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Fānanaua: Ethics education in an indigenous Solomon Islands clan

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Abstract

A key reason for many leadership development programmes in Pacific Islands countries is to teach ethics to Pacific Islands leaders. However, as interventions, these programmes are exclusively reliant on Western ideas about ethics and ethics education. To counter such impositions, this paper discusses the nature of indigenous clan ethics and how ethics education is undertaken in an indigenous Solomon Islands clan. Based on an insider-research project of the Gula'alā people of the Solomon Islands, the paper reports on the differences of indigenous ethics education to how ethics is taught, as reported in the global literature and seen in leadership development programmes in Pacific Islands countries.

Introduction

In the Pacific Islands region, concerns over leadership are widely framed as issues of governance. It is claimed that, due to poor governance, Pacific Islands countries are unable to meet their Millennium Development Goals[1] targets (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004), economic growth aspirations (Asian Development Bank 2005) and infrastructural development plans (World Bank 2006). Consequently, perceptions of corruption in these countries are high (AUSAID 2007, Larmour 2008, UNDP 2008).

In response, numerous regional, national and organisational responses have been seen. Regionally, the Pacific Islands Forum mandated a new regional vision that includes the improvement of leadership in Pacific Islands countries (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2014). This vision was catalytic in promoting regional uptakes of the good governance agenda, resulting in the introduction of leadership programmes for Pacific Islands leaders, such as the Leadership Pacific Movement (2005), the Pacific Governance Network and the University of the South Pacific leadership programme.

Nationally, countries had set up initiatives to improve leadership, such as the establishment of a new leadership code in Tonga and the setting up of Leadership Vanuatu. Other national level programmes included the formation of Leadership Fiji (2014), Leadership Papua New Guinea (2014) and Leadership Samoa (2014). Organisationally, agencies, such as the New Zealand Aid Programme and AUSAID, prioritised the improvement of governance in Pacific countries as key policy agendas.

Similarly, non-profit organisations, such as the Bible Society and OXFAM in Vanuatu, and universities, such as the East West Center of the University of Hawaii, had set up leadership programmes. In the same manner, international development agencies, such as AUSAID, set up the Pacific Leadership Programme (2014) and Pac ific governments, such as that of the Solomon Islands, initiated new leadership programmes as part of its services, such as at the Solomon Islands Institute of Public Administration.

While many of these regional, national and organisational programmes are short-term and offered as workshops or seminars, others are offered as formal award programmes that are undertaken in Australian or New Zealand universities. As observed by Sanga (2009), a driving motive behind these leadership programmes is to teach Pacific Islands leaders about ethics, but as Huffer (2005) pointed out, as intervention strategies these programmes are exclusively reliant on Western ideas. Moreover, as warned by Robinson-Pant and Singal (2013), Western approaches to ethics are legalistic and impose on non-Western contexts.

For a region that is mainly populated by indigenous peoples, the observation by Huffer (2005) is discomforting and requires attention. As a first response, this paper asks and answers the question: How is ethics taught in an indigenous Pacific Islands clan? Using base research of the indigenous Gula'alā people of East Mala'ita, Solomon Islands, this paper explores the teaching of indigenous clan ethics and, in so doing, offers an insider perspective of how ethics is taught in an indigenous, Melanesian Solomon Islands setting. This paper offers an indigenous framework, but not its application to improve governance. This paper makes the point that ethics education in an indigenous setting is different from how ethics is taught as reported in the literature or introduced in Pacific Islands leadership programmes.

The context

Set in the Solomon Islands, this study is of the Gula'alā, an indigenous people whose home region is on the east coast of Mala'ita Island. The Gula'alā are made up of seven clan groups, all speaking the Gula'alā language, one of twelve linguistic groups on Mala'ita Island. The Gula'alā number 1,800 people who live in seven villages in the Kwai and Uru harbours of East Mala'ita. The Gula'alā are now Christians, but their ancestral religion is animism. Today, the people continue to live a subsistence lifestyle, following customs of communitarianism.

