



# FIJI CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX REPORT

## A CIVIL SOCIETY IN TRANSITION

CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Fiji

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Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS)

An international action-research project coordinated by CIVICUS: World  
Alliance for Citizen Participation

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE FCOSS PRESIDENT .....	2
FOREWORD .....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	7
INTRODUCTION 10	
STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION .....	11
<b>I CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX: PROJECT AND APPROACH .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1 PROJECT BACKGROUND.....	12
2 PROJECT APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY .....	13
2.1 CSI CONCEPTUAL & ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK .....	13
2.2 PROJECT METHODOLOGY .....	15
2.3 LINKING RESEARCH WITH ACTION .....	17
2.4 PROJECT OUTPUTS .....	18
<b>II CIVIL SOCIETY IN FIJI .....</b>	<b>18</b>
1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.....	18
2 THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS .....	19
3 MAPPING CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS .....	21
<b>III ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN FIJI .....</b>	<b>26</b>
1 STRUCTURE.....	26
1.1 The Extent of Citizen Participation in Civil Society.....	27
1.2 Depth of Citizen Participation in Civil Society .....	29
1.3 Diversity of Civil Society Participants .....	29
1.4 Level of Organisation.....	31
1.5 Inter-Relations within Civil Society .....	33
1.6 Civil Society Resources.....	34
Conclusion.....	35
2 ENVIRONMENT.....	36
2.1 Political context.....	36
2.2 Basic Freedom and Rights.....	40
2.3 Socio-Economic Context.....	41
2.4 Socio-Cultural Context .....	42
2.5 Legal Environment .....	43
2.6 State-Civil Society Relations.....	44
2.7 Private Sector- Civil Society Relations .....	45
Conclusion.....	47
3 VALUES.....	48
3.1 Democracy .....	48
3.2 Transparency .....	49
3.3 Tolerance.....	51
3.4 Non-violence .....	51
3.5 Gender Equity .....	52
3.6 Poverty Eradication .....	53
3.7 Environment Sustainability .....	54
Conclusion.....	55
4 IMPACT.....	56
4.1 Influencing Public Policy .....	56
4.2 Holding the State and Private Corporations Accountable.....	59
4.3 Responding to Social Interests .....	60
4.4 Empowering Citizens .....	61
4.5 Meeting Societal Needs.....	64
Conclusion.....	66
<b>IV STRENGTHS &amp; WEAKNESSES .....</b>	<b>67</b>
STRENGTHS .....	67
WEAKNESSES.....	68
<b>V RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>VI CONCLUSION &amp; NEXT STEPS.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>95</b>

## **MESSAGE FROM THE FCOSS PRESIDENT**

Informed decision-making is one of the most important aspects of a liberating leadership. When such is nurtured with commitment to serve humankind and to care for one's environment it often results in creative transformation of the society and its people.

It is with this conviction that the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) welcomed participation in the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) project. The Fiji Council of Social Services believed that the project could contribute to more informed decision-making not only amongst the leaders of civil society but also those of government and the private sector in our society.

The implementation of the CSI in Fiji has been a learning experience for all those involved in the project. The participatory nature of the gathering of data, its analysis and the recommendations put forward, has, we believe, established a fertile ground on which CSOs and other interested stakeholders can continue to grow together and become more effective in implementing their various missions.

We thank CIVICUS for choosing FCOSS as one of its partners in this global project. We trust that the Fiji findings will contribute to improving the CSO's engagements internationally. We thank the FCOSS Executive Director, Mohammed Hassan Khan and the staff, particularly Ms. Ashiana Shah and Joy Kaloumaira, for their dedication to the project. We also thank all of those who willingly participated in the project.

It is envisaged that the outcome recorded in this report will greatly enhance the quality of CSOs and the work undertaken by them. We believe that this will contribute to a more humane, just and peaceful society for Fiji.

