

Healthy Eating Plus Enterprise:

A Participatory Approach to Pacific Youth Contributing to Health Goals
and Sustainable Economic Development

“Bele Project”

April 2019



Social media workshop facilitated by Laurent Antonczak and Losi Sa'uLilo held at the Young Entrepreneurs Council conference room, Suva, Fiji, September 2018

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CONTENTS

Executive summary	1
Recommendations	4
A Chronology of Activities	5
Introduction	9
Opportunities and future response	9
Study Design	12
Methodology	15
Analysis	21
Nakita’s Story	22
Theme 1 – Food & Health	25
Asinate’s Story	26
Theme 2 – Family & Tradition	28
Panapasa’s Story	29
Theme 3 – Social Enterprise	31
Taraivini’s Story	32
A Way Forward	34
Recommendations	36
Conclusion	37
AUT Research Team	38
Acknowledgements	41
References	43

Tables

Table 1 Methodology matrix: the relationship between Talanoa and Participatory Action Research (PAR) - developed by Carol Maibvisira and Losi Sa'uLilo	17
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Figures

Figure 1 Action Research cycle framework	16
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Glossary of abbreviations and terms

AUT	Auckland University of Technology
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
NCD	Non-communicable diseases
NZIPR	New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research
USP	University of the South Pacific
YEC	Young Entrepreneurs Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the scale of the problem, tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs), in the context of sustainable economic development in the Pacific, requires wide-ranging and innovative solutions. Opportunities are emerging for new responses which use social innovation and enterprise. Furthermore, given the importance and preponderance of youth populations in the Pacific, and the intergenerational imperatives of sustainable economic development, youth must play a strong role in any solutions. In this project, Participatory Action Research (PAR) of Talanoa (storytelling), social media activities, networking and advocacy, underpinned by policy review and analysis, provided a space for young Fijian entrepreneurs to inform youth-led models for healthy and sustainable food systems.

Young entrepreneurs are passionate about food, health and family; some are already food influencers and champions. Their passions and creativity around healthy food contribute to narratives of desirability and attractiveness for different ways of eating. Yet, there is limited support for such small business development and youth-led campaigns. This study indicates that there is a growing potential to develop local social entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as other youth-led models, to address NCDs in exciting new ways, as part of a sustainable economic development approach. A supportive environment is needed for such entrepreneurship, which will contribute to wide-ranging and innovative change to the Pacific food sector. The role of the project team was to create a space and provide support to youth entrepreneurs, for innovation, networking, advocacy, and social media utilization, respecting the Fijian community and ensuring their ownership of the project, and providing a strong bedrock for further action.

This report presents the work undertaken so far in this pilot project. The project is experimental in sustainable food systems; it is methodologically innovative in that it forefronts Pacific epistemology in an action research agenda (Conn et al., 2016). Pacific research must contribute to decolonisation if it is to genuinely serve Pacific communities (Smith, 1999; Southwick & Solomona, 2007). From this core value, the study utilises a Fijian worldview in designing the project methodology. With a Fijian cultural lens, the use of Talanoa, which is a foremost paradigm in Pacific epistemologies (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Coxon, 2014), became relevant for working with young Fijian entrepreneurs. Participatory Action Research (PAR) was chosen as it is well suited to the aim of the research and was developed in line with key concepts relevant to the Fijian worldview. The placement of PAR within a Talanoa methodology ensured that the research process was carried out within culturally appropriate parameters, whilst explicitly adopting a change agenda. A further comparative study will be undertaken in Samoa, starting in 2019, and we have funding from AUT's Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) for a similar study in South Auckland 2019-20.

This project originally stemmed from a partnership which began in 2016, between the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva and the Public and Environmental Health team at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), based in Manukau, South Auckland. This was founded on a mutual interest in public health education in the Pacific, with and for Pacific communities. As

public health educators and researchers, we are passionate about addressing significant health issues of the day; foremost of which is the NCD crisis and the sustainability/climate change agenda. We are keen to be part of the response to this, with our students, many of whom are from Pacific communities living in New Zealand, and other young people of Pacific communities in the region. We aim to provide spaces for young people's voices and mechanisms for youth populations to have a leading role in responses. We consider that in doing so we will contribute to a necessary focus on *food, community and whole systems*; using a strengths-based paradigm with joint community action to address the crisis.

The project, commencing 1 August 2017, started with scoping, networking and planning, and ethics and permissions processes in New Zealand and Fiji. Negotiating ethics in health research is a vital activity to ensure that participants are protected. The project has completed one action cycle, with a focus on:

- Phase 1 Viewekani or *relationship* – Relationship building with NCD stakeholders and youth entrepreneurs, planning, and ethics.
- Phase 2 Talanoa or *storytelling* – Social media training, focus group discussions and interviews with entrepreneurs to elicit and explore their personal stories.
- Phase 3 Raicu Lesu or *looking back* – Creating and developing personal blogs and a project website, continued online communication with entrepreneurs, and other networking and media-related activities.
- Phase 4 Veitokoni or *sharing* – Reporting, sharing findings and ideas with the team – including youth co-researchers - presenting at conferences and other stakeholder meetings, developing digital outputs, such as a digital report (this document), a video abstract and journal articles (forthcoming), digital stories on the Bele website. Additional follow up, analysis and dissemination are planned for 2019.

Key themes emerging from the study so far are:

- **Food & Health** - Youth entrepreneurs are passionate about food and health, local and fresh produce. They are significantly influenced by traditions of Fijian eating and healing that were known and used by previous generations, and by concerns for the health of current and next generations.
- **Family & Tradition** – Previous generations play a key role in youth entrepreneurs' appreciation for food and healing; and traditions of family enterprise play a role in their decisions. They also show concern and fear for the ill-health of their families and community, and they express concern for their children's health and wellbeing.
- **Social Enterprise** – Whilst co-researchers are keen social entrepreneurs, there is little in the way of a supportive environment for small businesses with a social purpose or youth-led campaigns, either in digital or physical spaces, which could support strong future-focused and

youth-oriented narratives and actions. There appears to be considerable scope for a greater emphasis on food cultures, environments, and narratives appropriate to Pacific contexts. There is scope to capitalise on the digital dividend in the Pacific, being mindful of the need to ramp up the way we work in the context of rapid technological & climate change. Such a strengths-based and less medicalised approach might help to support the efforts taking place in tackling NCDs.

- **Contributing to a sustainable Pacific food system** – A critical policy review undertaken as part of this study provides a valuable macro-policy perspective in support of the youth enterprise study. It emphasizes the need to shift from the current food system model - which is highly dependent on sugar / starch based processed foods, foods imported to Pacific countries, and is not sustainable - to a healthy and sustainable food system commensurate with the latest research on the topic adapted to a Pacific context (see the recent EAT-Lancet Report, ‘Our food in the Anthropocene: Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems’), which emphasizes a whole food and plant based diet, reducing starchy foods, and maximizing local and fresh foods. Such an approach would provide a valuable and supportive environment for Pacific youth-led health and sustainability models.

The project addresses wider MFAT objectives of contributing to health goals and sustainable economic development by working with players in the food system in Fiji, including local youth entrepreneurs, Ministries of health, education, youth and sport, tertiary institutions and regional bodies. This project aims to provide a model by which these players can work together to promote the voices of our youth in the Pacific. There are indications that this model needs further development to include greater investment in sustainable food system innovation and technology; and actions with ‘Big Food’ and a sustainable food system agenda. For example, New Zealand is currently a major exporter of soft drinks to Fiji, thus contributing to the NCD crisis and to climate change, and this needs to be addressed (Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity, 2016).

Such a model would also fit with new public health (Baum, 2016) and social determinants of health (Commission on Social Determinants of Health, 2008) which argue for systems approaches, such as addressing commercial determinants of health and the role of the private food industry. Both small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and ‘Big Food’ play a role in the NCD crisis, not only in terms of trade, regulation, and marketing, but in relation to food cultures, quality and freshness of food, opportunities for local agriculture, retailing, and food innovation. The youth/community have a key role to play as influencers and champions. These approaches are in line with the priorities of the World Health Organizations’ Ending Childhood Obesity and the Pacific Roadmap (Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity, 2016; Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Taskforce, 2008). Thus, as set out in the research proposal, this study is addressing the broader goals of MFAT:

- Building trust in New Zealand as a reliable partner in the Asia Pacific region when it comes to resilience, prosperity and stability involving youth and healthy eating enterprises;
- Building knowledge exchange and skills relating to the implementation of mobile social media for successful business practices involving healthy eating;

- Supporting and increasing a local research culture that will help to assess and monitor healthy eating enterprise success;
- Contributing long term to the improved health of Pacific people through the encouragement of healthy eating, specifically eating vegetables and fruits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fore fronting food & health, family & tradition, and social enterprise for sustainable economic development

- Foster a youth-led narrative, culture, and environment in Fiji with a focus on the strengths and desirability of local, fresh and traditional vegetable and fruit-based foods.
- Utilise new technology and innovation like social media, for increased networking opportunities and healthy eating awareness as well as sustainable food systems campaigns.
- Support youth-led innovation and enterprise with a social purpose in Fiji by investing in specific and practical social media and marketing training, small and medium enterprise (SME) training, mentoring/buddying, access to capital and business subsidies, and providing prizes or awards for innovation and enterprise.
- Increase the involvement of youth in governance and strategic planning bodies. This will help to build capacity among Pacific youth and foster greater participation in healthy eating campaigns and in sustainable economic development.
- Create spaces for connectivity between various stakeholders e.g. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Young Entrepreneurs Council. Such interconnectedness responds to the need for multisectoral approaches to NCD reduction.
- Undertaken further research in the area of youth leadership, social enterprise and innovation in a sustainable food system approach for the Pacific.

In sum, support a Pacific model of youth-led initiatives, positioning youth as influencers and champions for healthy and sustainable eating in Pacific settings. This can be achieved by supporting youth-led activities, such as sustainable food system innovations & campaigns; placing youth and Pacific food cultures at the forefront of health narratives; and involving youth in decision-making groups, so that they are less the object of research and policy and more part of decision-making processes.

