

**STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION
THROUGH
ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT
WITH CIVIL SOCIETY**

REPORT

**DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project

- The project revolved around two-day community dialogues in Suva, Lautoka, Apia and Honiara. Of the 146 participants, 117 attended both days.

Key Findings

- The sense of regional connectedness is stronger than expected.
- Despite low levels of knowledge and perceived benefit, the incidence of a strong regional identity as well as a strong sense of regional attachment and expectation is greater than expected.
- Regional organizations are seen to perform very well but room for improvement is also perceived.
- The community clearly wants regional organizations to be more engaged with them and not just through governments.
- It wants regularised and institutionalised engagement and maximum inclusiveness.
- The community wants to be integrally involved in the Pacific Plan, including its monitoring and evaluation.
- Community involvement is considered necessary for the success of the Plan, including through special contributions NGOs can make.

Recommendations

For greater community engagement with regional organizations:

- Broaden the eligibility criteria for the Forum Secretariat's Framework for Engagement with Non-State Actors.
- Accord the community the same recognition given the private sector.
- Help communities to form regional associations.
- Explore the establishment of Regional Liaison Units based in Forum Island Countries.
- Work towards a Pacific Parliament with direct community representation.

To strengthen regional affinity:

- Develop a Regional News Service.
- Establish a Regional Sports Academy.
- Hold a Regional Youth Congress on Leadership.
- Develop a Regional Register and Exchange Programme of Regional Experts (including retirees).

- Provide stronger support for community theatre.

To improve knowledge and awareness of regionalism:

- Embed Regional Studies at USP and strengthen linkages between USP and other CROP agencies by
 - a. Establishing a designated CROP-funded Chair in Regional Studies,
 - b. Instituting an Annual Lecture series on Regionalism.
- Seek Forum Education Ministers' endorsement of introducing into High Schools a curriculum on regionalism to be developed by USP.

To strengthen the Pacific Plan

- Use the Pacific Plan to secure better enforcement of human rights standards, especially in relation to the Rights of the Child and CEDAW.
- Include community representatives in national implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Pacific Plan.
- Where appropriate, make greater use of NGO data.
- Make greater use of community organizations to disseminate information on the Pacific Plan.

I INTRODUCTION

PROJECT AIMS

The main aim of the project was to seek community views on whether and how regional co-operation could be strengthened through enhanced community engagement. A commonly and long held view, based more on impression and anecdote than hard empirical evidence, is that Pacific Islanders generally feel disconnected from regionalism. This view has never been tested in a social scientific way and testing its validity was a necessary task around which the project was partly constructed.

Whether and how much that view has influenced the discourse and practice of regionalism cannot be determined but it is at least arguable that Pacific regionalism might have been more effective had the community been more involved in it. The recent shift towards such involvement is therefore welcome. It underlines the growing acceptance of the need for greater community involvement as well as the hope that the effectiveness and legitimacy of regionalism will be enhanced.

If greater community engagement were to produce successful outcomes, the basis for it needs to be solid, clearly understood and accepted by stakeholders. The terms of engagement need to be negotiated and the community views gathered through the project are a contribution to that task.

METHODOLOGY

PROJECT STRATEGY: COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

The project involved four 2-day community dialogues held in Suva (12-13 April), Lautoka (14-15 April), Apia (20-21 April) and Honiara (27-28 April) in 2005 and adopted a three-pronged strategy.

The first was maximization of time for participant contribution. The dialogues were organized predominantly around small group discussions for which key themes and guiding questions were developed (see Appendix C). However, it was stressed to participants that the guiding questions were no more than that, and they were free to address any question or issue they wished.

The second was educative. Wherever necessary, the project team provided information on regionalism. Plenary sessions were used to explain key issues and their context but often further information and explanation was necessary in the small group discussions that followed. This was especially true for the Pacific Plan.

The third was the use of questionnaires. One was administered at the start of each dialogue. The purpose was to get participants' views on regionalism cold, so to speak; in other words, to get views before being influenced by the substantive

discussions that followed. A second questionnaire was administered at the end of each dialogue. The purpose was two-fold: to see if participants' views had changed since the start of the dialogue; and second, to allow participants to evaluate the dialogue in a formal and structured way.

PROJECT SAMPLE

Of the 146 people who attended the dialogues, 117 attended on both days. Those who attended for only day are excluded from the data analysis because, compared with those who attended on both days, their contributions to the discussions were limited and, in relation to the questionnaires, incomplete. Including them would therefore skew the results.

In selecting participants the key consideration was to get a broad cross section of the community that mirrored its socio-economic and demographic makeup. To that end, a preferred sample profile was developed and given to in-country assistants with local knowledge. They were tasked with selecting prospective participants and were asked to aim for a mix as close as possible to the preferred sample profile. Selected participants were then issued with an invitation prepared by the project team.

With such purposive as opposed to random sampling, there is no claim to representativeness, only that the actual sample was close to the preferred sample profile, except for three notable biases. One is the under-representation of women (33%). The second is the small number of Indo-Fijian participants, a point noted by some Fiji participants. The third was the disproportionately large representation at the Honiara dialogue of students from the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education. The skewing effect of this, however, was mitigated by the fact that, overall, the representation of young people increased to a level (37% of the total sample) that was closer to the wider regional demographic than would otherwise have been the case. The makeup of the sample, shown in Appendix A, represents a good cross section of the community.

KEY CONCEPTS AND INDICATORS

Key concepts and the indicators used in the study are explained below.

COMMUNITY

Participants were not given a definition of community, certainly not before the administration of the first questionnaire, which included questions relating to "your community". The themes of the first two small group discussions that followed completion of the first questionnaire were "Us and our needs" and "Our communities in development". Participants spent much time addressing the guiding question: "who are we?" and the consensus was that "we" had many dimensions. When representatives of the small groups, selected by the groups themselves, reported back to the whole meeting, it was agreed that participants think of their community as the collectivity for which they felt the strongest attachment, which could be their

village, their church, work colleagues, a social or business group with which they were involved, or something else.

REGIONALISM

Regionalism means different things to different people and to have spoken about it in an abstract, undefined way risked greater confusion. As a working definition that they could understand, participants were asked to think of regionalism as, broadly, the activities of regional organizations.

REGIONAL CONNECTEDNESS

The negotiation of the terms of enhanced community engagement in regionalism are more likely to be effective if it is informed by a clearer sense of why the community might feel, or in the past felt, disconnected from regionalism. That in turn requires clarity about what regional connectedness/disconnectedness means and how it can be recognized. For the project, regional connectedness was understood as a multiple sense of being a meaningful and recognized part of the regional practice. Implicit in that is a sense of affinity, gain, success and expectation about the future, in addition to a reasonable level of knowledge. For the project, these are the elements in which regional connectedness was seen to consist. The conceptualisation and indicators of these elements are outlined below.

