



PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VII

30 YEAR LEGACY

AN NGO JOURNEY IN THE PACIFIC



Compiled & Written by:
Aengus O'Donoghue

A THIRTY YEAR LEGACY

AN NGO JOURNEY IN THE PACIFIC

By Aengus O Dochartaigh

“ As I write this down I am picturing PCDF as flowing waters. Most waters, like the inception of the organisation it starts as a small runoff (not recognised) then with time (years) it widens and get longer because other runoffs flow towards this particular runoff (projects, networks, stakeholder - you name it) and collect as one flowing downstream. By this time its effect on its surrounding is recognised. It is not a small drain, a creek or a stream it is a river.- yes that is PCDF today and thank you for being at its helm....”

*Sokoveti Namoumou
(PCDF Project Officer 2004 - 2009)*

Compiled and Written by: Aengus O Dochartaigh

Edited by: Dr Graham Roberts

Layout & Design: Filipe Waqairagata.

Cover Picture: Maria Seremana, aged 44, using the water supplied by MORDI in Nakorovou, Vanua Levu,

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	4
Foreword.....	5
Acronyms.....	6
Glossary.....	7
Fijian Pronunciation.....	8
Map of Fiji Islands.....	9
Introduction.....	11
Diagram: PCDF Programme Summary.....	13
The Early Years:	15
FSPF & KANA.....	15
Disaster Management.....	20
Natural Resource Management (NRM).....	25
Living Waters/ Waibulabula.....	26
Cora Gardens Initiative/ Corals for conservation.....	29
Blue Forest Project/ Cakaubulabula.....	32
NRM Future.....	33
Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE).....	39
Capacity Bulding Project.....	39
Just Water Project.....	42
Good Governance Project.....	44
‘Voices and Choices’ & ‘People and Policy’.....	44
Youth & Mental Health Project.....	50
Mainstreaming Of Rural Developmet Innovations (MORDI).....	55
Awards.....	61
The Past, The Present, The Future.....	63
Bibliography.....	66
Literature.....	68

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was undertaken to record the history, achievement and guiding principles of one of the most successful community development NGOs in the South Pacific region. I would like to thank the following for their support:

To those who listened and to those who answered.

To the PCDF family, one and all, who were always hugely warm and accommodating in work and play - especially those subjected to my interview technique.

A special note for Alisi Daurewa, Verona Lucas and Graham Roberts. Their knowledge and insight, in terms of methodology as well as history, was fundamental to this piece achieving an acceptable hue.

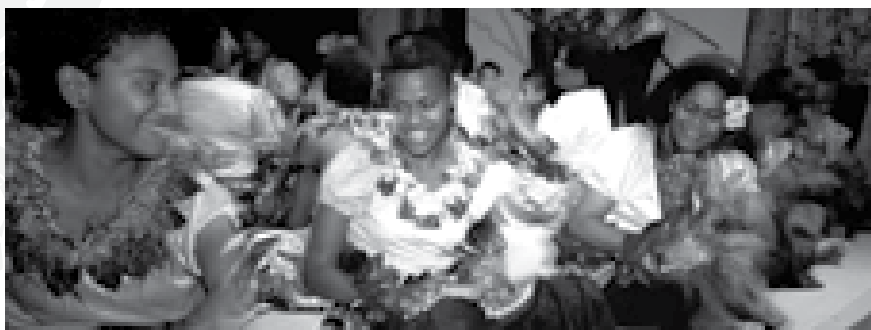
To Fiji for allowing me a brief and fleeting insight into this most fascinating of nations.

To Fijians for reminding me, through their actions, of the self-destructive nature of our relentless western cynicism.

To all of you who reach the end of this tome! I apologise and appreciate that you may well need a lie down.

'Go mba fada buan bhur saothar'

'May your work be long-lasting'



FOREWORD

Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF) has journeyed this far because of the generosity and trust of all those who have been so dedicated and involved over the years. Many have played vital roles in its growth and reputation as a national community development NGO, including: partnering communities; numerous donors; the Government; many stakeholders and above all, past and present staff, members and the board of directors.

This book chronicles PCDF's history and achievements to date; A '30 Year Legacy' reveals that behind the operations of PCDF, stand two strong women of the Pacific, who broke traditional barriers because they were more concerned with the people than following the social norms. They belong to two contrasting societies, Verona Lucas who served as Executive Director for 23 years is from Australia and Alisi Waqanika Daurewa, her successor and presently serving for over 7 years, is a native of Kadavu, Fiji.

Throughout their terms, programs have extended, ensuring gender and good governance characteristics are integrated which has gained international and local recognition. Collectively, all the programs that have been implemented share a common thread - they are holistic and restorative, designed to ensure there is mitigation should conflict arise out of their intervention.

The two women mentioned above were our supposed eyes at a particular time of our history. We thank them for their courageous wisdom! I apply to them this text from the Book of Wisdom 6: 12-14. "Wisdom is bright, and does not grow dim. By those who love her she is readily seen, and found by those who look for her. Quick to anticipate those who desire her, she makes herself known to them."

I wish Verona & Alisi their families and loved ones - peace! I also wish Partners in Community Development Fiji a safe and successful journey into the future – peace!

God, bless.

Petero Mataca
(PCDF Patron)

ACRONYMS

- AFAP** - Australian Foundation for Asia and the Pacific (formerly AFSP)
AFSP - Australian Foundation for the People's of the South Pacific
AIDAB - Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
AUSAID - Australian Agency for Overseas Development (formerly AIDAB)
CARITAS - Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development
CF - Community Facilitator
DIFD - UK Department for International Development
EED - Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (German Protestant Churches Development Org.)
FSPF - Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific Fiji
FSPI - Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International
FSPUK - Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific United Kingdom
FSPUSA - Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific USA
 (now Counterpart)
IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development
JWP - Just World Partners (formerly FSPUK)
KANA - Komiti for the Advancement of Nutrition and Agriculture
MPA - marine protected area
MISEREOR - German Catholic Bishops Organisation
NGO - non-governmental organisation
NZAID - New Zealand Agency for Overseas Development
 (formerly NZODA)
NZODA - New Zealand Official Development Assistance
ODA - Official Development Assistance
PCDF - Partners in Community Development Fiji
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia
 and the Pacific
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
USAID - United States Agency for Overseas Development

GLOSSARY

FIJIAN / ENGLISH

bure	traditional Fijian house
Cakaubulabula	Healthy Reefs
Kadavu	fourth largest island in Fiji
kana	to eat
koro o	village of
mataisau	traditional craftspeople
Maiwai	From the Water
Qelebulabula	Healthy Land
Ratu	traditional chief/ honorific used for high-born males
Taveuni	third largest island in Fiji
tikina o	district of
Turaga ni Koro	village headman (government employee)
Vanua Levu	second largest island in Fiji
Viti Levu	largest island in Fiji
Waibulabula	Living Waters
yasana o	province of



FIDIAN PRONUNCIATION

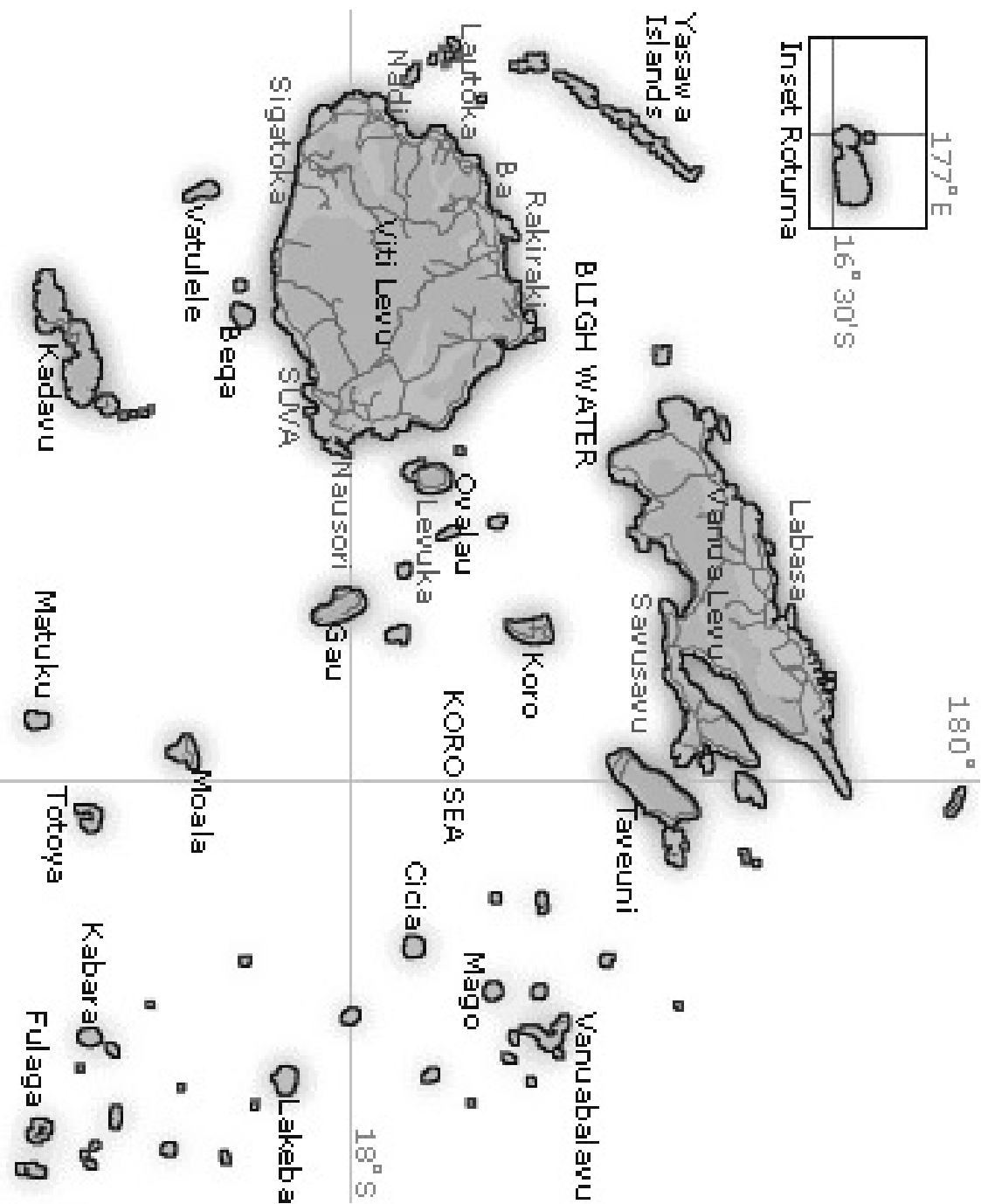
CONSONANTS

LETTER	PRONUNCIATION	EXAMPLE IN ENGLISH
b	mb	number
c	th	the (<i>never as thin</i>)
d	nd	lender
j	ch	choose
g	ng	singer (<i>never as finger</i>)
q	ngg	finger (<i>never as singer</i>)

VOWELS

LETTER	PRONUNCIATION	EXAMPLE IN ENGLISH
a	ah	jar (<i>never as cat</i>)
e	eh	fellow (<i>never as scene</i>)
i	ee	machine (<i>never as tin</i>)
o	aw	more (<i>never as dog</i>)
u	oo	put, pool (<i>never `as cut or fume</i>)

MAP OF FIJI ISLANDS





Local boy from the Serua District, Viti Levu

INTRODUCTION

“...Respect the community for having survived for 1500 years in this part of the world. Obviously they’ve been able to do that with some systems of their own, some understandings of their own - those things are not to be devalued, they are to be the foundation on which you work...”¹

Partners in Community Development, Fiji (PCDF) is a family. A family dedicated to every brother and sister throughout Fijian society. It is this spirit which differentiates NGOs from organisations which may have conflicting motives for engaging in community development projects. It is PCDFs total commitment to the empowerment of the people of Fiji which sets it apart as an NGO.

PCDF, formerly Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific Fiji (FSPF), has for thirty years been instrumental in the development of confident and sustainable communities. The three core elements of PCDFs community development operation are ‘Natural Resource Management’ (NRM), ‘Community Capacity Enhancement’ (CCE) and ‘Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations’ (MORDI). Without this wide-ranging mission, genuine progression in isolated and/or underdeveloped communities would not be possible. The foundations of PCDFs mission are partnership, stewardship and justice. They are not just a non-governmental organisation; they are of the community and for the community.

There is no doubt that post-independence Fiji was an entirely different social and cultural state to that which entered the British empire in 1874. Ninety six years of colonial rule had completely changed the human landscape of this corner of the South Pacific. The British policy of indentured labour lasted from 1879 to 1916 and fundamentally changed the ethnic demographics of the Fiji Islands – thousands of sub-continental Indians were brought to the Pacific as cheap labour for sugar production. Consequently, post-colonial Fiji did not just face the task of administering a newly independent and sprawling nation of islands; it also had to develop a cohesive national identity in an ethnically and religiously divided society. As with many former colonial states, generations of being run as a business by former colonial masters does not create the ideal foundation for harmonious nation building.

