



Community Engagement Study

Market Development Facility
June 2021



MDF is supported by the Australian government and implemented by Palladium, in partnership with Swisscontact.

Acknowledgements

The authors and the Market Development Facility acknowledge the Australian government's support, via the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, by providing funding to MDF towards the development of this paper. In order to grasp the nuanced complexities of working with communities in Fiji, the authors have drawn on the experiences of the Fiji country team and wish to recognize the efforts and contribution of the Business Advisers, Country Director, Unit Managers and the Quality and Inclusion team as well as the external consultants Deanna Salpietra, Anna Laqeretabua and Aisake Saukawa, who were vital in the development of this study.

We acknowledge Zoom Fiji, Tourism Kadavu and Tourism Suncoast (Rakiraki) for allowing us to use their promotional destination photographs.

We would also like to thank Aisake Saukawa posthumously for his contribution to this study. His experience as the community liaison was invaluable and the team was very sad to learn of his passing earlier this year. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment	i
Glossary	iii
Overview	iv
1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	1
2. METHODOLOGY	5
2.1 Objectives.....	6
2.2 Research Design	6
2.3 Implementation.....	7
3. CONTEXT	11
4. KEY RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	13
4.1 Governance Structures	14
4.2 Community Activities and Obligations	18
4.3 Values and Priorities	22
4.4 Economic Activities	23
5. ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK: APPLYING THE FINDINGS.....	29
5.1 Purpose.....	31
5.2 Entry	31
5.3 Consultation and Design	32
5.4 Implementation and Relationship Management.....	33
6. MDF'S ROLE IN ENGAGEMENT	35
6.1 Purpose.....	36
6.2 Entry	37
6.3 Consultation and Design	37
6.4 Implementation and Relationship Management.....	38
6.5 Strategic Involvement	38
ANNEXES.....	40
Annex 1: Village Selection	40
Annex 2: Additional Meeting Held.....	41
Annex 3: iTaukei Version of Vanua Structure	42
Annex 4: Diagram of Government, Traditional and Methodist Church Structures	43
Annex 5: Results of Time-Use Survey	44
Annex 6: Village Protocol Tips.....	49
Annex 7: Questions to Ask During Consultations	50
Annex 8: Research Principles	51
Annex 9: Variations to Terms of Reference.....	52
Annex 10: MDF Reflections	53
Annex 11: Summary of Discussions from Validation Workshops	54
Annex 12: Practicalities for MDF	55

Glossary

AMA	Agricultural Marketing Authority
bose va koro	Government-mandated village development forum
bose vanua	Traditional village governance/leadership group
CMF	Christian Mission Fellowship
cakacaka va koro	Communal village activities (usually village improvement)
FRIEND	Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development
lali	Fijian drum with wooden slits
macawa ni koro	Village week
Mataqali	Clan
Mata ni Tikina	Village coordinator (at Tikina level)
MDF	Market Development Facility
Nasi ni Koro	Community health care worker
SDA	Seventh-day Adventists
sevusevu	A meeting, or time and place, that visitors seek acceptance into a Fijian village
solesolevaki	Communal village work on farms
talanoa	A conversation, chat and sharing of ideas
TC	Tropical Cyclone
tiko vaka vanua	Village life
TLTB	iTaukei Land Trust Board
Tokatoka	Family group
Turaga Ni Koro	Key administrator for all village operational affairs
SPBD	South Pacific Business Development
SPC	Pacific Community
solu	Payment/obligation
Soli ni Yasana	Government-mandated levy
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VDC	Village Development Committee
Vola ni Kawa Bula (VKB)	Native Land Register
Yavusa	Tribe

Overview

The Market Development Facility (MDF) is an Australian Government-funded multi-country initiative that promotes sustainable economic development through higher incomes for women and men in partner countries. MDF connects individuals, businesses, governments and nongovernmental organisations with each other and local and international markets to enhance investment and coordination and allow partnerships to flourish, strengthening inclusive economic growth. MDF is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and implemented by Palladium in partnership with Swisscontact.

From 2017 to 2019, MDF invested in understanding best-practice community engagement methods for the private sector in Fiji. This included community engagement dedicated research in four villages.

The research gathered in-depth information on how indigenous Fijian villages operate and how the communities connect to, manage and maintain business relationships.

As a development program that supports private sector investment in Fiji, MDF's overarching goal from the research was to gain knowledge and insights that would support businesses to effectively engage with indigenous communities to develop sustainable opportunities, which then generate employment and income for women and men.

Many businesses already work with indigenous villages in Fiji, but most operate on a supplier-buyer relationship. The businesses buy agricultural produce and tourism inputs, such as handicrafts, raw materials and tour services, and the villages supply products and services communally or as individuals. Through its work in Fiji, MDF identified inconsistencies in the type and level of engagement undertaken by those businesses operating with indigenous villages. For many in the private sector, the concept of community engagement was unfamiliar or still being trialled and tested. As a result, commercial success varied – for both villages and businesses.

While MDF does not conduct business with villages itself, it does assist its partners to work with indigenous Fijian villages. The community engagement study aimed to provide MDF, its partners and other private businesses with a deeper understanding of indigenous Fijian villages. Through face-to-face meetings and interviews with four villages, plus surveys and a review of existing MDF partnerships, the study team explored traditional governance structures, village activities and obligations, decision-making processes, information flows and previous business relationships.

As a secondary objective, the study also looked at gendered dynamics within the villages, with the aim of providing insights for businesses which work with women and, ultimately, to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of strategies involving indigenous Fijian women.

The research concluded that while there is no “one-size-fits-all”, there are distinct features to engagement in Fiji that need to be kept in mind – such as the importance of *veilomani* or unity at the village level. It found if businesses were prepared to understand what was important to villagers and how business opportunities could fit into their broader social, communal and economic lives, business dealings and activities could be more successful. However, to gain this understanding, businesses needed to commit to community engagement, allocate time to get it right, and have an open mind to new ideas.

Following the conclusion of the longitudinal research, the study team adapted its observations and findings to develop a framework and guidelines for successful engagement with indigenous Fijian villages. These frameworks are detailed in this report, together with key research findings and recommendations, with the aim of supporting businesses to develop win-win relationships for the private sector and the indigenous Fijian villages with whom they work.



Summary of Findings



Summary of Findings



The community engagement study found **each village in Fiji was different**, and businesses looking to work with villages or with individuals living in villages needed to understand the context of each village structure, and its activities and drivers, to successfully engage in business for mutually beneficial outcomes.





Villages in Fiji are simultaneously governed by both **traditional and formal government** structures, which must be respected and followed - from initiation to conclusion - when engaging with indigenous Fijian communities.



Business proposals need to be developed in consultation with villages to be successful.



Businesses need to understand both village and individual motivations to determine if, and why, villagers would participate in their business opportunity.

In particular, the study found that:



Relationships with villages need to be maintained through regular contact, visits or purchases; transparency in business activities and prices; and flexibility in terms of changing existing business agreements based on evolving circumstances.



Businesses need to design business models that fit the village's and individual's way of life - for example, some villages are more communal in nature and prefer a shared operation and income model, while some are more individualistic and prefer individual income arrangements.



For businesses to be sustainable, existing village and individual activities need to be considered, as does the impact of proposed business activities on existing arrangements

From the very start, businesses need to be clear on why they are engaging with villages. They need to do their homework to select the right village and to evaluate the benefit and cost involved in building sustainable relationships. Then, businesses need to invest in maintaining relationships.

Businesses need to design an engagement strategy from the bottom up, rather than implementing a one-size-fits-all model, to reduce risk to the business and to help build a sustainable relationship.



When engaging with women, in particular, the study highlighted the need for businesses to understand a Fijian woman's dual-role as a homemaker and income-earner, as well as her lack of decision-making power and "voice" in the community. Engagement with women should always occur separately to broader village discussions to ensure women's views are understood and heard.



For those already operating with indigenous villages in Fiji, the study identified opportunities to re-visit business engagement processes with villages to improve long-term commercial outcomes through the review and application of the engagement framework (see Section 5).



The study also identified a potential role for MDF in advocating for better village engagement strategies, sharing successful models and working with the Fijian Government to ensure village business-village relationships are successful over the long term (see Section 6).



Finally, the study team recommended MDF reports back to the villages visited to respect traditional protocols and say thank you for their participation. This meeting would provide an opportunity for MDF to share general study findings and details from the time-use survey, as well as discuss the engagement model and ideas generated through the community engagement study to gain further qualitative input.





Methodology



Methodology

The Community Engagement Study was conducted by a committed MDF team who worked with external consultants Deanna Salpietra, Anna Laqeretabua and Aisake Saukawa in 2017.

Since the time of the research and publication of the study, Aisake Saukawa passed away. MDF acknowledges the immense contribution he has made to finalisation of this study.

This group of consultants was selected following the Request for Proposals, and they operated in accordance with the Fijian Vanua Framework for Research (FVRF). The FVRF framework underpinned the research process and methodology, and guided the design of the study to ensure it would benefit the Fijian people and consider indigenous cultural values, protocols, knowledge processes and philosophies (see Annex 8 for more detail about the FVRF).

2.1 Objectives

The primary goal of the study was to obtain in-depth knowledge on how indigenous Fijian villages operate, and connect to, manage and maintain business relationships, in order to develop information that could be shared with the private sector to help it better engage with villages to implement successful commercial arrangements.

In particular, the study's objectives were to:

- gather detailed information on what indigenous villages do socially and economically, and how they operate;
- map out the key steps involved in commercially engaging with an indigenous Fijian village;
- identify potential entry points for the private sector to effectively engage with villages as suppliers of products, raw materials and services;
- provide information to businesses not currently working with, or buying from, villages about designing effective and mutually beneficial village engagement strategies; and

- provide information to inform continuous learning about village engagement and sustainable business activity in Fiji.

MDF also initiated the study to gain a better understanding of:

- the gendered dynamics of village engagement;
- decision and information flows relating to economic and non-economic activities that women are a part of; and
- women's economic empowerment in Fiji.



Findings that relate specifically to women are identified with this symbol (♀) throughout the report.

2.2 Research Design

The study was designed based on core topics (see following) and four key activities:

1. Review of MDF's Relevant Partnerships

examining learnings from eight of MDF's existing partners that engage directly with villages. This helped draw out ways in which the businesses have been successful in working with villages in Fiji, as well as some of the limitations. The successes and

limitations were also discussed with the MDF team. They contributed to the core topics of discussion with each village (see core topics outlined in Section 2.3).

2. Interviews with Select Businesses

Four businesses that had engaged with villages were selected for face-to-face interviews to understand their experiences and perspectives, and the lessons they have learned in building successful village

engagement strategies. These businesses already had relationships with the villages participating in the field research (outlined below).

3. Qualitative Field Research

Four villages were selected for two-day visits to collect data on the community structure, how they operate, their values, income activities and their experiences with outside businesses. The locations, all in Bua and Ba provinces, were selected based on where MDF partners and potential partners typically work or where they source work, as well as their relative proximity to main markets. Two villages were initially chosen in each location, so villages with different businesses arrangements could be compared in the same geographic region to provide a mix of experiences. The selected villages were:

- Village 1, Ba, Viti Levu – no outside business relationships as a village. All income activity conducted on an individual level.
- Village 2, Ba, Viti Levu – village activity with outside business relationships in the tourism sector. All other income activity conducted on an individual level.

- Village 3, Bua, Vanua Levu – no outside business relationships as a village. All income activity conducted on an individual level.
- Village 4, Bua, Vanua Levu – high level of village activity with outside business. Selected based on known experience with one business in particular. However, replaced with Village 5, Namosi, Viti Levu, due to the disruption caused by a natural disaster.

More detail on the village selection process can be found in Annex 1.

4. Time-Use Survey

Distributed to individuals in the villages to gather quantitative data on how they spend their time.

This methodology varied slightly to the original terms of reference due to weather and time constraints. More detail about the variations can be found in Annex 9.

2.3 Implementation

The community engagement longitudinal study was conducted from 2017 to 2019.

2.3.1 Desktop Review

An initial desktop review of MDF case studies was undertaken, which involved reviewing eight of MDF's existing partners that engage directly with villages through studies already completed by MDF. The information contributed to the topics discussed in the field research with each village and was used to compare and consolidate interview findings.

2.3.2 Interviews with Select Businesses

Four businesses were originally selected to participate in interviews; however, due to time and availability, only one interview could be conducted within the period

of the research (hereinafter: Business 2). Experiences from MDF's other ongoing partnerships has also been captured. The interview with Business 2 was undertaken in May 2017, and the business was asked about their experiences and perspectives, and the lessons they have learned in building successful village engagement strategies.

2.3.3 Qualitative Field Research

Four villages were each visited in May 2017 for a dedicated research on community engagement:

- Village 1, Ba, Viti Levu;
- Village 3, Bua, Vanua Levu;
- Village 2, Ba, Viti Levu; and
- Village 5, Namosi, Viti Levu, which was selected to replace Village 4 due to disruption caused by TC Ella.

The field research involved the following meetings, discussions and interviews:

Activities	Participants	Structure/Purpose
Sevusevu	The Chief (when available), Turaga ni Koro and other male village leaders and elders.	Formal and traditional introduction and presentation to the village leaders to get permission to conduct the visit and research with the village members.
Leaders' focus group discussion	Village leaders (primarily the Turaga ni Koro, Turaga ni Mataqali, Turaga ni Yavusa, and in some cases the Liuliu ni Tokatoka and other elders in the village), which consisted of all men.	Usually more formal meetings that went into detail on traditional governance structures, as well as village activities and sources of communal village income.
Women's focus group discussion	The leader of the village's women's group, as well as any other women that were available in the village.	Talanoa discussions intended to be informal, with no men present, so the women felt comfortable opening up and voicing their opinions. These discussions centred on key themes, and focused on the women's role in the village, and their access to traditional governance and decision-making structures.
Individual household interviews	Four households selected in each village for individual interviews. In most cases, only one of the household heads was present (primarily the male head); but in some cases, the female head or both were interviewed together.	More informal and private discussions that went in-depth into business relationships and income generation; how the governance structures affect them; their village obligations and activities; and their values and priorities.
Youth group discussion	Leader of the village's youth group, as well as any other youth that were present and available in the village.	Initially held to get the youth on board to assist with distribution and collection of time-use surveys, these discussions became more of a talanoa session to get the perspectives of young people.





Core Topics

The topics discussed in each village correlated with the core principles of the study. They covered:

Governance structures:

- village composition;
- community groups; and
- changes to governance.

Community events and activities:

- communal social and economic activities;
- village obligations;
- community cohesion; and
- managing unexpected events.

Values and priorities:

- What is important?
- What are the goals?

Economic activities and experience with outside business, when applicable:

- What, how, when, why, who does what?
- How are economic activities managed from market identification/connections; information and negotiations; production; marketing sales; payment and income?
- How are relationships and trust built with businesses?



2.3.4 Time-Use Survey

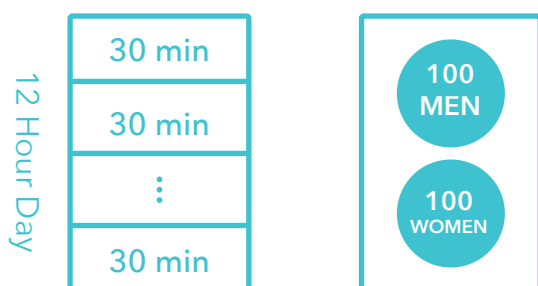
The time-use survey broke down a 12-hour day into 30-minute increments, and village members completed the form for one single day.

The hard-copy form was distributed by village youth to up to 100 men and women in each village. The results

were categorised by activity type and analysed by village and by gender.

A total of 180 responses were received – 91 from women and 89 from men.

Detailed reports from the time-use survey can be found in Annex 5.



2.3.5 Research Limitations

While the study was comprehensive, the time allocated to field research was insufficient to adequately explore all aspects of the research. As a result, the findings should be viewed in the context of the following limitations:

- **Village Representation** - the study was not intended or designed to be representative of all villages in Fiji. Rather, it engaged a selection of villages in different locations that were engaged in differing communal economic activities. The study, therefore, provides an in-depth examination of four distinct villages and analyses their similarities and differences. Any conclusions drawn are limited by the information obtained in the four sample villages and are not necessarily characteristic of other villages in Fiji.
- **Topic scope** - as the scope of the research was large, it was challenging to cover all topics in all interviews. The extent and quality of the response varied by the respondent's role in the village and how receptive they were to the process.
- **Consistency of response** - although similar topics were used to guide each interview, the responses were not always consistent, and a single interview response did not provide a full picture of village sentiment. Consulting with both groups and individuals, and separate consultation with different groups, helped provide a more holistic and objective picture.
- **Business participation** - while every attempt was made to reach businesses that were engaged with the four villages, only one business could be interviewed within the study timeframe. There was some confusion

amongst businesses when they were approached to take part in the interviews, as the study team tried to schedule interviews at the same time MDF was working to establish separate meetings. In other cases, previous or existing MDF partners were hesitant to arrange meetings without MDF being directly involved.