REGIONAL AFFINITY

Regional affinity was conceptualised as attraction to or liking of regionalism, which implies sense of attachment to, utility of and identification with regionalism. Each of these is now explained.

- **Regional attachment** was understood as sense of a belonging to the region and is indicated by expressions of caring for it. Participants were therefore asked the following question:

“Ordinary Pacific Islanders don’t care very much about regional organizations”. Do you strongly agree/agree/slightly agree/disagree/strongly disagree?

- **Regional utility** was understood as the usefulness of regionalism for the lives of Pacific Islanders and is indicated by their views on the extent to which regionalism improves peoples’ lives. Participants were therefore asked the following question:

“Regional Organizations do not improve the lives of ordinary Pacific Islanders”. Do you strongly agree/agree/slightly agree/disagree/strongly disagree?

- **Regional identity** is only one multiple identities that people have. To get an indication of its salience, participants were asked to rank in order of importance the following identities:

National identity

“Fiji Islander/Samoan/Solomon Islander”

Sub-regional identity	“Melanesian, Polynesian or Micronesian”
Village identity:	“My village/settlement”
Regional identity:	“Pacific Islander”
Island identity	“The Island I come from”

REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE

From the view that Pacific Islanders generally have little knowledge of regionalism flows the reasonable supposition that regional connectedness is likely to be weak if regional knowledge is low, and vice versa. To gauge the level of regional knowledge, three indicators were used: knowledge of six regional issues; knowledge of regional organizations (“what they do”); and knowledge of regional governance (“how regional organizations work”).

REGIONAL BENEFIT

A reasonable supposition is that there is an inverse relationship between connectedness and benefit derived from regionalism; the greater the benefit, the stronger the sense of connectedness and vice versa. Participants were therefore asked these questions:

How much do you think [the regional] organizations have benefited you?

How much do you think [the regional] organizations have benefited your community?

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE

Another reasonable supposition is that sense of connectedness is inversely related to perception of regional performance. Participants were asked to assess regional performance:

What do you think about the overall performance of regional organizations?

REGIONAL EXPECTATION

Regional expectation was understood as the confidence with which regionalism was seen in terms of improving people’s lives. It is indicated by views about the capacity regionalism to do that and the likelihood that it will. Participants were therefore asked the following questions:

Do you think regional organizations *can* improve your life?

Do you think regional organizations *can* improve your community?

Do you think regional organizations *will* improve your life?

Do you think regional organizations *will* improve your community?

Unlike the first four indicators, suppositions about the relationship between connectedness and expectation are less easily made. Knowledge about what regionalism can realistically deliver is often incomplete and the future is simply indeterminate. Intuitively, however, it makes sense that connectedness is informed by expectation.

A YARDSTICK

Collectively the five indicators of regional connectedness allow a picture that is better in outline than detail. A sharper, more textured picture is not possible because, in methodological terms, not only are the indicators no more than indicators that but also there is no watertight procedure by which to aggregate them. Even if there were, there would still be the contentious matter of salience and any attempt at attaching weights to the respective indicators would be subjective and fraught. What this means, again methodologically speaking, is that a measure of regional connectedness is not possible, which is why the notion of a yardstick is presented here as a reasonable alternative. To amplify: never perfectly straight, a yardstick cannot accurately measure distance but it can provide a fairly good approximation. Moreover, its twists and knots are a good analogy for the kinds of methodological difficulties described above and which is a fact of life for much social science research.

Against this conceptual and methodological account, the project findings are now presented: firstly, on regional connectedness, then on community needs and problems; enhanced community engagement in regionalism; the Pacific Plan; and, finally, the probable effect of the dialogues on participant views. For each of these, implications for possible future action are drawn. The report concludes with recommendations.

II REGIONAL CONNECTEDNESS

REGIONAL AFFINITY

Regional Attachment and Utility

The results suggest that regional affinity is not strong but neither is as weak as might have been supposed. This is generally the case across all three indicators. In relation to the first indicator (regional attachment), 58% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that Pacific Islanders do not care much about regionalism. A further 17% agreed lightly. The remaining 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed, a surprisingly high figure, which was even higher (31%) for those who felt that regionalism does improve the lives of Pacific Islanders (see Table 1). This is encouraging because it indicates a firmer than expected platform on which future efforts at strengthening regional affinity can be built.

**Table 1: Regional Attachment and Regional Utility:
Two Indicators of Regional Affinity**

	Regional Attachment: “Pacific Islanders don’t care about regional organizations”		Regional Utility: “Regional organizations do not improves live of Pacific Islanders”	
Disagree & Strongly Disagree	27	25%	33	31%
Slightly Agree	18	17%	25	23%
Agree & Strongly Agree	63	58%	49	46%

Furthermore, the unexpectedly high level of regional attachment and regional utility are not uniform across key variables. Strong regional attachment was more evident in Solomon Islands (44%) and Fiji (30%) than Samoa (26%), and among men (63%), younger participants (58%) and students (44%). See Table 2. A similar pattern was found in relation to regional utility (see Table 3), which suggest that strategies to strengthen regional affinity need to be targeted. One possibility is to focus, at least initially, on countries and community groups where regional affinity appears strong. A rationale for this is the greater likelihood of the targeted groups being catalysts for the wider diffusion of regional connectedness. Focussing instead on countries and sections of the community where regional affinity is comparatively weak might be a speedier way of achieving the same end but may require greater effort and resources because its starts from a weaker base. The choice might be informed by the findings on the third indicator of regional affinity – regional identity.

Table 2 Regional Attachment by Country, Sex, Age and Employment

	“Pacific Islanders don’t care about regional organizations”		
	Disagree & Strongly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree & Strongly Agree
COUNTRY			
Fiji	8 (30%)	9 (50%)	29 (46%)
Samoa	7 (26%)	5 (28%)	11 (18%)
Solomon Islands	12 (44%)	4 (22%)	23 (36%)
SEX			
Male	17 (63%)	12 (67%)	44 (70%)
Female	10 (37%)	6 (33%)	19 (30%)
AGE			
Under 21 years		1 (5%)	1 (2%)
21- 30 years	15 (58%)	5 (28%)	19 (31%)
31-40 years	4 (15%)	3 (17%)	13 (21%)
41-50 years	6 (23%)	2 (11%)	11 (18%)
Over 50 years	1 (4%)	7 (39%)	17 (28%)
EMPLOYMENT			
Student	12 (44%)	4 (22%)	14 (22%)
Public sector	6 (22%)	3 (17%)	10 (16%)
All others	26 (34%)	18 (61%)	63 (62%)