Unfortunately, it was the nutritional and social deficiencies emanating from this social confusion which inspired a new generation of development workers. The organisation we now know as Partners in Community Development Fiji, is a product of the passion for development in the South Pacific espoused by Australian actress Elizabeth Bryant Silverstein and her American husband Maurice ‘Red’ Silverstein (MGM International President) in the early 1960s. This auspicious couple’s friendship with Australian Marist priest Stanley Hosie, who had previously undertaken

¹ Interview: Graham Roberts (08.07.09), Aengus O’Dochartaigh.

extensive research in Marist missions throughout Polynesia and Melanesia, was the catalyst for a new approach to community development in the Pacific. In June 1963 Mr. Silverstein arranged for Fr. Hosie to attend the inaugural World Food Congress hosted by J.F. Kennedy in Washington D.C - the first seeds were sown.

In 1965 Hosie and Silverstein founded the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific USA (FSPUSA). Central to the success of the newly founded FSPUSA was Fijian-based Susan Parkinson. Referred to by Verona Lucas as the 'the grand old lady of nutrition'², the knowledge and expertise she had accumulated working for the South Pacific Health Commission since 1950 was critical in the early development of nutritional improvement programmes in Fiji and the Pacific. She was essential in the establishment of FSP in the Pacific and also in preparing the ground for a Fijian-based NGO.

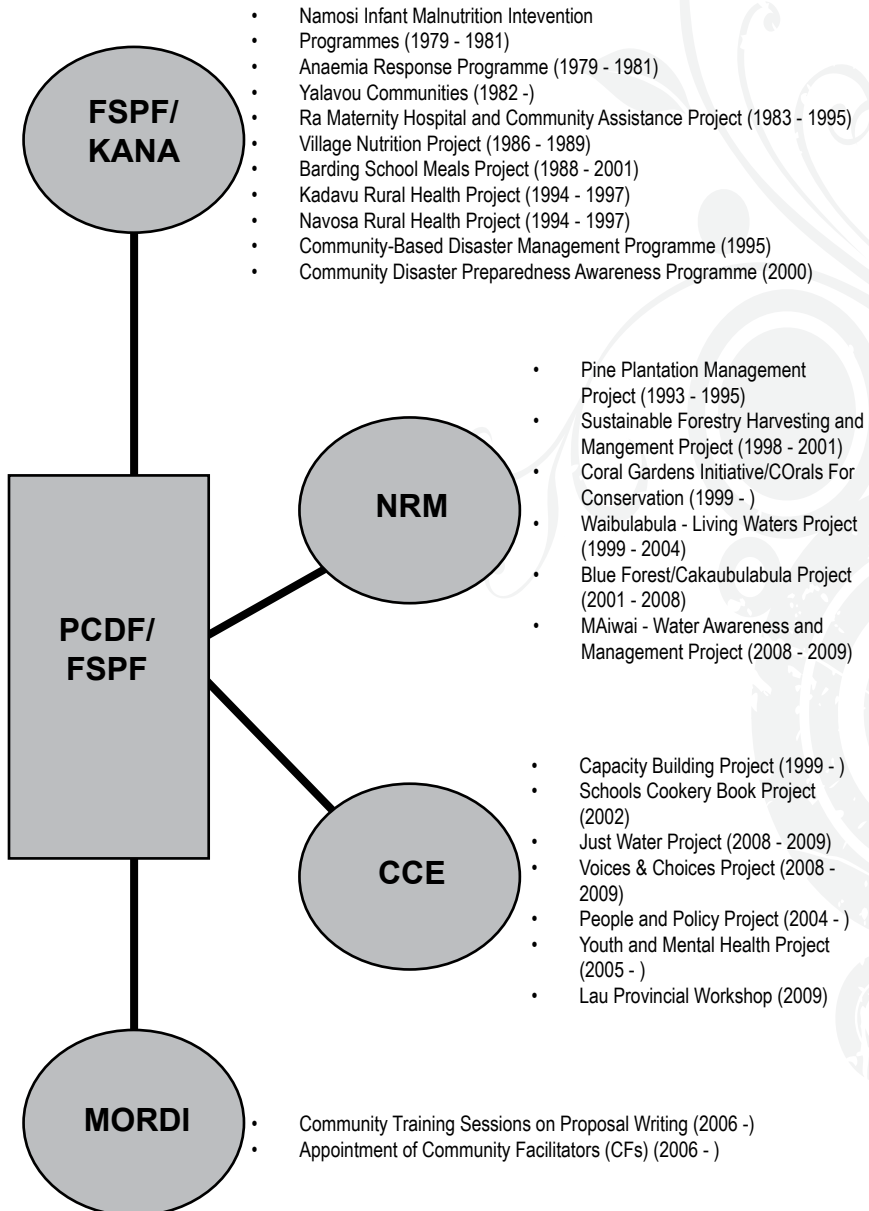
When FSPUSA received a grant from USAID in 1976 to study infant malnutrition in the Pacific, the first building blocks of what was to become the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific Fiji (FSPF) were laid. As a direct result of this grant, Verona Lucas, who remained Executive Director of FSPF until 2002, began her role as 'Fiji Project Manager and Nutritionist', with Susan Parkinson a valued consultant. In 1979 FSPF was born and began its mission to safeguard and develop the more vulnerable communities of Fiji. As Verona clarifies, "...Fiji [FSPF] was the first of the independent NGOs spawned out of FSPUSA"³. The USA office went on to establish FSP affiliates in Samoa, Tonga and Papua New Guinea. Although these affiliates are now individually autonomous NGOs, along with Vanuatu, East Timor, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Republic of Palau and the Solomon Islands they remain partners of PCDF within the broader FSPI network.

Since 1979, FSPF/PCDF has been a strictly independent NGO with donor funding the only source of income. In 2002 FSPF entered a new era. Alisi Waqanika Daurewa, who will be leaving for pastures new in this thirtieth anniversary year, was appointed the first Fijian Executive Director and all FSPF operations were transferred to the main office and current home in the capital - Denison Road, Suva on Viti Levu. The fact that PCDF was able to acquire such an ideal site without financial assistance or donations is testament to the expertise of David Wyler, FSPF/PCDF Finance Officer during the transitional period. The first internal audit of all project operations by I Naiveli & Company (chartered accountant) was also conducted. Finally, as if to complete the transformation, the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific Fiji (FSPF) officially changed its operating title to Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF). Thankfully, the hard work of the FSPF family allowed PCDF to move seamlessly into the twenty first century and continue the great work of the previous two decades.

² Interview: Verona Lucas (08.05.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

³ Interview: Verona Lucas (08.05.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

DIAGRAM: PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUI PROGRAMME SUMMARY





Suva Market on a Saturday morning

THE EARLY YEARS:

FSPF & KANA

Verona Lucas' initial work and expertise in the area of nutrition and agricultural management was to become synonymous with FSPF's operation. Unsurprisingly, FSPF saw severe malnutrition as the most necessary area for action after its inception in 1979. In an uncertain and precarious donor climate, Verona Lucas began the 'Namosi Infant Malnutrition Intervention Programme' in 1979 - partnered by a programme targeting the issue of anaemia among Indo-Fijian women in Yasana O Nadroga-Navosa (Nadroga-Navosa Province) ('Anaemia Response Programme'), they were FSPF's first projects, both lasting until 1981. These two projects represent the birth of modern-day PCDF. The project launched FSPF down a road which few could have predicted. Not least Verona Lucas, "...no no, we didn't expect to continue. We just worked on a grant by grant by grant...I mean all those years it was just one location, one grant"⁴.

In 1982, however, one of the fledgling organisation's most acclaimed projects emerged. A grant from the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) to support health related activities in Fiji was secured by metropolitan partners AFSP (Australian Foundation for the People's of the South Pacific). The result was the introduction of the 'Komiti for the Advancement of Nutrition and Agriculture' (KANA).

KANA was established as part of FSPF in 1982 in an attempt to tackle the scourge of malnutrition which plagued Fiji in the late twentieth century. Pre- and post-independence governmental neglect and scarcity of resources had long since conspired to threaten the nutritional health and educational independence of Fiji's rural communities. KANA was FSPF's weapon on the front line in the battle against nutritional deficiency.



Board Directors 1990-1995, L-R Serupepeli Naqase, Rev. Finau Tuiholohaki, Father Jim Ross, Bryan Vanhorn, Eta Qereqeretabua, David Wyler, Verona Lucas, Simone Kaitani

KANA's first 'independent' project began in 1982 in the form of the 'Yalavou Communities Development Initiative'. The 'Sigatoka Village Health Development Project' was a particularly active element of the Yalavou initiative and received it's

⁴ Interview: Verona Lucas (08.05.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

funding from AUSAID through the Fiji Government. Health and nutrition surveys were conducted in the villages on the Suva side of the Sigatoka River and it was proposed that these communities be given both financial and organisational management training. Furthermore, a graduate from the Agriculture School was employed to assist the communities in developing crops. Such a broad and long term approach to NGO-run development projects was quite simply unprecedented in Fiji - as Verona remembers, *"...of course this was a good 20 years before it's time"*⁵.

However, it remains important to remember the limitations of such projects in the early '80s. Verona Lucas and her dedicated staff were ploughing a new path; not every outcome was anticipated or preferred:

*"...A focus was put on the communities developing better cash crops which included using a pump for irrigated crops – the pump was destroyed in the ignorance of the community in how to use it..."*⁶

This snapshot into the difficulty of implementing project goals explains the clear rationale behind FSPF/PCDFs' insistence on assisting confident and self-reliant communities whose continued development is not entirely dependent on the physical presence of an NGO, or highly qualified experts.



Paula Raturaga, KANA Project Officer, with a completed smokeless stove at Tai District School, Tailevu

In 1987 FSPF became part of a pioneering regional nutrition project. This began FSPFs dedicated participation in nutritional improvement initiatives within educational establishments. Combined with the 'Village Nutrition Project' (1986-1989), FSPF was widening its nutritional net as the end of the decade approached. In October 1988, a grant from CARITAS (Netherlands) was secured by FSPUSAs Suva-based Pacific Regional Nutritionist. It was central to the support of a project aimed at the improvement, in quality and frequency, of boarding school meals - the 'Boarding School Meals Project'. Verona confirms:

*"...from 1988 to 2001 it [the 'Boarding School Meals Project'] was associated with feeding children who were living at school, boarding at school or in bures [traditional Fijian houses] supervised by the village they came from..."*⁷

⁵ Interview: Verona Lucas (08.05.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

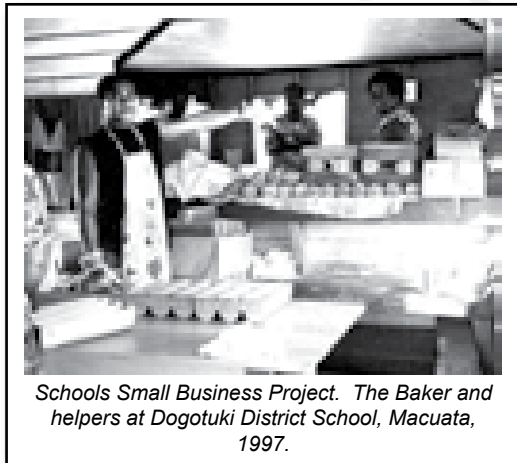
⁶ Interview: Verona Lucas (08.05.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁷ Interview: Verona Lucas (08.05.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

The project was a consistent success and received donations from a variety of sources. Significantly, these donors represent all corners of the globe - AFAP/AFSP, JWP, AUSAID, DIFD, EU, States of Jersey and UNICEF have all helped to emphasise the importance of nutrition at the heart of the most important sphere of development - education. Furthermore, the long term faith shown by these donors is a reflection of the financial accountability and efficiency of FSPF and PCDF to the present day. The importance of trust between donor and facilitator cannot be overstated. It is one reason FSPF/PCDF has been able to successfully span three decades. An element of ethical practice within an NGO Alisi views as essential:

*"...as a Pacific island NGO... prove to them - because they don't know us - that we are doing the work, that we report on the work, that we are reliable with our financial management... adhering to the agreements we make with the donors... trust is very important..."*⁸

The emergence of the 'Boarding School Meals Project' and its associated funding (as well as the securing of USAID funds as the organisation left Suva following the 1987 coup) provided an element of financial stability which had previously not been afforded the young FSPF. This continuity of support was responsible for the project running for a period of thirteen years, thus ensuring the existence of initiatives focused on nutritional standards in boarding schools. It is testament to the benefits that consistent donor support can provide the community.



Schools Small Business Project. The Baker and helpers at Dogotuki District School, Macuata, 1997.