- **Selection of participants** - as the discussions were in-depth and the total time available was limited, the team was only able to consult with up to four individual households and two groups - leaders and women - at each village. The research is, therefore, limited to the opinions and perceptions of a small number of village members in each village. This sample was insufficient to objectively verify responses. However, the talanoa sessions helped respondents feel comfortable and open up with their responses. All researchers involved in the study felt the depth of information received was better through this method than it would have been through the use of more formal methods.

2.3.6 Research Validation

Since the finalisation of the study, MDF has validated its findings and applied much of the learning with the private sector, governmental organisations and others. MDF has also held two validation workshops, where findings of the research were shared with key stakeholders that currently work (or plan to work) with the communities. These two workshops were held in Suva and Nadi, and included the participatory communities, private sector, development agencies, government organisations, and NGOs. The summary of discussions and findings can be found in Annex 11.





Chapter 3

Context



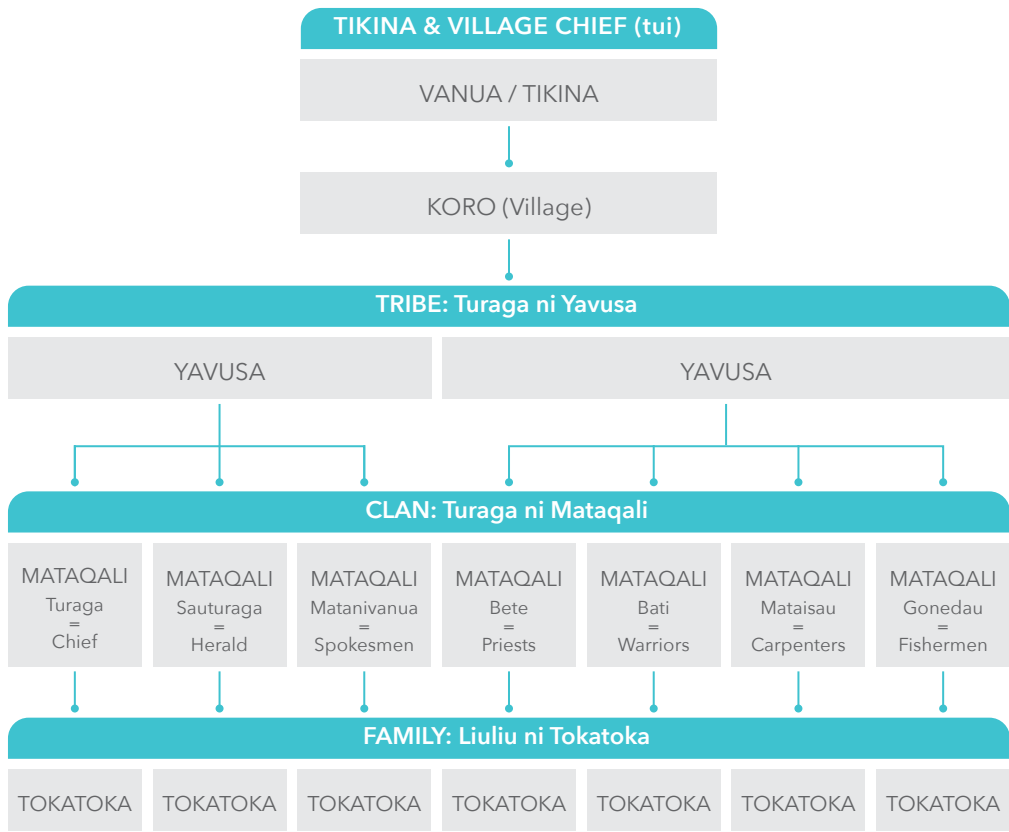
Context



The findings of the study are presented in the context of Fijian village structures and roles. Traditionally, each village is made up of:

- one or multiple tribes (Yavusa);
- each Yavusa is made up of one or multiple clans (Mataqali); and
- each Mataqali is made up of multiple families (Tokatoka).

Figure 1: Traditional Structure and Leadership



Fijians tend to embrace the system overall even if they are sceptical of the chief currently in power; they understand that vakaturaga (respect for elders/men) is the proper way to behave and thus chiefs and elders must be respected. For many rural villagers, the traditional system of governance is better understood than the government structures.¹

¹ Clark, Paul David, "Social Capital and Vanua: Challenges to Governance Development in a Community-Based Natural Resource Management Project in Cuvu Tikina, Fiji Islands" (2008). Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers. Paper 894. Pp. 38.



Key Results and Findings



Key Results and Findings



The desktop research and qualitative interviews with villages revealed both similarities and differences across the four villages in relation to the core topics of the study:

- governance structures;
- community events and activities;
- values and priorities; and
- economic activities.

These findings, outlined below, provide insights and knowledge that can be used by business operators to effectively engage with villages in the study area to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. They provide the foundation for the engagement framework that follows (see Section 5).

4.1 Governance Structures

Villages in Fiji are simultaneously governed by both traditional and formal government structures, which must be considered when engaging with indigenous Fijian communities.

The **traditional structure** is led by the village Chief or Tui who is determined through lineage, and who may be male or female. The Chief ensures good governance and the well-being of the people. Several leaders sit under the Chief, who are also determined through lineage and who may be male or female:

- Turaga ni Yavusa (head of the tribe);
- Turaga ni Mataqali (head of the clan); and
- Liuliu ni Tokatoka (heads of the family).

These leaders (and often others) make up the leadership or the 'governing' group – bose vanua.

Historically, the bose vanua considered resource-related matters affecting the village but, today, they often play a broader role in considering social issues affecting daily life. The study found bose vanua differed across villages in terms of composition, frequency of meetings and role. The only commonality across villages was that the bose vanua included members of the Vola ni Kawa Bula (VKB) or the Native Land Register.

Other traditional meetings held within the indigenous villages studied occurred at the Mataqali (clan) and the Tokatoka (family) levels. The meetings differed in importance and frequency across the villages and were for Mataqali or Tokatoka members only. In some villages

they were held sporadically; in other places they were very regular, for example weekly meetings, and explicit preparation for the bose va koro (see government structures below). The decision on when and who attended these meetings was made by the Turaga ni Mataqali (head of clan). See Section 3 for further context on this role.

Formal government structures in Fiji are based on the country's division of 14 Provinces and then 189 Tikinas. Several government-funded positions are in place at the village level to support the Provinces and Tikinas:

- **Mata ni Tikina**

The representative for a cluster of villages that make-up the Tikina at the provincial level. Formally appointed by the Provincial Council, with selection and recommendation from the Tikina Council, for a term of three years (with possibility of renewal for a second term to a maximum of two terms), the Mata ni Tikina works with the Turaga ni Koro (see below) across the Tikina. They also work closely with the Chief or Tui to promote the development of the Tikina. This position reports to the Provincial Council through the Tikina Council and attends all bose va koro (see below)

- **Turaga ni Koro**

The village coordinator responsible for overseeing development in the village and is the liaison between the Fijian Government and the village. The Turaga ni Koro is elected by the village for a term of three years. They report to the Provincial Office and undertake

secretariat or administrative functions for the village, such as organising and implementing resolutions of the boso va koro (see below) and supporting government and non-government organisation (NGO) visits to the village. While it is currently implied that only men can hold the position of Turaga ni Koro, proposed village bylaws may enable women to hold the position. As a leadership position, the Turaga ni Koro is respected by all of the community and villagers adhere to decisions made by the Turaga ni Koro, even if they are unhappy or disagree with that decision.

While it is currently implied that only men can hold the position of Turaga ni Koro, proposed village bylaws may enable women to hold the post. As a leadership position, the Turaga ni Koro is respected by the entire community and villagers adhere to their judgements, even if they disagree with a particular decision.

• **Nasi ni Koro**

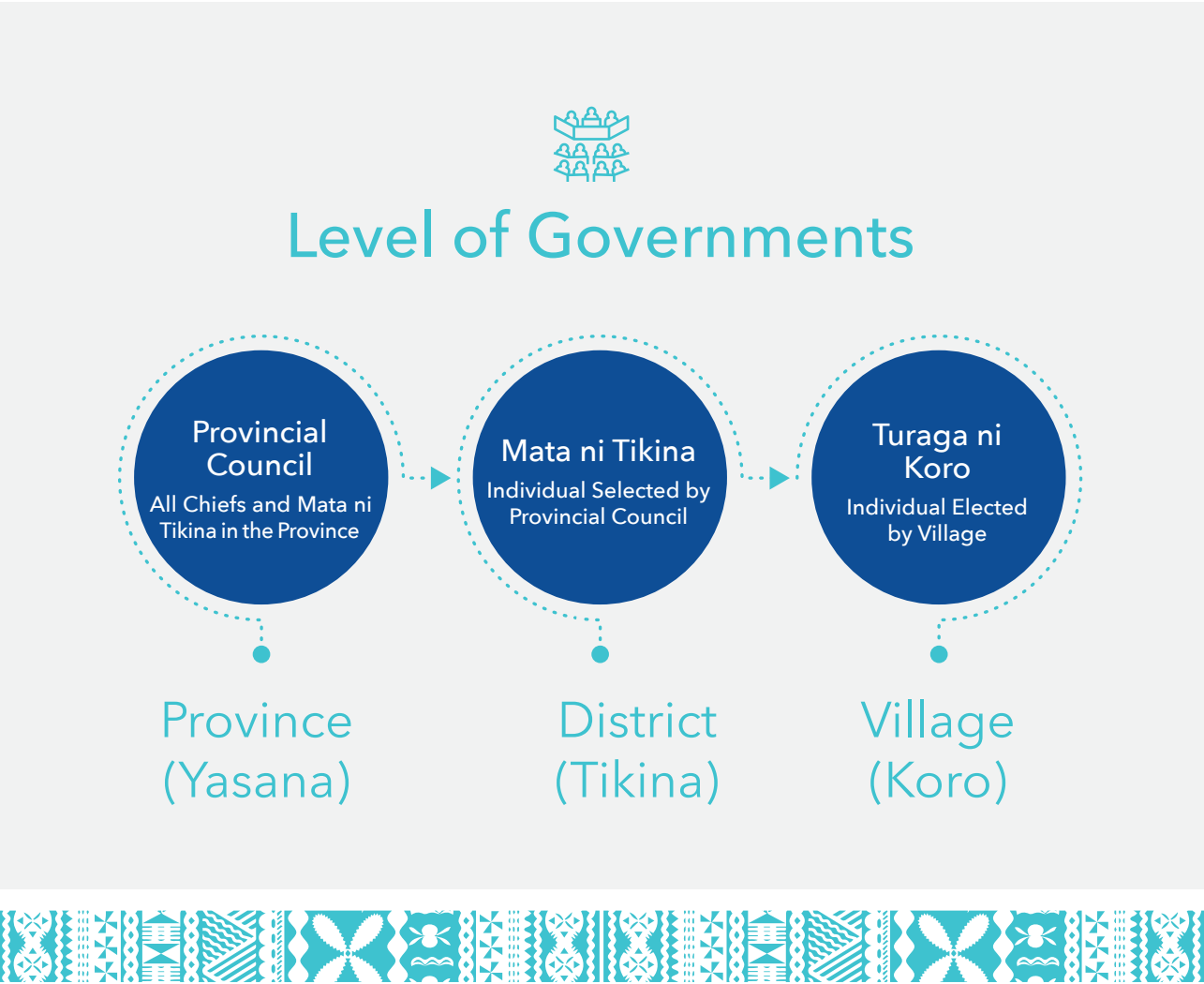
The community healthcare worker. Typically, women hold the position of Nasi ni Koro; however, new village bylaws propose men may be able to hold the position.

Conversations undertaken with the Fijian Government's Ministry of iTaukei Affairs as part of the study clarified that village life has changed over recent years to increasingly focus less on subsistence and traditional village obligations and more on cash income. The Ministry is trying to ensure leaders can see, and are positioned to, achieve that vision. They provide leadership training for all village leaders, focused on good governance, with the aim to develop more visionary leaders rather than leaders who are happy maintaining the status quo. The Ministry aims to preserve Fijian culture but also seeks to improve economic activities within the village at the same time.

Reporting to the Ministry, the Provincial Council is the governing body of the Province and all Tui, and all decisions regarding development and traditional matters of the Province are discussed and approved by the Provincial Council.

The Government-mandated boso va koro is the village development forum used to share information and, in some places, to make village-level decisions.

Figure 2: Fijian Government Structures



The bose va koro was almost identical across the villages in the study, as follows:

- **Composition:** all men and women living in the village (everyone is required to attend).
- **Frequency:** once a month, within the first week of every month, and typically a Monday.
- **Role:** topics discussed, such as contributions to the provincial fund and other obligations, village life, rules, improvements and developments, various committee updates, social issues concerning children or transportation to school, reminders and planning for upcoming village activities.

In all cases, while women attended the meetings, they were only invited to speak at the end of the meeting. In some villages, women were more comfortable speaking up in bose va koro – but, in all cases, they were encouraged not to be too vocal or to challenge decisions; silence and agreement was revered.

Community groups or village committees also exist in indigenous Fijian villages and report to the bose va koro. The standard, and most active, community groups identified across all four villages were the:

1. Village Development Committee: chosen by the bose va koro, with approval from the bose vanua. Members are rotated every three years and issues considered by the group are related to the village development plan – physical development related, such as infrastructure;
2. Komiti ni Marama (women);
3. Komiti ni Tabagone (youth); and
4. Church Committee (all villages have a mix of churches, with anywhere from two to six denominations. The most common are the Assemblies of God, Catholic, Christian Mission Fellowship (CMF), Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist (SDA)).

Other committees, whose presence and importance varied across the villages studied, included a Wellness Committee, Education Committee, Tourism Committee, Resource Committee, Natural Disaster Committee and Water and Sanitation Committee. Two of the villages also had a committee established to manage and report on all communal village income – in both cases these were called the Tourism Committee.

The role of the bose va koro and the bose vanua differed by location; however, the study found that villages tended to apply one of two governance models.

Figure 3: Village Decision-Making - Traditional and Government Structures

Model 1	Model 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government-mandated bose va koro has the primary decision-making role, with the bose vanua only handling issues referred to it by the bose va koro• Bose vanua includes all members of the Vola ni Kawa Bula (VKB), not just leaders• Bose vanua meets only as and when needed• Bose vanua only covers major issues that cannot be resolved within the bose va koro	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional village bose vanua takes the lead in decision-making – making all decisions for the village – and sharing decisions with the bose va koro to facilitate implementation• Bose vanua includes key male leaders only• Bose vanua meets regularly, every month before the bose va koro





Women in Focus

Governance

The role of women in village governance was consistent across all four locations visited – they had no direct involvement in decision-making at the village level. However, at Mataqali, Tokatoka and household levels, women had more input into decisions and managing their own activities; and, in some cases, women said they shared their opinions about village issues at a household level. How much these household-level discussions filtered up to village-level governance and decision-making was not clear.

In all cases, even though the leaders of the village emphasised that women attended the bose va koro and were invited to speak and raise issues (at the end), women admitted they did not feel comfortable raising issues and being too vocal. This is supported by secondary research, which states that *“unfortunately, women and youth are also more or less relegated to subordinate roles in terms of planning and decision-making. While Fijian culture can create respect for and adherence to strong networks, it also limits what individuals within that network may do.”*²

Within each village, women were represented on the various committees. In some villages, women were on every committee; while in other places they may only have representation on the women’s committee. While all of the villages had a women’s committee (or women’s group), the leaders did not have input into either the traditional or formal government governance structures. The groups were also not all formally registered with the Provincial Office, which means they cannot receive government support or grants. Non-registration also means the groups are not formally recognised in the village and provincial governance structures (e.g. bose va koro) and, therefore, do not contribute to decision-making. Being unregistered also has effects on relationships with other government agencies and NGOs.

In some places, women’s groups were very organised and active – for example in Village 5, where they run the Women’s Papermaking Project that supplies paper weekly to a local business. In other cases, they focused on particular issues, such as in Village 1 which focused on water, sanitation, well-being in the village and education. And yet in other places they were less organised and not engaged in any activities together as a village, such as in Village 3. While the women in Village 3 had attempted projects as an organised group in the past, these were not sustained due to what was identified as a ‘lack of support’ from some members of the group.

While the groups typically had some autonomy over what they did, and they used their initiative to create and drive projects and activities, a few stated their role was “to do as they are told”.

However, in Village 5, where there was a high level of village activity with outside business, the Women’s Committee had a strong role in the village, largely because it ran a project that brought in significant income for individuals and the village as a whole. This showed that, in order to increase women’s role in decision-making, women need to be economically empowered.



