

How to collaborate with Pacific Churches for development research

**Guidance for effective approaches to
collaborations with Churches in the Pacific
for development research**

September 2018



RESEARCH FOR
DEVELOPMENT
IMPACT NETWORK

A collaboration between
the Australian Council for
International Development
and Australian universities

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About the Research for Development Impact Network

The Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network, (formerly the ACFID University Network), is a collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Australian universities. It is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development with the objective of linking quality research, policy and practice for impact in international development.

The Network began in 2009 as a partnership between ACFID member NGOs and Australian universities, when it was co-hosted by ACFID and the Institute of Human Security at La Trobe University. The partnership grew out of a collective desire to widen debate on international development and to strengthen collaboration between academics and members of ACFID. Since then, the Network has continued to grow and promote positive relationships between ACFID members and universities, with the overall goal of supporting collaboration and understanding across actors within the Australian development sector.

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1 Introduction

Purpose of the Guide

This Guide, *'How to Collaborate with Pacific Churches for Development Research'*, is a practical resource to assist Australian-based researchers and Australian and international development organisations. The Guide is designed to support good practice for research partnerships with Churches in the Pacific, where the aim of the research is to generate evidence that influences policy and practice in the international development sector. The primary focus is *how* individuals and organisations might partner with Pacific churches for development research. The Guide does not consider in depth whether researchers *should* work with Churches in the Pacific. Rather, it provides insights into how these research collaborations can be conducted effectively and ethically. The case studies at the end highlight the application of the principles contained in the Guide.

The Guide offers contextually specific advice, which should be read alongside the processes highlighted in the previous RDI Network Guide, *'How to Partner for Development Research'*, available at: <https://rdinetwork.org.au/resources/partnerships-in-practice/>.

Methodology

The information in this Guide draws on Pacific values and research protocols, and regional and global evidence on how to work effectively and ethically with faith-based partners for international development. Twenty-two interviews with individuals representing Pacific Churches and/or involved in Pacific Church research collaborations were conducted to inform the Guide's contents (see list of contributors, p.ii).

Who is this Guide for?

The primary intended audience for the Guide is development practitioners with an interest or focus on Pacific programs, including those working in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as well as researchers. Researchers may be working within academic institutions with a particular focus on the Australian/Pacific development sector. The Guide will also be relevant for others engaged in international development, such as NGOs and researchers based in other countries; donors; individual consultants and the private sector, with an interest in setting up or participating in Pacific research activities.

Where did this Guide come from?

The impetus to write this Guide was feedback received from participants in the RDI Network who expressed an interest in working with Churches in the Pacific. The Guide was commissioned by the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network, a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development. The RDI Network is a partner of, and hosted by, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), and funded by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The importance of research partnership and localisation

As in the previous Guide, 'How to Partner for Development Research', emphasis was placed intentionally on the value of engaging in partnerships to carry out research. Collaborative practice reflects the way that international and Australian NGOs work with in-country partners and communities. It reflects a growing understanding of the complexity of development, alongside the need for development solutions to be created in and responsive to the local context, and owned by local actors.¹

International development and humanitarian discourse highlights the importance of localisation. Therefore, investment in the localisation of international development and humanitarian research by partnering with Pacific Churches and FBOs is, in essence, evidence of 'walking the talk'.

Definitions of 'partnership' and 'collaboration' are found on page 6. For the purposes of this Guide, 'collaboration' rather than 'partnership' will be the preferred term, reflecting how these research relationships were described by the majority of interviewees who contributed to the Guide.

Using this guide

This Guide provides advice on how to:

- i) Collaborate effectively with Pacific Churches for development research, and
- ii) Use ethical and appropriate research methods when working in a Pacific and/or Christian context.

Chapter Two discusses the **relevance of Christianity** in the Pacific development context. It also discusses reasons why development researchers and practitioners might want to collaborate with Churches for research.

Chapter Three gives practical advice related to finding and **establishing a Pacific Church relationship** for research purposes. Collaborations with Churches should be established that respect Pacific values and the Christian faith, and adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct. This Chapter also lists various types of Pacific Church entities that may be interested in a research collaboration.

Chapter Four gives brief advice regarding the **management of a research collaboration** with reference to Pacific values and Pacific Church protocols. Additional relevant advice is found in the RDI Network Guide, 'How to Partner for Development Research'.

Chapter Five covers **Pacific research practices**, which consider the Pacific/Church context and values.

Chapter Seven is a series of four **case studies**, highlighting how advice in this Guide may be applied to research collaborations with Churches in the Pacific.

¹ Chris Roche and Linda Kelly, 'Partnerships for Effective Development', Australian Council for International Development, (2014): 21.

Within this document you will see a few icons to help you navigate different content areas:



recognise the 'gems' and value-add which result through research partnerships



look out for and pay attention to these topics to get the best out of your partnership



beware there could be danger ahead
– take precautions to avoid challenges



take practical actions / steps to get the best out of your research partnership



ask questions to help you navigate choices and decisions within a research partnership

Terminology and Definitions



The word 'Church' has multiple and interchangeable meanings.

Within this document, the word 'Church' (capital 'C') may refer to any/all of the below, although clarification will be provided where necessary;

- ▶ all of the Christians in the world,
- ▶ a Christian denomination
- ▶ a Christian denominational institution/organisation

Smaller church groups (lower case 'c') will be referred to as the 'local church' or 'church congregation' and represent;

- ▶ a local group of Christians or congregations who meet together in a church building.

Lower case 'c' in 'church' is a common way to refer to the church building in everyday conversation, however for clarity, the church building will simply be referred to as the 'church building' within this document.

When engaging with Church organisations, it is respectful and important to take the time to understand the hierarchies and titles used by different Churches and their clergy. For researchers coming from a secular society, these can be confusing. The following religious terms may be relevant when engaging in a research collaboration:

Table 1: Religious definitions

Bishop	A priest/member of the clergy of high rank who oversees clergy in the lower ranks. Typically governs a diocese.
Church	The group of all Christians in the world. Can also refer to the organisation or institution relating to the assembly of Christians, for example the Catholic Church. In everyday language, 'church' can also refer to the church building (see previous note about the world 'church' and how it is used in this Guide).
church congregation	A group of Christians who meet together in a certain place. This could alternatively be referred to as the 'local church'.
Christian/ Christianity	A person who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and who tries to live according to His teachings. Something that relates to the teachings of Jesus Christ.
Clergy	Those who have been trained and ordained for religious service in the Church.
Deacon	An appointed church leader—someone who serves the Church practically. A Deacon may assist the Pastor with duties, but usually also has a secular job.
Denomination	A distinct religious body within the wider Christian Church, characterised by specific doctrine, beliefs, leadership structure and style of worship. Well known Christian denominations include: Anglican, Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox.
Devotions	An act of prayer and/or Bible reading either as an individual or as a group.
Diocese	A region or district under the care of a Bishop, within the church.
Elder	An appointed church leader—who provides oversight of spiritual matters as well as pastoral duties. An elder is often older in age, and is usually male, although a few Church denominations allow female elders. There is usually a group of elders within each church, and it is acknowledged as a respected church leadership position.
Faith	A belief in the existence of, and trust in God.
Ecumenical	Representing a number of different Christian Churches. An 'ecumenical body' is an organisation that brings together multiple denominations within a nation or region, promoting Christian unity. This is not withstanding theological differences.
Evangelism	Also called proselytism. Evangelism is the attempt to convert people to a certain faith, religion, or denomination.
Lotu	Pronounced 'low-too', 'lotu' is a term used across Melanesia and Polynesia to describe the act of coming together for religious practice/worship.
Mission	The purpose of a Christian organisation—to spread the message of putting faith in Jesus.
Missionary	A person who encourages conversion to Christianity.
Pastor	The name of the ordained leader/Minister in some Protestant congregations.

Priest	An ordained Minister of the Catholic, Anglican or Orthodox Church.
Proselytism	Also called evangelism, proselytism is the attempt to convert people to a certain faith, religion, or denomination.
Tambu	A term used across Melanesia meaning either holy or sacred. For example, a 'tambu place' refers to a holy place. 'Tambu practice' refers to practices that may be sacred, secret or for men only. Tambu may also mean that which is prohibited or not allowed.
Theology	The study of religious faith, practice and experience. Practically speaking, for most Christians, theology is about studying the Bible, or the word of God. This is in order to understand God and the ways Christians should live.
Religion	A set of beliefs, practices and values that are related to the relationship between people and a divine/sacred being.
Synod	The meeting together of an advisory council to discuss religious matters. The synod always includes Clergy and sometimes includes church members/leaders also.

Other relevant terms:

Table 2: Other Definitions

Development and humanitarian initiatives	Activities undertaken in order to reduce poverty and address global justice issues. Development and humanitarian initiatives may occur through a range of engagements that includes community projects, humanitarian response and emergency management, community education, advocacy, volunteer sending, provision of technical and professional services and resources, environmental protection and restoration, and promotion and protection of human rights. Development activities take place over an extended period of time, while humanitarian activities are aimed at addressing immediate human suffering and often take place in the context or aftermath of war or natural disaster.
Development research	Research to generate evidence that will inform development and humanitarian policy and practice, ensuring such engagement is effective and ethical.
Non-development activity	Includes activity undertaken to promote a particular religious adherence or to support a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.
Evaluation	A systematic, objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program or policy.
Ethical	In accordance with the rules or standards for moral and correct conduct or practice, including the standards of a particular profession.
Faith Based Organisations (FBOs)	In this Guide, 'FBOs' refer to development organisations supported by Christian groups to assist the poor. FBOs fund and manage programmes that tackle poverty and social exclusion. ²

2 Gerhard Hoffstaedter, 'Religion and Development: Australian faith-based development organisations', *ACFID Research in Development Series Report No. 3* (2011):6. https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Religion-and-development.pdf

Monitoring	Refers to the continuous or ongoing assessment of a project, program or policy over time.
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Monitoring and evaluation are systems or processes used to manage and assess the progress and results of development or humanitarian work. M&E is conducted in order to provide accountability to affected stakeholders and donors, to improve performance, to enable learning and adaptation, and to communicate information about results and impact. ³
Pacific values	The principles of Pasifika communities and peoples, which are demonstrated in social behaviours, rituals and customs. These may be interconnected with faith values.
Participatory	Ethical development and humanitarian initiatives recognise that local people are actors in development, rather than merely beneficiaries. Participatory engagement occurs through facilitating the opportunity for individual and/or collective involvement and leadership. This also involves inclusive negotiation ⁴ rather than the imposition of an externally designed project agenda.
Collaboration/ Partnership	<p>Often these terms are used interchangeably. They should be understood in relation to a continuum of engagement between parties.</p> <p>Both can be understood in relation to the practice of working together to achieve shared or overlapping objectives.</p> <p>Collaboration can be understood as a process to engage multiple parties to come together to address a defined purpose that could not be achieved by working alone.</p> <p>Partnership may be a more formal arrangement. Often resources from each party are shared (co-mingling) to achieve shared objectives. Within a partnership, shared benefits can be realised but risks are also shared by all the parties⁵.</p>
Protocols	A set of acceptable behaviours, or rules to be followed within specific settings. This document discusses protocols relevant to interactions with Church communities, as well as protocols relevant to conducting research in the Pacific.

3 ACFID, 'Code of Conduct: Practitioner's Handbook' 30. https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/11974_ACF_Code%20of%20Conduct%20Relaunch_LOWRESSINGLES_R5%20%281%29.pdf

4 OECD, *Evaluation of Programs Promoting Participatory Development and Good Governance: Synthesis Report*, (1997):93.

5 Keren Winterford, *How to Partner for Development Research*, Research For Development Impact Network, Canberra, Australia, (2017):6.

Acronyms

Table 3: Acronyms

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development	LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Transgender and Intersex
ACOM	Anglican Church of Melanesia	M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency	MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
AHP	Australian Humanitarian Partnership	NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ANGO	Australian Non-Government Organisation	NUS	National University of Samoa
AOA	Anglican Overseas Aid	NZIPR	New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research
ANU	Australian National University	PhD	A Doctor of Philosophy
CAN DO	Church Agencies Network—Disaster Operations	PNG	Papua New Guinea
CCC	Christian Care Centre, Solomon Islands	PPDVP	Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Program
CPP	Church Partnership Program	PTC	Pacific Theological College, Fiji
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	RDI Network	Research for Development Impact Network
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)	SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
DMEL	Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	ToR	Terms of Reference
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction, or Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience	UCPNG	United Church Papua New Guinea
EoI	Expression of Interest	UoO	University of Otago
FBDO	Faith Based Development Organisation	UW	UnitingWorld
FBO	Faith Based Organisation	UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
GBV	Gender Based Violence	VAW	Violence Against Women
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group	WHO CC	World Health Organization Collaborating Center
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency	YAP	Young Ambassadors for Peace (UCPNG program)

2 Why collaborate with Churches in the Pacific for development research?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- ▶ In most Pacific Island countries, over 90% of the populations is Christian.
- ▶ Recognising that religion has significant influence in most developing countries, there is renewed interest among development and humanitarian organisations in working with faith groups for development.
- ▶ A Church collaboration may provide opportunities for Pacific peoples to define research priorities, and act as researchers, leaders, advisors, participants, and stakeholders in a research project.
- ▶ It can facilitate ongoing data collection in otherwise unreached populations that would be difficult to access by other means.

REMINDER:

While there are important distinctions between FBOs, Churches, congregations and Church-based institutions (see 'Terminology & Definitions' on page 4)—for ease of reading within this Guide, all Church-based organisations will be referred to as 'the Church' (Capital 'C'). Exception will be taken when referring to local church (lowercase 'c') congregations and specific examples. (See explanation on page 3).

Why partner/collaborate with churches for development?

The role of the Church in developing countries

Fifteen years ago, religion was seen as counter-developmental, with Western understandings of humanitarianism shaped by an increasingly secular Western society⁶. For some, Christianity was—and to some extent still is—perceived as being at odds with human rights, especially in regard to its colonial and missionary history, its perceived negative impact on world conflict, and the conservative stance taken by some Christian denominations on issues around gender equality and sexuality⁷.

While the Australian political system is based on the separation of Church and State, and Australian society is increasingly secular, this is not the case for much of the developing world. Religion is a significant feature of societies in many developing countries. There is increasing recognition among development and humanitarian agencies, practitioners and scholars that the Church is a significant civil society player and has the potential to be an influential voice, challenging adverse social and cultural norms and promoting human rights. Unlike most development actors, Churches are an embedded part of many developing countries and their local communities. Often, Churches hold 'dense' networks, have extensive local knowledge and hold the trust of citizens⁸. As a result, there is growing recognition and acknowledgement of the importance of the Church as potentially an effective partner in development.

6 Gerard Clarke, 'Faith-Based Organizations and International Development: An Overview,' in *Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations*, ed. Gerard Clarke and Michael Jennings, 17-45. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17.

7 Matthew Clarke, 'Good works and God's work: a case study of churches and community development in Vanuatu,' *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 54, no.3 (2013): 349.

8 Katherine Marshall, 'Revisiting the Religious Revival in Development: A Critique of Philip Fountain' in *International development policy: Religion and development*, ed. Giles Carbonnier, 31-46. (Geneva: Pargrave Macmillan, 2013), 38-39.

Shared values

NGOs and Universities may opt to partner with Churches, Church networks or FBOs for development purposes in recognition that the Church forms a significant part of local communities and 'civil society'. More broadly, donors, NGOs and Churches may hold shared values in support of social justice and improved well-being for the communities in which they work. These development partnerships are not always without risk—as discussed in Chapter three.

Why collaborate with churches for development research in the Pacific region?

Over 90% of people in the Pacific Islands describe themselves as Christian. The Church is a significant part of civil society, participating in the social, spiritual and physical development of the Pacific region.

Given its standing and influence, the Church should have an important role in forming and contributing to development research within the region.

With the exception of Fiji, affiliation with Christianity in the Pacific⁹ far exceeds that in Australia (at 67.3%)¹⁰. The Pew 2012 report on the Global Religious Landscape provides statistics on religious affiliations, by country. The following table illustrates the high rates of Christian adherence in the Pacific Islands;

Table 4: Percentage of Christian adherence in Pacific nations.

Country	% of Christians	Country	% of Christians
American Samoa	98.3	Palau	86.7
Cook Islands	96	Papua New Guinea	99.2
Federated States of Micronesia	95.3	Samoa	96.8
Fiji	64.4	Solomon Islands	97.4
Kiribati	97	Tokelau	99.8
Marshall Islands	97.5	Tonga	98.9
Nauru	79	Tuvalu	96.7
New Caledonia	85.2	Vanuatu	93.3
Niue	96.4	Wallis and Futuna	97.4

The 'intensity'¹¹ of Christian adherence in the Pacific Islands is noticeable for a researcher from a secular society. Christianity is embedded within public discourse on social, cultural and political issues. It permeates and informs nearly all aspects of everyday life in most Pacific countries. For example, in some Pacific nations, politicians regularly quote the Bible in public statements, and opinion columns are dominated by theological interpretations of public issues.

9 For recent conversations on the definition of 'The Pacific' region, please see <https://www.nzipr.ac.nz/2018/06/26/nzipr-seminar-critical-conversation-on-the-pacific/>.

10 Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, *The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Major Religious Groups as of 2010*. (Pew Research Center, 2012), 45-50.

11 Matthew Clarke, 'Good works and God's work: a case study of churches and community development in Vanuatu.' 341.

One PNG church development partner stated,

"We are a people interwoven by our culture and faith. Any donor agency who works with us has to have an integrated view of development"¹².

In many—but not all—countries in the Pacific, the Church is the main provider of primary public health and social services, such as hospitals, health clinics, schools and women's refuges. Given the prominent role that the Church plays in the social, spiritual and physical development of Pacific Island nations, development researchers should consider working with the Church, and development research should take its role into account.

Pacific research requires that Pacific peoples are more than objects of research, they should be actively involved in the process of research itself¹³. Church collaborations may provide opportunities for Pacific peoples to act as researchers, leaders, advisors, participants, and stakeholders in research projects. Churches can mobilise large numbers of highly motivated and trained workers and volunteers in development implementation, including research and evaluation.



Potential reasons to collaborate with Churches for development research are to:

- ▶ Grow the local pool of human resources for development research.
 - ▶ Grow the research coverage of otherwise difficult to reach/excluded populations.
 - ▶ Add to local understandings of development issues and the ability of local populations to influence policy decisions.
 - ▶ Facilitate knowledge exchange and sharing of contextually appropriate research practices.
 - ▶ Facilitate ongoing systematic collection of data in Pacific communities.
 - ▶ Provide a foundation for building trust and mutual respect between different groups.¹⁴
-

12 Jane Anderson, 'Partnership through translation: a donor's engagement with religion,' in *Handbook of Research on Development and Religion*, ed. Matthew Clarke, 505-520 (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013) 511.