Mrs. Lorine Tevi  
President of Fiji Council of Social Services

## FOREWORD

FCOSS is one of the oldest and largest civil society organisations in Fiji. As such, it feels a strong responsibility for the development of the nonprofit sector, the direction it takes, for the analysis of needs and for setting priorities and long-term strategies in this area. To fulfil such a task, it is necessary to acquire sufficient valid data, background materials, statistics, research reports and arguments that could be of use not only to FCOSS but to the whole range of nonprofit organisations, the state administration, corporate actors and the public. This is why FCOSS has continuously conducted data finding exercises on the nonprofit sector and civil society in the past (e.g., Voluntary Sector Index, 2002)

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) project implemented in the Fiji Islands drew on our previous research experience but at the same time was new and inspiring in many respects. First of all, it initiated new discussions about the notion of civil society, which at the time of commencement of the CSI was still not broadly understood. The process of the research itself was beneficial as it allowed a number of actors to participate in a debate about the needs and problems of civil society and created an opportunity to identify problems, propose solutions and clarify definitions at various levels (e.g., in the National Advisory Group, within the academic community, amongst students, nonprofit organisations from the regions and the general public).<sup>1</sup> The research as a whole has produced concrete data, facts, comparisons and findings that are new and important not only for civil society organisations but also for professionals working for civil society, the public administration, as well as students and the general public.

This research was carried out with the valuable assistance of a wide and diverse group of individuals and organisations. We hope that such cooperation does not end with the publication of this report but rather that the report serves as an impetus and a springboard for further discussions and cooperation in the field of strengthening civil society.

Mohammed Hassan Khan  
Executive Director, Fiji Council of Social Services

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 2 for a complete list of stakeholders consulted

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), as the National Coordinating Organisation of the project, wish to thank the many people and organisations who willingly took the time to meet with us and share their knowledge, views and opinions. These include:

The FCOSS Executive Committee for supporting the Secretariat's application to be a part of this innovative global exercise that brought together different nations and organisations but with the common goal of strengthening global civil society to ensure that the roles of civil society in development and governance are recognized, respected and fulfilled.

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation for acknowledging and acting on the need for a comprehensive repository on civil society and in the process enhancing the commitment of stakeholders to strengthen civil society both nationally and globally. The CIVICUS CSI team, in particular, Ms. Mahi Khallaf, Mr. Navin Vasudev and Mr. Volkhart Finn Heinrich for their patience and support.

We thank AusAID for providing the necessary funds to carry out this exercise. We also extend a big 'Vinaka Vakalevu,' (thank you) to the members of the National Advisory Group (NAG)<sup>2</sup> who uncomplainingly sacrificed their time and energy to ensure that the implementation process was carried out effectively.

The Fiji Bureau of Statistics (BoS) are also acknowledged for assisting with the identification of communities for the various surveys that were conducted as well as the volunteers from the University of the South Pacific who willingly sacrificed their vacation period to assist with research work, namely Shabana Khan, Priya Rajdarshni, Simeli Ravakekama, Ashwin Vikash Nand, Razeen Ali, Naveen Dutt, Rohit Kumar, Seruwaia Tuvou and Inosi Yabakivou.

The members of the National Index Team (NIT): Mr. Mohammed Hassan Khan, Mrs. Suliana Siwatibau, Ms. Alison Tyrell, Ms. Natasha Khan and Ms. Joy Kaloumaira are mentioned for working tirelessly and overtime in overseeing and ensuring that all aspects of the CSI came together cohesively.

Last but not least the FCOSS Staff, in particular Ms. Ashiana Shah and Ms. Mereoni Rabuka, are acknowledged for their patience in accepting our demands and last minute requests.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix 2 for full details of NAG Members

## TABLES & FIGURES

### TABLES

Table I.1.1	Countries participating in CSI
Table II.2.1	CSO Types
Table III.1.1	Indicators assessing the extent of citizen participation
Table III.1.2	Indicators assessing depth of citizens participation
Table III.1.3	Indicators assessing diversity of civil society participants
Table III.1.4	Indicators assessing the level of organization
Table III.1.5	Indicators assessing inter-relations within civil society
Table III.1.6	Indicators assessing civil society resources
Table III.2.1	Indicators assessing political context
Table III.2.2	Indicators assessing basic freedom right
Table III.2.4	Indicators assessing socio-cultural context
Table III.2.5	Indicators assessing the legal environment
Table III.2.6	Indicators assessing state-civil society relations
Table III.2.7	Indicators assessing private sector-civil security relations
Table III.3.1	Indicators assessing democracy
Table III.3.2	Indicators assessing transparency
Table III.3.3	Indicators assessing tolerance
Table III.3.4	Indicators assessing non-violence
Table III.3.5	Indicators assessing gender equity
Table III.3.6	Indicators assessing poverty eradication
Table III.3.7	Indicators assessing environmental sustainability
Table III.4.1	Indicators assessing influencing public policy
Table III.4.1.1	Perceived impact of civil society
Table III.4.2	Indicators on holding state and private corporations accountable
Table III.4.2.1	Perceived impact on holding the state and private corporations accountable
Table III.4.3	Indicators on responding to social interests
Table III.4.4	Indicators assessing empowering of citizens
Table III.4.5	Indicators assessing meeting societal needs