² Clark, Paul David, “Social Capital and Vanua: Challenges to Governance Development in a Community-Based Natural Resource Management Project in Cuvu Tikina, Fiji Islands” (2008). Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers. Paper 894. Pp. 43.

4.2 Community Activities and Obligations

Existing community activities and social and financial obligations shared by indigenous Fijian villagers need to be considered as part of any business viability assessment, as new business activities could impact existing household activities or work schedules.

For businesses to be sustainable, both villagers and businesses need to be aware of any activity trade-offs that could be required, including sacrificing 'free' time, which was found to be scant in the study, especially among women.

4.2.1 Community Activity Profile

To determine how villagers spent their time, face-to-face interviews, meetings and discussions were supplemented by a quantitative time-use survey conducted in the four study villages.

The time-use survey revealed the villages had a broad range of activities taking place in one day. The type, and amount of time, dedicated to each activity varied significantly between the villages:

- Work was one of the most common activities undertaken, except in Village 5;
- Farming was common across all villages and predominately undertaken by men;
- Food preparation and related activities were common across all surveyed villages and more likely to be undertaken by women;
- Handicraft work was undertaken only by women; and
- Chores and cleaning were undertaken by men and women, except in Village 1 where only women recorded such homemaking activities.

The results showed men and women living in villages have only two to three hours of 'rest time' in a 12-hour day. Considering 'rest time' covered physical rest following hard labour, as well as time spent socialising with friends, neighbours and family, the actual free time available to villagers was even lower.

4.2.2 Communal Village Activities

All of the villagers surveyed spent time participating in regular community activities. The amount of time allocated varied between villages, with Village 3 recording the highest number of hours during the survey period as it was macawa ni koro, or village week, at the time the survey was conducted.

These communal village activities included:

- **Cakacaka ni koro** where village members pool labour to work on village improvements, such as footpaths, churches, cleaning and mowing the village green. These often take place as part of macawa ni koro, or village week, which is typically held during the first week of every month. Normally, men work on village improvement projects, while women cook for the men;

- **Solesolevaki**, where villagers work on rotation on farms. Only one village surveyed (Village 5) operated solesolevaki. For others, this is usually scheduled as and when the need arises, for example, if the village decides to plant crops for a church function;
- **Regular meetings**, such as the bese va koro, which occurs on the first Monday of every month and bese vanua, as well as committee meetings and Mataqali meetings;
- **Church services**, which occur weekly on either a Sunday or Saturday; and
- **Soli's or special celebrations** held at the same time every year. For example, May 16th in Village 1 is Village 1 Day, and in Village 2, the church soli is dedicated to the month of June.

Some villages had detailed weekly calendars, with designated days of each week for communal income activities, church service days, market days and committee meeting days. Other places maintained a macawa ni koro, with the remaining three weeks of the month left to individuals to focus on their own activities.

For details of each village calendar, see the profiles in Annexes 6 to 9.

4.2.3 Unexpected Events

To determine how potential business disruptions would be handled in the case of an unexpected event, villagers were asked to recall a recent unexpected event and explain what happened. This approach was taken, rather than asking an abstract question such as "if there were an unexpected event, what would happen?", as conceptual topics are very difficult to respond to in the Fijian cultural context. The two responses provided by the interviewed respondents were:

- The recent death and funeral of high Chief for Village 2; and
- The effects of TC Winston in 2016 for all the villages.

In response to the death and funeral of the Chief for Village 2, the villagers' role in arranging the funeral was significant. However, the villagers met and agreed families would be allowed to choose who would attend and how they would be involved in the funeral, and all others in the village could continue with their day-to-day activities so as not to cause major disruptions.

The response to TC Winston revealed various neighbouring villagers would help each other out when such natural disasters occurred.

Overall, villages and individuals appeared resilient in the face of unexpected events. While it was unclear what types of mitigation strategies were in place at the village or familial level, if any, unexpected events were considered part of day-to-day life and usually taken as they came. In some cases, disruptions were minimised by ensuring the workload was shared so "business as

usual” could continue; in other cases, village disruption was accommodated by pushing back or adjusting village schedules. Some households also noted they kept cash on hand in case of emergencies.

4.2.4 Community Cohesion

The study attempted to assess how cohesive or united different villagers were and whether that had an influence on the preference for, and success of, the villager’s ability to work together on income-generating activities.

While it was not possible to assess cohesion in the short time spent at each village, and with the research methods used, the general sense of obligation and unity in all villages was strong. This can be positive in maintaining the cohesion within the community but it can also lead to disconnection, as even though individuals may not be happy with their Chief or Turaga ni Koro or the way communal income activities are managed, they will not raise their discontent for the sake of village unity.

This highlighted that, when planning a business opportunity, it was important to consult all village

members to ensure the work and benefits of any new enterprise would be agreed and shared.

Other related information gleaned from the study on questions of community cohesion revealed:

- **Different villages have different ways of working together** – in some places, the whole community worked well together and preferred it that way, while in other places sub-groups such as church or women’s groups managed activities or smaller groups such as Tokatoka worked cohesively together. Understanding the level at which groups prefer to work together can help define more successful village engagement strategies;
- **Traditional governance structures do not recognise women and youth in decision-making** – so consultation with these groups is necessary, no matter how cohesive a village appears; and
- **Each village has a set way of operating** – which brings order to the village. Organisation ensures the community can sustain traditional village life and operations.

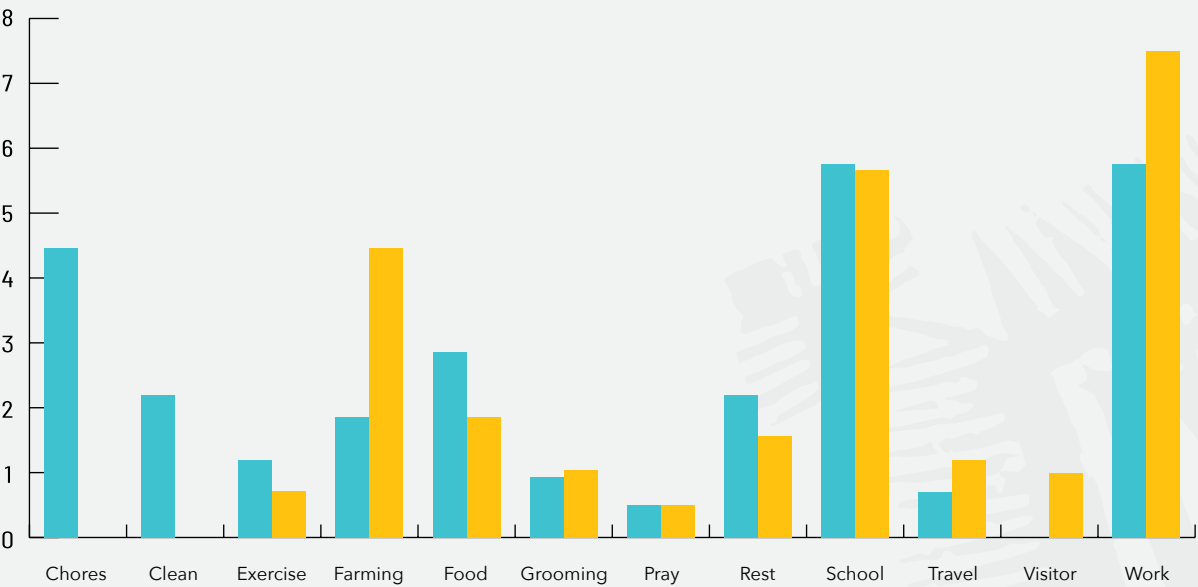


Figure 4:

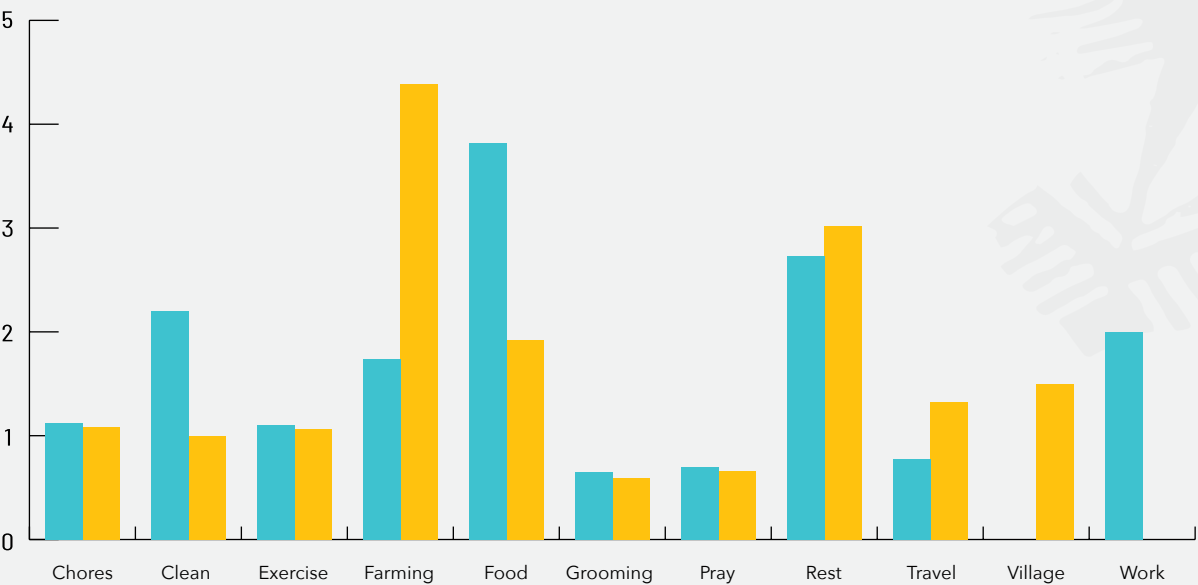
Time Spent on Community Activities

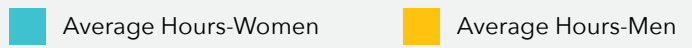
(Men and women, by village)

Village 1

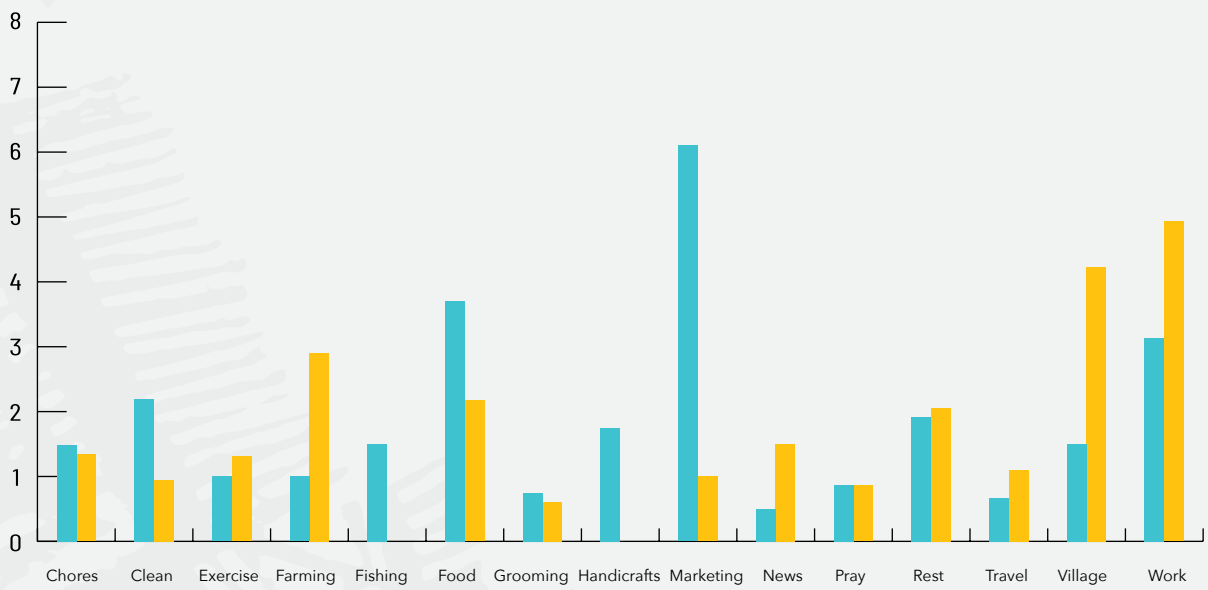


Village 2

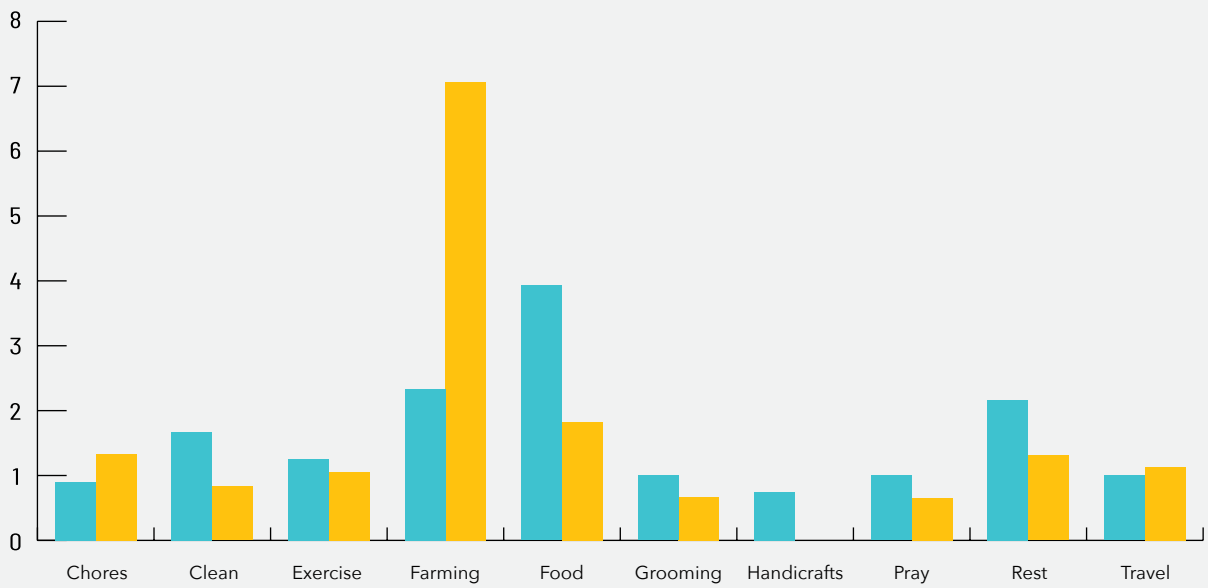




Village 3



Village 5



4.2.5 Village Obligations

Village obligations (solis) varied between villages – in frequency, number and value.

Some villagers paid as much as they could contribute, while others paid based on given amounts in set schedules. In all villages but one, village obligations were paid from individual household income activities, while in the fourth village, the village obligations were subsidised by communal income activities.

The most common financial obligations included:

- **Soli ni Yasana** - a standard government-mandated levy. The amount was the same across all villages (\$4,000 per year); however, way it was paid differed – in one village it was divided evenly among only the men; in another it was divided per family.
- **Church soli** - primarily the Methodist Church Soli. This was standard across villages although the amounts and how it was divided differed – the amount was based on the budget estimate for the church and it ranged from \$2,000 per Mataqali to \$200 to \$500 per household. These are paid by households periodically throughout the year, with contributions received divided between the local church and head office. Other denominations also request contributions and villagers also sometimes contribute regular tithes (cash donations).
- **Other solis** - which vary from village to village, as follows:
 - Village solis paid for special projects as and when needed;

- Education solis where households paid what they could;
- Soli ni Tikina (at Tikina level) which raises \$2,000 per year in total and Soli ni Koro (at city level) of \$100 per family per year; and
- Other solis – such as women’s committee solis for female education expenses, the church or new mothers. This ranged from a \$1 to \$35 contribution per woman.

Families were also expected to contribute to weddings, funerals and special events as they occurred.

Conversations with villagers revealed that village members would assist others who had difficulty meeting their obligations. How this was done, or how often, was not disclosed.

Some villagers commented that communal obligations were increasing from year to year but the willingness to contribute was decreasing. This was attributed to increased “individualism” in how households earn and manage their money. In some cases, village members also complained about the level of transparency in how the money was used, which also decreased people’s willingness to contribute.

For details of each village’s obligations, see Annexes 6 to 9.

4.3 Values and Priorities

To understand motivations for existing and potential business participation, villagers were asked their values and priorities.

All four villages identified a consistent village-level value – veilomani or unity – while individual (household) level values varied between villages and included education, church and immediate family.

The importance of village unity related to the traditional village structure and the commitment to the well-being of the village.

Individual values of education, church and family were reflected in the way families manage and commit their own resources. Some families saved and invested for their children’s education and some would move outside of the village to get better access to schools.

Cash-based income was also identified as being increasingly important, with individuals planting cash crops like dalo and yaqona, so that they could meet their own household goals and obligations.