13 University of Otago, *Pacific Research Protocols*, (University of Otago, 2011): 107.
<https://www.otago.ac.nz/research/otago085503.pdf>

14 Adapted from *UNDP Guidelines on Engaging with Faith-based Organizations and Religious Leaders*, (October 2014), 6.
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/partners/2014_UNDP_Guidelines-on-Engaging-with-FBOs-and-Religious-Leaders_EN.pdf

Do Pacific Churches want to collaborate for development research?

The answer is yes—and no. Whether Churches support collaborations for development research depends on a few factors. Interviews conducted in the Pacific (Fiji, PNG, Samoa and Vanuatu) for this Guide's case studies revealed a wide range of opinions:

Yes

For the most part, Pacific Church agencies and institutions were positive about opportunities to partner for development research, provided:

- ▶ The research reflects local church and regional priorities. Priorities cited included family and gender violence, poverty, environmental protection of land, sustainable agriculture and the impact of international investment on small business.
- ▶ Collaborators agree that the proposed research has the potential to stimulate community dialogue about issues and/or provide a basis on which to lobby governments in support of policy initiatives or other reforms.
- ▶ The research is funded by international partners. As with many CSOs, most Church agencies do not have significant budgetary resources for research. Despite their limited capacity to contribute funds, if the research is considered a priority for the Church community, this is an incentive to be involved.
- ▶ There is opportunity to partner with international academics for specific learning purposes.

No

To a lesser extent, there was some hesitation about the benefits of collaborating for development research. The reasons for this were:

- ▶ Anxiety about the potential for research to be colonised and thus to devalue local priorities, beliefs, values, customs and research expertise.
- ▶ Potential for exploitative relationships. Respondents hesitated because of concerns that the Church would be used as a commodity for Western researchers' gain, without regard for the Church's priorities, ownership of knowledge, autonomy or values.

3 How to prepare for a research collaboration

This section provides guidance on how to identify a Church partner for development research. It also gives advice on how to set up this partnership with appropriate consideration for the context and for the needs of a Church partner.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter provides guidance on how to:

Understand:

And apply Pacific values (*respect, reciprocity, family obligations, common good, collective responsibility, respect for older people, humility, love, charity, service, spirituality*); Understand Pacific research protocols, as well as Christian beliefs, and denominational differences.

Find:

An appropriate Church group/organisation/institution, in order to begin discussions about a potential research collaboration.

Discuss and assess:

The potential risks and benefits of a research collaboration for each party, including by using a partnership selection tool, and discussing each party's beliefs and their research priorities. This section also provides guidance on thinking through the meanings of 'development' and 'non-development' activities in relation to the ACFID Code of Conduct and potential joint research activities.

Formalise and establish the research collaboration:

Take steps to make sure that your new research collaboration is established well. You should also consider important indicators of Pacific relevance, partnership and governance—which are important to keep in mind during early discussions and decision making.

Understand the context

Understand Pacific values and research protocols

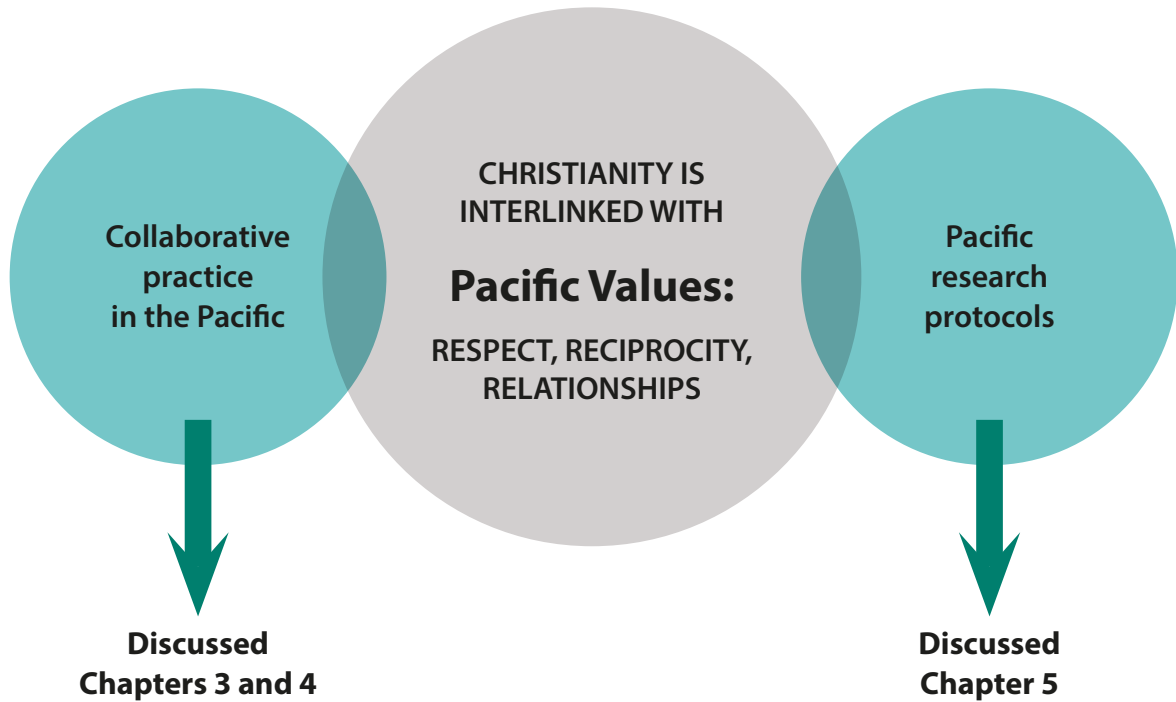
Preparing for a research collaboration should include giving thought to how you will respectfully and appropriately interact with Church groups with whom you may wish to work.

Ways of living and associated values are quite varied in the Pacific. Even so, there are some common values that, while they may be practised differently, are commonly prioritised and justified Biblically. These include: respect, reciprocity, family links and obligations, the common good, collective responsibility, reverence for older people, humility, love, charity, service and spirituality (most commonly associated with Christianity)¹⁵.

Pacific values will inform and underpin expectations relating to working relationships (the practice of collaboration) and the research process (including research methods) with potential Church partners.

¹⁵ University of Otago, 'Pacific Research Protocols,' 7.

Figure 1: Pacific values should underpin both the practice of collaboration as well as research practice.



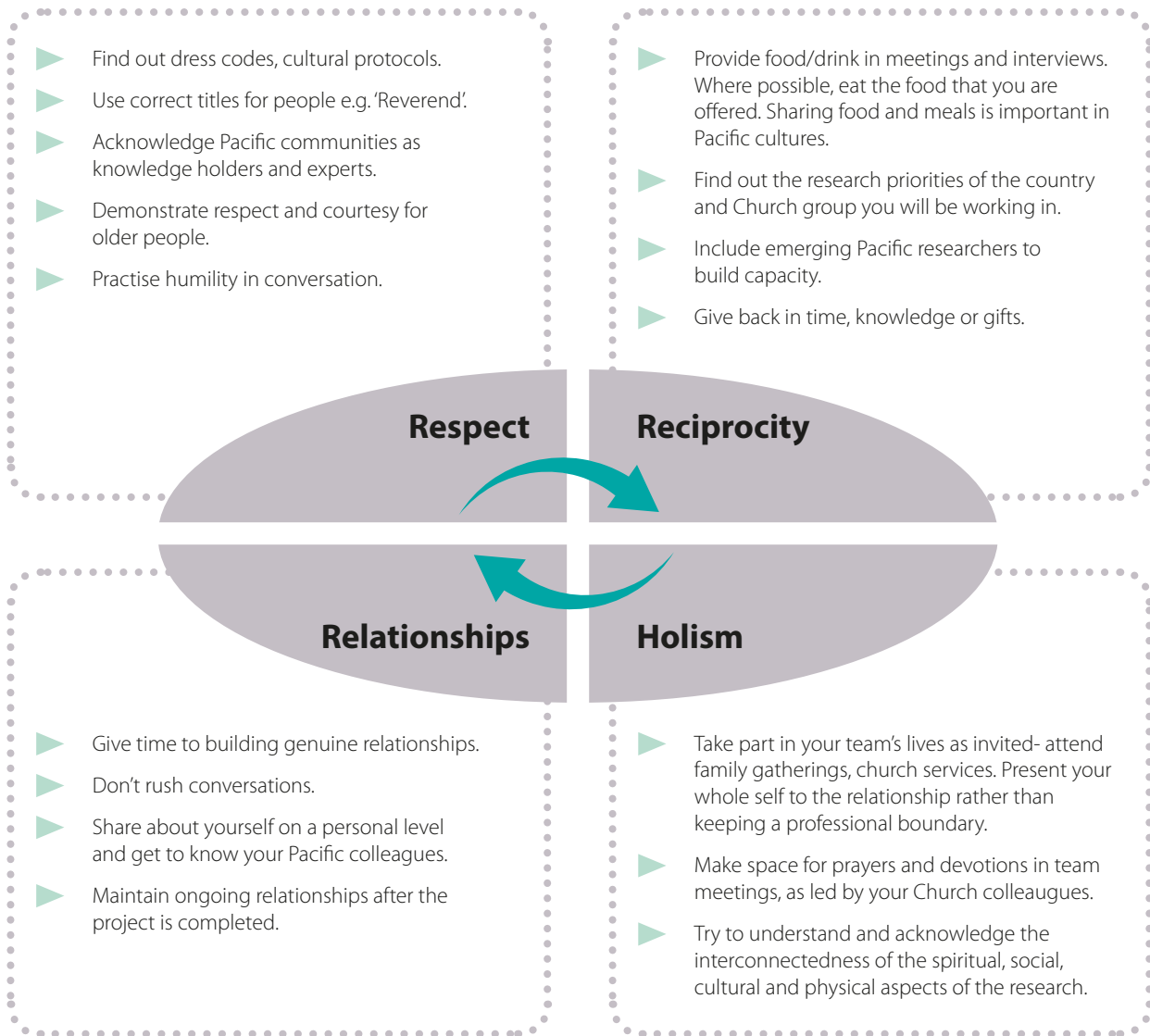
The ways in which these values influence Pacific research practice and protocols is discussed in Chapter five.



Pacific values should influence the way that you interact with Church-based research colleagues, throughout the exploration, assessment and management phases of a research collaboration. Keep referring back to this Figure 2 for simple tips on important attitudes and behaviours.

Figure 2: Pacific values¹⁶ should underpin the practice of collaboration when working with a Church for development research.

Pacific Values and Collaborative Practice



16 Adapted from Pacific Research and Policy Centre, Massey University, *Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocols* (Massey University, 2017). <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/centres-research/pacific-research-policy/doing-research.cfm>

Understand Christian values/beliefs

Because faith and life are profoundly interwoven, many Christian values and beliefs coincide with Pacific values. Even if not conducting research in a formal partnership or collaboration with a Church entity, Australian development researchers will inevitably interact with Christianity in the Pacific. This calls for researchers—both secular and faith-based—to deepen their understanding of Christianity, and its geographical and denominational nuances, in the Pacific.

For research partnerships with Pacific Churches, it is important to understand the faith-based motivations of a potential partner.

Christianity involves a number of beliefs around numerous subjects. Although the Bible is the foundational text for all Christians, there are many different versions of it and numerous interpretations of its many teachings. The result is a diverse range of denominational, contextual and individual convictions within Christianity and diverse social and cultural practices. For example, most denominations meet together on a Sunday, whereas the Seventh Day Adventist Church honours Saturday as a day of rest and worship (Sabbath).

A basic summary of Christianity, according to the United Church in PNG is included in the Appendix (p 71).

Find churches for potential research collaborations

Define your own reasons for wishing to collaborate with a Pacific Church for research. When you approach a Church for a potential collaboration, this will assist allow them to comment on whether or not your expectations are realistic.

Potential research collaborations with Pacific Churches

Local congregations are not the only potential partners for research. Church networks, services, demographic groups and interest groups may be interested in a research collaboration:

Table 5: Potential Church groups, organisations and institutions for research collaborations.

Church Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Church leaders' networks ▶ Denominational bodies ▶ Ecumenical networks and governing bodies
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Women's savings groups based in church congregations ▶ Women's groups ▶ Women's shelters
Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Men's groups (Bible study groups, interest groups)
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Youth groups/clubs ▶ Youth networks ▶ Youth Shelters
Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Denominational school networks ▶ Denominational health clinic/hospital networks ▶ Victim support services
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local church congregations ▶ Humanitarian /Development organisations and/or networks ▶ Theological colleges

How to find a Church for potential research collaboration

There are multiple entry points to beginning a research collaboration with Pacific Churches. The following table is a summary of various ways that researchers and development practitioners have established research collaborations—as revealed by the case studies in Chapter seven of this Guide;

Table 6: Examples of how Australian/NZ researchers have established Pacific Church research collaborations.

For development practitioners	For researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Worked through previously established Church networks, relationships and partnerships. ▶ Approached Pacific denominational bodies. ▶ Approached Pacific ecumenical bodies (e.g. Pacific Conference of Churches or National Council of Churches). ▶ Approached individual Pacific FBOs directly. ▶ Approached individual Pacific based theologians. ▶ Approached leadership at Pacific Theological Colleges for recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Approached DFAT for suggestions. ▶ Approached in-country researchers and faith-based research institutions. ▶ Facilitated meetings with other Church/ university researchers with similar interests. Shared networks during these meetings. ▶ Strengthened connections with theological scholars (with interests in the application of theology to public issues). ▶ Strengthened connections with Australian and/or Pacific FBOs.

Assess the potential for a research collaboration

At this stage it is helpful to be aware that a potential partner will have varying levels of experience in collaboration and/or research. For example, a local church congregation may have much less research/ collaboration experience—and human/financial resources—than an ecumenical body. Below are some fundamental principles to guide you with exploring and setting up a research collaboration.



Assessing a potential research collaboration means taking the time to ask questions and share ideas and concerns. Do not make assumptions about the beliefs and values of your potential Church colleagues. Instead, ask as many questions as possible and share about yourself in an open and honest manner.

Principles for assessing the potential for a research collaboration with a Pacific Church:

1. Invest in genuine relationships.
2. Honesty and transparency are a good foundation for any collaboration. Each party should be open about their mission, beliefs, values, policies and practices.
3. Discuss similarities and differences openly.
4. Aim to find areas of agreement, but don't try to agree on everything.
5. Discuss the strategic priorities of each other's organisations. Find common ground in priorities and focus on these.¹⁷
6. Be open to workplace practices that are different to your own. For example, it is not uncommon to open/close meetings in prayer and/or devotions in Pacific work settings.
7. Ask about the role of faith groups and their contributions to development.
8. Seek to understand the history and beliefs of the Church denomination associated with your potential Church colleagues.



Remember that Church denominations have differences in beliefs and social/cultural practices. There are also nuanced differences in theological interpretations and spiritual practices within the same denominations across different countries. For example, it should not be assumed that those who worship with the Catholic Church in Fiji have identical beliefs and practices to those who worship with the Catholic Church in Vanuatu.

Discuss the ACFID Code of Conduct

Reflect on the ACFID Code of Conduct together, to explain why you will need to adhere to certain principles within the potential research collaboration.

ACFID's Code of Conduct reflects a secular approach to development, but this does not mean that religious values must be excluded from research.

The Code of Conduct refers to religion twice:

- 1) *In all of its activities and particularly its communications to the public, the Organisation will accord due respect to the dignity, values, history, religion, and culture of the people with whom it works consistent with principles of basic human rights.*
- 2) *Funds and other resources designated for the purposes of aid and development will be used only for those purposes and will not be used to promote a particular religious adherence or to support a political party, or to promote a candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.*



To comply with the ACFID code, it is important that researchers do not use the research as a means for promoting a particular religious adherence.

¹⁷ UNDP *Guidelines on Engaging with Faith-based Organizations and Religious Leaders*, 13-14.



As is common practice with many NGO/CSO partnerships, you can ensure financial transparency by asking the Church that you are collaborating with to set up a separate bank account for the proposed research project. This does not mean your organisation/institution should control finances throughout the project. Instead, it ensures a clear separation of use of funds between research and Church activities.

Discuss the meaning of 'development' and 'non-development' activities

The Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme does not allow funds raised to be used for missionary activities. It emphasises a distinction between development and non-development activities (these definitions are found on page 5 of this guide).

Although a Pacific Church may value *both* development work and non-development work, it is important to make the distinction between the two so that they are not combined during the research process. It is also important to ensure that the subject-matter of research is clearly related to development and to the achievement of development goals.

You may wish to include clear definitions of aid and development activity, and non-development activity, within your formal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. Ongoing dialogue about this distinction, for the purposes of the development research, can also be of assistance.

The following excerpt demonstrates one way that CAN DO (Church Agency Network for Disaster Operations) have ensured clarity on the subject of proselytisation.

CAN DO is a consortium of 8 faith-based agencies. This consortium uses the strengths of Church networks (being extensive reach, influence and long-term community relationships) for humanitarian action. CAN DO's statement on proselytisation is a useful example of a policy which formalises separation of development and non-development activities. This statement also exemplifies respectful recognition of the 'non-development' aspects of the Church's stated beliefs and purpose.

We recognise that development work and proclamation belong together in the life of the Churches. The challenge is to ensure these dimensions are held together in a way that acknowledges their distinctiveness, and by not inappropriately mixing them.

What they must not do is:

- 1 Incorporate proselytising activities into programs designed to address poverty, for this would exploit the vulnerability of the very people we seek to serve, an action that runs counter to the values of the Christian faith;*
- 2 Use government funds for proselytising activities, as this would violate the secular mandate of the government;*
- 3 Carry out their work in a manner that is inconsistent with good development principles and professional practice.*

... we strongly support the ACFID code requirement that, if agencies seek to engage in evangelistic type activities, these are clearly separated from poverty focused development activities.

For CAN DO's entire statement on proselytisation and development, see:

<http://www.churchagenciesnetwork.org.au/assets/documents/CAN-Guiding-Principles-on-Proselytization-and-Poverty-April-2014.pdf>



Despite needing to make the distinction between ‘development’ and ‘non-development’ activities, ACFID members should respect the values, religion and cultures of the people with whom they work, consistent with human rights. Members should not ask Churches to minimise their religious beliefs or activities, although these should not be supported by development or research funding.