Mala'ita Island is rugged and mountainous, with dense tropical forests, deep harbours and lagoons in the west, south-west and north-east parts of the island. The linguistics groups on Mala'ita include Toabaita, Baelelea, Baegū, Lau, Fataleka, Kwara'ae, Langalanga, Kwaio, Dorio, 'Are'Are, Sa'a and Gula'alā. Anthropologically, Mala'ita cultures are patrilineal and egalitarian. Within this generalisation, it can be said that the clan groups in 'Are'Are and Sa'a have a more structured chief system. As indigenous traditional societies, however, Mala'ita clans (particularly the central and northern ones) are theocratic, with a principal high priest as the leader. Mala'ita Island is the most populated in the country.

As a modern state, the Solomon Islands attained political independence in 1978 from Britain. Solomon Islands is an independent country with a Westminster system of democracy. It is part of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Commonwealth and a member of the United Nations. Culturally, the Solomon Islands is a diverse group of people with the majority being indigenous Melanesians, with pockets of Polynesians and Micronesians. This cultural diversity, coupled with geographical distances and isolation, has meant that the 500,000 indigenous Solomon Islanders who make up the population still speak more than 80 indigenous languages. While English is the official language, *pijin* English is the common language. About 90% of Solomon Islanders live in villages on their own tribal lands.

Literature review

This review is organised into four sections as follows: What is ethics? Ethics education, The teaching of ethics and Ethics education curriculum.

First, and without going to foundational sources, the following definitions of ethics are offered. According to Velasquez, Andre, Shanks and Meyer (2010), ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong and to the continuous study and development of ethical standards. These well-founded standards are what Sanga and Walker (2005) refer to as ethical principles—values that are deemed foundational to what is right, just and virtuous in society. Further to this definition, Rae (2000) notes that the terms 'morality' and 'ethics' are often used interchangeably. However, Rae (2000) explains 'ethics' as being the process of determining right and wrong, while 'morality' is the substance of right and wrong.

Second, the literature about ethics recognises the problematic nature of ethics education. Geary and Sims (1994) point to the unconvincing performance results of ethics education programmes. On one hand, ethics education is questioned for its relevance, casual uptake by students (Stephens and Stephens 2008), poor teaching (Wittmer 2004), inappropriate curriculum (Pamental 1991) and more. On the other hand, ethics education is seen as necessary (Martell 2007), as it supports wider societal needs (Levine and Nidiffer 1997, pp. 53-85).

To improve the value of ethics education, a number of suggestions are made. These include the need for ethics education programmes to have clear objectives (Weber 1990) and appropriate pedagogy and learning assessments (Geary and Sims 1994). In the medical profession, there is much support for ethics education programmes to have clear objectives (Eckles, Meslin, Gaffrey and Helft 2005). According to these authors, ethics education courses for medical professionals should create virtuous physicians and provide them with the needed skill sets to analyse and resolve ethical dilemmas. Similarly, from business studies, Felton and Sims (2005) expressed the importance of clear objectives. According to these authors, the following objectives should guide ethics education programmes:

1. Assisting students in the formation of their personal values.
2. Introducing students to societal, moral challenges.
3. Providing students with ethical theories.
4. Providing students with applied exercises in business ethics.

In support of clear objectives, other authors have expressed a number of points, including the need to teach ethical systems analysis (Hosmer 1985), to help students identify ethical problems (Murphy and Boatwright 1994), to broaden students' understanding of the complexities of ethics (Wright 1995) and to teach students to apply personal morality to real life scenarios (Haugen 2005).

Third, can ethics be taught? This question continues to be asked in the literature. Authors Andre and Velasquesz (2014) think that ethics can be taught, pointing to changes in the problem-solving abilities of young adults based on changes in their moral perceptions and roles. This view supports an earlier work by Kohlberg (1984) who argued that a person's ability to resolve moral issues is developmental, taking place over the three stages of pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional.

Who should teach ethics? The literature seems definitive about answers to this question. Accordingly, instructors of ethics must be experts, including philosophers (Siegler 1978) and trained professionals (Calman and Downie 1987). Moreover, such instructors must not work alone. Instead, Culver, Clouser, Gert et.al. (1985) argue that instructors of ethics must work in multidisciplinary teams. This latter point possibly may be reflective of a professional community's requirement, such as the medical profession.

What teaching methods should be used? Literature seems to support an integrated approach to ethics education. According to Miles, Lane, Bickel, Walker and Cassel (1989), ethics education must be coherent and integrated throughout a professional socialisation period. Moreover, programmes should be learner-centred (Fox, Arnold and Brody 1995) and problem-based (Goldie, Schwartz, McConnachie and Morrison 2001). From a medical ethics perspective, Smith, Fryer-Edwards, Diekema and Braddock (2004) propose the use of small group discussion as an effective method of teaching ethics.