One individual openly made a connection that if you put education and church first at an individual level, you could better contribute to unity in the village. Another individual observed that unity within the communal way of life meant, if there was a time of need within his own family, he would be looked after. So, the values of the village and individuals can be considered together and supportive of each other, rather than mutually exclusive.

For details of each village’s response in relation to values and priorities, see Annexes 6 to 9

4.4 Economic Activities

Indigenous Fijian villages are historically known to work together in both social and income-generating activities, as well as for communal fundraising projects (such as building the village church or village hall).

However, the study revealed income-generation in villages was becoming more individualistic. While some of the villages were engaged in communal income-generating activities, each villager relied heavily on individual income earned for their day-to-day living. Some were even dissatisfied with the village-only payment model, with the most satisfied groups being those with a mixed payment model.

The sources of income and contribution to communal activities (social and economic) for each village are outlined below, with more detail available for each village in Annexes 6 to 9.

4.4.1 Communal Economic (Income) Activities

As the villages were selected for the study to provide a mix of experiences – two with successful and long-standing relationships with outside businesses at a village level and two with limited relationships or none – the level of communal activity, including who does the work and how the income is managed, varied considerably, as did village satisfaction with the arrangement, as summarised below.

4.4.2 Individual Economic (Income) Activities

All other income activity was managed and undertaken individually. The most significant income-generating activity was farming, with the main products grown being root crops (dalo and cassava) and yaqona.

Farming was generally done on individual plots on Mataqali land.

In one village, Mataqali members leased their own Mataqali land, which provided security of the land and allowed them to use the lease as collateral for loans. In another village, solesolevaki took place, whereby village members rotated from farm to farm to help each other plant on their individual plots. When and how this occurred was determined during the bese va koro and as needed. In the same village, some village members paid others within the village to help with planting, but this was coordinated on an individual basis.

In terms of harvesting and sale, the root crops were sold by each individual, either to traders directly at the market, or cooked and sold as a part of food parcels.

Yaqona was also planted by individuals on their own plots and primarily sold to traders in the market, or to traders which visit each village directly. For both root crops and yaqona, men took responsibility for selling to traders

who visit the village. However, women were responsible for selling the root crops at local markets.

In terms of marketing, all villagers were aware of the going market rate through local market prices, information from the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA), or information from various traders. Village members regularly shared information in the village and through family links and connections between villages; however, each individual decided where they would sell their products, and they managed these sales individually. Sometimes people sold to the same buyer who regularly visited the village, while in other cases people found and made arrangements with their own buyer.

Other crops grown, including fruits, vegetables and ginger, were sold in local markets by women villagers who managed the marketing on a weekly basis.

In all cases, transporting crops to the market was paid for individually. The women in one village coordinated and shared the cost of a hired carrier, while in another village the village carrier was used – which charged per person and per cargo, and went back and forth to market a few times a week.

Other income activities that took place in the villages visited included fishing (fish and beche de mer), business ownership (gravel, tourism, logging), employment and remittances (not discussed in detail but mentioned).

4.4.3 External Business (Income-Generating) Relationships

The study examined existing business relationships and what worked and didn't work to inform further engagement and enterprise.

This started with a review of eight existing or previous MDF partnerships to glean insights into the characteristics and arrangement of successful business relationships.

While the level of detail on the business strategy, and the characteristics of the villages involved in MDF-funded partnership case studies, were limited in relation to the topics in this study, several themes could be extracted from these case studies. These further support this study's research findings, as follows:

- **Village leadership decision-making does not necessarily correlate to individual satisfaction** – decision-making and negotiation undertaken in the case studies largely involved village leaders rather than those who would do the work. This meant the village may benefit but individual expectations and benefits may not be met.
- **Villages differed in how they wanted to organise themselves and be paid** – for example, some chose to organise themselves communally but preferred to be paid individually.

Table 1: Village Income Generation Summary

	VILLAGE 1 ³	VILLAGE 2
	No Communal Income Activity	Significant Communally Earned Income Village Model
Activities	None	Half-day village tours; road clearing
Level of Frequency	None	Tours two to five days each week; road clearing twice a year, as needed
Participants	None	All village members involved – rotating weekly between Tokatoka
Income Allocation	N/A	To the village fund only
Income Management	N/A	Male trustees (Tourism Committee) decide on the use of funds
Income Use	N/A	Village development projects, school boarding fees and “to ease village contributions” (i.e. Chief’s funeral)
Role of Women	Many women have their own income-generating activities within their households	Men and women are involved in these activities, but men oversee decision-making and income management
Role of Individuals	All economic activities are decided and managed by individuals	Households involved indicated the work can be significant and required them to contribute their own supplies without reimbursement; many are unhappy with the payment structure and the lack of spending transparency of fund utilisation and would prefer to be compensated individually or for decisions to be made within the bōse va koro, although they have not raised the issue
		
	VILLAGE 3	VILLAGE 5
	Minimal Communal Income	Significant Communally Earned Income-Mixed Payment Model
Activities	Tours, hosting exchange students and honey farming	Only women work on rotation; men drive and manage the store
Level of Frequency	Occurring irregularly and infrequently	Shared between the village fund, church levy, women’s group and individual women working each week
Participants	Minimal communal income	Women’s group decides how the funds are divided; village spending decisions are made by village consensus
Income Allocation	To the village fund only	Village development, maintenance projects and school tuition; individual income decided upon at a household level
Income Management	All-male Tourism Committee decides on the use of funds	Women manage the largest income-generating activities and determine how the income is distributed
Income Use	Significant communally earned income – village model	Women and men involved on the projects are individually compensated, as determined at the start of the project; the equal distribution gave recognition to the Women’s Committee and increased women’s satisfaction
Role of Women	Significant communally-earned income – mixed payment model	
Role of Individuals	Many households have individual income-generating activities, so a minimal amount of village income activity fits within their schedules	

³ Village members receive lease payments for the Nabouwalu Jetty. As of 2011, all income from leasing is distributed equally between all living members of each land-owning unit, according to section 14 of the *iTaukei Land Trust Act*.

- **Training or information provided to villagers was best done in the spoken vernacular** – so that people could clearly understand the content being shared. This increased transparency about how the business operated, its terms and expectations.
- **Businesses whose core business models required supply from the villages (with no alternative supply) appeared to be more successful working with villages** – this highlighted how the importance of the relationship with the business could factor into its success. This is likely because the business was more willing to invest in what was necessary to make the relationship work.
- **Price fluctuations or uncompetitive market prices influenced villages' willingness to supply** – regardless of the time invested, personal relationships or training provided by the business. In some cases, this is due to a lack of understanding of wholesale pricing or a lack of transparency in pricing along the supply chain..

To further explore business income-generating relationships, the study considered the arrangements and perceptions of current business relationships within the four study villages, as summarised below and outlined further in Annex 11. Further profiles of each village relationship can be found in Annexes 6 to 9.

Discussions with villagers involved in business activities found mixed levels of satisfaction with the existing business relationships, with longevity of relationship not necessarily correlating to satisfaction. For example, the relationship with Business 2 was not viewed favourably despite being in business with the village for almost 20 years.

When requesting views on “what makes a good relationship and what do village members look for when building relationships with an outside business?”, villagers identified that personal connections were important – as they are in other areas of indigenous Fijian culture. However, while personal connections help establish relationships, it was less clear they were not a determinant of whether the relationship would be successful and sustained.

Instead, villagers identified other attributes that they valued, including:

- **Regularity**

Villages wanted businesses to be consistent, as much as businesses wanted suppliers to be consistent. When businesses did not come regularly into the villages, villagers did not feel invested in the relationship and so they picked and chose who they sold based on convenience rather than an ongoing commitment. When there was a big payout to farmers, they often slowed their production in the following months, but that didn't mean they wanted to stop selling to the buyer. Most agreed that consistency built trust and some villagers indicated that middlemen who buy from

the village do not stay around long or help financially within the village, so it was hard to trust new buyers as they may not be around for long. For this reason, village members changed who they sold to frequently and preferred to have the freedom to choose who to deal with rather than feeling locked into one buyer.

- **Flexibility**

In the pricing and payment terms. Villagers preferred when prices were not fixed. Advances from buyers also helped individuals feel more invested in the relationship. For example, one villager got advances for yaqona (a five-year crop) from his buyer to smooth cash flow, and another got a seven-day account for stock purchased for the shop, from the supplier. When businesses recognise the realities that people face, and accommodate them, villagers trust the business more.

- **Fair pricing**

Past experiences of being cheated made villagers sceptical and, because those experiences are shared, they became lessons for everyone. In the case of Business 1 and Business 2, village members reported feeling unhappy about the price paid and they felt it was unfair based on what they knew of other prices and the costs and labour incurred. In the case of Business 1, the price paid was below the price floor set by the AMA. In the case of Business 2, the price for paper only increased \$0.30 over 19 years. Despite this discontent, villagers continued to sell to these two buyers as they were the only market currently available. If there were new buyers, the villagers would be more interested in selling where they felt the pricing was fair.

- **Transparency**

Lack of transparency of pricing was the most discouraging factor in dealing with traders or businesses, not necessarily low prices. Most village members recognised price fluctuations had to do with supply in the market; however, they preferred to have a more complete picture of the factors that affect the price and what the end market price was, rather than just trusting the word of the middlemen and buyers. The villagers wanted transparency in how businesses operated – knowing who they were dealing with, what end markets that business serves, being clear on the benefits, and being treated professionally.

Villagers also stated that they were seeking “something more” in business relationships, including:

- **Trust and commitment**

built through physical presence and social involvement, such as contributions to community projects, funerals or weddings. Very few buyers currently engage in long-term relationship-building with the villages, and those that do are often well regarded and trusted as a community member.⁴

⁴ For example, in Village 3 they acknowledge the contribution to funerals and the church of one buyer who purchases from a few community members. In Village 2, Business 4 has contributed to schools and helped local village members play rugby overseas, etc.



Women in Focus

Income Generating & Non-Compensated Activities

In all the villages studied, women not only contributed to communal income activities where they occurred but they also engaged in the regular household economic activities (e.g. farming and marketing) and they often had their own separate income activities, such as making handicrafts, running canteens, rearing chickens, catering, sewing and selling eggs. Many of the women indicated they had decision-making influence on the income earned in their individual households. As many of the women were responsible for marketing, they would sell the produce and make purchase decisions with the income before returning to the village.

Women also participated, sometimes at the exclusion of men, to non-compensated activities on a weekly or regular basis including:



Household duties

such as childrearing, cooking and household chores.



Women's group and church activities

which typically occurred weekly.

Given women not only contributed to these income activities, but various non-productive (or non-compensated) activities, they carried a significant overall workload within Fijian village households.

According to the time-use survey, in all villages, women undertook a wider variety of activities throughout the day than men. Attending to visitors and village duties was the only activity in which men were more engaged than women.

A visual summary of how women spent their time between the four villages can be found with the results of the time-use survey in Annex 5.



- **Understanding**

individuals wanted to feel that a business was not there to just buy once or take advantage of them. They wanted businesses to recognise the village's and the individual's values – and contribute to furthering those values. For example, many businesses may provide training, but the village may not value the training provided.

In most conversations, it was clear that any one of the above attributes on its own would not be enough, but rather a combination would deliver village and business success.

4.4.4 Other Village Perspectives

In addition to these general findings, some village members provided their own ideas for how they would like to see businesses engage with them.

The following summary is a combination of villagers' thoughts and the research team's insights gathered from these conversations:

- **Businesses should demonstrate what support they can provide**, for example, a village may have plenty of land for planting crops, but would seek support such as mechanisation before working the land to sell products to a business.
- **Business dealings should still go through traditional structures and entry points**, even when done individually, to have the backing of the village as a whole. Although economic activities are handled individually in most places, when doing business with individuals in the village, buyers still need to sevusevu and go through the formal structures before trading with individuals. In some cases, businesses need to be willing to invest in building relationships with the village to gain their faith and trust, even though they are trading with individuals.
- **Businesses need to consult with both men and women** to get the best information and design a relationship that incorporates the views of all involved in the work. Instead of bringing women and youth within the formal structures, separate conversations should be conducted to ensure their views and feedback is clearly relayed and understood. This is because the message coming from the village leaders and elders was frequently quite different from that coming from other village members – particularly around communal village income and how it is managed. This demonstrates the importance of consultation with village members, not just leaders.
- **Individuals should get paid for the work provided**, regardless of whether it is a village activity or individual activity. For example, one option for communal activities would be for a portion of the money to go to the village fund and a portion to families or individuals doing the work.
- **Initial business relationships are preferably handled during the first week of the month**. Some villages officially require all visitors to come during the first week of the month when everyone is in the village and when the bese vanua and bese va koro meet. In other villages, it is the obvious week, as it is when all village members are present in the village. Visiting on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays is not ideal, as those days are reserved for either religious days or marketing. Purchasing visitors need to consider village schedules and commitments, and seek guidance from the village members they have a business relationship with to determine the most suitable time to come and trade at the village.
- **Business relationships should be initially introduced through the Provincial Office**. Coming through the Provincial Office provides an extra layer of vetting. Businesses that come through the Provincial Office are viewed as having already been vetted by the formal structures. The Assistant Rokos are also able to provide advice on when is the best time to visit the village, give introductions to the Turaga ni Koro and assist with setting up the sevusevu. In addition, the Provincial Offices can get involved in conflict management should any issues between the business and village arise. Proposed village bylaws require that any new visits to villages be registered with, and approved in writing by, the Provincial Office.

Table 2: Summary of Major Village Income-Generating

BUSINESS • Village	BUSINESS 1 • Village 5	BUSINESS 2 • Village 5
Relationship History	20+ years	19 years
Activities	Buys root crops from individuals	Buys paper weekly
Work Structure	A local agent in a nearby village provides quotas, then visits weekly to purchase from individuals	The women's group manages the project and rotates who will work each week; there is no formal written contract in place
Income Use	Income is earned and managed individually	Income is paid to the women's group which divides it between the village fund, church soli, women's group fund, and payments to individuals
Individual Views & Perceptions	Individuals are happy with the regularity and quotas provided; they are discontent with the pricing offered, which is below the AMA floor	The business is not currently well regarded because the company has only increased the price paid for paper once in 19 years; women do not feel they are treated professionally
BUSINESS • Village	BUSINESS 3 • Village 2	BUSINESS 4 • Village 2
Relationship History	Nearly 20 years	3 years
Activities	Brings tourists to village for tours and lunches	Trains women to produce handicrafts
Work Structure	The village manages the tours, which rotate between families (Tokatokas); a formal contract is negotiated every two years	Business 4 trains women and places orders through a community liaison, and the women then divide, make and sell the handicrafts individually
Income Use	Income is paid into the village fund and used on village improvement projects and other activities	Income is earned and managed individually
Individual Views & Perceptions	While the tours are well run, the satisfaction of villagers is low due to the payment structures, not the relationship with Business 3; villagers want to be compensated individually	Business 4 is well respected given the personal ties to the village and the previous support provided; the women are happy with the work and income provided
BUSINESS • Village	BUSINESS 5 • Village 2	
Relationship History	20 years	
Activities	Arranges tours	
Work Structure	An individual runs the company in Village 2, and engages other village members, as needed, who are paid individually for their services	
Income Use	Income is paid to the host, who then pays individuals for services provided; some funds get donated to the village fund	
Individual Views & Perceptions	The host regards the relationship professionally (rather than personally) and feels that mutual trust helps maintain the business	



