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

4.10. Summary

The Wala Lagoon society is a maritime society situated on the west coast of Malaita Island. The lagoon is located between Auki, the capital of Malaita Province and Buma Station in west *Kwaio*. Wala Lagoon is part of the Aoke Langalanga Constituency that has a representative in the National Parliament and two provincial ward members in the Malaita Provincial Assembly.

Government currently delivers services through its members of parliament, the provincial government and statutory bodies and agencies. These services include law and order, health, education, roads and bridges, energy and water. Religious institutions also impact the livelihood of rural people through their religious teaching, provision of health and education. Traditional institutions like clans, families and relationships also shape livelihood strategies.

Having access through the family and friends social networks is important in accessing resources in the Wala Lagoon. Resources like land for food gardens are only accessible through family connections. Social connections through friends will help in accessing part time employment.

Land and sea resources for a subsistence livelihood are limited in Wala Lagoon. Land for making food gardens is limited and sea resources are already depleted. Opportunities for formal employment are limited but the informal sector is providing some form of employment. These informal sectors include shell money, boat building/shipping and small village businesses.

Chapter 5: Shell Money as a Livelihood Strategy

5.1. Introduction

Understanding the history and pattern of settlement in the Wala Lagoon will help us appreciate the use of shell money as a livelihood strategy in the lagoon. This chapter outlines the history and settlement patterns of the Wala Lagoon and then provides a brief history of the Wala shell money. The chapter will also discuss other shell currencies produced in Wala, the contribution of shell money to livelihood and constraints to using shell money as a livelihood strategy in contemporary Wala.

5.2. The Process of Settlement in Wala Lagoon

People migrated from other parts of Malaita and the neighbouring islands of Isabel, Gela, Guadalcanal, Makira and Ulawa and settled in the Wala Lagoon to participate in the production of shell money and share in the newfound wealth. The process of settlement in the Wala Lagoon was known as “*aurara*” – which is the process of settling a community by individuals from different parts of Malaita and other islands. Silas Maike during a local court hearing at Lalana Village in 1992 explained the process in Box 5.1.

Box 5.1: The Process of Settling a Community: Silas Giroro Maike (1992)

A settler will start a community by collecting and piling coral stones (called *Faurara*) in a selected site of the lagoon so that the *Faurara* is some 2 feet above the high tide mark (see figure 1 below). The engineering of the *Faurara* must be such that it can withstand the force of waves and currents. The settler then builds his house on top of the stones. Only selected people can start a *Faurara* because one has to have the power and magic to hold the stones together (called *agia*, literally - to secure by surrounding it with stones). The original settler who *agia* the community then selects other settlers who wish to join him on the basis of the skills they possessed and the usefulness of that skill to the functioning of the community. As new settlers joined the community they add more stones, build their own houses and the community grows. Every new stone added is premised on the original stones that the original settler used to *agia* the community with. The functioning of the society for the production of shell money then becomes the responsibility of the different skilled people concocted. The different settlers in the original communities then became the founding fathers of their clan in the lagoon.

Figure 5.1: A Faurara in its early stages of construction



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

The process of *aurara* is a unique pattern of settlement peculiar to Wala Lagoon. This pattern of settlement enabled people of different lineage and language to live together in a community and contributed their individual skills to the development of the community. The known pattern for settlements in Malaita according to Bara, a member of the Ward 3 House of Chiefs was only for people of the same lineage to live together in a hamlet. The exception was for one or two people adapted into the clan. Communities composing of different lineages became prominent only in the late 1890s when the missionaries arrived and required that their adherents congregated in a community along the coast for ease of pastoral visits. The founding communities of Wala were experiments with the concepts of interdependency and cross boarder trade. Politically and economically, the concepts worked and the society thrived. Tribes/clans in Wala can still trace their genealogy to their places of origin either in Malaita or the other islands. Their relatives from these places also acknowledge them through reciprocal visits and according them land rights.

5.3. History of Shell Money

This section discusses the history of shell money and trade, minting the shell money and its different currencies, and a look at how the quality and standard of the shell money was maintained.

5.3.1 Shell Money History and Trade

Oral tradition says that a women from the New Guinea Islands (Papua New Guinea) brought the art of making shell money to the Wala lagoon³ (per. com. Anifaemamu 1986, Feragwau 1999, Waletofea 2006). The women landed and tried making shell money in other islands in the Solomon group but did not settle long on those islands. The last place she settled before coming to Wala Lagoon was on Guadalcanal. She came through the *Bina* harbour and was found by a *Kwara'ae* man at the mouth of the *Bina* River. The man took the women as his bride and they went up to his place in the highlands.

After some time, the women managed to convince her husband that in order for them to create and enjoy the wealth she brought (*talona*), they have to come down to the lagoon and settle near the raw material. They eventually came down and she started producing the shell money (*bata*). The concept of arranging shells into a pattern and calling it *bata* (money) was appealing. But the use of the *bata* to purchase (*foli*) goods was even more attractive. A new way of creating wealth has been discovered. Money (*bata*) creates wealth and *bata* can be used to buy goods one cannot produce through trade (*lilifu* or *sabero*). In this way one is able to secure their livelihood but at the same time save for the future. This was a great improvement from the practise of barter (*usina*) that had “coincidence of want” (finding the person who has the good you want and wants the good you have) as its limiting factor. Different denominations were produced to facilitate business transactions. The production of other currencies came later when Wala people went out to *lilifu* (trade) in other regions. Changes to the design were suggested and incorporated and they became currencies of the particular region.

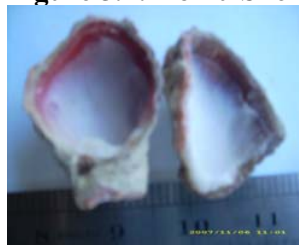
3. The researcher came across another version during the process of research but has not included it because it has not been verified enough.

Word of the money and wealth spread near and far and people from other parts of Malaita and other islands began flocking to the Wala Lagoon. The movement of people to the lagoon was similar to a gold rush and the process of settling the four original communities of *Gwata'a*, *Alite*, *Laulasi* and *Aoke* began. The leaders that established the communities selected only the best and useful (process of *aurara*) to settle with them and to partake in the minting of the shell money.

5.3.2. Shell Money: Minting

Shell money is made from four different shells. The local names of the shells are: *romu* (*chama pacifica*) to produce the pinkish red discs and the most valued (see Figure 5.2), *ke'e* (*Beguina semiorbiculata*) when heated will give a carrot like colour (see Figure 5.3), *Kurila* (*Atrina vexillum*) is used to produce the black discs (see Figure 5.4), (A fruit called '*fulu*' from a shrub in the bush is also used interchangeably with *kurila* especially for the end of the shell money) and finally, the *Kakadu* (*Anadara granosa*) for making the white discs (see Figure 5.5). *Romu* and *ke'e* grow around the body of coral stones. *Kurila* grows alone on coral reefs or coastal areas. *Kakadu* grows in the mud on river mouths. Local shells have now been exhausted and supply is sourced from other areas like Tarapaina in South Malaita, Suafa in North Malaita and the Gela group of islands and even as far as the Western Province and Temotu Province. The Western Province supplies the Honiara market with the *ke'e* shell.

Figure 5.2: Romu Shell



Source: David Faradatolo, 2007

Figure 5.3: Ke'e Shell



Source: David Faradatolo, 2007

Figure 5.4: Kurila Shell



Source: David Faradatolo, 2007

Figure 5.5: Kakadu Shell

Source: David Faradatolo, 2007

Stage One: Diving for the Shells (*Su'u na*)

The process of minting shell money starts with diving for the shells. In the olden days the responsible priest (*fata'abu*) would sacrifice a pig and declare the sea open before any diving took place. The sacrifice is necessary for the protection of divers from any predators in the sea. Today no sacrifice is offered for diving as the institution has now collapsed.

Stage Two: Breaking the Shells (*Kwai fulo na*)

The next stage of the process involves breaking the shells into small pieces (called *kwai fulo* or *kwai bata na*) and rounding the edges of the pieces (called *didia fulo*) to form round discs. The whole process is called *u'ui na* or *ui bata na*. The women break and smooth the edges of the discs over a flat stone (this stone is called *fau li ui*) using a small stone or in contemporary times a piece of steel rod as a hammer (see Figure 5.6a and 5.6b). The stones for this purpose are obtained from the region of Kopiu on the South Western coast of Guadalcanal (per. com. Harry Walemamata 2006).

Figure 5.6a: Stage 2: U'ui na: Ms Memene **Figure 5.6b U'ui na: Ms Geli'aoke**



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

Stage Three: Smoothing the Discs (*Safa na*)

The next stage involves smoothing the sides of the discs (called *safa na*) so that holes can be drilled through the discs (see Figure 5.7). Only the *romu* and *Kakadu* discs go through this process because they have rough sides. The main tools used for this process is a block of wood about 4"x3"x2" (called a *mae'ai*- see Figure 5.8) and a flat stone about 2'x1'x10" (called *fauli safa*). The *fauli safa* is usually collected from Kwai River at Suafa in north Malaita. A paste made from grinding burned granite stones (called *ladi*) is applied to the *mae'ai* and *fauli safa* to hold shell discs in place and to aid friction to the smoothing process. Once shell discs are secured on the *mae'ai* the *mae'ai* is then placed on the *fauli safa*, so that the discs are sandwiched between the *mae'ai* and the *fauli safa*. Pressure using both hands is then applied to the *mae'ai* in a forward and circular motion in the clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. Water is added occasionally to reduce heat and to aid the smoothing process. The *mae'ai* is checked occasionally and the smoothed discs are removed from the *mae'ai* for washing and new ones are added to continue the process. A good day's work will produce a coconut shell container of shell discs. Women and young girls do this work.

Figure 5.7: Stage 3: Safa na: Ms Geli'e'ela **Figure 5.8: Shell discs on a Mae'ai**



Source: David Faradatolo, 2007



Source: David Faradatolo, 2007

Stage Four: Drilling the Holes (*Futa na* or *O'oka na*)

The next major stage is the drilling of holes on the discs (called *futa na* or *ooka na*). In the olden days a crude drill (called a *futa*) fitted with a flint stone as the bit was used for this purpose. These flint stones are obtained from Kwarea in the west coast of Malaita.

The *futa* was very cumbersome to use and it can take months to drill a coconut shell full of discs. The carpenter's hand drill (Figure 5.9) replaced the *futa* since the 1960s and has greatly increased productivity.

Figure 5.9: Stage 4: O'oka na: Ms Bataka



Source: David Faradatolo 2007

Stage Five: Heating the Discs (*Para na*)

The next stage involves only shell discs made from the *ke'e* shell. This involves heating (called *para*) the discs on preheated stones (called *fauli para*) to change the disc colour from black to orange. Finished discs are removed and placed in a container filled with water to maintain the desired colour. Today a flat piece of iron plate placed over a primus stove is used for this purpose.

Stage Six: Grinding the Discs (*Ara na*)

The next stage involves threading the discs on a string (see Figure 5.10) and grinding the edges (called *ara* – see Figure 5.11) to the required sizes. Before the discs are threaded on a seven feet string and placed on a flat piece of timber for grinding. Two men sitting, one on each end of the timber, hold down the stringed discs with one hand and the other hand will press down and push a grooved stone over the stringed discs back and forth in unison. Sand and water is added occasionally to aid this grinding process. Today a timber up to 16 feet in length is secured on stilts or alongside buildings for the process of grinding shell money (see Figure 5.11). The stringed discs are secured on top of the timber and men stand alongside the timber to grind the discs with grooved oilstone (Figure 5.12) using both hands (see Figure 5.11). The discs are

washed occasionally with water to aid the grinding process and to check for the desired size.

Figure 5.10: Uru Bata na



Source: David Faradatolo, 2007

Figure 5.11 Stage 6: Ara na



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

Stage Seven: Threading Discs (*Uru bata na*)

The final stage involved threading (called *uru bata*) the discs into different patterns for the different currencies of the geographical regions. See section 5.3.3 below for the different currencies. David Torilalao of Talakali village (Figure 5.13) is threading a *Tafuliae* shell money. The different currencies have set patterns to follow. Both the male and female participate in this process.