Simione Dusilele Kaitani was particularly influential in the expansion of FSPF during this period. He joined in early 1989 to work on the 'Boarding School Meals Project' and brought a wealth of experience and knowledge. As Verona remembers:

*"...His special area was community development and it was directly due to his involvement that FSP Fiji went from one project at a time in one location to a national multi-location agency - his previous work had taken him the length and breadth of the country training the Fijian administrators..."*⁹

Simione was responsible for introducing the 'Resource Management' element of FSPF's programme as well as working very closely with Graham Roberts on the hugely successful 'Kadavu Rural Health Project'. His expertise was invaluable in the development of FSPF throughout the late '80s and '90s.

⁸ Interview: Alisi Daurewa (06.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁹ Interview: Verona Lucas (11.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

The 'Schools Cookery Book' project, launched in 2002, is a relatively recent example of PCDFs dedication to compensating for the distinct lack of infrastructural support for remote educational establishments in the post-KANA era. It aimed to improve and update the previous cookery book facility with the addition of nutritional charts and information provided by the National Food and Nutrition Centre (NFNC). This initiative was facilitated by PCDF and funded by an AUSAID grant. The book was published in both Fijian and English versions so as to cater for as much of the school-attending population as possible. Fiji's ethnic diversity requires a flexible and accommodating approach when administering workshops and training sessions. This is, however, an element of PCDFs programme which is ardently embraced. The diversity of Fiji can become its strength. However, only through dialogue and understanding can multiculturalism move from an agent of fear to an example of a mature and vibrant population.

The support and partnership of the metropolitan partners (namely AFAP, JWP and Counterpart), highlighted by the 'Boarding School Meals Project', have been fundamental to the survival of FSPF since 1979. These vital allies not only provided much needed access to funding, many were part of the wider FSP family and mission. In particular, the 'Ra Maternity Hospital and Community Assistance Project' (1983-1995) and the 'Kadavu Rural Health Project' (1994 to 1997) were the direct result of negotiation between AFSP and the Australian Government.



Verona and Pita checking the vegetable farm at Naiserelagi, a source of food for Ra Maternity Hospital.

The 'Ra Maternity Hospital and Community Assistance Project' in Ra Province, was KANAs second solo project and one of its longest running. It sought to address the concerns of a hospital stretched by limited funding and a lack of adequate equipment. Fortunately, a local chief offered the use of a plot of land for a period of ten years. During this time FSPF provided the manpower required to grow vegetables and sugar cane, as well as raise goats. Despite the fact that, *"...the community was unable or unwilling to support this project –*

*no labour was volunteered to manage or to harvest and sell crops"*¹⁰, the agricultural development did provide food for the hospital and staff. The addition of solar power in 1986 further enhanced the hospital's ability to function to high standards. This was an initiative which highlighted the potential for self-sufficiency in Fiji's lush, tropical environment, but also the difficulty in ensuring the complete support of rural communities - a challenge which continues to face PCDF and the broader NGO community.

¹⁰ Interview: Verona Lucas (11.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

The 'Kadavu Rural Health Project' (1994-1997) can be attributed with being one of the most successful and sustainable projects FSPF has been involved in. An AUSAID project - organised through AFSP with FSPF acting as one of the facilitators - its aim was to develop structures which would more effectively analyse and improve the level of healthcare on the island of Kadavu. The main components of this project were community development, human resource development, infrastructure improvement and establishing participative project management systems. Furthermore, the project's passionate insistence on creating health development structures interwoven with the fabric of Fijian traditions of governance and culture is a philosophy mirrored in all PCDFs current projects. Graham Roberts was the Australian Team Leader of this project. Now a board member at PCDF and the Director of Research at the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM), he is very clear on the fundamental reasons for the project's success:

*"...Community development and training could only have been achieved if they were wanted, endorsed and implemented by the community..."*¹¹

This was indeed the epitome of a 'bottom-up' approach motivated by the principle that sustainability is rooted in education: *"...the integration of learning with organisational development is likely to produce sustainable change..."*¹².

The Kadavu project has left us with a legacy of inclusive and honest community based interaction. Education courses on environmental health during its operation were attended by all three key groups from the village structure: village and district chiefs, village headmen and village health workers (mostly women). Graham recalls that, *"...The selection of these people for conjoint training was reportedly the first time that this had occurred in Fiji"*¹³. The alliance of traditional, modern and the often marginal is vital to the emergence of resilient and vibrant structures of development. It is a model which has huge potential.

The 'Navosa Rural Health Project' (1997-1999) was the first indicator that the Kadavu model was flexible and

effective enough to be replicated. Indeed as Verona comments, *"...it was a*



Women participants in a School Cooks' Training session at Vunisea Secondary School, Kadavu, 1997

¹¹ Roberts G. The Kadavu health promotion model Fiji, Health Promotion International Vol. 12 (4), Oxford University Press, 1997.

¹² Roberts G. The Kadavu health promotion model Fiji, Health Promotion International Vol. 12 (4), Oxford University Press, 1997.

¹³ Roberts G. The Kadavu health promotion model Fiji, Health Promotion International Vol. 12 (4), Oxford University Press, 1997.

*great*¹⁴ - the consequent expense of medical services was a major threat to the health of the community. The integrated and community-lead nature of the Kadavu model proved to be the perfect antidote to Navosa's precarious scenario. It clearly indicated that the most sensible response to isolation and lack of medical infrastructure is not the suffocating onslaught of outside experts and imported theories of medical practice. Rather, the bottom-up, education-based nature of the Kadavu model provides the most fertile environment for a truly sustainable project.

The baton first carried by FSPF and KANA is now an integral element of community development within PCDF - namely the improvement of the standard of nutrition and health in many isolated and forgotten rural communities. Moreover, this project is the basis for every social, political and economic improvement throughout Fiji. The population must be confident of the provision of basic educational, nutritional and medical requirements before more complex issues of development can be addressed. It is a process which requires not just the dedication of NGOs throughout the Pacific, but the genuine involvement of a socially-aware administration.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

FSPFs involvement with disaster management began in the early '80s. Cyclone Wally (1980) and Cyclone Oscar (1983) resulted in widespread damage and FSPF offered material assistance in both cases. In the aftermath of Wally, building materials such as chainsaws and roofing iron were required, with toilets and kitchens urgently needed after Oscar had wreaked havoc. Cyclones Eric and Nigel in 1985 did not require FSPF assistance and it was not until 1993 that FSPF felt the full force of Mother Nature again. Cyclone Kina (1993) had a damaging impact on the 'Boarding School Meals Project' within the KANA project. PCDFs approach therefore revolved around the provision of rations to schools - furthermore, dialogue with the Ministry of Education immediately after the disaster brought the issue of school rations to the centre of the KANA project, increasing the Government's awareness.

Nonetheless, it was felt by all parties concerned that a purely reactionary approach to disaster management was unsustainable and less than effective. The strong community-theatre element within the 'Kadavu Rural Health Project' in 1994 had particular influence on the evolution of the 'Community-Based Disaster Management Programme' in the mid-1990s. Therefore, to increase community capacity and education, the programme utilised the persuasive medium of drama to convey the many dangers and responses associated with natural disasters.

The 'Community Disaster Preparedness Awareness Programme' emerged at the turn of the century as the next natural step for the 'Disaster Management Project'.

¹⁴ Interview: Verona Lucas (11.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

The 'Community Disaster Preparedness Awareness Programme' emerged at the turn of the century as the next natural step for the 'Disaster Management Project'. Focused mainly on the high risk islands of Beqa, Vatulele Kadavu and the Yasawa group, particular emphasis was placed on traditional coping mechanisms such as food preservation, early warning and alert systems, seasonal planting, development of village disaster plans and procedures and rehearsed preparedness plans.

The relatively infrequent nature of major natural disasters requires even more emphasis on solid capacity building. It is one area of community action in which complacency is not an option.



*Hospital equipment handover to the Fiji Government, on behalf of the Australian Foundation for Asia and Pacific (AFAP), 2004.
L-R: Sokoveti Namoumou, Ministry of Health Official, Alisi Daurewa, Kimberly Johnsson, Australian Youth Ambassador*

KANA PROJECT PHOTOS



Alisi and Verona, finding solace at the Rev. John Wesley Chapel, London, on return from programme funding negotiation (which was later successful) with Misereor, Germany, 2002. Photo taken by Naibuka Qarau, London, UK.



Biram Singh, Principal, Natabua High School, opening a KANA Workshop for medical doctors and nurses.



Staff with Peni Qioniwasa of NFNC, preparing display at World Food Day, 1996



L-R, Simione Koto and Simione Kaitani facilitating the Teachers Workshop in Macuata, 1992



Filipe Bole, Minister for Education, with Verona Lucas at the National Workshop for KANA, Beqa Island, 1992



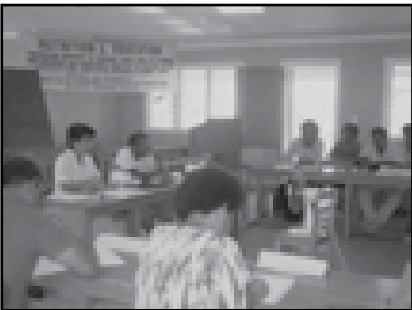
In the early years, Executive Directors and managers of the FSP Network



A fish pond and poultry project at Naloto District School, Ba, 1994



Paula with men and youth of Nasorowaqa Settlement, Bua, on completion of their water tank.



*Seini Seniloli of the NFNC at a Nutrition Workshop for Boarding schools in the Western Division, 1990.
Venue: Ba Provincial High School*



Verona Lucas presenting a peanut grinder to Atunaisa Lacabuka, Head Teacher, Waya District School, Yasawa.



Traditional fishing next to the Holiday Inn, Suva

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (NRM)

FSPFs first engagement with areas of development not associated with nutritional improvement came during the 1990s. The increasing willingness of donors to support environmental projects, coupled with FSPFs confidence borne out of twelve years of survival as an independent NGO, provided the ideal climate for the emergence of an initiative specifically focused on environmental management. A UK ODA grant, secured by FSPUK, funded an FSPF initiative to assist independent pine plantation owners in processing their own timber, rather than selling produce to wood chipping companies. This programme was focused in Mataso village, Ra Province from 1993-1995. FSPFs 'break from the norm' began the project development of what is now known as 'Natural Resource Management' (NRM), an area of PCDF activity which has blossomed in the twenty first century.

Fiji's vast stocks of timber have long been coveted, and often mismanaged. FSPFs 'Sustainable Forestry Harvesting and Management Project', running from 1998 to 2001, aimed to improve the business standards of Fijian timber merchants as well as ensuring the sympathetic harvesting of this great resource. This initiative was part of a regional forestry project funded through FSPUK and managed by FSPFs partners at FSP Vanuatu. The result was the practical engagement of a community in Tailevu Province. Funding was provided for the purchase of a portable band saw and the recipients were trained to map the selected forest area using GPS and operate the mobile saw mill. Furthermore, the villagers were schooled in business strategy and provided with the required expertise to harvest and mill their own timber, therefore allowing the community to oversee and manage all elements of the timber business from harvest to sale - fundamentally ensuring the community's 'intellectual ownership' of the development of local resources.

Specific marine environmental projects first entered the FSPF lexicon in 1999 with the emergence of the 'Coral Gardens Initiative' and subsequently the 'Waibulabula - Living Waters Project'. Partnership between the projects was a vital part of their success:



Matilila Kedrayate collects seaweed for the Seaweed Workshop held in Serua Island. 2008

"...Despite being separate projects, Coral Gardens and Waibulabula worked together to empower local communities to reverse the decline of coral reefs and nearshore waters..."¹⁵

The latter was made possible by a grant from the Darwin Initiative (a UK state funded programme which *"assists countries that are rich in biodiversity but poor in financial resources"*¹⁶) in conjunction with JWP (formerly FSPUK) and Counterpart (formerly FSPUSA), which focused on the rebuilding and safeguarding of Fiji's reef environment - with specific attention paid to the land-sea frontier. The area of coral conservation has of course become one of PCDFs most cherished development programmes, an example not just for the Pacific but the coral world.