Examples of ways you might demonstrate respect for your colleagues’ faith include:

- ▶ Asking church colleagues if there are religious protocols that you should be aware of.
- ▶ Accepting the common practice for Pacific Church colleagues to lead prayer/devotions prior to, or at the close of meetings.
- ▶ Attending local church services, or gatherings, where you have received an invitation and feel comfortable accepting.
- ▶ Demonstrating your own commitment to learning about the important role of faith/Church in development by asking questions.

Assess risks

Once you have taken time to get to know your potential partner with open and transparent conversations, both parties are better equipped to assess potential risks.

The following table summarises some of the potential risks and benefits to take into account when negotiating a research collaboration with Pacific Churches. Individual consideration must be given to each risk and to if and how it can be mitigated. Risks should be weighed against potential benefits in order to reach a decision about establishing a research collaboration.

Table 7: Risks and benefits for potential research collaborations

Risks for Pacific Churches	Benefits for Pacific Churches
<p>Research interrupts Church’s usual work and priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Appropriation of Pacific knowledge for Western research agenda. ▶ Unbalanced power dynamics, resulting in local research priorities not being emphasised. ▶ Spirituality is minimised or criticised in research agenda and processes. 	<p>Initiating important dialogue in Church communities on development and human rights issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Growing the local pool of human resources for development research. ▶ Assisting to include otherwise excluded or difficult to reach populations in development research. ▶ Facilitating ongoing systematic collection of data in communities. ▶ Adding to populations’ understanding of development issues in order to influence policy decisions. ▶ Facilitating knowledge exchange and sharing of good research practice.

Risks for Australian based researchers	Benefits for Australian based researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Exclusion of vulnerable or minority groups from participation in research. ▶ Researchers and Churches have differing views regarding proselytising during the research process. ▶ Researchers and Churches have different expectations regarding what constitutes 'informed consent', e.g. a local church Minister may want to consent on behalf of the whole congregation. ▶ Mismatch in research priorities between Australian researchers and Pacific Churches/researchers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Expanding Australian researchers' understanding of the interface between religion and development. ▶ Providing a foundation for building trust and mutual respect between different (secular/religious) groups for future development/policy initiatives. ▶ Growing the coverage of otherwise excluded or difficult to reach populations in research. ▶ Learning about good research practice in the Pacific. ▶ Facilitating an evidence base to inform policy and practice, drawing on unique skills and perspectives from both Australian researchers and Pacific Churches.

Research collaboration selection



Consider working through a partnership selection process as exemplified by IWDA below. Remember to ask those who you are considering collaborating with to advise who should be present at any assessment meetings—for example, church governing bodies or local leaders.

Example of partnership selection process:

IWDA and Christian Care Centre, Solomon Islands

Information provided by Donna McSkimming, IWDA

Although not specifically developed for research partnership, IWDA has a clear process for the selection of program partners. This process was implemented in 2017 when considering a potential program partnership with Christian Care Centre (CCC), Solomon Islands. CCC is one of only two providers of non-government emergency accommodation for women and girls fleeing gender violence. Secularism is a key principle of IWDA's work, however the organisation acknowledges that they should not impose this in a Melanesian context.

Therefore, potential partners are assessed against specific criteria—chiefly to identify similarities in values and strategic priorities. IWDA worked through its 'Program Partner Selection Tool' with staff from CCC and its governing body, the Anglican Church of Melanesia. It found that CCC's strategic plan and policies were consistent with the goals of IWDA as an organisation. Furthermore, their policies did not deter clients from family separation, nor support any form of proselytisation or religious adherence.

This values alignment led to IWDA completing a 'Program Partner Capacity Assessment' followed by a 'Partner Risk Management' assessment. IWDA also encouraged CCC to conduct its own assessments. A formal partnership has now been formed. A copy of IWDA's 'Program Partner Selection Tool' is found in the Appendix on page 73.

Formalise and begin your research collaboration

The following section recommends priorities, considerations and activities relevant to the initial stages of a research collaboration with a Pacific Church. These do not need to be applied in any particular order and should be considered according to their appropriateness for the particular research collaboration.

Define the type of partnership/collaboration you wish to engage in

Early discussions of a potential research collaboration should require all parties to consider the type of partnership/collaboration that they want to be part of. There is a spectrum of potential relationships and partnerships: see RDI Network Guide, 'How to Partner for Development Research', p.7-12, and the case studies in Chapter seven of this Guide, which reflect different forms of collaboration.

Regardless of where your research collaboration fits within the spectrum of types of partnerships, it is important to consider indicators of Pacific relevance, partnership and governance (see Figure 3). These will be important to keep in mind during early discussions and decision making, as well as throughout the research process.

Designate one or two key leaders

Designate one or two key leaders with the drive and people skills to bring together a diverse group of people to form working relationships. Allow the leader/s to work on an agenda for a 'kick-off' meeting by consulting all groups within the potential partnership.

Have an open and honest discussion about expectations

These can be reflected in the partnership agreement down the track.

Consider initiating a discussion about financial accountability. As discussed above, research partnerships with Churches require that the Church creates a separate bank account for funds used for research, to distinguish the research from other Church activities. This ensures financial transparency from the outset and reduces the risk of fraud or otherwise inappropriate use of funding, which can complicate relationships and breach the ACFID Code of Conduct.

Define the research priorities

Defining the ToR or evaluation criteria should come later (see Chapter five), but in general terms, the research should reflect Pacific priorities. Consider who will benefit from the research in defining the research priorities.

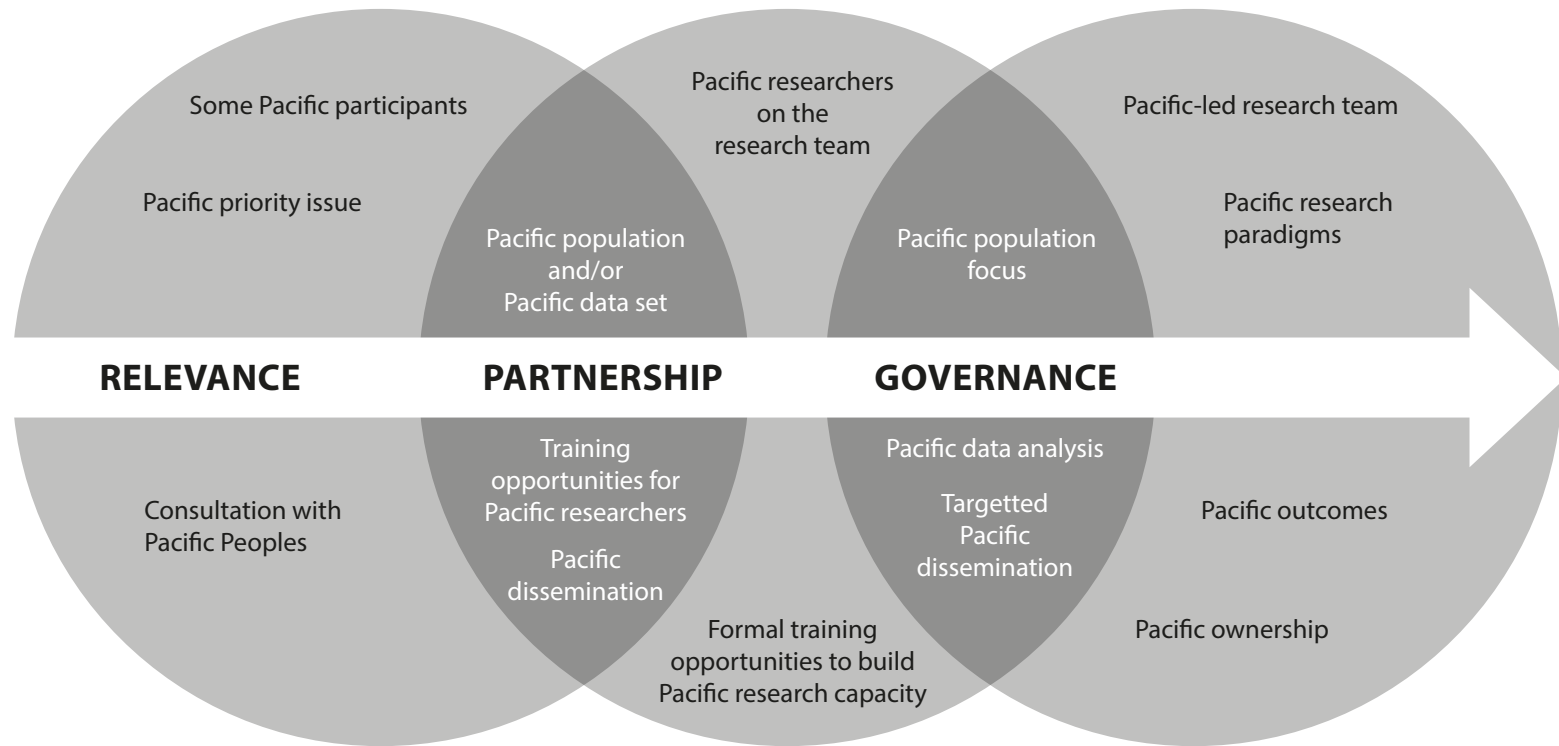


Examples of how you can ensure Pacific priorities are incorporated includes by:

- ▶ Investigating the publicised government research priorities within the country you plan to work in.
- ▶ Ensuring the research team is composed of a majority of local researchers.
- ▶ Developing the ToR or evaluation criteria collaboratively.
- ▶ Agreeing on a minimum standard that will satisfy reporting requirements for Australian donors and meet the needs of the Church organisation/s in question. This could be piloted, then adjusted as the case may require.

***See Case Study Two on page 54: CAN DO Ambae Volcano Response for an example of localising the evaluation planning, to reflect Pacific (local) priorities.

Figure 3: Indicators of Pacific relevance, Pacific participation and Pacific governance, University of Otago (2011) 'Pacific Research Protocols' p.5
(Adapted from: The Health Research Council of New Zealand, Guidelines on Pacific Health Research, May 2005)



Seek permission from all governing bodies

- ▶ Your research may require approval from more than one church division/office in each denomination. It is up to you to ascertain what approvals are needed.
- ▶ Researchers must allow adequate time to ask for guidance in seeking approval from the necessary people within Church structures.
- ▶ These structures will be different according to the specific country context and denomination.
- ▶ If in doubt, start at the top and work your way down.
- ▶ Don't assume that if working with the Church, you do not need to seek permission from government bodies. Ask church contacts to guide you to relevant government bodies that may also need to be consulted or whose permission may be required.

Partnership/Collaboration agreement

See page 22 of 'How to Partner for Development Research' for examples of what can be included within a partnership/collaboration agreement.



Familiarise yourself with Pacific research protocols:

You will need to understand how research is best conducted in a Pacific context prior to discussing roles and responsibilities within the research team. Pacific research protocols are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, and are an essential part of getting the most out of a research collaboration in this context.

Create agreed procedures for addressing contentious issues

This can be explored during the 'kick-off' meeting so that procedures are established before any challenges arise. Consult your partner/s in establishing a balanced mechanism for this. There will be Christian, Biblical and cultural values that inform your partner/s' expectations about addressing conflict. This may also include conflict avoidance or power imbalances, so early discussions should attempt to unpick understandings.



Find out how your church colleagues would typically raise concerns or address conflict *before* the research activities begin. Find out how you can best raise any future concerns also.

Hold a 'kick-off' meeting or workshop

Use the meeting (sometimes held over several days in workshop format) to ensure that everyone within the team is on the same page regarding roles and responsibilities; research priorities and outcomes; partnership principles and practices; and procedures for handling challenges.

- ▶ Check with your church colleagues to determine if the meeting should begin with a short time set aside for devotions.
- ▶ Consider a catering budget for the meeting/s.
- ▶ Allow a sufficient allocation of time for individuals to get to know each other and their reasons for being involved in the project.
- ▶ Invite a small number of advisors to the meeting who have expertise, or relevant experience—but are not part of the official research collaboration. This will allow objective opinions to be shared. Examples may include theologians, local Pacific research consultants, specialists from other NGOs, academic with interest in the research.

Consider power and control when defining roles and responsibilities

Faith groups and ACFID organisations working together for development research need to show mutual respect for distinctive roles and contributions. Considering and recognising balance in power, control and involvement is critical for practising ethical principles of Pacific research.



Local/church researchers should make up at least 50 percent (and preferably more) of the team.

Key aspects of the working relationship and roles and responsibilities may include:

- ▶ Research design
- ▶ Data collection
- ▶ Ethical practice
- ▶ Analysis and sense making of research findings
- ▶ Production of research outputs
- ▶ Communication and dissemination of research findings

Red Cross and The Humanitarian Advisory Group's publication on 'Localising the Research Process',¹⁸ documents a commitment to collaborative humanitarian research, where Pacific researchers are responsible for driving the research process. Australian-based colleagues perform a support function within Red Cross' research, as opposed to the reverse, which is often found in humanitarian research.

In addition to this example, the CAN DO Ambae Volcano Case Study on page 54 within this guide, emphasises leading roles for local church based researchers in humanitarian evaluation planning.

¹⁸ Ayla Black et al, *Localising the Research Process: Walking the Talk Insight Series*; (The Humanitarian Advisory Group, 2017) <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Localising-the-research-process.pdf>

Training and capacity building

Remember that Faith groups are often working on a different time schedule to development agencies and/or researchers. For the most part, Churches intend to be present in communities indefinitely. Therefore, it is important that if a church has ability/interest in ongoing research—that they are equipped to do so.

One point to evaluate at this stage, is what training and capacity building could be implemented for more junior Pacific academic researchers or for church congregation volunteers (who may be collecting data). For church congregation volunteers who wish to be research assistants, offer on-the-job training to ensure ongoing research capacity.



Short term training courses are less effective than other methods of capacity building in the Pacific context. On-the-job training offered to junior researchers, ideally from senior Pacific researchers, is the most effective¹⁹.

The following table summarises the methods used to build Pacific Research capacity exemplified in the case studies at the end of this document. Capacity building for the Pacific research community should be a central component of a research project and should be specifically integrated into the research design. This entails participation of Pacific peoples at all levels of research, including research governance and decision-making, applied and professional research, and implementation of the research project.

Building local research capacity—examples from case studies

Table 8: Examples from case studies: How Pacific Church research collaborations have built local research capacity

Fiji	Development agency staff trained large groups of church volunteers in human rights (using Biblical language) and effective methods of data collection for disaster responses.
Vanuatu	A local consultant from Vanuatu's Humanitarian Advisory Group was employed to facilitate evaluation planning and learning for Church partners.
Samoa	Conducted a number of public seminars in the Pacific on research methods and preliminary results. The research team included junior and senior Pacific researchers. International advisors and mentors were available to offer their expertise.
PNG	An external consultant used the research evaluation process as a training opportunity and throughout the entire process she worked alongside local church staff with less evaluation experience.

For further reading on formalising and establishing a research partnership or collaboration, see pages 20-29 in the RDI Network Guide, 'How to Partner for Development Research'.

19 Yaseen Ayobi. et al, 'Going Local: Achieving a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific,' 6.

4 How to manage a research collaboration with a Pacific Church

Generally speaking, practical principles for managing a research collaboration with a Pacific Church are no different to those for managing secular research partnerships. We recommend reading the advice in this Chapter, relevant to working with Pacific Churches, in parallel with pages 30-32 of the RDI Network Guide, 'How to Partner for Development Research'.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter provides guidance on how to:

- ▶ Measure and reflect on important milestones
- ▶ Build a supportive team culture, relevant to a Pacific and Church context
- ▶ Manage any emerging challenges to your collaboration
- ▶ Conduct a health check on your research collaboration (according to Pacific values).

Measure and reflect on project milestones

- ▶ As partnerships develop, there is a need to review them to ensure they are delivering on the objectives agreed to by the partners.
- ▶ As you continue to carry out the work, you will need to take account of any changing circumstances; manage expectations—which often shift along the way; and adjust and work in ways that enable both organisations and individuals to stay engaged.²⁰

Build a supportive team culture

- ▶ Investing in genuine relationships *demonstrates respect* for Pacific cultures and creates an environment for honest conversations. It can also be helpful for avoiding mistaken assumptions and to prevent differences being misinterpreted. Genuine relationships involve mutual trust, openness, honesty, empathy and clear communication between yourself and your church colleagues. All of these will be a firm foundation for a shared research project.
- ▶ Investing time in relationships is *not a once off activity* at the start of the collaboration. Good relationships can be built upon by attending cultural ceremonies and events, attending church, accepting invitations to lunch/dinner, sharing the preparation of food, and joining office devotions. An example of this can be found in the case study found on page 66. Highlighting Dr Jane Anderson's work researching the Church Partnership Program in PNG, one church partner commented:

"Our time with Jane showed how essential relationship is in order to overcome these differences. Jane took the time to understand us, to get to know us. From an anthropological perspective, she lived with us, partaking in all aspects of our lives. Because of this, the differences between people, and the barriers between us—just melt away."— Bena Seta, UCPNG.

- ▶ Provide psychological and emotional support for 'insider' (church or community based) researchers for whom the research subject may be quite personal.

²⁰ Keren Winterford, *How to Partner for Development Research*, Canberra: Research for Development Impact Network, 2017, 30.

Manage any emerging challenges to your collaboration

- ▶ Previous investment in positive relationships will go a long way in establishing a foundation for overcoming challenges throughout the research collaboration.
- ▶ Create an environment for open and honest discussions: make sure this is with an attitude of respect and humility.
- ▶ Avoid making prior assumptions: ask questions frequently, even if they seem simple.
- ▶ Respect differences in beliefs and opinions. Continue to focus on shared values rather than seeking to impose beliefs.
- ▶ Remember that there are Christian and cultural beliefs that will be relevant to how your church colleagues deal with conflict. You will need to identify people who can explain relevant conflict resolution processes to you. How conflicts are navigated should also be something that was discussed in the planning stages for the research collaboration (see Chapter three).
- ▶ Identify those who can assist in building bridges. There may be individuals within your team or networks who have a good understanding of both local church practices as well as secular/development practices. These people can be an invaluable asset to the research team in identifying shared values and research priorities, as well as facilitating dialogue between church groups and secular institutions/organisations.
- ▶ Check the distribution of power and control. This should be a continual process, and useful in a partnership health check (see below). Your commitment to this will be demonstrated by localising the research practice. Relevant Pacific research processes and protocols are discussed in Chapter five.

