



THE UNIVERSITY  
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# STRENGTHENING LOCAL LEADERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN PEACEBUILDING AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

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Dear Reader,

It gives me great pleasure to present this brochure on the outcomes of the Bolave Peace and Governance workshop that was held in mid-July at Boleuko Catholic Mission Station in Bana District. The Workshop was a joint endeavour of the Bolave Leadership, ABG Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation and Peace Studies Project on legitimate leadership in peacebuilding at The University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. The project was funded by Germany's Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies.

I felt honoured to participate in the workshop and overwhelmed by the friendliness and hospitality of the people in Bolave and their leaders. I was also deeply impressed by the commitment shown by all workshop participants, during the two days of lively discussions. I clearly sensed the enthusiasm for taking ownership of the challenging tasks of peacebuilding and governance into their hands. I am convinced that the Bolave workshop and the ensuing local process can be a model for other areas in Bougainville.

**I wish people of Bolave and all Bougainvilleans all the best on their way to referendum and to a peaceful and prosperous Bougainville.**

**Volker Boege, The University of Queensland**

## BOLAVE PEACEBUILDING AND GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

Bolave refers to the more than 4,000 people of Booga, Lamane and Veliye in their 16 Village Assemblies constituting the Bolave Council of Elders and Bolave Constituency located in the northern east-west common border of South and Central Bougainville. The Council of Elders Chairman is Mr. Michael Aganai and the Constituency Member is Honourable Lawrence Uakai.

In 1988, Bolave hosted the Meeting that resolved for rebellion to eliminate foreign domination, and exploitation. In 1994, Bolave was among the first to realize that continued warfare beyond year 2000 would result in permanent warfare for Bougainville, hence resolved for reconciliation and peace.

There is relative peace in Bolave but pockets of conflict and violence still threatens peace and governance evident with ex-combatants and perpetrators of abuse and victims living together in a fragile and fearful situation that is marked by lawlessness and power imbalances which encourage human rights abuses and perpetuate insecurity. This raises the question: how can peace and governance be balanced to guarantee irrevocable peace and security?

Under the theme: *"Revitalising Collaboration for Renewed Local Level Approach for Effective Peacebuilding and Governance"* the workshop aimed to discuss issues and challenges of local level peacebuilding and governance with a view to strengthen local leadership and capacities for participatory peacebuilding and good governance.

**The Workshop gathered about 200 hundred people who participated and engaged in constructive discussion on the History of Bougainville Conflict and Peacebuilding; the Bougainville Peace Agreement; the Bougainville Constitution; the Importance and Urgency of Disarmament; and Village Improvement and Governance.**

Challenges identified included the need for: an all-inclusive Overarching Peacebuilding and Governance Strategy; consistent Weapons Disposal Plan including World War 2 remnants; conflict-sensitive planning and development, centralized Coordination mechanism to implement the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) simultaneously; ongoing stakeholder collaboration; stakeholder partnership through substantive engagement; effective law and order; respect for the Rule of Law, systematic communication and right information sharing; effective and legitimate Leadership and commitment at ABG Political

and Administration Levels expanding to local level leadership; economic and financial prioritization for full implementation of the BPA; implementation schedule of the BPA, trauma counselling, rehabilitation and peace education including skills training and addressing Bougainville Crisis and Post-Crisis issues adequately.

**The Workshop established a specially mandated working committee to develop peace and governance plan for Bolave and agreed that the next steps will include; Formalization of the Bolave Peace and Governance Working Committee; Planning and Empowerment Workshop; Strategic Planning; Adoption and Endorsement of Bolave Peace and Governance Strategy; and Legislation to legalise Bolave Peace and Governance Initiative preferably as a Model for Bougainville.**

The Workshop recommended that: Peacebuilding in Bolave must be All-inclusive; Awareness, Sensitisation, and Peace Education is priority to meet the Bougainville obligations under the BPA; Disarmament is integral component of the overarching peacebuilding; policies and developments must be conflict-sensitive; revitalize and realign local governance to respond and implement the BPA, strategic reform of the Bougainville Security Sector to meet expectations of post-conflict situation; and allocation of relevant technical advice and funding for Assemblies to facilitate effective peacebuilding, legitimate leadership and good governance.

The Workshop reaffirmed the Bougainville Peace Agreement and its provision on referendum for Independence as the legally guaranteed freedom of Choice to decide our political status. The obligation now is to address and resolve the original issues of the conflict; the issues and problems that arose from the conflict; and prevent any future conflict and unrest. The priority task is to fully implement the BPA in collaboration with all leaders and stakeholders of the Bougainville peace process. The people and leaders of Bolave unanimously decided on an evolutionary approach as the way forward for the fulfilment of the Bougainville Obligations under the BPA.

The Gathering closed with an exchange of appreciations and acknowledgements with special mention of the Ministry of Peace & Reconciliation, Bolave Council of Elders, the Boleuko Parish Council, the University of Queensland, Chiefs, Women, Youth, Veterans, Village Court Magistrates, Community Auxiliary Police, Bougainville Police Service, UNDP Bougainville Program, Bougainville Healthy Communities Program, the Churches, Meekamui, Solo Moma Muvment, Catering Groups, Destiny Guest House, and the Bolave's 16 Village Assemblies; James Tanis, Dennis Kuiai, Dr. Volker Boege, Clyde Parris, Anthony Agyenta and Jason, Hon. Lawrence Uakai, and Michael Aganai.

**Dennis Kuiai – Ministry of Peace & Reconciliation**





Garamut wood drum.