Chapter 5

Engagement Framework- Applying the Findings

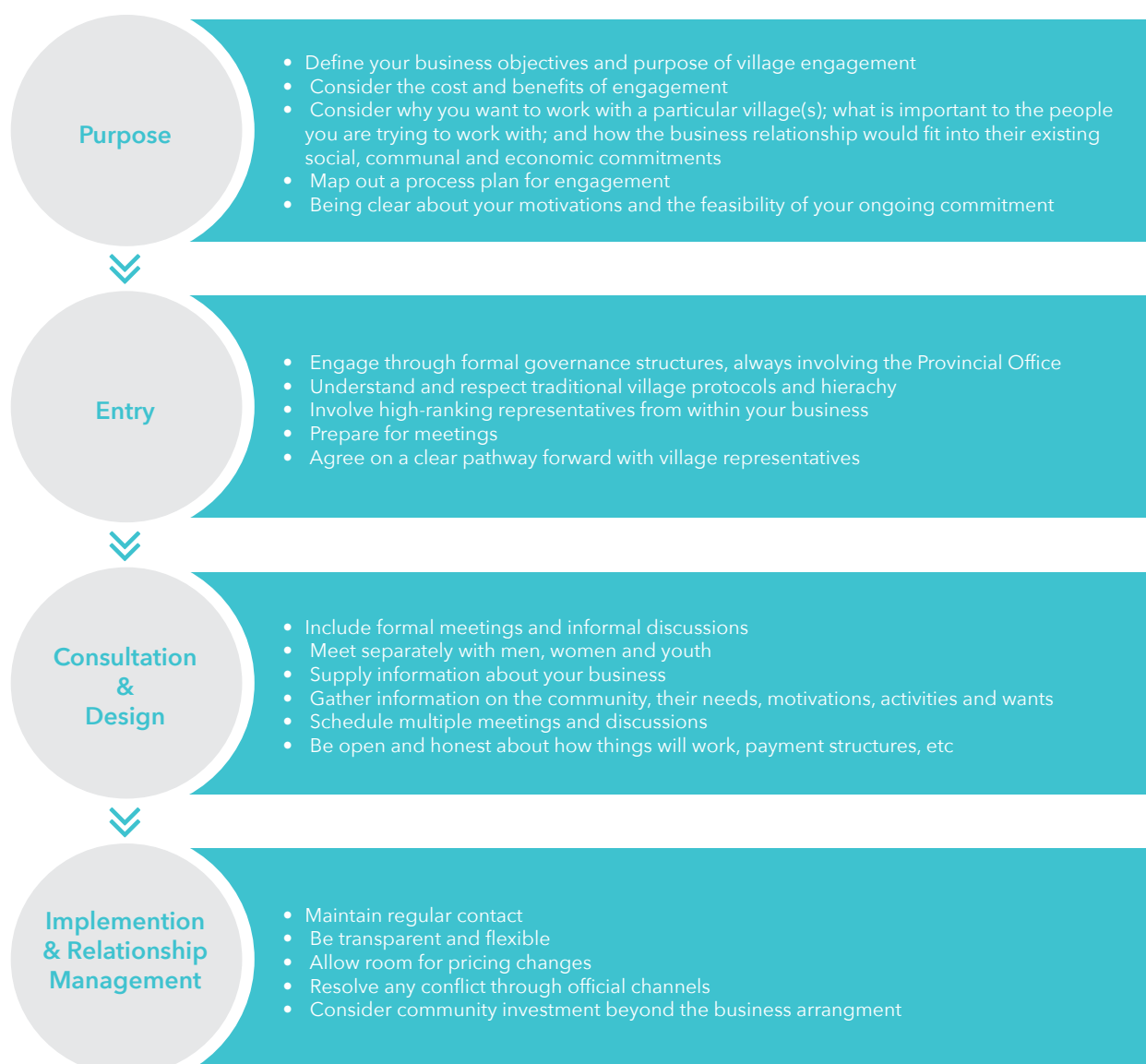


Engagement Framework - Applying the Findings



The key findings and insights gathered through the community engagement study provide a guide to underpin business engagement and development. The following framework and recommendations have been prepared based on the study findings and are designed to be a guide for businesses to build productive, successful and sustainable business opportunities with indigenous villages in Fiji.

Figure 5: Fijian Village Engagement Framework



5.1 Purpose



Purpose: define your purpose and primary objectives and apply a process perspective to plan village engagement.

There is no one-size-fits-all model for engaging with villages, so a process-driven model needs to be developed.

To do this, it is important to understand what is important to the people a business is trying to work with, and how the relationship fits into their other social, communal and economic lives.

If a business is committed to effective engagement, and it makes commercial sense from a cost analysis perspective, time should be taken to define the business purpose and objectives, and then map out an engagement model that works and that should involve the people who would be involved.



Don't factor the cost of investing in engagement into pricing structures – i.e. by offering a lower price, as the study found villages are price aware and price sensitive.

This model should include milestones for periodic review and updating to ensure the relationship between the business and village remains sustainable and satisfactory for all involved.



Prepare a pitch: consider the cost and time involved and the reasons for choosing to engage a village or individuals. Be prepared for your initial meetings to avoid wasting time and be honest and clear about why you are trying to engage with a village to help you decide which village is most appropriate and how much you are willing to invest in building and maintaining the relationship, especially as you might actually need the village more than they need you

It may take time and effort to build a sustainable relationship that fits your business needs, and the cost of investing in village engagement strategies needs to be considered in the context of profitability in the long term.

5.2 Entry



Entry point: being introduced to the village, sharing information and establishing the relationship.

The first entry point should always be through the Provincial Office and engagement should occur through formal governance structures.

Initially, contact should be made with the Assistant Roko at the Provincial Office that oversees the village in question. The Assistant Roko can:

- provide information about the village;
- recommend other villages with the resources or skills needed;

- provide advice on the best way to present information to the village; and
- make necessary introductions to arrange the first visit.

Businesses should keep in mind that the Assistant Roko and Provincial Office have a wide mandate and oversee multiple locations so their time should be accessed sparingly and effectively. Businesses should also be honest and transparent about their business motivations from the outset.

The Assistant Roko will provide an introduction to the village Turaga ni Koro, who will set up a meeting, or sevusevu, with all the necessary individuals – usually village leaders and elders. A formal sevusevu will occur first with the Chief (if necessary), Turaga ni Koro and other village leaders.



Always follow protocols - even if you have personal relationships or family ties, traditional protocols should be followed to set up business arrangements. The Provincial Office should always be notified and access to the village should be formal through the Turaga ni Koro with a sevusevu. This approach ensures both the village and business can use the Provincial Office as a resource should conflict arise

If familiar with traditional formalities, the sevusevu can be conducted by the business itself; if the business is not familiar with the traditional formalities, the Assistant Roko may represent the business. If seeking assistance from the Assistant Roko, the business needs to thoroughly discuss its intentions so the Assistant Roko can provide a proper introduction and seek permissions. Key high-ranking business representatives (owners or managers) should be present during the sevusevu as a mark of respect and commitment to the village. At this meeting, the business should explain their purpose and ask for permission from the village leaders to pursue their purpose. For more detail on protocols when visiting a village, see Annex 6.

Businesses should use the initial introduction and sevusevu to not only establish a relationship but identify a way forward - understanding how the village works,

what is happening in the village and how best to engage the village (as a group or individuals). This will help the businesses identify who to talk with, who to do business with, and how to make arrangements.

It will take more than one meeting to design and agree on an effective engagement strategy. The entry point therefore should be used to set up the next steps of consultation, design an agreed list of who to consult and an appropriate time and place to do so.



Understand how the activity fits into Schedules: businesses must find out if their proposals would create completely new activities or if they would be an extension of work already taking place. This is essential to determine how it would fit into village schedules and compete with other activities. This is key to design a business model that is built around realistic deliverables and expectations.

It will take more than one meeting to design and agree on an effective engagement strategy, so the entry point should be used to set up the next steps of consultation, and design and gain agreement on who to talk to next and an appropriate time and place to do so.

5.3 Consultation and Design



Consultation and strategy design: consulting with relevant parties to understand how the village prefers to work to design an effective strategy.

After initial introduction and permissions, consultation with village groups and/or individuals is important to gather information to have the best chance of business success.

Consultation will help the business decide if the activity is better done with individuals or as a community group, and which individuals or groups would best be involved.

Who the business should consult, what is shared, and how long it takes will vary. Consulting with various groups allows the business to get the best and fullest picture. Often leaders make decisions but women, youth and other groups will be the ones implementing activities, so they have different information and opinions that are useful to design the best strategy. The most effective strategy will be one designed - in part - on the suggestions and ideas of those who will do the work.



Share information: through both formal governance structures and smaller groups to ensure information trickles down.

As a minimum:

- meet separately with men, women and youth, either in groups or as individuals. Ensure each group is spoken to separately so they are comfortable speaking more openly. Sometimes sensitive or detailed topics are best brought up informally in small group talanoa consultations; and
- Consider other groups in each particular location, such as church groups, other committees under the bōse va koro, or separate Mataqali or Tokatoka meetings, as relevant.

Multiple rounds of consultation will be needed to make decisions and work out details regarding the work arrangements, process, timing and payment structures. And every village is different. Some villages will prefer to consult communally, some individually, and some both. Sometimes villages work well as a whole, and sometimes they work better in smaller groups, like women's group, church groups or Tokatoka. The key is to work with the natural and preferred groups within a village, rather than creating artificial ones. But it is important to remember that there are multiple realities, so do not rely on the opinions of just a few, but be sure to consult widely.

Keep in mind the consultation process is not just about talking, but listening. It is about taking information, and

sharing information. A business should share what it does, how it works, what it needs, and the benefits of engagement. The business needs to be transparent, ensure it has its numbers and facts worked out, and is able to both explain and seek ideas from the community.



Difference of opinion: as an outside business, listening to all ideas and suggestions and allowing for negotiation when proposing ideas will be appreciated. By capturing the preferences of the different groups consulted (for example, for money and payment matters), the business may get two preferences, one from leaders and another from individuals, so it should be willing to use the information to suggest alternatives that will, in the end, be more sustainable

For sample questions to help guide the consultation and engagement process, see Annex 7.

5.4 Implementation and Relationship Management



Implementing and maintaining the relationship: engaging in business activities with the village or individuals and considering new ways to maintain and improve the relationship.

Once work activities, process, timing and payment are agreed, the arrangements can be implemented – remembering it is important to honour any agreements made during the consultation and design process. This helps build trust and is the foundation to maintaining good ongoing relationships.

Feedback from the community engagement study revealed it was critical for businesses to maintain:

- regular contact, visits and/or purchases;
- transparency in business processes and practices, as well as pricing against market prices; and
- flexibility to change agreements based on evolving circumstances.

Maintaining the relationship might be as simple as showing up to buy products when agreed, or it might



Relationships are paramount: understanding what makes a good relationship from a village's perspective is critical to designing an effective strategy and maintaining a positive relationship

take more. The important thing is to keep an open avenue of two-way communication, which shows villages the business is willing to share and listen to them, and is invested in their progress as well as that of the business itself.

Leaving room to update or consider new arrangements or renegotiate prices can also help maintain the relationship and ensure people want to continue doing business with the business.

When considering pricing, be transparent with villages about pricing models:

- acknowledge the business' prices versus market prices;
- clearly communicate and consider what other benefits the business can provide; and

- allow flexibility in pricing and payment structures through price matching or renegotiating.

The bottom line is that people do not like to feel exploited, and if they can sell at a higher price elsewhere, they probably will.



Explaining wholesale pricing: for people with limited time in a day, wholesale prices may not make sense. For example, if you offer \$10 per bottle of honey produced and one bottle of honey takes an hour to produce, they earn \$50 for five bottles of honey and five hours work. If they can sell honey at the local market for \$18 per bottle, they can sell just three bottles for \$50 for half the work (2.7 hours). The latter is more appealing for people who have limited time available for business activities.

Once business activities are up and running, regular relationships should be maintained. It is also a good idea to consistently check in with village leaders, the broader village as a whole, and even the Provincial Office to gather information about what is happening and what is changing on the ground. Treat the village or individuals professionally and ensure they are empowered to solve issues as they arise.

If conflict arises, village structures, such as the village leaders or Provincial Office, can be effective to settle disagreements. If businesses are unhappy with the way the Provincial Offices have acted, or are unable to resolve conflicts within village governance structures, recourse is available through the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. If conflicts cannot be settled through formal (government) and informal (traditional village hierarchy) structures, a business should consider if it can substantiate its position and if it makes financial sense to pursue legal avenues.



Community investment: villages do not always see the steps a business takes when investing in building and maintaining the relationship. For example, many businesses feel training is a significant investment that should build loyalty but villages see this as part of business operations. Social investment, such as school or church donations, contributions to village obligations, a long-term presence in the village through local representatives, and payment advances, are all examples of ways that businesses can demonstrate their commitment to the community and build trust in tangible ways



Chapter 6

MDF's Role in Engagement



MDF's Role in Engagement



As most of the private businesses with which MDF works are not social enterprises by mission, there is a role for MDF in advocating for better village engagement strategies.

MDF can support and encourage existing and new partners to develop and implement better community engagement practices by:

- Ensuring businesses develop engagement strategies, which achieve a balance of both economic growth and pro-poor impact;
- Sharing successful models so the value of investing in village relationships is recognised by the private sector;
- Raising awareness and understanding of village protocols, how to work with individuals effectively and how to consider villagers' social, religious, communal and economic lives; and
- Supporting businesses that may not be willing or able to navigate through the suggested steps above on their own – either due to lack of time, resources, knowledge or interest.

It is important that potential partners want to engage with a particular village and not view it as a requirement for doing business with MDF. Ultimately, a village engagement strategy will never be successful unless the business really wants it to work. MDF can make the case of effective engagement to partners by focusing on how a good strategy can add value to the business, and how it can help reduce risks.

To support businesses, MDF can work more closely alongside its partners to navigate each stage of the community engagement process, as outlined below.

6.1 Purpose

MDF can mandate and monitor engagement strategies.

To ensure its partners consider and address engagement, MDF can:

- **Incorporate engagement on partner justification forms** to ensure partners consider engagement and have sufficient information to design an effective strategy;

- **Review existing partnerships** with a “village lens” to ensure engagement is adequate (i.e. businesses have considered and defined who is doing the work, how payments are made, how workloads are affected, what preferred interactions/timelines are involved, and if villages have been consulted) – and require businesses to address this if it is not adequate; and
- **Consider a two-stage partnership approach** to all business proposals – first requiring the design of the village engagement strategy, and second ensuring implementation is clearly articulated, with an emphasis on business and villages working together to get the design right.

6.2 Entry

MDF can help businesses navigate the process of establishing relationships.

To assist businesses to establish appropriate engagement practices, MDF can:

- **Support new businesses** through appropriate channels by providing introductions to Provincial Offices and Assistant Roko, giving advice and tips to businesses on

what the formal entry process is, assisting businesses to clarify messages to, and requests from, the village, and help businesses identify what further consultations might be needed; and

- **Evaluate existing partnerships** to determine if there are any ways to improve the engagement strategies. For example, examining formal structures (i.e. Provincial Offices were contacted and who the business negotiates or deals with, and who is doing the work) to ensure it is sustainable and mutually beneficial. If not, MDF might suggest improvements.

6.3 Consultation and Design

MDF can be the moderator to help businesses prepare for consultation and translate information into the design of effective strategies.

MDF can work with each business to identify groups and provide a checklist of information that needs to be gathered and shared with each group to ensure all necessary groups are consulted in the appropriate way. If left up to the village or the Provincial Office, key viewpoints, like those of women, may not be sufficiently represented.

In particular, MDF can either assist businesses directly or engage consultants to assist particular businesses (e.g. NGOs that work in the villages, know the villages well and have the village members' respect) to support businesses with their village engagement strategy. MDF can:

- **Assist with consultations** if the businesses do not have the resources, language skills or experience doing village consultations by covering the costs of engaging the right people or assisting in village consultations itself (although representatives and key decision-makers from businesses should always be present and attentive during these consultations).
- Be the eyes and ears to **vet the strategy**, making sure villages and individuals have negotiating power throughout the process and that a win-win strategy is ultimately designed, with all parties clear on the terms, requirements and benefits. In doing so, MDF will:

- ▶ Help businesses **identify risks** to the strategy so that they can be monitored and mitigated (e.g. natural disasters, change in market prices, entrance of new buyers, changes in local power dynamics, or risks of key personalities in the villages);
- ▶ Encourage businesses to **compensate individuals** and avoid exploitation by ensuring payment structures are based on the preferences of those involved, and that everyone is compensated based on their contribution to the work. Preferences may be for individual compensation or for payments into the village fund (or a combination of both). Individuals may not challenge village leadership on this matter, so reflecting village preferences from the outset can avoid issues later; and
- ▶ Ensure women's preferences and roles are considered and reflected. Consultation with village leaders often fails to **consider both the productive and non-productive (uncompensated) roles that women have in the village**. MDF can consider any business impact on women's workloads and make sure women are consulted, as well as ensuring their roles, responsibilities and preferences are reflected in the design of the strategy, including potential family support.

6.4 Implementation and Relationship Management

MDF can help monitor and provide feedback to businesses on their strategies and identify areas for improvement if necessary

MDF's results measurement system monitors and evaluates the impact of partner activities on individuals. The information gathered through the results measurement system typically assesses the village relationship with the business partner, the satisfaction of the individuals involved and the benefits or unexpected negative consequences that any individuals might experience.

MDF will:

- Continue to **share information with partners** gathered through its regular monitoring and evaluation visits. In some cases, partners will need help troubleshooting where issues arise to maintain a relationship and engagement strategy that is mutually beneficial to the village and the business;
- Be realistic about how long it takes to build relationships with the village and acknowledge that not every strategy is going to work everywhere, so review and adjustments might be necessary. Part of this is to **manage expectations** of the business and part of this is to help the business plan its resources and investment in relationship-building; and

- Pay particular **attention to pricing**, as this is often a major reason relationships breakdown. MDF may need to help partners monitor market prices to make sure partners are aware of competitors' and local market prices. MDF can also assist businesses to analyse the cost structure from the village perspective, checking whether it makes sense and encourage businesses to leave room for negotiation and flexibility in pricing should the supply chains come under threat from competitors.