THE LIVING WATERS 'WAIBULABULA' PROJECT / QELEBULABULA

The primary focus of these projects was to improve skills in land-based pollution management so as to halt the dangerous effects of effluent on coral reefs and marine ecosystems. Essentially, the initiatives sought to educate communities in how to more effectively manage and reduce waste levels in the marine environment. The challenge and long term aim was to create coastal sites with enhanced biodiversity and natural processes of waste management - sustainability remaining at the core of all facets of PCDF activity. Fulori Waqairagata, member of the NRM team from 2002-2009 and latterly as Programme Coordinator, expresses the broad approach encapsulated by the 'Living Waters Project':



The Wetland at the Shangri-la Fijian Resort. 2003

"... [It is a] ridge to reef approach. So not only targeting marine conservation but trying to look at the problems from the land causing degradation to reefs..."¹⁷

The 'Waibulabula' and 'Coral Gardens' initiatives worked hand in hand to tackle coral decline in Tikina O Cuvu (Cuvu District). In partnership with Austin Kerby (Counterpart International Marine Scientist) Cuvu had been identified as an ideal marine site to begin the conservation effort. Fulori remembers that:

¹⁵ Interview: Verona Lucas (11.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

¹⁶ <http://darwin.defra.gov.uk/>

¹⁷ Interview: Fulori Waqairagata (nee Nainoca) (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

*"...In 2000 there was a big bleaching event and a lot of Fiji's corals were really badly damaged, all around. But there were some areas that had corals surviving, so those were areas that we looked in to. Cuvu was one of those areas that had very damaged reef, due to the bleaching event..."*¹⁸

A total of 1000 hybrid coconut trees were planted in Cuvu to help absorb wastewater runoff before being deposited in the sea, not only protecting the marine environment, but also enhancing the land based vegetation. Cuvu has proved to be a particularly successful project area. In a major partnership with the private sector, the Fijian Shangri-La Resort constructed an artificial wetland during 2001/2002 resulting in the improvement in the health of the marine environment and waste management infrastructure within the resort. Plant species and fish were used to absorb nutrients and kill pathogens in the resort's wastewater, resulting in a 70% reduction in nutrient loads. Furthermore Shangri-La has now taken full ownership of the wetland, ensuring its future and the protection of the local environment. This example shows the value of engaging a wide range of partners, within both the public and private sectors. Former PCDF family member Merioni Mataika is now a member of the Shangri-La team dedicated to the creation of environmentally beneficial developments within the resort. Such expertise at the heart of a profit-lead establishment is a particularly positive consequence of PCDFs varied interaction. The five star Turtle Island Resort has followed the lead of the Shangri-La Resort in terms of cooperation. In 2007 Margaret Fox was appointed resort Marine Biologist in conjunction with the USAID project in the Yasawa Islands. Alisi places great emphasis on the benefits of such partnerships:

*"...[in terms of the relationship] With the private sector it has definitely been positive ... specifically when we talk about environment. The hotel operators for example, have taken on more responsibility not only in terms of education for the communities, but also their own staff to be more aware of the importance of waste management, marine resource conservation... I happen to think that this was a huge contribution..."*¹⁹

To date, PCDF has assisted in a further five resort based MPAs (marine protected areas) in the Yasawas (Nanuya Island Resort, Navutu Star, Coral View, Oarsman Bay Lodge, Yasawa Island Lodge) and three on Malolo Island (Musket Cove, Plantation Resort, Castaway).



L-R: The Shangri-la Fijian Resort General Manager John Rice, Floyd Robinson and Rt Kini Vosailagi during the opening ceremony of the Wetland.

¹⁸ Interview: Fulori Waqairagata (nee Nainoca) (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

¹⁹ Interview: Alisi Daurewa (06.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

'Waibulabula' was succeeded by the 'Qelebulabula' project in 2004, running until 2005. Its main focus was the planting of pineapple, citrus, pine and mahogany in coastal wasteland. These areas are often responsible for the transport of pollution into the marine environment. In Yadua Island and Cuvu District the Forestry Department was involved in training men and youths in how to mark and establish contours on a fresh planting site. These are essential skills which allow the local population to continue to manipulate their own environment as demands and needs change.



The Wetland under construction. 2001

'Qelebulabula' was specifically active in local schools. In 2004 a competition was launched in five primary schools and three high schools to find the most effective environmental poster on the theme of 'managing land-based sources of pollution in order to conserve coral reefs'. All projects must leave a lasting imprint on the community they are launched within. From chief to child, the entire community must be aware of the importance of projects like 'Waibulabula' and 'Qelebulabula'.

It is clear that the combination of marine-based conservation and on-land pollution management has had a hugely positive impact on fish stocks and marine health in general. As Ratu Sakiusa Tunitoto of Koro O Solevu (Solevu Village) on Malolo island in Nadroga-Navosa Province has expressed:

*"...It's an honour to have a facilitating organisation like PCDF. Schools of Fish that were seldom found in the past years are now abundant in our MPA. More clams and octopus are found easily in our healthy coral reef..."*²⁰



Once the physical benefits of conservation policies are seen and experienced by the local community, support will be wholehearted. Thankfully, the continued support offered to PCDF by many partners worldwide, along with the dedicated work of its staff and the commitment of the Fijian people, makes further development possible.

²⁰ PCDF, Annual Report 2004, ed. Alisi Daurewa, 25.

CORAL GARDENS INITIATIVE/ CORALS FOR CONSERVATION

The 'Coral Gardens Initiative', which is now more commonly known as the 'Corals for Conservation Project', was made possible through funding from the 'Pacific Development and Conservation Trust' and cooperation from the Fijian Shangri-La Resort in 1999. Additional support from NZODA and the US based MacArthur and Packard Foundations in 2000 and 2004 respectively, ensured that this vital project was financially viable for the foreseeable future. The alarming state of decay throughout many of Fiji's coral reefs had made, and continues to make, this area of marine conservation an immediate necessity. Over-fishing and the adoption of aggressive fishing techniques, using poisons and explosives, as well as the bleaching of 2000, left many coral reefs with a less than secure future.

FSPF, and now PCDF, has sought to provide education to resource-rich communities as to how best their reefs can be harvested and protected. These projects are sustainable, providing training focusing on long term protection and economic innovation for those communities whose existence has always been entwined with the marine environment which surrounds them.

The 'Coral Gardens Initiative' was particularly active in adopting a hands-on approach to habitat restoration and enhancement. This support has included coral planting, crown-of-thorns starfish removal, the creation of giant clam and bech-de-mer spawning aggregations as well as mangrove planting. It is essential to enrich the biodiversity of the marine environment to improve its basic environmental health.

Major expansion in 2003, centred in Moturiki District, Malolo District and Yadua Island in Cuvu District, focused on the creation of dual sites - the creation of MPAs in conjunction with mangrove forests. This joint approach increases biodiversity on the land-sea frontier, thus reducing waste damage to the marine environment - 'ridge to reef' in action.

PCDFs pro-active conservation methods have already influenced the health of marine areas. In particular, the MPAs established in ten villages on Moturiki Island have contributed to a significantly improved marine environment. Such progress will provide a more sustainable and economically viable supply of marine resources in the short and long term. In Malolo Island the decision was taken to combine MPAs between settlements. Such progress will provide a



*Trimming of the mother coral
(1st generation corals). 2004*

more sustainable and economically viable supply of marine resources in the short and long term. In Malolo Island the decision was taken to combine MPAs between settlements. The villages of Yaro and Solevu have shown the importance of working together to improve the marine environment of the wider community. Such local cooperation in rural areas is a real tribute to the impact of PCDFs coral conservation projects. As in the great communal tradition of Fijian culture, voluntary cooperation between towns and villages is a powerful force for change.

MPAs are particularly important in encouraging the replenishing of fish stocks. Although a potentially unsettling move in the short term for those dependent on marine resources, in many cases it is an essential step if the destruction of a marine environment is to be avoided. Subsequently, local 'Fish Wardens' (FWs) trained by PCDF are tasked with enforcing 'no fishing' regulations with the required knowledge and subtlety of a local member of the community. As of 2009, a total of one hundred and sixty three FWs have been trained in five communities (Moturiki – 43, Maolo – 24, Cuvu – 6, Serua – 50, Yasawas – 40). The training of permanent residents ensures that PCDF projects become only the first step along the road to successful, sustainable and locally administered marine environments. In 2007, in partnership with the

Ministry of Fisheries, PCDF established a further 41 marine protected areas in Fiji – to date, 55 MPAs have been established. Fish wardens have been assigned to monitor these sites. They are independently managed and free from dependence on continuous PCDF involvement. The focus of this system of authority is the adoption of traditional guardians of the sea. PCDF actively seeks to engage with, and reinforce, local forms of governance. Not only to express respect, but in recognition of such an approach providing the best chance of project survival in the long term.



Kulinio Naivalu (Fisheries Officer) fixing a coral table in Moturiki, Lomaiviti. 2005

Successful interaction with coastal communities involved in PCDF development projects is reliant on an honest and flexible management plan. For an initiative to succeed, challenges associated with lifestyle change must be recognised. Fulori explains:

*"...What PCDF is trying to do is overcome those challenges, trying to make it very community appropriate, so that it doesn't affect their routine every day - it complements what they are already doing. Our techniques are normally very community appropriate, it's very simple, very easy to understand and it's easy for them to explain to other village members..."*²¹

²¹ Interview: Fulori Waqairagata (nee Nainoca) (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

'Due to the financial implications of enforced MPAs, PCDF has always sought to introduce ecotourism and commercial aquaculture strategies which do not decimate the marine environment. They aim to provide sufficient income to offset the potential loss of excessive coral harvesting and fishing revenues.

As with many of PCDFs marine initiatives, 'Coral Gardens', and now 'Corals for Conservation', adopts a three-pronged attack on environmental degradation. Not only does the hands-on style accelerate the recovery of the reefs, resource-rich communities are left with an increase in ecological knowledge and experience as well as fresh potential for collaboration with tourism and marine-based industries - recovery, stability and development. The greatest challenge is to create a viable and sustainable community model which reflects the eccentricities of each particular population grouping - PCDF taking the role of steward and not owner. Alisi explains how fundamental this is to the FSPF/PCDF mission:

*"...resource owners or custodians...must always have been informed fully at all levels. That is something I was very careful with in terms of environment. I was always cautious that we were not advocating for something that they have not given their permission to..."*²²

Through PCDFs discussion with many inhabitants of Cuvu Village in Cuvu District and Solevu Village on Malolo Island, it is clear that the knowledge acquired from training workshops has allowed citizens to engage with their environment with a greater sense of clarity and understanding. As Alumeci Gavid (Cuvu Village) expressed:

*"...We established our MPAs. We are now experiencing the impact of what we are doing... There is more to eat... Our younger generation will also benefit..."*²³

Mrs. Gavid is clearly very aware of the long term impact of these conservation measures. Equally, Mereseini Tamani (Solevu Village) emphasises the freedom knowledge can provide:

*"...PCDF came and carried out workshops. I began to understand the cause of our problem. We now have an MPA and it is so nice to understand our own surroundings..."*²⁴



Adi Mereoni Mataika putting a coral onto a cookie in Moturiki.

In the short term PCDFs 'Coral Gardens Initiative' has empowered communities to make informed decisions about the protection of marine environments, in the long

²² Interview: Alisi Daurewa (06.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

²³ PCDF, Annual Report 2003, ed. Alisi Daurewa, 14.

²⁴ PCDF, Annual Report 2003, ed. Alisi Daurewa, 14.

term it will provide continued training to ensure the growth and independence of marine reliant communities. All organisations involved in development processes dream of a system of progression driven by those initially identified as requiring assistance. Paradoxically, the ultimate aim of all NGOs is to render their further endeavour unnecessary - that will be success.

BLUE FOREST PROJECT / CAKAUBULABULA

PCDF has been responsible for some of the most valuable coral conservation developments internationally. The 'Blue Forest Project' of 2004 has given the world an entirely new approach to coral conservation, focusing specifically on the issue of harvesting. Whilst 'Corals for Conservation' aims to improve local management of the reef, the 'Blue Forest Project' offers a revolutionary and innovative approach to its cultivation.

The 'blue forest' is the coral gold mine of many coastal Fijian communities. Unfortunately it is a massively fragile resource. It must not be harvested without provision for its long term survival. Many coastal communities are not in a financial position conducive to a laissez-faire consumption of a wide array of resources. For this reason, any attempt to curtail or control the harvesting of coral must be accompanied by a strategic plan aimed at the development of the local economy distinct from the plundering



Giant Clams in the Marine Protected Area in Uluibau Village, Moturiki, Lomaiviti. 2005

of the 'blue forest'. The main aim of the 2004 'Blue Forest Project' was to investigate coral monitoring methods with a view to improving and updating best practice. Subsequently, the expansion in coral manipulation resulted in an increase in the laying of coral tables and planting of seedlings. Central to these initiatives has been the presence of local youths and men from many of PCDFs coral conservation projects. The education and expertise of locals of all ages is vital to unlocking the bounty of sustainable coral harvesting. This principle of community-based reef

support remained the focus of the 'Blue Forest Project's' successor; the 'Cakaubulabula Project' (2004-2008).