Two further points are deemed to be important in the teaching of ethics. First, according to Lewis (1987), teachers of ethics must note that teacher behaviour is a vehicle for communicating ethics content to students. Second, Ballyn (2014) argues that ethical teaching involves the ability of teachers to listen, particularly when teaching in cross-cultural contexts, if they are to understand themselves and their students.

Fourth, what of the ethics curriculum? A number of literature citations are shared, providing instructive advice about the ethics curriculum. In a Malaysian study, Thambusamy and Elier (2013) emphasise the importance of a curriculum that provides character education, especially in the early years of raising morally responsive citizens. These authors point out that such a curriculum must be balanced in developing virtuous traits and habits, as well as building moral reasoning. In support of an integrated curriculum approach, Bosco, Melchar, Beauvais and Desplaces (2010) claim that, in their study of business students, a highly integrated curriculum is more effective in enhancing students' moral reasoning and moral competence. Within such a curriculum, Kretz (2014) draws attention to the importance of emotions. According to Kretz, ethics education must facilitate both moral thinking and moral agency, hence the pedagogy used must include students' emotions. Without engaging students emotionally, Kretz believes that ethics education is unlikely to be empowering for students.

From an effectiveness perspective, Davies (1993) argues that an ethics education curriculum that is systematic, multi-pronged and multi-term is more likely to be effective than a sermon, being iron-fisted and offering one-shot programmes. In support of a longer-term curriculum, Keefer and Ashley (2001) point out the importance of embedding professional knowledge in the ethics curriculum, the same knowledge and principles needed to comprehend and apply a particular profession's code of ethics.

Methodology

This paper is based on qualitative content that is obtained from a wider, multi-year research project about the Gula'alā people of Solomon Islands. In the wider study, I obtained data from my recordings of daily activities, interviews with numerous Gula'alā elders and *ala lā kini* (intentional, focussed discussions) with key Gula'alā knowledge experts. For this paper, I have limited my data to the study question by drawing out relevant information from recordings and interviews that I had carried out. The descriptive data are arranged in answer to the research question, before further analysis and discussions are made.

Because the scope of this paper is limited to the Gula'alā, its application to other indigenous Mala'ita and Solomon Islands peoples is limited. However, the paper is relevant to indigenous Pacific peoples generally and inspirational to indigenous Mala'ita, Melanesian and Pacific Islands ethics and leader developers. In writing this paper, I do so as an insider researcher, being a Gula'alā person of the Gwailao clan. Further, I acknowledge my personal responsibility for any limitations in the description, interpretation or execution of this very new area of indigenous Pacific Islands scholarship.

Findings

Ethics in Gula'alā. Ethics in indigenous Gula'alā is clan-based. In other words, all seven Gula'alā clans have separate ethics systems. These ethical systems are similar and overlap in nature. However, because the clans are theocratic, each subscribes to a distinct spiritual ancestral authority. Study respondents referred to *tagi nia* Gwailao (ethics of the Gwailao clan) or *tagi nia* Leli (ethics of the Leli clan). Study respondents pointed out that *fānanaua* (ethics education) is the principal back-bone of Gula'alā moral philosophy. All agreed that *fānanaua* is *rau laona luma* (literally 'that which belongs to a household'). In other words, in Gula'alā, any education that is intended to shape people morally is a private knowledge domain. Respondents spoke of ethics as *rau ni nagwatei lana* (hidden knowledge). Generally, this domain belongs to clans. Particularly for ethics education, elders were quick to qualify that this is the privileged jurisdiction of certain clan families only and not all clan members. In Gula'ala, *fānanaua* is the principal means to clan survival, success and honour, as depicted in the following *tarafulā* (proverb) by an elder:

> *Mouria ma maea, ma tō lea lā, rau 'e tala'ae 'i luma*. (Life or death and good living begin at home).

Who teaches ethics and to whom? The study captured multiple levels of evidence depicting the teaching of ethics in Gula'alā clans. At the first level, daily *fānanau lā* (morals teaching sessions) were offered by elders and adults to younger clan

members. Arai, a male clan leader, was always seen offering ethics instructions to his clan members, including children. Geni, a female elder was recorded on numerous occasions as she was undertaking *fānanau lā* to clan girls and women, all of whom were younger than herself.