To build its own relationships while conducting evaluation visits, MDF will also:

- Establish its **own relationships** with the village through the Provincial Office and formal governance structure, rather than rely on the relationships and contacts of the business;
- Clarify its **role as a separate and independent organisation** (not as staff of the business) when attending any design consultations or monitoring visits;
- Conduct all monitoring and evaluation **visits alone**, without the presence of any business representatives; and
- **Follow formal protocols** in any research plans and field requests. For some key insights into how to conduct research in indigenous Fijian villages see Annex 8.

6.5 Strategic Involvement

In addition to activities to support its partnerships, MDF can take a more strategic role in business-village engagement in Fiji by:

- **Building relationships with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and Provincial Offices** – by meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for iTaukei Affairs to explain its role and its work throughout Fiji. This will help MDF build a positive relationship, which will extend to the support of Provincial Offices. On a case-by-case basis, MDF can then meet with Provincial Offices to build and maintain relationships.
- **Challenging the system to progress women's economic empowerment** – while the direct role of MDF may be limited in terms of changing governance structures and the role and participation of women in indigenous Fijian villages, MDF has an opportunity to indirectly challenge the system by ensuring individuals, especially women, are treated fairly in the business relationship, and there is transparency and flexibility in their role and compensation. MDF can ensure the engagement strategies its partners use do not exploit

the role of women and women are fairly represented in the roles and preferences of engagement strategy design and payments. The simple act of pulling women aside for separate consultation shows the village that women's voices are important. Encouraging their participation can increase women's economic role in the village, which can increase their confidence in participating in decision-making processes.

- **Sharing examples with the private sector** – as MDF has learned over the years, businesses have engaged with villages with varying degrees of success. While some examples of long-lasting sourcing relationships between local businesses and villages were uncovered through this study, these are not public examples. MDF can share appropriate examples with the broader private sector of how village engagement strategies are built and what has worked well. Many businesses attempt to build village engagement strategies, but examples of how and when engagement is possible, and how different these models can look, as well as the challenges and investment necessary to set realistic expectations, can help businesses which rely on the relationship with a village to get it right.

- **Establishing an ongoing legacy** – after MDF has gone there is likely a gap in willingness, resources and/or skill of businesses to invest time and energy in business-village engagement. On one level, MDF encourages businesses to develop this capacity in-house by providing grants or sharing the cost of staff who focus on engagement throughout the supply chain – building and maintaining relationships with individuals or villages from which the business sources supplies. On another level, MDF provides advice and services to businesses directly. To ensure this role is sustainable over the long term, MDF can build a relationship with the newly-established Commercial Unit at the MITA.⁵ The Ministry is focused on the role and structure of economic activities within villages, and has set up a Commercial Unit to oversee work in this area. There may be an opportunity for MDF and the Commercial Unit to work together – for MDF to offer a link to the private sector and guide the Commercial

Unit in its activities with the end market, enabling the Commercial Unit to eventually take on a role of advisor for businesses looking to engage with indigenous villages. It would be advantageous for MDF to engage with MITA now, while this unit is still in the start-up phase. Should MDF engage in any partnerships which involve relationships between landowners leasing land, a relationship with the Landowners Affairs Unit at the TLTB would be useful, as it is the body that facilitates resolutions for landowner disputes.

During the study the team had a half-day discussion with the MDF team to reflect on the field work and the findings. Annex 10 contains a summary of the MDF team's initial reflections and Annex 12 contains some tips from the research team on future studies of this kind.



⁵ This unit is also focused on promoting financial literacy in villages.

Annexes

Annex 1: Village Selection

The villages within Bua and Ba provinces were selected based on the location of existing MDF partners and potential partners, as well as relative proximity to the main markets.

Ba is geographically closer to the main markets and transport links. One village - Village 2 - in Ba was identified as having known relationships with outside businesses. Villagers in Village 2 work with Business 4 and Business 3. These are both known to MDF due to its business relationships. The second village - Village 1 - was selected by the Provincial Office because it is geographically close to Village 2 and does not have current relationships with outside businesses at a village level.

Bua is geographically more remote to the main markets and transport links; however, it has good access to Nabuwalu Jetty and Labasa market. The first village in Bua - Village 3 - was selected based on CES team awareness

of its experience and the fact it does not have consistent business relationships. A second village - Village 4 - was identified by the Provincial Council because it is geographically close to Village 3 and had quite a lot of economic activity, particularly in fishing. However, due to TC Ella, the trip to Bua had to be cut short, and the field team was not able to visit Village 4.

In its place, a village in Namosi - Village 5 - was selected based on its proximity to Suva, so that a visit could be easily arranged and accessed at the end of the field work. The village also had quite a lot of economic activity due to a long-standing 19-year relationship with Business 2, supplying paper used for wrapping products.

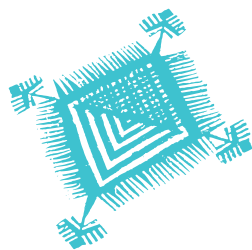
All arrangements for village visits were made through the Provincial Offices, and in some cases the Assistant Roko for the region accompanied the CES team during the first day of the visit.

Summary of four villages involved in the CES



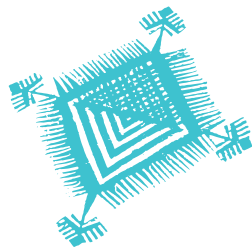
Annex 2: Additional Meetings Held

The following meetings were held to inform the CES.



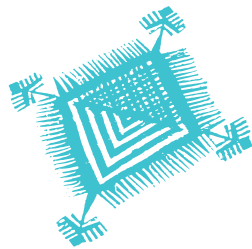
TUI TAVUA
Chief of Tavua

Overview of activities in Tavua Village.



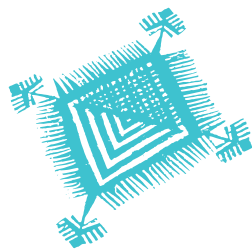
MR. NAIPOTE KATONITABUA
Permanent Secretary, Ministry for iTaukei Affairs

Perspective on governance and economic activities in villages, including introduction of proposed bylaws.



TURAGA ROKO SAU
Chief of Island in Lau Islands Group

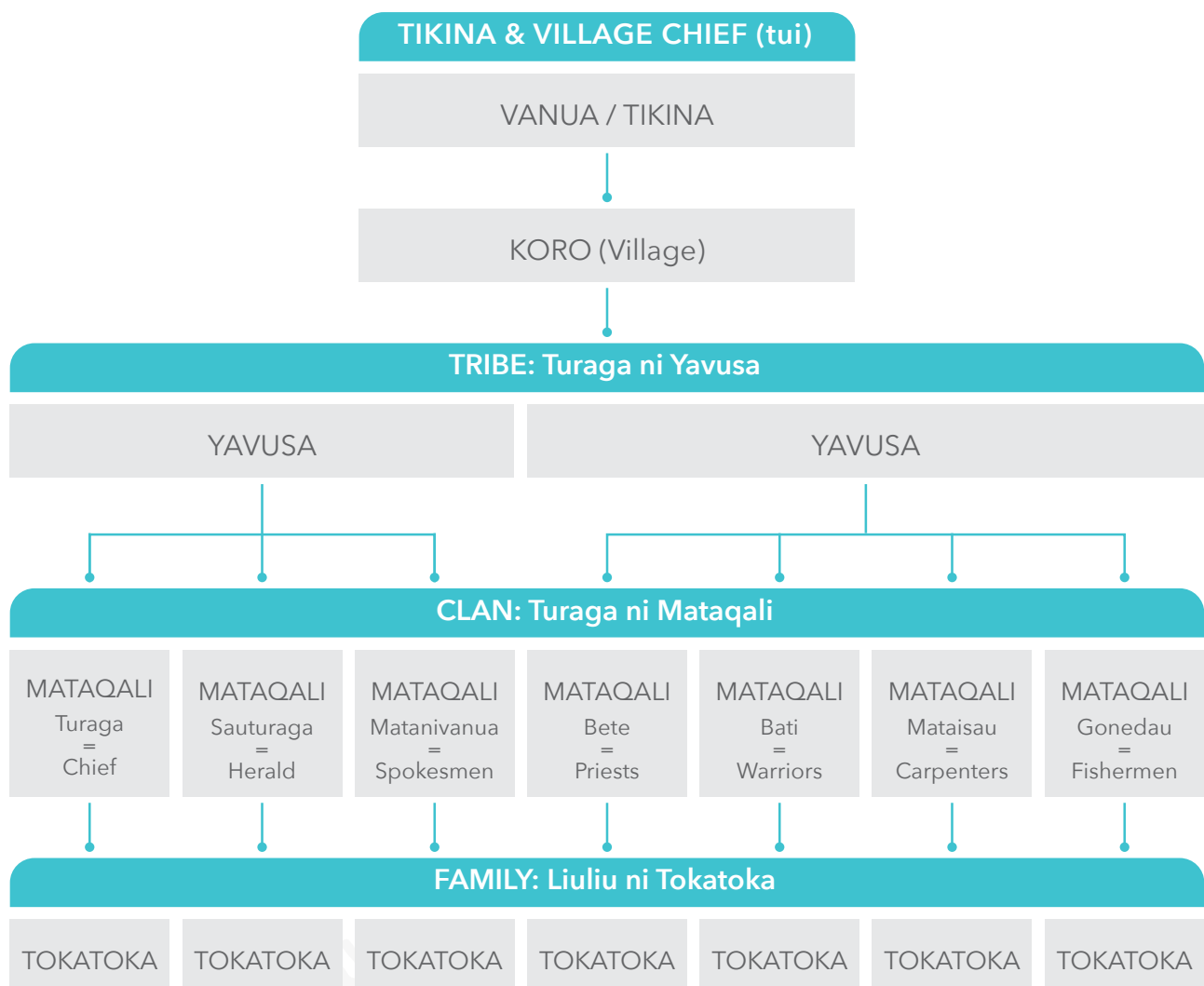
Overview of activities in Lau Islands; pros and cons of running cooperative versus individual model



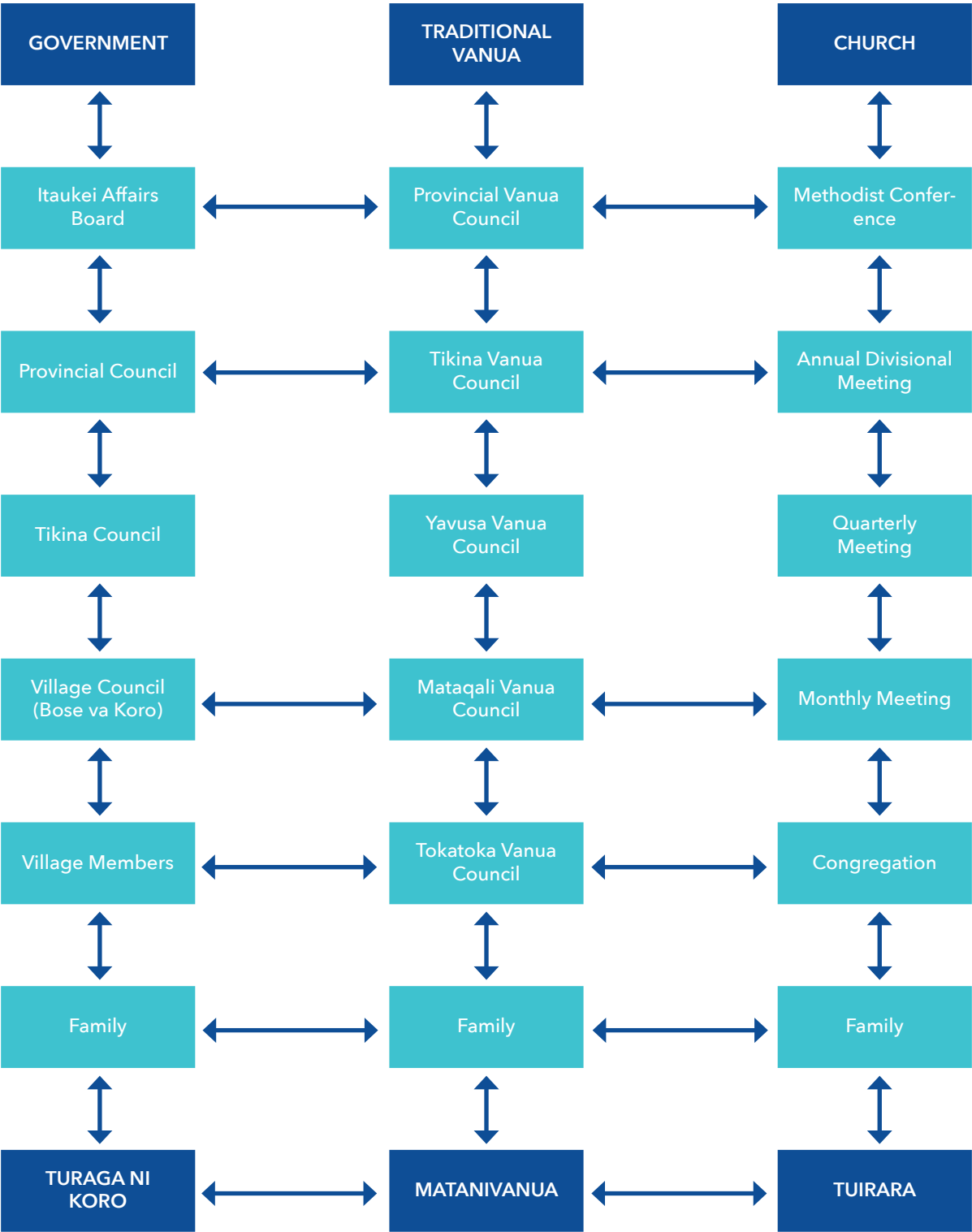
ASSISTANT ROKOS FOR BUA, NADI, BA, NAMOSI
Provincial office representatives responsible for the villages visited

Arrange village visits and gather village profiles.

Annex 3: iTaukei Version of Vanua Structure



Annex 4: Diagram of Government, Traditional & Methodist Church Structures



Annex 5: Results of Time-Use Survey

As part of the CES study, a time-use survey was distributed in the villages to gather quantitative data from village members on how they spend their time.

The hard-copy form was distributed by village youth to up to 100 men and women in each village (up to 400 surveys). From that, a total of 180 responses were received across the four villages.

Survey Response

Responses	Village 1	Village 2	Village 3	Village 5	Total
Female	21	33	30	7	91
Male	17	32	25	15	89
Total	38	65	55	22	180

Activity Categories

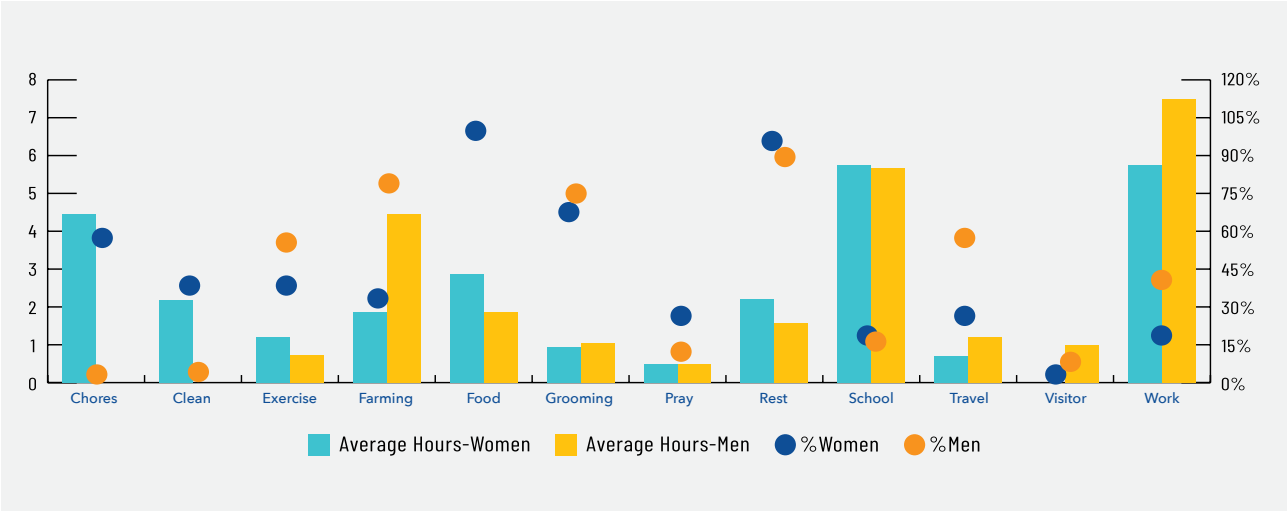
The time-use survey broke down a 12-hour day into 30-minute increments, and village members completed the form in one single day. The results were categorised by activity type, which were defined as follows:

- Chores: household chores, such as chopping or gathering wood, as well as taking care of the children. Does not include cleaning or personal grooming.
- Clean: chores specific to cleaning, such as laundry, washing the dishes, cleaning the compound, and cleaning the house.
- Exercise: time spent doing individual exercise or group sport (i.e. volleyball).
- Farming: time spent on farming activities.
- Fishing: time spent fishing.
- Food: preparation/cooking and eating.
- Grooming: personal grooming, such as brushing teeth and bathing.
- Handicrafts: time spent specifically on mat weaving.
- Marketing: time spent preparing for going to the market and selling in the market. Does not include travel to the market, which is covered under travel.
- News: time spent listening to the news, particularly the weather for cyclone updates.
- Pray: time spent reading the bible, praying or in family worship services.
- Rest: resting after physical labour, watching tv/movies, reading, or talking with friends/family.
- Travel: time spent travelling to and from the village to the farm, market, town, work, etc.
- Village: time spent on village activities, village duties, committee meetings or work for the macawa ni koro.
- Visitors: time spent hosting visitors.
- Work: attending a paid job.