Figure 5.12: Grove Oil Stone



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

Figure 5.13 David Torilalao Threading



Source: David Faradatolo, 2007

To make the work of shell money production light, groups of women normally band together (3 to 5 members) and work together. A day of the week would be assigned for each member where all members of the group will work for their friend. The work may involve *u'ui na* or *safa na* or *futa na*. This method of organising production increases productivity and output greatly for each member.

5.3.3. Shell Money: The Different Currencies

When the shell money was introduced as a form of money to other parts of Malaita and the neighbouring islands, they suggested changes to the design so that it becomes their own. The Wala people complied with the changes and minted the shell money according to the needs of the district. Thus, different regions in Malaita and other neighbouring islands have different currencies. Trade with these regions must be in their own currency.

The central and northern part of Malaita use *Tafuliae* also called *Akwala'afu* in Wala dialect. This shell money is made of ten strings with established designs to follow. The *Tafuliae* currency has two denominations. The first denomination is called *fofoloabisi* (Figure 5.15). It is made up of ten strings. A *firai* (*romu* discs) is placed in the middle and has identical designs on either side. The length of a *fofoloabisi* varies from 6 feet to 10 feet. The value increases with the length. The second denomination of the *Tafuliae* is called *bata maefuo* in Wala (Figure 5.14). The pattern is the same as the *fofoloabisi* except that the *romu* discs used in the middle are designed into a diamond net. The length varies from 10 feet to 15 feet. The value of one *bata maefuo* is equivalent to two *fofoloabisi*.

Figure 5.14: Tafuliae (Bata Maefuo)



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

Figure 5.15 Tafuliae (Bata Fofoloabisi)



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

The currency use by the Wala people is called *galia*. *Galia* is made from *Kakadu* shells that have been stringed but not smoothened (the *ara na* stage). After the *futa na* stage, shell discs are stringed into two feet strings that will be bend into one foot

lengths. The different denominations consist of the *galia*, *fura* and *isae galia*. Table 5.1 below outline the various denominations. The *galia* denomination consists of two strings from the fingertip to the elbow. Four *galia* tied together will make the denomination *fura* and ten *fura* tied together will make the denomination *isae galia* (see Figure 5.16).

Table 5.1 Denominations of the Wala Currency

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Exchange rate</i>
<i>Galia</i>	Two strings from finger tip to elbow	1 pound
<i>Fura</i>	Four <i>galia</i> tied together	4 pounds
<i>Isae galia</i>	Ten <i>fura</i> tied together	1 tafuliae or 1,000 taro

Source: Memorandum No.7/45 F43/2 for the Secretary to the Government from Office of the District Commissioner, Auki, Malaita, 31 August 1945

Figure 5.16: Isae Galia



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

Table 5.2 Denominations of the Kwaio Currency

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Exchange rate</i>
<i>Ae'u</i>	From thumb tip to wrist bone	
<i>Lua'ae'u</i>	From finger tip to mid forearm	
<i>Lomenima</i>	From finger tip to elbow	
<i>Lau'usu</i>	From finger tip to bicep	100 taro
<i>Kwage bata</i>	One string of six feet	
<i>Gerabi (genilabi)</i>	Two strings of six feet	
<i>Sau'uru</i>	Three strings of six feet	
<i>Fafa'a</i>	Four strings of six feet	
<i>Nima'ae</i>	Five strings of six feet	
<i>Baniau</i>	Six strings of six feet	1 tafuliae or 1,000 taro
<i>Ono galia safi afu afu</i>	6 strings with red safi	
<i>Fiu galia</i>	7 strings mixed with safi and mamalakwai	

Source: Memorandum No.7/45 F43/2 for the Secretary to the Government from Office of the District Commissioner, Auki, Malaita, 31 August 1945; and Goto, (1996).

The Kwaio currency has more denominations than all other currencies. The denominations include *Ae'u*, *Lua'ae'u*, *Lomenima*, *Lau'usu*, and *Kwage bata*, *Gerabi*, *Sau'uru*, *Fafa'a*, *Nima'ae* and *Baniau*. Table 5.2 on page 94 summarises the denominations. The Kwaio still use these today.

In southern Malaita, the currency can be from *Kakadu*, *ke'e* or *Romu* shells. Shell money from *Kakadu* shells is less valuable than shell money from *ke'e* or *romu* shells. To some extent, this currency was also used in Ulawa Island and to a lesser extent parts of Makira Island. Table 5.3 below summarises the denominations. The smallest denomination is called a *Ulu'ulu* – a thumb length. This is used mainly for small purchases. The *Apala* is an arms length to the chest. Next in value is the *Kaweiha'a* about a fathom in length. Four strings of *kawei ha'a* tied together is called a *Ha'atahana*. Ten *Ha'atahana* tied together is called a *kariawara*. The southern region of Malaita still uses their currency today.

Table 5.3 Denominations of the Southern Malaita Currency

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Exchange rate</i>
<i>Ulu'ulu</i>	Thumb length	
<i>Apala</i>	1 arm to chest	
<i>Kaweiha'a</i>	1 string of 1 fathom	
<i>Ha'atahana</i>	4 strings of 1 fathom	
<i>Kari awara</i>	10 ha'atahana	

Source: Personal Communication with Steve Maesiola, a student from South Malaita doing Governance at USP, 2007

The currency of the Florida group of islands or Gela is made from the *Romu* or *ke'e* shells. The Wala people will produce the strings for them and they will arrange the strings into their own different denominations. Their denominations from the smallest to the biggest are summarised in table 5.4 below. The denomination ranges from the *turobuto*, *vinda*, *sautolu*, *bara*, *matabala*, *talina* and *sauhongavulu*. The Gela people still use their currency in their social and economic transactions. The Gela currency is similar to the Guadalcanal one which the researcher did not have the time to collect.

Table 5.4 Denominations of the Gela Currency

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Exchange rate</i>
<i>Turobuto</i>		
<i>Vinda</i>	2 strings with division in centre, length 12 feet	1 or 10 pana or 50 yam
<i>Sautolu</i>	3 strings with division in centre, length 12 feet	1.10
<i>Bara</i>	4 strings without division in centre, length 12 feet	1 pound
<i>Matabala</i>	4 strings with division in centre, length 12 feet	2 pound
<i>Talina</i>	5 strings with division in centre, length 12 feet	2 pound 10
<i>Sauhongavulu</i>		2 pound 10

Source: Memorandum to District Commissioner Central, Subject: Native Money – Gela, 23 April 1945 and Enclosure 1, Office of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Suva, Fiji, 24 July 1936, Solomon Islands, No. 132

All above currencies are minted in Wala lagoon by individual family units. The Kwaio also mint some of their shell money however their minting is limited only to a type of shell known as *mamalakwai*. They do not have full-scale production as in the Wala Lagoon. The Wala people are responsible for issuing their own currency and the currencies of the nearby communities and islands. This responsibility not only enabled them to control price but more importantly, allow them to control the standard and quality of the shell money produced.

5.3.4. Shell Money: Quality and Standards

The late Ulufa'alu believed the clan of *Takila* in Alite played the role of a Central Bank (per. com. Ulufa'alu 2006). The Central Bank only looked after the standard and quality by making sure the pattern was followed and quality maintained. Money supply was not controlled by the Central Bank although production is delegated to the households. The difficulty for mass producing shell money and thus causing inflation was rare.

The control of the Central Bank also included making sure that the money was produced only in Wala Lagoon. It was believed that the skill and spiritual powers for

producing shell money was limited to the Wala people and the Wala Lagoon. The spirits that look after shell money does not allow Wala people to produce this money in other places (per. com. Ulufa'alu 2006). Producing the shells outside Wala will make it difficult for the shell money spirit to protect you because that is a different jurisdiction so to speak. People who attempted to produce shell money in other places met misfortunes. In contemporary Wala, people are still fearful of minting the money outside of Wala Lagoon. The only other place other than Wala Lagoon that Wala people can produce the shell money is Honiara. It is believed that it was the amalgamation of different cultures in Honiara that made it possible for the spirit of shell money to accept the place.

The restriction of the production place enabled the Wala people to control the quality and standard of the shell money and thus control the money supply. This enabled the Wala people to dictate the terms of trade albeit a functioning law of supply and demand.

5.4. Shell Money and Livelihood

This section discusses the use of shell money for livelihood historically and in contemporary Wala society. Secondly, the section will also consider the constraints facing shell money as a livelihood strategy in the contemporary Wala society. The historical setting will briefly discuss the Wala trading ring and how it contributes to household livelihoods. The contemporary setting will discuss shell money with regards to household livelihood, community development, business development and socio-cultural uses of shell money.

5.4.1 Shell Money and Livelihood Historically

5.4.1a. The Wala Trading Ring

The word trading in the Wala dialect is known as *sabero* or *lilifu*, which refer to the act of going out to buy goods from another place using money. The traditional Wala trading ring covered the Islands of Malaita, especially the south, western and northern parts, the Bugotu side of Isabel Island, all of the Florida group or Gela, Guadalcanal, Savo, part of Makira Island and Ulawa Island (refer to Figure 4.1). Incidentally, these were the places that the Wala people originally came from, so it was understandable that they would re-establish trading links with places that they originated from.

The households were the business units in the Wala society. The head of the household would establish trading partners known as *Ruana* in the various trading ports. It is customary for Wala households to do business only with their trading partners (*Ruana*). Business between trading partners can be transacted in cash (*foli*) or credit (*sake lana*). They can also make deposits (*alu fafi*) with their trading partners and may collect the goods now or later. The concept of credit transaction (*sake lana*) on the other hand is to take the goods or service now with only the promise of a future payment. Some trading partners have abused this privilege and thus strained relations to some extent.

Trading voyages were mainly for root crops and livestock for feasts (called *maoma*). The common root crops traded were taro, pana, yam and potato. These were normally transacted in the thousands. A shell money could purchase a thousand root crops. A thousand root crops is known as *luda'a*.

The trading flotilla in the olden days was vulnerable to hostile attacks. The late Bart Ulufa'alu explained that in unknown areas or known hostile areas, a number of clans will go together with arms but in known trading areas, individual clans may go to trade on their own without the fear of been attacked (per.com. Ulufa'alu: 2006). The

trading voyages can last between 2 weeks to 2 months depending on which places they go for trading. If they could collect everything they need from one locality then they immediately return home. Where business is not good, they would visit several places before returning home.

The trading voyages were taken on boats called *baru*. A flotilla of 2 to 5 *barus* normally took the voyages together. An average trading *baru* was 30 feet long with enough space for people and cargo. A sail powered the *baru* when there is a good wind blowing otherwise they use paddles. Navigation between the islands was by reading the geography of the islands, stars and the flow of current. Much later bigger boats more like schooners were used when Wala people adapted the technology for building these boats.

5.4.1b. Household Livelihoods

Shell money is the basis for household livelihood and power. Having access to it was considered very important in Wala. Everything considered, an average household is able to produce only one *tafuliae* in one year. In their quest to increase the amount of shell money they have, some ‘big man’ married more than one wife to increase their shell money production. The wives would be organized between shell money production and household keeping. The late Baefulu (he was in his late 90s) explained that women who were good at producing shell money were highly sought after (per.com. Baefulu: 1980).

Occasionally well-off families also trade in root crops to increase their wealth and secure their livelihood. Frank Fosala (per.com: 2006), a ‘big man’ of Talakali village who is well into his 90s described the process as follows:

‘A family can buy a *luda’a* (1000 heads of taro) for a *tafuliae* and then sell the taro in small quantities for a *galia* or *fura* or *galae bata*. During this process the family can use some taro for their household consumption. If the family manages the process well, enough material

will be collected to make two *tafuliaes* of shell money. The process has gained the family one additional *tafuliae* of shell money’.

Families that participate as customers to the process described above also benefit as far as household sustenance is concerned. Bringing the goods right at their doorstep and selling them in small units make it possible for them to use their *galia* (smallest denomination) or could negotiate to take the taro on credit thus improving their livelihood. Having access to shell money and the relationship of the buyer to the seller (social capital) is important for livelihood in Wala.