A CHRONOLOGY OF ACTIVITIES

2017

- August The project commenced with meetings of the AUT team in south Auckland and making of arrangements to visit Fiji.
- 4th – 13th September Scoping and networking in Fiji. Dr Conn, Dr Cammock and Losi Sa'uLilo visited Suva, met stakeholders and partners: Young Entrepreneurs Council; Minister of Youth and Sport, Hon Laisenia Tuitubou and team; Dr Tukana, National Adviser, NCDs; Dr Jokhan, Dean Science and Technology, USP; Dr Soakai, Secretariat of Pacific Communities; NGOs; and, CPOND/FNU. Initial scoping of potential youth entrepreneurs and gathering information about permissions processes.
- November AUTEK approval received based on a 15,000-word ethics' application (AUTEK 17/367).
- December Fiji ethics submitted.
- 2017 The project also supported Gloria Faesen Kloet a Pacific postgraduate student to undertake her Master of Public Health thesis, Fijian youth perceptions of vegetable and fruit eating.

2018

- February Suva visit by Dr Cammock to further the ethics process and further networking and discussions with stakeholders. Ethics processes involved immigration clearances and Ministry of Education approval. Meetings were also carried out with stakeholders as a follow up to 2017 discussions.
- April Ethics approval from the Ministry of Health (2017.178.NW).
- May Ethics approval from the Ministry of Education (Ref RA 45/18). Six months extension for the project requested and received from MFAT.
- 1st – 10th July Immigration processes completed. Dr Cammock visited Fiji to set up recruitment processes and to establish data collection protocols. Research officer Losi Sa'uLilo also visited Fiji during this time to meet stakeholders and entrepreneurs. We were also able to speak to local media about the project.

July	Creation of the website (https://bele.community/) by Nicolas Lienart, a student of the University of New Caledonia.
10 th August – 8 th September	Recruitment and field study in Suva, social media workshops, focus group discussions, individual interviewing audio and video by Laurent Antonczak, and Losi Sa'uLilo. Commissioned a Fijian filmmaker in Suva, David Lavaki, to assist with film clips and preparing a video abstract/short film of the study.
11 th September	“Our food, our people” one-day symposium at AUT South, Manukau. The symposium explored themes of food, NCDs, youth champions in south Auckland, and built networks in South Auckland with a view to connecting youth entrepreneurs in Fiji and the Pacific to each other. Keynote speakers were: Dave Letele, a finalist of the New Zealander of the Year Awards 2017 and 2018, for his work with Pacific communities tackling obesity; and Kelly Francis, Whenua Warrior, and champion on community gardens. These were key relationships to establish for future possible collaborations between Fijian youth entrepreneurs and New Zealand entrepreneurs.
November	NZIPR “Oceans and Islands” conference for Pacific Research conference, University of Auckland: Dr Cammock presented on Pacific epistemology and PAR; Gloria Faesen Kloet, Pacific masters’ student, presented on Pacific food systems. Abstract for the 23rd International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) World Conference on Health Promotion, largest and prestigious health promotion event, based on ideas emerging from this project, ‘Pacific food systems and planetary health: our food, our people, our future’, by Dr Conn and Dr Cammock, was accepted.
14 th – 15 th November	Pacific Medical Association Conference, Auckland, “Innovative approaches to Non-Communicable Diseases”, Dr Cammock presented, Young entrepreneurs in healthy eating enterprises in Suva, Fiji.
October – January	Email follow up with entrepreneurs. Data analysis of datasets from individual interviews and focus group discussions by Losi Sa'uLilo.

2019

17th – 23rd February

Visit by Dr Conn and Dr Cammock to Suva and Nadi for follow up with entrepreneurs, networking and disseminating experiences so far. In Suva follow up meetings with young entrepreneurs and with the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Travelled to Nadi where Nakita Bingham, youth entrepreneur, had been invited to present at the Pacific Ending Childhood Obesity (ECHO) forum, on 19 February, at the Tanoa Hotel, Nadi. Nakita was the only community representative presenting. Also, attended the Pacific Health Governance Research Network forum, with regional government, NGO and donor representatives discussing NCDs research, met Minister of Health, Hon Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete and other key stakeholders in NCDs response.

23rd February

‘Fiji Sun’ report on Nakita Bingham’s entrepreneurship and success in receiving a prize, UN Youth Empowerment and Innovation Challenge Award, which provides funding for the development of a commercial kitchen for other healthy food entrepreneurs.

February-May

Preparation of a final report for MFAT and drafting of three articles including preliminary findings and methodological innovation.

7th – 11th April

Dr Conn and Dr Cammock presenting at the 23rd IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion Conference, Waiora: Promoting planetary health and sustainability for all, in Rotorua, on Pacific food systems and sustainability.

May

A one-day conference presenting initial findings and discussing further actions and recommendations with young entrepreneurs and stakeholders. To be held at the Young Entrepreneurs Council, Suva.

Production of video abstract/short film by David Lavaki and further analysis, follow up and dissemination activities to come.

Publishing this report, and the review of Pacific food systems.

Making connections between young entrepreneurs in Fiji, Samoa and South Auckland and with local health mentors and champions.

Fiji sun newspaper article

Bolanavanua, S. (2018, July 9). NCD's Solution Here in Fiji, says Academic. Fiji Sun, p.7

Fiji Sun | Monday, July 9, 2018 | Fijisun.com.fj

NATION 7

HEALTHY EATING

NCD's Solution Here in Fiji, says Academic

Public health lecturer encourages young entrepreneurs to join her Bele Project

SELITA BOLANAVANUA
SIVA

If we don't start using what is readily available in Fiji, someone from overseas will come and use it.

This was stressed by Radhika Cammock of Auckland University of Technology (AUT) while speaking to the Fiji Sun.

The AUT Public Health lecturer departed for New Zealand yesterday after conducting a research project on young entrepreneurs, who are involved in promoting healthy eating.

She said with the rise in non-communicable diseases in the region, she believes that the solution is right here.

The main aim of her project was to look at some ways to help improve the businesses of the young entrepreneurs who are involved in healthy eating and have their voices heard.

She explains how important it is to use what is readily available in Fiji, which are the local herbs, fruits and vegetables as the solution of NCDs.

Ms Cammock and her team were in Fiji last week connecting with young entrepreneurs.

"We are trying to see how we could help with their businesses to move it forward," she said.

"We want to help them with what they've done so far to show that some of the answers come from young people."

"We are trying to look for the future solutions and build the young group of people that could empower the next generation."

Ms Cammock said their project was an aspirational project with the aim to empower youths and give them the spotlight and provide a platform to have their voices heard.

So far they have a few young entrepreneurs who had joined their team including some students from the University of the South Pacific (USP) showing interest.

They encouraged young entrepreneurs who are involved in healthy eating to come forward and be part of their team.

Their project is called the Bele Project and it started in September last.

Ms Cammock can be contacted on: radhika@gmail.com.

Edited by Jonathan Bryce
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Bele Project research officer Lusi Saxillo (left) with Ms Radhika Cammock. Photo: Selita Bolanavanua

BUDGET

INTRODUCTION

The health of Pacific people is known to seriously be at risk because of the onset of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes (Hou, Anderson, & Burton-Mckenzie, 2016; Parry, 2010). Risk factors can be managed by eating fresh vegetables and fruits, reducing the intake of sugar and salt, not drinking too much alcohol, avoiding smoking, increasing exercise (World Health Organisation, 2017a, 2017b). Fijians have been shown to have low consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits, one study finding that this is two portions a day (Ministry of Health, 2012). A recent meta-analysis of studies looking at fruit and vegetable intake and mortality risk found that increasing the intake to 800g or 10 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, leads to significant reductions (approximately 30%) in premature death (Aune et al., 2017). A range of social determinants such as urbanisation and the introduction of western lifestyles (including sedentary behaviours and processed foods) have had a negative impact on many communities, such as that of Fiji. With the expansion of trade and global markets, new foods (processed products high in sugar, salt and fats) have been introduced which have shown to be popular due to their convenience, taste, affordability, and promotion from heavy marketing. The situation today must also be considered against the deepening crisis of climate change, the biggest threat faced by the Pacific and globally, and how this must shape future policy and action on food systems (Willett et al., 2019).

As part of the MOH Fiji's NCD strategic plan, diet is proposed as a key area for obesity and NCD prevention (Ministry of Health, 2015). A great deal is being done to support the vegetable and fruit industry and provide healthy eating messages and programmes in the community. Fiji, as with other nations in the Pacific, is aiming for a systems-wide, inter-sectoral, multi-pronged approach (Ministry of Health, 2014; Thaman, 2009; World Health Organisation, 2013), which is essential for wide-scale sustainable improvements in NCDs. Pacific nations are also in the forefront of action on climate change and are key champions of the Paris Agreement. However, these are difficult and complex challenges involving many agencies and actors across government, business and community.

OPPORTUNITIES AND FUTURE RESPONSE

Unlike other areas of public health, such as tobacco, nutrition is a much more complex and contested area. Despite this, there is consensus on the benefits of eating a diet high in fresh vegetables and fruits. In this research, we have focused on food systems in the Pacific as particularly important for promoting vegetable and fruit eating. Food systems are complex and multifaceted, with many actors in both the public and private sectors that can shape healthy food choices through the supply and marketing of healthy foods (Swinburn et al., 2015; Swinburn et al., 2011). Against the background of climate change, there is a growing consensus around the nature of a sustainable food system (Willett et al., 2019); what this might mean for Pacific food systems is an ongoing challenge.

This project adopts an innovative 21st century participatory and design thinking approach to promoting vegetable and fruit eating in Fiji within the context of policy and systems research. In

2000, the World Health Report, 'Health Systems: Improving Performance', following on from the 1993 World Development Report, 'Investing in Health', signalled a comprehensive reform approach to strengthening health systems. For two decades, reform has been the primary mechanism for health policy addressing goal setting, financing, and delivery. Reform has involved government, non-government, private and public partnerships, and indeed it remains important today (Swinburn et al., 2015). However, in the face of the acceleration of environmental change, and the opportunities offered by rapid technological change, researchers and policy makers are exploring new ways of addressing such difficult and complex problems (Hunter, 2009). As a result, as epitomized in our approach, there is a growing interest in disruptive and innovative projects that challenge norms, present new models of change, position key groups as having a voice and an influence on change, particularly those that are typically voiceless in policy.