Survey Results - Villages

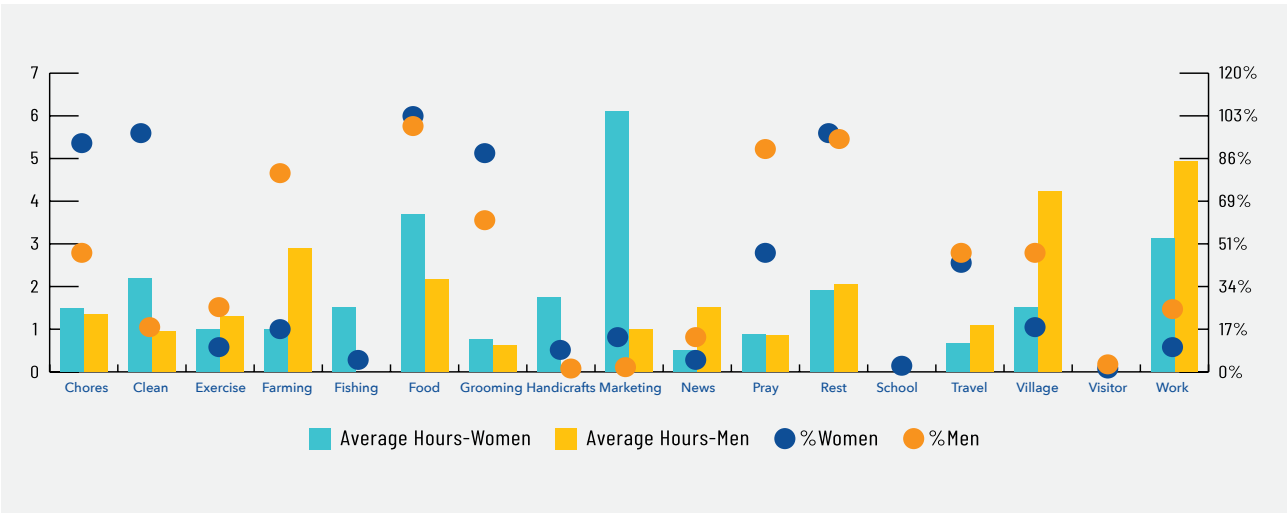
The following graphs show the number of hours in the day that both women and men engaged in each activity type. The averages are based only on the individuals who engaged in that activity during the day, and do not include those that spent no time on that activity. The left side of the graph and the bars show the average number of hours spent in the village for women and for men. The right side of the graph and the green and yellow dots shows the percentage of respondents who were engaged in that activity on the given day.

VILLAGE 1 had a large number of people working or attending school full-time. Its close proximity to Nadi and Lautoka (it is a 20-minute drive to Nadi and about a 40-minute drive to Lautoka, with regular bus services throughout the day) can explain this. Another key difference to the other village studies was that all of the housework, including cleaning, childrearing and household chores, was completed by the women and none by the men.



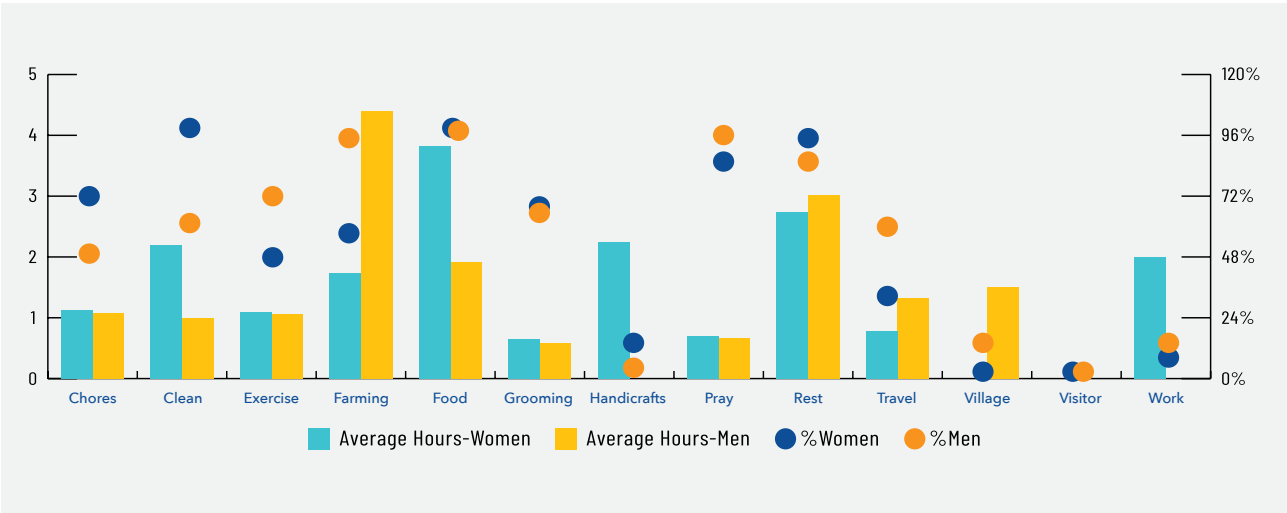
Out of all the villages, VILLAGE 3 had a higher variety of activities on the given day. It was the macawa ni koro (village week), so many were working on village activities while also carrying on with normal day-to-day activities. Based on conversations in the village, if the survey had been conducted during any other week in the month, the results would be likely to show village activities at a minimum and a significant increase in time spent on the farm for men. In addition, the survey was completed a

few days before a cyclone was predicted to pass through the area, so village members spent more time listening to weather reports and more time on chores related to preparing for the cyclone. Some of the women in Village 3 spend most days of the week marketing, rather than just marketing on select days, as the village is within a short walking distance to the Nabouwalu market in a short walking distance to the Nabouwalu market.



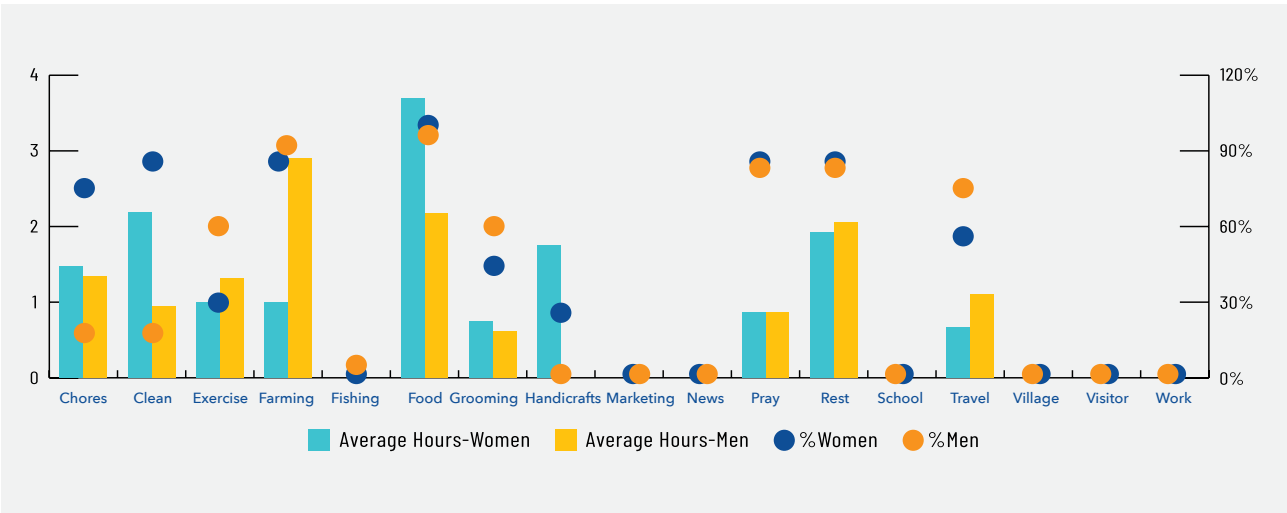
In **VILLAGE 2**, both men and women shared many household chores and cleaning, with the men spending more time on the farm and women spending more time cleaning and in food production. A higher percentage of men were involved in chores and cleaning than in other villages, although the average time doing those tasks for men was similar to other villages. Based on

conversations, the survey was completed on a non-marketing day for women. If the survey had been conducted during marketing days, it would likely show much more time spent marketing for women (as some women spend whole days and nights in Lautoka at market accommodation, reducing the need to travel back and forth).



In **VILLAGE 5**, the men spent a significant amount of time farming. Compared with the other three villages, both the men and women who responded to the survey engaged in the least number of activities on the given day. It should be noted that more men completed the survey than women, which is likely due to the day of the week and availability of people in the village. The survey

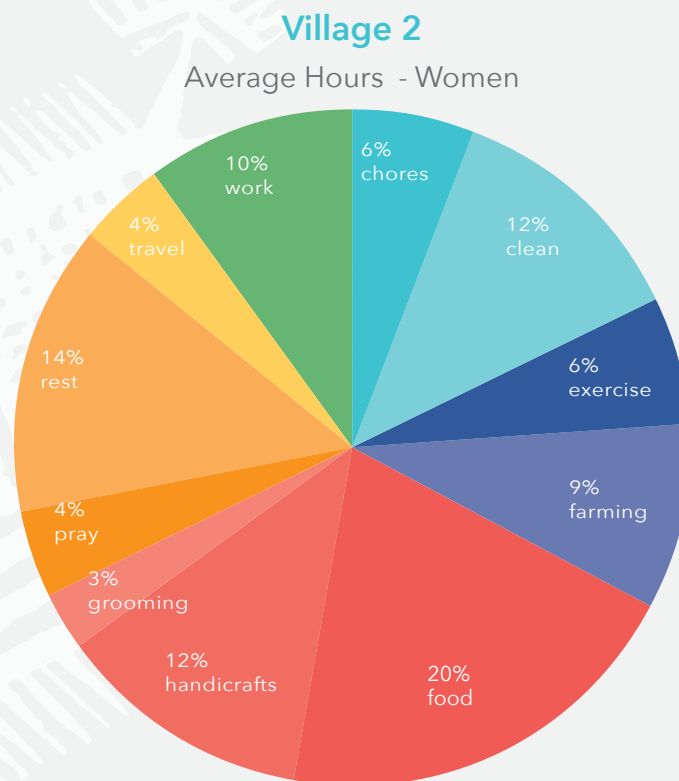
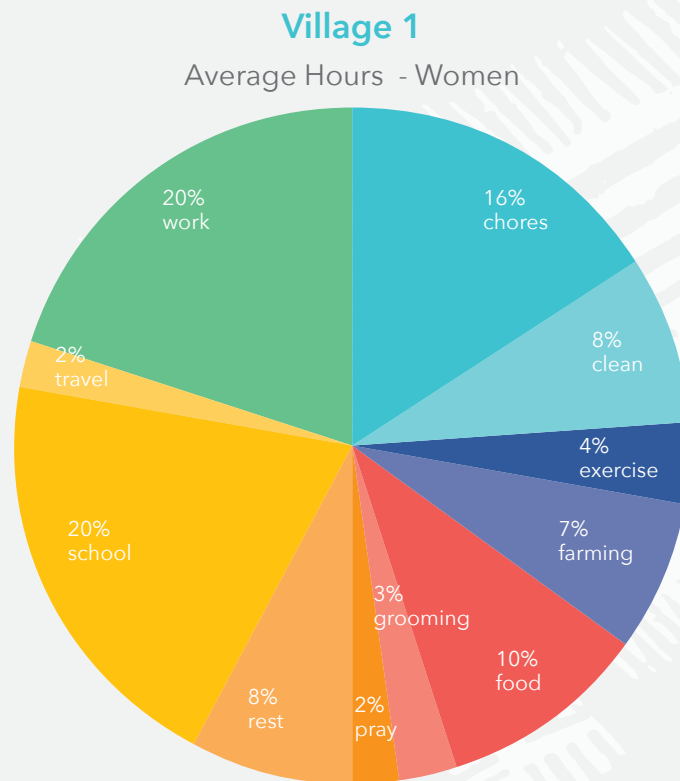
was distributed and completed between Wednesday and Friday, which are busy days for the women in the village. Some women work on papermaking, and some travel to the market on Fridays. It should also be noted that men spent considerably more time on the farm that day than men in other villages.



Survey Results - Women in Focus

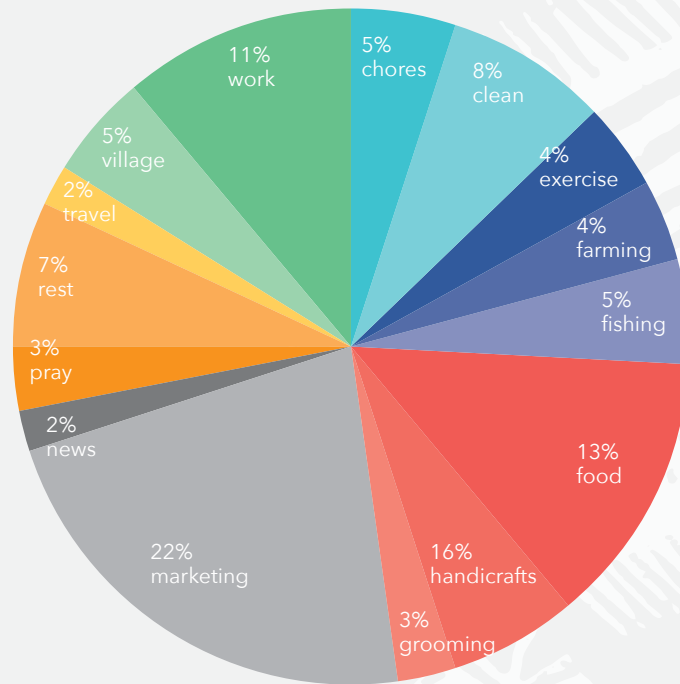
A comparative view of the total average hours women spent on activities in each village is illustrated in the

following pie charts (noting that not every woman in the village was engaged in all activities).