At a second level, daily *fānanau lā* was offered by clan members as fathers, uncles, mothers, aunties, grandparents and cousins to clan relatives, both adults and children. I recorded a female elder named Kini while she was undertaking *fānanau lā* to her clan brothers, all adults, but younger than herself. In a patrilineal society, having a female offer ethics education to her adult clan brothers may seem unusual. However, in Gula'alā this is permissible because of the strength and closeness of the relationships. In this case, Kini is a *maiwane mamana* (true blood sister) to her clan brothers and could advise them as she did. In another instance, I recorded Kō, a visiting uncle, offering *fānanaua* (ethics education) to his nephews and nieces. In this case, while Kō was not a primary clan member, his relationship as an uncle legitimised his teaching.
A female respondent explained that, because Kō was her uncle, she trusted his advice and teaching. At a third level, the study noted repeated examples of clan members who appeared to have moral authority to offer *fānanaua* in Gula'alā. One such person was Aibaita, the matriarch of her clan among the Gula'ala. At the time of study, Aibaita was past 80 years of age. Throughout the study period, Aibaita was seen offering *fānanaua* on a daily basis to clan adults and children. Mothers would send their daughters to spend an afternoon with Aibaita, primarily to obtain *fānanaua*. Young married women would visit and sit with Aibaita during the day, seeking *fānanaua*. Gula'alā grandmothers would stay overnight with Aibaita to *maleo 'aena* (lie at her feet) in the hope of catching wisdom through Aibaita's authoritative *fānanaua*.

Beyond clan members, the study found that church pastors from the district visited Aibaita regularly for ethical advice. Twice during my field research, two aspiring politicians and one incumbent political leader visited Aibaita separately, seeking *fānanaua*. Study respondents spoke of numerous university-educated students from Gula'alā and beyond, as well as visiting government officials and church leaders from Honiara, who visited Aibaita, seeking *fānanaua*.

How can such authority to offer ethical education be explained? Respondents overwhelmingly spoke of Aibaita as being *ai 'e futa laona fānanau* (one who had been herself, birthed in ethical education). Respondent elders posed the question, *Ma tei lau*? *Ma tei lau ka fānanau*? (Who else? Who else can ethically educate?). Two Gula'alā elders separately explained that among the Gula'alā people, Aibaita was one who *fātainia tō lā sulia tagi* (shows how to live ethically).

How is ethics taught? In a recent paper (Sanga In press), I explained that, as integrated ethical systems, indigenous ethics are often hidden in people's daily practices and ways of life. For the Gula'alā, the repositories of their ethical system is in the *fānanau lā* (morals teaching sessions), *fābasu lā* (invocations), s*aefua* (story with a moral lesson), *'ainimae* (historical accounts), *sili lā* (creative laments) and t*arafulā* (proverbs) and more. In this section, examples of how ethics is taught are shared, using selected genres from those listed above.

First, using the genre of *fānanau lā,* numerous examples were recorded. In one example, a mother was teaching her son about the virtue of humility as follows:

> *Wela nau 'ae, tā lea ne 'oe fātainia, 'amoe 'o adea, 'o ade aroaro 'amu ana. Kosi 'ufungia lau na bungu fana fātailana lea lamu.* (My child, whatever goodness you've achieved or done, ensure that you are quiet about it. Never blow a conch to herald your own goodness).

There are two points from this example. First, the teacher begins with "My child." In doing so, the student is emotionally prepared. Second, the teacher ends with a metaphorical statement, "Never blow a conch to herald your own goodness." According to a respondent, using metaphoric statements is common in ethics education and, often, students are required to recite such wise sayings. By doing so, students are armed to deal with life's moral challenges.

In the next example, a female elder was advising a young bride, as follows:

> *Geni 'afe, gonitainia fatalamu. Fāsia kwala lā. 'Oe kwala, te'ena 'oe oli mai, tei nē rangoni bō māsi 'oe? Tei nē tōdā bata fana kale fakamu nā?* (You O bride, contain your speech. Do not be foul-mouthed. Because if you do and swear in public, who is feeding pigs, you? Who is earning shell valuables merely to cover your small mouth?)