## THE WAY AHEAD FOR BOUGAINVILLE PEACEBUILDING

I recall the statement made by the Late James Sinko, Bolave's own leader who joined hands with the Late Francis Ona to lead the uprising in 1988. **He often said, "We started this war from the village and must end in the village way". Those words from one of the founding fathers of the struggle are as relevant today as they were then, and will remain so in the years to come.**

The Bougainville peace process has three obligatory groupings. First are the external obligations of the international community and Government of PNG to support the Bougainville peace process. Second is the obligation of the Autonomous Bougainville Government

to provide leadership and administration to ensure Bougainville implements its share of commitments under the Bougainville Peace Agreement. Third is the obligation of Bougainville society to end the conflict at the local societal level. The Late Sinko's statement was more than just a personal view but a statement based on customary beliefs that the society has an obligation to end its war.

The success of the Bolave Workshop is a reminder that Bougainville must revisit these old commitments that were made at the start of the Bougainville conflict. While participation of the Autonomous Bougainville Government and international donors is essential to provide funding, Bougainville society cannot wait forever but must move on. The villages and communities must continue to maintain ownership of the peacebuilding process at the community level. The Bolave Workshop was an initiative of the community with minimal external support. This success can be achieved in other communities of Bougainville. We must not forget that the peace process that we have today also started from local initiatives and later found its way to cover whole of Bougainville through the cultural, social, church and political interconnections of the society. Vibrant community drive can be reactivated again.

To reactivate the community drive, it will need collaboration from all levels of Bougainville society. We must not forget that in the beginning there were no titles, no Presidents, no Ministers and Chairmen etc. We were all one with one purpose. **We must look beyond the formal structures we have today and see the task ahead of us and step up to it with the same will we stood with in the beginning. Hand in hand as one people we must keep on striving where it matters most. That is at the community level where we all belong and where we love most.**

James Tanis, Former ABG President





## LEGITIMATE LEADERSHIP IN PEACEBUILDING

The Bolave workshop brought together different types of leaders – church leaders, chiefs and elders, women leaders, elected political leaders, traditional or *kastom* leaders, former military commanders, and others. They all have an important role to play when it comes to good governance and maintaining peace in the communities. They play their role at different levels, and in different spheres of society. There is a division of responsibilities and tasks for different types of leaders. Sometimes there can be uncertainties, an overlap of responsibilities, and as a consequence, competition or conflict.

There can be different views on what constitutes legitimate leadership. For instance, one can argue that only elected leaders are legitimate leaders, but one can also argue that customary status e.g. as a chief, provides a source of legitimate leadership, or that leadership depends on personality, not formal position. Or one can say that there should be a combination of different sources of legitimate leadership. In fact, Bougainvilleans have a strong desire to “marry” customary and introduced institutions and processes in order to establish legitimate leadership for peacebuilding and governance.

The Bolave workshop contributed to a clarification of the relationship between different types of leadership and to the identification of ways to improve their collaboration for better peacebuilding and governance. This is an important stepping stone on the road to a home-grown Bougainville form of peace and governance, not copying alien (e.g. Australian or German) models, but pursuing positive mutual accommodation of introduced forms and local *kastom* forms of leadership. Peace and good governance in Bougainville depends on this positive mutual accommodation and constructive interaction.

**The Bolave workshop contributed to such constructive interaction, bringing together ABG leadership and the local level leadership, including chiefs and elders and other traditional leaders, Meekamui, youth and women leaders, leaders of veterans, churches and other community based organisations.** To summarize: there are different types of legitimate leadership, the basis of legitimacy is the people and their interactions with their leaders, and peacebuilding and good governance depend on the collaboration of different types of legitimate leaders.

Volker Boege

## SUBSEQUENT TASKS AND PROGRESS

The Workshop appointed a Working Committee under the Leadership of Hon. Lawrence Uakai and Mr. Michael Aganai. Membership includes: Representatives of the 16 Village Assemblies; Executive Members of Bolave Council of Elders (COE), Christian Church Denominations, Women, Youth, Veterans, Bougainville Police Service, Community Auxiliary Police, Business Community, Meekamui, Solo Moma Movement, Village Court Magistrates and Bana District Administration. The Committee adopted the initiative as “*Bolave Peacebuilding & Governance Initiative*”.

The first Meeting held on 27th July 2012 confirmed the Membership of the Committee, its Terms of Reference and adopted the Bolave Workshop Report. The Terms of Reference are founded on: the ten years of violent conflict that caused human lives to be lost with substantial destruction of infrastructure further creating injustice, serious inter-ethnic disruptions and conflicts, violation of basic human rights, radical changes of human lives; broken relationships and drastic collapse of general economy.

Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace is widely proclaimed with little exposure and practical application. Bougainville’s new beginning started with the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement on 30th August 2001 that embarked on an ongoing process to bring real healing, reconciliation and reunion of the Bougainvillean Society through peaceful means.

**The Bougainville Peace Agreement must be technically translated and implemented to suit every person of the Bolave Constituency and Bougainville Society at large. The Bolave Peacebuilding and Governance Initiative will strive to fulfil this vital task.**

The Committee held its second Meeting on 17th August and resolved that priority task shall be awareness and spiritual awakening to stimulate community-led disarmament, rehabilitation and reconstruction. It was resolved that Bolave will be a peaceful, weapons-free zone by 17th August 2014. While combined Churches in Telepi Area are conducting public Outreach and Awareness, the first Spiritual Formation Workshop convened on the 9th to 23rd September in Osikoba Christian Community Area.

Dennis Kuiai

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Pictures Clyde Parris.