Trade using shell money secured the livelihood of the households in the Wala lagoon in times past. Comparatively speaking, the Wala people during the trading period were relatively better off than their Kwara’ae and Kwaio neighbours in terms of their freedom to move, forge relationships, build alliances, had less enemies and trade beyond their borders and to acquire a variety of goods and ideas to improve their livelihood. Trading also exposes them to new places and customs that they blend into their own and enabled them to put on elaborate feasts (*maoma*) for their gods that they believe brings them prosperity. For a Kwara’ae man, putting together a feast is no easy feat. He must have land and enough workers to prepare the taro gardens and raise the livestock (per.com: Osiramo). The Wala man on the other hand has more than one source of supply for his feasts because of the elaborate network of relationships they build. Marrying into these places strengthen these alliances.

The arrival of the Europeans in the 19th century with the introduction of their government, economic and religious systems affected the Wala trading system. Shortly after European arrival, the Wala trading system collapsed and their way of life greatly affected. The trading system collapsed because people began to accept introduced goods and services that require Western monetary exchange – the Western currency. Secondly, the requirement that tax money be paid in pounds affected the lifestyle of the

people who must look for paid employment to enable them to pay for their tax dues. Thirdly, the denunciation of their religion by the Christian faith meant they could no longer present feasts for their gods. Although trading survived after the arrival of Christianity and modernization, the introduction of western food from Honiara eventually made it redundant. There was no smooth transition from the Wala trading system to the modern cash system.

Despite the collapse of the Wala trading system in the early 20th century, the production of the shell money continued on a limited scale. The shell money was adapted to the changing environment and this enabled it to survive. Shell money continued to play the functions of money but in a traditional economy running parallel with the cash economy.

Shell money continued to feature prominently in social and cultural transactions like bride price giving and compensation for conflict resolution. Shell money was also beginning to be seen as a cultural icon not only for Malaita but also for the other islands that used it. This cultural icon appealed to both the government and the tourist market. The government use shell money in its ceremonial giving of gifts to dignitaries and tourists buy it as cultural gifts or for their own use.

In the 1970s, the late Samu Maesulipala (entrepreneur and boat builder) and late Waletofea Faraege (entrepreneur) discovered the Bougainville market (PNG) for shell money (per.com: Silas Waletofea, 2006). This market was considered lucrative and helped to sustain the shell money industry in Wala. The late John Ferafaita (entrepreneur and boat builder) and Frank Fosala (entrepreneur and big man) who have made use of this market at some time in their lives also shared the same sentiments about this market. This Bougainville market together with the traditional, economic and social demands for shell money like bride price and compensation created the market that saw the progress of the shell money industry to the 21st century.

5.4.2. Shell Money and Livelihood in Contemporary Wala

This section examines the household dependence on shell money for their livelihood. This level of household dependence will be further contrasted between the two regions of Aoke and Laulasi in the Wala lagoon.

Household Livelihoods

Before analyzing the level of household dependence on shell money for their livelihood, it is proper that total income and expenditure of households is presented to give an overall picture of the situation. Table 5.5 shows aggregate annual income for the sample households at \$517,940 and the aggregate annual expenditure at \$584,106. More than half of the total household expenditure (55%) and household income (55%) comes from the Laulasi region.

Table 5.5: Annual Household Income and Expenditure by Region

	Aoke	Percent	Laulasi	Percent	Wala
Total Income	233340	45.0	284600	55.0	517940
Total Expenditure	260740	45.0	323366	55.0	584106
Difference	-27400	41.0	-38766	59.0	-66166

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Further, total annual expenditure is above income by \$66,166. This difference is more evident in the Laulasi region (59%) than Aoke (41%), a reflection of the difficulty and sensitiveness of collecting household income and expenditure data. The expenditure figure is more reflective of the situation than the income figures. Respondents talk more freely about their expenses than their sources of income. This makes the expenditure figures more near to the reality than the income figures. Now I discuss the expenditure figures in detail.

Household Expenditure

Data on average household and per capita expenditure in Wala, Malaita and Solomon Islands is shown in Table 5.6. The data for Malaita and rural and urban Solomon Islands was obtained from the national Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) conducted in 2005/6 by the Statistics Office at the Ministry of Finance. This data was combined with data collected during this research to produce Table 5.6 below. The researcher is aware of the different dates of data collection but considers the time difference of one year to be good enough for general comparisons.

Table 5.6: Average Annual Household, Per Capita Expenditure and Household Size by Region

Region	Average Annual Household Expenditure	Median Annual Household Expenditure	Average Household Size	Average Annual Per Capita Expenditure	Median Annual Per Capita Expenditure
Solomon Islands	30,069	20,035	6.15	4,887	3,256
Urban Solomon	69,935	52,726	6.90	10,215	7,701
Rural Solomon	23,366	17,668	6.00	4,871	2,927
Malaita	21,018	16,538	6.36	3,305	2,600
Wala lagoon	19,470	14,938	6.43	3,028	2,323
Aoke	17,383	10,200	6.00	2,896	1,700
Laulasi	21,558	20,040	6.86	3,143	2,921

Source: Solomon Islands Government, Statistics Office (2006), Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2005/2006, Table 3.1, Honiara and Faradatolo (2006), Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

The average annual expenditure for households in Wala lagoon (\$19,470) is very low compared to the average annual expenditure for Solomon Islands households (\$30,069), rural Solomon Islands households (\$23,366) and Malaita province households (\$21,018). For urban Solomon Islands households, the average expenditure is almost \$70,000 (\$69,935).

In column five, the average per capita expenditure for rural Solomon Islands households (\$4,871) was more than the average per capita expenditure for Wala households (\$3,028). From column six, note that half the households in rural Solomon Islands spent \$2,927 annually, while half the households in Wala spent only about

\$2,323 annually. Between the two regions, Aoke households spend less (\$1,700) than Laulasi households (\$2,921).

The table above shows how households in the Wala Lagoon struggle to put food on the table on a daily basis. They do not have any savings and they operate from hand to mouth existence. Access to resources for livelihood is the problem in Wala Lagoon. Mr. Sede, a resident of Molou village (Aoke region) summed it succinctly as *“life today is hard. We are struggling to survive daily by selling the little fish we caught to buy salt and sugar”* (per.com. Sede: 2006). The story of Wale in Box 5.2 below reflects this difficulty.

Box 5.2: The Story of Wale

Wale is 30 years old and is married with two primary school age children. Wale dropped out from primary school at standard 4 and does not have a permanent job. Further, he does not have access to land for gardening and he does not like fishing much. His wife works at a Chinese shop in Auki town and earns less than \$100 a month – not enough to buy a bag of 20kg Rice that cost \$200.

Wale waits at the Auki market area everyday for any chance to work for a commission by selling the fisherman’s bonito catch. There are many others like Wale at the Auki market. On good days, he could earn \$20 and on bad days he earns \$10, or nothing at all. With the \$10, he would buy a packet of rice and a bundle of cabbage for dinner and may be one or two packets of biscuits for tea in the morning. If he cannot earn \$10 in a day, he would look for someone to borrow from.

Life for Wale is all about struggling to put food on the table. He does not have any savings or investment or a house for his family. His family shares a small leaf-thatched house with his father and mother. Wale does not contribute to his social obligations because he does not have extra cash to go around. This is causing some friction between him and his father who thinks that Wale should start taking over some of the social responsibilities, like contributing to ceremonies associated with marriages and deaths.

Wale claims that his parents forced him into married so that he could ‘settle down’ with his family. Apparently Wale led an active social life of beer drinking with his friends that forced his parents to find a wife for him so he ‘would settle down’. The logic was that if he had a wife, he would feel responsible and therefore stop drinking and start looking after his family. This did not happen as expected and Wale still blames his parents for his current difficulties.

Table 5.7 shows the annual household expenditure by region and by population. The population column is divided into 5 equal categories of 20 percent. The top 20 percent of Aoke households contributed 55 percent (54.99) of the regional expenditure while the bottom 20 percent of households contributed 7.09 percent of household expenditure. In the Laulasi region, the top 20 percent of the households contributed 35.36 percent of household expenditure while the bottom 20 percent of households contributed 10.88 percent of household expenditure. Household expenditure was more evenly distributed in the Laulasi region than in the Aoke region. For the Wala Lagoon as a whole, the top 20 percent of households contributed 44.12 percent of expenditure while the bottom 20 percent contributed 9.19 percent of the household expenditure. Household expenditure is more evenly distributed between the middle 60 percent of the households.

Table 5.7: Total Annual Expenditure by area and by Population Category

Population Category	Aoke Amount	Percent	Laulasi Amount	Percent	Wala Amount	Percent
1	18480	7.09	35180	10.88	53660	9.19
2	26484	10.16	46700	14.44	73184	12.53
3	31240	11.98	58188	17.99	89428	15.31
4	41160	15.79	68970	21.33	110130	18.85
5	143376	54.99	114328	35.36	257704	44.12
Total	260740		323366		584106	
Average	17383		21558		19470	
Median	10200		20040		30240	

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 5.8 presents the categories of household expenditure including social, consumed, inputs and investment. Social expenditure includes payments for school expenses and school contributions, giving for bride price and funeral expenses and the church and financial help to extended families. The consumed category includes purchased food, produced food, kerosene or electricity, transport expenses, clothing and medical expenses. The inputs category includes expenses for agriculture, fishing, village businesses (trading) and shell money production. Investment expenses include

expenses for shelter, funeral and bride price. The type of funeral and bride price expenses included here are those that are treated as deposits. The recipients will have to repay these amounts to the giver sometime in the future. Savings is not included under investment as there was none reported. The low propensity in savings reflects the high propensity to consume and may also reflect the unequal distribution of income (Seers 1969). Savings in the form of shell money is known but it is very hard to get the data because people do not normally share information about their wealth, in the form of shell money to anyone. To share this information would make one a target of sorcery or competition. A native of Laulasi put it thus: “*Who would tell anybody his wealth? You expose yourself when you tell others the shell money you have*”.

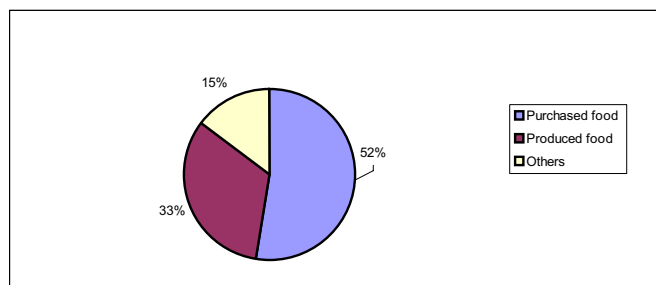
Table 5.8: Annual Expenditure by Households by Activity by Region

<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Social	9480	24.5	29220	75.5	38700	6.6
School fee/contrib	5240	20.5	20280	79.5	25520	4.4
Bride giving	720	21.2	2680	78.8	3400	0.6
Funeral	160	4.7	3260	95.3	3420	0.6
Extended family	3360	52.8	3000	47.2	6360	1.1
Consumed	150576	39.6	229320	60.4	379896	65.0
Purchased food	93216	46.8	105960	53.2	199176	34.1
Produced food	39000	31.2	85920	68.8	124920	21.4
Lighting	12960	60.0	8640	40.0	21600	3.7
Transport	2880	10.1	25560	89.9	28440	4.9
Clothing	1560	41.9	2160	58.1	3720	0.6
Medical	960	47.1	1080	52.9	2040	0.3
Inputs	99724	61.9	61466	38.1	161190	27.6
Agriculture	0	0.0	1920	100.0	1920	0.3
Fishing	1440	92.3	120	7.7	1560	0.3
Shell money	700	2.9	23786	97.1	24486	4.2
Trading	99724	73.7	35640	26.3	135364	23.2
Investment	960	22.2	3360	77.8	4320	0.7
Funeral	120	8.3	1320	91.7	1440	0.2
Bride giving	480	19.0	2040	81.0	2520	0.4
Shelter	360	100.0	0	0.0	360	0.1
Total	260740	44.6	323366	55.4	584106	100.0

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 5.8 shows the highest expenditure item was consumed food (65%), followed by inputs (27.6%), social payments (6.6%) and investment (0.7%). The consumed foods are from three sources: purchased food (52%), produced food (33%) and others (15%). Others include kerosene, transport, clothing and medical expenses. Purchased food in order of their value include rice, bread, biscuits and noodles, fresh and tin fish, root crops, tobacco and alcohol, non alcohol beverages like Milo and tea, vegetables, fruits, dairy and milk and fat and oils. Rice is the staple diet in most households. Fish is most often purchased for use with *koa* (mangrove pods) to produce a soup dish that may be eaten with rice, potato or other root crops. Produced food in order of value includes root crops (mainly sweet potato (Figure 5.19) and *kakama* - swamp taro (Figure 5.18)), fish, *koa* (mangrove pods), vegetables and fruits. The different sources of consumed food are presented in Figure 5.17 below.