Conduct a health check on your research collaboration

As mentioned in 'How to Partner for Development Research,' (p.31) some good questions to reflect on are:

- ▶ How are we tracking against the principles and practices of collaboration to which we originally committed?
- ▶ What are examples of our principles of practice being operationalised?
- ▶ What areas do we need to strengthen in order to best meet our principles of collaboration?

When conducting a health check on your research collaboration, priority should also be given to ensuring that the Pacific values (discussed throughout this guide) are being reflected in Pacific values.



CHECK- Is your research collaboration operating appropriately for the context and according to Pacific values and Church protocols?

- ▶ **Respect**—Respect those in positions of authority in the Church, and communities.
Find out if people have titles, and use them (unless instructed otherwise). Respect all people in your team, and the contributions each person makes. Each person is an ‘expert’ within the team.
 - ▶ **Reciprocity**—Make sure that all parties are benefiting from the research collaboration. Give your time to build capacity or listen to/help with challenges. Share resources and gifts. This is a way of ensuring harmonious relationships within the collaboration.
 - ▶ **Communal relationships**—Each individual is responsible for community wellbeing and social cohesion.
 - ▶ **Holism**- Acknowledge the interconnectedness of the social, cultural and spiritual aspects of the environment. Try to present your ‘whole’ self to the working relationship—rather than separating the professional from the personal. Be open to getting to know those in your team for the long-term.
-

5 Ethical research practices for research collaborations with Churches in the Pacific

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provides guidance on how to:

Consider Pacific research methods: e.g. Talanoa—and why these are relevant methods for addressing Pacific issues.

Develop the ToR together: Do the ToR reflect Pacific priorities, as agreed by your partner?

Consult widely: Develop a team of local and international advisors if necessary.

Seek permission to enter church communities through relevant channels. Your church partner should lead this.

Prepare for interviews: local researchers will be best placed to understand language and cultural meanings for arranging and conducting interviews. Find out dress codes, and the titles of those you will be meeting. While always conforming to appropriate dress codes and ensuring that you address people by their correct title, an informal approach to interviews and other research engagements is often appropriate.

Organise consent: This may involve a range of processes from formal to informal, and written, verbal or ceremonial. Formal acknowledgement should also be offered.

Navigate sensitive issues: Consider reframing human rights using Biblical language or Christian precepts. Consider using this reframing process for M&E training around inclusion, or in Bible studies to allow open dialogue. The reframing process should not be imposed—in most cases, your church partner should lead these initiatives and activities.

Analyse data collaboratively in order to get the most out of your research.

Consider how the research report can be shared with the church community and the wider public, in a contextually appropriate way. Share research as widely as possible in order to 'give back'.

The purpose of a research collaboration should be to research topics that reflect Pacific priorities, alongside, and led by, Pacific researchers.

Decolonising research—Pacific research methodologies

Collaborating with Churches for development research in the Pacific requires more than consideration of the 'faith' aspect of the collaboration and research. Collaborating with Churches for research should transform the activity of research by prioritising Pacific methods of research and Pacific research priorities. Linda Tuhaiwai Smith explains:

"When Indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms."²¹

21 Linda Tuhaiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People*. New York, USA: Zed Books, 2012.

The following research principles, developed by Massey University in New Zealand, should influence your expectations for research protocols and processes when working with a Pacific Church for development research.²²

Figure 4: Pacific research principles are underpinned by Pacific values



PACIFIC RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

Respect for relationships

Ensuring that cultural protocols and processes are followed throughout the research process. Respect for research participants is exercised and grounded in humility, the roles of gatekeepers and elders are appropriately acknowledged and confidentiality is respected.

Respect for knowledge holders

Ensuring that Pacific knowledge, aspirations and wellbeing are integral to research design, research processes, outcomes and outputs. Both research partners and research participants are prioritised as knowledge holders and a participatory approach is adopted in seeking informed consent.

Reciprocity

Ensuring that reciprocity is an integral part of the research process and participants and communities benefit from the research. Reciprocity can encompass gifts, time and service and extends to accessible dissemination of research findings.

Holism

Ensuring the interconnected nature of the physical, social, environmental, cultural and spiritual aspects of research with Pasifika and Pacific communities is understood and acknowledged.

Using research to do good

Ensuring the the wellbeing of Pasifika and Pacific communities and their environment is of central importance in why and how research is conducted, at the same time as ensuring that the research is rigorous and scholarly. The goal of research beneficence applies to both the integrity of the research process and the potential research outcomes and impact.

For more information please contact the Pacific Research & Policy Centre
PacificResearch@massey.ac.nz or visit our website <http://www.massey.ac.nz/prpc>

22 Pacific Research and Policy Centre, Massey University. *Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocols*. Massey University. 2017. <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/centres-research/pacific-research-policy/doing-research.cfm>

Pacific research methods—Talanoa

The word ‘Talanoa’, simply defined, means a conversation, discussion, or to tell a story. Talanoa research is a widely known qualitative, Pacific research type that requires a genuine relationship and conversation between two people. However, it is not the only Pacific research model, and researchers should investigate relevant country-specific Pacific research methods.

Tongan researcher, Vaioleti, describes Talanoa as,

“a personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations”²³.



Talanoa may allow more authentic information and data to be made available for Pacific research than other methods.

Timote Vaioleti argues that Pacific peoples have been subjected to research methodologies that were not designed to identify issues within Pacific cultures, and therefore are not always suitable for finding solutions. Talanoa research produces more relevant knowledge for addressing Pacific issues²⁴.

The case studies at the end of this guide demonstrate that, for the most part, informal, genuine conversations—either semi-structured or unstructured—are the preferred research methods used in Fiji, Samoa and PNG. There is no set time limit on the conversation. Relevant to results is the relationship between researcher and participant, and the status/gender/age of each. Furthermore, the research participant/s are viewed as the ‘expert/s’.

Deliberately consider both Western and Pacific ways of knowing

Decolonising research does not mean completely disregarding Western ways of knowing. In discussing decolonising Pacific research, Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea state that in their experience, research partnerships between senior and junior Pacific researchers benefit most when there is deliberate consideration of both Pacific and Western ways of knowing²⁵.

In a collaborative project, methodology design can be undertaken with the entire research team and tools developed with significant input from local team members. However, in considering research methods, Western researchers should ultimately be willing to be led by Pacific team members as to the most contextually appropriate ways of collecting data.

23 Timote M. Vaioleti, ‘Talanoa Research Methodology: A Developing Position on Pacific Research,’ *Waikato Journal of Education* 12, (2006): 21.

24 Vaioleti, ‘Talanoa Research Methodology: A Developing Position on Pacific Research,’ 22.

25 Suaalii-Sauni, Tamasailau, and Saunimaa Ma Fulu-Aiolupotea, ‘Decolonising Pacific research, building Pacific research communities and developing Pacific research tools: The case of the talanoa and the faafaletui in Samoa,’ *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 55, no. 3 (2014): 332.

WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development Research Centre

Michele Rumsey is the Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre (WHO CC) for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development Research Centre at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). She states that when partnering with Church-based health institutions in the Pacific for research, her team always prioritises Talanoa research. This requires a greater financial commitment than Western research methods (chiefly due to requiring additional time for research interviews), but this is an organisational commitment that WHO CC make. The outcomes of this commitment are ongoing and respectful relationships with Pacific Church partners. This results in quality research outcomes, reflecting Pacific priorities.

For further information on research conducted by the WHO CC at UTS, please see <https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/who-collaborating-centre>

Preparations for research

Developing the Terms of Reference (ToR)

It is important to acknowledge that there will always be different interests for local/faith and foreign/secular researchers in a collaborative research project. These differing interests will likely effect research decisions. Therefore, developing the ToR together allows important decisions surrounding the proposed research to be made collaboratively²⁶.

- ▶ The development of ToR for research projects should consider the perspectives of local church actors. If it is a faith actor—how do the ToR reflect a desire for research that will measure impact according to the holistic value systems that represent the actor's own community?
- ▶ Where possible, the time frames for submission of expressions of interest (EoI) should be extended to allow teams adequate time to reach out to and gather input from national and local actors.
- ▶ There should be flexibility around any EoI content, so that the research methodology can be developed collaboratively with local researchers rather than included in the initial submission.²⁷

26 Lebel, Jean and Robert McLean, 'A better measure of research from the global south,' *Nature*, 24 no. 559, (2018):24. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05581-4>

27 Black, A. et al. (2017) *Localising the Research Process: Walking the Talk Insight Series*; The Australian Red Cross. Accessed at: <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Localising-the-research-process.pdf>

How to develop the ToR together: UnitingWorld Australia's evaluation of Phase 2 of the Church Partnership Program in PNG.

This evaluation was conducted in partnership with UnitingWorld's long-term partner—the United Church in PNG (See Case Study 3 on page 60). The ToR for this evaluation were developed by local Church staff because, "research terms that are defined by local Church partners (as opposed to externally imposed), are both well understood, and useful to local people in PNG".

– (Jane Kennedy, UnitingWorld Australia).

The following process facilitated the development of the ToR:

- i) Because most staff members had not previously participated in an evaluation, a more experienced Australian partner staff member initially created skeleton ToR.
- ii) The ToR were developed by staff from the local team from the United Church in PNG (UCPNG).
- iii) The PNG staff members referenced initial program plans for the phase that was being evaluated, and decided on the most useful terms for this evaluation, filling in the gaps within the skeleton.
- iv) PNG staff managed the bulk of the evaluation, alongside an external consultant.

The UnitingWorld Australian staff member attributes the usefulness and success of this evaluation to the understanding and ownership of the research by the local team, as well as UnitingWorld's long-term relationship with staff.

Information provided by Jane Kennedy, UnitingWorld Australia.

Wide consultation

Reaching out to individuals, organisations and institutions who may be interested in your collective work brings the following advantages:

- ▶ Helps to build a local research community in the topic of interest.
- ▶ Ensures that the research is relevant to local priorities.
- ▶ Enables local and international experts on related topics to offer their advice and expertise.
- ▶ Builds Pacific ownership and interest for ongoing research in the topic.
- ▶ Initiates or sustains national dialogue on 'sensitive issues' that may be related to the issue.
- ▶ Validates the research with respected individuals, including those in church leadership positions, who may assist in arranging interviews.
- ▶ Builds a community interested in the research, who may wish to assist with the dissemination of results.
- ▶ Adds potential partners to the partnership/collaboration.

Consultation should begin at the start of the research process, but should also be ongoing.

Potential contacts to reach out to during this process may include: government ministries, government service bodies, theologians, theological colleges and research institutions that may be attached to colleges, universities, academics with relevant research expertise, CSOs, NGOs, and denominational bodies.

When people first meet in Pacific communities, finding out about one another and their social connections is often more important than the purpose of the business/meeting itself. Researchers will need to allow the 'personal' to mix with the 'professional' in these contexts. Making a personal connection in professional settings is important for the success of the research project.²⁸

See Case Study One, 'Tatala le Ta'ui a le Atua: Rolling Out the Fine Mat of Scripture: Church Responses to Gender-Based Violence Against Women in Samoa' on page 46 for an example of the practice of wide consultation.

Seek permission to enter Church communities for research

Depending on the country context, you may need to secure permission from church Ministers, community leaders or Church governing authorities to enter local church communities/congregations for research. You will need those that you are collaborating with to guide you in this process.

The following is an example of how one UCPNG staff member will typically seek permission for development related research:

In PNG the United Church has extensive networks, therefore many layers of leadership need to be consulted in order to obtain permission for research. Bena Seta from UCPNG commonly seeks permission for internal or external researchers to work with church communities by:

- ▶ First, writing a letter of introduction to the church Minister/s. This letter is read aloud to the congregation, and following discussion, a 'wan bel' (verbal consensus) agreement is reached.
- ▶ Next, organising a preliminary meeting with elders in order to ensure they understand the purpose of the research.
- ▶ Planning and undertaking activities related to obtaining additional layers of consent (informal/formal, etc). Written consent from individuals is secured, as well as written consent to enter cultural sites and cultural ceremonies (e.g. weddings, funerals, initiations).
- ▶ If it is not a religious community, but rather a cultural society—permission is sought from the Council of Chiefs.

Information provided by Bena Seta, UCPNG.

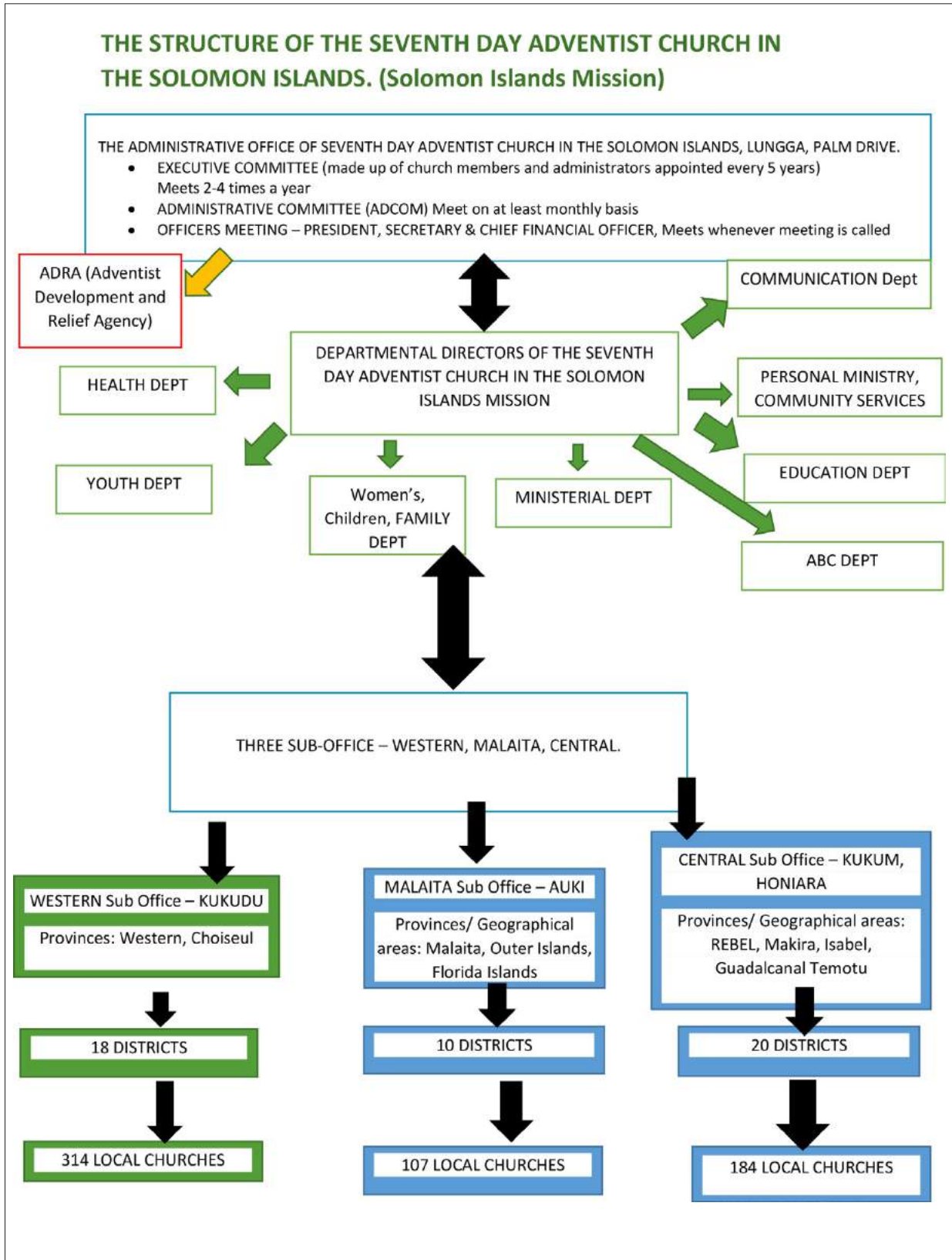


Have you approached *all* relevant parties within a Church structure for permission to conduct research? Ask questions to make sure that this has been thoroughly covered.

Church structures and hierarchies are often complex and unique to specific country/denominational contexts. The following is an example of the complexity of Church divisions for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Solomon Islands. Keep in mind that this structure is different to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in other Pacific countries, and completely different to other denominations within the Solomon Islands.

²⁸ The Health Research Council of New Zealand, *Pacific Health Research Guidelines* (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2014): 17 <http://www.hrc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/Pacific%20Health%20Research%20Guidelines%202014.pdf>

Figure 5: The structure of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in the Solomon Islands.
Diagram by Stephen Tasker, ADRA, Solomon Islands.





Procedures for obtaining Pacific research permits

For detailed advice on the process of seeking formal permission to conduct research in specific countries, please see the RDI Network guide 'Ethics Approval Processes in the Pacific', available from: <https://rdinetwork.org.au/resources/conducting-research-in-the-region/>.

N.B. Requirements may change, and researchers should also make their own enquiries for the requirements associated with obtaining permission to conduct research.

Conducting the research

Arranging interviews

- ▶ Local staff are best placed to arrange interviews, as they have the networks and understanding of church and community structures.
- ▶ Church staff in respected positions can give weight to the importance of the research project and may even assist in arranging interviews.

Prepare for interviews (discussions, Talanoa)

Decide who should conduct interviews. It is nearly always ideal for local researchers to conduct interviews, ensuring richness of data; not only because of their familiarity with the language, but also because of their cultural awareness and their ability to interpret what may not be said.

Consider the age and gender of the interviewer and how this may affect results in the particular cultural context. In most Pacific countries, legitimacy is associated with an older person. Therefore, if a senior researcher is working with a junior researcher, it may be beneficial for the senior researcher to be present, giving the junior researcher legitimacy to act.

If it is not the local researcher conducting the research:

- ▶ Learn how to pronounce names of research participants before arriving. Find out if they have a title, and use the title when addressing them.
- ▶ Learn as much of the language as possible. As a minimum, learn basic greetings.
- ▶ Find out appropriate dress. If unsure, conservative and modest is always best.
- ▶ Frame interview questions in a way that ensures sensitive issues that are critical to the research cannot be avoided, but that does not alienate participants. Using theological language and concepts can be helpful (discussed later).

Consent

Different Pacific communities have differing protocols for obtaining consent for research, ranging from informal to formal (and ceremonial) processes.

Whether verbal or written consent is preferred should also be guided by participants themselves, as well as Pacific researchers within the research collaboration²⁹.

Sometimes, just 'showing up' may be a form of consent; other times, consent involves a two-way dialogue or discussion (Talanoa)³⁰.