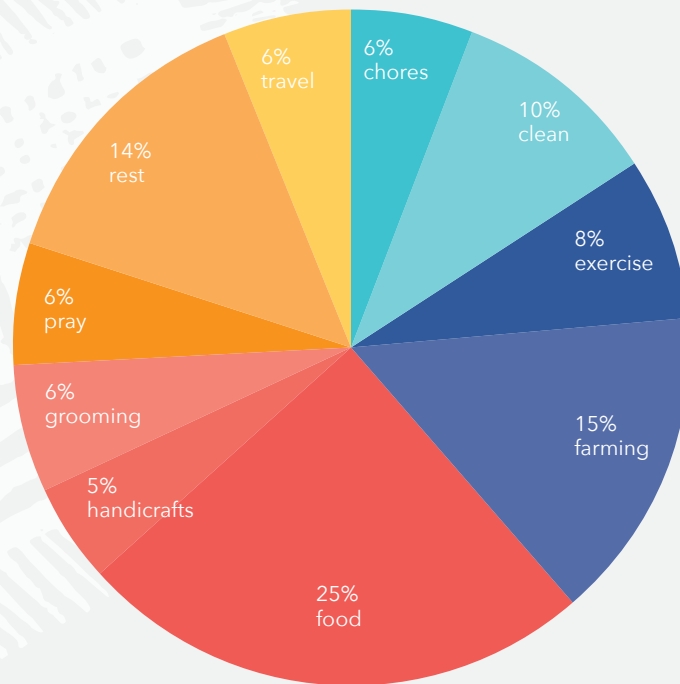
Village 3

Average Hours - Women



Village 5

Average Hours - Women



Annex 6: Village Protocol Tips

- **Always follow traditional protocols** – seek advice from the Provincial Office, as needed, to clarify what the protocols are for the area that is being visited.
- **Become familiar with village bylaws** – seek verification if needed.
- **As a matter of protocol, always liaise with the Turaga ni Koro** (village headman) first before entering a village, even if the business' contact is from that village.
- **When in the village, always follow instruction from the Turaga ni Koro** – respecting all traditional structures and protocols in place, and abiding cautiously shows respect.
- **Never enter a village for any purpose on a Sunday** – with the exception of joining the community in their worship. Sunday is a church day for the majority of the indigenous Fijian community. If the village has members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, avoid Saturdays as well.
- **Dress code is always important** – for women that means strictly no pants, and skirts should be below the knee and not tight. The most proper attire would be a sulu and jaba. Alternatively, a dress or a long top with a sulu-i-ra (sulu with the elastic) is appropriate. For men, sulu is the preferred option. While it might be okay to wear work pants in a village, a sulu should be taken just in case. A bula shirt or a work shirt is recommended and preferably no t-shirts.
- **Always ask for permission from the Turaga ni Koro before taking photographs** – and ask an individual's permission before taking photos in homes. Refrain from taking photographs or filming during the sevusevu.
- **Walk in one line** when walking through the village.
- **Stay behind the person who is leading the delegation** when approaching and entering the meeting hall or area (if outdoors).
- **Always remove shoes** – and leave them outside before entering a building or home.
- **Avoid standing fully upright** while indoors.
- **Adhere to the sitting arrangement in the village** – the Chief will always sit at the top on either side or in the middle. Visitors should sit opposite the Chief, facing the Chief, but sitting in front of the Tanoa. A visitor should not go past the Tanoa until, and unless, invited to move up. A visitor should never go past where the Chief is sitting. If in doubt, ask the Turaga ni Koro and follow his instruction on where to sit.
- **Follow sevusevu protocols** – as the sevusevu is a formal ceremony. Remain seated, remain quiet (unless representing the business), and do not take photos or film during the sevusevu.
- **Always address village members with either Sir or Madam.** When talking, always address the Chief first and foremost, and then any other elder in the village.
- **Discuss openly with the elders of the village and be as transparent as possible** – remembering they always have their doubts about any stranger wanting to do business with them.
- **Be respectful at all times** in tone of voice – and refrain from shouting either indoors or outdoors

Annex 7: Questions to Ask During Consultations

? Questions you may want to ask

- How are raw materials owned/managed/decided upon?
- Who participates in decision-making for the village?
- Is the village currently engaging with an outside business regularly? Which and how?
- Has the village worked with a business previously in a similar way? Which and how? What worked well and what didn't?
- What does the village calendar and social obligations look like for the village and individuals?
- What is the actual workload of different groups - how might this engagement affect that workload?
- How do village members earn money (communally and individually)?
- What are village and individual preferences for doing the work proposed? For payment structures?
- How often do the villages or individuals look to sell? What do they prefer and what is possible?
- What support might be needed from the village to do the activities?
- What assets is the business providing for the village? Who would take responsibility for caring for and managing those assets?
- What do the villages want most out of the relationship with the business and which of those things is the business willing/able or required to provide to meet its needs? Is it assistance with production through equipment, payment of advances, competitive and flexible pricing, training, etc.?

? Questions a business will need to consider

- What type of support (financial, technical) is needed? How will the business provide that? How does the village value it?
- How will the business establish regularity/consistency in its relationship and in its transactions?
- What kind of physical presence does the business need in the area, if any?
- How will payments be made?
- Are individuals working on the initiative getting compensated individually for their contributions? If not, who should the business approach and how should it address this?
- What is the pricing structure? Is there room for flexibility in the future?
- What are potential risks? How can those be mitigated?
- Are village and individual preferences factored into the design? Who does the business need to consult more with - both within and outside of the village?
- If working with individuals, what should the business share with village in order to get appropriate backing at the village level, while still maintaining the privacy of individuals?

Annex 8: Research Principles

The Community Engagement Study was conducted in accordance with the Fijian Vanua Framework for Research (FVRF). This Annex includes relevant excerpts directly quoted from the paper, “Decolonising Framings in Pacific Research: Indigenous Fijian Vanua Research Framework as an Organic Response” by Dr. Unaisi Nabobo-Baba⁶, published in 2008.

The use of the Vanua Research Framework incorporates the following principles:

- Research that is carried out on Fijians needs to benefit people, especially the researched community.
- It should focus on indigenous peoples’ needs and must consider indigenous cultural values, protocols, knowledge processes and philosophies, especially those related to knowledge access, legitimisation, processes of ethics, indigenous Fijian sanctions and clan ‘limits or boundary’, all of which influence knowledge and related issues.
- Researcher fluency in the Fijian Language and or dialect of the researched community. This recognises the importance of language in understanding, critiquing and verifying indigenous concepts, and in documenting aspects of their lives appropriately.
- The use of indigenous persons in the research team as principal researcher(s) in team research situations. On the role of insider native/indigenous researchers Swisher (1996: 9) had noted that they should be given the principal role in research that focuses on native peoples and their issues. He further points out that ‘insider’ views enhance passion and commitment as well as asking new and different questions. This is in line with Smith (1999: 184) who suggested that ‘Kaupapa Māori research needs Māori researchers who regard themselves and their research as fitting within a Kaupapa Māori Framework’.
- Respect and reciprocity: researchers need to acknowledge and affirm existing elders and Vanua structures and protocols. In terms of reciprocity, researchers must ensure there is sufficient means to show appreciation to people so that people’s love, support, time, resources and knowledge freely given are duly reciprocated. Fijian gifting is appropriate here.
- Researchers need to ensure as far as possible that local people in the research setting are co-opted as members of the research team. This is a means of building local capacity and ensures benefits in multiple ways to the research community.
- Researchers need to build accountability into their research procedures through meaningful reporting and meaningful feedback to the relevant people and community.
- Vanua chiefs, as well as village chiefs and elders at all levels, must give permission to all ‘researches’ (research) done in the Vanua.”⁷

Additional considerations when conducting research in a village context include:

- Conception – “Consider appropriate framing, which will ensure that all peoples that are needed in the research are identified, and appropriate gifts, plans, schedules and timelines are mapped out. This also includes the permission to be sought from various chiefs, leaders of the researched community and from the appropriate government institute or body.”
- Preparation and Planning – “The Vanua ceremonies and activities need preparation. Research in the Vanua needs to have all important chiefs, leaders and elders consulted and approached beforehand. This is important if the research is to proceed smoothly with the blessing of those who will give information and the warmth of their homes to the research team. Local calendars of events are noted and considered by researchers so that the research takes place at times convenient to the researched community. In all this preparation, it is important that researchers bear in mind that in the community people and people relationships are very important. Part of good preparation will be to appreciate that such relationships exist and may either deter or support research processes.”
- Entry – “The Fijian customary process of a i sevusevu (the presentation of yaqona) is a norm for requesting entry into a vanua (home, village, community). Entry is not negotiated once only. It is done on a continuous basis and at all levels of the research exercise. The sevusevu can begin with gifting, depending on appropriateness of circumstance. This process may differ a little from one Fijian vanua to the next or from one province to another.”
- Information Collection – “The appropriate method or tool for collecting information is through talanoa. All the types and rules of engagement in the talanoa and the protocols are determined by Vanua and its contextual realities.”
- Report Writing – “It is the responsibility of the indigenous researcher, whether ‘insider’ or not, to act responsibly in the selection of information that is to be reported for public consumption. This is because a lot of the information gathered would have been the result of the researcher’s own standing in society or the trust people have in him or her. This trust must not be misplaced.”
- Thank You – “This is reciprocal behaviour; it is not a one-off event as it will involve a continuous and ongoing relationship between the researcher and the researched. Amongst Fijians gifting may occur both ways, depending on circumstances or the nature of relationships between the researcher and the researched.”
- Departure – “There is no closure as the research relationship is one of continuous engagement with

⁶ Nabobo-Baba, Dr. Unaisi. “Decolonising Framings in Pacific Research: Indigenous Fijian Vanua Research Framework as an Organic Response.” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 140-154.

⁷ Pages 144-145.

people. Researchers are often reminded, just like other visitors, that relationships once established are (usually) for life—a lifelong association is forged. This is Vanua or Fijian customary behaviour and a way of sustaining important people-links. So, while one presents i tatau (a bundle of yaqona) to the researched community it is not closure as such; people expect that a relationship, once forged, will continue from then on.”

- Reporting Back - “This should be thought out carefully and, if budgeted beforehand, this needs to be appropriately carried out in phases with carefully

thought-out ways. To return to say thank you or to report completion does signal an important Fijian protocol of honouring people who have ‘looked after you or given something of value to you’. It is indicative of appropriate upbringing or custom on the part of the researcher. To disappear and not to return to report or just to pay a visit is considered ill-mannered and disrespectful; only westerners may be excused for forgetting to visit as they are considered ‘outsiders’ vulagi (visitors not of the land) and hence may be excused for displaying inappropriate behaviour.”⁸

Annex 9: Variations to Terms of Reference

The study’s research design varied from the original terms of reference established by the MDF by:

- The focus was only on supplier-buyer relationships between villages and businesses. It did not cover consumer-seller or employee-employer relationships, as originally stipulated, as it was not practical to cover three relationship types in four different villages in the timeframe allocated to field work. The latter two relationships were not examined as these are less common within MDF’s portfolio and with potential partnerships.
- The focal point was on the two main islands of Fiji, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, as this is where most of MDF’s

portfolio partners are located and it simplifies the logistics of the study, given its tight timeframe.

- Semi-structured qualitative focus group discussions and household interviews, known as ‘a guided talanoa approach’ in Fiji, were conducted. This approach was identified as the best option to build rapport with the villages and collect in-depth information. A time-use survey was conducted within the four villages to provide supplementary information on how men and women in the village spend their time on a given day.

⁸ Nabobo-Baba, Dr. Unaisi. “Decolonising Framings in Pacific Research: Indigenous Fijian Vanua Research Framework as an Organic Response.” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 146-148.

Annex 10: Reflections by MDF

Below are various reflections the MDF team made after accompanying the CES team in the field, and prior to receiving a debriefing on the research findings from the four villages:

- The level of individual choice in income-generation was surprising – especially given our pre-existing assumptions that most things in village life are done communally.
- Talanoa-style session worked very well and went smoother than previous research which used structured questionnaires. With the women in particular, they were more comfortable and able to say what they were feeling. They also opened up more having no men present and appeared to be having fun in the discussions.
- Villages which are closer to a main road and urban areas are no more progressive regarding the role of women than more remote rural villages. Men still dominate the committees and decisions; and while women have avenues to speak, they do not have formal input in village-level decisions.
- Most decision-making around income is done at the household level. Women are heavily involved through selling in the market and then decide on use of income earned at the market.
- The link to villages through the Provincial Council proved to be useful and important. Being aware of when villages have their cakacaka va koro helped, as well as the introduction and attention given by the village.
- In addition, arranging the visit beforehand, with the sevusevu occurring one to two days before the visit, rather than in the same day, was helpful. The villages were clear on our purpose, had time to prepare and gather the necessary people, and were able to tell us when the times were to meet.
- Keeping flexibility in the research/visit schedule helped. By spending two days we could make sure we had enough time for each visit and have them at the appropriate times – without having to rush through them.
- The structures in the villages are well kept – it appears to work for village life. People are good organisers and, even though they have a lot of work/activities from week to week, they are able to fit it all in. This also was evident in the way the research visits were well organised.
- A business mentality is present in the way individuals and villages manage their economic activities.
- Speaking the local dialect was very helpful in allowing the respondents to speak more openly and comfortably.
- The role of youth in the village context was really not considered, particularly how they are able to make decisions and are involved in economic activities. They appear to take a supporting role, similar to the women.

Annex 11: Summary of Discussions from Validation Workshops

During the process of finalizing this research MDF conducted validation workshops, where we shared the findings of the research with key stakeholders that work with communities or are aiming to do so. Two validation workshops were held, in Suva and Nadi, and included stakeholders from participatory communities, private sector, development agencies, governments, and NGOs. Below is a summary of discussions and selected feedback of the participants:

- Entry into villages for businesses is via the respective Provincial Council (PC), however businesses can also engage with villages directly once the relationship has been established. This direct entry is used once the relationship has been established and the village is working in partnership with the business. The PC are however, updated on the progress of the relationship through the Turaga Ni Koro.
- Besides being motivated to engage in a business relationship as a means of income-generation possibilities, communities also emphasize leveraging the business relationship to lobby government for infrastructure development (e.g. roads), which can further attract access to more business relationships. Infrastructure such as connectivity is important for businesses and villages to better engage particularly for business transactions. Villages sometimes face connectivity issues which further hinders their business engagements. An example from one business was the high cost of having to buy mobile phone recharge cards to enable the villages to contact them. However, due to this being the only form of contact, the business was bearing the costs.
- Flexible options can be suggested to the villages in terms of how they can engage with the business and whether they would like to form a committee to interact with the business, or a focal point or whether they would prefer to use the TNK as the point of contact. A 'one-shoe-fits-all' approach on how villages should engage with businesses will only make the business relationship fail because the villages do not have the flexibility to ensure what works for them.
- Some villages create committees to engage with businesses and it is important that businesses engage with the proper committees that are directly involved with the business or that the focal point is a member of the committee.
- Businesses need to understand the Village bylaws within which villages are governed. This will give businesses a good understanding of the limitations of working with villages. In addition to that, understanding the political economy of villages with regards to who the leaders are and/or resource owners, and what the protocols are surrounding these resources, is important for businesses to build strong relationships with villages. Knowing village bylaws and protocols, key actors and decision-makers is important in cases of disputes or conflicts, as businesses and communities will be equipped with knowledge on how best to resolve these in the most amicable manner, using the most appropriate mechanisms.
- Villages need business advisory services to help them better engage with businesses and to understand how businesses work. These services, it was suggested, can be provided through the assistance of the Provincial Council.
- Points of contact or focal points between the village and the business can be negotiated so that the designated person has a firm grasp of the business relationship and requirements. Of critical importance is these contact points understand the value chain to gain an appreciation and ownership of where and how the village fits into the overall business. As an example, one business took the focal point to the factory to show them the need for consistent quality of supply from the village. This helped the villagers to understand their role in the supply chain.
- Communities and businesses need to share mutual visions for the venture to succeed. If the community does not see value in the relationship the venture is not likely to succeed.
- Businesses can create feedback channels particularly for women and youth. Feedback channels are important for businesses that seek equal participation of all genders in the village.
- Continuous dialogue to be fostered between designated committee and the governing structures of the village to ensure that decisions of the committee are not overruled. This further supports the need for business advisory services in villages to help them to understand how businesses work.

Annex 12: Practicalities for MDF

- 1. Language skills:** it is necessary for MDF to have on hand not only Bauan speakers, but people with the ability to communicate and understand different dialects. Particularly those with a level of fluency that allows them to navigate complex topics. While many people outside of Suva can speak Bauan dialect or English, most are more comfortable expressing themselves in their own dialect.
- 2. Women meeting facilitators:** Women should always be present on village visits when meeting with other women. Only women should be present when speaking with women's groups or individual women (including note-takers). These conversations should also be held without any men present (both from MDF team and from within the community). This allows women to speak more freely.
- 3. Sevusevu and Thank you:** the protocol for gaining permission to a village – whether to consult with the village as a whole or individuals should be followed. In addition, when visiting a village presenting yaqona at the end of a visit to say a formal 'thank you' to the village is appreciated.
- 4. Follow-up with villages:** in order to maintain good relationships, it is suggested that MDF follow-up with villages after making visits. Rather than just coming to a village to take away information, MDF should return later to offer something in return. MDF can either give a verbal debrief of how the information was used or share copies of the public research findings. In cases where MDF is facilitating design consultations with businesses, MDF should follow-up directly with the villages to ensure they are satisfied with the process and to say thank you. Any issues raised by the village should be listened to and incorporated into learnings for future engagement-building visits.
- 5. Being seen independently from the business:** MDF has historically relied on business connections in the villages where they work. However in order to be seen as a third party, it should establish its own entry points and relationships with a village (through Provincial Office). Otherwise, for good or bad, MDF will be viewed as a part of the business. MDF can accompany the business on visits where it will be useful, but beforehand it should seek introductions through the Provincial Council and go through the traditional governance structures on its own and not ask for the business to make the introduction. During results measurement visits, MDF should not be accompanied by the business, but can and should discuss specific relationships between the business and the community.
- 6. For future research of the sort:** Firstly, the research design was large and it would have benefitted from being more focused – either in topic or location. There were some topics which we were not able to adequately cover due to only having the time to spend two days in each village. Secondly, MDF should dedicate small but experienced field research teams who speak the necessary languages/dialects to help conduct the field research. This should include both men and women – so that women's group or individual discussions can be attended by only female discussion leaders and note-takers. If MDF team members are going to lead field interviews, they should also be involved throughout the design discussions. This allows for consistency in the way the interviews are conducted; for learning to be incorporated along the way; and eases logistics. Thirdly, if using the research as a learning exercise for MDF team-members, it is recommended that an MDF RM team member be involved full-time throughout the design and field work in order to coach and mentor the team in the field.



