(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

Adaptation and Resilience: A Small NGO's Response to the Pandemic in Fiji

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Abstract

NGOs play a vital role in society and the study intends to discover its role and challenges in a pandemic. The study questions covered the issues that the local NGO encountered, and it was learned through the respondents' interviews that the NGO reported a decline in the quantity of money raised through donations and collections. The NGO was dealing with a reduction in subsidies, the loss of fee-for-service income, and the delay in processing funds, among other problems. The research additionally reveals that the NGO is unable to retain its employees and help everyone in need as a result. According to the study, the NGO's operations and activities were impacted in a number of ways by the extra challenges brought on by the pandemic. To prepare for such unanticipated situations, it is advised that such NGOs have appropriate strategic plans in terms of staff planning, financial management, and communication tactics.

Keywords: Perspective; NGO; Pandemic; Social work; Resilience

1. Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are a diverse group of institutions that are largely or completely unrelated to the government and pursue cooperative or humanitarian objectives as opposed to profit-making ones (Sayarifard et al., 2022). Over time, NGOs have expanded their influence in the health sector. According to numerous academics, NGOs' coordinated and organised efforts can result in a better and more efficient response to national disasters (Shin et al., 2018; Kim & Mason, 2020; McMullin & Raggo, 2020). NGOs can respond to emergencies more swiftly than official institutions because they have a stronger relationship with the community, have more flexible methods, and need less paperwork (Mondal et al., 2018).

The non-profit foundation selected for the study in Fiji works to help the country's less fortunate children by offering them education and other assistance with a regional focus on providing education and support to underprivileged schoolchildren in Fiji as well as to their families Verma, 2021). The COVID-19 case's emergence was among the hardest periods in Fiji's history for businesses, governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to connect with the public and fulfil their expectations (Tuimaisala, 2018).

In Fiji, this small NGO has been striving to help underprivileged kids get ready for school or complete their home studies. Thousands of food vouchers and school backpacks for the kids were distributed to families in the Western and Central regions, to name a few of the other services offered by the NGO to the people of Fiji during COVID-19. They went above and beyond to guarantee that each coupon was utilised for its intended purpose. The main goal was to prepare Fijian children for school (Tuimaisala, 2018).

This study aimed to understand the challenges that this small NGO in Fiji encountered during COVID-19, how they overcame them, and their preparation strategies going forward. The research acquired information from a variety of

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primary sources, including interviews, as well as secondary sources including NGO websites, reports, and newspaper articles.

To induce responses to the research question and develop an understanding of the many challenges faced by the NGO during COVID-19 as well as the support they received, the interview questions were aligned to the study's aims and objectives. The results on the role and difficulties faced by NGOs during COVID-19 are all mostly centred on NGOs in other nations, such as the United States, China, and Australia, according to the materials gathered so far for the literature review. On the findings about the NGO's difficulties in Fiji, there was no study publication online or in any database. This might be because there has not been much support in this field of research for researchers.

Six sections make up this report. The first section includes an introduction and three subsections that detail the research question, aim, and objectives. The second section of the study includes literature and background data that give an overview of recent developments in the sector. The study techniques are discussed in section three, which is further subdivided into subsections that include the research site, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, and challenges that were encountered. The findings and analyses are presented in section four. This report concludes with Section Five, which summarises the main points and outcomes of the study. The numerous websites and resources used are listed in section six of the list of references.

1.1. Research Question

During COVID-19, what challenges did the NGO in Fiji face?

1.2. Research Aim

This study aimed to understand the challenges that the NGOs encountered during COVID-19, how they overcame them, and their preparation strategies going forward.

1.3. Research Objectives

The overall goal is to comprehend the NGO's difficulties during COVID-19. The following are the four specific objectives:

- To understand the kinds of challenges that the NGO faced during COVID-19
- To understand which strategies the NGO used to address the challenges
- To learn how the NGO partners, support the organisation in handling the challenges
- To learn the NGO's future readiness for unprecedented events

Interviews with potential employees responded to the aforementioned research objectives. A total of twenty employees were interviewed.