The objective of the *fānanau lā* in this example is to develop the young bride's character and virtues. The questions at the end (…who is feeding pigs, you? etc.) require some degree of cultural knowledge. According to a respondent, because the young bride had married into the clan, she would have had to learn about the Gula'alā compensation customs entailed in this particular *fānanaua*.

Second, using the genre of *saefua* (story with a moral lesson), a number of accounts were recorded during the study period. In the following example, Wane, a grandfather, narrated this *saefua*:

> *Tōtō tā, rō wela kini dāro tō 'adāro na. Rō wela nori rata dāro ra Suraokwaikwai fainia Suraoalibako. Dāro sikau mai dāro ka tō fainia tē dāro leleka dāro ka baita nō. Sui dāro ka angisia tē dāro fana dē lā. Mala tē dāro ka 'urī, 'aia.' Tē dāro ka dalofia nō na dadalo. Ka raungainia bala ilifainia maefinau. Sui ka kwatea nō fadāro. Tē dāro 'e kwatea fadāro 'unori sui ka fābasu dāro nō. "'Amoro leleka 'amoro dē, leka 'amoro adasia kwage rama, moro oli nō mai 'i fanua. Fāsia 'A'aniwane ka 'ani 'amoro.*

Translated, this narrative begins:

> Once there lived in these parts of the island, two boys. The names of these boys were Suraokwaikwai and Suraoalibako. Since childhood, these boys lived with their mother. Day after day, the boys urged their mother to let them go fishing. One day, the mother agreed to their repeated requests; made them strings and hooks and passed these on to the boys. But before the boys set off to the sea, their mother sat them down and sternly warned the boys about a cannibal who lived by the sea. "When you go fishing and

you see seaweeds floating in towards the shore, it is time to come home. Do not tarry otherwise the man-eater will eat you both.

The above *saefua* is intended to teach the virtue of obedience. On the evening of this recording, the storyteller was repeatedly heard emphasising obedience. He did this through his voice tone, repetitions of parts of the story and in answer to children's questions. The audience were three children, aged five to twelve years old. The older two had heard this *saefua* before, yet paid attention. All three, including the five-year old, asked questions and actively participated in the storytelling discussions. In Gula'alā, *saefua* stories are usually told to children in the evenings within family settings.

Third, using the genre of *'ainimae* (significant historical accounts), the following example is one of many that were recorded during the study period. As historical accounts, happenings or incidents, *'ainimae* are often used to teach and learn from nature or errors committed by clan members. As a genre of knowledge repository, the *'ainimae* is expressed orally in song, dance or skits. Elsewhere (Sanga In press), I explained that *'ainimae* is both a private and a public domain knowledge holder. Because this example is of the private domain, only excerpts of the account are shared as follows:

> *…Kō golu, arai baita nori wane 'e susuke 'asia nō nori. Kada dī nia 'e soe ledi kou, arai bā 'e tofea ma'ana. Dī nia ka oli kou sui arai bā 'e leka ka fulia ma'ana rau ta'ā na.*

> …Our ancestor, though a brave leader, was rather deceitful. In response to an investigating clan cousin's question, the leader pleaded ignorance when really he was the troublemaker. As soon as the cousin had left, the leader got up and did more trouble.

On the evening this *'ainimae* was narrated, the audience were four clan boys. The principal narrator was a male elder who was supported by another male adult. As a private domain *'ainimae*, this story was intended to explain an historical animosity between two neighbouring clans. The boys knew about these clans and the people in the story. In keeping with this genre of knowledge sharing, considerable discussion took place during the process of narration. The boys asked numerous questions. Many teaching points were made by the adults and lessons restated by the boys. It was evident that elders were using the *'ainimae* to teach moral lessons as part of their deliberate socialisation process to inculcate clan ideology or ethics in their younger members.

Fourth, using the genre of *sili lā* (creative laments), the following example records another teaching strategy for ethics education in Gula'alā. This *sili* is called *Alafaitalana* and was created by a matriarch of Gula'alā, recounting the virtues of a Gula'alā husband, father and male tribal leader. Parts of the *sili* are reproduced (Sanga, 2014), but with English translations, as follows:

'Ōi, kelei rurūfia nau 'ae
Ku manata oli to'ona
Maedangi 'oro kini
Dangi ka dangi boro
Kakarai ka angi boro
'E angi nō burimu
'Oe leka nō matakwa daudau. (p.121)

(My memories bring joy
Of one whose days,
The rooster was always late to announce
Because you had gone to the deep ocean blue).