### FIGURES

Figure I	Civil Society Diamond of Fiji
Figure I.2.1	Civil Society Diamond
Figure I.2.2	Data aggregation
Figure II.3.1	Social forces analysis
Figure II.2.2	Civil society map
Figure III.1.1	Sub-dimension score in structure dimension
Figure III.1.1.1	Membership in CSO types
Figure III.2.1	Sub dimension scores in environment dimension
Figure III.3.1	Sub dimension scores in values of dimension
Figure III.3.1.1	Means of selecting CSO leadership
Figure III.4.1	Sub-dimension scores in the impact dimension
Figure III.4.4.5	Breakdown of responses on trust indicators
Figure III.4.5.3	Providing better services to meet the needs of the marginalised
Figure IV.1.1	Civil Society Diamond For Fiji

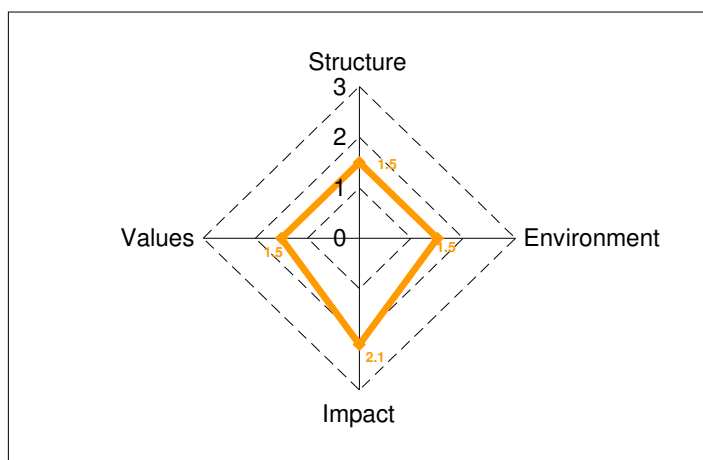
**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

Ab/Ex	Absent or Excluded
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BoS	Bureau of Statistics
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCF	Citizens Constitutional Forum
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CI	Conservation International
CIDCM	Centre for International Development & Conflict Management
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CS	Civil Society
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DK	Don't Know
DSA	Drug & Substance Abuse
ECREA	Ecumenical Centre for Research Education & Advocacy
Eq Rep	Equitably Represented
FAB	Fijian Affairs Board
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
FDPA	Fiji Disabled Peoples Association
FNPF	Fiji National Provident Fund
FTIB	Fiji Trade & Investment Board
FTUC	Fiji Trades Union Congress
FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
GCC	Great Council of Chiefs
HDI	Human Development CSI
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources now World Conservation Union.
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAG	National Advisory Group
NCO	National Coordinating Organisation
NCW	National Council for Women
NFU	National Farmers Union
NIT	National Index Team
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLTB	Native Land Trust Board
PM	Prime Minister
PSC	Public Services Commission
Rep	Represented
RP	Rural Population
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WCS	World Conservation Society
WWF	World Wildlife Fund now World Fund for Nature

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of 2004 and 2005, the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) project collected information and input from a broad range of civil society representatives, citizens, experts and researchers on the state of civil society in the Fiji Islands. Using a comprehensive framework of 74 indicators and drawing on extensive data collected by the project team, the project's National Advisory Group (NAG) assessed the overall state of civil society in the country, which was summarized in a visual graph (see Figure 1), the Civil Society Diamond. The diamond graph shows moderate development of all four dimensions, i.e., civil society's structure, environment, values and impact with the latter attaining the highest score of 2.1

**FIGURE 1: Civil society diamond for Fiji**



The CSI exercise stimulated deeper thinking of the situation and role of civil society organisations in Fiji. It raised questions of relevance and efficiency that challenged actors within civil society to re-examine the way they work both individually and together. The main findings of the assessment are briefly summarized below.