Table 3 Regional Utility by Country, Sex, Age and Employment

	“Regional organizations do not improves live of Pacific Islanders”		
	Disagree & Strongly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree & Strongly Agree
COUNTRY			
Fiji	14 (42%)	8 (32%)	22 (45%)
Samoa	8 (24%)	8 (32%)	7 (14%)
Solomon Islands	11 (33%)	9 (36%)	20 (41%)
SEX			
Male	22 (67%)	14 (56%)	37 (75%)
Female	11 (33%)	11 (44%)	12 (25%)
AGE			
Under 21 years	1 (3%)		1 (2%)
21- 30 years	14 (44%)	9 (38%)	15 (31%)
31-40 years	6 (19%)	6 (25%)	9 (19%)
41-50 years	5 (15%)	2 (8%)	10 (21%)
Over 50 years	6 (19%)	7 (29%)	13 (27%)
EMPLOYMENT			
Students	10 (30%)	6 (25%)	14 (29%)
Public sector	8 (24%)	4 (17%)	6 (12%)
All others	15 (46%)	14 (58%)	29 (59%)

Regional Identity

Not surprisingly, most participants (37%) ranked village identity or national identity (22%) the most important of the five identified. Regional identity ranked third at 16%, a result that can be interpreted differently, not least because it represents only eighteen participants (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: The Ranking of Regional Identity

	ORDER OF IMPORTANCE				
IDENTITY	Most important	Second most important	Third most important	Fourth most important	Fifth most important
Village	41 (37%)	19 (18%)	20 (20%)	16 (16%)	9 (9%)
National	32 (22%)	15 (14%)	39 (39%)	6 (6%)	13 (13%)
Regional	18 (16%)	17 (16%)	13 (13%)	30 (30%)	27 (28%)
Island	16 (14%)	38 (36%)	17 (17%)	16 (16%)	14 (14%)
Subregional	4 (4%)	17 (16%)	12 (12%)	31 (31%)	34 (35%)
Total	111 (100%)	106 (100%)	101 (100%)	99 (100%)	97 (100%)

One surprising result, however, is that of the five identities regional identity was the most consistently held. This is indicated by the differences in the spread of participants across the rankings for each identity. A large difference indicates a less consistently held identity; a small difference indicates a more consistently held one. The difference for regional identity was the lowest. (See Table 5 below.)

Table 5 Consistency of Regional Identity

	RANKINGS OF IDENTITIES					
	Most important	Second most important	Third most important	Fourth most important	Fifth most important	Difference in Spread
Village	1	2	2	3	5	+4
National	2	5	1	5	4	+4
Regional	3	3	4	2	2	+2
Island	4	1	3	3	3	+3
Subregional	5	3	5	1	1	+4

The incidence of strong regional identity was also compared across key variables and the pattern there is different. It was virtually the reverse. Whereas regional attachment and regional utility were least evident in Samoa, strong regional identity was most evident there. It was also more evident among older than younger participants and among public sector employees than students. (See Table 6 below.) Again because of the small number involved, this finding is at best suggestive.

Table 6: Regional Identity by Country, Sex, Age, Employment Status

	No.	%
COUNTRY		
Fiji	6	33%
Samoa	9	50%
Solomon Islands	3	17%
SEX		
Men	12	67%
Women	6	33%
AGE		
Under 21 years	1	6%
21-30 years	3	18%
31-40 years	1	6%
41-50years	7	41%
Over 50 years	5	29%
EMPLOYMENT		
Students	3	17%
Public sector	7	39%
All others	8	44%

What, then, do these results collectively suggest about regional affinity amongst Pacific Islanders? They cannot be aggregated easily, nor can an overall measure be extracted from them, but there is a consistency across them that serves as a yardstick. It suggests that, although not strong, the level of regional affinity is more encouraging than might have been expected. Moreover, the results also point to differences between countries and sections of the community that can be useful for future attempts at strengthening regional affinity.

REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of Regional Issues

The findings on regional knowledge are less encouraging but not surprising. The vast majority of participants (83%) knew “nothing, little or not very much” about the six regional issues put to them, most especially trade and fisheries, and only slightly less so the environment, as well as regional peace and security. Knowledge of regional education was rather better but low nonetheless. As an overall measure of regional knowledge, individual averages across the six regional issues were calculated and from these an overall average was calculated (see Table 7).

It should be noted that some participants did not respond on all of the issues. Only those on which participants responded were included in the calculation of averages. This procedure was also applied to knowledge of regional organizations and knowledge of regional governance.

Table 7: Knowledge of Regional Issues

	Knowledge of regional issues					
	Little/ Nothing		Not very much		Quite a lot/A lot	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Trade	60	59%	28	28%	13	13%
Fisheries	56	54%	34	33%	13	13%
Education	33	32%	40	38%	31	30%
Transport	56	55%	31	30%	15	15%
Environment	41	40%	40	39%	21	21%
Peace & Security	51	50%	33	32%	18	18%
Average	50	46%	40	37%	18	17%

Knowledge of Regional Organizations

Knowledge of regional organizations is worse than knowledge of regional issues. Across the eight regional organizations, 89% of participants knew “nothing, little or not very much” about their activities. Least was known were the activities of PIDP, SOPAC and SPTO, only slightly more about those of the Forum Secretariat, SPREP and SPC. By comparison, USP fared significantly better but even in that case the level of knowledge was low.

Table 8: Knowledge of Regional Organizations

	Knowledge of what regional organizations do					
	Little/Nothing		Not very much		Quite a lot/A lot	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FORUM SEC.	64	63%	23	22%	15	15%
SPC	53	52%	28	28%	20	20%
USP	34	34%	20	20%	47	46%
SPREP	61	62%	20	21%	17	17%
FFA	67	68%	19	20%	12	12%
PIDP	78	80%	11	11%	9	9%
SOPAC	76	77%	14	14%	9	9%
SPTO	79	79%	12	12%	9	9%
Average	65	63%	27	26%	12	11%

Knowledge of Regional Governance

Of the three indicators of regional knowledge, knowledge of regional governance (operationalized as “how regional organizations work”) was the worst. Across all eight organizations, 92% of participants knew nothing, little or not very much about how they work. Again, the level of ignorance was highest for PIDP, SPTO and SOPAC and only slightly lower for the Forum Secretariat and SPC. Again, USP fared better but poorly nonetheless.

Table 9: Knowledge of Regional Governance

	Knowledge of how regional organizations work					
	Little/Nothing		Not very much		Quite a lot/A lot	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FORUM SEC.	61	60%	26	26%	14	14%
SPC	62	60%	24	23%	17	17%
USP	44	44%	18	18%	38	38%
SPREP	64	65%	21	21%	14	14%
FFA	72	74%	17	17%	9	9%
PIDP	77	77%	18	18%	5	5%
SOPAC	80	80%	12	12%	8	8%
SPTO	78	77%	16	16%	7	7%
Average	65	63%	30	29%	8	8%

In sum, the level of regional knowledge is low. It was lowest in Solomon Islands, followed by Fiji and Samoa; as well as among women, younger participants and those without university education. The need for an effective education programme is clear.

REGIONAL BENEFIT

The overall finding on regional benefit is similar to that for regional knowledge. Most participants (80%) benefited little from regional organizations. Again PIDP, SPTO and SOPAC came out the worst, followed by the Forum Secretariat, FFA and SPREP, with USP bucking the trend, slightly more than 50% saying they personally benefited a lot or quite a lot from it. See Table 10.