'Ōi, kelei rurūfia 'ae
'E mamana 'asia
Lua 'e lua 'urī tā
'Oe dao mai fainia ta ia 'agu nori
Ta leleko, ba'ā, 'alā ma ta gwaila kini
Rau ni fā ele nau kini. (p.121)

(Who among the living will dispute how you honoured me, your bride?
On days like today, as the tide is coming in;
You'd be bringing home a full canoe of the choicest of fish;
The catch of joy for any bride or wife.)

Tei mouri nē ka manata buro amu?
Kusi manata buro amu
Wane dangi ko fāfōlosia asi baita
Wane 'o galia walo kini
'Ōi kelei rurūfia lea nau 'ae. (p.122)

(How can the living forget you?
Provider for a thousand,
The one who crosses ocean currents
and surveys submerged reefs.)

As a teaching strategy, the Gula'alā *sili lā* is a highly emotive tool, engaging all who are gathered and with considerable transformative effects on listeners. In this particular incident, after this *sili* was narrated, considerable discussions have taken place among clan members about the person who was honoured by the *sili*, the events referred to and the subject matters contained within, including other cultural significance of this *sili*. In each of these discussions, considerable *fānanau lā* was done with younger members, ensuring ongoing ethics education.

Finally, using the genre of *tarafulā* (provers), this teaching was offered by an elder during a group discussion one evening. There were a dozen or so people sitting around, including boys, girls and adult men and women. The elder was recorded as saying:

Alua tafu nā ka tō 'ana māsia na afe loko 'i Lau'alo. (Leave the heap of rubbish for the Lau'alo currents to take away).

As a Gula'alā *tarafulā*, this proverb reinforces the importance of completing a task. Three observations are made about this *tarafulā*: First, pedagogically, this *tarafulā* used negative logic/association (i.e., heap of rubbish on land and sea currents); a common way of communicating Gula'alā *tarafulā*. The intention was to encourage the virtues of industry, diligence and completion of tasks. However, the *tarafulā* statement itself says the opposite (i.e., leave the heap of rubbish). Second, in order to understand the *tarafulā* fully, an understanding of contextual knowledge is essential, such as the Lau'alo currents of North Mala'ita and the daily village cleaning schedules in Gula'alā. Third, in Gula'alā ethics education, *tarafulā* is used to appeal to principles, as well as consequences.

When is ethics taught? In Gula'alā, ethics teaching is principally a private (hidden) knowledge domain activity. Consequently, ethics education takes place within family and clan settings. As mentioned, *fānanau lā* (morals teaching sessions) are undertaken as daily activities in one-on-one and small group settings. While the examples given were of sessions sitting down, others captured during the study period happened as people were travelling in canoes or walking in the forest to their gardens. Often, *fānanaua* are done in whispers to ensure that non-clan members do not hear the teachings. As stated, the Gula'alā consider ethics education as *rau nagwatei lana* (that which is to be kept secret in the clan).

The *saefua* (story with a moral point) quoted earlier together with the *'ainimae* (significant historical accounts), *sili lā* (creative laments) and *tarafulā* (proverb) accounts were undertaken in the privacy of home and in the evenings. In all settings, only clan members were present.

Discussion

In the following discussion, focus is made on four topic areas: the goal of ethics education, the teaching of ethics, the ethics curriculum and a suggested framework for ethics education.

First, for Gula'alā islanders, *fānanaua* or ethics education is of paramount importance. To these indigenous people, *fānanaua* is not only the backbone of their moral philosophy, but it is their lifeline, as expressed in their local *tarafulā* (proverb), "*Mouria ma maea, ma tō lea lā, rau 'e tala'ae 'i luma.*" (Life or death and good living begin at home). Ethics education is a double-edged sword. With ethics education, a society survives, thrives and is alive. Without ethics education, a society stalls, disintegrates and dies. With effective ethics education, society experiences and sustains the good life—experiencing joy, peace and prosperity. Given this Gula'alā appreciation of *fānanaua*, the goal of ethics education is to ensure that the clan is alive and that its members have a good living.