Design thinking focuses on empathy with users, seeking their ideas for new prototypes, user-driven ideas to be tested on a small scale, and it relies on the disruptive leverage of such prototypes to generate useful debate and challenge intransigent norms (Brown, 2008; Conn, Nayar, Lubis, Maibvisira, & Modderman, 2017). It fits with an entrepreneurship environment shaped by 'start-ups' having significant influence through the connectivity of our digital society. It is noteworthy that District Health Boards in New Zealand have recently turned to design thinking to address public health problems in communities for exactly the reasons set out here. Design thinking aims to be bottom up and innovation-driven, recognising that small non-traditional projects might influence change.

Role of youth

Pacific youth have the potential to be key players in providing solutions to the NCD epidemic and the sustainability agenda. Their involvement is key to both economic and social development in the region due to their ability to inspire and motivate others. However, youth are rarely involved in decision making and are typically voiceless in addressing the issues facing society. This project explores the role of a group of Fijian youth in developing vegetable and fruit eating enterprises as an important component in the fight against NCDs. We use Pacific epistemologies as a qualitative methodology framework for this research. This approach enables "a personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations" (Vaiolati, 2016, p. 21).

Social media

It has been recognised that using social media as a business tool can have a great impact on a country's economic growth (Qualman, 2010). In fact, traditional forms of marketing have become obsolete as peer groups demonstrate their powerful influence through social media communication (Qualman, 2010). Social media can be used as a hybrid marketing tool in that it not only distributes information about a company or a product through social networks (that is, direct marketing), but it also has a 'word of mouth' effect in that consumers can communicate about products and services they have encountered within their own social networks (Kwok & Yu, 2012).

We have also seen that social media can play a key role in advocacy and influencing campaigns.

The number of Fijian people being active on social media continuing to grow—40 per cent of the Fijian population in 2016 were active social media users (Turagaiviu, 2016). Although Cave (2012, p. 3) highlights the Pacific’s new ‘digital generation’ of “activists, thinkers, informers and influencers” resulting from the simultaneous boom in mobile phone use and uptake of social media, when it comes to understanding how social media is used there is a great deal yet to learn. Social media marketing companies are often employed by large organisations for their branding and sales and Fiji is no exception as evidenced by the following websites: Power Marketing (<https://powermarketing.online/social-media-marketing/>) or Oceanic Communications (<http://www.oceanic.com.fj/pages.cfm/news/fiji-companies-embrace-social-media-marketing.html>). For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and youth entrepreneurs with limited budgets, the cost of having someone else promote their brands and their healthy eating messages is prohibitive. Training in social media marketing skills too is important and not always accessible.

Addressing healthy eating through entrepreneurship fits within the wider sphere of social entrepreneurship whereby ventures are created and supported not only for economic benefit but also because they add social value to the community (Certo & Miller, 2008). Social entrepreneurship is a key area in which business innovation and industry can play a role in public health solutions (Hernández, Carrión, Perotte, & Fullilove, 2014).

Project Aims

This project thus combines youth and enterprise in a participatory project underpinned by a paradigm of design thinking, also by the potential for disruptive and innovative change agents, and challenge to the wider system, especially given the widening availability of social media and digital dissemination. Whilst the project is conducted in one context, that of Fiji, we would argue that the paradigm of participation and design thinking, and the model of co-design with youth adopted here, is replicable.

Our research aim is to develop a participatory model of Pacific sustainable food systems led by youth through social entrepreneurship, innovation and voice-based approaches. The incorporation of social media is a crucial component of the project not only to empower youth as role models through the digital promotion of their own stories and businesses, but also because platforms such as Facebook and Instagram in today’s digital society present opportunities to widely disseminate advocacy and influence policy makers and society. This study links to public health goals and economic development principles in the Pacific region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016).

STUDY DESIGN

Study Aim

“Explore how Fijian youth could be supported to develop sustainable, community-based enterprises that may work to facilitate increased vegetable and fruit eating”.

To fulfil this, a series of research questions guided the overall design of the study:

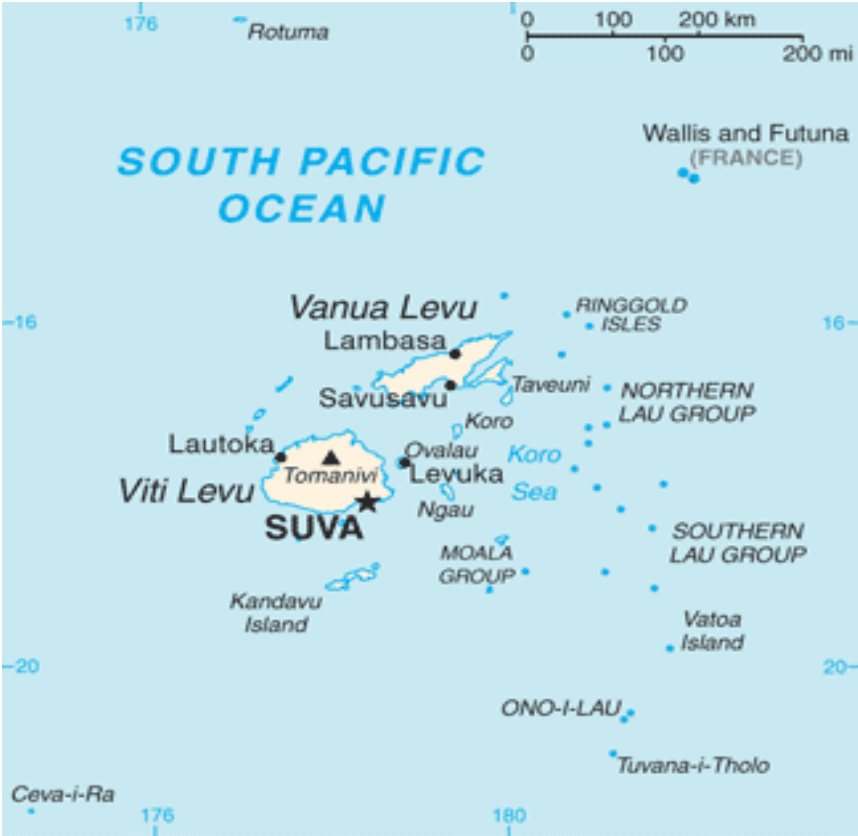
- What are youth perspectives on vegetable and fruit eating and food systems in Fiji?
- What factors contribute to youth vegetable and fruit eating entrepreneurship in Fiji?
- What support do youth entrepreneurs need to design and develop their vegetable and fruit eating business in Fiji?
- How might digital platforms, and social media in particular, assist in creating a space for youth entrepreneurs to reflect on and analyse vegetable and fruit eating solutions through business?
- How might participatory action research and Talanoa epistemology contribute to youth-led research in the Pacific?

Study Setting

The study was set in Fiji in the capital Suva. Suva is multicultural, urban and home to one-third of Fiji’s population. Suva is the metropolitan hub of Fiji with growing industries in food, retail and transport. Food spots in Suva range from the bustling municipal market where most goods available are locally grown, to high-end eateries and quaint coffee shops. Market foods include the main components of local Fijian dishes, such as taro, coconut, rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, breadfruit, and fresh seafood (Schultz, Vatucawaqa, & Tuivaga, 2007). The local restaurants and cafes serve traditional Fijian cuisine, such as Riley’s restaurant and Old Mill Cottage Café (Go-Fiji.com, 2018). Due to the multi-cultural diversity of the Fijian population, people from India, China, and Europe have introduced their traditional foods as part of the Fijian food system. Food vendors are popular places for people to meet, and they are popular with locals and tourists from around the globe (Go-Fiji.com, 2018). Despite international influences and the growing food industry, traditional foods such as Lovo, Kokodo, Rourou and Tavioka are still made within the home, valued and used for special occasions.

Map of Fiji

Retrieved from
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fj.html>



Population of Interest

The population of interest in this study was Fijian youth. This study followed a flexible definition of youth based on cultural context and institutional definitions. The age band 15-24 years is commonly used by global institutions (Conn et al., 2016). However, concepts of youth are fluid and often culturally bounded with many cultures in the Pacific and elsewhere considering the transition to adulthood (with its related role in decision making) to be much later (Tuagalu, 2011). Therefore, definitions of youth in Fiji for this study are broadly interpreted. In Fiji, the Youth Enterprise Council (YEC) describes its target group as between 18 and 40 years of age. As a result, those involved in this study range from 22 to 38 years of age.

In this first phase, the study recruited four young entrepreneurs who had a vegetable and fruit business. We had aimed to recruit 4-6 entrepreneurs; and indeed, the number of interested people was small given the significant personal input required. Their businesses ranged from market gardening—and selling at the market—to retail and online spaces. Businesses that were run by a young entrepreneur and involving vegetable and fruit products were considered to meet the inclusion criteria. Contacts with young entrepreneurs were made through advertising in local community hubs and through stakeholder networks. Young entrepreneurs were in constant communication with the researchers and therefore provided with opportunities to reflect on their involvement in the study.

Key Stakeholders

The stakeholders involved in the research represent interests from youth, local business, other government organisations and tertiary institutions. They have played a pivotal role in our scoping work, including facilitation of key networks and processes. Engagement with these stakeholders was key to the conceptualisation of the research design, ethics approval processes, and thinking about the impact or implications involved with working between different sectors and particularly within the context of Fiji.

Young Entrepreneurs Council, Fiji (YEC) – We partnered with the YEC through the newly elected chairperson, Patricia Mallam. YEC provided valuable networks for recruitment and key advice regarding youth involvement in the private sector and in health.

Ministry of Health and Wellness Centre, Fiji – The project has had great support from Dr Isimeli Tukana the national NCD advisor. Dr Tukana has provided key insights and advice on the need for innovation in Fiji's approach to NCDs. The young entrepreneurs remain in contact with Dr Tukana and have presented at various NCD related fora in Fiji.