Critically, the process of expansion seen during the 'Blue Forest' and 'Cakaubulabula' projects, coupled with the findings of an FSPI facilitated socio-economic survey, paved the way for the world's first 2nd generation coral farm (launched in 2007) - a unique technique pioneered by Austin Kerby which has since been exported to the Caribbean and looks set to have a major influence on coral reef management worldwide. Such focused experiments and research can reveal the economic and environment ben-

efits of coral farms. Of course the potential benefit of this data must not remain the intellectual property of the scientific elite. Fulori emphasises that implementation remains the number one aim:

*"...You have all that information, gained from all these research activities, but it's trying to get those results, that information, down to the grass roots level and really get them [the community] to change their behaviour by seeing those results..."*²⁵

The NRM programme's strength is rooted in its ability to overlap and cooperate within projects. A focus on business and the successful marketing of 2nd generation farmed coral is also at the heart of the current 'Corals for Conservation Project'. In 2008 this initiative succeeded in bringing the issue of coral sale to the forefront of the government's marine consciousness. Furthermore, contact with the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions shows the potential for regional trade. This level of business acumen will be vital if the causes of rural and coastal poverty are to be successfully challenged. The coral reef is the Fijian jewel - it must be utilised by the Fijian people for the Fijian people, and not follow the trend of so many of the world's developing countries' resources.



L-R: Lenora Qereqeretabua ATH Vodafone Foundation, Fulori Waqairagata, the US Ambassador Mr Larry Dinger and Alisi Daurewa, during the launch of the NRM awareness posters which was funded by USAid.

NRM – FUTURE

The years 2007 and 2008 were eventful years in terms of the NRM project's financial partnerships. Grants were finalised from long standing partners the MacArthur and Packard Foundations, and vital new funding was secured from EED and AUSAID to support a new site in Serua District. The investment has continued to allow PCDF to assist local communities in the maintenance of their marine environments. The NRM team can look towards the second decade of the 21st century with confidence and anticipation.

The dawn of the millennium required a fresh analysis of the health of Fiji's coral reefs. Undeniably, marine conservation was in crisis. Climate change induced bleaching, the use of destructive fishing methods and short term coral harvesting had lead to a reef system on the edge of collapse. It has been, and continues to be, the goal of PCDF to empower coastal communities to make more efficient use of their natural resources, whilst also ensuring economic stability and long term operational sustainability.

²⁵ Interview: Fulori Waqairagata (nee Nainoca) (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

Undeniably there is much more to achieve, however, as Fulori contends, the first decade of the 21st century gives reason for optimism:



Etika Sing with a Triton Shell inside a Marine Protected Area in Moturiki, Lomaiviti Province. 2005

“...the environmental conservation work in Fiji didn’t really take off until eight years, ten years ago. It is now full on. We’ve got the ‘Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas’ Network (FLMMA), which is ready to provide information not only to government but also to the grass roots level. So there is a lot of information, a lot of resources available, and environmental work is really great now in Fiji. You’ve got a lot of MPAs that are established, a lot more NGOs that are doing environment work, so you’ve got a great network of all these stakeholders that are involved in conservation...”²⁶

The main purpose of PCDFs environmental projects is to safeguard natural resources. The improvement of natural resource management is imperative if local communities are to provide themselves with an environmentally and financially secure future. PCDF is at the forefront of this approach to natural resource management.



²⁶ Interview: Fulori Waqairagata (nee Nainoca) (24.06.09), Aengus O’Dochartaigh.

NRM PHOTOS



*The Late Turaga na Toranibau,
Revend Ratu Isireli Caucau.
The late chief was one who was very
supportive of PCDF's environmental
programme.*



*The students of Ratu Latianara Primary
School with their newly painted bus stop
which they painted themselves. 2008*



*Seremaia Koro with a tray of cookies ready
put to put on a coral table in Oarsman's Bay
Resort, Yasawa. 2006*



*Etika Sing showing the women of Rukuruku-
levu Village methods of Seaweed Farming.
2003*



The launch of the 'first harvested second generation farmed corals' held at the Civic Auditorium in Suva. 2007



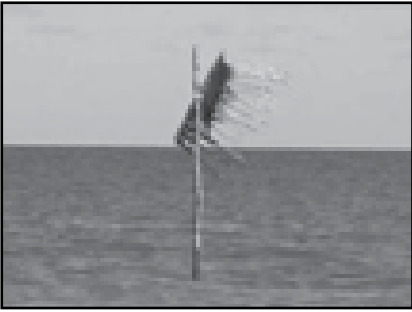
Yanuya Fishwaders, Malolo, Nadroga surveying their Marine Protected Area. 2006



Austin Bowden Kerby with his farmed corals.



Kesaia Saumadu of Nasesara Village, Moturiki with her grand daughter during a Skills Developmet and Handicraft Workshop. 2009



A traditional marker for Marine Protected Areas (MPA)



The students of Naidovi Indian Primary School, during an Environmental Awareness Campaign for the Schools in Cuvu District, Nadroga. 2008



Tavarau Indian Community, Volivoli, Ra after an Awareness/ Participatory Learning and Action Workshop on water Source/ Resource Management. 2009



Women of Serua District during a Handicraft workshop by PCDF and the Department of Culture & Heritage held at Navutulevu Village. 2009



A participants from a MORDI cattle farming workshop in Nakorovou Village, Bua Province.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT (CCE)

Towards the end of the 1990s, it became clear that a broader spectrum of development was necessary. The CCE programme put an ever increasing focus on social and psychological development, as well as infrastructural. It is important to recognise that the full implementation of CCE relied on the presence of a Fijian Executive Director. Despite Verona's wealth of experience, ultimately she was aware of what a Fijian figure head could bring to the CCE programme: "...access"²⁷. Significant donations allowed the momentum created by the KANA project to remain and increase. If engagement with vulnerable communities breaks down, the impact of workshops and training sessions can be fleeting at best, nonexistent at worst.

CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT (CBP) [for rural education]

The 'Capacity Building Project' began in 1999 with the particular aim of improving the ability of communities to support local educational establishments. Laufitu Malani, current Deputy Chair of the PCDF Board, outlines the rationale behind the capacity building project:

*"...The key objective was and is to develop the capacity of the education committee so that they may be able to plan and articulate needs relating to education and the education of their children..."*²⁸

A history of isolation and lack of effective local government infrastructure resulted in a system unable to provide many institutions with essential schooling needs. Provincial Education Committees (PECs) established in the 1980s did not have sufficient resources to provide assistance to isolated communities and had no influence over government policy. FSPF/PCDF has sought to recompense for this twenty year gap in provision whilst utilising already existing structures – "...It's no use developing new structures and



Isireli Raikabuka (left) and Simone Koto (right) on their way up to the interior of Tailevu. 2004

²⁷ Interview: Verona Lucas (11.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

²⁸ Interview: Laufitu Malani (12.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

*mechanisms, so we looked at what was in place and strengthened them”*²⁹. Since 2002 PCDF had been able to contribute greatly to advances in policy construction



Participants of a Capacity Building Workshop for Rural Education held in Nadave. 2007

through consultation with the Ministry of Education. Equally, workshops facilitated by PCDF and the Ministry of Education have sought to reduce the impact of administrative clashes between senior teachers and school committees. Alisi sees this cooperation as vital in achieving long term development:

“...the way forward is to work closer with government...to be able to be a partner, particularly when it's community development work - government has set up programmes, what we have said to them is: “give us those programmes, we can do

*them cheaper.” So it's a win-win situation for them and us...”*³⁰

Despite a perception of political instability in Fiji, PCDF has achieved much success engaging and lobbying government at all levels. For example, a ‘Schools Nutrition Project’ is now a permanent initiative within the administration and the Ministry of Education has a full-time Schools Nutrition Officer. This level of engagement with central administration is a key aspect of PCDFs ministerial networking. The appropriate distribution of resources and improvement of living standards must be a fundamental goal of any government. When this is not the case, it is the aim of PCDF and the NGO community to make it so. The power of the lobby cannot be underestimated.

Workshops are one of the most direct ways PCDF has managed to empower those communities who previously have not been given the support or training to more successfully influence rural life. The CBP has targeted seven provinces in particular in Viti Levu: Tailevu, Rewa, Naitasiri, Serua, Namosi, Ra and Nadroga-Navosa.

CBP workshops have achieved much. Countless success stories have emerged from the project's workshops and training sessions. None more so than Namalata District School in Tailevu Province. The future impact of the transformation in this community's educational facility is immeasurable. During 2007 the school committee succeeded in building toilet facilities, renovating a teacher's area, drafting a new school constitution & preparing the school budget.

Funding from the German Catholic Bishops organisation MISEREOR in the late 1990s, as well as in 2003, has financed the educational projects in the provinces of Naitasiri, Namosi, Serua and Ra, with dramatic success. As Isikeli Nasoga, Chairman for Naitasiri Provincial Education Committee explains:

²⁹ Interview: Laufitu Malani (12.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

³⁰ Interview: Alisi Daurewa (06.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

“...This community training conducted by PCDF gives us the opportunity to learn and commit ourselves to understand that education is an investment and to make plans for the education of our children...”³¹

The emphasis of educational projects must focus on the freedom knowledge can provide to generations of Fijian youth. This liberating truth is the most persuasive argument when faced with occasional local apprehension. Indeed, this dialogue must occur within traditional structures. Biu Vakaloloma of Burebasaga Village, Rewa Province comments:

“...We have discussed these things with the people and decided that we want to bring some changes to our lives and for our future generations...”³²

A survey commissioned in 2007 provided the CBP with vital and complex information. The survey identified schools in remote and rural areas under the following categories: type, ownership, infrastructure, resources/assets and school roll. In many ways, the study unlocked the key to facilitating development in these identified provinces. Not only were schools documented, but the specifics of the research ensured the particular needs of each establishment could be efficiently identified. This aspect of research is not glamorous or considered newsworthy, however in reality, research of this depth is the life-blood of any development project. Whether government- or NGO-based, information is key in creating a nationwide database and strategy for development. Only through understanding the real and immediate needs of the Fijian people can community-development-based organisations hope to succeed. Equally, the community must be encouraged to communicate its own requirements. Laufitu contends that, *“...When you develop the capacity of communities you are empowering them to be able to articulate their needs”*³³.

The Fijian school attending population must be exposed to a positive environment which teaches confidence and ambition. Every societal obstacle PCDF has faced during its thirty year history will be inherited by the next generation if crucial failings are not challenged and defeated. In the simplest terms, this reality defines PCDFs ongoing mission and growing legacy.



Practically, many schools throughout Fiji have a deficiency of basic utilities. The reliability of regular water supply is of particular concern - such a deficiency potentially

³¹ PCDF, Annual Report 2003, ed. Alisi Daurewa, 16.

³² PCDF, Annual Report 2003, ed. Alisi Daurewa, 16.

³³ Interview: Laufitu Malani (12.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

threatens the existence of formalised education in isolated areas. In early 2002 an AUSAID grant to the Save the Children Fund (Fiji) targeted the Northern Division which for so long has battled with water shortages. Along with Save the Children (Fiji) and the Ministry for Education, FSPF/PCDF was instrumental in building sixteen water tanks in eight schools in the provinces of Bua and Macuata. The project guaranteed a clean and regular water supply for those attending and working within the school, thus allowing the schools concerned to continue their vital work nurturing the potential of Fijian youth. Again the community lies at the heart of the project.

As PCDF celebrates its 30th anniversary, the Capacity Building Project is actively engaged in establishing a formal network of education focused NGOs. Together we will be stronger.

JUST WATER

The 'Just Water Project' has been focused in eight provinces – Ba, Kadavu, Nadroga-Navosa, Naitisiri, Macuata, Lomaiviti, Ra and Tailevu. Currently concluding its second phase, the project focuses entirely on the supply of water to educational establishments - working to familiarise the leaders of tomorrow with the insight and experience of the KANA project of yesterday. This project highlights PCDFs continued dedication to ensuring the most essential provisions in partnership with educational development.

The 'Maiwai Project' (2008-2009) is a broad community based initiative, ensuring the provision of water services that are essential in the continued development of Fiji's rural communities. Despite currently residing under the NRM banner, it is a willing partner of 'Just Water' in safeguarding water provision. The current project's workshops will reach twenty two villages and two schools across the provinces of Tailevu, Ra,



*Students in Wailotua with their new water tank.
2009*

Naitisiri, Rewa, Ba, Macuata and Cakaudrove - an estimated 5740 people. In some instances, the provision of water can cause disagreement between neighbouring communities, or within individual community hierarchies. This challenge is most effectively discussed in PCDFs workshops. Much like the CBP, dialogue is essential in putting perceived conflict in context. Every project which PCDF continues to support and dedicate resources to has survived and developed due to the mutual

understanding fostered in a workshop environment. The measured approach of discussion, not opposition, is a central part of the PCDF philosophy.

Dialogue, therefore, is critical in the process of understanding and practical progress. The schools, and most importantly the pupils, will ultimately benefit from an educational sector whose success is based on open, honest and efficient communication. From NGO, to government ministry, to community committee, to head teacher, each concerned party has a duty to act responsibly. It is this acceptance of collective responsibility and ownership which lies at the core of PCDFs mission. Communities do not achieve progress due to the instruction of a nominated organisation. On the contrary, they progress when the ownership of issues affecting the community is embraced.