29 The Health Research Council of New Zealand, *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*, 32.

30 Pacific Research and Policy Centre, Massey University, *Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocols*, Massey University, 33.

It is up to the researchers to obtain appropriate advice relating to the communities they are working with, and to only begin interviews having previously obtained an appropriate form of consent.

Ownership of knowledge

The use of knowledge received through the research process should be approved and consented to by the community before publication. Choice should be given regarding acknowledgement or anonymity of contributions.

The final research publication should acknowledge the participants from the relevant Church or Pacific community, unless anonymity has been requested, as well as their provision of the knowledge that made the research possible. If possible, invite a community member to write about the role of the community in the research³¹.

Collection of human tissue and/or genetic material

For most Pacific cultures, the human body is tapu and is considered the embodiment of spirituality and sacredness, and of socio-cultural and spiritual continuity between the past, the present, and the future. As a result, it is commonly necessary to obtain the consent of the individual, the family, and the larger kinship group for any collection of human tissue. There should also be transparent discussions about how samples will be kept and stored, whether or not samples will be sent overseas, and potential uses in the future³².

Interview techniques

Advice from Pacific researchers and church leaders is as follows:

- ▶ Acknowledge that the community or interview participants—not the researcher—are the experts.
- ▶ Beginning an interview with small talk is important. Ask about the person and be prepared to share about yourself.
- ▶ Don't rush; be quiet; listen. Don't interrupt or finish sentences for the other person.
- ▶ Co-interviewing is an acceptable method.
- ▶ Story-telling and group discussions are relevant to Pacific cultures, and likely to provide rich data.
- ▶ If a junior researcher is conducting an interview, it is important to have an older researcher with him/her in order that the junior researcher is perceived to have legitimacy to conduct the interview.
- ▶ Create an atmosphere of informality to encourage honesty and overcome the participant's potential anxiety. Consider going for a walk while talking, or participating in an activity.

**Important—Interviewing children involves the application of a unique set of considerations. For practical advice around safeguarding children that is specific to their involvement in development data collection, see pages 151-153 in the *Oxfam Australia Child Safeguarding Toolkit*, available at: https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Oxfam%20Child%20Safeguarding%20Toolkit%20Full.pdf

Modify techniques as you go along

Testing of research tools should take place in the country of research with the national and local researchers. The importance of researchers being flexible with methods is a recurring theme among the case studies included in this Guide.

31 The Health Research Council of New Zealand, *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*, 25.

32 The Health Research Council of New Zealand, *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*, 14-15.

Insider/outsider researcher

There might be some instances of Pacific researchers conducting research within their own church congregations. This may create an ethical dilemma for the congregation and the researcher—especially when the topic of research is a contentious or sensitive issue within the Church. Maintaining a balance between the two roles should be supported by more senior Pacific researchers, so that conflicts of interest are avoided³³. Furthermore, if the topic of research is contentious the church based researchers may need additional psychosocial support throughout the research process.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

Advice from Pacific Theologian, Rev Dr. Cliff Bird

Rev. Dr. Cliff Bird is a prominent Pacific theologian and researcher. He was a key author of UnitingWorld's 'Theology of Gender Equality', and related bible study resources. His leadership, writings and teaching in Churches have helped embed a framework that sees the Bible as a foundation for advancing equality, inclusion and dignity of all human beings. His wife, Siera is currently writing a "Theology of Child Protection" for UnitingWorld.

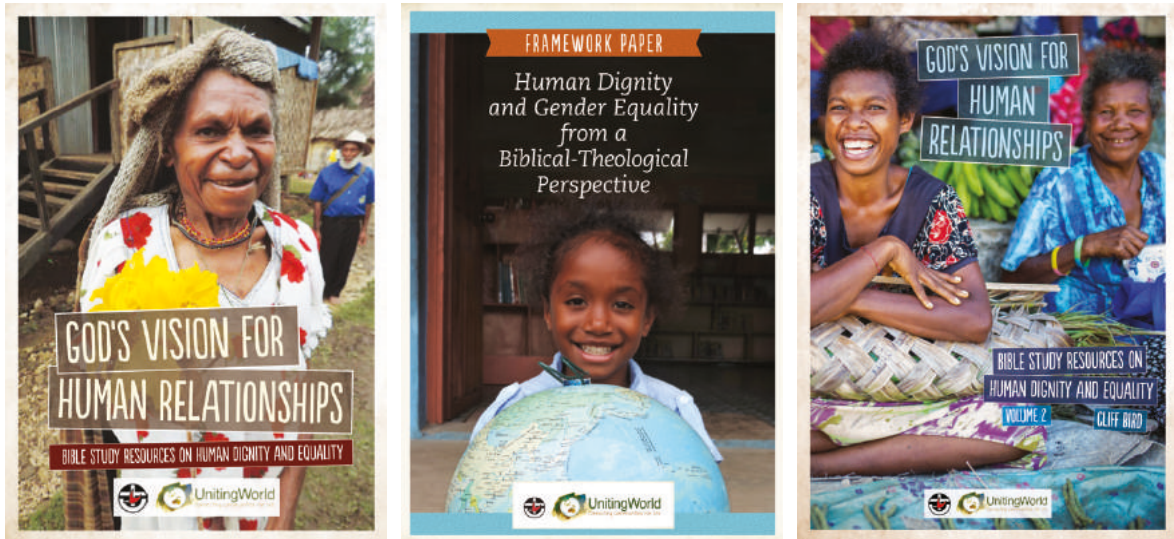
As a theologian and researcher, Dr Bird's advice for working with Pacific Churches for development research is as follows:

- ▶ It is up to the researcher to ensure that he/she has done a thorough investigation into the cultural and historical background of the country and Church that he/she is working with. The researcher will have to be vulnerable to some extent to a new context, and open to learning and modifying their approach according to the context.
- ▶ Although Western researchers describe the conversational process of data collection as an 'interview' - the word 'interview' in itself will most likely make the participant nervous. Instead it should be called a 'talanoa' or 'discussion.'
- ▶ If you are willing to be genuine with people—to share something of yourself –then you will gain more from your discussions.
- ▶ Research should be 'transformational'—all participants should be able to express themselves freely, allowing them to speak the truth. In doing this, research can change the way you think, as well as the way participants think.
- ▶ One-on-one interviews tend to achieve more honest results when discussing sensitive issues. However, the caution for the researcher here is that Pacific Islanders don't in general talk in this manner. Because of this, it is best to take an informal approach. Go for a walk or participate in an activity. You have to be strategic in creating an environment for openness and honesty.
- ▶ Some groups prefer to write/engage with written surveys, and others will prefer to talk. It's up to the researcher to work out which is best for the context and to ask the proper questions to find this out.
- ▶ Women will always talk more freely with other women, so it is important to consider this when deciding on roles and responsibilities of team members.

Dr. Bird's work on the theology of gender equality can be found here:
<https://www.unitingworld.org.au/gendertheology/>

33 The Health Research Council of New Zealand, *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*, 20.

Figure 6: UnitingWorld Theology of Gender Equality framework and related Bible study resources. Study resources, to which Rev. Dr. Cliff Bird has contributed.



Navigating sensitive issues

You may have come to an agreement on how sensitive issues should be handled within your research collaboration, however this does not mean that research participants share or accept the proposed approach. In some cases, understanding that participants have differing viewpoints may be the focus of the research. In other circumstances, differing viewpoints may prevent vulnerable groups from sharing their opinions or participating in research. The example on page 40 from ADRA, Fiji demonstrates methods to overcome this potential exclusion.

Figure 7: Potentially sensitive issues as identified during interviews with research partnership participants

Child Protection	Family Planning	LGBTQI rights
Gender equality	Family and Gender violence	Human Rights
Causes of Natural Disasters	Disabilities	Divorce

HOW TO NAVIGATE SENSITIVE ISSUES AND AVOID EXCLUDING VULNERABLE GROUPS for M&E—Adventist Development and Relief Agency and CAN DO, Fiji.

Churches are present in all regions of Fiji and provide a large volunteer base for the delivery of disaster relief and assistance. ADRA is the lead agency for the Australian funded Church Agency Network for Disaster Operations (CAN DO) in Fiji. As part of this network, church volunteers are trained to fill out templates on their mobile phones, collecting vital data related to emergencies. ADRA staff recognise that these church volunteers need training in human rights relevant to their roles in delivering disaster assistance and collecting data.

ADRA staff in Fiji offered the following advice for ensuring that the voices of more vulnerable groups (e.g. women, children, LGBTQI people, those with disabilities, elderly people) are included in M&E related data collection:

1) Identify vulnerable groups from reports both within and outside the Church. For example, a church leader may have a different perspective on the rates and causes of exclusion of LGBTQI people in disaster relief activities as opposed to a national LGBTQI foundation.

2) Identify local champions for vulnerable groups within the Church, and ask for their advice. A local advocate for gender equality may be willing to suggest the names of the best people within the Church to conduct interviews regarding women's experiences in a disaster response. Family members of LGBTQI individuals are often motivated to speak up about their relative's experiences during the disaster.

3) Use a Biblical framework to emphasise the need for volunteers who are collecting data to ask vulnerable groups for their perspectives. This might be referred to as translating the language of development (rights) into Biblical concepts (justice, mercy). Discussion of God's equal love for a diverse humanity, including varying Church denominations, religions, genders, disabilities and sexual orientations, reinforces the need to include vulnerable groups in M&E activities. Even discussing the importance of quality M&E can be related back to Biblical principles of honesty and transparency.

Information provided by Daniel Taufaga, ADRA Fiji



It is best for local church teachers/leaders to explain human rights within a Biblical language with honesty and transparency about their intentions. Bible studies are often a good format for facilitating a conversation about the meaning of concepts rather than imposing a particular viewpoint.

Analysis and dissemination of data

Rather than employing a Western theoretical framework for analysing data, Pacific Church researchers with whom you are collaborating can provide interpretations of data that consider the holistic values and systems of meaning relevant to the participating community/ies. It is also respectful to take the research back to the community that have participated in the research before it is published or shared widely.

It is up to the research team to analyse the most effective and relevant way for research stakeholders and participants to learn about the research findings. Possible ways to communicate these findings may include:

- ▶ Public seminars held at universities, churches or theological colleges.
- ▶ Sharing your research with relevant government ministries.
- ▶ Organising a 'fono' or meeting that takes into consideration the most accessible location and time (with catering costs included).
- ▶ Use family networks within the research collaboration for potential Pacific based media opportunities.
- ▶ Consider publishing your work in open access fora³⁴.



A church building is only appropriate for a public seminar on research findings if the topic of research is acceptable to the church. Some research topics (including health related research, which may discuss body parts etc.) are not acceptable for discussion within a church building.

Research follow-up

All research conducted with a Pacific Church should be viewed as part of a long-term relationship. It should contribute practically to people's wellbeing. This may be through policy influence or the creation of relevant resources (see example below).

See case study on page 45: Tatala le Ta'ui a le Atua: Rolling Out the Fine Mat of Scripture

Supporting Church Capacity for Transformative Social Leadership.

This research team wanted to contribute practical resources to accompany their research on GBV within church communities. They decided to create a Bible study which addressed the key Biblical interpretations used to justify GBV within Samoan church communities, and alternative interpretations of these. These bible studies were refined and used by the lead researcher with various church communities and theological student groups throughout the research process. It is hoped that they will continue to be a valuable resource for Samoan church communities, and can be developed in an ongoing manner.

Four case studies of research collaborations with Churches in the Pacific are included in Chapter Seven. These case studies provide advice relating to:

- 1) The practice of setting up and managing a collaboration with Pacific Churches for development research.
- 2) Pacific research protocols and processes that are appropriate for research collaborations with Churches.

³⁴ Pacific Research and Policy Centre, Massey University, *Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocols*, 21-22.

A summary of the Case Studies

Full case studies are documented in Chapter seven.

Table 9: Summary of Case Studies

CASE STUDY	KEY EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE
<p>Case Study 1</p> <p>Samoa: NZIPR</p> <p>A study of Church responses to GBV</p> <p>Pages: 46-53</p>	<p>Collaborative Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A supportive team culture, with clearly defined individual roles. ▶ Wide consultation. ▶ International experts offered support to local researchers. ▶ Initiated dialogue between the Samoan Churches and Universities on GBV. <p>Pacific Research Protocols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Research led by a Samoan and inclusive of other Samoan researchers. ▶ Research subject reflected Samoan government priorities. ▶ ‘Talanoa’ research approach. ▶ Respectful, carefully worded discussions of ‘sensitive’ Church issues. ▶ Public seminars held to discuss preliminary findings. ▶ Creation of a Bible study resource (translating human rights) to give back to church communities.
<p>Case Study 2</p> <p>Vanuatu: CAN DO</p> <p>Ambae Volcano Response</p> <p>Evaluation Planning Workshop with Church partners</p> <p>Pages: 54-59</p>	<p>Collaborative Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Australian partners chose to ‘remove themselves from the seat of power and control’ and instead, provided a support function. ▶ Sensitive issues navigated by ongoing relationships, and Biblical framing. <p>Pacific Research Protocols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A ‘localised approach’ to research, as guided by the Humanitarian Advisory Group. Local church staff defined relevant evaluation criteria. ▶ Senior local consultant researcher led evaluation planning and helped to build capacity among less experienced local church partners.
<p>Case Study 3</p> <p>PNG: UnitingWorld and United Church PNG</p> <p>A Church Partnership Program Evaluation</p> <p>Pages: 60-65</p>	<p>Collaborative Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The local consultant worked with Church partners to define an evaluation ToR. ▶ Church partners arranged permission for interviews. <p>Pacific Research Protocols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘Sensitive issues’ were easy to talk about because of long-held partnership with the Church and communities. A Biblical framework of gender had also laid the groundwork for open discussion on gender. ▶ The consultant worked alongside Church partner staff throughout the process in order to build research capacity. ▶ An advisory committee was made up of predominantly local church staff, with only one Australian staff member.

CASE STUDY	KEY EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE
<p>Case Study 4</p> <p>PNG: Dr Jane Anderson</p> <p>A PhD Thesis relating to the Church Partnership Program</p> <p>Pages: 66-70</p>	<p>Collaborative practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr Anderson built genuine relationships with church staff over a period of time. This led to positive collaborative practice. ▶ Church staff gave Dr Anderson contextual advice concerning her research. They also arranged interviews with church leaders via their own contacts. ▶ Dr Anderson prioritised reciprocity in contributing expertise towards Church partners' work. <p>Pacific Research Protocols:</p> <p>Dr Anderson prioritised fitting in with her environment, respecting different world views, and respecting local protocols. These demonstrations of respect also influenced the way Dr Anderson interviewed people and sought consent.</p>

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7 Case studies

Case Study One—New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research (NZIPR)

Tatala le Ta’ui a le Atua: Rolling Out the Fine Mat of Scripture: Church Responses to Gender-Based Violence Against Women in Samoa

Supporting Church Capacity for Transformative Social Leadership

The project is funded by the New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research (NZIPR), at the University of Auckland. Interview contributions from: Dr. Mercy Ah-Siu Maliko (PTC), Prof. David Tombs (UoO), and Dr. Ramona Boodoosingh (NUS). Additional thanks to Dr. Evelyn Marsters (NZIPR) and Dr. Penelope Schoeffel (NUS).



Image 1: Fitiao Susan Faoagali (MWCSO- far left) with Prof David Tombs (middle) and Dr Mercy Siu-Maliko (second from right) and NZIPR seminar participants (Photo Credit: Samoa Planet).

Research background and purpose

The 2017 Samoan National Family Safety Study (NFSS) indicated that 60% of women have experienced domestic violence. Furthermore, 90% of children and 100% of persons with disabilities surveyed said they had experienced some sort of violence and abuse.

Church membership in Samoa is over 99%, and the moral authority of Churches in Samoan villages and communities is significant. A 2010 Samoan Government Report stated that that Churches should 'be heavily involved in addressing violence against women.' However, despite this recommendation, Churches have been largely silent on the subject.

This research collaboration includes two components which proceed in parallel:

- i) **Research interviews:** The primary purpose of the research is to find out what is stopping the Church from being more actively involved in prevention initiatives? This includes asking what level of Church support is there for GBV prevention initiatives? What are the Church norms and structures that might be supporting violence?
- ii) **Development of Bible study resources:** In order to support a deeper conversation about GBV within Samoan church communities the project is developing a series of group Bible studies to explore family relationships and GBV violence.

The project name is 'Tatala le ta'ui a le Atua (Rolling Out the Fine Mat of Scripture)'. The image suggested in this title is the rolling out of a fine Pacific mat for an honest conversation on an important issue in a respectful manner. The choice of title signals the 'positive, inclusive and dialogical intention behind the 'strengths-based' research approach'. At the time of writing this case study, the project was still ongoing (August 2017–October 2018).

Interest in the collaboration

The project takes a collaborative approach to research. The project team consists of a number of individuals backed by faith-based and secular tertiary education institutions located in both New Zealand and Samoa. Local collaborations are prioritised to ensure the long-term sustainability of changes promoted by the project.

Dr Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, Piula Theological College

The lead researcher, Dr Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, was the first Samoan woman to be awarded a PhD in theology, and is currently the only female theology lecturer at Piula Theological College, Samoa. She is also a Research Affiliate at the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Otago. Dr. Ah Siu-Maliko has insider's knowledge of Samoan churches and is motivated to promote ongoing and positive relationships with local church leaders, theological colleges and local groups in Samoa.

Prof. David Tombs, University of Otago (UoO)

The principal investigator, Prof. David Tombs is the Howard Paterson Chair of Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago (UoO). His previous work on Church engagement with social issues has focussed on Latin America and Northern Ireland, so the chance to work on a collaborative Pacific research project was a positive opportunity. The possibility of a collaboration with Dr Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko was of particular interest to Prof. Tombs. It was clear that *"this... would have to be owned by Pacific Churches. There was no likelihood of success if someone from outside the Pacific was trying to impose these conversations."*

Other Team members include:

Dr. Ramona Boodoosingh, National University of Samoa (NUS)

Dr. Boodoosingh is a key contact between the research team and other colleagues in the Centre for Samoan Studies, including Professor Malama Meleisea and Associate Professor Penelope Schoeffel.

Co-Investigator: Dr Melanie Beres, Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Gender and Social Work, University of Otago.

Co-Investigator: Dr Caroline Blyth, Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Religious Studies; School of Humanities, University of Auckland.

Project Adviser: Dr Tess Patterson, the Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Otago.