Ministry of Youth and Sports, Fiji – The Ministry of Youth and Sport aims to provide young people in Fiji with the opportunity to improve their lives through greater investment and support. Therefore, the Ministry's investment in youth programmes serves its strategic goals. The Ministry was particularly interested in the study's model of support for youth voices, empowerment and leadership.

University of the South Pacific, Fiji (USP) – This project supports a developing partnership between AUT South and USP. USP and AUT have been in discussion for some time over common areas of interest in an intersectoral 21st century model of public and environmental health education for the Pacific. We have worked with Dr Anjeela Jokhan, Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment, and Reema Prakash PhD candidate and lecturer. Dr Jokhan visited AUT South on the 5th of April for ongoing partnership discussions.

AUT South, New Zealand – The AUT south campus houses health promotion, public and environmental health programmes and has a strongly Pacific identity, population and culture. The stories gathered through our Talanoa sessions in Fiji may be incorporated as weblogs or links on the New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research (NZIPR) website to highlight research being carried out with Pacific youth. AUT Tuwhera is a project supporting the development of online journals, and the School of Public Health and Psychosocial Studies hosts the *Pacific Health* journal, which will be used as a dissemination tool.

Other stakeholders we have networked with include:

Pacific Research Centre for the Prevention of Obesity and Non-Communicable Diseases (C-POND), Secretariat of the Pacific community, Fiji National University, Pacific Governance Research Network, local community groups and local council.

METHODOLOGY

The study was designed to reflect the contextual landscape of youth entrepreneurs in the health and food space in Fiji, and the socio-cultural characteristics of the Fijian way of life. Therefore, concepts like *vakarokoroko* (respect), *veitokoni* (reciprocity), *veiwekani* (relationship) were integral in our design and conceptualisation of the study methodologies and methods.

Talanoa as a research methodology has been used in various Pacific Island countries (Halapua, 2000) with various Pacific island groups (Otsuka, 2006). According to Conn et al. (2016) ‘the epistemological basis of Talanoa forefronts the knowledge construction processes of Pacific peoples drawing on Pacific world views’ (p. 51). Talanoa was first coined as a methodology by Tongan academic, Timotei Vaioleti, who explains: ‘Talanoa’s philosophical base is collective, oriented towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspirations while developing and implementing Pacific theoretical and methodological preferences in research’ (Vaioleti, 2016, p. 25). The use of Talanoa as a flexible, Fijian centric framework lends itself well to co-design and empowerment research agendas (Conn et al., 2016), see also Table 1.

The study utilised Participatory Action Research (PAR) to facilitate co-design and change processes. PAR is a collaborative methodology which involves recruiting participants as co-researchers to work in partnership with academic researchers (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). The use of PAR facilitates a commitment to empowering youth with the potential of creating engaged citizens. The strength of PAR in this study is that it positions young entrepreneurs as the experts in their own lives, with unique insights based on experiences in the social entrepreneurial space in Fiji.

The synergies between Talanoa and PAR were important in providing avenues in which, co-design, cultural competencies, youth empowerment, action/change agendas, could be accommodated. Table 1 further illustrates the relationship between Talanoa and PAR in the research.

Study Procedures

Discussions with co-researchers were facilitated through processes of Talanoa. In Talanoa sessions, discussions are collaborative, whereby experiences are shared and examined with other co-researchers and academic researchers (Conn et al., 2016). The phases of the study were informed by the action research cycle framework set out by Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014), and adapted to reflect the Fijian world view by categorising processes that reflect Fijian cultural and social norms (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Action Research cycle framework

Adapted by Dr Radilaite Cammock from Kemmis et al. (2014)

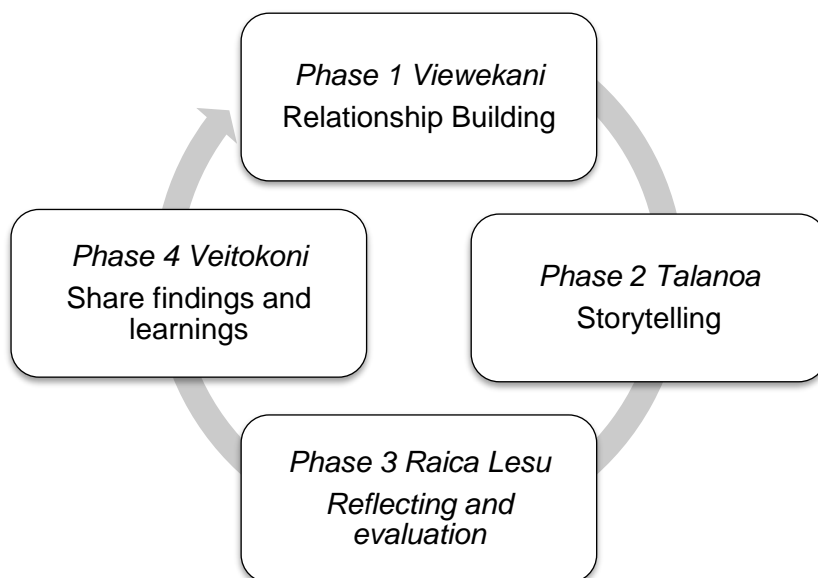


Table 1 Methodology matrix: the relationship between Talanoa and Participatory Action Research (PAR) - developed by Carol Maibvisira and Losi Sa'uLilo

	Talanoa	Participatory Action Research
Epistemology	Pacific knowledge, critical, subjectivist	Critical, social change/emancipatory, subjectivist
Origins of Methodology	Vaioleti created the Talanoa; kakala methodology and Fonofale from Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemann	Paulo Freire's work with Brazilian poor in 1970's; roots in social activism; partnering with vulnerable groups
Methodology	Participants as subjects in research; type of narrative inquiry; participants from different Pacific communities; research conducted in a space convenient and comfortable e.g. in the home	Participants as co-researchers involved in design & decision making (their space, their knowledge, their views/beliefs)
Empowerment & Action	Empowering nature where participants share their experiences with their peers including family and church members	Avoid tokenistic participation e.g. by equipping co-researchers with skills & knowledge required to participate in informed decision-making; genuinely creating a space to speak up/ be heard, learning from and capacity building for all
Facilitating researcher mindset	Researcher collaborates & shares power with others	Researcher collaborates & shares power with voiceless group; tries to adopt an attitude of 'not knowing'
Methods	Any method of storytelling	Emphasis on group methods; co-researchers choose methods based on their preferred means of expression – often visual, performed, oral
Data Collection	Collecting stories from Pacific people told in their own way	Production/generation of experiences and perspectives or ideas; collection implies extractive processes
Data Analysis	Researcher analyses stories using Pacific epistemology	Data generation and analysis not separate processes – both involve collaboration
Dissemination	Researcher dissemination; use of Pacific for a and dissemination methods	Ideally co-researchers participate in dissemination; PAR leads to their greater partnership in decisions and voice-based activities

(Boog, 2003; Kemmis et al., 2014)

Phase 1 Veiwekani – Relationship building and planning, July 2017 to August 2018

This phase of the study involved reaching out to stakeholders and young entrepreneurs in Fiji. We made our first visits to Fiji in September 2017 to meet with key stakeholders, and more importantly, to talk with young entrepreneurs we met through ‘word of mouth’ as a prelude to the study. We spoke with a number of young entrepreneurs at their places of work and at other spaces that were convenient to them.

We also completed ethics and regulatory processes in Fiji and New Zealand. The use of PAR is innovative in the study, whereby participants are also named co-researchers in the study. The participants are a vital part of the study in their role of influencers and champions in healthy eating, their role as co-researchers, and their role in presenting the outcomes of the research. This moves away from traditional methodologies where participants are the object of research, to participants being co-researchers. As such the ethics process was also innovative and challenging in that it was important that co-researchers were named and visible, rather than anonymized. In our submissions for ethics we were successful in arguing for lack of anonymity on the basis that it was consistent with the purpose of the research, that we would make it clear to participants that they would be named and visible, and that they would be invited to approve their written stories, and related images and video clips, before these are made public, and they would be invited to participate in dissemination and networking activities.

This first phase was key to ensuring that collaboration and support was established for the project.

Phase 2 Talanoa – Storytelling and design, September & October 2018

Once ethics’ approval was gained, and key relationships formed, we began the Talanoa sessions; guided by the key research questions. Co-researchers described their story and also discussed actions taken relating to their businesses, such as, setting up an Instagram account, or using an existing social media account to more actively promote the business, or seeking to expand their business.

To assist co-researchers in developing strategies, we organised a social media workshop held at the Young Entrepreneurs Council offices in Suva. This provided attendees with tools and skills to take their businesses online. In total, 19 participants registered and took part. These participants included three of the four co-researchers, young entrepreneurs from the YEC based in Suva, Fiji, the Chair of YEC, and a representative from the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The workshop provided the co-researchers with training in marketing their products on social media such as Facebook and Instagram.

The workshop aim was to empower participants via mobile social media training and orientation in order to support their business initiatives. After an introduction/presentation by each participant, the workshop introduced some key statistics/facts about social media to support participants understanding of the broader context of digital media. Then, the main part of the workshop was composed of some short discussions/tips-and-tricks about mobile film making (How to make a short movie with your phone? How can you tell your story? How can you share your values/the

benefits of your business to an audience/your customers?), with an associated learning-by-doing activity such as “write your name with images”, “interview your neighbour”, to name a few. The workshop ended by showcasing each participant’s first experiment with social media. There was a lot of enthusiasm and fun. The following document [<http://bit.ly/2Ph158n>] was shared with the participants as a take-away, post-workshop reminder and support.

Post workshop, and with the 4 recruited co-researchers, over a 4-week period from mid-August to early September 2018, we carried out four formal individual semi-structured interviews with each youth entrepreneur and three Talanoa formal group activity sessions with the four youth entrepreneurs.