Students and Teachers of Wailotua Primary School with their new water tank

Partners in Community Development Fiji seeks to free the abundant potential within the Fijian population. A colonial history and recent political upheaval has conspired to create a society which to some degree is suffering from an economic and social malaise. The 'Capacity Building Project', with support from vital infrastructural projects such as the 'Just Water' and 'Maiwai' projects, is successfully passing the future of Fiji's forgotten communities back to the men, women and children who comprise them.



Students of Waiqanake Primary with their new water tank.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

The lack of accountable and effective governance throughout Fijian society has consistently threatened the cause of development in post-independence Fiji. Fundamentally, a transparent system of governance is a necessary foundation for development. As Laufitu Malani observes, Fiji's deficiency in this area occurs at every strata:



*"...the main cause behind the breakdown or straining of governance of Fiji is leadership. Poor leadership at all levels... when you mentor leaders they reach out to those at the other levels of governance – the village, tikina, province and up. We have a leadership crisis..."*³⁴

The notion of mentoring leaders has thus become a key element of PCDF projects - effective leadership as a consequence of a healthy culture of good governance.

'VOICES and CHOICES' & 'PEOPLE and POLICY'

The 'Voices and Choices' (2002-2004) project was the first comprehensive initiative that allowed PCDF to engage with the public on issues related to the importance of good governance. The lack of trust fostered by miscommunication between traditional and modern figures of authority, particularly between Ratu and Turaga ni Koro, is often responsible for the deterioration in accountable local governance. Setefano Nauqe, Project Assistant of the 'Voices and Choices Project' and current Project Officer for the 'People and Policy Project', sees an awareness of the tension between old and new as vital in understanding issues of governance deficiency:

*"...the traditional and the modern should be able to work together for the good of the community. At times there's a conflict; one says he's the boss and the other says he's the boss. There should be a common cause..."*³⁵

That common cause is the establishment of a transparent system of authority and recognition of basic and inalienable rights for all citizens and human beings, within the context of existing hierarchies. This respectful recognition

³⁴ Interview: Laufitu Malani (12.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

³⁵ Interview: Setefano Nauqe II (14.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

of traditional forms of governance is essential if the trust and warm-hearted cooperation of Fiji's communities is to be achieved.

Inevitably in some cases, misunderstanding can arise between traditional chief and the members of the village. Nukutubu in Rewa Province (2004) is one such example. Voices and Choices findings found the traditional Mataisau (craftspeople) of Nukutubu Village in Rewa Province originate from the province of Ra. Consequently, conflicting allegiances to Ra Province and the Paramount chief of Rewa led to, as Sete remembers, *"...misunderstandings about the two party's roles, there was some disagreement, who has to do this who has to that"*³⁶. In this scenario dialogue was vital in achieving an amicable outcome, safeguarding harmony within the region. As Sete candidly states, *"...they found out they had to communicate"*³⁷.

The UNDP has joined with PCDF in seeking to make the Fijian population aware of their enshrined status as citizens and fundamental rights as human beings through communication and dialogue. As such 'Human Rights Awareness' has been a constant part of FSPF, and subsequently PCDFs work since 2000. PCDF involves human rights education in most of its good governance workshops.

Mariana Rokotina (Women's Assistant Leader of Nukutubu Village, Rewa Province) commented that as a result of PCDFs 'Voices and Choices' project:

*"...Men are trying to change to involve women in the decision-making process in the villages... sometimes we have problems but we know that we need to work together, men and women, so we can be united and productive..."*³⁸



Participants of a Good Governance Workshop for the Lau Province. 2009

The importance of a community-lead commitment to dialogue and flexibility is clear from Mrs. Rokotina's analysis - the willingness to create healthy discourse within the community is essential.

³⁶ Interview: Setefano Nauqe II (14.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

³⁷ Interview: Setefano Nauqe II (14.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

³⁸ PCDF, Annual Report 2003, ed. Alisi Daurewa, 20.

It is vital that the fundamental moral motivation for human rights theory is part of the educational system. Unless the main tenets of human rights are understood at a primary school level, they will not permeate fully through Fijian and Indo-Fijian culture. Working with the Ministry of Education it is hoped that human rights can increasingly become a central part of every Fijian's primary education.

PCDF recognised that the successful implementation of 'Voices and Choices', and



Participants of a Good Governance Workshop for Yale District, Kadavu.

later 'People and Policy' (2006 -), relied on a broad focus. Governance projects must challenge deficiencies at community, regional and national level – namely in accountable and transparent local leadership, regional uniformity and cooperation, and a legislative commitment to enshrining human and civil rights at national level.

The 'Voices and Choices' project team began the process in five selected communities – Tavarau and Busabusa (Indo-Fijian) in Ba Province, Nukutuba in Rewa Province as well as Jubaniwai District (seven villages)

and Manikoso in Nasinu - whilst incorporating the principles of good governance into workshops in seven previously existing education projects.

The Busabusba and Tavarau settlements were examples of communities with existing tensions between landlord and tenants, and inter-ethnically, between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. In this instance, dialogue was shown to be a simple yet fundamental stage in the removal of uncertainty and fear between two ethnic groups. With AUSAID assistance, a series of Inter-ethnic Development Committees were set up to address any issue which could potentially damage the communities and/or inter-ethnic relations. It emerged that water shortages were an urgent and controversial issue, another example illustrating the power of discussion and importance of maintaining cross-community relations.

PCDFs experience with the Indo-Fijian community has been limited. The good governance workshops undertaken in Tavarau and Busabusa in 2002 aimed to assess the impact of the reduction in traditional figures of authority throughout the last two decades – again adopting a process of dialogue and discussion. Previous to the 1987 coup, the Indo-Fijian community worked within the Panchayat system – a system of governance dating back to the arrival of the indentured Indian labourers. It is a system which has suffered significant damage since 1987. Although contact with the communities of Tavarau and Busabusa did reveal the potential for productive dialogue with the Indo-Fijian community, by Alisi and PCDFs own admission, more has to be done. As Sete accepts, "...we have to engage more with the Indian community and the multi ethnic community"³⁹. Certainly, if PCDF is to continue addressing the nationwide breakdown in accountable leadership and systems of justice, all communities must be engaged.

³⁹ Interview: Setefano Nauqe II (14.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

PCDFs governance projects have, and continue to be, comprised of two elements. 'Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice' (KAP) surveys are conducted before and after workshops in all the communities. These surveys allow PCDF to gauge how much potential there is for development in any particular community, and latterly, how much attitudes have or have not been changed. As Sete clarifies:

*"...Initially we begin with the KAP survey...From that we identify issues, especially the problems that are facing the communities..."*⁴⁰

Secondly, 'Participatory, Learning and Action' (PLA) workshops bring the community to the heart of discussion - addressing issues relating to conflict resolution, effective leadership, the role of governmental leadership in relation to traditional figures of authority, and importantly, proposal writing. These workshops are an integral part of the process of empowerment. Sandy Fong, Project Officer during 2006/2007, explains:

*"... They were able to systematically map out: this is the problem, this is the solution to the problem, who is responsible for it, what is the timeline, what are the resources we need..."*⁴¹

Although as Sandy alludes to, gauging the views of all the community often relies on the resourcefulness of the facilitator:

*"...For me, doing KAP surveys, it was sitting in the kitchen, getting up at 06:30 in the morning - even though I am not a morning person - and sitting the kitchen sort of fanning the fire with the women and trying to talk, it's getting out of the comfort zone..."*⁴²

The two step principle of engagement represents PCDFs commitment to ensuring initiatives come from within the community itself, not a dictate from outside. PCDF is the facilitator, the people are the creators.



The newly renovated Suva Market. 2009

As such, PCDF (along with FSPI, NZAID, the islands of Batiki and Nairai in Lomaiviti Province, Kadavu Provincial Council and Lau Provincial Council) is actively involved

⁴⁰ Interview: Setefano Nauqe I (26.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

⁴¹ Interview: Sandra Fong (02.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁴² Interview: Sandra Fong (02.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

in tackling the current crisis in local governance. Through the more recent 'People and Policy' project, PCDF has been involved in a series of informal training sessions on leadership skills for village headmen. This training allows a measured and morality-based infrastructure to replace the potential chaos of a power vacuum, whilst also addressing confusion surrounding specific roles of authority. These projects are essential to the strengthening of Fiji's social structures. Political stability, local and national, is fundamental to the development of the nation. Without compassionate respect as part of the rule of law, Fiji will not reach the great heights of its potential - politically, socially or economically.

Addressing the issues involved in good governance, human rights and conflict resolution is particularly challenging. It is essential that the dignity of individual communities is maintained, however, they must be engaged intellectually. PCDF makes extensive use of drama in training and educational workshops. It is an artistic medium which relaxes the observer and allows potentially divisive issues to be broached confidently and honestly. The success of this approach can be attributed to the involvement

of young, local and talented performers directing the dramatic events. Consequently, potentially contentious issues are portrayed within a local context taking account of the subtleties of differing social histories.



Participants of a Good Governance Workshop for the Lau Province. 2009

As recently as mid-August 2009, PCDF facilitated a good governance workshop for the entire province of Lau. A first of its kind, this workshop brought together representatives of both traditional and modern structures of authority under one roof – PCDFs Denison Road. Suliana Siwatibau, a central figure in the growth of PCDFs governance initiatives, regional expert and current member of PCDF, is very clear on the importance of this event:

“...This is the first time that I have witnessed a workshop that has involved such a large and extensive representation of the communities of one province. For me it is a milestone...”⁴³

The 'Lau Provincial Workshop' has emphasised the potential of integrated governance projects. Their potential is vast and will be central in the creation of new systems of governance founded on a commitment to dialogue. Therefore, as Suliana notes:

“...Villages need local government bodies to facilitate their communications with higher government institutions and with each other across the province. Provincial bodi-

“...Villages need local government bodies to facilitate their communications with higher government institutions and with each other across the province. Provincial bodi-

⁴³ Interview (email): Suliana Siwatibau (17.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

*es cannot function well without regular feedback from the villages they serve. Governance projects that wish to help local community development must be engaged with both and facilitate effective communications between them..."*⁴⁴

There is no doubt that Fiji's recent experiences have resulted in a crisis in the relationship between modern and traditional systems of law and governance. Alisi explains that, "...there is a clash if there is no clarity on the role"⁴⁵. When civil leadership is weak or threatened, it is the local community which suffers first. This is often an area directly linked to a breakdown in human rights. Out of this complex web of societal breakdown came both the 'Voices and Choices' and 'People and Policy' projects.

Despite uncertainty at a central governmental level, the soul of a community is defined by the people who live, work and play within it. If the grass roots are empowered, the inefficiency or corruption of central powers cannot undermine the integrity of the people. Sandy explains the simple yet effective motto which characterises all PCDF programmes, and specifically 'Good Governance':

*"...Empowering people to be able to take the initiative to be creative in addressing their own problems..."*⁴⁶

The continuation of projects based on good governance and the relationship between people and policy is central to a renaissance in the Fijian sense of trust in figures of authority. This sense of trust is representative of a uniformity of morality within any society. These projects continue to be at the heart of social and political development in Fiji - not just as a part of PCDFs mantra, but all NGOs engaged in the restoration of accountable and trustworthy governance throughout society.



The Turaga ni Koro's Workshop for Kadavu Province, held at Tavuki Village. 2008

'Good Governance' projects are initiatives based on patience, trust and belief. Addressing a collapse in effective governance lacks the physical elements of environmental conservation or infrastructural construction. As such, it must be treated with a greater degree of sensitivity and subtlety. To change the instincts of tradition is perhaps the greatest challenge PCDF faces. Equally, if success is achieved in building empowered communities based on the principles of equality and honesty, it may be PCDFs greatest accomplishment.

⁴⁴ Interview (email): Suliana Siwatibau (17.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁴⁵ Interview: Alisi Daurewa (06.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁴⁶ Interview: Sandra Fong (02.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

YOUTH and MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT (YMH)

The scourge of mental illness provides a unique challenge to PCDF. Unlike other projects within the NRM and CCE programmes, mental health issues are generally taboo throughout Fijian culture and indeed globally. Tiriseyani Nauliovou, current 'YMH Project' Coordinator, notes that:



"...Stigma is very strong... Mental health is not being prioritised enough by all the different levels of society. It really comes from the lack of knowledge..."⁴⁷

The 'YMH Project' (2007-) grew out of an academic study coordinated by the Fiji School of Medicine – the 'Youth, Mental Health and Violence Situational Analysis of Fiji'.