Figure 5.17: Sources of Consumed Food



Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

The input category (27.6% from Table 5.8) includes expenses for village business (trading), shell money, fishing and agriculture. Activities under village based businesses include selling betel nuts, dough nuts, buns, rolled tobacco cigarettes, selling fish and chips, canoe hire, small trade store, selling firewood, trading vegetables and fishing for tuna in the open seas using outboard motors. Shell money inputs are mainly to buy shells and for the hire of labour for some of the stages in the production process. The fishing expense under inputs is for lines and hooks for one-man operations in the

lagoon. Agriculture input is for the hire of labour to work in the potato patches like hoeing potato mounts (Figure 5.19).

Figure 5.18 Kakama Plantation



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

Figure 5.19: Potato garden



Source: David Faradatolo, 2006

Items under the social category (6.6%) in order of value include school expenses, financial help to extended families, bride and funeral expenses. School expenses are fees and contributions. Financial help to extended families may include cash payment to a relative. Bride and funeral expenses are like payment to creditors. These are the repayments for bride and funeral money received earlier from relatives and friends. Patterson Walebaela from the Laulasi region explained that in Wala these repayments are regarded as *bata mae* (literally dead money) or the clearing of a debt.

Items under the investment category (0.7%) include giving in bride price, giving for funeral expenses and expenses for minor maintenance of shelter. Bride and funeral giving are recorded under investment because the person receiving the money (the debtor) is obliged to return the favour to the giver when the right time comes. Again Patterson Walebaela explained that money given to help in a bride price is called *bata mauri* (literally live money). Giving in bride prices and for funerals is more prominent in Laulasi than in the Aoke region. A number of reasons could be responsible for this but the capacity of households to give seems prominent. The giving in bride recorded here includes only cash contributions but exclude shell money contributions because of the difficulty in soliciting data from the respondents.

Some general points that could be highlighted about Table 5.8 include the fact that, first, the high percentage of household expenditure on food or consumption is a reflection of the rural nature and orientation of the households and the earning difficulties that households in Wala face. Their earnings and the opportunities for earning incomes are so limited that the little money they earn is all used up in consumption. Wala households are not earning enough to meet all their basic needs.

Second, the current difficult economic environment has forced most Wala households to operate on the 'survival mode' on a daily basis. 'Survival mode' means trying to access only the bare basics in food for survival. Whether the food is nutritious or not was often overlooked. Their efforts were only for survival and to meet their social and religious obligations. Operating on the survival mode may be linked to the increasing incidence of lifestyle disease like diabetes facing the Wala people today.

Finally, produced food (food produced by the household) make up 21 percent of the total expenditure against 52 percent for purchased food – Table 5.8. This reflects the scarcity of gardening land in the lagoon and the increasing dependence on purchased food. This is a major contrast to most other rural communities in Solomon Islands where home production is the major source of food for households (HIES 2006). Further, almost 70 percent of this home production (that is the 21percent) is from Laulasi and 30 percent from the Aoke region. The contrast in the level of dependence on home production by the two regions is a reflection of the difficulty households in Aoke have in accessing land for gardening. Land around Auki town is scarce and the customary landowners who control these lands do not allow any other person making food gardens on the limited available land (per.com. Jack Aru: 2006). Some households in the Laulasi region however have food gardens on the little land they can access from Kwara'ae landowners. In the coming years, livelihood from home production will

decrease because of increasing population, the fixed nature of land, and the depleting stock of fish.

Household Income

The top 20 percent of Wala households share 50 percent (48%) of the Wala income while the bottom 80 percent shares the other 50 percent (52%) of income (shown in Table 5.9). In the regions, the top 20 percent of households in Aoke share 60 percent (59%) of the household income while the bottom 80 percent of households shared 40 percent (41%). In Laulasi, the top 20 percent of households share 40 percent (39%) of the household income while the bottom 80 percent share 60 (61%) percent of the household income. Income is more evenly distributed in Laulasi than in Aoke region. The uneven distribution of income in Aoke reflects an outlier in the sample that was involved in tuna fishing and the selling of fish and chips. The bottom 20 percent of households in Wala was a critical group that receives only 8 percent of the income. This group found it extremely difficult to survive because they received less than \$10,000 per annum.

Table 5.9: Total Annual Income by area and by Population Category

Population Category	Aoke Amount	Percent %	Laulasi Amount	Percent %	Wala Amount	Percent %
1	14400	6	27600	10	42000	8
2	21300	9	36140	13	57440	11
3	26960	12	49360	17	76320	15
4	32640	14	61480	22	94120	18
5	138040	59	110020	39	248060	48
Total	233340		284600		517940	
Average	15556		18973		17265	
Median	8960		16240		25200	

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 5.10 below shows the broad categories of household income. These sources include formal employment, casual employment, self-employment, and others like remittances, loans and rent. Shell money was classified under self-employment. Self-employment as a category contributes 80 percent of the total annual income while casual employment contributes only 13 percent of the income. Formal employment as a source of income was insignificantly low.

Table 5.10: Annual Income by Major Source by Region and by Percent

<i>Source of Income</i>	<i>Aoke</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Formal Employment	-	-	12800	100	12800	2.5
Casual Employed	38,320	57	28,900	43	67220	13.0
Self-Employed	181,820	44	234,860	56	416680	80.4
Others	13200	62	8040	38	21240	4.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>233340</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>284600</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>517940</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

The significantly high level of self-employment (80%) as a source of livelihood reflects the ingenuity of the local people. The environment in Wala was difficult enough to craft any livelihood based on natural resources. The people recognized this difficulty and adapted a livelihood based on self-employment. While self-employment may support livelihood, it also has vulnerability for the households. The self-employment activities are not secure or sustainable therefore households cannot confidently rely on them. Except for a few activities like shell money, most of the activities are seasonal and often subject to change.

Table 5.11: Annual Income of Households by Activity and by Region

Type of Activity	Aoke Household Income	Percent of Regional Contribution	Laulasi Household Income	Percent of Regional Contribution	Total Annual Income for Wala	Percent of Total Income
<i>Formal:</i>						
Teach/Admin	-	-	12,800	100	12,800	2.5
<i>Casual:</i>						
Boat building	-	-	20,900	100	20,900	4.0
Stevedore	-	-	6,000	100	6,000	1.2
Urban labour	38,320	95	2,000	5	40,320	7.8
<i>Self-employed:</i>						
Shell money	6,500	7	84,200	93	90,700	17.5
Small business	136,320	68	64,740	32	201,060	38.8
Fishing	16,320	63	9,600	37	25,920	5.0
Gardening	22,680	23	76,320	77	99,000	19.1
<i>Others</i>						
Remittance	1,200	13	8,040	87	9,240	1.8
Rent	12,000	100	-	-	12,000	2.3
<i>Total income</i>	<i>233340</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>284600</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>517,940</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 5.11 expands the information in Table 5.10 to show household income by activity and by region. These include activities under formal employment, casual employment, self-employment, and others. Under formal employment, the activity is teaching or teachers in the primary sector. Activities under casual employment include boat building, stevedore and urban labour. The boat building activity represented only those who sell their labour in the industry. It does not include the boat owners and their business. The stevedores include those who occasionally go on contracts for loading log boats. In the logging industry in Solomon Islands the only three groups that do this risky job include the Micronesians of I-Kiribati origin, the Lau of north Malaita and the Wala people of West Malaita. Urban labour represented those who do casual job in Auki and Honiara occasionally like driving buses or taxis. Under self-employment, the activities are shell money, small business, fishing and gardening. Small business included a number of informal village-based business activities like selling doughnuts, buns, fish, tobacco and betel nut. The activities of remittance and rent come under others. Remittances were mainly from relatives working in Honiara and the rent received was from a property in Honiara.

Small business (village-based), as shown in Table 5.11, contribute 38.8 percent of household income; followed by gardening (19.1), shell money (17.5), urban labour (7.8), fishing (5), boat building (4.0), teaching (2.5), rent (2.3), remittance (1.8) and stevedore (1.2). Households in Aoke region derive most of their income from small business, urban labour, and fishing. On the other hand, households in Laulasi derive most of their income from shell money, gardening, small business and boat building.

Table 5.12: Household Income by Activity, Region and Participation

Activity	Number of Households		Total Households	Percent of Households	Total Income	Percent of Total Income
	Aoke	Laulasi				
<i>Formal:</i>						
Teach/Admin	-	2	2	6.7	12,800	2.5
<i>Casual:</i>						
Boat building	-	6	6	20.0	20,900	4.0
Stevedore	-	3	3	10.0	6,000	1.2
Urban labour	10	1	11	36.7	40,320	7.8
<i>Self-employed:</i>						
Shell money	2	15	17	56.7	90,700	17.5
Small business	8	5	13	43.3	201,060	38.8
Fishing	13	8	21	70.0	25,920	5.0
Gardening	4	11	16	53.3	99,000	19.1
<i>Others:</i>						
Remittance	1	3	4	13.3	9,240	1.8
Rent	1		1	3.3	12,000	2.3
Total					517,940	100

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 5.12 combines Table 4.10 and Table 5.11. It compares household income with the level of household participation in the various income activities. Village based businesses contribute 38.8 percent of household income, but only 43.3 percent of households depend on it. The second highest source of income is gardening (19.1%) with a household participation rate of 53.3 percent. The third source of income is shell money (17.5%) with 56.7 percent of the households participate in this source of income. Fishing has the highest rate of household participation with 70 percent but contributes only 5 percent of household income.

Table 5.13 used data only from the households that produced shell money and calculated the contribution of shell money to their household income. This is now looking further into the individual income of the shell money-producing households. Note from the table that the contribution of shell money to the individual household incomes ranged from 8.8 percent to 81.1 percent. Six of the 14 households producing shell money received more than half of their household income from shell money. The

average contribution of shell money to individual household incomes was 44.6 percent.

This was a significant percent.

Table 5.13: Household Income from Shell Money by Region

<i>Region</i>	<i>Aoke</i>		<i>Laulasi</i>				
Shell Money Inc	4500	2000	19700	3400	800	3000	4900
Total Income	7380	8960	28940	9580	9140	11460	17520
Percent	61.0	22.3	68.1	35.5	8.8	26.2	28.0

Cont..

<i>Region</i>	<i>Laulasi</i>							<i>Wala</i>
Shell Money Inc	4200	10000	6800	7200	8700	4400	11100	90700
Total Income	26120	18560	13800	8880	15900	10880	16240	203360
Percent	16.1	53.9	49.3	81.1	54.7	40.4	68.3	44.6

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Table 5.14 shows the total annual income from shell money by area and by population category. The top 20 percent of shell money producers share half (52.15%) of all shell money income and the bottom 80 percent share the other half. In comparing the two regions, the Aoke region contributes 7 percent (\$6,500) of shell money income while Laulasi contribute 93 percent (\$84,200). The average shell money income for households in Aoke is \$433 while for Laulasi households it is \$5,613. Average household income is less in Aoke than in Laulasi.