Table 10: Personal Benefit derived from Regional Organizations

	A lot (5)/ Quite a lot (4)		Not very much		Little (2)/ Very little (1)	
Benefit from:						
Forum Sec	16	16%	19	20%	63	64%
SPC	18	18%	23	23%	59	59%
USP	9	51%	17	17%	31	32%
SPREP	17	18%	19	20%	59	62%
FFA	16	17%	20	21%	61	63%
PIDP	6	6%	18	19%	72	75%
SOPAC	8	8%	17	18%	70	73%
SPTO	9	10%	12	13%	74	77%
Average	12	12%	26	26%	61	62%

Assessing the benefit of regionalism to communities is rather more difficult. In any case, what often matters is perception. Asked for their perception of benefit to their community, many participants felt unable to offer an assessment (the 'Don't Knows' in Table 11).

Table 11: Perceived Community Benefit derived from Regional Organizations

	A lot (5)/ Quite a lot (4)		Not very much		Little (2)/ Very little (1)		Don't know	
Benefit from:								
Forum Sec	13	13%	11	11%	30	30%	45	46%
SPC	16	17%	16	16%	31	31%	37	37%
USP	31	31%	15	15%	28	28%	25	26%
SPREP	14	14%	17	17%	27	28%	40	41%
FFA	13	13%	13	13%	31	31%	44	43%
PIDP	8	8%	17	17%	22	22%	53	53%
SOPAC	8	8%	13	13%	22	22%	56	56%
SPTO	11	11%	11	11%	27	27%	52	51%

The vast majority of those who did offer an assessment, upwards of 75%, felt that their communities benefited little. Again USP was the stand out exception, with 42% believing it benefited their community (see Table 12).

Table 12: Assessed Community Benefit derived from Regional Organizations

	A lot (5)/ Quite a lot (4)		Not very much		Little (2)/ Very little (1)	
Benefit from:						
Forum Sec	13	24%	11	20%	30	56%
SPC	16	25%	16	25%	31	50%
USP	31	42%	15	20%	28	38%
SPREP	14	24%	17	29%	27	47%
FFA	13	23%	13	23%	31	54%
PIDP	8	17%	17	36%	22	47%
SOPAC	8	19%	13	30%	22	51%
SPTO	11	22%	11	22%	27	56%
Average	17	22%	22	28%	39	50%

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE

With such low levels of regional knowledge and perceived benefit, a similar result would have been expected in relation to overall regional performance but this was not the case. Again, many participants felt unable to make a judgement (see Table 13) but the large number who did were overwhelmingly (upwards of 72%) positive in their assessment of all regional organizations (see Table 14).

Table 13: Performance of Regional Organizations

	Bad/Not very good		Good		Very Good/Excellent		Don't know	
Forum Sec	10	10%	25	26%	20	21%	42	43%
SPC	12	12%	28	29%	26	27%	31	32%
USP	9	9%	18	19%	49	51%	20	21%
SPREP	14	14%	30	31%	23	24%	30	31%
FFA	14	14%	35	36%	15	16%	33	34%
PIDP	10	11%	34	35%	5	5%	47	49%
SOPAC	13	14%	26	27%	11	11%	46	48%
SPTO	14	15%	24	25%	12	13%	44	47%
Average	18	20%	43	48%	23	26%	5	6%

Table 14: Assessed Performance of Regional Organizations

	NEGATIVE (1) Bad/Not very good		(2) Good		(3) Very Good/Excellent		POSITIVE (2) + (3)
Forum Sec	10	18%	25	46%	20	36%	82%
SPC	12	18%	28	42%	26	40%	82%
USP	9	12%	18	24%	49	64%	88%
SPREP	14	21%	30	45%	23	34%	79%
FFA	14	22%	35	55%	15	23%	78%
PIDP	10	20%	34	70%	5	10%	80%
SOPAC	13	26%	26	52%	11	22%	74%
SPTO	14	28%	24	48%	12	24%	72%

That most participants rated USP's performance highly, with 64% judging it very good or excellent, further confirms its standing in the community as a good performer. Clearly this has to do with the large numbers of people, students and others, who over the years have been involved with USP. That in turn is due largely to USP's extensive presence in the region. As one Solomon Islands participant put it:

USP is successful because it is nationally present and it publicises its activities. People know about it through interaction with it.

To anticipate the later discussion, physical presence was strongly emphasized as a key factor in strengthening community engagement with regionalism.

How is the strong and positive assessment of regional performance to be explained, especially against a background of low knowledge and perceived benefit? The argument here is that three factors are important. One is the stronger-than-expected level of regional affinity. The second, which will be discussed later, is the high level of dissatisfaction with government and governance at the national level. Related to this, thirdly, is the surprisingly high level of confidence that regionalism can help Pacific Islanders and the high expectation that it will.

REGIONAL EXPECTATION

Excluding the small number of participants who did not offer a view, the overwhelmingly majority of participants felt that regional organizations *could* benefit their lives (97%) as well as their community (95%) (see Table 15). Most also felt that it *would* benefit them and their community, 88% and 87% respectively (see Table 16).

Table 15: Assessed Capacity of Regional Organizations to Improve individuals' lives and the community

Can improve	Yes		No	
Individuals' lives	84	97%	3	3%
The community	84	95%	4	5%

Table 16: Assessed Likelihood of Regional Organizations improving individuals' lives and the community

Will improve	Yes		No	
Individuals' lives	76	88%	10	12%
The community	74	87%	11	13%

How well placed this overwhelming sense of confidence and expectation is remains to be seen, an early test of which will be the outcomes of the Pacific Plan, on which more later. For now, the following observations are made by way of a summary of the discussion thus far.

While there clearly are gaps between regionalism and the community, the task of bridging them might not be as daunting as many might have believed. Knowledge levels need to be increased and the benefits of regionalism need to be explained rather better. Too often lack of tangible benefit is equated with no benefit at all, so it is not surprising that in the eyes of the community USP consistently comes out the best and SPC generally second best. The vital importance of the Forum Secretariat's efforts in the area of regional reform, for example, is generally lost to the community and the same is true of much of the work of the other regional organizations.

A strong and sustained education campaign is needed if the community is to become better attuned to the aims of regionalism and what can realistically be expected of it. The evidence from the project suggests a degree of regional connectedness that puts such an outcome within the realm of possibility. But education can achieve only so much. As is now increasingly recognized, the relevance, viability and legitimacy of regionalism require meaningful participation by stakeholders in it, and they include the community.

The encouraging levels of regional affinity and confidence in regionalism revealed by the project point to a reservoir of latent responsiveness that fuller community engagement in regionalism could easily unlock. But such engagement needs to be genuine, institutionalised and predicated on willingness by all stakeholders to give as well as to take. As will be shown presently, the community desires such engagement and have views on the forms it might take. Before considering them, a brief account of their needs and aspirations is necessary.

III COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS: NEEDS, PROBLEMS, ISSUES

NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

Community needs and problems are generally well known. Nevertheless, at the start of each dialogue participants were asked through the first questionnaire to identify “the most important needs and problems in your community”. As expected, these were numerous and wide-ranging. In addition, problems were very often couched in similar ways as needs. This allowed use of the same broad categories to categorize needs and problems. The categories used are: Basic/Substantive, Community Governance, and General

In the responses to the questionnaire, the similarity of the language in which community needs and problems were couched suggested that participants were making causal connections between them, that the problems identified were key causes of unmet need. This was confirmed by the amplifications made by participants in the small group discussions that followed completion of the questionnaire.

Together, then, the responses to the questionnaire as well as notes taken of the small group discussions were used to develop a fuller picture of participants’ views, which is presented below as ‘Overview of Community Needs and Problems’. Obviously, some needs and problems do not fall neatly into one category. Judgements were therefore made as to category that best captured their urgency or prominence. Also, some seemed worthy of special mention and in the ‘Overview’ below are presented separately from ‘well known’ ones as ‘noteworthy’. The possible need for re-categorization or category refinement is acknowledged but what follows tells the general story.

A broad outline of the story is indicated by Table 17 below, which, unsurprisingly, shows that vast majority of participants identified basic or substantive needs and problems as the most important. A fuller account appears in the Overview box that follows and where, as much as possible, the words of participants are used, with occasional clarifications included in brackets.

Table 17: Community Needs and Problems Most identified as Most Important

	NEEDS		PROBLEMS	
	No.	%		
			87	
Basic/Substantive	94	89%	87	84%
Community Governance	9	9%	8	8%
General	3	3%	9	9%

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

Basic/Substantive

Well known: Income, employment, food, health, housing, education and training, sanitation, electricity, transport, lack of markets, access to credit; telecommunications.

Noteworthy Needs: Special needs of outlying islands; access to and distribution of funds; family support, care for the aged, the disabled and youth, resources in times of natural disaster; destitution, reproductive health, human rights (including women's and worker's rights), civic virtue.

Noteworthy problems Barriers to trade, lack of micro financing schemes and project work [for] villages, no savings culture; management of cultural fishing rights, child abuse; HIV-AIDS, drug abuse; lack of community facilities, e.g., community halls.

Community Governance

Well known: Better planning, greater efficiency; greater community recognition of its members, especially marginal groups, [inadequate links between] villages and provinces, environmental problems, especially from logging.

Noteworthy: needs Greater inclusion of the community in national decision-making; more visits from government and NGOs.

Noteworthy problems Poor leadership, lack of transparency and lack of honesty [at community and national level], land disputes, church tax, waste management, law and order, inefficient Town and City Councils.

General

Well known: Greater self-reliance; more tolerance, especially of marginal Groups, sport and sport facilities.

Noteworthy: needs Hold a regional youth congress on leadership, minimise negative impacts of the media, [need more effective ways to cope with] the speed of change, stronger community identity; [greater responsiveness to] community aspirations; [better] morality.

Noteworthy problems Cultural mentality; laziness/Pacific Way; lack of motivation, dependency, culture of silence over sexuality; lack of motivation, powerlessness of youth, including unemployment and urban drift because village life is boring and isolated, peer pressure, globalization.

Much of this confirms what was already known. Particularly significant was the confirmation, especially in the small group discussions, of the view that community problems and unmet needs were largely due to government, with self-interest, corruption, bureaucratic red tape, and lack of responsiveness, accountability and transparency featuring prominently as particular causes. Against this, the evidence presented above of the high level of confidence in the capacity of regionalism to help communities, as well as the high expectation that it will, makes better sense. The critical question, therefore is: how well placed is this strong and unmistakable sense of hope? Only time will tell but there is some indication of what participants think the priorities of regionalism should be, as well as the organizational changes needed. A hint lies in other responses to the first questionnaire but stronger evidence emerged in the small group discussions.

Participants were asked to identify and rank what they saw as “the most important issues facing regional co-operation in the Pacific Islands”. Most identified at least three; fewer identified more. To get an overall picture, the issues were categorized under three headings: Substantive, Institutional Efficacy, and Other.

Of the participants who identified up to three issues, around 45% identified substantive issues, 30% other issues, and 25% issues relating to the efficacy of regional organizations. The last of these is telling, for if regionalism in the future is to respond effectively to the hope that the community appears to place on it, then the evidence from the study suggests that, despite their positive assessment of the performance of regional organizations, a large proportion of Pacific Islanders think that there is room for improvement. The kinds of improvement, along with key examples of important substantive and other issues, are shown in the following box .

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THE REGION

SUBSTANTIVE

Well Known Employment, health, education and training, cost of living, transport, communications, tourism, political stability, law and order, security, nuclear waste, external migration, environment.

Noteworthy Democracy, labour mobility, trade, fisheries, drugs, food security, climate monitoring and warning systems, food security, information technology, child abuse, human rights, social justice.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFICACY

Well Known Lack of knowledge/awareness of regional organizations and processes,
better planning and monitoring, greater inclusion of community, governance of regional organizations.

Noteworthy Elite bias in regional co-operation, lack of awareness of community at regional level, devolution of regional co-operation to civil society [where appropriate].

OTHER

Well Known Availability and distribution of regional assistance, globalization and external dependency, big power dominance and respect for Pacific cultures and traditions, marginality, information technology.

Noteworthy Poverty, corruption, tolerance, laziness/ 'Pacific Way', speed of change, indigenous issues, leadership/government as obstacle, sports.

Especially against the perceived need for greater institutional efficacy, the central issue that the study set out to investigate took on heightened significance. As the dialogues unfolded, a strong consensus increasingly surfaced that enhanced community engagement with regionalism is both desired and necessary. The question is how?

IV TOWARDS GREATER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Identifying community needs and problems was easy; harder were strategies to address them; hardest of all were strategies at the regional level. This was evident in the session around the question “How do we get involved more effectively in regional co-operation?” This was probably the most difficult session, despite the inclusion of possible forms of engagement in the guide prepared for the small group discussions. Evidence of this was the paucity of ideas in response to the guiding statement “Other suggestions I would like to make...” Nevertheless, after much deliberation and with care consciously taken to minimize the risk of leading participants in particular directions, views did emerge, at times strongly.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

From the discussions emerged three key requirements for more effective community engagement emerge.

1. regularised and institutionalised (as opposed to ad hoc and informal) engagement;
2. maximum/optimal inclusiveness, facilitated by appropriate eligibility criteria and taking into account representativeness, capacity to engage, and resource constraints; and
3. the “need for governments to open up and strengthen communications internally if people are to benefit from regionalism”.

FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

Direct Engagement

Participants were unanimous and strong in their desire for more effective community engagement in regionalism. On possible modes of engagement, one suggestion was for community representatives to engage directly with regional organizations. The point was made that some already do and more could.