2. Background/Literature Review

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are groups of individuals who work without the assistance of the government, are led by citizens, and pursue a particular social goal. They most frequently employ foundations or groups as legal entities (Sayarifard et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic's exceptional scope and rate of evolution have presented a challenge to NGOs, having an impact on a wide range of their activities (Kim & Mason, 2020; McMullin & Raggo, 2020). Recent research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced the management, operations, and working conditions of NGOs (Kim & Mason, 2020; McMullin & Raggo, 2020; EFA, 2020; Young et al. 2020; Stewart et al. 2021). The pandemic increased demand for NGOs' services across a wide range of industries, but it also had an influence on their finances and roles due to a fall in donations, which further delayed grant processing and resulted in employee reductions (Deitrick, et al., 2020).

The local NGO under study in Fiji experienced the same issue; there was not enough money to support all of the beneficiaries, and those most negatively affected were the kids who were set to start school again in the fall of 2022. Most organisations were forced to postpone or cancel scheduled fundraising activities.

During a lockdown, half of them have problems getting to every recipient or rendering services (EFA, 2020). During the same period, NGOs' revenue from individual donations and services decreased, and their ability to provide human resources was reduced (EFA, 2020). Their main worries are lost income and cash flow interruptions, as well as communicating with and enlisting sponsors, as well as issues with human resources including managing pay roll-work, stress, health, and service delivery, as well as satisfying customer needs (Stewart et al. 2021; EFA, 2020). Additionally,

many companies think they need to improve their digital skills for marketing purposes (EFA, 2020). Based on the research, it can be said that the NGO encountered problems in reaching the beneficiaries for aid, including those related to money, stress, a reduction in workforce due to job loss, transportation, and COVID-19 restrictions.

The government offered a variety of security measures within nations, although they were frequently regarded as insufficient. In the instance of the NGO under study, they received support from private businesses and banks instead of any funds from the government. Only 13 percent of NGOs received government money, while 21 percent received other grants to maintain or grow their operations, and 36 percent witnessed an increase in the demand for their services, according to the European Fundraising Association (EFA, 2020). However, many organisations have noticed a decrease in government financing as they address their problems and incur additional costs (Charycka & Gumkowska, 2021; Johnson, et al., 2021; Finchum-Mason, et al., 2020).

The pandemic encouraged NGOs to be more adaptable, to present fresh ideas, and an opportunity to advance and forge a new business framework or strategy despite the challenges and obstacles. Additionally, it forces them to review their policies, practices, and overall operations. This is essential for NGOs to prepare for odd situations, put the right plans in place, and get rid of outdated policies and procedures (Chikwanda, 2020). Therefore, this process of change, which is driven by pandemic events, could lead to some beneficial changes in organisational cultures, like making them more flexible and paperless. Because of the majority of the NGO's, work requiring them to make personal visits to assess and determine what types of aid should be given to the needy; The NGO under study was unable to connect with its people online. This was a challenge due to the restriction imposed and evidently, they could go online just to call out for donors and inform people about the assistance they provide.

The COVID-19 outbreak and its instability had a big impact on non-NGOs' capacity. Human resources on individual, team, and organisational levels were all impacted (Baluch, 2017; Akingbola, 2020). The most significant effects on NGO human resources include furloughs, teleporting problems with team dynamics, mental health issues, work schedules, or work-life balance (Baluch, 2017; Akingbola, 2020), employee participation in decision-making processes, and their capacity for collaboration, which has historically been a key value and component of organisational culture in organisations (Levine & McCambridge 2020).

A deliberate and long-term shift in how organisations operate, communicate, generate money, and offer services, digital growth is only a requirement for some organisations in the face of the pandemic. It's too soon to say if these improvements will last permanently (Rottkamp, 2021). Organisations were already in a dire state before the outbreak because ICT was not given enough emphasis, and as a result, they are now significantly worse off in the current context (Rottkamp, 2021). Strategic planning, money, and deliberate thought go into digitisation, which is a large task. The difficulties faced by NGOs are essentially a result of the settings and circumstances under which they function, such as tight financial restrictions, slow prospective growth, and a slower culture of adaptability (Rottkamp, 2021).

Additionally, because of public impression, such as the expectation to maximise the portion of contributed funds spent on providing services and reduce administrative expenditures, including technological spending (Krueger & Haytko, 2015). The COVID-19 challenge has made it more urgent to begin or speed up digital innovation (Ibrahim et. al. 2021). The COVID-19 outbreak has increased the importance of digitisation technologies (Nandi, et al., 2021). For donations and to engage supporters, the vast majority of NGOs used websites, social network messaging, and email. There were significant disparities between the national data sets of the European countries even though almost every organisation used some form of digital fundraising (EFA, 2020).