The CSI assessment of civil society's structure in the Fiji Islands showed that citizens are predominantly active in faith-based organisations and as volunteers for civic activities. Their involvement in social organisations for self-benefit such as sports, trade unions and women's groups is also significant. Participation in non-partisan political action remains weak, despite the restoration of democratic rule in 2000 following three political coups in the country since 1987. There appears to be a correlation between income and membership of CSOs as the poorer and less educated members of society tend to be left out. In the last year over 80% of citizens made a material or financial donation to CSOs, of which a significant proportion are faith-based organisations. A slightly higher percentage of citizens are members of at least one CSO. Notably, more than half of these participate in more than one organisation.

Between 50% and 60% of citizens take part in civic and social activities in their communities. The CSO types with the largest membership are religious organisations, followed by trade unions, educational groups and sports organisations. Apart from these organisation-types with large memberships, there are also active and influential not-for-profit organisations that do not have significant membership. These are active in matters concerning drug prevention, environmental protection, human rights education, governance and integrity, monitoring, and advocacy and consumer issues, amongst others.



Apart from religious organisations and large trade unions, CSOs in Fiji struggle for resources and technical expertise and have a weak to moderately developed infrastructure. Nevertheless, they seem to be satisfied with the achievements they make using the resources they have. They tend to be understaffed with heavy reliance on volunteers. Although many have rules and regulations for self-governance, there is little effort to monitor and ensure compliance. Umbrella organisations exist and are appreciated, although they often lack the capacity to provide technical support to members. Despite adequate communication infrastructure, communications between CSOs are limited. However, cooperation over specific issues is evident in the formation of alliances or coalitions. CSOs reflect the society in which they are situated. Fiji's CSOs are a rich diversity ranging from local ethnic based to national coalitions to chapters of international organisations. They represent a wide range of organisational arrangements and accountability rules. Generalisations made here must be viewed in this context.

Civil society's environment in the Fiji Islands is assessed as moderately enabling to the long-term development and sustainability of civil society. The legal environment is considered fair as far as the registration of CSOs is concerned, although an outdated act (currently under review) governs the activities of most CSOs. Although this is the case, some legal restrictions exist and are considered inhibitive to CSOs' ability to criticise government's activities and/or policies. Government's attempts to consult with CSOs are mostly ineffective not because of the lack of trying, but rather because of bureaucratic processes that are not conducive to civil society's engagement. The political context is assessed as unfriendly both in terms of meaningful participation of individual citizens in elections and in the government's acceptance of dissent by CSOs over contentious political issues. The study found that private companies are generally supportive of civil society and that cooperation between business and CSOs is substantial. However, limited incentives exist to encourage philanthropic activities by private individuals and institutions.

The socio-cultural context is of concern. More than 79% of citizens do not trust fellow citizens and this might represent a barrier to the development of a strong civil society. Strengthening civil society will need to include addressing the need to raise levels of trust in society at large. This will be a difficult but urgent task given the significant proportions of the two major racial groups, who identify first and foremost as members of separate groups rather than as common nationals of Fiji.

In terms of values, the CSI found that, although CSOs practice democracy within their organisations, most of them make little effort to promote democracy within the wider society. The few CSOs that do so have a high profile and have wide support. Corruption within civil society is considered to be widespread and CSOs do not assist the situation as only a minority (38%) make their financial accounts publicly available. Representatives of CSOs speak of the relatively common misuse of an organisation's influence for its own benefit and at the expense of other organisations, rather than of 'corruption' per se. This worrisome tendency is probably exacerbated by the fierce competition among CSOs for scarce resources and by the constantly changing rules for grant schemes and financing of CSOs.

The work of CSOs to promote transparency both in government and in the private sector is relatively well known and assessed as moderately favourable. Tolerance within the Fiji society is not high with only 31% of regional stakeholders stating the absence of explicitly racist, discriminatory and intolerant forces. Further, only a minority of CSOs (23%) actively promote tolerance.

In the aftermath of three political coups, violence is an ever-present factor in Fiji's society. Some 11% of stakeholders stated the presence of mass groups that use violence to express their interests. Significant attempts are being made by CSOs to address violence and to promote non-violence. Notable amongst these are women's organisations that also address domestic and sexual violence.