Engagement through Regional Representatives

Another was to engage through representatives of national association of community groups or through regional umbrella organizations. Resource constraints and organizational difficulties were seen as major obstacles and assistance was widely felt to be necessary.

Engagement through Regional Liaison Units

A third was the formation of ‘regional liaison units’ through which the community could work. This received strong support. The general sentiment was that this would vastly improve the dissemination of regional information, “short circuit” bureaucratic red tap, and serve as a “one-stop shop” for accessing regional

assistance. Less clear were the specifics around the formation and authority of such units.

Should there be liaison units for each regional organization or for CROP agencies collectively? Where would they be located? The strong preference was for a unit in each country. What would their authority be? A view strongly expressed in Solomon Islands was that the units be empowered to manage regional assistance for community projects independently of government.

For the purposes of the study, the details around the idea of regional liaison units are less important than what it suggests about the bigger issue of regional connectedness. It sharply crystallizes the wider desire for greater and more effective community engagement in regionalism, the particular suggestion that regional liaison units be based in each country reinforcing the powerful impact of physical presence that the highly positive assessment of USP suggested.

Other forms of engagement

Many supported the idea of engagement through a Pacific parliament, the case for it succinctly captured by one participant:

We could have direct election of reps on to a Pacific Parliament. We have local elections, national elections- why not regional elections?

It would help foster accountability, transparency, and provide an avenue for popular dialogue separate from that of the nation. Also supported was engagement through a Regional Ombudsman. Other ideas later emerged in the discussions around the question “How can we help our government to implement the Pacific Plan?”

IV THE PACIFIC PLAN: WHAT HOPE?

The Plan was explained to participants and for many that was their first exposure to it. Consequently it was not surprising that compared to other discussions, the discussion on the Plan was less substantial and fluid. Nevertheless, views were expressed and, again, these are presented here as much as possible in the words of the participants. To facilitate discussion, the small groups were asked to consider the following:

- Do we understand the issues covered in the Pacific Plan?
- Do we agree with the issue covered in the Pacific Plan?
- Other issues we think should be in the Pacific Plan are.....

At various times in the course of the dialogues, including before discussions of the Pacific Plan, the following points were made:

- development is primarily a national responsibility;
- the aim of regionalism is to assist efforts at the national level;
- the benefits of regionalism do not always come in the form of tangible assistance; and
- there is a need to be clear and realistic about what regionalism can achieve.

REACTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The discussions were wide-ranging, cutting back and forth across many issues, but several points are worth highlighting.

First, there was a clear wish to be involved. In the words of two participants:

We feel disconnected from the Plan. We are ready and willing to be involved in the Plan. We will learn from the experience.

The Pacific Plan is proclaimed as a People's Plan but [it] needs more consultation with people than with governments.

Second, there was concern about the “complementarities” between it and national development plans.

Third, especially strong in Fiji and Solomon Islands was a concern with governance, peace and security, as illustrated by the following comments:

- Link Pacific Plan to Biketawa and Nasonini Declarations and Forum's Principles of Good Leadership
- Establish Regional Ombudsman and a Regional Leadership Code Commission
- Provide for enforcement of conventions, human rights, democracy & good governance; list enforcement procedures.
- Law and order, peace and security – priority!!

Fourth, the long wish for inclusion in the Plan reflects in varying degrees:

- sectional or special interest,
- the predominant focus on day-to-day concerns,
- ignorance of the Plan, and
- lack of appreciation of the benefits that can realistically be expected of the Plan and regionalism generally.

The following suggestions are illustrative and headed by especially noteworthy ones:

- *Establish a regional sports academy*
- *Develop a register and exchange programme of regional expertise, including of retirees*
- *Have a regional youth congress on leadership*
- *Introduce leadership into school and tertiary curriculum*
- Why are Australia and New Zealand excluded from the Plan?
- Key is Australia & New Zealand: need initiatives on labour mobility, goods and services for the larger economies.
- What will be the social and environmental impacts and costs of the Plan?
- Issues are soft, need to demonstrate real economic benefit.
- Need to state where benefits are and how they will be delivered. But doing nothing not a solution.
- Economic issues need to be highest priority.
- Current list of economic activities do not necessarily guarantee growth.
- Labour mobility.
- Review trade agreements (SPARTECA not mentioned in PP).
- Review SPARTECA rules of origin.
- Extend trade arrangements beyond the region.
- Raise quarantine standards to Australian and New Zealand standards.
- Raise regional infrastructure to international standards and make affordable.
- Help minority and marginalised groups (aged, disabled, sexual orientation, people living with Aids).
- Re-examine commitments under WTO TRIPS, especially in relation to general Drugs.
- Need regional programme/project to strengthen local forestry enterprises.
- Establish regional programme on social safety nets.
- Rights of the Child.
- Address tax regimes; indirect tax a burden for the poor and low paid.
- Adopt a regional living wage policy (MDG).
- Produce a regional concessions card to help the poor.
- Cost of living needs addressing (mark-up on goods too high).
- Poverty reduction is about the poor. Need for a regional study to identify the poor.
- Occupational health- greater access for aged and disabled.

ASSISTING IN NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

To emphasize the point that the national implementation was the key to the success of the Plan, participants were asked how they could assist their government in that task. Two general points about the suggestions are notable.

1. They all have to do with a partnership between government and the community; as one participant captured it, “Let the community do some of the implementing.”
2. They see community involvement as vital for greater acceptance and legitimacy of the Plan in the community. Again in the words of one participant: “impress on government the need for grassroots support”.

Two specific suggestions are especially noteworthy:

1. *Share NGO data with governments. Some more up to date than government data.*
2. *We can help in disseminating information on the Pacific Plan*

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Participants were also asked if they wanted to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the Pacific Plan and, if so, how? The overwhelming response was ‘yes’ and there was a consensus on “how”. These are captured by the following comments.

Communities want to be engaged in monitoring and evaluating processes.

NGOs need ability to check on governments at regional level- see how they respond & implement the Pacific Plan.

Monitoring and evaluation a sign of commitment. If done professionally it is accepted and valuable. Will help generate community acceptance of Plan (including Forsec’s evaluation).

Community to check on national implementation of the Plan.

Form independent committee/task force, to include government and CSO representatives, in each FIC to monitor Pacific Plan

The national implementation report to include community views and recommendations.

What does all this point to? Despite misgivings, the indications are that the community wants to be involved in the Pacific Plan; is willing to assist in its implementation, and has practical suggestions on how; and attaches special importance to monitoring and evaluation, in which it especially wants to be involved. There clearly is a sense of hope that the Pacific Plan will be community-friendly and will deliver benefits. It may well be misplaced, for the argument can be made that it is grounded on (1) incomplete knowledge of the Pacific Plan and the Pacific Plan process; and (2) an inadequate appreciation of what the Plan can reasonably be expected to deliver.