There is no one way to deal with the issues of COVID-19, according to the numerous viewpoints and arguments put out by various authors. The relevance and effect of the pandemic, on the other hand, were further investigated as part of the research topic selected for local NGOs in Fiji. This was done to understand the problems the NGO encountered, both internal and external, as well as how well-prepared the NGO is to handle pandemics in the future. The study of resilient NGOs and how they may be applied to create organisational standards for successful adaptation to external factors that impact their survival has several limitations. The purpose of this study was to identify the resilience techniques used by the NGO and see if they are comparable to those reported in the literature review.

The study discusses a number of the NGO's problems and remedies. It offers information on the effects of the pandemic on the economy and society as a whole, the impact of the emergency on the civic sector and civil society organisations, and the results of the lockdowns that have taken place. All of these significant issues need to be investigated further, including the role of the NGO in security, risk mitigation, and rehabilitation processes, the resources needed to carry out these duties, and the role the local NGO played or could have played in distributing information and helping victims.

3. Research methods

Information for this study was gathered through qualitative methods such as interviews. Open-ended questions were used in interviews, to elicit information from participants.

Secondary data was collected from journals, reports, and newspaper articles. Finding out how the informants see COVID-19, as well as their difficulties and perspectives, is the interview's main goal within the research agenda. As a result, it is necessary for the interviewer and subject to have a conversation that "moves beyond surface banter to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings" (Maykut& Morehouse, 1994). Additionally, to look at what the NGO workers on the ground were observing and sensing as the events developed and what they anticipated would happen next. The goal of narrative analysis is to interpret interviewees' experiences to identify recurring themes, which were used in the study. The two most popular methods for qualitative analysis are inductive and deductive.

3.1. Research Site

Due to the participants' roles, which primarily required them to be out in the field visiting their clients or schools for evaluation or support, it was difficult to locate the twenty participants at one location and one time. Therefore, the interviews were conducted at different times and dates based on their availability. Interviews with participants one to seven took place on June 3, 2022, on a Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Interviews with participants eighth to thirteen took place on Tuesday, June 7, 2022; between 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Interviews with participants fourteenth to twenty took place on June 10, 2022, on a Friday from 2.50 to 5.45 p.m.

3.2. Data collection

Data was collected by interviewing as stated earlier. The interview questions were divided into four sections as follows;

- Section 1: Background/Information of the NGO
- Section 2: kinds of challenges faced by the NGO during COVID-19
- Section 3: strategies the NGO uses to handle challenges
- Section 4: support received by the NGO
- Section 5: future readiness for unprecedented events

The NGO's National Coordinator Fiji and nineteen of her subordinates who were volunteers and permanent employees were asked for interviews. The purpose of dividing the questions into five categories or headers is to obtain extremely comprehensive replies and in-depth viewpoints from the respondents, as well as a clear image of how their experiences were impacted. These also align to answer the four Research Objectives.

3.3. Data analysis

During the interview, notes were taken on the Interview questions. The responses of all twenty interviewees were placed into an Excel spreadsheet after the interview. The key topics of the spreadsheet are divided according to the research objectives. After entering and verifying the differences in opinions of the participants the data was analysed and discussed in the research's findings using narrative analysis.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

According to Scheyvens and Leslie (2000, p. 129), "all social research involves consent, access, and attendant ethical concerns because it is dependent on data from people about people." The proposed research was conducted with informed consent from participants. They were given full information about the study, including whether or not they chose to participate.

The NGO's reputation and image could be damaged if interviewees' information is misused. This could erode NGO confidence in me, which will affect future ability to conduct future studies. Participants' confidentiality and confidence were protected in this study. Principles like secrecy, anonymity, integrity, respect, informed consent, and honesty are crucial in research since most of the time; researchers are presented with a dilemma and must decide. As a result, it is possible to conclude that accommodations like confidentiality, anonymity, and integrity are vital in research (Scheyvens& Leslie, 2000).