Table 5.14: Annual Shell Money Income by Area and by Population Category

Population Category	Aoke Amount	Percent	Laulasi Amount	Percent	Wala Amount	Percent
1	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
2	0	0.00	7200	8.55	7200	7.94
3	0	0.00	13500	16.03	13500	14.88
4	0	0.00	22700	26.96	22700	25.03
5	6500	100.00	40800	48.46	47300	52.15
Total	6500		84200		90700	
Average	433		5613		3023	
Median	0		4400		4400	

Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

Two important points may be established from the results: firstly, shell money, as a livelihood strategy is more prominent in Laulasi than in Aoke. More households in Laulasi depend on shell money than in Aoke. Secondly, on average, shell money

contributes less to household income in Aoke than in Laulasi. Households in Laulasi receive a big proportion of their household incomes from shell money. Several reasons may explain these points. The first explanation is that shell money, as a cultural identity is not taken seriously in Aoke other than for bride price. Even with bride price, institutions like the churches are very influential in controlling the amount that may be exchanged. This in turn controls or reduces the demand for shell money and thus its production in the Aoke region. Secondly, shell money production is hard work. Aoke residents have other easier sources of income like working for the shop owners in Auki town and selling doughnut at the Auki market. These other income earning requires less physical activity compared to making shell money. Thirdly, the depletion of shells from reefs has discouraged some Aoke residents from producing shell money. Jack Aru, a resident of Molou village in Aoke stated that *'If shells are made available, our people would produce shell money'*.

Figure 5.20: An example of a Talakali modified project house



Source: D Faradatolo 2006

5.5. Shell Money and Community Development

Community development is where the community come together around its shared goals and work communally to achieve these goals together (OMAFRA: 2005). The goals were arrived at through the participation of all sectors of the community. Most community development is built around the notion of self-reliance as well as through partnerships with the government and the business community.

Box 5.3: Talakali Housing Project

Adherents of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church started the Talakali village along the coast of the lagoon in the 1960s from its original location in the barrier part of the lagoon called Saliu village. The people moved to Talakali from Saliu because of limited space, the threat of cyclone and their desire to be near their food gardens and water (per.com. Doreen Sukuluta'a: 2006). The housing project was an offspring from the Talakali church project that was completed in 1973 (per.com. Anigafutu: 2006). John Dio, late Anipoeni Noda, and Harry Anigafutu spearheaded the housing project.

The housing project was an attempt to organize the village by building proper marked houses for the arriving immigrants from Saliu village. The objective was to build the base of the house with cement and the owner will complete the structure with timber at his/her own expense (per.com John Dio: 2006). The size of the house is a standard 40 feet by 18 feet. Talakali families that were then working with Levers Plantations Ltd at Lunga (Guadalcanal) were also included and they contributed in kind (per. Com. Mamau Sifoni 2006). The village was demarcated and reasonable size plots were assigned to each family member (per.com Anigafutu 2006). Two days in a week was given for project work and a roll of attendance was kept.

Most members give their contributions to the project in strings of shell money (*safi*). The contributions of *safi* were demanded in installments to ease the burden on households (per. Com. John Dio 2006). The strings of shell money contributed were either converted to cash locally or were sold at the Bouganville market (ibid).

Money from the shell money was then used to buy steel and cement for the construction work, a brick-making machine and ration in the form of rice (per.com John Dio 2006). Cooking lunch on project days is shared between participating households. Gravel from the nearby *Kwaimanafu River* was negotiated with landowners and a tractor from the Buma Catholic Mission Station towards the south was contracted on some Sundays to carry gravel from *Kwaimanafu River* to the project site (ibid).

The housing project has achieved its goal and some owners have since changed the design to build two story buildings (figure 5.20). Shell money has enabled many families to own brick houses that they would otherwise not have if they were left on their own. Access to shell money is easier than access to cash.

Community development discussed in this section is concerned only with the development of social infrastructure like church buildings, school buildings and family housing. In such community development projects, the community members are required to contribute in cash and labour. As cash is often limited, the cash component may be given in the form of strings of shell money. Depending on the project cost, some contributions may include one or two strings of *safi* per household. Talakali Housing

project is highlighted below in Box 5.3 as an example of a community project that has benefited from the use of shell money.

5.6. Shell Money and Business Development

According to the Wala entrepreneur, late John Ferafaita (Founder of Maofaita Shipping) ‘shell money is the basis for small business development in Wala in terms of contributing to the seed money and helping out during the difficult times’ (per.com. John Ferafaita: 2004). Most indigenous Wala businesses had at one time or another used shell money to develop their businesses. As formal credit was difficult because of the collateral requirement, most Wala businesses were started with bags of shells or strings of *safi* or a *Akwala’afu*. To illustrate the contribution of shell money to business development, three case studies are outlined below. These include the cooperative movement in the 1970s, Laulasi Cultural Tours and an example of a boat building and shipping business.

5.6.1. Cooperative Movement

The cooperative form of business ownership was a government policy to involve local people in the retail industry during the 1960s and 1970s. At the initial introduction of the cooperative form of business organization, a lot of Wala people embrace the concept by buying shares in cooperatives. Cash was scarce so most cooperative shares were bought with strings of shell money. Shell money contributed positively to the development of Cooperatives because of the easy access villagers have for it. By the late 70s and early 80s most cooperative businesses collapsed because of the lack of management skills and technical support from the government. The case below in box 5.4 is to highlight the contribution of shell in the development of cooperative societies.

Box 5.4: The Talakali Cooperative Society

The Talakali Cooperative Society was active in the early 1970s. The society was a consumer cooperative society. Each member of the community was encouraged to buy shares in the society. As cash was difficult during these years, the management made provision for the shares to be paid with strings of shell money. A share would cost for example one string of *safi*. The *safi* can then be converted locally for cash or sold at the Bouganville market for cash. The cash was then used to buy stock. Members were also allowed to buy goods from the society with shell money. Shell money has enabled most members to own shares in the society. Shell money also enabled customers to buy goods from the society. The net benefit of using shell money to the cooperative society, shareholders and the community was positive. The society failed in the 70s when the managing director lost their money at a Honiara bus stand.

5.6.2. Laulasi and Alite Cultural Tours

The culture of the Wala people revolves around the shell money, boat building and shipping and artificial islands. These are unique features of the Wala people that was recognized by two foreigners who later explored these features for the tourism industry. The foreigners managed to convince the elders of Wala to get organized and sell these products. One-day tour packages were organised for Laulasi and Alite islands (see Box 5.5 for a brief discussed). Laulasi and Alite are located some 12 kilometers from Auki town (see Figures 5.13 and 5.14). Laulasi Island is a truly artificial island and is one of the islands that went through the process of *Aurara* described in section 5.2.2 and Box 5.1. Figure 5.13 is a picture of Laulasi Island today. Alite Island is also a place that was *aurara* before but is not a complete artificial island. The tourist attraction in Alite was in the tambu area where tourists get to see the calling of the *kwalu tafana* (literally 8 fathoms) snake.

Figure 5.21: Alite Island

The tambu sites in Alite are on the left towards the back

Figure 5.22: Laulasi Artificial Island

The tambu sites in Laulasi are on the right, that is also the site for shark feeding during times of Maoma.

Box 5.5: Laulasi and Alite Tours

The Laulasi and Alite Cultural Tours was a thriving business in the late 70s. The concept for the tours was built around the unique culture of the Wala lagoon. Prominent among this culture is shell money making. The tours were one-day excursions organized for tourists to come and experience the beautiful lagoon, artificial islands, see tambu places and the production of shell money. The two villages that were assigned to showcase these cultural items were Laulasi and Alite villages. Bosita'a, a one time driver of the Laulasi tourist Baru explained the tours as follows: *'Group tours were organized whereby tourists would fly to Auki, rest a while in a lodge in Auki and then board a Baru canoe through the beautiful lagoon to Laulasi and Alite Islands. War canoes were organized to meet the tourists as the Baru approaches the islands. Upon arriving at the matakwa (landing spot), the tourists were again welcome by warriors and escorted to their resting place. After a brief refreshment, the tourists were given a tour of the village visiting the residential side, the women side (bisi) and the tambu sites (fera). The main activity was the demonstration of shell money production. The demonstration continue throughout the day and tourists were free to wonder between the stalls buying artifact and shell money'* (per.com. Bosita'a: 2006). During these tours most of the lagoon people were drawn to Laulasi and Alite to participate either as tour guides, custom dancers, security, participants in shell money making, vendors or even as spectators just to enjoy the activities on display. Severino Anifaemamu who used to officiate in the Alite tours recalled that *"during those times, Wala people have access to tourist money. People have money from selling their shell money during the tours. The money was then used to buy trade goods at the Alite cooperative society. The business of the society was then very health"* (per.com. Seferino Anifaemamu: 2006). The tours stopped abruptly in the late 1970s because of disagreements about the sharing of land rights.

(Source: D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey)

5.6.3. Boat Building and Shipping Industry

The boat building industry is as old as the Wala people themselves. The Wala are a maritime people and building boats is part of their culture to enable them to travel to get the goods they need to survive. The early form of Wala boat building for commercial trading was the *Baru*. A *baru* can be anything between 16 feet to 30 feet by 3 - 6 feet wide made by joining planks of timber (*babae ai*) together. Later when they came in contact with Europeans, the Wala people adapted their boatbuilding technology to build carter boats – more like the European Schooners. Later in the 1960s, a government boat building school was established at Auki station and this radically changed the boat building technology of the Wala people.

Financing the boats has always been from shell money. Bags of shells would be bought and minted into shell money. The women were mostly involved in the minting process. The shell money was then sold locally or overseas for cash. The main overseas market during the 1970s was the Bougainville market. The cash was then used to buy timber and material for the boats. This process would take years before a boat is completed. The case in Box 5.6 illustrates the contribution of shell money to the boat building and shipping industry in the Wala Lagoon.

In the modern boat building era of Wala Lagoon, the following Wala names are associated with boat building industry: late Samu Maesulipala, Frank Fosala, late Torita'a, Allan Glass, Harry Mamata, late Ben Ma'aria, Raitikoti Konare, late Jack Kalafu, late John Ferafaita, late Galiburi, Suana, Celestine Ofotelia, Francis Sawanu, late Harry Noda plus others in Gwata'a and the Aoke region.

Boat building is a live industry in Wala. It is common to see boat building sheds on the side of villages (see Figure 5.15 below). Some new boats are under construction and still others are yet to start. Shell money contributes significantly to the construction of these boats.

Box 5.6: Liomasia Shipping Business

Close relatives of the Numafelo clan in the Laulasi region of Wala lagoon owned the Liomasia shipping business. The seed money to start the operations of Liomasia shipping business was from money obtained by selling shell money in Bougainville in the 1970s. Shell money in the form of *galia* belonging to Frank Fosala and Time Anifaemamu were put together and then were exchanged in Bougainville for cash.

Frank Fosala had been an entrepreneur all his life so he has access to cash. He used this cash to buy *galia*. Anifaemamu was a traditional canoe maker who has the skill of *torina* (making canoe) and has been making canoes since the 1940s. The canoes he made were bought only with *galia* so by the 1970s he had quite an accumulation of *galia*. In the mid 1970s they put together their *galia* and *galae bata* and hired young people to smoothen (*ara*) the strings of *galia* and *safi* for the Bouganville market. When enough *galia* and *safi* was ready, a family member took the trip to Bouganville to sell the *galia* and *safi* for kina*. The kina brought from Bouganville was used to exchange more *galia* and *safi* and when enough is prepared, another trip is made to Bouganville.

Part of the money from Bouganville was also used to buy bags of flour to prepare pancakes. The pancakes were sold for thirties – 30 discs of *galia* or *safi*. In those days, 30 discs is equivalent to 10 cents. But people were not allowed to buy in the Solomon dollar. The pancakes can only be bought with 30s of *galia* or *safi*. This was another way to collect *galia* and *safi* for the Bouganville market.