Phase 3 Raica Lesu – Observe and reflect, October to December 2018

This phase involved looking back over the journey the team experienced throughout the project. This evaluative process involved face-to-face Talanoa sessions with co-researchers discussing business activities in the interim, and specifically following up on their experiences of social media. We visited their homes and their places of work to hear about their current and planned strategies, such as, expanding their business, adding additional workers, promoting the business through social media.

Where entrepreneurs faced difficulties, these were discussed. For example, it was noted that using social media and promoting the business was a time-consuming activity and co-researchers had limited time or other resources for such activities. As a token of appreciation and for their commitment to being involved in this study each co-researcher received a \$50.00 Tappoo city voucher.

Phase 4 Veitokoni – Reflect and share, December 2018 to April 2019

Reflecting and sharing in the form of reciprocity was key during this phase. Our dissemination processes focussed on ensuring that we ‘looked after’ our co-researchers and communities and that the information we shared was reflective of their experience. Co-researchers were involved in presentations and their feedback was sought on various outputs and reports that were developed. This ensured that they had the best opportunities for sharing their stores and experiences. We also provided our co-researchers with useful connections with other sectors that they may not have necessarily communicated with, for example, the YEC and Ministry teams.

Phase 1

**AUT research team with the
Ministry of Youth Sport president
and members**



Phase 2

**Social media workshop facilitated by
Laurent Antonczak and Losi
Sa'uLilo held at the YEC conference
room, Suva, Fiji**



ANALYSIS

The process of *veitokoni* informs the data analysis. The principles of reciprocity and working together are reflected in the involvement of youth entrepreneurs as co-researchers in the PAR process (Kemmis et al., 2014). The datasets that were produced from the Talanoa phases included: transcribed individual interviews, videos of individual interviews, images and posts/blogs from social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook), and audio and transcriptions of Talanoa focus group discussions.

This collected data forms the basis of co-created stories presented here. The reflection processes in PAR are key to data analysis in that participatory teams consider what took place and through a process of shared reflection; consider what works and what could be done differently. The data analysis process is guided by Kemmis, McTaggart and Retallick's 'Action Research Planner' (2014), with emphasis on a dominant-free paradigm, that is a shared approach between all partners and stakeholders. Data analysis is still ongoing with further discussions with co-researchers and stakeholders to be held in May 2019 in Suva. This will inform development of the recommendations which will then be disseminated to relevant stakeholders. Also, the macro-policy aspects of the study, based on the Fiji work and the review of Pacific food systems, will be the basis of further synthesis and dissemination.

The following section presents the stories of the four entrepreneurs we worked with intensively, and preliminary thematic analysis. The four co-researchers are Nakita Irvin Bingham, Panapasa Daunakamakama, Asinate Lawenicagi, and Taraivini Vueta.

NAKITA'S STORY

“Where there's a will there's a way”

A self-made health entrepreneur in Suva, Fiji – Nakita Bingham, Owner of Tasty Island Treats Fiji, healthy food entrepreneur, and mama of 3, enjoys being a pillar of support for her husband and children.

Nakita is the only Fijian selling ice pops which are organic and focus on locally grown fresh fruits. They are available in Suva city and Tamavua and are now also being made available to tourists in local hotels. Nakita has a firm following with many loyal customers and great positive feedback: *“A lot of different people have never really had some of the flavours that I've put together so for me that's very rewarding, just having that feedback”*.

Nakita Bingham was born into a family of entrepreneurs. From as young as 5 years of age she was busy helping out by collecting and organising the receipts from customers. Reflecting on these skills she recognises how valuable they were in her every-day life, and with running her own business. *“Yes, that's right, I'm surrounded by family members who are entrepreneurs, running their own businesses”*.

Concerned about the lack of healthy food options in Fiji, yet uncertain about her business direction, Nakita wanted to make and sell a product that benefitted the community: *“When I first started this business I literally had no idea what direction I was going in, all I knew was I had this product I needed to sell, I need to make sure I get it to market and know people that recognise it and I think it's been like a year a half later and I think I've managed to do that ok”*.

Having begun with selling chocolate and coconut flavoured ice pops, today, she has developed up to 15 different flavours. Her animal and gluten free product are sold at two key locations: 1) Kundan Singh Service Station, and 2) Contain Yourself Café, Suva, Fiji for FJD\$3.00 per ice pop, as well as through direct delivery sales or catered events. Additionally, on sunny weekends, her husband rides their own mobile vending 'CHILLIPOPS' trike around the Suva city area and sells as many as 10 to 30 ice pops per visit at FJD\$2.50 an ice-pop.

Her business goal is to utilise social media to showcase the different ingredients within her ice pops, especially fruits and vegetables, in the hope that others will view her product as a health food option: *“What I want to do is promote a health focus on a social media campaign promoting the health benefits of certain fruits [alongside the small players] just to show people that you really are consuming something healthy like a 'cool pop'”*.



Nakita Bingham
Tasty Island Treats Fiji
Suva Fiji

Her ice pops are more expensive than the regular ice-blocks being sold in shops, so she relies on taste and health messages to make them popular. The big challenge that she is trying to solve is how to bring the price of them down so that they are more accessible to the wider public.

Nakita's drive and passion for a clean and green environment is apparent from using a bicycle trike rather than a car to transport and sell her ice-pops. She uses reusable bags and containers to reduce waste. She also makes her produce by hand and adds the organic waste to her compost to replenish rich soils from home-grown produce. Her awareness of fruit and vegetable waste in landfills has driven her to be involved with the "women's empowerment community initiative" which she founded as an organic movement. The movement has two key strategic priorities: 1) social development, and 2) organic planting. Her ideas involve raising the profile of indigenous farmers and community champions in the hope of creating sustainable developmental opportunities.

Making ice-pops

Nakita's usual routine involves waking up as early as 6am to start cutting the fruits and vegetables for her home-made ice pops. By 9am, her chief ice pop maker and key supporter, Olita, arrives and begins helping with child care duties and making of the ice pops. Sometimes these processes begin late in the evening due to her family commitments. So, after thoroughly checking through the local market for ripe and flavoursome fruits and vegetables, sifting through the correct cocoa beans, selecting ready to eat, freshly picked coconuts and mixing these ingredients to the right consistency, producing these ice-pops is not an easy process.

As laborious as her role can be, she loves running her business and enjoys creating new ideas and playing around with different foods and flavours. Although her entrepreneurial journey has had its fair share of ups and downs, Nakita loves meeting new people and receiving positive feedback from her customers. Challenges have included unsuccessful funding proposals, unreliable stakeholder support, and customers recognising the reality of the NCD problem.



Some flavours include: Watermelon-Guava lemonade, Banana Bu, Mango Cream, Soursop Banana, Beulahland health tonic, Watermelon Soursop, Ginger cream, Watermelon cream, Mint pineapple lemonade, Chocolate, Pineapple basil, and Toasted coconut.

We all know this (NCD) epidemic is around us and is a significant problem but specifically here in Suva, the effects of NCDs has become desensitised and the shock factor from society has numbed them to the conclusion where they don't know what to do about it.

If I walk down the street I can count a bunch of people, like a handful of people, young people with amputated limbs and 'you know' what it's from, you don't even have to guess what it's from and you don't really think twice about it or if you walk down the street and there's somebody taking up like half the side walk it's like you just don't think about it but everyone's so used to it, it becomes so entrenched in our society that maybe people are just so used to it and they don't internalise it as much as they should but I think having a death due to it, it hits people pretty hard but I'm not sure if that's enough to go full circle and make total changes.

In 2018, Nakita signed on to be a part of the 'Bele' project as a young established food entrepreneur and sole trader with ambitious goals to grow and support other healthy food entrepreneurs. In doing so, she hopes to contribute towards an eco-friendly environment and the fight against chronic diseases including obesity and diabetes:

As a Pacific Islander I think of future generations and it doesn't look good if things don't change...because there is an epidemic and it's pretty alarming...it's happening to everyone, and I have friends who either know someone or has diabetes in their early thirties. There's just a general approach to NCDs specifically diabetes like its 'ok, we'll just deal with it' because people are just very relaxed...but it's going to hurt.

Nakita's ice pops, and her growing vision, can play a role in providing alternatives from regular treats, and crucially, she is a great voice as an influencer/champion for healthy foods in Suva. As a vital advocate for promoting positive change, Nakita's long term philosophical views are to continue looking for influential and impactful ways for addressing current important health-related issues in Fiji such as the environment and the food system.

Throughout her entrepreneurial process, her business-luck trajectory has exceeded her expectations. As of late 2018, her business dream came true as she now has an established commercial kitchen in Tamavua, Suva. As the only social enterprise entrepreneurial space for potential up and coming young leaders, Nakita is leading the way in providing sustainable solutions for key issues in Fiji. In 2019, she won a Total Award for Youth Entrepreneurship where she now has FJD\$21,000 to invest in her business. Nakita is now selling her ice pops at local hotels and has been featured in newsprint media, including Fiji's own 'Island Living Magazine and the Fiji Sun. She was the only community representative who presented at the Early Childhood Obesity (ECHO) forum in Nadi of Pacific government, multilateral, and NGO representatives. Her efforts have also been recognised by the United Nations Development Programme, which awarded her the Youth Empowerment and Innovation Challenge Award at the University of the South Pacific in Suva.

"I can guarantee within the next few years there will be more of us out there which will be great to see."

THEME 1 – FOOD & HEALTH

Youth entrepreneurs displayed a passion for food. They show their excitement about different kinds of food, being creative with food, sourcing good quality and local produce, and what food can do for our health. They include traditional Fijian dishes and produce. Studies refer to the importance of a narrative of desirability and attractiveness of healthy food if people are to feel attracted to the notion of healthy eating, “The cuisines of the South Pacific island nations are noted for their sensational use of coconut cream, fresh fruit and the most delicate fish. Away from the big resort hotels, skilled local cooks make the most delicious meals” (‘Me’a Kai: The Food and Flavours of the South Pacific’, Oliver, Berno, and Ram (2010)). The language and ideas emerging here reflect that to ensure healthy food is consumed, it needs to be attractive and pleasurable.