Gender equity has yet to be achieved both in CSOs and in society at large. Only 21% of CSOs are reported to have gender policies although a larger proportion of them are known to have dedicated programmes to promote gender equity. CSOs' involvement in poverty eradication is well known. Most of the CSOs working towards poverty eradication are faith-based organisations with limited resources. Similarly, many CSOs are involved in activities for environmental protection and sustainability. Their role in this area is assessed to be moderate.

Despite the relatively weak structure, the moderately constraining environment and the relative lack of strong values, the impact of CSOs is rather significant. At the national level, CSOs have significant impact on human rights issues and national policies, although influence on national budget remains very limited. There is a general belief that CSOs are very active and successful in the areas of environment and social services. Civil society in general is moderately active on holding the state and the private corporations accountable. A significant number of stakeholders consider CSOs quite successful in responding to social interests such as the promotion of human rights, the rights of children, women, the fight against HIV/AIDS and drugs.

#### *Civil society's weaknesses*

For the first time in Fiji, a comprehensive and participatory assessment of civil society has been carried out through the CSI project. Its findings reveal several weaknesses in Fiji's civil society that pose a challenge for the CSOs to address urgently. A matter of particular concern is the lack of trust in society, especially amongst the different races. The continuing existence of violence in society (especially following the three coups that have taken place since 1987), the relative absence of the poorer and less literate members of society in CSO, and the weak involvement of civil society in non-partisan political action that could address these weaknesses, are other challenges that have to be given priority. The CSI exercise (if used well) can contribute to charting the way for civil society's progress in the years to come, particularly in addressing these deeply rooted issues. Some means of addressing weaknesses that emerged from the CSI findings include a focus on structural features, particularly the strengthening of networking, co-operation, communication and self-regulation within civil society. Another issue of concern is the common perception of widespread corruption in society and the relative lack of attention by civil society groups as watchdogs of both the public and corporate sectors with regard to this issue. Very few CSOs currently act in this area and will need support and cooperation from a wider segment of civil society to bring about needed

urgent changes. Corruption is a scourge that robs countries of needed development resources that would meet the needs of the poor, who constitute a rapidly rising population in Fiji.

The CSI project has been a useful exercise for Fiji civil society. Its participatory nature has enabled quite a substantial segment of the CSO leadership to examine the way they work together and the impact they have on issues of national interest. Both the process followed and the results thereof have provided a useful learning experience for those involved. The onus is now on CIVICUS International, and FCOSS as the national NCO, to facilitate widespread discussions within Fiji of the findings of the exercise and to encourage relevant action for addressing the weaknesses it revealed.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document presents the findings of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) in the Fiji Islands. The CSI was implemented in Fiji from October 2003 to April 2005 as part of the CSI project coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, which has been implemented in over 50 countries.

The participatory and action-research nature of the CSI has been appreciated in Fiji as an effective approach to self-examination and assessment of civil society. The CSI provides an opportunity for civil society stakeholders to reassess their goals, objectives and activities thoroughly. The CSI facilitates the assessment of civil society mixed with a reflection of and action-planning process by civil society stakeholders, aiming to strengthen civil society in areas where weaknesses are detected. By seeking to combine valid assessment, broad-based reflection and joint action, the CSI not only comprehensively scrutinizes civil society but also contributes to the continuous debate on how research can inform policy and practice.

The CSI exercise requires a National Coordination Organisation (NCO), in close consultations with both the National Advisory Group (NAG) and the CIVICUS CSI team, to conduct the implementation of the CSI in each of the participating countries. The Fiji Council of Social Services, in its role as NCO in Fiji, synthesized all data collected during the research period and was responsible for providing regular updates to both the NAG and the CIVICUS CSI team. The primary role of the NAG was to validate, and adapt where necessary, the proposed framework, the research methodology and the scoring matrix. The analysis of 'Social Forces,' construction of the Civil Society Diamond and 'scoring of the 74 indicators' were carried out by the NAG. All these together provided a comprehensive assessment of the state of Fiji civil society, which was documented and further discussed at a National Workshop where civil society stakeholders identified specific strengths and weaknesses of Fiji civil society and formulated recommendations. The CIVICUS CSI team provided technical assistance and quality control to the NCO throughout the implementation of the CSI.

