

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND

Indigenous people have an important role in assuring the long-term management of a large portion of Fiji's lands, ecosystems and biodiversity. Indigenous peoples' overall systems are based on sustainable livelihoods and the notion of community well-being. Poverty rates among indigenous peoples is significantly higher than for populations at large – as a result of inability to protect rights to their lands and resources. To get indigenous peoples to be economically empowered, mutually beneficial collaborations with their communities and organizations must be formed, based on respect for indigenous peoples' rights, as well as the protection of their intellectual property rights.

CURRENT STATUS

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage & Arts (MTACHA) oversees the creation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of government initiatives aimed at promoting good governance and the well-being of the iTaukei people. Throughout the fourteen provinces, the Ministry serves as a direct link between the government, iTaukei institutions, and its administration. Currently, the MTACHA is drafting the Ministry's Strategic Development Plan, which will provide a vision for iTaukei Affairs until 2030 and outline the overall strategy to transform iTaukei community. The intention is to expand on the concept of *solesolevaki*: a whole-of-society approach. This is an acknowledgement that everyone has a role to play. Making it work is everyone's joint responsibility: the Vanua, the Church, and the government.

CHALLENGES

1. *Review of Indigenous Institution*: there is a need to strengthen the position of Indigenous institutions to realize iTaukei aspirations.
2. Streamlining of assistance provided by various iTaukei administrative facilities to address the development of Indigenous People's (IP) wellness and good governance.
3. Development of village guideline to support holistic and effective development of the Vanua.
4. The revival of traditional iTaukei games and increasing the involvement of iTaukei in entrepreneurship.
5. Need to capitalise on the 'vanua' and 'lotu' to promote the wellbeing and effective administration of indigenous participation (IP).
6. Need to build capacity of IP in entrepreneurial skills to increase participation in business.
7. Increase returns to IP from Natural Resource Development.
8. Unlocking the Cultural and Heritage Sector.
9. Addressing NCD's among i-Taukei people.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. *Institutional Review*: initiate i-Taukei land legislation reforms to empower i-Taukei resource owners to utilize their land as direct equity participants in business opportunities.
2. *Land*: Mobilize i-Taukei land resources to achieve their economic empowerment.
3. *I-Taukei Entrepreneurship*: Develop financing and saving products that iTaukei investors can access and encourage indigenous participation in business.

4. *Tourism*: Leverage i-Taukei land to secure ownership of tourism ventures with other strategic investors, and maximize benefits accruing to mataqali landowners.
5. Establish sustainable financing mechanisms for the development of i-Taukei community through the established of the iTaukei Wealth Fund.

FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- **Enhance Skills & Capabilities of i-Taukei workforce:**
 - ✓ Collaboration with Indigenous Institutions.
 - ✓ Public Awareness Campaigns.
- **Promote more i-Taukei engaged in business:**
 - ✓ Implement targeted incentives for indigenous businesses.
 - ✓ Encourage more indigenous entrepreneurship by providing support for start-ups and small businesses.
 - ✓ Review land laws to allow resource owners to leverage land leases as equity into commercial ventures with foreign investors and local investors.
- **Review the roles of respective i-Taukei institutions:**
 - ✓ Development of a new Vision and related policy development.
- **Review of the i-Taukei institutions:**
 - ✓ Enact new legislations, amend related and existing laws and put in place organisational structure, policies, systems and processes, and human resources to ensure good governance, promote indigenous people participation.

- **Cultural and Heritage sector:**
 - ✓ Establish more iTaukei businesses which focuses around cultural & heritage sector.
- **Solesolevaki Framework:**
 - ✓ Establish more “solesolevaki” framework within all iTaukei institutions and provincial councils.
- **Improve the overall wellbeing of the indigenous people:**
 - ✓ Introduce wellness programs and include traditional indigenous games to help combat NCD among indigenous people.
 - ✓ Establish counselling services to address mental health related problems.