Traditional dishes and Fijian produce play a significant role in these stories. The youth entrepreneurs talked of previous generations, creating dishes, and collecting and using healing plants. There is a desire expressed both to respect and emulate these traditions. Thus, they are capturing and sustaining traditions which are in danger of being lost as Fijian society embraces urbanization and mono-diets, a common feature of what has occurred elsewhere. One example is Asinate’s revitalization of vakolovo; a traditional Fijian dessert using Taro leaves.

In addition to the place of tradition in food, youth entrepreneurs demonstrate considerable creativity by creating new and exciting products with fruit and vegetables. For example, as discussed in the stories here, Nakita uses unusual combinations in her ice pops and Panapasa’s juice mixture use a variety of local fruits. Also, youth entrepreneurs show creativity and enterprise in developing and promoting their products in such a way as to appeal to customers; such as, Asinate’s home-produced ‘takeaway dish’, which combines seafood and vegetables.

Using fresh produce is positively described, but it also poses a challenge. Sourcing, storing and preparing fresh foods is described as time consuming and challenging.

There is some confusion about health and food among youth entrepreneurs, which is concerning if messages of what constitutes healthy eating are to be effectively delivered. Yet, the stories demonstrate that youth entrepreneurs are passionate about contributing to health; this is a major motivation to promoting their food products. Despite Tarai having only a little knowledge of public health issues, she and her family are committed to eating healthily and trying to maintain healthy lifestyles especially for their children. Panapasa is influenced by his grand-mother’s beliefs, knowledge and expertise with traditional Fijian herbs. Panapasa understands consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables combined with the benefits of organic growing is great for health. Even though Asinate appears quiet in her approach, she is very passionate about health and has a strong desire to work with people to help resolve this NCD problem: *“I try to eat healthy, my fruits and vegetables and I think leading a healthy lifestyle is important”*. Nakita shows wide ranging concerns about the lack of healthy food options in Fiji. Despite uncertainty about her business direction, Nakita wants to make and sell products that benefit the community, starting with her ice pops and growing her healthy food business.

ASINATE'S STORY

“I want to have my own stall at the Suva market, so I can sell my own produce.”

Born and raised in Fiji, Asinate Lawenicagi was surrounded by land. Her family grew produce such as taro, pineapple, and green bananas. Her family farm was owned by her grandfather who maintained the farm. Now as a young adult she has continued her grandparent's legacy and is currently working at the Suva market selling fresh produce, such as pawpaw, apples and oranges.



**Asinate Lewenicagi Toosaqa
Suva Fiji**

As a hardworking, independent woman, Asinate's inspiration comes from her family. She is the oldest of 8 siblings and is determined to help out with family obligations as much as she can, given her circumstances, *“I'm the eldest that's why.... I'm struggling with this because they're still coming out.... I just want to help my family”*, she said. Aside from working hard at the Suva Market, she independently makes 'Vakalolo'. Vakalolo is a traditional Fijian dessert that is made with rourou (taro leaves), cassava, brown sugar, and flour. This is an innovative recipe as traditionally vakalolo does not include rourou leaves. Also, the dessert is traditionally made by men. The addition of rourou is beneficial as it brings nutritional value to the dessert.

I pick the ingredients myself and I hand make the vakalolo myself from 5am in the morning. It takes me about 6 hours to make and I make it here at home.

Being part of the Bele Project has opened many doors for her. She has enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the social media workshop which developed her understanding of promoting a business through social media and how to establish networks. This led to an offer to join a shared space at the market with other young entrepreneurs to sell her products. She is also contributing to helping provide solutions to the NCD problem. She found that while this was an opportunity for her business, the project was eye opening, and she notes that 'she got lucky' that day when she was approached.

They are [helping] me learn some more and know some more like how to use the social media, how to advertise my product and how to write my blog and for you to come over and sitting down and asking me question and tell me more about health.

Even though Asinate appears quiet and humble in her approach, she is very passionate about health and has a strong desire to work with people to help resolve this NCD problem: *“I try to eat healthy, my fruits and vegetables and I think leading a healthy lifestyle is important”*. Within the next 5 years she is keen to continue selling at the market with the hopes of expanding her business at the Suva Market where she can sell her own fresh produce/develop her side-line products. In doing so, she wants to promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. She has continued to promote her

vakalolo online. She has admitted that she still needs, and would appreciate, more support for connecting with other entrepreneurs on a regular basis to share entrepreneurial ideas and particularly through social media:

Asinate has a great interest in becoming an ambassador for healthy living through healthy eating. She can be a leading trend setter for sustainable food ideas in the fight against NCDs.



THEME 2 – FAMILY & TRADITION

Family is a vital motivator and source of ideas and inspiration for entrepreneurs. The youth entrepreneurs refer to grandparents and parents' roles in the collection and preparation of traditional foods and an awareness of which foods are beneficial to health. There is a sense that this knowledge is in danger of being lost and they are keen to hold and revitalize it.

Entrepreneurs were motivated by their experience of NCDs in their family and wider community family. There is a sense that youth entrepreneurs are seeing the devastating effects of NCDs in society, and this has is having a critical influence on their approach to their business.

Key to their business development goals is the desire to be a role model for others, their children, and the next generation, and to support other youth entrepreneurs. They refer to family and their children as important motivations for their efforts.

Family enterprise, culture and legacy are very important. This stems from cultural and generational customs where family wealth and property are passed down through children, and in reciprocal manner, young people look after their elders. It also highlights how their elders were entrepreneurial in nature, with them inheriting businesses and adapting family businesses to reflect socio-cultural and economic contexts. Within the traditional Fijian context, this is important to highlight in engaging with other young entrepreneurs who may feel that entrepreneurship may be foreign or difficult to engage with.

PANAPASA'S STORY

“It’s about gut health and drinking this health juice will help solve these health issues.”

From owning a clothing store in Samoa to creating and designing his own bottled juice, owner of Beulahland Eco Farm, Panapasa (Pana) Daunakamakama, is a successful entrepreneur in Suva, Fiji.



**Panapasa Daunakamakama
Beulahland Eco Farm Owner
Suva Fiji**

His Beulahland ‘Health Juice’ is sold at Dolphin’s plaza, local convenience stores and cafes such as ‘Moments’ in Suva city, at FJD\$5 for 500 mls and FJD\$10 for 1 Litre. As a strong believer in gut health healing, Pana has committed his time and effort towards creating and designing a nutritious drink, as he says, *“it helps cleanse from the inside out.”* Pana’s story began with ill health within his family. After much personal time spent researching the issue on the internet, he found that there were organic, nutritional solutions to try.

The Beulahland Health Juice contains a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, natural herbs and spices. These include beetroot, ginger, pure sugar cane juice, lime, lemon. Pana also uses local Fijian plants, such as lailai, which is known to have high levels of vitamin C. Lailai is a body detox and energiser that has proven locally to help lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels and improve gut health, brain function, blood circulation, and bowel movements. It is also health-giving properties believed to fight against NCDs.

Pana has an innate ability to develop great rapport with members of his community. He strongly believes that he has an important role in changing the mind-set of health professionals and the community to have a greater regard for nutritional, specifically fresh plant-based, solutions for health.

I’ve tried talking to pharmaceutical companies about this health juice, but they don’t want to know about this as this could potentially threaten their business.

Influenced by his grand-mothers’ beliefs, knowledge and expertise with traditional Fijian herbs, Pana understands consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables combined with the benefits of organic growing is great for health. As a family man, his goal is to leave a legacy behind where his children can serve as well as health entrepreneurs one day *“I’m doing this for my family, for my kids”*. Pana grows some of his own produce and sources others carefully. He has found a growing market for his juice in Fiji; as Fijians become increasingly aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle in terms of the food they eat and the exercise they take. He notes that the people he meets at the gym realise that exercise is not enough, that it is also what you put in your body. He explains this reflecting back on a past conversation with his grandparents which motivated him to begin this business.

Just playing sports and learning about food and what it does to our body...I was blown away by the knowledge...they're [general public] saying it's one of the latest finding and I'm thinking man, my grandparents used to eat like this [organically] and that we shouldn't eat this certain food [New processed foods]..we're always drinking herbal medicine and every month they're always mixing something for us' so yeah that has given me the drive to do this.



“For me my drive is to export to the market because I know that this juice really works”

As an entrepreneur, he would like to scale-up his business by exporting and seeking wider investment and growth.

For me, I'll be better supported [if someone] invest in and grow my business...my drive is to export to the wider market because I know that this juice really works.



He is also determined to give back to and help the community. He went on to say, *“it's about gut health and people are surviving from it... I mean there are people with diabetes, high blood pressure, open sores... they've come [to me] asked not to stop the business because it's working for them.”*

The Bele Project has shown him how to use social media to promote his products. Understanding the world of social media and the many platforms on which to promote his business, has helped him to make connections overseas and network more around the nutritional benefits of organic produce and products. He says he has found it interesting and challenging to use social media and realises that it is an important component of his business.

“It's been great it's been a wonderful experience I've learned a lot it's been a good platform especially now, knowing how to make use of technology which is my weakness...I don't know much about the new technology... using Facebook and Instagram as a marketing [strategy] and I think it's been beneficial.”

It's been great it's been a wonderful experience I've learned a lot it's been a good platform especially now, knowing how to make use of technology which is my weakness... I don't know much about the new technology...using Facebook and Instagram as a marketing [strategy] and I think it's been beneficial.

THEME 3 – SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Enterprise is clearly important to the young entrepreneurs both for financial and social reasons. Enterprise is described as helping financially with the family, and this is a vital element as it provides independence. But financial reasons are not the only goal for young entrepreneurs. Enterprise has been a way to develop and protect their culture, identity and legacy. The social purpose of family and community benefit is cited as being a vital motivator. A sense of instilling enterprise values in the next generation also comes across – but interestingly – this is not about making money only.

A feature of the study is that the entrepreneurs are all somewhat established. They bring a range of experiences of enterprise and other life skills to their business. They already have ideas as to how they would like to expand their business. However, they describe significant barriers to developing their businesses as the lack of networking and promotional opportunities, lack of training opportunities, lack of investment opportunities, and local barriers and bureaucracy.