The practice of collaborative research

The project proposal

The project proposal was selected for funding and support by the New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research (NZIPR), which is a collaboration by three of New Zealand's universities (University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology and the University of Otago). NZIPR's key support partners are the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Pacific Cooperation Foundation. One of the proposal's strengths was that it involved a collaborative relationship between researchers with complementary expertise at the University of Auckland and the University of Otago, as well as close links with institutions in the Pacific.

Preliminary activities

After the project proposal to NZIPR gained initial acceptance, the project team spent a period of six months reaching out to institutions, organisations and individuals who might have an interest in the research. An initial workshop with MFAT in Wellington and a subsequent conversation with the New Zealand High Commission in Apia were particularly helpful. This consultation enabled the team to receive useful feedback on how the project could be conducted prior to the formal contract being signed.

Others consulted included: Theological colleges in Samoa and Fiji, Samoan and New Zealand government ministries, NGOs, Police Services, Pacific Theologians and Bible scholars and international consultants. The period of time dedicated to consultation allowed for researchers from the Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Fiji and Charles Sturt University to be added to the team.

Alongside these external consultation initiatives, Prof Tombs undertook a range of consultation interviews with colleagues at UoO. UoO's Pacific research protocols for research in the Pacific provided a very helpful framework for developing the project.

Formalised research aims, and clearly defined individual roles

An initial workshop was held at the UoO in September 2017, to gather the whole research team together. Since the contract was not finalised and signed until shortly before the workshop there was a degree of 'financial risk' in organising the workshop and booking flights before the funding had been released. However, the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at the UoO was willing to bridge this gap so that the team could meet as soon as possible. The relatively short duration of the project (15 months) and the geographical spread of the project team meant that it was helpful to gather the team and get the project underway as early as possible.

This workshop enabled the stages of the project and individual roles to be clearly defined. Key activities and intended outputs were also clarified. By the end of the workshop there was clear consensus on the aims and outcomes of the research project and good rapport within the team.

A supportive team environment

The lead researcher also used this workshop to communicate the type of support structure she would need (e.g. sociologists, Old Testament experts), as well as emotional/psychological support.

All team members interviewed for this case study were respectful of the unique contribution that each person was able to make. One team member commented that the lead investigator, Prof Tombs, has an approach to work that is respectful, collaborative and encouraging towards team members—thus supporting positive working relationships within the collaboration.

Conducting the research

Ethics Approval and Māori Consultation

Research ethics approval was gained from the UoO as well as from NUS. Both institutions were helpful in processing the ethics approval applications in a timely manner. A formal Māori research consultation process was also completed at the UoO. Māori consultation is an expectation of all research conducted at the UoO. This expectation extends to research that will take place outside of New Zealand.

Securing interviews with Church leaders

Dr Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko was appointed to Piula Theological College in July 2017. Without the backing of Piula Theological College, the research team acknowledge that it would have been extremely difficult to proceed with research from 'within the Church'.

Dr Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko has used numerous strategies to secure interviews with Church leadership. These included:

- ▶ Using personal, friendship networks.
- ▶ Beginning with interviewing the wife of a church leader, and then requesting an interview with the husband (in Samoa, when a married man becomes a president of a denomination, his wife automatically becomes the president for the women's ministry).

Not all interview requests with church leaders have been accepted. Requests have been declined for a number of reasons: problems with scheduling; the complicated procedures involved in obtaining permission; suggestions to interview others instead.

Navigating sensitive issues—a balancing act

The topic of human rights, and with the use of a human rights lens to discuss gender and family violence, is very contentious in Samoa. From Prof. David Tombs' perspective, it is a fine balance between pushing the issue with research participants—because without 'pushing' in conversation with church leaders, little will be revealed and nothing will change—and being careful not to alienate leaders or deter them from participating in the conversation. Prof. Tombs emphasises the importance of respectful but honest conversations and sensitivity about what needs to be said and how it is said.

Anonymity of participants

Due to the contentious nature of the subject matter, nearly all interview participants want to remain anonymous. The exception to this is the General Secretary of the Congregational Church who acknowledged that GBV in Samoa is an important issue.

Outcomes of the research

Preliminary findings suggest that there is a lack of awareness of the scale and nature of violence against women among church leaders. Along with silence from Churches, victim-blaming rather than support is a common response to women who experience violence.

Prof. Tombs explained that even when the victim is not directly blamed, many women who experience violence fear shame and stigma within their communities and churches. Widespread silence on GBV reinforces the sense of shame as this silence is viewed by survivors as judgemental.

One very valuable contribution that Churches can potentially offer is to publicly challenge attitudes to shame, stigma and silence around GBV. This can reduce the additional harm suffered by women who experience violence, and will help the Church to offer more effective support. For this to transpire, Churches need to examine their own responses to survivors and how these may be reinforcing existing problems. Talking about

the issues in Church settings can make a big difference. The Bible studies that Dr Mercy Ah-Siu Maliko is developing provide a way to have these conversations. When two of the Bible studies were presented as a one-day group study for church leaders in Auckland, the dramatic impact of looking at the Bible texts was obvious to participants.

Public seminars and media coverage

To date, a series of public seminars (and related media coverage) in Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand have been completed. These events have contributed to initiating a dialogue on GBV in Samoa;

i) Samoa

The research project team presented the initial findings in 2018. As hoped, this has contributed to an ongoing national dialogue. A number of seminars and public events have been conducted, with those in attendance representing both secular and faith-based organisations and institutions, as well as the wider public.

Samoa television and newspaper have covered some events, which has provided a starting point for further dialogue on the issues raised.

Fitiao Susan Faoagali, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Research, Policy, Planning and Communication division in the Ministry of Women, Community, Social Development spoke on the importance of the project in an interview with the Samoan Planet (19 March 2018):

“The message today from Prof David and Dr Mercy reinforced our view that using faith-based principles and approaches is just as important as using rights-based principles in tackling gender-based violence and family violence in Samoa.... the key message from the seminar for us was the huge potential the Church has now to transform lives in this area and the useful research that Dr Mercy is already carrying out at Piula Theological College.”

ii) Fiji

A two-day NZIPR conference was held at Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Suva, hosted by Dr Richard Davis and colleagues. A range of speakers addressed the prevalence of violence against women in the Pacific region and the need for strong and proactive Church action. There was a notable difference between Fiji and Samoa in terms of the higher commitment to tackling GBV among the Church leadership in Fiji.

iii) New Zealand

A panel discussion on ‘Church Responses to Violence Against Women’, was held in partnership with St John the Evangelist College and Trinity Theological College, Auckland. Bible studies on the ‘Rape of Tamar’ and ‘The Mistreatment of Hagar’ were facilitated by Dr Ah Siu-Maliko, with participants from Pacific Churches in Auckland. A one-day conference was also held at the Fale, University of Auckland in June.

Dialogue between Universities and the Church

The collaboration has initiated dialogue between Pacific and New Zealand Churches and universities on the issue of GBV in the Pacific. The Church theological colleges in New Zealand (Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian) and in the Pacific (Piula and Malua in Samoa and Pacific Theological College in Fiji) are critically important ‘bridge institutions’ within this dialogue framework, as are Pacific Church congregations within New Zealand.

Advice from the experienced

Dr Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko:

For research conducted in the Pacific it is always better to have a local researcher—but a collaboration allows a wider team of experts to advise the local researcher with expertise needed in specific subject areas.

It is more appropriate to frame human rights terms in language that is more acceptable to Pacific cultures. Examples include terms such as 'well-being', 'common good' and 'partnership'. Human rights can also be framed as reviving core Christian, and cultural Samoan values. (Additionally, 'gender' is not a word that is used in Samoan language).

Respect the cultures of Pacific peoples. Be sensitive. Use cultural protocols and honorific sayings relevant to a person's status—for example, honourable reverend, president, madam president. These words reassure those in esteemed Church positions that you respect their status and the time they have given to be interviewed.

The local researcher must be aware of the need to share the power of his/her assigned research position. He/she should share the work with junior researchers, and thus contribute to building a larger community of local researchers with an interest in the subject matter.

Prof. David Tombs:

Working in collaborations can be a steep learning curve, and it helps if you enjoy both learning new things and are also open to working in new ways. Being open to guidance and advice from different stakeholders and especially from local partners is critically important.

It is also good to be prepared for the unexpected, and to be open to how an initial set-back may in the long-term be a gift in disguise to be embraced.

Dr. Ramona Boodoosingh:

Researchers in this sensitive area need to be culturally aware when approaching discussions on the topic. The Centre for Samoan Studies at the National University of Samoa has experts who can provide useful guidance and advice.

Showing appreciation and respect with working with villagers, this includes showing respect for the time they have spent speaking with you and the knowledge and experiences they have shared. A token of appreciation is important.

Good research in Samoa takes time. Building rapport and trust of interviewees takes time but is vital to having meaningful conversations. I would advise that researchers not set out a short period for an interview to allow for a conversation that can follow a natural path.

If conducting research with church pastors on the topic of gender violence or gender equality in Samoa (or other contentious issues), it is best if the researcher is an older male. There is an emphasis on rank in Samoa, and without having rank, your research with this audience will be limited.

Lessons learned

Localising research: Local researchers should both lead the research and be part of research teams. This is ideal for providing guidance on relevant research priorities, for contextual understanding, for accessing local networks, and for ongoing relationships and dialogue on the research. This has been enabled by the lead researcher, Dr Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, who is a respected theologian, teacher and Church leader within the Methodist Church of Samoa. Local researchers from the National University of Samoa also have key roles and responsibilities.

A Pacific research priority: The topic of this research is a Pacific research priority, as reflected in a recent Samoan government report highlighting that 60% of women have experienced violence and calling on Churches to be more involved in a response. An investigation as to why Churches have remained silent on this issue hopes to enable solutions to this silence.

Consult widely: Seek advice from individuals, institutions and organisations as part of your preparation activities. Consult as widely as possible within the timeframe that you have. This project invested six months towards this and was able to assemble an international team of advisors with specific expertise during this time.

A supportive, collaborative team culture: is key to lightening the emotional toll that is likely when researching a contentious issue. Prof. David Tombs established this from the beginning by holding workshops with all of the team at the outset of the project—investing in genuine relationships and demonstrating appreciation for each person's expertise. It also created a unified approach within a diverse international research team, representing both secular and theological tertiary education institutions.

Arranging and conducting Talanoa research: Informal Talanoa discussions were the primary research method used. The lead researcher was able to use personal connections to arrange interviews with church leaders that would otherwise have been impossible.

Navigating sensitive issues: Involved thoughtful consideration of what needs to be said and how it is said in interviews with church leaders. It was important to be able to address an issue that is not often publicly addressed by Churches, whilst being careful not to alienate church leaders from engaging in the dialogue. The lead researcher has been careful to use 'honorific' titles of church leaders during Talanoa discussions in order to maintain their trust. The creation of Bible studies to initiate dialogue in a relevant way has been an effective tool in discussing this sensitive issue with theological students and church communities.

Dissemination of research results: Public seminars are both a way of sharing findings with Pacific communities, of initiating dialogue on contentious issues, and of creating local ownership of the issues. Public seminars were held in Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand. Family and kin relationships of the local researchers were used for socialising research e.g. this was an avenue used to obtain TV coverage of the research and workshop at Piula Theological College, Samoa.

Reciprocity and using research to do good: The creation of a resource for church communities to engage in dialogue about gender violence has been a practical way for the research team to 'give back' to Samoan church communities and begin to address an issue highlighted as a priority for the Samoan government.

Journal publications and other resources related to the research

At the time of writing this Guide, project publications were not yet complete. However, a discussion of the project can be found on the NZIPR website:

<http://www.nzipr.ac.nz/research/fofa-le-taui-a-le-atua-rolling-out-the-mat-of-scripture-church-responses-to-gender-based-violence-against-women-in-samoa-supporting-church-capacity-for-transformative-social-lea>

Media Coverage

'Gender-based Violence in Samoa and Pacific Project Looks to the Churches', Samoa News (16 May 2018); <http://www.samoanews.com/regional/gender-based-violence-samoa-and-pacific-project-looks-churches>

Samoa TV1 Weekly news roundup (18 March 2018); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCYgGK9hGXg>

'Public Theology and Domestic Violence in Samoa' Samoa Planet (11 December 2017) http://www.samoaplanet.com/public-theology-and-domestic-violence-insamoa/#_ftn21

Selection of Academic Papers by those involved in research

Ah Siu-Maliko, Mercy. 'Public Theology, Core Values and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society'; Unpublished PhD, University of Otago (2015).

Ah Siu-Maliko, Mercy. 'A Public Theology Response to Domestic Violence in Samoan Society.' *International Journal of Public Theology* 10 (2016): 54–67.; Ah Siu-Maliko, Mercy 'Fa'atuatua Kerisiano ma Sauaga i totonu o Aiga: Ripoti mo Tagata Lautele Samoa i Niusila.'

Ah Siu-Maliko, Mercy. 'Conscientisation and Pacific Women.' *The Pacific Journal of Theology* Series II, no.41 (2009): 64-84.

Ah Siu-Maliko, Mercy. 'Nofoaga Tutotonu o Mataupu Silisili ma Mataupu Lautele.' Lunivesite o Otago; 2016. <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/handle/10523/7051> (Samoan version). English Version: 'Christian Faith and Family Violence: A Report for Samoan Communities in New Zealand.' Dunedin: Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Otago, 2016. <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/handle/10523/7050>

Boodoosingh, Ramona. 'Measuring Gender Based Violence: Towards Improved Services for Victims in Samoa.' *Journal of Samoan Studies* 5, (2015): 97-106.

Boodoosingh, Ramona. 'Violence Against Women in Developing Countries: Policies and Services in Samoa and Fiji.' PhD Development Studies Dissertation, National University of Samoa, Apia (2016).

Schoeffel, Penelope, Ramona Boodoosingh and Galumalemana S. Percival. 'It's All About Eve: Women's Attitudes to Gender-Based Violence in Samoa.' *Rape Culture, Gender Violence, and Religion, Religion and Radicalism*, edited by Caroline Blyth, Emily Colgan and Katie B. Edwards, 9-31. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Case Study Two—The CAN DO Ambae Volcano Response, Vanuatu

A collaborative, localised approach to evaluation planning.

Introduction

The CAN DO Ambae Volcano Response team (including ADRA Australia, ADRA Vanuatu, Anglican Overseas Aid Australia and the Anglican Church of Melanesia) demonstrates a collaborative approach to evaluation planning. This case study is an example of ‘walking the talk’ of localisation when working with Church partners in humanitarian monitoring and evaluation.

Background to CAN DO—Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations

As stated on their website, CAN DO is a consortium of 8 faith-based agencies and is a sub-group of the Church Agency Network (CAN) that was founded in 2004. CAN DO members share a strategic vision and have a history of collaboration. Their humanitarian work benefits from the key strengths of Church networks:

- ▶ **Reach:** Combined networks of Church partners are extensive—eight agencies work with 500 partners combined, throughout 200 countries and territories.
- ▶ **Depth:** Churches are influential messengers across society and especially in the Pacific region.
- ▶ **Long-established relationships:** The power of the Church is in its reach and relationships as part of the community.

CAN DO supports Church collaboration for disaster management by investing in:

- ▶ Church leadership for disaster management
- ▶ Disaster preparedness and planning capacity
- ▶ Disaster response

The CAN DO Ambae Volcano Response is a humanitarian project in Vanuatu, funded by the DFAT Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), managed by the CAN DO consortium, and implemented by two local Churches: the Adventist Development and Relief Association (ADRA) and the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM). The project works with local community and church leadership to assist in conflict prevention and protection of women and children during crisis resettlement and relocation as a result of volcanic activity on the island of Ambae in Vanuatu.

Interest in the research collaboration

Although not required by the AHP, an internal evaluation of the Ambae Volcano Response was commissioned by CAN DO partners, Anglican Overseas Aid (AoA) and ADRA Australia, and the two implementing partners. This commission was due to a consensus that it would be a useful exercise to reflect on CAN DO’s first response as a network.

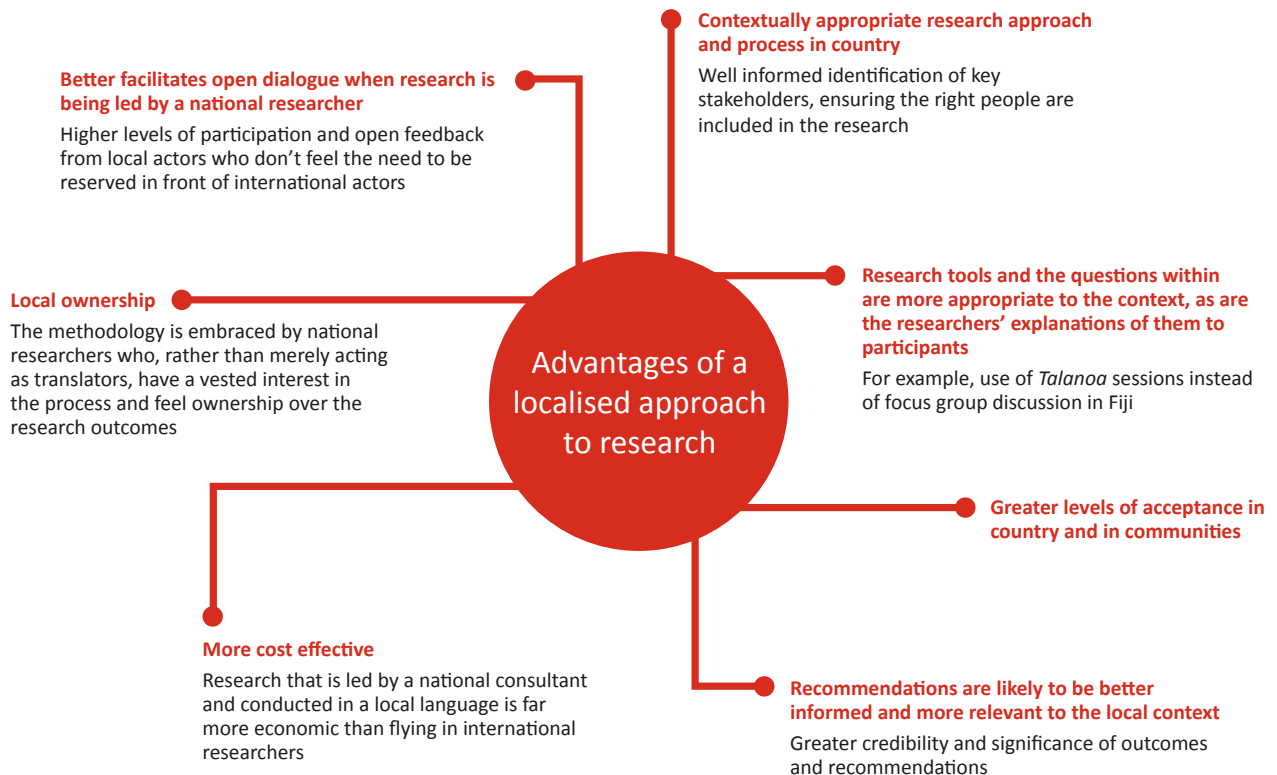
As a result of this consensus the CAN DO Ambae Volcano Response partners gathered in April 2018 for a four-day evaluation planning workshop. The overall purpose of the workshop was to reflect on the progress of the program to date and to begin evaluation planning. The key objectives were to:

- ▶ Conduct participatory evaluation planning
- ▶ Determine locally defined evaluation criteria
- ▶ Identify ways to measure localisation.