3.5. Problems Encountered

Some of the problems I encountered throughout my research included the respondents' reluctance to provide answers to inquiries about the NGO's contributors or the improvement tactics they had used. The NGO's participants had ethical reservations about disclosing sensitive firm information such as a list of all donors or exactly how much was given by them, for the obvious reason that doing so would expose them to liability. They were given the assurance that the data would only be used for study, not for personal gain since this would be against research ethics. It is well-recognized that interviews can be unpredictable. It is impossible to forecast how a connection will arise or how this will impact the knowledge gained, which will then impact data analysis. While interviews are collaborative, they are not the same as community-based or participatory data collection techniques. As a result, rather than knowledge extraction exchanges, interviews should be considered as collaborations. Participants should be engaged and empowered to discuss through a participative form of two-way communication with open ears to hear rather than asking them questions, and ethics, secrecy, and assurance should be preserved (Tanggaard, 2009; Swauger, 2011).

Second, only nineteen employees and the national coordinator could participate in the interview due to the limited time. Putting together the entire report was challenging, but it was fun to learn something new in terms of the research and the NGO's role. Third, because there are so many options, deciding how to assess the data was difficult.

4. Findings and Analysis

To respond to the research question stated in the report's introduction, a narrative analysis was done. The interview question was broken up into sections or themes with the research goal in mind to get in-depth information from the interviewees about their experiences, problems, and methods, among other things. These are outlined and discussed in the Section 4.

4.1. Section 1: background/Information of the NGO under Study

In 2009 the NGO under study was established intention of helping Fiji's needy or disadvantaged children. The numerous duties played by the current employees and part-time volunteers for social causes included data entry, field visitation, assessments, and overall coordination, in which they would assess the needs of families in the field and then help in the form of groceries or school supplies for kids as necessary. *"The NGO is involved in a variety of programs and services, including teaching mothers how to talk to their children about their health and safety at school, providing food vouchers for low-income families, conducting training for teenagers, providing food and sanitary packages, conducting training and tutoring for children and provided educational worksheets to children without internet in the villages,"* said the National Coordinator of the NGO. Interviewees 7, 8, 14, and 17 confirmed this.

4.2. Section 2: kinds of challenges faced by the NGO during COVID-19

According to interviewees 1 to 15 and 17, one of the causes of their financial problems is a shortage of funds to satisfy all of the demands of the needy people. The 6800 assistance submitted applications from the previous year were still being reviewed, but only 1,500 of those were from families in North Fiji, according to the National Coordinator of the NGO, who noted that the majority of the 300 applications for education support submitted in January 2022 came from families impacted by COVID-19 and cyclone YASA. *"Families would email, physically visit, or call for assistance, but a government ban from the year before, 2021, forbade psychical visits for assessment. Later, when a wave of applications arrived, the NGO was unsure of where to begin or what to do"*, according to interviewees 2, 10, 16, and 19. "We were unable to serve everyone owing to financial limitations", stated interviewee three. In the literature review for the study, the author (Baluch, 2017; Akingbola, 2020) identified challenges as having an impact on the organisation's capability, stress, and many people being unemployed. The same was the challenges faced by the NGO classified under administrative issues by the interviewees such as stress, workload, lack of employees, and work delegations.

According to the studied literature, NGOs around the world highlighted the same primary concerns, such as a loss in revenue, challenges finding and engaging sponsors, issues with managing human resources, such as stress, health, and service delivery, as well as meeting client needs (Stewart et al. 2021; EFA, 2020). Issues with funding activities, maintaining the organisation, financial liquidity, and fixed costs were the major challenges the local NGO faced during the COVID-19 outbreak. The primary issue, which was financial limits, might have been resolved by creating a plan for controlling the unavoidable fixed spending, monitoring cash flow, delaying the expenditures that may be deferred, and essentially shifting into lean management mode. Check the websites of the federal and local governments to confirm any help being given to non-profit organisations. But then there was a decrease in government assistance as well towards NGOs locally which could be seen in other countries as well as per the literature review organisations facing a decline in government funding (Charycka & Gumkowska, 2021; Johnson, et al., 2021; Finchum-Mason, et al., 2020).

The NGO emphasises that clients require IT proficiency, access to cameras, microphones, high-speed Internet, and the necessary software which is also a challenge. Numerous writers in the literature review also emphasise the importance of IT and innovation. This also raises issues with how everyone may access and use IT. The same resources, such as data management systems, IT security, and remote access to documents and office supplies, have to be made available to non-profit workers (Ibrahim et. al. 2021; Rottkamp, 2021; Nandi et al., 2021).