Perhaps more than any other area, mental health provides numerous subconscious obstacles to any organisation attempting to reach out to those who fall victim to it. Unfortunately, the stigma associated with mental illness continues to conspire against those committed to its treatment. Through the 'YMH Project' PCDF is attempting to meet that challenge head on. With NZAID funding, FSPI and PCDF have undertaken a series of programmes aimed at challenging preconceptions surrounding mental health and youth suicide. The 'Youth and Mental Health Project' is overseen by FSPI in eight South Pacific countries. PCDF is lucky enough to facilitate the 'YMH Project' in Fiji.



*Youth & Mental Health's Gary Round winning the Mr Hibiscus.
2009*

The 'YMH Project' is inspired and lead by the youth of Fiji. Although the lack of an existing traditional coping mechanism may be viewed as a hindrance to the establishment of vibrant youth movements, in reality, it gives PCDF, the broader NGO community and youth groups the freedom to initiate an organic, empowered and broad-based movement - free from protocol:

"...the issue we are trying to address is huge, so we can't do it all on our own. The best thing to do is partner-up with other organisations and individuals..."⁴⁸

At a local level, training sessions aimed at tackling the issue of mental illness in small communities have proved very popular. The training programme administered by PCDF is now the FSPI gold standard for all nations involved in the broader

⁴⁷ Interview: Tiriseyani Nauliovou (23.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁴⁸ Interview: Tiriseyani Nauliovou (23.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

'Youth and Mental Health Programme' throughout the South Pacific. Despite funding constraints, PCDF continues to actively train and support the 'Youth Champs 4 Mental Health' (YC4MH) group in Viti Levu. As we enter PCDFs 30th year, the 'Youth Champs 4 Mental Health' group has grown from sixteen members to forty. As Tiri recalls, the emergence of the YC4MH was the archetypal expression of youthful energy:

*"...these participants felt that they wanted to commit to advocating for mental health [issues], to other youth in Fiji... they formed the YC4MH, and they've been working to advocate for mental health ever since their inception in early June 2008. They attached themselves to the Ministry of Health, the St. Giles Psychiatric Hospital, providing their own creative abilities to come up with some things that are maybe unconventional approaches to advocating for mental health..."*⁴⁹

Indeed YC4MH have succeeded in a number of creative projects. A song written by two of the Champs in 2008, 'Keep on Walking', has since become a regular mainstay on local radio. A mental health themed music video with the same name has since been produced.. These independent initiatives are absolutely representative of PCDFs mission, with initial training providing the inspiration of further independent development – again an example of stewardship not ownership.

Inevitably PCDF and FSPI have also sought to engage with government concerning this blight on society. By coordinating monthly stakeholder meetings between governmental and non-governmental partners and spearheading the formulation of a 'Suicide Prevention Policy' with the Ministry of Health and UNESCAP, the issue of mental health has been successfully brought into the main arena of political discussion. Furthermore, one of the main focuses of the 'YMH Project' in 2009 is the campaign for the establishment of a 'National Mental Health Policy'. Without unified, government-backed legislation recognising the importance of mental health issues, the movement cannot hope to generate cohesive and nationwide momentum in the short term.



Miss Hibiscus 2008, Filomena Tuivanualevu helps fundraise for the Sigatoka Bus Tragedy Victims.

"...We've got a strong network that links us to the Ministry of Health... So they've already seen it [mental health deficiency], identified it as a priority. For example last year, [Government saw] that there was a need for a Mental Health Policy. They recognised the importance of the work that is going on at the grass roots level, commu-

⁴⁹ Interview: Tiriseyani Nauliovou (23.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

nity work. They recognised PCDF and they roped us in to be part of the planning, the policy development team, the consultation team...”⁵⁰

The ‘Youth and Mental Health Project’ seeks to lessen and defeat the inherent stigma which makes the diagnoses, discussion and treatment of mental illness so challenging. The answer to this particular societal shame lies with the youth themselves. Their energy and unapologetic desire to defeat the stigma of centuries will lead to a far more healthy discourse on the relationship between youth and mental health throughout Fiji. As Graham Roberts explains:

“...Mental Health is the balance between all aspects of life – social, physical, spiritual and emotional. It is an integral part of our overall health and more than the absence of mental illness...”⁵¹

Practically, therefore, PCDF seeks to ensure a fresh administrative approach to mental health issues. The key components of this mission are awareness, research, promotion and advocacy. It is the partnership between raw passion and a pragmatically organised campaign which makes the youth movement such a potent example of the Fijian self.



The Mental Working Group L-R: Jamie Robinson (CWM Hospital Counseling Unit Volunteer), Joan Teaiwa, Liebling Marlow and PCDF's Tiri Nauliovou



⁵⁰ Interview: Tiriseyani Nauliovou (23.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁵¹ Roberts G. Masculinity, Mental Health and Violence in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji and Kiribati, Health Promotion in the Pacific Vol. 14 (2), Pacific Health Dialogue, 2007.

CCE PHOTOS



A National Trust Workshop held in Solodamu Village, Tavuki, Kadavu. 2005



Youth of Natokowaqa Settlement In Lautoka during a HIV Workshop. 2006



Alisi Daurewa been presented a "sevusevu" by the Community of Nawairuku during the opening ceremony of the Turaga ni Koro's Office. According to the Fijian Affairs Board publication 'Na Mata', the office for a Turaga ni Koro was a first of its kind. 2005



Sitiveni Naileqe in Yasawa, Ba; during an ADB's assessment of community hardship in Fiji was facilitated by PCDF



A participants from a MORDI cattle farming workshop in Nakorovou Village, Bua Province.

MAINSTREAMING OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT INNOVATIONS (MORDI)

The MORDI project is a pan-Pacific initiative funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). MORDI has been a central part of PCDFs CCE programme since 2006 and also hosts the Fiji office within the broader MORDI family. The programme is based in Veinuqa District, Namosi Province as well as the Vanua Levu districts of Wailevu West and Kubulau in the provinces of Bua and Cakaudrove respectively. It aims to provide communities with the expertise to move beyond the basic provision of fundamental rights and actively develop the ingenuity and innovation present in any and every human society. Current PCDF and Fiji Programme Coordinator – as well as PCDFs new Programme Director in 2009 - Illiapi Tuwai explains MORDI's motivation:

*"...Injecting that knowledge that they [the communities] have the power to do it on their own... it's an empowerment process..."*⁵²

Perhaps the most representative element of the MORDI project is the appointment of 'Community Facilitators' (CFs). These locally elected facilitators act as the guardians of their own community's creative wealth. Crucially, CFs represent a broad spectrum of the community:

*"...For me it's so positive what MORDI's doing. It doesn't only concentrate its effort in getting people [CFs] who are well established to lead, also young people and women, they can use their talents and gifts in society. Very positive..."*⁵³

It is the perfect example of how communities are able to produce competent facilitators to run initiatives after PCDF has embarked on a training programme. These are sustainable projects, not fleeting pantomimes.

The PCDF team has now selected and trained a network of eleven 'Community Facilitators' in three districts - 31 communities in total, based in the provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua and Namosi. These CFs, selected by the communities themselves, represent the programme's dedicated



Opening ceremony of the Telephone Installation in the interior of Namosi. 2008

⁵² Interview: Illiapi Tuwai (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁵³ Interview: Illiapi Tuwai (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

commitment to inclusive and trustworthy authority at village level. Since establishing this network, community training sessions have taken place on issues such as financial literacy education, conflict resolution/transformation, good governance, leadership



skills and project proposal writing. The clear focus of these training programmes is to promote self-reliant, confident and educated communities. Furthermore, the communities involved have benefited from technological improvements - the installation of two telephone systems in the villages of Wainiyavu and Burotu in Namosi Province in 2008 being one such example. As Illiapi recalls, the ability and willingness of communities to take ownership of their future is a key feature of the MORDI project:

*"...in Kubulau, they have this resource management [marine tourism] project going on... under that management they have already collected money and given scholarships to their children. Now I think two or three of their children are going to graduate from university in FIT..."*⁵⁴

The success of MORDI is best illustrated by its assistance becoming redundant. That is the ultimate example of community empowerment.

The official launch of the MORDI programme (2007) at the Forum Secretariat by the Minister for Provincial Development and Multi Ethnic Affairs, Hon. Ratu Epeli Ganilau, highlighted the real progress this enterprising project has made. Although connection



*The new Community Facilitators
Training held at PCDF. 2009*

with the local community is of paramount importance, the endorsement of government illustrates the lobbying power of NGOs like PCDF. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the information used by the MORDI group has been compiled by government ministries, including the Ministry of Provincial Development, Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Youth, Employment Opportunities and Sport. The sharing of expertise and data between governmental and non-governmental organisations is fundamental to the successful

implementation of community development projects. Opportunities and Sport. The sharing of expertise and data between governmental and non-governmental organisations is fundamental to the successful implementation of community development projects. The potential for cooperation is illustrated by the current administration's

⁵⁴ Interview: Illiapi Tuwai (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

'National Disaster Management Department' engaging with MORDI with a view to accessing the programme's database. These community profiles are essential in assessing the needs and abilities of individual communities.

Community development is a goal for Fiji and all Fijians - no one body has ownership of this most noble of missions. Echoing Alisi's thoughts, Illiapi is certain that a broad coalition is the only remedy for chronic underdevelopment:

*"...From my experience now, I think we need each other, the government and NGOs. Especially for Fiji, specifically for Fiji right now, if we are thinking of sustainable programmes for Fiji we have to work together. Most of the government ministries and departments are already there. It's already there in the field... Government is there and the NGO is there, and whatever we experience, share it, it will work..."*⁵⁵

The 'MORDI model' represents a microcosm of the goals of development. As a way of life, its potential is immeasurable:

*"...From what we have seen so far, we can exit from there... we are looking for them to stand on their own two feet, to make their own decision, to do their own planning, to do their own funding for themselves; in the long term that's the way it's supposed to be ... No dependence..."*⁵⁶

Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi – Vice-President of Fiji (2004-2006), former patron of PCDF and current member of the board – encapsulate the MORDI and wider PCDF mission:

*"...Partners in Community Development Fiji...is an organisation whose ideals I share. You seek to empower ordinary people in the community by helping them to take responsibility for their own development. This is not an easy task. To do this, we need to resist the temptation to tell them what to do. We have to listen carefully to what they want and assist them accordingly..."*⁵⁷



The 2009 Community Facilitators

⁵⁶ Interview: Illiapi Tuwai (24.06.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁵⁷ Madraiwiwi J. A Personal Perspective – The Speeches of Joni Madraiwiwi, University of the South Pacific Press, 2008.



PCDF's Executive Director Alisi Daurewa, Seruwaia Hoyte (right), Mata ni Tikina (left) Jone Matakibau (back left) with the communities of Venuqa District, Namosi



Boat Captain's Training Workshop conducted by PCDF and the Fiji Islands Maritime Safety Administration (FIMSA) in Namalata Village, Kubulau.



MORDI Community Facilitators been demonstrated how honey is harvested. 2009



The villagers entertains the staff of PCDF during dinner in Kubulau, Bua. 2009



An elderly lady doing her laundry using the water system installed by MORDI in Kubulau, Bua Province.



The taking group shot after completing the cattle fence in Nakorovou Village, Kubulau, Bua Province.



A long drive inland to the interior of Vanua Levu



The MORDI Staff and the Community Facilitators



A young Indo - Fijian girl in the Bua Province.

AWARDS

FSPF/PCDF has received many awards in recognition of thirty years of successful community development work. Although success is ultimately represented by the independence and innovation of Fiji's isolated and under-developed communities, such accolades highlight the hard work and dedication of PCDFs staff and wider family.

In 2000 Verona Lucas was made an 'Honorary Member of the Order of Fiji' due to the success of the KANA project. With so much of her life dedicated to the health needs of Fiji's future leaders, it is fitting that the current political class bestowed such an honour upon her. Equally, the FSP family has not been shy in recognising inspirational figures throughout Pacific history. FSPUSA, now Counterpart International, awarded founding father of independent Fiji, Ratu Kamisese Mara, 'Pacific Man of the Year' in 1987. This was not just in recognition of his great contribution to the nation and region, but also the rocky road of Fijian development walked by both FSPF and Ratu Mara.

The parliamentary theme has continued. Simone Dusilele Kaitani left PCDF in 1999 to pursue a career in politics. In the same year he was elected an independent member of parliament for his home island of Koro. Despite being ousted during the coup d'état lead by George Speight in 2000, Simone was re-elected to parliament in 2001 and 2006 respectively. Such electoral success is testament to his dedication to the island of Koro and Fiji as a whole, as well as PCDFs central role in the political development of the state.