When they had saved enough money, they bought a pickup truck and serve the south road from Auki town. The pickup truck was another source of income to accumulate cash for their project. Money from the Bouganville trips would help in the buying of tools and materials for the family boat. When enough basic tools and materials were bought, they began to construct the boat. The boat was 57 feet by 18 feet by 15 feet and took about 3 years to complete. When the boat was ready, the family register a business name and took out a loan for the engine and other navigational equipment for the boat.

The shipping business operated successfully in the first few years so they were able to acquire property in Auki and Honiara. The shipping business however stopped abruptly when the boat ran aground on a reef with a full load of fuel cargo and that helped destroyed the boat completely. By then the family had already diversified into other business areas before the tragedy happen.

Source: Researcher observations by D Faradatolo 2006 Wala Lagoon Livelihood Strategies Survey

* Kina: The PNG currency

Figure 5.23: A new boat building shed

Source: D Faradatolo 2006

Figure 5.24: MV Sa'alia, built with shell money

Source: D Faradatolo 2006

5.7. Socio-Cultural Use of Shell Money

Apart from the use of shell money to facilitate trade, shell money also plays a socio-cultural role in the society of Wala and in other parts of Solomon Islands as well. Two of the socio-cultural roles that will be discussed include bride price and dispute settlement.

5.7.1. Bride Price

In the Wala language, there is no word for bride price. The closest equivalent word would be '*kwatena*' literally meaning 'giving'. While the overall notion of bride price entails payment, *kwatena* entails giving and sharing. As a result of Western influence on the Wala language, the word *foli geli* (literally pay girl/women) is now also used to refer to a *kwatena*. A *kwatena* include shell money and food given to the bride's people. The bride's family in turn returns the grooms party with cooked and uncooked food and one or two shell money with the bride. The complete process involves almost equal 'giving' and sharing from both parties. One party gives shell money and the other give food equivalent to the value of the shell money. The matrimony of man and woman is legitimate by the giving and sharing of shell money and food in a *kwatena*.

When a potential bride is made known to the parents, a ceremony known as *galina* is done to the potential bride's parents. This is usually done in the evening and is

usually done discretely so that the public does not notice. The young man's parents and relatives will present one *tafuliae* shell money plus betel nut and leafs to their prospective daughter in law's parents requesting for her hand in marriage. When accepted, a date for the *kwatena* is agreed upon.

From the date of the *galina* to the date of the *kwatena* any assistance or goods given by the young women's people to the young man's people must be recorded (remembered) by the receiver so that it is repaid in double during the day of the *kwatena*. This provision is made so that people related to the bride receive something from the bride price. The part of the *kwatena* where the goods and services are repaid in double is called *duna'a* (to repay). During the period of engagement, the young man and bride-to-be may see each other but are not allowed to sleep together. Where they have decided to stay together before the *kwatena* is given, the boy's parents, before presenting the *kwatena*, must present a shell money - called a *fatoro* as a form of compensation to the women's parents (per.com. Bosita'a 2006).

There is no fixed amount for the *kwatena* in Wala. Parents thought that it is inappropriate and demeaning to put a price tag on their daughters. They also recognize that making shell money is difficult. As a guide, a *kwatena* should include 30 *isae galia*, a *wailuma*, *duna'a* and food. A *wailuma* is the part of the *kwatena* set aside for the mother of the bride. This may include a *maefuo* shell money, some *galia* and even cash. The father of the bride has no say over the *wailuma*.

The *kwatena* will be laid out (*tasia kwatena*) on the front yard of the bride's place and a herald will be hired to count (loudly) the amount of the *kwatena*. The count will be noted especially by the bride's father so that he can reciprocate appropriately in his giving of food when he return the grooms party. If the amount of shell money in the *kwatena* is below his expectation, he will demand that the boy's father pay for the food he prepared. If the amount is appropriate, then he will give the food for free. Normally a

luda'a (1,000 of a root crop) with cooked food is prepared to give in exchange for the *kwatena*.

After the *kwatena* is settled, the herald is again employed to call out the *du'una* (literally repayment). Individual names of the bride's people who gave goods to the man's people during the engagement period are called out noting the goods they gave, when and where they gave it and the amount for the repayment. All sorts of things are repaid during the *du'una* ceremony. It ranges from actual goods given to words (kind or bad) spoken to them, help rendered to them, even to such things as ignoring them in public places or even not saying good morning to them are all called out and would normally be received with laughter and rejoicing. Most *du'una* are in cash but *galia* and *tafuliae* is also used for big items like bags of rice, potato or taro.

The preparation of the *kwatena* is an activity for close family members of the same clan. Parents with male children accumulate shell money early by producing it themselves or through depositing shell money in the *kwatena* of their close relatives. When the time to give his son's *kwatena* comes, all he does is ask for the shell money deposits he made with his relatives during their *kwatena*. The debtors will repay their debt and make their own deposit again. Severino Anifaemamu (2006) explained it thus:

The normal practice is to give a shell money as repayment for a past shell money given to you and give a second shell money as your deposit to the kwatena. Where it is not possible to repay and make a deposit (give two shell moneys), then at least a repayment is enough with some cash as deposit. Helping out in the kwatena shows how we see and value each other as relatives. We are showing to our children that we are related to such and such a person when we help in their kwatena. Apart from the kwatena the only other time we see each other as relatives is during a funeral ceremony.

5.7.2. Dispute Settlement

Shell money is used for settling family disputes, disputes between villagers, or between clan members, or disputes with other clans or tribes or between island groups or

between provinces and even between countries. Shell money produced in Wala has been used in all levels in times past.

On Malaita and Wala, shell money is used to settle serious crimes like murder, fornication or adultery. Without shell money, the offender or his relatives could expect reprisal from the victim's relatives. Often cash money is added with the shell money but it is the shell money that is recognised and valued. When a young man elopes with a young woman, the woman's relative will go to the man's parents and demand shell money, failure to give to the demand could result in blood shed. Once shell money is given the offender is forgiven and good relationships are restored. In the case of an elopement, marriage may be arranged or the relationship is discouraged.

After the period of social unrest (1998 – 2003), shell money was instrumental in mending broken relationships between families and friends of Malaita and Guadalcanal. The Solomon Islands Government also used the shell money to mend its broken relationship with Taiwan when the Solomon Islands Foreign Minister secretly visited China in 2002. The Prime Minister of Solomon Islands gave shell money to the Premier of Taiwan on his visit to Honiara.

The *tafuliae* (10 strings) shell money especially has been made to meet the requirements for dispute settlement. The most valuable shells called *firai* (red discs) is placed in the middle of the shell money. On both sides of the *firai* will be a *lige bata*, followed by a *lige Kurila*, then another *lige bata*, three segments of *fulu* and finally *kekete* and red cloth (see figure 5.9). The arrangement was in order of the value of shells. This is analogous to the different levels of crime that may be committed between different parties and the level of their consequences for these different crimes. In other words, the arrangement covers all disputes and therefore is capable of settling all kinds of dispute.

The other shell money worth explaining is the shell money with a *maefuo* (net) in the middle (see figure 5.10). Oral history explains that the net was placed in the middle of the shell money because of a dispute between two brothers over fishing net.

The origin of this type of shell money is explained below:

The younger brother after using the family fishing net hanged it to dry at the back of the fera. The elder brother without realising that his brother used the net and was in the fera, uttered some bad words to whoever that used the family net because it had holes in it. The younger brother enraged got up and asked his nephew to drop him off at the coast in a canoe. When they got to the coast, he killed his nephew and pushed the canoe with him back to the village. He then walked from Wala lagoon to the Lau lagoon in north east Malaita and settled there. Several attempts to settle the dispute with the normal shell money were unsuccessful. The younger brother demanded that because their dispute was over fishing net, the shell money to settle their dispute must have a net in the middle. The shell money was manufactured and the dispute settled. That is why we have the maefuo shell money today. It was to settle a dispute over fishing net.” (Per.com. Augustine Maemarine: 2006).

5.7.3. Ceremonial

In recent years shell money is used extensively in ceremonial functions. At the local level, dancing groups from Malaita use shell money for decoration during traditional functions like feasts and wedding ceremonies. At the national level, shell money is often given as a token of appreciation to foreign assistance received. At the completion of national projects in Malaita or Guadalcanal, shell money is often given as a token of appreciation to the funding agent. The government of Solomon Islands also use shell money to receive overseas dignitaries when they present their credentials to the Solomon Islands Governor General. Shell money has become a national identity for Solomon Islands.

5.8. Constraints to Shell Money

The following issues discussed below are considered as constraints for the use of shell money as a livelihood strategy. These issues often affect and influence the lives of the Wala people.

5.8.1. Supply of Shells

The reefs in the Wala Lagoon are no longer in a position to supply shells to sustain the current level of shell money production experienced in the Wala Lagoon today. This is not a new constraint but one that has always been with the people as far as they could remember. Archival records in the 1940s saw correspondence between the District Commissioner of Malaita and Central Solomon for a man from Langalanga (Malaita) to go over to Gela (Central Solomon) and negotiate diving rights with the local land owning groups (District Commissioner, Malaita, 1943). This would enable the people of Wala to gather the shells from Gela. Most shell supplies now are bought in the Honiara market. These supplies come from the Western Province. Other areas of supply include southern Malaita and North Malaita. The main concern now is that the supply of shells is not owned or controlled by the Wala people. The reefs that supply the shells belong to different people and therefore they can stifle the shell money industry if they decided not to supply the Honiara market. Although in history no incidences to stifle supply can be recalled, the possibility of this happening in the future is not remote.

5.8.2. Demand for Shell Money

The demand for shell money as outlined earlier comes mainly from the traditional/cultural sector in Malaita, the tourism sector in Honiara and the overseas market in Bouganville. While the tourism sector and to some extent the Bouganville market may hold some hope for the future demand of shell money, demand from the traditional/cultural sector may wither if the process of modernization also includes

modernizing to the extent of relinquishing cultural values such as bride giving and compensation. Culture does not change overnight, but dwindling demand from cultural factors are not remote or distant. It is possible that a cultural revolution against bride giving and compensation could effectively sterile the demand for shell money and therefore the livelihood of Wala people.

5.8.3. Not a Legal Tender Money

Although shell money is widely used for social, cultural and livelihood in Malaita, Gela and Guadalcanal it is not a legal tender in Solomon Islands. This lack of recognition by the government does affect the type and volume of transactions that shell money can be used for. When the Central Bank does not recognize shell money as a currency of exchange, it indirectly affects demand for shell money and the velocity of its circulation that are important for wealth creation and livelihood. The non-recognition by the Central Bank may be the stumbling block to an otherwise prosperous economy fueled by shell money.

5.9. Summary

People of different places built artificial islands and settled the Wala Lagoon purely to partake in the production of shell money. A woman from the New Guinea Islands brought the art of making shell money to Wala Lagoon. The production of the shell money facilitated trade between communities thus enabling the Wala people to buy the goods they cannot produce themselves. Trade then improved the livelihood and security of the Wala people.

Shell money is still used as medium of exchange and a commodity of trade in Malaita and other islands of the Solomon. Some forty percent of households in the Wala lagoon depend on shell money for their livelihood. These households produce shell

money, sell it for Solomon dollar, then use the cash for their livelihood. This is more prominent in the Laulasi region of the lagoon. Shell money is also useful in developing small businesses and community projects. Most of the shipping businesses started in Wala lagoon, started with seed from shell money. Community development projects like housing also benefit from shell money. Households contribute to these projects with shell money. Apart from the economic benefits, shell money is also used for socio-cultural functions like bride price, dispute settlement and ceremonial uses.

Shell money as a livelihood strategy is facing a supply constraint. The shells for producing shell money no longer grow in abundance in the lagoon. Supply is now sourced from outside the lagoon, especially from the Honiara market.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1. Introduction

Crafting a sustainable livelihood in the Wala Lagoon is very difficult because of the difficulty in accessing land and sea resources and the little employment opportunities available. There is limited land in Wala for everyone to have food gardens and the sea resources are depleted because of over harvesting due to an increasing population and the indiscriminate use of dynamites for fishing.