Understanding this principal goal of ethics education seems to be absent in the assumed perspectives of international organisations, international donors, Pacific regional institutions and Pacific governments in their views of the ethical needs of indigenous Pacific Islanders. Consequently, unless the good governance programmes

of these well-meaning institutions are informed by indigenous understandings of ethics, the programmes risk relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

Second, in Gula'alā, ethics is taught. Ethics teaching takes place within socio-emotive-relational spaces. The ethics teachers are known by their students, personally and ethically, and they are known as effective educators, communicators and mentors. This profound knowledge of teachers is integral to the teaching of ethics because without credibility, teachers cannot be emulated by their students. As well, in Gula'alā ethics teaching spaces, the students are known personally and ethically by their teachers. This deep knowledge of the students enhances those students' familiarity with their own starting values, their societal contexts and the content of the ethics education socialisation experience.

In teaching Gula'alā ethics, a myriad of pedagogical genres are used, including *saefua* (story with a moral), *'ainimae* (historical accounts), *sili lā* (creative laments) and *tarafulā* (proverbs). Indigenous to Gula'alā, these pedagogical genres are context-informed, allowing for authentic instruction to take place. Teachers and students are familiar with the pedagogy, enabling students to emotionally connect and fully participate in the learning experience. These teaching approaches do not include lectures, one-off workshops or written assignments.

Third, the Gula'alā ethics curriculum is lifelong and integrated; woven into the daily activities of *fānanaua, saefua, 'ainimae, silia lā* and *tarafulā.* The curriculum is not prescribed, hence, no two clan members will undergo the same ethics education socialisation experience. Nor is the curriculum hierarchically arranged and or formally sequenced. Instead, as clan members live their daily lives and as moral issues arise and demand attention, they are dealt with, often on the spot. In such times, students of ethics are challenged to show judgment, act ethically and learn to negotiate moral dilemmas. As students pose questions, this process exposes further needed curriculum areas. As teachers respond, the curriculum is enhanced and is further co-created, sequenced, managed and, in time, owned by all.

Fourth and finally, the following framework is proposed for teaching ethics in indigenous Solomon/Pacific Islands settings. Firstly, the goal of ethics education must be carefully and clearly stated. A priority goal must support the survival, success and honour of indigenous people's clans and families. This goal is understood to be achieved through clan members as agents of change, hence the education of members. Secondly, teachers of ethics in indigenous settings must first be personally, emotionally and ethically connected with their students. Without this prerequisite, ethical modelling by teachers is ineffective. Without students having knowledge of their teachers, the latter's credibility to teach ethics is minimised. Thirdly, the teaching of ethics, which is character-based and advances personal virtue as a means to enhance societal goodness, should be consistent with indigenous ethics education. Fourthly, ethics education for indigenous Solomon/Pacific islanders must be connected to real life and places. The starting assumptions—of people, content, pedagogy and context—must be the worlds of indigenous Solomon/Pacific islanders. Without a meaningful connection to indigenous people, ethics education programmes are susceptible to failure.

Concluding summary

This paper had set out to answer the question: How is ethics taught in an indigenous Pacific Islands clan? Using the case of Gula'alā, an indigenous people group in East Mala'ita, Solomon Islands, I explored how ethics is taught in a clan setting. From the outset, I pointed out that, for these islanders, ethics is clan-based. Consequently, ethics education is a private knowledge domain activity. As such, the teachers of ethics are fathers, mothers, uncles, aunties, cousins and grandparents; people who are relationally, ethically and credibly connected and known to their students.

I further explained that, for this indigenous people, theirs is an integrated ethical system; one that is woven into their daily lives, ceremonies and practices. In consistence with this integrated system, the Gula'ala use a myriad of genres; strategies that are directly linked to the ethical knowledge that is embedded in their indigenous repositories—*fānanau lā, saefua, 'ainimae, sili lā* and *tarafulā*. These are used daily in teaching curricula that are context-process-demand driven; informed by the life-worlds of these indigenous islanders' everyday realities. In support of Rae (2000), who sees ethics as a process, this paper has argued for ethics education that is grounded in an indigenous people's philosophical understandings. I end the paper with a proposed framework for ethics education in indigenous Solomon/Pacific islands settings and now invite further research attention to this new area of scholarship.

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