These young entrepreneurs are keen to grow their businesses. They are very motivated and self-sufficient, so they are likely to take up opportunities where they exist. They describe the challenges of competing with bigger businesses; the difficulties for them in producing a high-quality product at a sufficiently low cost. This is particularly problematic where there are many cheap imported foods available, as is the case in Fiji. Having to be very creative to find outlets for their goods, and the time investment involved in promoting their products are further challenges. The challenge of balancing making, sourcing ingredients or produce, making products, and promoting and selling products. This is a difficulty for them as sole traders and a major impetus for finding additional investment is to be able to pay for additional support or technology. Nakita describes the change made in her business by recruiting Olita. She explains that this frees her to concentrate on networking, promotion and widening the distribution of her ice pops.

The entrepreneurs expressed appreciation for meeting each other through the project, and desire for greater networking and collaboration opportunities is mentioned. Given that youth entrepreneurs often work as sole traders, working from home, or by themselves, such social isolation is an issue, and finding mechanisms to break down that isolation is described as beneficial.

The young entrepreneurs discussed the risks that starting a business can bring, especially in cases where there is little capital available to invest. Because of this, they defer starting their business until they are in a financial position to do so. For some, this involves changing careers once financial stability has been achieved. The entrepreneurs argued that the environment in Fiji has been challenging for young entrepreneurs to thrive. Despite this, there is evidence of creativity and potential to grow in this important sector of society.

TARAIVINI'S STORY

Market stall businesses – key drivers in public health solutions.

Strong believer in God, family, and devoted wife and mama of 2, Tarai has her hands full as business manager running her family business at Suva Market in Fiji.

As a young woman born into a traditional Fijian family, Taraivini (Tarai) Vueta has always been family oriented and a woman of strong faith in God. She is committed to church obligations every week, including church on Sunday. She is part of the church band and a Sunday school teacher. *“God is great, all the time God is great”*. As calm as she is when surrounded by her family and within the presence of the Lord, she is very busy trying to maintain her family business every other day of the week.



Taraivini Vueta
Suva Fiji

Taraivini and her husband took on the role of managing Tarai's family business when her late mother passed a few years ago. Their faith has significantly helped with their ability to keep their family ties strong and their family business together. She, and her family decided to continue the family legacy of selling fresh fruits, vegetables and on some days, seafood at the Suva Market. These include fresh fruits from green/yellow bananas, apples to fresh vegetables including tomatoes, lettuce, cucumber, ginger, lemon and seafood such as seaweed and clams with the option to be served with lemon, a few red peppers and canned coconut cream.

Sunday has always been reserved as a day of rest and committing to their church obligations but every other day of the week from Monday to Saturday, Tarai, and her husband commute on the bus to the Suva Market as early as 4am to begin a days-worth of work until 6pm. Wednesday, Thursdays and Saturdays are the only days of the week where they sell seafood as well as fresh fruits and vegetables due to availability. Currently, they are assessing how often and common this product is being bought by their customers and if the demand becomes popular, Tarai will look into selling seafood every other business day. At 6pm the Suva Market closes and Tarai and her husband clear their stall of any rubbish then cover and seal fruit and vegetable that can be sold for the next day of business and set up for the next day's activities. Thereafter they then catch a bus sometimes as late as 7:30pm to return home after a busy day's work.

As a pioneering business woman, Tarai and her family wanted to explore more ways to further develop their successful family business. In doing so, they decided to join the Bele Project and have enjoyed the experience. As a result of her involvement, she re-discovered her love for eating organically from her own produce. In critical reflection, this journey has been very personal for Tarai, where she has been working on ways, she can be a positive influence within her family by building relationships with other young entrepreneurs. Having only a little knowledge of health and public health issues, Tarai and her family are committed to eating healthily and trying to maintain

healthy lifestyles especially for their children. A turning point for Tarai was when her 8-year-old daughter intimately said to her *'I don't want you to die mummy'* her response was *"we are all going to die one day but mummy will do her best by eating the right food and spending more time with you"*. Her husband is on the healthy lifestyle bandwagon too always reminding her to eat her vegetables and fruits, especially on her work breaks.



As an entrepreneur she has many business goals. She hopes to establish the skills needed to use social media as a platform to promote and sell fresh produce. Admittedly, she struggles with finding the confidence to upload her photos and blog her stories as this is a new concept of business entrepreneurship. However, being part of the Bele Project has reassured her that it is possible to promote her business online. After discussions with a young group of school leavers around social media exposure and its power to promote her business, she is determined to use social media as a regular platform for promoting and selling her market food items:



Then he mentioned about putting up his business up online on Instagram and I said 'oh I wish, I wish I could do that ay' but then I didn't know anyone and then I didn't know how to do it so I found out with this [the Bele Project] that you guys were doing the media and so I said 'oh why don't I [do this] so yes I want to expose my business especially my seafood because when they [the community] do their catering maybe they'll go 'oh why don't we go and order from Tarai in the supermarket you know they see it on the Facebook or maybe Instagram...



Tarai hopes to sustain and maintain her late mother's legacy by selling her products at the Market but also hopes to expand out into the community and work outside her comfort zone by selling door-to-door. Also, after having attended a Bele Project workshop she learned of the idea of using a coconut scraping machine to create fresh coconut cream for her customers rather using coconut cream from a can. She acknowledged that customers ask if the coconut cream is freshly squeezed from the coconut and would tell them 'no, her coconut cream was from the can' and reluctantly, sometimes customers are hesitant to purchase her seafood so in order to retain customers from purchasing her seafood she wants to invest in a coconut scraping machine. With her determination and support particularly from her family, she can make this happen.

A WAY FORWARD

The overall aim of this project was to develop a model of partnership and participation to contribute to the fight against NCDs, focused on youth entrepreneurship and vegetable and fruit businesses in Fiji. The study was successful in doing this by providing a space for such youth voices, bringing them to the NCD discussion in Fiji and the region, and highlighting barriers to healthy food enterprises. Furthermore, a policy outcome of the study, in the context of the ramping up of efforts to develop a sustainable food system (Willett et al., 2019), is evidence of a potential for greater Pacific youth involvement in the vital sustainability agenda. The project has identified key areas for action which will foster involvement of Pacific youth to a greater extent. As well as highlighting the lack of youth voices, the study highlights the lack of attention to the private sector food system. We were also surprised about the lack of policy discussion about innovation and technology as important developments in NCDs and sustainable food systems. This seems very surprising at a time when all efforts should be focused on the key components of sustainability.

A focus on youth voice and leadership is key to the sustainable development of healthy food systems in the Pacific. We are two years on from the start of the study and during that time we have become more aware ourselves of the urgent need for continuing work in this space, particularly around involving young people, future generations, as decision makers and innovators in the food system. We have identified how social enterprise could be one avenue which should and could be fostered. A sustainable food system for the Pacific requires wide engagement. Given the effects of climate change in the Pacific, sustainable development of a healthy food system is a tremendously important area for policy makers to address. The momentum for such considerations is increasing and this project contributes to a model whereby youth and the private and public sectors can be engaged in action together going forward.

The project identified four key themes for consideration when exploring NCDs in Fiji – food and health, family and tradition, social enterprise, and sustainable food systems for the Pacific. The first area involves changing the narratives around food. Our experiences with youth entrepreneurs were that, an over-emphasis on the types of food people should NOT eat challenged their approach to improving their lives. They felt that dwelling on the negative aspects of food contributed to the lack of enthusiasm for eating healthier foods or motivation for seeking better alternatives. There was also “NCD fatigue” where people were tired of hearing about NCDs and the negative impacts on the lives of individuals and families. Therefore, we argue that there needs to be a shift in the way food is perceived and that good food and health, family and tradition, should be the focus of our approach to the conversation around healthy diets.

The cultural association with food in Fiji, particularly through traditional foods, places local food at the core of any NCD response in Fiji. This fosters a model of healthy eating that is underpinned by a strengths-based paradigm of good food, traditional fresh dishes (with fish and a variety of vegetables as the core diet), fruit-based treats and food cultures and flavors. These shifts serve to make local fresh produce and products desirable and attractive. Such a focus brings the conversation back to the local, community, village level whereby all members are stakeholders,

from the fisherman at the local level to the family who eat the produce to the traders and investors who market and distribute the produce. It is also consistent with the key messages from the sustainable food system agenda – which emphasizes plant-based diets, consumption of local produce, and support for local producers and markets (Willett et al., 2019).

The project found that family and traditional knowledge systems were integral to entrepreneur's development of their businesses, and that personal experiences were motivations for the passion they had for their business. The focus on social entrepreneurs in this study was important in contributing to a local empowerment agenda. Young entrepreneurs knew their local communities because of their experience of living with their families and communities and so were in a better position to understand and respond to local needs. The ingredients and flavours they used in their products were a result of their knowledge of what was available and palatable to those around them. Our entrepreneurs were concerned for the health of their families and communities and this was evident in their desired future product development and business plans e.g. to expand their distribution of existing healthy products or add new healthy products.

As mentioned previously, social enterprises are businesses that aim to address a social issue. In this study our youth entrepreneurs created and developed their businesses in response to the lack of healthy food options in Fiji and in light of the impact of NCDs on their families and communities which they experienced personally. Yet, it is clear to us that the notion of social enterprise in Fiji and particularly within health is new and not well understood. Youth entrepreneurs' place in furthering positive conversations and innovations around provision of local, fresh food is shown to be of value. The study also adds to calls for a shift in approach away from the biomedical model of health and health services, to looking at the wider multisectoral landscape of sustainable food systems, to technology and innovation, and in particular to the responsibility of the private sector as well as the public sector to assist in NCDs solutions.

The need to be responsive to technological trends, such as information availability, social online networking, and agri-technology, also seem to be key areas for further work. In Fiji we were able to engage with entrepreneurs through social media and internet-based platforms and support them in promoting their businesses and networking with each other. Our recommendation is that more efforts in this space will be beneficial, such as training and capacity building, and widening the net to include other entrepreneurs in the food sector. Our experience in the project has highlighted how powerful social media is in connecting our young entrepreneurs with the public, as well as each other, and other stakeholders. These connections help youth entrepreneurs gain feedback and support as they develop their businesses.