I biggest issue faced by the local NGO during COVID-19 was finance, which caused aid to the Fijian people to be delayed. This obstacle might have been solved if the NGO had received the required advance retained funds, but this was an unanticipated occurrence for which many organisations were unprepared. The local NGO did, however, gain a lesson from this, which could be drawn after speaking with the interview subjects.

4.3. Section 3: strategies the NGO uses to handle challenges

The NGO's interviewees revealed that the NGO under study was unable to complete all of its goals for 2020–2021, including those from earlier applications when the team needed to go to the applicant's house for a home inspection and to offer help, but this was impractical owing to COVID–19 restrictions. The National Coordinator of the NGO under study stated that *"many application vetting and visitation processes are still pending as of now due to a shortage of field employees and funds".* During this challenging time, there were additional challenges to be addressed, such as the growth in violence against women, problems such as an increase in extreme poverty, racial discrimination, and gender-based violence, as well as pervasive misinformation. The NGO employed a variety of techniques to address issues, including a plan for the company and its employees. *"It doesn't need to be difficult to keep in mind the major projects and strategies and consider how they are affecting or might be affecting the program's delivery over the coming days or weeks",* suggested interviewee three. *"Limit the acts that make up the core of the core of program delivery, and all organisation members should have their tasks assigned to them and made clear",* said interviewee four. As stated by Interviewee Seven, *"Raising money is crucial for an NGO's financial security in such times and the months to come, seek assistance without hesitation, continue fundraising efforts, and make any required adjustments to the tactics and appeals".* The strategies, according to National Coordinator of the NGO, are to *"advance and develop a new organisational structure, policy, plan, procedure or vision, don't just sit and wait for aid but go check the sites, email organisations for support, or call out people to come out and make donations".*

One could say that this circumstance has helped the NGO to better prepare for unforeseen circumstances in the future and to engage in proper relationship-building, communication, and collaboration which was lacking in their strategy. It was clear from the literature review expressed the same viewpoint. It also encourages NGOs to assess their future policies, procedures, and overall operations to prepare for unanticipated circumstances (Krueger & Haytko, 2015; Chikwanda, 2020).

The local bank and a few other charity organisations are just some of the many sources of support and assistance providers for the local NGO.

4.4. Section 4: COVID-19-related support received by the NGO

The local bank and a few other charity organisations were some of the generous donors who aided during the difficult period in both money and kindness. Interviewees four claimed that *"there was a reduction in government funds, even wealthy donors lack the resources necessary to support every great project when there are so many wonderful organisations competing for the attention of the public and generosity".* According to the National Coordinator of the NGO *"A few organisations or individuals offered to assist and a few were approached by the NGO for donations ".* Due to the increasing demand, there was a drop in government funding, which is also demonstrated by previous research, which was reviewed by the European Fundraising Association for European countries. Only 13% of NGOs received government grants, while 21% received other grants (EFA, 2020).

After speaking with interviewees eight, eleven and fourteen, it became clear that they were disappointed that they couldn't help because of a lack of resources or funding. I strongly believe that they should prepare ahead and contact contributors via email, phone calls, fundraising events, etc. instead of continuing with their outdated model of waiting for sponsors to support the walk.

4.5. Section 5: Future readiness for unprecedented events

The National Coordinator believes that "*Without a doubt, the NGO was unprepared for such circumstances. It had goals and objectives, but it wasn't ready for a sudden incident like it. The unexpected shutdown and decrease in funding were the main barrier that finally led to a reduction in labour in all divisions in Fiji".* According to an earlier study, this was also

true for other NGOs throughout the world whose literature reviews indicated that they weren't prepared for such occurrences and that the abrupt shifts had an impact on a variety of NGO activities, including management, operations, and working conditions (Kim & Mason, 2020; McMullin & Raggo, 2020; EFA, 2020; Young et al. 2020; Stewart et al. 2021).

An anticipatory finance structure, according to interviewee seventeen, *"may help with prospective solutions and the NGO's future readiness by making funds obtained in advance broadly available to handle urgent requirements and changing as needs and contexts change"*.