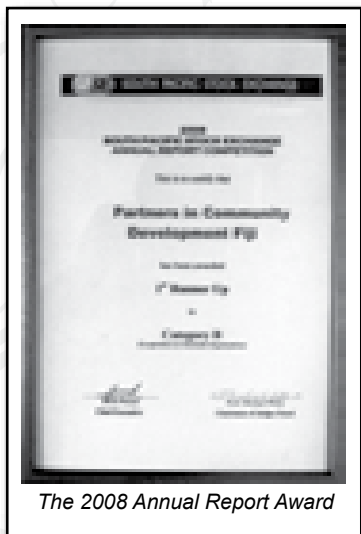


The Green Apple Award 2006

Success and excellence in the area of environmental conservation and management has not gone unnoticed. In 2004 and 2006 respectively, PCDF was presented with the International Green Apple Gold Award for 'Environmental Best Practise'. The Green Organisation is a *'non-political, non-activist, non-profit environment group dedicated to recognising, rewarding and promoting environmental best practice'*⁵⁹ around the world. Their recognition of PCDFs efforts in the area of NRM is evidence of the professional and dedicated work ethic of all staff members.

⁵⁹ www.thegreenorganisation.info

South Pacific Stock Exchange 'Annual Report Awards' have consistently highlighted the quality and clarity of PCDFs annual reports. A first place award under category B – 'Co-operatives and Charitable Organisations' – in 2003 has been followed up by first runner-up awards in 2006, 2008, and another award in this anniversary year, 2009. These annual reports are a vital part of PCDFs process of self-renewal and assessment.



The 2008 Annual Report Award

The 2007 Annual Report does deserve special mention. After rigorous analysis of accounts and broader practice, the first 'Certificate of Completion' from 'Social Audit New Zealand' was awarded to PCDF - one of only two NGOs in the region to achieve this level of recognition of the ethical nature in which financial and logistical matters are administered. Suliana Siwatibau emphasises the importance of this award:

"...NGO integrity includes strict accountability of the use of funds as well as the implementation of programmes as planned and presented to donors and stakeholders. I think that PCDF would not have survived the 30 years of its life to date if it

*has not been faithful to financial accountability. Donors seek its services because they know that its financial management is sound..."*⁶⁰.

Social accounting represents another facet of operation in which PCDF is dedicated to acting responsibly and with inherent honesty. For PCDFs principles of development to retain credibility, all aspects of operational activity must adhere to the same level of transparency - from accounts to community based action. As Laufitu notes:

*"...it's important that we stick to the principles of good governance and make sure that we are accountable in everything we do, and do it within the confines of the law..."*⁶¹

In addition to these awards recognising the NGO as a whole, PCDF has consistently assisted young staff in their pursuit of scholarships and further training as development workers. This represents a deep commitment to the development of the Fijian skills base from within, even if it results in a loss in staff. PCDF is a part of the broader development initiative and consequently does not exist to expand the power of its own administration.

As much as anything, these awards serve to refocus the mission and philosophy of PCDF.

⁶⁰ Interview (email): Suliana Siwatibau (17.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

⁶¹ Interview: Laufitu Malani (12.08.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FIJI – THE PAST, THE PRESENT, THE FUTURE

In three decades FSPF has grown from a nutrition-based NGO into the broad and proactive FSPF, and since 2002, PCDF of the twenty first century. This is not just due to the changing emphasis of donor agencies, but also a reflection of FSPF/PCDFs understanding that development is multi-faceted and all encompassing. A broad and holistic philosophy is essential.

Foreign aid restrictions placed on NGOs in British ruled pre-independence Fiji fundamentally stifled the ability of organisations to tackle deficiencies which threatened the Fijian population. Progression during the post-independence colonial hangover required patience and foresight. Thanks in part to the intelligent and resilient management of the fledgling FSPF of the late '70s and '80s, PCDF is now in a position to pursue a wider variety of development initiatives than ever before. Consequently PCDF aims to assist Fijians in all aspects of development - environmental, infra-structural, governmental and social. Perhaps the greatest quality of this mission is the innate understanding that true development requires a change in mentality, not just a change in rhetoric. Every aspect of PCDFs activity, therefore, is dedicated to the development of Fijian society in the present and the future. PCDFs 30 year legacy provides valuable lessons, guidance, and most importantly, inspiration for that future.

The twenty first century has brought many challenges - none more so than the reduction in donor funding from more traditional sources such as the EU, USA, UK, AUSAID, NZAID and the UN. This reality, coupled with the global economic crisis, has and will force PCDF to explore new and imaginative ways of utilising previously existing skills and resources as well as searching for new sources of income. The most obvious of

these alternative sources of funding is the local private sector. The active support of local private organisations is fundamental to the creation of self-sustainable communities - the tourism industry must not be at odds with the local communities whose resources provide such attraction. Equally the regional Asian and Pacific market is potentially vital in the future development of many Pacific based NGOs. Graham comments that:



PCDF Staff staff with Board Chairman, Paula Kunabuli during the 25th Year Anniversary. 2004

*"...the private sector and the donors go together. You can't do much unless you've got resources... I think PCDF has got opportunities to find that sort of partnering when somebody else actually needs access...that's what PCDF has got to offer, access. That's really important..."*⁶²



Access is the greatest asset any NGO can hope to acquire. It is an asset founded in the trust and confidence shown in PCDF by the community. Without the support, respect and understanding of the local communities FSPF/PCDF has always sought to nourish, no effective progress can be made. Therefore, PCDF continues to emphasise the community at the centre of any development project. They must be engaged with

honesty and respect for cultural differences that can exist from province to province, town to town and indeed village to village. PCDF's thirty year history is its legacy - its projects have and continue to flourish after three decades. This legacy of sustainability is only possible with the genuine commitment of communities who welcome PCDF into their lives. If her projects are sustainable, then so PCDF's mission becomes sustainable.

Outwardly at least, one of the most challenging aspects of a NGOs work in Fiji is its relationship with government. It is a relationship perceived to be increasingly complex in the light of the 2006 military coup and the abrogation of the 1997 Constitution in 2009. However, there have been many positive signs that despite political uncertainty, PCDF can work with the government in expanding and safeguarding many development projects. PCDF has made great strides since the 2006 coup - both spearheading the formulation of a 'Suicide Prevention Policy' with the Ministry of Health and the creation of a 'Corals for Conservation' authenticity label which received a stamp of authority from the Ministry of Environment in 2007, represent major cooperation with the interim government. Furthermore PCDF is a frequent partner of the Ministry of Education and continues to liaise on policy formation. As Graham points out, interaction with government is not limited to negotiating with those holding high office.

*"...there're certainly ways of working with provincial councils, where PCDF could partner with government. And district councils as I said. There's definitely certain potential in that..."*⁶³

⁶² Interview: Graham Roberts (08.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh

⁶³ Interview: Graham Roberts (08.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

It is this level of negotiation and cooperation which has ensured the consistency of PCDF projects in any political environment. Quite simply, the work of community development undertaken by any NGO is too important to allow centralised political instability to threaten it. Furthermore, PCDF and the broader NGO community have a specific role in the socio-political development of Fiji. As Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi clarifies:

*“...PCDF is part of the emergence of civil society in this part of the world. Some in authority tend to decry and bemoan this trend. They should not do so. Civil society exists to reflect the voices of those who would otherwise not be heard. In broad terms, civil society exists as a counterweight to the State and the multilateral corporations and organisations...”*⁶⁴

During FSPF/PCDFs thirty year history, the concept of an extensive and multi-faceted theory of development has emerged. Any project which focuses on the immediate physical environment of any particular community must be reinforced and sustained by a trustworthy, fair and traditionally acceptable system of governance. In essence, this is a combination of the physically tangible and the internally moral. Without a marriage of these ideas, true development cannot occur. To change and develop, is to change mind, body and soul. The NRM, CCE and MORDI programmes provide a flexible template with the potential to deliver holistic community development in Fiji - encompassing environmental, infrastructural and psychological elements of development.

*“...We work with empowered people who make informed decisions about their own development...”*⁶⁵

In the current political limbo, all non-state actors are a vital part of Fiji's fight against poverty and unemployment – the current political stagnation must not be allowed to plunge Fiji into social decay. PCDF is a shining example of an NGO which continues to empower communities within Fiji with absolute commitment. In any political, social or economic environment PCDFs dedication to the Fijian people remains unquestionable.

PCDF has emerged stronger and more determined from one of Fiji's most turbulent periods of political and social history. It is with fortitude and strength of will gleaned from this myriad of experiences that PCDF approaches the next thirty years.

*“...PCDF will have to change... we will have to give more of our work to the communities, a process we have begun with MORDI. It really is consistent with our mission... we have to change now...”*⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Madraiwiwi J. A Personal Perspective – The Speeches of Joni Madraiwiwi, University of the South Pacific Press, 2008.

⁶⁵ PCDF, Annual Report 2008, ed. Alisi Daurewa , 3.

⁶⁶ Interview: Alisi Daurewa (06.07.09), Aengus O'Dochartaigh.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNUAL REPORTS / STRATEGIC PLAN

PCDF, Annual Report 2002, ed. Alisi Daurewa, Bluebird Printery Limited, 2002.

PCDF, Annual Report 2003, ed. Alisi Daurewa, Bluebird Printery Limited, 2003.

PCDF, Annual Report 2004, ed. Alisi Daurewa, Max Marketing & Publication Ltd, 2004.

PCDF, Annual Report 2005, ed. Alisi Daurewa, Quality Print Ltd, 2005.

PCDF, Annual Report 2006, ed. Alisi Daurewa & Wesley Morgan, Max Marketing & Publication Ltd, 2006.

PCDF, Annual Report 2007, ed. Alisi Daurewa, Bluebird Printery Limited, 2007

PCDF, Annual Report 2008, ed. Alisi Daurewa, Bluebird Printery Limited, 2008.

PCDF, Strategic Plan (Draft) 2002-2005, ed. PCDF, 2002.

INTERVIEWS

Daurewa, Alisi (06.07.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Fong, Sandra (02.06.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Lucas, Verona I (08.05.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Lucas, Verona II (11.07.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Malani, Laufitu (12.08.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Naulivou, Tiriseyani (22.07.09), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh

Nauqe, Setefano I (26.06.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Nauqe, Setefano II (14.08.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Roberts, Graham (08.07.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Siwatibau, Suliana (via email) (17.08.09), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochar-
taigh.

Tuwai, Illiapi (24.06.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó Dochartaigh.

Waqairagata, Fulori (nee Nainoca) (24.06.2009), interviewer: Aengus Ó
Dochartaigh.

LITERATURE

Ewins, Rory, *Changing Their Minds, Tradition and Politics in Contemporary Fiji and Tonga*, Macmillan Brown, 1998.

Lal, V Brij, *Fiji before the storm, elections and the politics of development*, Asia Pacific Press, 2000.

Madraiwiwi, J, *A Personal Perspective – The Speeches of Joni Madraiwiwi*, University of the South Pacific Press, 2008.

Sanadhya, Totaram, *My Twenty One Years in the Fiji Islands & The Story of the Haunted Line*, ed. John Dunham Kelly and Ultra Kumari Singh, Quality Print Limited, 2003.

Roberts G. Masculinity, *Mental Health and Violence in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji and Kiribati*, Health Promotion in the Pacific Vol. 14 (2), Pacific Health Dialogue, 2007.

Roberts G. *The Kadavu health promotion model Fiji*, Health Promotion International Vol. 12 (4), Oxford University Press, 1997.

Wright, Ronald, *On Fiji Islands*, Penguin Books, 1987.



A lady relaxing in Nakorovou Village, Kubulau, Bua Province.



Celebrating PCDF's 30 years of service



ODE TO PACIFIC NGOS

*What words are deserving of thee?
You, who light up the community
With the service you give so tirelessly
So committed; so free
And oh with so little; but with hearts so big and
offered with dignity.*

*Conceived out of a desperate situation of
need
Where human sufferings are seen
Like hungry mouths to feed;
Poverty to defeat;
Environment to upkeep;
Good governance to see;
Human rights to meet
And justice and equality to instill,
You – the NGO movement of the Pacific came
into being.*

*I salute you the first born
The women NGOs who defied all odds
In the colonial era, you first went on record
To serve the women of Fiji as that
Humble bird of peace, the “RUVE”, which you
were called.*

*Other NGOs followed
Diverse in nature -
in your goals
in your visions
in your areas of focus and structural forms*

*But consistent and oh – so consistent,
Are your efforts to remain strong
And uphold what is good and right all that is
wrong*

*Challenges are many and common to all
Fundraising keeps you toiling all night long
Perceptions of you – sometimes prejudiced –
cause much distraught
Political interference to conform – is yet an-
other gall to haunt
And to be silent.....oh, to be silent.....,
Challenges the very core of your very being
and all
And to be relevant,most of all .*

*So let me salute you NGOs of the Pacific !
You have done us proud
You are infused with passion , strength and
foresight
You have radiated that unique brightest of
lights
For you see, You are a rare breed indeed !!
You have been the gems that glow
Within the Crown of
Pacific life.*

*Susana Tuisawau
Executive Director of the Pacific Foundation
for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW)
/Trustee of PCDF*