The importance of connecting with and fostering key relationships with different sectors, and between entrepreneurs, is another area that we found to be integral to youth empowerment in this space. As part of our work in the project, we were purposefully collaborative in our approach to the project, and especially with stakeholders. Our efforts were underpinned by an understanding that all sectors (private and public) needed to work together to ensure young people, and that tackling NCDs within a sustainable development agenda is a complex systems approach requiring complex

systems ways of working. Our recommendations include the need for more action is needed to work with all actors in the sustainable food system, and to promote youth voices in seeking innovative solutions. Our preference is that youth representation would be represented in key decision-making fora, as well as through more fluid, and diffused mechanisms and new ways of connecting. Our specific recommendations are as follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS

Forefronting food & health, family & tradition, with social enterprise for sustainable economic development

- Foster a youth-led narrative, culture, and environment in Fiji with a focus on the strengths and desirability of local, fresh and traditional vegetable and fruit-based foods.
- Utilise new technology and innovation like social media, for increased networking opportunities and healthy eating awareness as well as sustainable food systems campaigns.
- Support youth-led innovation and enterprise with a social purpose in Fiji by investing in specific and practical social media and marketing training, small and medium enterprise (SME) training, mentoring/buddying, access to capital and business subsidies, and providing prizes or awards for innovation and enterprise.
- Increase the involvement of youth in governance and strategic planning bodies. This will help to build capacity among Pacific youth and foster greater participation in healthy eating campaigns and in sustainable economic development.
- Create spaces for connectivity between various stakeholders e.g. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Young Entrepreneurs Council, and youth entrepreneurs. Such interconnectedness responds to the need for multisectoral approaches.
- Undertaken further research in the area of youth leadership, social enterprise and innovation in a sustainable food system approach for the Pacific.

In sum, support a Pacific model of youth-led initiatives, positioning youth as influencers and champions for healthy and sustainable eating in Pacific settings. This can be achieved by supporting youth-led activities, such as sustainable food system innovations & campaigns; placing youth and Pacific food cultures at the forefront of health narratives; and involving youth in decision-making groups, so that they are less the object of research and policy and more part of decision-making processes.

CONCLUSION

The project has been an exploratory process focusing on the role of Pacific youth and social enterprise in the response to NCDs within a sustainable economic development framework. Although the study has highlighted some key areas for consideration and presented recommendations to address concerns and provide further support, we acknowledge that this work has only scratched the surface. The relationships that we have built with stakeholders and youth entrepreneurs need to be nurtured and developed if we want to continue to understand the role of youth, enterprise and innovation, the private sector and key government bodies in developing a sustainable food system in Fiji and in other Pacific contexts. From our point of view, the study does not end with this report and more investment in such work would be of value.

AUT RESEARCH TEAM

Dr Cath Conn, Associate Head of School (South), AUT Public Health and Psychosocial Studies

Cath has nearly 40 years' experience in international development, and a background in public health and management, including 10 years as a programme manager with Save the Children; also, at Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex, and Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Auckland. Her roles included Deputy Country Director in Sudan, and Primary Health Care Adviser to the MoH, The Gambia. She also worked as a DFID(UK), British Council, and SIDA health systems' consultant in Vietnam, Laos, Nigeria, China. As Associate Head of School, Cath is taking a lead in developing a distinctive profile in public health education at AUT South (Manukau) with an emphasis on the youthful Pacific and Māori south Auckland population. She is co-director of the AUT Centre for Child Health Research (Elaine Rush is also a co-director). Her research focuses on youth empowerment, participatory, visual and action research methodologies, health systems and policy. Recent research includes: participatory research with indigenous Nepalese youth and the early marriage and pregnancy project; participatory action research with Zimbabwe in-school youth and HIV prevention sex education; participatory action research with young men who have sex with men in Bali and internet-based HIV prevention; and participatory action research with Auckland Youth Leaders.

Dr Radilaite Cammock, Project Manager & Lecturer, School of Public Health and Psychosocial studies, AUT.

Dr Cammock has been involved in research in the Pacific particularly Fiji for 10 years. She has worked with various organisations in Fiji, which include the secretariat of the Pacific community, United Nations population fund and Ministries of Health and iTaukei affairs. Her approach to research in the Pacific has always been to ensure that Pacific values and belief systems are upheld when conducting, interpreting and disseminating research. This approach led to publications from the prospective outcomes of injury (POIS) study, which emphasized the importance of Pacific models of health when trying to understand Pacific people's wellbeing. Dr Cammock is interested in the use of Talanoa as a research methodology for health research and has used Talanoa to investigate iTaukei or indigenous Fijian women's family planning attitudes in both the New Zealand (Developed country) and Fiji (Developing country) context. Dr Cammock is Fijian and given her research experience in Fiji, provides the study with further contextual expertise.

Losi Sa'uLilo, AUT MPH, PhD Vice Chancellor's Scholarship awardee & Research Officer, School of Public Health and Psychosocial Studies

Losi's work and academic experience is diverse and substantial; having graduated with a Bachelor of Sport and Recreation in 2011, a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health in 2013, completing her Masters of Public Health, where she explored the associations of demographic and behavioural factors with health literacy of Pacific mothers in the context of Pacific health and well-being. She

began her doctoral journey in 2018 exploring the current food environment and youth entrepreneurship in Samoa. Losi has a sound knowledge of the sport, recreation and health sector working with communities nationally and internationally of all age groups and ethnic groups as a researcher, teaching assistant in nutrition, and community liaison since 2010. She was awarded an InterNZ placement in New York in 2015 with Play Rugby USA and is currently supporting Cath as a researcher on the project, Vanuatu Seasonal Workers: Leading the way in oral health promotion.

Laurent Antonczak, Research Fellow & Health Communications and Media Lecturer, AUT School of Public Health and Psychosocial Studies

Laurent Antonczak is a multicultural entrepreneur specialising in digital strategies, education and mobile technologies (mainly for smartphones). Within the last 20 years, Laurent led and managed a diversified myriad of international, national and regional projects across numerous disciplines. His role mainly consisted in connecting and interfacing with key stakeholders, supporting business development and improvement processes to ensure smooth implementation of initiatives and accurate delivery in conjunction with nurturing teamwork in a multicultural environment. Laurent is also a multiple award-winning researcher at Colab – Auckland University of Technology focusing on Mobile Technologies & Education. Moreover, he is one of the co-founders of MINA [Mobile Innovation Network Australasia], which aims to explore the possibilities of interaction between people, content and mobile devices in the APAC region mainly. In addition, Laurent’s decisive representative and diplomatic roles as Honorary Vice-Consul of Auckland, Embassy of France in New Zealand, former Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce Europe - New Zealand, as well as his various connections and working collaborations across Ministries, National Advisory Boards, Local Authorities, and agencies, Education stakeholder representatives is an asset for this project.

Dr Philippa Smith, Research Manager, Institute of Culture, Discourse & Communication, AUT

Dr Philippa Smith is the Research Manager for the Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication at Auckland University of Technology and teaches in the area of (new)-media. Philippa has been a researcher at AUT since 2002 and has a penchant for projects involving all forms of communication ranging from text analysis to the impact of digital technologies. She has spoken at a range of conferences locally and internationally and has been a plenary speaker twice at InternetNZ’s Nethui conference. Philippa has received a number of academic awards and was most recently recognised for her excellence in research leadership by the Faculty of Culture & Society in 2016. Some of the research projects she has been involved in are (funders in brackets): the Television Violence in NZ project (Ministry of Culture & Heritage); bro’town and Pasifika identity (AUT); the World Internet Project in New Zealand project that has surveyed New Zealanders biennially since 2007 about their internet use. While involved in all of the surveys Philippa was executive director of the project from 2014 – 2016. (Funded by InternetNZ and, respectively, the National Library of NZ, DIA and MBIE); mobile devices and learning in the classroom (AUT) the Online News project (AUT); New Zealanders with disabilities and their internet use (AUT); the Digital Inclusion Project (MBIE).

**Gloria Faesen Kloet, AUT postgraduate MPH, SPC intern, graduate management trainee
CMDHB**

Gloria Blake is New Zealander born with parental ties to Fiji and Tonga. She has an undergraduate degree in Sport and Recreation with a double major in 'Exercise and Sport Science' & 'Physical Activity and Nutrition'. She has recently completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health and is a Master's student in Public Health. She has been a research assistant in the school of public health doing work focused on participatory action research for data collection and research development. She is focusing her Masters on the involvement of Fijian youth to increase vegetable and fruit consumption. Her other roles include programme Coordinator for Pu Ora Matatini; supporting Māori midwifery students who are a part of a scholarship programme; and assisted in the Auckland Wide Healthy Homes initiative (AWHI) during the piloting phase. She worked with Counties Manukau DHB as part of a Health Management Trainee programme over 2 years and she is currently lecturer at AUT for the Health Promotion undergraduate paper.

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Stakeholders:

Young Entrepreneurs Council, Fiji (YEC) – We partnered with the YEC through the newly elected chairperson, Patricia Mallam. YEC provided valuable networks for recruitment and key advice regarding youth involvement in the private sector and in health.

Ministry of Health and Wellness Centre, Fiji – The project has had great support from Dr Isimeli Tukana the national NCD advisor. Dr Tukana has provided key insights and advice on the need for innovation in Fiji's approach to NCDs. The young entrepreneurs remain in contact with Dr Tukana and have presented at various NCD related fora in Fiji.

Ministry of Youth and Sports, Fiji – The Ministry of Youth and Sport aims to provide young people in Fiji with the opportunity to improve their lives through greater investment and support. Therefore, the Ministry's investment in youth programmes serves its strategic goals. The Ministry was particularly interested in the study's model of support for youth voices, empowerment and leadership.

Other stakeholders we have networked with include:

Pacific Research Centre for the Prevention of Obesity and Non-Communicable Diseases (C-POND), Secretariat of the Pacific community, Fiji National University, Pacific Governance Research Network, local community groups and local council.

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