Much the same case can be made of regionalism generally. The critical question therefore is this: what, if anything, can be done about it?' The short answer is a great deal, and the challenge may not be as daunting as many might suppose. From the dialogues have emerged ideas about what can be done, some of which are later recommended for adoption. Of these, raising awareness, generally strengthening the sense of regional connectedness, and more effective community engagement in regionalism are critical. Running through all this is the vital need for education, which the project findings confirm.

VI PROSPECTS

At the end of the dialogues a second questionnaire was administered, the intention was to gauge any change that might have occurred as well as allow participants to evaluate the dialogues. Overall, the results suggest in a preliminary way that the dialogues may well have had an impact on participants' sense of regional connectedness.

The sense of regional attachment (caring about regionalism) remained roughly the same but the strong sense of regional utility was now more evident, with an additional 12% (an increase from 31% to 43%) now believing in the utility of regionalism (that it improves the lives of Pacific Islanders). (See Table 18.)

Table 18: Before and After: Regional Attachment and Regional Utility

	Regional Attachment: "Pacific Islanders don't care about regional organizations"		Regional Utility: "Regional organizations do not improves live of Pacific Islanders"	
	Before	After	Before	After
Disagree & Strongly Disagree	25%	26%	31%	43%
Slightly Agree	17%	23%	23%	27%
Agree & Strongly Agree	58%	51%	46%	30%

Regional expectation was high at the start of the dialogues; by the end it was even higher. Earlier, 97% of participants agreed that regionalism "can improve" their lives and 95% their community. Both figures increased to 99%. Similarly, 88% initially believed that regionalism "will improve" their lives and 87% their community. Those figures increased to 96% and 91% respectively. More telling was the large proportion of participants who earlier said they did not know but later agreed: 85% later agreed that regionalism *could* improve their lives as well as their community; 51% that it *would* improve their lives; and 94% that it *would* improve their community. These higher levels of confidence and expectation might have been due in part to the dramatic improvement in regional knowledge.

As Table 19 shows, 64% of participants said their knowledge of regional issues had improved “a lot” or “quite a lot”; 75% said their knowledge of regional organizations had similarly improved; and 59% had their knowledge of regional governance a lot.

Table 19: Improvement in Regional Knowledge: Before and After Dialogues

	Improved a little/ very little	Not very much improvement	Improved a lot/ quite a lot
Knowledge of: Regional Issues	14%	22%	64%
Regional Organizations	9%	16%	75%
Regional Governance	12%	29%	59%

These before-and-after comparisons point to the power of quality education and awareness-raising strategies and the need for long term ones. At issue here are not short-term improvements but deep and lasting ones. The results of the study also suggest the need for targeted approaches, and they point particularly to youth as both key primary targets as well as key catalysts for change.

VII RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen regional affinity:

- Develop a Regional News Service.
- Establish a Regional Sports Academy.
- Hold a Regional Youth Congress on Leadership.
- Develop a Regional Register and Exchange Programme of Regional Experts (including retirees).
- Provide stronger support for community theatre.

For greater community engagement with regional organizations:

- Broaden the eligibility criteria for the Forum Secretariat's Framework for Engagement with Non-State Actors.
- Accord the community same recognition given the private sector.
- Help communities to form regional associations.
- Explore the establishment of Regional Liaison Units based in Forum Island Countries.
- Work towards a Pacific Parliament with direct community representation.

To improve knowledge and awareness of regionalism:

- Embed Regional Studies at USP and strengthen linkages between USP and other CROP agencies through
 - a. the establishment of a CROP Chair in Regional Studies, and
 - b. by instituting an Annual Forum Lecture series on Regionalism.
- Develop and introduce a High School curriculum on regionalism.

To strengthen the Pacific Plan

- Use the Pacific Plan to secure better enforcement of human rights standards, especially in relation to the Rights of the Child and CEDAW.
- Include community representatives in national implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Pacific Plan.
- Where appropriate, make greater use of NGO data.
- Make greater use of community organizations to disseminate information on the Pacific Plan.

VIII POSTSCRIPT

Earlier versions of the draft Pacific Plan included an Implementation Strategy that identified possible initiatives to be undertaken along three timelines: over 3, 5 and 10 years. Later the Implementation Strategy focused on initiatives for the first 3 years, and the broad assessment that now follows relates to the draft Pacific Plan as at 11 July 2005.

The overall finding is that, in general, the views and aspirations of participants are strongly reflected in Plan's proposed initiatives both on *substantive* issues as well as ways to engage the community more effectively in regionalism.

It appears that many of the substantive suggestions made by participants were also made by others in the course of the numerous consultations undertaken by the Pacific Plan Task Force. Such a meeting of minds is encouraging; even more encouraging is that many of the suggestions were included in the Pacific Plan, as the following extracts from the Pacific Plan show.

- *Integrate trade in services, including temporary movement of labour, into the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Economic Partnerships Agreement (EPA).*
- *Harmonise approaches in the health sector under the Samoa Commitment including: implementing the HIV/AIDS and STI Strategy; a stronger focus on non-communicable diseases; and agreement on health worker recruitment.*
- *Harmonise approaches in the education sector..*
- *Investigate the potential for expanding regional technical and vocational education training (TVET) programmes...*
- *Deliver specific studies and scholarships on regionalism, pro-poor economic growth, peace and conflict, traditional structures, leadership, gender-specific indicators, and cultural policy to support regional cooperation and integration.*
- *Enhance advocacy for and coordination of youth programmes and monitoring of the status of youth, and establish volunteer schemes and other forms of regional exchanges and sharing of services and expertise for regional capacity building.*
- *Enhance regional sporting networks to support the developmental role of sport.*
- *Create a regional sporting institute.*
- *Develop a strategy to maintain and strengthen Pacific cultural identity.*

- *Support the regional consolidation of commitments to key institutions such as audit and ombudsman offices, leadership codes, anti-corruption institutions and departments of attorneys general...*
- *Support the Forum Principles of Good Leadership and Accountability.*
- *Enhance multi-disciplinary regional governance mechanisms, including in resource management; and in the harmonisation of traditional and modern values and structures.*
- *Ratify and implement rights-based international and regional conventions and agreements; and support meeting reporting and other requirements.*
- *Develop a mechanism to review the list of initiatives approved by leaders and identify issues, gaps, organisational and resource synergies...*
- *Create a regional team to provide advice on business-friendly regulatory reform, including collateral, access to credit, and enforcement of contracts.*
- *Increase the levels of market support funds and/or examine alternative financing facilities for, e.g., joint ventures and micro-finance training.*
- *Create a Pacific Disabled People's Association (PDPA), to promote the Biwako Millennium Framework.*
- *Provide specialised support for the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)...*
- *Integrate Pacific rugby into the International Rugby Board (IRB).*
- *Expand the role of the Pacific Parliamentary Assembly for Population and Development (PPAPD), including regular constitutional review.*
- *Create a Forum Parliamentary Assembly by enlarging Forum Presiding Officers' Conference (FPOC).*
- *Create a Pacific Human Rights Charter...*
- *Integrate regional commitments into national policies, planning and resourcing.*
- *Adopt regionally integrated planning systems for the equitable consideration of economic, social and environmental elements from the community to the national level.*