A localised approach to evaluation

Because an important mandate of the CAN-DO agencies is the localisation of humanitarian programs, the CAN DO Ambae Volcano Response team informed their approach to evaluation by learning from the research project conducted by the Humanitarian Advisory Group of the Australian Red Cross: 'Localising the Research Process—Walking the Talk Insight Series April 2017'. This project sought to identify research strategies relevant to the Pacific context.

Figure 8: Advantages of a localised approach to research. Localising the Research Process: Walking the Talk Insight Series, April 2017, p. 4.



The Red Cross project found that while international actors might perceive their work to be localised, this perspective isn't necessarily shared by local and national actors themselves (Ayobi et al 2017):

"This indicates a need to improve the way that we partner with local organisations—thus including localisation on our evaluations is one way to reflect on and measure this, holding ourselves accountable and learning from our partners how to do better."

Key to guiding a localised approach to evaluation for the CAN DO group was inviting a local researcher from Vanuatu's Humanitarian Advisory Group to the workshop. The local researcher was invited to offer research guidance throughout the workshop and to lead the discussion about localisation so that it was presented from a localised perspective and in local language.

Conducting the evaluation planning workshop

A priority was to ensure that the workshop itself was carried out in a participatory manner and that staff representation and participation throughout the workshop was 'as local as possible [and] as international as necessary'. The approach to evaluation planning was informed by both localisation and participatory evaluation literature (Flint, & Lia 2008; Ayobi et al 2017; Preskill & Russ-Eft 2005; King & Stevahn, 2013; Chambers 2002).

Research strategies were designed to ‘walk the talk’ of localisation. These strategies included:

- ▶ Co-facilitation by a CAN DO representative and a local researcher;
- ▶ Higher representation of national (seven staff) to international counterparts (three staff), and inclusion of community-level representation (two staff);
- ▶ Strategies in place to support national and local actors to actively participate and lead the discussion more than international actors. For example, significant portions of the discussions were in DuiDui language or Bislama, before being translated into English if required;
- ▶ Inclusion and mainstreaming of capacity strengthening activities;
- ▶ Adoption of qualitative methods and contextually relevant methods including visual and storytelling activities;
- ▶ Use of traditional knowledge. The views of the team—informed by their community knowledge—were treated equally to knowledge offered by formal players in the humanitarian system (government agencies and international actors) and strongly influenced discussion and decision making.



Image 2: Workshop participants defining order of priorities.
Photograph supplied by Grace Asten, Anglican Overseas Aid Australia.

The practice of collaboration

Navigating sensitive issues

Local Church partners explained that because there had previously been a great deal of work around the inclusion of vulnerable groups (such as women, children and people with disabilities) in program implementation, there had been a remarkable improvement in the quality and transparency of DRR evaluations. Discussing issues around inclusion has not been a problem for the Vanuatu churches within this collaboration as there was an existing consensus with Australian partners on the importance of inclusion.

Vanuatu church partners also explained that they are not yet at the stage of good inclusion of LGBTQI groups. However, because they 'had such success with the gender approach' (awareness workshops and Biblical resources for church leaders and communities, leading to greater M&E transparency), they are agreed on the immediate need to take the same approach to human rights and inclusion for LGBTQI communities.

Letting go of control

Using specific strategies that put partners in the driving seat at the beginning of the collaboration assisted Australian partners to remove themselves from the seat of power and control. In Vanuatu, Australian partners who attended the planning workshop had significant experience and technical knowledge in monitoring and evaluation. However, they did not want this to interfere with local partners being able to voice their priorities for the Volcano response evaluation.

One way that this was considered at the beginning was by bringing in the local researcher from the Humanitarian Advisory Group, discussed above. This way, Church partners could learn and be guided by a local researcher rather than being heavily influenced by Australian partners. The lead facilitator found the resource, 'Interactive Evaluation Practice' (King & Stevahn 2013) helpful to think about ways to target participation and decision making at different stages in the evaluation cycle.

Research results

During the workshop, each participant took time to reflect on the question: 'what does success look like?' in order to establish what should be measured in the upcoming evaluation. Each participant was asked to visualise their response, then draw/convey it in a visual picture, and then form their own vision statement. The image below is a summary of this session:

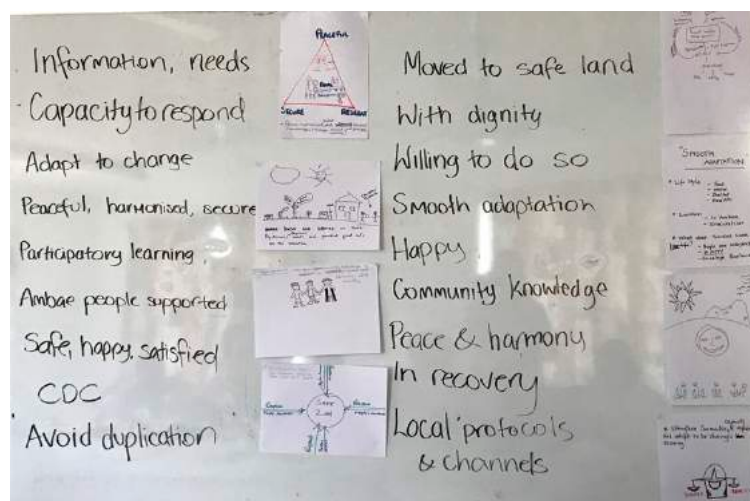


Image 3: 'What does success look like?'—criteria defined by evaluation planning workshop participants. Photograph supplied by Grace Asten, Anglican Overseas Aid Australia.

Three major results were achieved through a Mid-Term Workshop, and are viewed as a firm foundation for future evaluation planning and design:

- i) The project achieved a high level of *participatory evaluation planning*.
- ii) A set of five *locally defined evaluation criteria* have been drafted, drawing on specific outputs of the group evaluation planning activities and localisation group activities.
- iii) 17 draft indicators were selected for *measuring localisation* in this response.

The final evaluation has not been completed, as volcanic activity has been protracted and response programs are continuing.

Advice from the experienced

Ethel George, Anglican Church of Melanesia-Vanuatu

CAN DO collaborative workshops have significantly improved the technical capacity of M&E practices for Vanuatu implementing agencies. The localisation workshop and practice in evaluation techniques have both contributed to this.

While some may feel hesitant about partnering with Church agencies in relation to assumed conservative views on human rights, Vanuatu Churches have in fact made significant gains in these areas.

Churches have made significant gains in areas of gender violence and because of this, feel confident to begin addressing awareness of LGBTQI rights with the same approach.

Grace Asten, Anglican Overseas Aid Australia³⁵

Participatory DMEL may appear to some as having technical trade-offs. In practise, however, it is technically very difficult and requires resource, time and discipline.

As an Australian partner you need to constantly keep power dynamics in check. You should ensure that local partners know they can lead the process. This can require you to remove yourself from the seat of control while ensuring you are still working towards agreed objectives with partners.

When done well, the insights that are achieved are incredibly valuable and the result is programming which has a high level of community ownership. It is therefore more likely to be sustainable because it is based on local insights in terms of both needs and programming strategies. It can also provide insights into ways to measure impact which wouldn't ordinarily be thought of from a primarily Western perspective.

Perhaps most significantly, it builds on existing local capacity. This is critical if we are to see the systems change, and this is ultimately what we are working towards in international development and humanitarian response.

35 Grace Asten has written further about this work in the ACFID resource 'Localising Evaluations through Participatory Evaluation Planning CAN DO Ambae Volcano Response', available at: https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/CAN%20DO%20Localisation%20Case%20Study_Participatory%20Evaluation%20Planning.pdf

Lessons learned

Decolonising research: This was the key goal of the evaluation planning. This was achieved through Co-facilitation by a CAN DO representative and a local researcher; higher representation of national (7 staff) to international counterparts (3 staff), and inclusion of community-level representation (2 staff); and having discussions in DuiDui language or Bislama, before being translated into English if required); and

A Pacific research priority: Practising localisation in evaluation planning has ensured that the evaluation will be centred around local priorities. Church partners know local communities well, and were able effectively to represent local priorities in the planning.

Consult widely: Rather than the evaluation planning being completed by CAN DO staff based in Australia, the purpose was to consult as widely as possible to create a more relevant evaluation framework. The planning workshop included local Church partners, community representation, a local researcher to facilitate and Australian staff.

Capacity building: Inclusion and mainstreaming of capacity strengthening activities was a priority. A local researcher from the Humanitarian Advisory Group, Vanuatu was invited in order to build the skills of Church partners in evaluation and M&E.

A local approach to research methods: The planning workshop used contextually relevant methods including visual and storytelling activities. Traditional knowledge; that is, the views of the team informed by their community knowledge, was treated equally to knowledge offered by formal players in the humanitarian system (Government agencies and international actors) and strongly influenced discussions and decision making.

Navigating sensitive issues: The inclusion of vulnerable groups in M&E with Church partners is a long-term goal. For Vanuatu Church responses to the Ambae volcano, previous awareness workshops and the use of Biblically based resources created a foundation for M&E planning that factors in inclusivity.

Reciprocity and using research to do good: Facilitating a genuinely localised approach to research requires an investment in planning, time and resources. In this case study, the results of this investment were high quality Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (DMEL), with local church partners motivated to implement quality practices. The knock-on effect of good DMEL has also been 'much better programs'.

Related resources

Ayobi, Yaseen, Ayla Black, Linda Kenni, Railala Nakabea, and Kate Sutton. 'Going Local: Achieving a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific.' Humanitarian Advisory Group. October 2017. <http://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ARC-Localisation-report-Electronic-301017.pdf>

Black, Ayla, Yaseen Ayobi, Railala Nakabeam, Linda Kenni, Smith Sapaka, Kate Sutton and Phil Connors. 'Localising the Research Process: Walking the Talk Insight Series.' The Humanitarian Advisory Group. April 2017. <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Localising-the-research-process.pdf>

Flint, Josie and Alex Lia. 'Intention to Impact: Measuring Localisation.' Humanitarian Advisory Group. February 2018. https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/HAG_Intention-to-impact_research-paper_FINAL-electronic_140218.pdf

King, Jean A., and Laurie Stevahn. 'Interactive evaluation practice: Mastering the interpersonal dynamics of program evaluation.' USA: Sage Publications, (2012).

Preskill, Hallie S., Darlene F. Russ-Eft and Sage Publications. 'Building evaluation capacity: 72 activities for teaching and training.' London UK: Sage Publications, (2005).

Case Study Three—The United Church in Papua New Guinea and UnitingWorld Australia

Church Partnership Program Phase Two Evaluation

Research Background and Purpose

The Church Partnership Program

The Church Partnership Program (CPP) is an initiative of the Australian Government and the seven mainline Churches (Anglican, Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Salvation Army, Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran and United Church) of Papua New Guinea.

Church institutions are significant civil society groups in Papua New Guinea, delivering more than half of the country’s health and education services. The CPP focuses on improving the services Churches deliver by developing their institutional support structures for effective service delivery and strengthening their public sector performance. The CPP also mainstreams cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and disability inclusion into service delivery, governance and management. Building effective partnerships is also part of the CPP.



Image 4: Photograph taken at a CPP Forum in Madang 2014.
Photograph supplied by UnitingWorld Australia

Purpose of the research

The joint UnitingWorld (UW) and United Church (PNG) CPP Phase 2 Evaluation was conducted by an independent consultant, Ms Judith Ascroft, alongside a United Church in PNG (UCPNG) team, and with a reference group comprised of PNG and Australian staff. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the overall Phase 2 program effectiveness, sustainability and learning as well as the UCPNG/UnitingWorld partnership.

Interest in the research partnership

UCPNG has a large membership of more than 710,000. Their churches, health and education departments operate in 11 out of 22 PNG provinces.

For both UW and UCPNG, the evaluation was an opportunity to;

- i) Review the joint CPP program during Phase two, in order to apply learnings to the development of the design and implementation strategy for Phase Three.
- ii) Review the quality of the ongoing partnership.
- iii) Conduct an 'on-the-job' learning and capacity building exercise for local staff who did not have previous experience in conducting evaluations, and were keen to learn this skill for the future. Everyone involved considered this an important element of the evaluation. Ms Ascroft made it clear that 'evaluations are for learning—not policing'.

The practice of partnership

UW is an agency of the National Assembly of the United Church in Australia. The agency's approach to development focuses on 'genuine partnership' and it has had an enduring partnership with UCPNG for more than 130 years, supporting both UCPNG's social and spiritual missions. The partnership is, therefore, much broader than the CPP and the evaluation under discussion here. Because of this, the 'practice of partnership' focused on creating a learning experience based on the dynamics of an established and already positive relationship.

Conducting the research

The research involved a desk-based review of key program documents and over 40 interviews and consultations with stakeholders. Because the CPP was operating within the context of a pre-existing organisational partnership between UCPNG and UW, the preparation phase for the evaluation was less complex than would otherwise have been the case.

Consultation with United Church Assembly leadership

The UCPNG team had already set up the schedule for Ms Ascroft prior to her arrival, because 'they know best how things work'. However, it was still necessary to touch base with UCPNG and UW staff to explain the purpose of the evaluation and make sure they were comfortable with the interview questions being asked.

Drafting interview questions together

A team from the UCPNG's Development Unit had also been set up prior to Ms Ascroft's arrival to work on the evaluation alongside her. Immediately after she was hired for the contract, Ms Ascroft had telephone conversations with this team and discussed 'next steps'. Ms Ascroft also emailed her own survey templates and interview questions, and information on how to get accurate data, through to the Development Unit before she arrived. She requested feedback on the appropriateness of the templates and suggested questions, but it was not until Ms Ascroft was in-country and sitting with the team in person that the PNG team felt comfortable to suggest changes (many of the PNG staff had not conducted an evaluation previously).

Planning, logistics and consent

Planning and logistics were led by staff from UCPNG. They went through existing relationships and Church channels to organise who would attend interviews. Even using existing networks, it took more than two weeks to confirm availabilities and to schedule interviews. The fieldwork itself took two weeks. Verbal consent was organised from the Port Moresby UCPNG office prior to the interviews. Church ministers from each village offered verbal consent after consulting with their own church executive and/or village chiefs. All church congregations received an explanation of the purpose of the evaluation and were aware of the team's presence. Consent for photographs was collected during the field work.

Understanding Church structures

The UCPNG team explained the Church structures at community and Assembly levels to Ms Ascroft. They also explained the different cultures that exist within PNG.

The interaction between faith and human rights in research

Shortly before this evaluation was conducted, UCPNG and UW had undertaken some important work on the theology of gender, and the theology of development. *The Theology of Gender Equality* uses Biblical texts to promote the participation and inclusion of both men and women in creating and sustaining communities. Because of this previous work, participants appreciated the importance of speaking about gender. Rather than being an awkward topic, the evaluation team found that people were proud to speak about their church's work and positive changes in this area.

Ms Ascroft and Helen Vavia, a UCPNG gender specialist, travelled together throughout the interviewing process, and Ms Vavia was able to 'fill in the gaps' for Ms Ascroft when it came to some of the interview responses. For example, there was an instance where a church leader spoke about gender policies without explicitly mentioning the real progress that had been achieved. In this case, Ms Vavia was able to explain the situation in more detail.

Capacity building and reciprocal learning

As mentioned above, it was agreed that the evaluation process would be an opportunity to teach some of the local staff how to conduct a program evaluation. However, while the process represented an educational opportunity for the PNG team, they also reciprocated by providing Ms Ascroft with contextual knowledge.

The local staff within the team provided feedback on the interview questions, accompanied Ms Ascroft throughout her entire trip, conducted interviews and suggested additional individuals who could be consulted when gaps in evidence emerged.

Modifying interview questions throughout the process

This was an iterative process. Each day the team would discuss what worked, what didn't work and how they might do it differently next time.

Data analysis and reporting

Ms Ascroft put together a summary of the critical areas and findings and consulted the M&E team for their opinions on this. The M&E team worked to edit the summary—they checked data and participated in analysing it. They also participated in a debriefing workshop, sharing their findings with Assembly staff.

Research findings

The final report and resulting recommendations were made available in June 2016. Overall, the Church was found to have developed a 'strong foundation' across each of the CPP's outcomes and technical strategies during Phase 2. While there were some shortfalls in governance, management (centralised structure) and cross-cutting issues (disability and child protection), the report highlighted a number of strengths as important foundations for Phase 3 of the CPP:

The Church's leadership in the development of the *Theology of Gender Equality* and the associated gender strategy was a significant contribution to the CPP during Phase 2. It had encouraged Church denominations to partner together towards achieving the shared goals of the gender strategy.

UCPNG and UW were found to have made strong contributions to facilitating and strengthening CPP partnerships, including working groups and hosting partnerships.

Progress had been achieved in advancing economic empowerment of women through some of the Church's programs, with women engaged in leadership and decision-making for programs.

Church services aimed at caring for those with HIV, AIDS and for victims of gender-based violence had been expanded under the CPP.

UCPNG had made major contributions to peace-building and reconciliation through its Young Ambassadors for Peace (YAP) program.

Outcomes of research

For the most part, the results were not surprising to the UCPNG M&E team. In this way, it was useful to have an external evaluation that confirmed some of the issues that they felt needed addressing. The evaluation also contributed to gaining support to prioritise certain changes to the next phase of the CPP.

As intended by the Australian Government, UCPNG and UW, the evaluation results helped improve the project design and implementation strategy for CPP Phase III, which commenced in July 2016.