Shell money has been a livelihood strategy of the Wala people since the inception of their society some 800 years ago. A lot of things have changed since then. This research examines the potential of shell money as a livelihood strategy for the contemporary Wala people. Is shell money a viable livelihood strategy for people in the Wala Lagoon? To understand and answer this question, the following objectives were put forward: to review how shell money sustained the livelihood of the Wala forefathers, to review how Wala forefathers maintained the standard and quality of shell money production, to investigate why shell money is still acceptable as a commodity for trade in the 21st century, to assess how shell money contributes to the livelihoods of Wala households, to assess how shell money contributes to small business development, to identify constraints to using shell money as a livelihood strategy and to outline possible strategies to secure livelihoods based on shell money.

This study argued that there is potential for shell money to secure the livelihoods of the Wala people. The constraint of shell resources was part and partial of shell money production in Wala since the days of the forefathers. Wala people need to revive their traditional marine management systems, secure supplies from other provinces and strengthen the markets for shell money to secure their livelihoods.

Livelihood is about using resources to provide sustenance for the family. These resources include natural resources, physical resources, human resources, social resources and financial resources. The level of access that households have to these resources will determine their state of livelihood. Households that have least access to these resources will be handicap in their livelihood and vice versa.

The research use the sustainable livelihood framework developed by Scoones (1998) to explain livelihood in the Wala Lagoon. Although developed outside the Wala Lagoon, this model includes most of the things affecting livelihood in the Wala Lagoon and assisted a lot in understanding livelihood in Wala.

To understand livelihood in Wala, the research use both qualitative and quantitative methods in collecting data. Historical data about shell money and livelihood was collected using interviews and digging at the archive for relevant data. A household questionnaire was used to collect data on household livelihood. The survey was complemented by interviews and observations.

Understanding livelihoods begin by looking at the resource base of the society. In Wala, the following are the resources available to the households:

6.2. Resource Base in Wala

Natural capital

Land for food gardens was very limited and depends very much on negotiation with Kwara'ae landowners. There is no forest resource for households in the lagoon to use. The only forest is mangrove forest. The swampland provides areas for the cultivation of swamp taro. Space is however limited for every household to have swamp gardens. Mangroves provide *koa* fruits – a staple diet, mud crabs, other crustaceans, firewood and house building material. Sea resources have been depleted due to increasing population and destructive fishing practices like dynamite fishing. The break down of

traditional marine management systems has not helped in the maintenance of the marine resources

Physical capital

All households share their house with other families. A road from Auki town directly or indirectly serves all the communities in the lagoon. Private businesses run public vehicles most days of the week to and from Auki. Sea transport to most villages was also available from time to time from Auki town. Solomon Telekom provides public phones in a few villages in the lagoon. The mobile telephone service in Auki also covers the lagoon. Electricity was limited only to Auki town and the villages surrounding it. Piped water was limited only to Auki and a few villages in the lagoon. Some households used tanks and wells and some rudimentary form of water supply

Human capital

The bulk of the population is under the age of 25 years with slightly more males than females. Skill in leadership as displayed by village chiefs and church elders was present in most communities. Some form of agriculture skills was available with those that have food gardens. There was an abundant supply of fishing skills in the communities. Traditional skill in canoe making was available. Canoes are useful to enable movement within the lagoon and between the villages. Some members of the communities have Boat building skills that they sell to those who make boats. Wala Lagoon is known for the inter-island trading boat they build. Some community members are teachers with government and private schools in the lagoon and other parts of the country. Community members also have nurses working in the local clinics and other parts of the country. A number of Wala members work in the public service in Honiara as lawyers and administrators and some Wala people own and run businesses in Auki and Honiara. Common health problems in the lagoon include malaria, pneumonia and life style

diseases like gout, high blood and diabetics. Opportunities for these people to use their skills to earn a decent living in Wala Lagoon are limited.

Social capital

The family unit is where most economic decisions are made. Close clan members where relationships have been maintained and in close proximity assist in livelihood through the giving of cooked, uncooked food and cash. Clan members assist in bride giving and funeral ceremonies. The traditional system of helping clan members build their garden or house is now disappearing. Members now expect to be paid when they offer their assistance.

There is a growing distrust between people and this has strained relationships. Social capital in terms of institutional strengths is limited to the village level committees for cleaning the village and doing other community projects. Political groupings and associations usually come out clear during periods of national and provincial elections. Such associations do affect access to resources and thus livelihood of households.

The dominant religious groupings are Catholics, South Seas Evangelical, Seventh Day Adventists, Church of Melanesia, the Bahai faith and the Pagans. The church groups greatly influence community work like village cleaning and maintaining school buildings

Financial capital

All households in the Wala Lagoon will require some form of cash to survive. Cash is derived from employment or production. Shell money provides 43 percent of households in the Wala Lagoon with a cash income. The other major provider of household income is small village based businesses. Credit is limited to small amounts

only from individuals with zero or reasonable interest rates. Households rarely used the credit from commercial banks in Auki, as they do not have the necessary collateral.

Savings in terms of cash in the bank is nil, however savings in the form of shell money was prevalent in most households. Communities and individuals in the lagoon have benefited from aid in the form of school building, clinic, church building, water supply and private enterprises. Remittance from family members working in Honiara and other parts of the country was common.

6.3. Livelihoods

Livelihoods include food gardens, fishing, collecting, self-employment, casual employment and some form of formal employment. Self-employment includes those working the shell money, and those running small village based businesses. Shell money provided livelihood for 43 percent of the surveyed sample and has the potential to support the livelihood of households in years to come as long as the supply of raw materials and local and overseas markets are secured. Casual employment includes those that do odd jobs occasionally for others for an income. Income from the boat building and shipping industry is limited to the selling of labour either as a crew on the boat or as casual labourers in the boat yards.

6.4. Public Policy

Government services include a south road that runs alongside the lagoon, health centres and some schools in the lagoon. Auki town, the seat of the Malaita provincial government provides all other amenities like post office, telephone, administration, police and shops. Government policy to develop rural areas in the last twenty years had not helped rural households in securing their livelihood. The constituency development

fund from the national government is creating a dependency mentality within the constituency

6.5. Vulnerabilities

The Wala Lagoon and especially the artificial islands are prone to cyclones. A bad wet weather during the research period had affected those who have sweet potato gardens. During the period data collection, unusually high tides were experienced in the lagoon. This, if continue, will affect the swamplands used for *kakama* gardening. The other major vulnerability was the supply of shells for shell money making is not secured.

6.6. Shell Money as a Livelihood Strategy

6.6.1. Viable Demand

Shell money was demanded for livelihood, bride price giving, compensation, government gift giving and from the tourism sector. Anecdotal evidence suggests no diminishing demands for shell money from any of these sectors. Farmers in north Malaita and trading partners from Wala Lagoon, for example, still transact using shell money as payment for the farmers' produce like taro, pana or yam produce despite the changing prices over the years. In the 1960s the price for 1,000 taros was one *tafuliae*. Inflation has now increased the price from 1,000 taros to 500 taros for one *tafuliae*. Shell money is still the medium of exchange in some of these agricultural transactions.

In the Malaita society bride price is non negotiable. Every married ceremony must include bride price. A marriage without bride price is treated as a de facto relationship in the eyes of most people. During the early days of the Christian faith, the Seventh-Day Adventists, South Seas Evangelicals and to some extent the Church of Melanesia (Anglican) discouraged bride price giving among its adherents because the practice places too much financial burden on its followers and borders on treating

women as a commodity. In Wala Lagoon and other parts of Malaita the practice of bride price giving is still alive and encouraged as a significant feature of their culture and society. Parents who do not give bride price for their son's wedding are regarded as aliens and lacking the knowledge of the Wala tradition and culture. Some churches now regard bride price giving as unavoidable. The Church of Melanesia for example now sets a fixed bride price for its members.

Compensation today is a contentious issue in the Solomon Islands. The practice of compensation has its part in traditional dispute settlement in Malaita and other parts of Solomon Islands. However, opportunists have abused the cultural practice of compensation for personal gain thus giving it a bad name among the people. The abuse however, was not enough to make people let go of the practice of compensation. People in Malaita still recognize the importance of compensation in their frameworks for dispute settlement. In the society of Wala, differing levels of disputes requires different amounts and forms of compensation. Small disputes may involve the exchange of small money but serious crimes like adultery or fornication, involves the giving of shell money to settle it. The amount of shell money involved will depend on the nature of the dispute and the negotiation process that happen between the two parties. Compensation as a form of dispute settlement is a deeply engrained culture that will be hard to erase from the people.

Occasional demand from the government for shell money to give as gifts to welcome or farewell dignitaries has taken the shell money to a prominent position among other cultural items in Solomon Islands. The availability of shell money and the presence of Guadalcanal and Malaita workers in government offices make shell money the immediate choice for government gift and token of appreciation. In the recent social unrest, the Solomon Islands government spent substantial amounts of shell money in the

negotiation process leading up to the signing of the peace agreement in Townsville. Government's demand for shell money will continue in the immediate future.

The production of shell money for the tourism market is an area that has not been fully utilized. Only necklaces and earrings are currently produced for the tourism market. Other products like headbands, and other custom dancing attire has the potential to increase the demand for shell money. Secondly, the art of promoting the shell money ornaments as a truly unique product of Solomon Islands needs to be guided and protected. The potential to market shell money ornaments internationally is there but a lot of work must be done to secure the market and the patent for the product.

The Bouganville market for shell money strings is lucrative. The market is now open although trading is still low because of the simmering law and order problems on Bouganville Island. The inclusion of shell money as a commodity for trade under the Melanesian Spear Head Group Trade Agreement makes the trading of the shell money duty free between Solomon Islands and Bouganville. The removal of this shell money tariff is a big boost to a trade that once attracted tariff from both countries. As soon as peace is fully restored on Bouganville, shell money trade will increase substantially.

With an increasing demand for shell money, the potential of shell money to contribute to the livelihoods of the Wala people is therefore secured. Demand for shell money looks certain to continue because the demand is tied to the culture and the tourism industry. The constraint of shell resources was part and partial of shell money production in Wala since the 19th century. Wala people need to revive their traditional marine management systems, secure supplies from other provinces and maintain the markets for shell money and their livelihoods will be secured. These recommendations are expanded below.

6.7. Recommendations

6.7.1. Secure the Supply of Shells

We now consider the supply side of shell money production. The objective on the supply side is to ensure a steady supply of shells so that the industry is sustainable for many more years to come. The recommendations to ensure sustainability include measures to improve local supply and measures to facilitate supplies from other jurisdictions. To secure local supplies of shell once again, the recommendation is to revive the traditional marine management system of the Wala society. The objective here is to strengthen the tribes again and give back the responsibility of managing the reefs and portions of seas to them. This however, must be strengthened with provincial or national legislation recognising and giving tribes this responsibility so that they are empowered legally to enforce management and ensure the prosecution of offenders so that people are able to comply with the arrangement. Under the management of tribes, it is envisioned that marine protected areas would be established to revive fish and shell stock. Secondly, Wala families must maintain their family links to the other islands of the Solomon Islands. People from Wala came from all areas of Malaita and from other islands like Isabel, Gela, and Guadalcanal. Today, other people also have relations in Western Solomons and other provinces. The objective is to maintain these family relationships through regular visits at times of marriages and funerals so that the relationship is maintained and therefore one can have access to the shells in these localities.

6.7.2. Secure the Market for Shell Money

We now consider recommendations for the demand side of shell money production. The objective on the demand side is to ensure that there is a steady demand for shell money so that the industry is able to sustain the livelihood of the Wala people. The demand for

shell money comes from the socio-cultural market (bride price, compensation and ceremonial functions), tourism market, government market and the Bouganville market. Shell money has already affected the lives of many people. It is highly recommended that the government legalise shell money to enhance its production and trade and in the process improving businesses and livelihood. Legalising shell money will ensure that there is a secure market for shell money. Legalising shell money also involves recognising custom wealth and bringing it into the mainstream of financial wealth that will greatly improve the livelihood of locals. The legislation among other things will establish a central bank to facilitate the trading of shell money and determine the exchange rate between the shell money and Solomon Dollar and other international currencies like the PNG kina. I propose a national legislation over a provincial one to ensure maximum benefits to the country.