- *Develop a strategy to support participatory democracy and consultative decision-making (including NSAs, youth, women and disabled), and electoral process.*

The Plan's key initiatives to enhance community engagement in regionalism include the following:

- *Create mechanisms to engage Non-State Actors (NSAs) (including the private sector) in sustainability initiatives.*
- *Support private sector mechanisms including through the Regional Private Sector Organisation (RPSO).*
- *Strengthen processes for national and regional Non-State Actors (NSAs), particularly through current mechanisms, to encourage implementation partnerships, disseminate information and harmonise work programmes..*
- *Build capacity of regional NSAs for advocacy and programme delivery.*
- *Provide NSAs with observer status at Forum meetings.*
- *Establish a NSAs liaison mechanism at PIFS, for example to support monitoring and evaluation processes.*

The last of these has already been implemented and may well be a first step towards participants' preference for NSA liaison units/officers to be based in each FIC. Whether that eventuates will depend on many factors, including the effectiveness with which community advocates make the case for this form of engagement with regionalism. Other forms are indicated by the other initiatives listed above or may emerge in the future.

That the Pacific Plan has picked up on community concerns and aspirations articulated in the dialogues is encouraging. So too is the greater knowledge of regionalism in the community that the dialogues generated. The hope is that these outcomes will catalyze a greater sense of connectedness with regionalism as well as broader and deeper community engagement with it.

APPENDIX A: PROFILE OF SAMPLE

	FIJI	SAMOA	SOLOMON ISLANDS	TOTAL
SEX				
Male	25	16	35	76 (67%)
Female	23	9	6	38 (33%)
TOTAL				114 (100%)
TRADITIONAL LEADERS	11	11	5	36
AGE				
Under 21 years	2			2 (2%)
21-30 years	13	4	24	41 (37%)
31-40 years	6	5	10	21 (19%)
41-50 years	5	8	6	19 (17%)
Over 50 years	19	8	1	28 (25%)
TOTAL				111 (100%)
EMPLOYMENT				
Student	4		27	31 (27%)
Public Sector	16	10	2	20 (24%)
Private Sector		2	1	3 (3%)
NGO	14		1	15 (13%)
Unemployed		1		9 (9%)
Self Employed	6	3	1	10 (9%)
Retired	7	5		12 (11%)
Other	1	3	1	5 (4%)
TOTAL				113
EDUCATION				
Primary	1		1	2 (2%)
Secondary	22	12	12	46 (40%)
Technical/Vocational	7	1	20	28 (25%)
University	18	12	8	38 (33%)
TOTAL				114 (100%)
INCOME LEVEL				
No Income	14	10	19	43 (40%)
Very Low	9	6	7	22 (21%)
Low	5		1	6 (6%)
Middle	6		2	8 (8%)
Upper Middle	3	5	2	10 (9%)
High	7	4	6	17 (16%)
Total				112 (100%)
RESIDENCE				
Capital City	18	6	24	48 (43%)
Town	18			18 (16%)
Village	11	18	17	46 (41%)
TOTAL				112 (100%)

APPENDIX B: **DIALOGUE PROGRAMME**

*A Civil Society Dialogue on
Strengthening Regional Co-operation Through
Enhanced Engagement with Civil Society*

DAY 1 **OUR NEEDS**

8.30-9am	WELCOME
9-10am	OVERVIEW
10-10.30am	Morning Tea
10.30-11.30	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS 1 <i>Us and Our Needs</i>
11.30-12.30	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS 2 <i>Our Communities in Development</i>
12.30-1.30pm	Lunch
1.30-2.30pm	PLENARY Report Back on Small Group Discussions
2.30-3.30pm	PLENARY <i>The Pacific Plan</i>
3.30-4pm	Afternoon Tea
4-4.30	PLENARY <i>Preparing for Tomorrow's Discussion</i>

DAY 2:
IMPROVING OUR LIVES
through
REGIONAL CO-OPERATION
and
THE PACIFIC PLAN

8.30-9am	PLENARY <i>Today's Tasks</i>
9-10am	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS 3 <i>The Pacific Plan</i>
10-10.30am	Morning Tea
10.30-11am	PLENARY <i>Getting ourselves organized for more effective involvement in regional co-operation</i>
11-12.30pm	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS 4 <i>How can we get more effectively involved in regional co-operation?</i>
12.30 - 1.30pm	Lunch
1.30-2.30pm	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS 5 <i>How can we assist in implementing the Pacific Plan?</i>
2.30-3.30pm	PLENARY <i>Report back on Small Group Discussions</i>
3.30-4pm	Afternoon Tea
4-4.30pm	Plenary <i>Conclusion and Thanks</i>

APPENDIX C

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (SGD)

SGD 1: 'Us and Our Needs'

Me and my community:	Who are we?
Me and my community:	What do we do?
Me and my community:	What do we need?
Me and my community	What are our problems?

SGD 2: 'Our Communities in Development'

Our communities:	Do we have/need a NATIONAL association?
Our communities:	Do we have/need a REGIONAL association?
Our communities:	We can better co-operate among ourselves NATIONALLY by...
Our communities:	We can better co-operate among ourselves REGIONALLY by.....

SGD 3: The Pacific Plan

Do we UNDERSTAND the issues covered in the Pacific Plan?
Do we AGREE WITH the issues covered in the Pacific Plan?
OTHER ISSUES we think should be in the Pacific Plan are.....

SGD 4: Getting ourselves organized

Do we have/need National Associations? Do we need help for these?
Do we have/need Regional Associations? Do we need help for these?

How do we get involved more effectively in regional co-operation?

By working directly with regional organizations?
By working through our Government?
How can this be improved?
By forming NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS and working through them?
By forming REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS and working through them?
By working through a Community Liaison Officer in each regional organization?
Other suggestions I would like to make....

SGD 5: How can we help our Government to implement the Pacific Plan?

We can help our Government in the SHORT TERM by.....
We can help our Government in the MEDIUM TERM by.....
We can help our Government in the LONG TERM by.....
Monitoring and evaluation of progress under the Pacific Plan.
Do we want to be involved in this? How?

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION OF DIALOGUES

	No.	%
Excellent	59	59%
Very Good	29	29%
Good	10	10%
Not Very Good	2	2%

APPENDIX E

TEAM MEMBERS

The team was led by Professor Robbie Robertson, Director of Development Studies in PIAS-DG, the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

The project leader was Dr William Sutherland from the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

The other team members were:

Dr Malakai Koloamatangi from the National Centre for Research on Europe, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, and
 Dr Tarcisius Kabutaulaka from the Pacific Islands Development Program, Honolulu, Hawaii.