For Ms Vavia, from the UCPNG team—she found that the experience gave her understanding of incorporating a gender lens in all programs that are conducted,

"The evaluation allowed us to have an in-depth look at all of our programs and to analyse how we could be more inclusive in what we do. It also taught us how to design our research in a way that is inclusive."

Advice from the experienced

Helen Vavia—Chair of the CPP Gender Committee, Gender Coordinator United Church in PNG.

We didn't have trouble working with the communities, because Judith had prior understanding of our culture and understood what our country is like. As well as this, there was existing United Church presence and influence in each of these communities—all of the communities that we conducted research in were expecting us. If we had been entering communities where this existing relationship did not exist, or there was not a visible influence from the United Church—there would have been misunderstandings and disapproval from the communities—because there are different values in each church community.

Communities often experience NGOs coming in and asking questions around sensitive issues like gender without the backing of the Church. Because it was us (the Church) coming in and accompanying Judith—we did not get any resistance.

Jane Kennedy—Associate Director, International Programs, UnitingWorld

Partnerships should have to be genuine. A Pacific person, Church or community group will not open up to you if they feel like they are a commodity for your own development agendas. There has to be a genuine commitment to collaboration and partnership. Whatever the ultimate end goal of the research, it has to be something that is in their interest. You cannot come in with an extractive attitude.

Pacific people value story telling in a different way. I appreciate that because you get a fuller picture of what is actually going on. If a woman can tell me how her life is now different and how things have changed for them, what her observations are from her experience of being a mother, compared to when she was a child—that's what I want to know.

Sometimes, you might not receive truly honest answers, because the Pacific people might not want to disappoint you. If you want the truth, you've got to be prepared to hang around. Have a meal. Go and experience a cultural event or just BE there. Sophisticated tools, surveys and technology don't make a difference. You have to be able to just sit and listen. You can often observe so much more than you can ask.

Judith Ascroft—Senior International Development Consultant

The critical thing is to have a team identified and have them involved right from the beginning. Demonstrating good development practice should be the primary focus—working with partners and local teams and making it a learning exercise.

People always start evaluations thinking that the consultant and/or team is coming to their community in order to criticise. Moving beyond that is really important. Identify that an evaluation is about learning, doing things better and not about policing.

I think it's important for an external evaluation consultant to say things like 'I'm just here to help you with the process of the evaluation. I don't necessarily have all of the solutions.'

If you are conducting an evaluation with a faith-based organisation, in a Christian context like PNG, it is good to be aware that faith will inform people's perspectives—you can respect their beliefs and accommodate their faith in the way you frame questions. You can also look at the way that Church structures and theology can assist in development goals.

Lessons learned

Decolonising research: The consultant regularly communicated that the purpose of evaluation is not about ‘policing’ but is about learning. She also emphasised that she did not necessarily have solutions for every problem. The collaborative process, where local people defined the terms for research, conducted interviews, and assisted with analysis—rather than merely being objects of research—contributed to ‘decolonising’ this evaluation project. Furthermore, there was a deliberate decision to have only one Australian person on the Guidance Committee for the evaluation.

A Pacific research priority: Developing the ToR collaboratively meant that the evaluation was centred around local priorities.

A supportive, collaborative team culture: Genuine partnerships are essential when working with church communities in PNG. A pre-existing and enduring partnership between the Australian UnitingWorld and United Church in PNG was the crucial element in facilitating this aspect of the Church Partnership Program, and related evaluation. Furthermore, the consultant and local staff were open to learning from each other from the outset.

Arranging and conducting Talanoa research: There is a complex Church structure to be aware of when seeking permission to conduct research within PNG communities. When conducting research with PNG communities, there will be less resistance if it is done alongside the Church denomination with the most influence in that community. The process of securing permission to conduct the research in this case was relatively seamless because of the existing relationship between UnitingWorld and the United Church in PNG.

Good research takes time. It requires the researcher to take the time to participate in daily activities, to sit and to really listen.

Navigating sensitive issues: The evaluation tried to find out to what extent the CPP had contributed to mainstreaming gender-equality, disability issues, care for those with HIV and AIDS, and child protection. United Church staff reported that because it was the church asking questions around these topics, there was no resistance, but if it had been an outside NGO this would not have been the case. Relationships are crucial to successful research and evaluations with church communities in PNG.

Furthermore, the research process itself was transformative, with one UCPNG staff member stating that, *“The evaluation allowed us to have an in-depth look at all of our programs and to analyse how we could be more inclusive in what we do. It also taught us how to design our research in way that is inclusive.”*

Reciprocity and capacity building: The decision for the external consultant and M&E team from UCPNG to work together as a team benefited both parties: the consultant was given access to communities to conduct fieldwork and gain a contextual understanding throughout all stages of the research, while the M&E team learned a great deal about research (and principles of inclusion in programming and research) as a result of this genuine collaboration.

Resources related to the research

Terms of Reference for evaluation: <https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/UCPNG%20CPP%20Phase%20%20Program%20Wide%20Evaluation%20TOR.pdf>

UnitingWorld Theology of Gender Equality Resources: <https://www.unitingworld.org.au/projects/church-partnership-program/unitingworld-gender-equality-theology-get-resources/>

Case Study Four—A PhD thesis by Jane Anderson

A Kundu Relationship: Translating development in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program

Background to the research

The AusAid (now DFAT) funded Church Partnership Program (CPP) was initiated in part because of the perceived lack of impact and value-for-money in previous Australian funded Aid Programs in PNG. In an era where there was an appetite for new approaches, the CPP represented one such new approach. It began in PNG in 2004.

Dr Jane Anderson's research, conducted for her PhD thesis, with fieldwork carried out in 2010, was interested in how the partnership model that is so prevalent in international development and aid supports Churches to 'do development work'. She sought to find out how a policy commitment to partnership works when this partnership is between an avowedly secular international donor and a group of seven faith-based ANGOs and their respective partner Churches in PNG.

This case study presents Dr Anderson's recollections of working with three CPP Church members for her research fieldwork in PNG. The UCPNG was one of these, and Ms Bena Seta, a Program Manager from UCPNG, was interviewed for this case study and her experiences and advice are also discussed here.

Interest in the collaboration

Dr Anderson was awarded an Australian Government Endeavour Research Fellowship that funded the fieldwork research for her PhD thesis with the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia program at ANU. Dr Anderson approached AusAid (now DFAT) in order to ask them for case study suggestions.

For UCPNG, planning for future activities and an impending organisational restructure meant that the research would allow them to gain relevant insight that could inform these activities and changes. The research would not otherwise have been possible for the Church given its budgetary constraints.

Conducting the research

The discussion below outlines the key activities conducted as part of the research fieldwork, and how collaborative elements were navigated throughout. While there were no formal research partnerships, without the significant support and assistance provided by the three CPP PNG Church members and their ANGO partners, it would not have been possible to undertake the research.

Research Church history

Dr Anderson allocated fieldwork time to learning about PNG and CPP Church history. She considered this an ongoing process.

Frame interview questions

CPP Program Managers such as Bena Seta assisted Dr Anderson to frame interview questions appropriately. They also worked with Dr Anderson to map out key 'Church gatekeepers' and potential research participants.

Obtain permission to enter Church communities

In her role as Program Manager at UCPNG, Ms Seta had connections with many church leaders. She was able to provide introductions to the leaders involved.

Research method

Taking an ethnographic case study approach, Dr Anderson recorded observations of aspects of the social life of Churches, particularly at the national offices and in relation to the CPP. She talked with people about their experiences of the practices of development, and conducted numerous in-depth, semi-structured interviews. With hindsight, Dr Anderson wishes that she had known more about participatory methods and Talanoa research, although this would likely have changed her focus and the research process.

Avoiding appropriation of PNG knowledge

A concern was expressed by some participants that as an outsider, Dr Anderson would be appropriating other participants' knowledge without their consent or awareness. The danger of this was lessened because most participants did not want to be anonymous. This meant that their views and perspectives—as church members, partners in the CPP, and partners in development—could be directly communicated in the research findings.

Collaborative practice

The value of genuine relationships and informal conversations

The three CPP coordinators were 'very collegial'. Dr Anderson talked both formally and informally with the coordinators and other CPP staff—sharing thoughts about development and other ideas. For Dr Anderson, it was the informal conversations that were often the most valuable. She 'really came to understand the importance of relationships and [of] trying to listen and truly understand'.

Navigating differences

Focussing on shared values assisted the working relationships between Dr Anderson, Church and CPP staff. Shared values centred around wanting to work towards social justice, improved well-being, and gender justice. For Dr Anderson, 'acknowledging the importance of the prophetic voice of the Church in achieving change' is where all participants' values aligned.

Dr Anderson and Ms Seta both agreed that framing human rights within a Biblical framework was essential to avoid alienating people from considering certain concepts related to the research.

Ms Seta was keenly aware of all of the types of jargon that Churches use. Just as development has extensive jargon. Churches do also, and Bena was aware of the need to make sure that Dr Anderson understood this theological jargon along the way.

Flexibility

Dr Anderson found that she had to learn to be flexible because 'things just kept changing'. Sometimes interviews would be scheduled and then wouldn't take place; whereas, on one occasion, Dr Anderson travelled to Telefomin to conduct individual interviews and during her visit a large group of women gathered—all wanting to be interviewed.

Reciprocity

Because the Baptist Union was aware of Dr Anderson's prior experience in organisational development, they requested assistance in developing their institutional strengthening strategy. Dr Anderson co-designed and co-facilitated a workshop to develop this strategy. This was done while Dr Anderson was conducting the fieldwork with the Baptist Union and it was a practical way for her to reciprocate, as well as providing a rich source of data.

Being an 'outsider' and showing respect

Dr Anderson was influenced by the work of Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, and Ilan Kapoor on how 'we' represent the 'other'. Dr Anderson was an 'outsider' and was conscious of the need always to be polite,

respectful, and to dress conservatively. She attended church services and devotions. As a student researcher, Dr Anderson perceived that she was 'studying up'—interviewing people holding important positions in the Churches and ANGOs.

Differences in faith

While Dr Anderson's upbringing in a Christian home and the Anglican Church provided her with an understanding of Christianity, not sharing the faith of those around her resulted in some 'feelings of loss.' However, these differences were not perceived by Ms Seta as having an impact on the collaborative relationship:

"Our time with Jane showed how essential relationship is in order to overcome these differences. Jane took the time to understand us, to get to know us. From an anthropological perspective, she lived with us, partaking in all aspects of our lives. Because of this, the differences between people, and the barriers between us—just melt away."

Outcomes of the research

The main outcome of Dr Anderson's research was a collective understanding of how the CPP model worked. The research unpacked the interactions between the regimes of practice in Christianity and the regimes of practice in development. Preliminary findings were presented at a CPP Forum in 2012, to Church partners, ANGO's, government and DFAT, with opportunities for questions and feedback. Dr Anderson's research was also published in a book chapter, peer reviewed journals, and presented at conferences and a seminar for World Vision staff (Dr Anderson had received a World Vision Scholarship).

For UCPNG, the research came at exactly the right time, when the Church was planning and designing a restructure and other activities for the future. The research enabled UCPNG to commence planning with a thorough understanding of its existing structures and governance.

Advice from the experienced

Dr Anderson's perspective

There is potential for there to be a mismatch of expectations, in terms of the process, the outcomes, the benefit of research to the Churches. I would advise others to be as clear as possible, and to have as deep and as long a discussion as possible during the preparatory stage.

Lay foundations by establishing and building on relationship—be open about who you are as an individual and/or organisation and where you are coming from, ask for guidance from your Church colleagues in the research collaboration, acknowledge and respect their expertise and knowledge and experience (be humble), get to know them as people—their families, their hopes and fears.

Try to appreciate different worldviews to your own. Be open and try to walk in the shoes of others.

You need to have a thorough understanding of the context- inform yourself and ask questions. Be prepared to keep learning as you go and avoid making assumptions.

Ms Bena Seta's perspective

If you are coming to PNG to conduct research with faith groups—be prepared to be culturally shocked. The people in rural areas are not prepared or programmed for your way of doing things. They will continue to live their life, and you will need to prepare yourself for this.

There are 700 ethnic groups in PNG so be prepared for this diversity and specifically prepare for where you are going.

Always bring something to contribute to the communities that are hosting you. If it is tea and sugar, and that tea and sugar runs out, that's fine. But it is important to contribute.

Our approach to research is the Talanoa approach. We ask people to identify and discuss the issues that are affecting them through dance and drama. It is an indirect way for people to tell us about their issues and act out how they would solve them. I like this approach because it is not focussing on the deficits of our people—but it is a strengths-based approach, where it is an equal playing field. Each participant is an expert who is allowed to focus on what we do have in order to solve our problems.

Christianity is a vital part of our culture. Everything we do comes back to it, to the Church and to the Bible. If you don't share the same beliefs, as long as you contribute your own knowledge and understanding in a constructive way, this is okay.

Lessons learned

Consult Widely: Devote a significant portion of time to the preparation stage of your research. Consult NGOs, donors, church leaders and government ministries before and during your research. Learning should be an ongoing process.

A supportive, collaborative team culture: Offer your friendship, time, empathetic understanding, and respect to Church partners. Listen intently to their problems and their solutions. Informal conversations resulting from genuine relationships are often very valuable in the research process.

Arranging and conducting research: Church networks can be complex and hierarchical. As Jane did, ask church staff to guide you in seeking out permission from relevant church leaders and authorities.

Consider making time and space for dance and drama within Talanoa research. Be guided by church leaders and members in this process of participation and lively interactive communication.

Be prepared to adapt and respond in a flexible way to situations and opportunities as they emerge.

Navigating sensitive issues: Human rights can be understood and discussed within a Christian framework. A collaboration between secular development researchers and the Church can be built upon shared values such as a desire for social justice and improved well-being. Framing human rights in Biblical language is a valuable method for navigating sensitive issues.

Dissemination of research results: Jane was able to present results publicly at a CPP Forum in 2012, to Church partners, ANGO's, government and DFAT, with opportunities for questions and feedback. Jane's research was also published in multiple academic formats.

Do not take ownership of Pacific knowledge—provide opportunities for contributors to be acknowledged appropriately in research outputs. Jane found that the majority of participants did not want to be anonymous.

Reciprocity and using research to do good: Drawing on her experience, Jane agreed to help the Baptist Union, PNG in its process to develop an institutional strengthening strategy.

Ms Bena Seta (UCPNG) advised that researchers should be willing to contribute food, materials and knowledge to hosting communities in the spirit of reciprocity.

Journal publications and other resources related to the research

Anderson, Jane. 'A Kundu Relationship: Translating Development in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program.' Doctoral dissertation, Australian National University, (2012).

Anderson, Jane. 'Life in All Its Fullness': translating gender in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program.' Australian National University. 2012. <http://bellschool.anu.edu.au/experts-publications/publications/1628/life-all-its-fullness-translating-gender-papua-new-guinea>

Anderson, Jane. 'Productive power in the Papua New Guinea Church partnership programme.' *Development in Practice* 25, no. 4 (2015): 535-50.

Anderson, Jane. 'Struggling with 'this gender relations thing' in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program.' *Gender, Place & Culture* 22, no. 10 (2014): 1357-1373.

Anderson, Jane. 'Partnership through translation: a donor's engagement with religion.' *Handbook of Research on Development and Religion*, edited by Matthew Clarke, 505-520. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013.

8 Appendix

One Summary of basic Christianity (The United Church in PNG)

The following is one example of the basics of Christianity explained, by the United Church in PNG (See <https://ucpng.com/vision/>). Please note that denominations will each explain Christianity in a slightly different way, in and across countries within the Pacific.

Vision

The United Church in Papua New Guinea exists to teach, preach and live the Good News of Jesus Christ in her faith, life and witness; in loving and caring ministries through the united participation of the people of God until he returns.

Mission Goals

1. Enhance the teaching and proclamation of the word of God
2. Encourage members to be prayerful and live Christian lives, expressing Christian faith in life and witness
3. Provide health and education and other social services to the community
4. Promote continuous communication among her people
5. Promote, encourage and provide opportunities to enhance participation by all
6. To be good stewards of resources
7. Continue and maintain ecumenism and partnership in mission with partner churches
8. Promote gender balance and issues
9. Be united in its life and witness
10. Encourage young people to participate in the mission of God
11. Equip members with self reliance & entrepreneurial skills.
12. Continue and increase our partnership with government, development agencies and other stakeholders

Core values

The core values and beliefs of the The United Church in Papua New Guinea are based on God's eternal love, and the entire trustworthiness of the Holy Scripture.

1. We are a people who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
2. We are a people who are sinful, believe that by the death on the Calvary Cross, Jesus Christ has paid the penalty of our sins, and believe in his resurrection, and his second coming.
3. We are a people who believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and his supernatural abilities to empower us to live a wholesome life.
4. We are a people who believe in the unity of the believers working together in harmony for the benefit of each other, seeking to serve each other out of compassion and genuine concern for each other.
5. We are a people that are aware of the diversity of PNG cultures and seek to collectively work together through constructive dialogue, consultation, and teamwork for the common good of our people, community and country.

6. We are a people that realise that in sharing our resources, we show a spirit of caring and sharing and the love of God. We actively seek to share the love of God.
7. We are people who recognise leadership and authority, and those who are in position of authority, rule with diligence for the good of those they lead.
8. We are a people that recognise the importance of good stewardship of resources at our disposal. We seek to exercise responsibility, good management and accountability of our resources.
9. We are a people that value and celebrate life through songs, dances, and hospitality.
10. We are a people that support good governance and leadership and will promote servant leadership in our sphere of influence to enable the community and the people to prosper.

IWDA program partner selection assessment (2 pages)

Information provided by Donna McSkimming, IWDA



EMPOWERING WOMEN TO LEAD

IWDA Program Partner Selection Assessment

1. IWDA Program Partner Selection Assessment

NOTES

1. PMs forward this form to your SPM.
2. SPM forward this form to the Leadership Team once you have reviewed.
3. If the Leadership Team approves this form, complete [2. IWDA Program Partner Capacity Assessment](#) and [3. IWDA Program Partner Risk Management Matrix](#).

ORGANISATIONAL SUMMARY	
Name	
Location	
Contact Details	

SELECTION CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Women's Organisation 1. Women's Rights Organisation 2. Organisations that demonstrate a strong commitment to gender equality	
Strategic Alignment with IWDA	
Shared Thematic Concerns	
Emerging or Established	
IWDA Value Add	
Identified Risks	

Partner, Country, Date

1

RECOMMENDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP SELECTION (PM/SPM)

--

LEADERSHIP TEAM ANALYSIS AND DECISION

--

Partner, Country, Date

2



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