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Annex 1: QuestionnaireLivelihood Strategies in the Coastal Wala Lagoon of Malaita
Household Survey Questionnaire

Household Number:	_____
Village:	_____
Region:	_____
Survey Date:	_____
Enumerator:	_____
Who else is present during the interview?	_____

A: BACKGROUND

1. Head of Household

1.1. Sex (Observe): Male Female 1.2. Age of the Head of Household: 1.3. Formal Education: Primary Secondary Tertiary RTC No Education 1.4. Marital Status: Married Divorced Single
Widowed De facto

1.5. How long have your family been living in this village? _____

1.6. Type of family: Nuclear Extended Composite

1.7. Tribe of the head of household: _____

1.8. Name of your spouse's tribe: _____

2. The house you live in:

2.1. Type of house: Leaf Semi-permanent Permanent 2.2. House ownership: Owned Relative Rent 2.3. Number of bedrooms: 2.4. How many families share the house? 2.5. Cooking fuel: Firewood Kerosene Gas 2.6. Lighting: Kerosene Electricity Solar Others

3. Household composition

Please complete the following for all members of the household. An example is given.

<i>Person</i>	<i>Gender</i> Male 1 Female 2	<i>Age</i> Years	<i>Relation</i> Head 1 Spouse 2 Child 3 Adopted 4 Relative 5 Others 6	<i>Resident</i> Usual 1 School 2 Migrant 3	<i>Occupation</i> Employed 1 Self Employ 2 Casual 3 Not employ 4 Student 5	<i>Church</i> ROC 1 COM 2 SDA 3 SSEC 4 UC 5 Bahai 6 Pagan 7	<i>Literacy</i> Literate 1 Illiterate 2
0	1	49	1	1	4	1	1
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							

4. How does living in this village help in your livelihood?

Help from family members Access to marketing
 Access to gardening land Access to clinic
 Access to fishing Others: _____
 Access to employment _____

5. How do you access water for your household use?

Piped water in house Rain water tank
 Piped water in the village Well
 Piped water from next village Stream

6. What type of household is available to your household?

Flush Bush pit Nearby bush
 Slab Stone wall pit

7. What could be improved in this village to facilitate your livelihood?

Access road Open space Refuse disposal

Foot path Water supply HH Toilets

Beaches Clean water Safety

Schools Prevent crime Prevent vandalism

Prevent garden theft

B: LIVELIHOOD RESOURCES

Natural Resources

8. How do you access land/sea for:

Gardening Building materials

Firewood collection Fishing

Forms of access: 1. tribal land, 2. old family garden, 3. village committee, 4. common access area, 5. traditional fishing ground, 6. tribal fishing ground, 7. others (specify)

9. What food does your household produce on a monthly basis?

<i>Food/articles</i>	<i>Whom involve</i>	<i>Acre of garden</i>	<i>Days/month worked</i>	<i>Bags/month</i>	<i>Value \$</i>
Potato					
Kakama					
Other root crops					
Koa collection					
Vegetables					
Fruits					
Bread/bun					
Other foods					
Fish					
Firewood					

9.1. Where do you normally go to fish for your livelihood? (weekly)

<i>Place</i>	<i>Whom</i>	<i>Type of fishing</i>	<i>How often Day/week</i>	<i>Time of day</i> 1. Day 2. Night 3. Day/night	<i>Duration (hours)</i>	<i>Catch (Kg)</i>	<i>Value (\$)</i>	<i>Nature Of catch</i> 1. Inc 2. Dec 3. Same
River Mouth								
Inside Lagoon								
Lagoon Fringes								
Open Sea								
Alite reef								

9.2. What foods does your household purchased for consumption? (weekly)

<i>Food items</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Value (\$)</i>
Rice		
Root crops		
Vegetables		
Koa		
Fruits		
Fresh fish		
Tinned fish		
Meat		
Bread/biscuits/noddles		
Fats and oils		
Dairy/milk products		
Non alcohol beverages		
Tobacco/alcohol		
Total		

Economic/Financial Capital

10. Are you involve in shell money making? Yes No

10.1. If you answered No, go to question 11.

10.2. If you answered Yes, how many shell money did you produce and sell in the last 12 months?

<i>Shell money</i>	<i>Qty produced</i>	<i>Qty sold</i>	<i>Qty kept</i>	<i>Unit price</i>	<i>Total Received</i>	<i>Market</i>
Akwala'afu						
<i>Safi</i>						
<i>Galia</i>						
<i>Necklaces</i>						
<i>Other</i>						
<i>Total</i>						

10.3. What did you use for the shell moneys that you did not sell?

10.4. How much did it cost you to produce the shell moneys?

<i>Shells/items</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Unit cost</i>	<i>Total cost</i>
Romu				
<i>Ke'e</i>				
<i>Kurila</i>				
<i>Kakadu</i>				
<i>Fulu</i>				
<i>Kekete</i>				
<i>Summary of costs:</i>				
Cost of shells				
Cost of labour				
Cost of tools				
Transport				
Ration				
Total				

11. Are you involve in a small trading business? Yes No

11.1. If you answered No, go to questions 11.4 and 11.5

11.2. If you answered Yes, how are you doing with your trading business?

Items	<i>Business one</i>		<i>Business two</i>	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Sales	Xxxxx		Xxxxx	
	xxxxx		Xxxxx	
Stock		xxxxx		Xxxxx
Transport		Xxxxx		Xxxxx
Labour		Xxxxx		Xxxxx
Other expenses		Xxxxx		Xxxxx
		Xxxxx		Xxxxx
		Xxxxx		Xxxxx
Total expenses	Xxxxx		Xxxxx	
Difference	xxxxx		Xxxxx	

11.3. What are two things affecting your business?

- i. _____
 ii. _____

11.4. If you had been running a trading business but stopped, why did you stopped?

- i. _____
 ii. _____

11.5. What are some of the things stopping you from running a trading business now?

- i. _____
 ii. _____

12. How and why do you access credit?

<i>Source of credit</i>	<i>Reason for credit</i>	<i>Amount taken</i>	<i>Amount outstanding</i>	<i>Interest rate</i>
Friends				
Relatives				
Local money lender				
Local shop				
Commercial bank				
Association				

Reasons for taking credit: 1. Household consumption, 2. Social consumption, 3. Agriculture input, 4. Shell money input, 5. Fishing input, 6. Small business input

Human Capital

13. How many meals does your household have each day?

Good times: 1 2 3
 Bad times: 1 2 3

14. How many members of your household smoke?

14.1. How long have they been smoking?

15. How many members of your household drink alcohol?

15.1. Does your household have any problem with their drinking?

16. How often do your household members get sick in the last 6 months?

<i>Who was sick</i>	<i>Frequency: Weekly 1 Monthly 2</i>	<i>Sickness: Malaria 1 Fever 2 Diarrhea 3 Others 4</i>	<i>Clinic Hospital visited</i>	<i>Nature of Health Services: Adequate 1 Not adequate 2 Close by 3 Too far 4</i>	<i>Cost Incurred e.g. for transport & medicine</i>
Person 1					
Person 2					
Person 3					
Person 4					
Person 5					
Person 6					
Person 7					
Person 8					
Person 9					

Social Capital

17. Are there some criminal activities in your village? Yes No

17.1. If you answered No, go to question 18

17.2. If you answered Yes, name three such criminal activities

- i. _____
 ii. _____
 iii. _____

18. How often do you participate in village meetings?

All the time Sometimes Not interested

18.1. Do you belong to any village committee? Yes No

18.2. If you answered No, go to question 19

18.3. If you answered Yes, which committee(s) are you a member of? _____

18.4. Why is this committee useful to you? _____

19. Do you go out of your way to help others?

All the time Sometimes Not interested

19.1. Do you get help from extended family members?

All the time Sometimes No

19.2. Do you receive help from friends?

All the time Sometimes No

20. Are you well informed about local affairs?

All the time Sometimes No

21. Generally speaking most people can be trusted

All the time Sometimes No

INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

22. What publicly provided services are generally available to people in your area?

<i>Services provided</i>	<i>By whom</i>	<i>Condition of service</i>	<i>Services use</i>
Primary school			
Secondary school			
Clinic			
Hospital			
Pharmacy			
Public road			
Feeder road			
Electricity			
Water supply			
Agriculture extension			
Fisheries extension			
Others (specify)			

23. Has you household received any project assistance from anyone in the last 12 months?

23.1. If you answered No, go to question 24.

23.2. If you answered Yes, what was the assistance for?

23.3. Who provided the assistance?

24. Has your village received any project assistance from anyone? Yes No

24.1. If you answered No, go to question 25

24.2. What was/is the assistance for?

24.3. Who provided the assistance?

24.4. When was the assistance received?

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

25. What local institutions help in your livelihood?

<i>Name of Institution</i>	<i>Nature of assistance</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Family/Tribe		
Village committee		
Local church		
Other church		
Apex		
Others (specify)		

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

26. In the table below, outline your household's monthly income and expenditure

Income for Livelihood			Expenses for Livelihood		
	\$	\$		\$	\$
Employed			Social payments		
Government			School fees		
Private			Bride price (repay)		
			Funeral exp (repay)		
Self Employed			Church contribution		
Agriculture (Food/Energy)			School contribution		
Fishing			Tribal contributions		
Shell money			Extended family		
Trading					
			Consumed		
			Purchased food		
Casual Employment			Produced food		
Boat building			Energy (firewood)		
Stevedore			Kerosene		
Urban labour			Transport		
			Clothing		
			Medical		
Remittance					
Relatives			Re-circulate as inputs		
Others			Agriculture		
			Fishing		
			Shell money		
Loan (Kaoni)			Trading		
Cash only					

			Investment		
Rent received			Savings		
			Funeral contributions		
			Bride price contributions		
			Shelter		
			Cash repayments		
Total Income			Total Expenses		

CONSTRAINTS/PROBLEMS

27. What are some of the problems/constraints faced by your household in your livelihood endeavours? Key: 1 = bad, 2 = very bad

	<i>Problems/Constraints relating to:</i>	1 or 2	<i>Strategies to reduce problem/constraint</i>
A	Land Resource		
	Not enough land for gardening		
	No land for housing		
	Regular bad harvests		
	Regular bad harvests		
	Stealing food gardens		
	Specify others below:		
B	Sea Resources		
	Depleting fish stock		
	Unregulated fishing		
	Breakdown of traditional marine management system		
	Specify others below		
C	Health and Sanitation		
	Poor diet		
	Crowded house		
	Poor toilet facilities		
	Specify others below		
D	Human Resource		
	Physically unfit		
	Bread winner is terminally ill		
	Bread winner passed away		
	Posses no useful skill		
	Lazy to work/fend for oneself		
	Specify other below		

E	Finance/Economics		
	High price for trade store goods		
	Expensive school fees		
	High transport costs		
	Less employment opportunities		
	Less income generation opportunities		
	Lack shells for shell money		
	Specify others below:		
F	Social/Cultural		
	Too much social obligation		
	Disrespect for the elderly		
	Disrespect for social norms		
	Alcohol related problems		
	Petty crimes		
	Specify others below:		
G	The Environment		
	Unusual weather patterns		
	Use of mangroves as toilets		
	Unsustainable mangrove harvesting		
	Coastal erosion		
	Specify others below:		
H	Infrastructure		
	Poor public road		
	Poor feeder road		
	Expensive telephone costs		
	No water supply		
	Poor water supply		
	Poor health facilities		
	Specify others below:		
I	Shell Money		
	Increasing cost of shells		
	Increasing cost of production		
	Accommodation problem in Honiara		
	Specify others below:		

RESILIENCE

28. How would you rate your households' ability to cope with the following disaster?

<i>Disasters</i>	<i>Can cope</i>	<i>May cope</i>	<i>Cannot cope</i>
Cyclone			
Long drought			
Bad harvest			
Bad weather for fishing			
Long illness of member			
Death of member			
Lack of income			
Others (specify)			