"Create a COVID-19 response investment vehicle, such as an online outcome-funding model, that financially supports homes and communities while they engage in social isolation", according to the suggestion from interviewee twenty. It was proposed by the NGO's national coordinator as a means of empowering, educating, and reaching out to people while also making work easier. For donations and to engage supporters, the vast majority of NGOs used websites, social network messaging, and email. As per other research, there were significant disparities between the national data sets of the European countries even though almost every organisation used some form of digital fundraising (EFA, 2020).

Additionally, going digital entails creating an application gateway, enabling applicants to submit applications by phone or email, and most importantly deciding to use digitisation to contact donors for assistance.

"COVID-19 has made us appreciate the need for Digitalisation," said the National Coordinator of the NGO. As mentioned by the interviewees, The NGO under study would be able to conduct work via digitalisation as long as it maintained worker security, complied with legal standards, and only relocated when mandated to do so by a government agency for frequently legitimate social service activity. The NGO is making the transition to using social media and websites for fundraising, which is now taking place. It has been emphasised in earlier literature reviews and in author statements that COVID-19 accelerates innovation, increases digitalisation technologies, and encourages the use of websites and social networks for charitable giving (Ibrahim et. al. 2021; Nandi, et al., 2021; EFA, 2020).

5. Conclusion

The study questions that were covered involved the challenges that the local NGO faced. The NGO reported a decrease in the amount of money collected through donations and collections, according to the findings. Similarly, the research by Deitrick et al. 2020 demonstrates that the largest worries about the pandemic increase the decline in donations, the loss of fee-for-service income, and the delay in financing processing. However, many researchers also draw attention to the serious problem of burnout among paid staff and volunteers attempting to mitigate the harmful effects of COVID-19 (Deitrick et al. al. 2020; EFA, 2020).

This study demonstrates that as a result, the NGO is unable to keep its workforce and reach out to everyone in need of support. The additional challenges that the NGO encountered as a result of the pandemic, per the study, have had a variety of effects on the organisation's operations and activities. To emphasise how significant, it is that the NGO's field of action has an impact on the challenges and certain repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the analysis' conclusions must be made clear. Regarding the prospects for NGO operations, the organisations anticipated delayed support and labour reduction, which are required for an organisation to operate in a healthy environment with its human resources and given by (Levine and McCambridge 2020). Results of a survey indicate a rise in interest in online communication via IT tools. According to studies, the NGO made significant attempts to move services for charitable organisations and those in need to telephone or internet platforms. Obtaining the required software, cameras, microphones, and fast Internet was a challenge, though. Other researchers have suggested using IT and digitisation for fundraising or working remotely when there are constraints (Rottkamp, 2021; Krueger and Haytko, 2015; Nandi et al., 2021; EFA, 2020).

Because the lockdown has never occurred on such a large scale before and has never had such a complex socioeconomic impact; the comparison to prior findings is restricted. Another flaw in the study is that it is conducted on a very small scale with only four interviewees, referring to international research papers with no literature reviews or writings to be found for the Pacific Islands. Even though several academics have written papers on the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences on charities, most of these studies concentrate on US groups with origins in other states or the EU. This study fills a particular research hole in the field of NGOs by shedding light on the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisation activities from the perspective of the local NGO, in Fiji. However, the main significance of this study comes in the fact that its conclusions offer vital information on the requirements and early response of NGOs in pandemic scenarios. The bulk of authors concentrate on the stark contrasts between the circumstances in the USA and Europe, particularly from an Eastern European perspective. The results demonstrate considerable differences within

the areas of their work in terms of both their worries and the effects of the pandemic scenario. This report advises public authorities and non-profit leaders on the necessary challenges that need to be overcome by local NGOs in Fiji.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

As the research paper's author, I hereby declare that I have no conflicts of interest about the publishing of this work. Instead, the term "NGO" is used to generalise the name of the actual NGO where the research was conducted, which is kept confidential. Furthermore, this study resulted from a research unit at a university-level postgraduate program which was conducted and submitted as a research assignment. The study was carried out on its own, and neither personal nor financial ties to outside parties affected the results or conclusions reported.

Statement of ethical approval

Furthermore, when the research report was submitted for publication, the names of the respondents and the organisation where the research was performed were not revealed anywhere for ethical and confidential reasons.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

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