With over 50 countries participating in this exercise the international character of the CSI is crucial as it allows for comparisons, shared learning and the development of best practices across countries. In acknowledging the various cultures, geographies, norms, etc., of each of the participating countries, CIVICUS made it possible to adapt the

methodology and the 74 indicators to country-specific factors. Bearing in mind that one of the objectives of the CSI is to provide useful and comparable trans-national knowledge of civil society, FCOSS made minor changes to the framework and methodology.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION**

This report is divided into different sections. It provides useful knowledge on civil society and recommendations on how to increase the commitment of stakeholders to strengthen civil society:

Section I, the “Civil Society Index Approach and Methodology”, presents a detailed history of the CSI, its conceptual and analytical framework and research methodology.

Section II, “Civil Society in Fiji”, provides an insight into civil society in the Fiji Islands, as well as the definition of the term ‘civil society’ and how it is applied and understood in Fiji. Characteristics and features of civil society in Fiji are also presented under this section.

Section III, “Analysis of Civil Society”, contains results and information sought far and wide during the research period to effectively assess the four pillars of CS; Structure, Environment, Values and Impact. As such, this section is divided into four parts. This section also makes reference to a range of case and overview studies, which are described in greater detail in the Appendices.

Section IV, “Strengths & Weaknesses of Civil Society in Fiji”, summarizes the ideas, arguments and opinions raised at the National Workshop and the FCOSS Annual General Meeting, held on 1-3 June 2006.

Section V, “Recommendations”, provides the various recommendations put forward by stakeholders at the National Workshop and the FCOSS AGM.

Section VI, “Conclusion”, presents a summary of the report’s implications for the state of civil society in the Fiji Islands. The overall interpretation of the report is also contained in this section and visually presented in the form of the Civil Society Diamond.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Civil Society Diamond is a visual tool developed by CIVICUS and Helmut Anheier, Director of the Center for Civil Society at the University of California, Los Angeles, which presents the overall findings of the CSI study in form of a Diamond-shaped graph.

# I CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX: PROJECT AND APPROACH

## 1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of more than 1000 civil society organisations in more than 100 countries aiming to strengthen citizen participation and civil society. To improve upon international comparability of the state of civil society, CIVICUS saw the need for the development of the CSI, a comprehensive assessment tool for Civil Society. Since 2000, CIVICUS has been improving upon the methodology of the CSI to bring it in line with contemporary trends and international standards of research. The CSI underwent extensive consultation and field-testing in 2000-01, when it was pilot-tested in fourteen countries around the world. On the completion of the pilot phase in late 2001 an external evaluation study on the CSI was conducted by Srilatha Batliwala from the Hauser Centre for Nonprofit Organisations at Harvard University. The evaluation ascertained the relevance and usefulness of the tool:

*as a process the CSI appears to be very useful as a creative and concrete instrument to mobilize civil society stakeholders, focus attention on the state of civil society, and create a basis for collective action. There does not appear to be any other comparable process that has effectively achieved this. [Evaluation Report, 2002]*

Based on the recommendations of the evaluation report and drawing on lessons learned from the pilot phase, aspects of the CSI conceptual framework and research methodology underwent redesigning; a toolkit to guide the country implementation was developed. Prior to the commencing of the first full implementation phase in 2003 (*see Table A1.1-CSI-Participating Countries*), a CIVICUS CSI Training Exercise was conducted in Johannesburg which Mr. Mohammed Hassan Khan, FCOSS Executive Director attended.

**TABLE I.1.1: Countries participating in the CSI<sup>4</sup>**

1. Argentina	18. Gambia	36. Northern Ireland
2. Armenia	19. Georgia	37. Orissa (India)
3. Azerbaijan	20. Germany	38. Palestine
4. Bolivia	21. Ghana	39. Poland
5. Bulgaria	22. Greece	40. Romania
6. Burkina Faso	23. Guatemala	41. Russia
7. Chile	24. Honduras	42. Scotland
8. China	25. Hong Kong (VR China)	43. Serbia
9. Costa Rica	26. Indonesia	44. Sierra Leone
10. Croatia	27. Italy	45. Slovenia
11. Southern part of Cyprus	28. Jamaica	46. South Korea
12. Northern part of Cyprus	29. Lebanon	47. Taiwan
13. Czech Republic	30. Macedonia	48. Togo
14. East Timor	31. Mauritius	49. Turkey
	32. Mongolia	50. Uganda
	33. Montenegro	51. Ukraine
	34. Nepal	52. Uruguay

<sup>4</sup> This list encompasses independent countries as well as other territories in which the CSI has been conducted, as of February 2006.

15. Ecuador 16. Egypt 17. Fiji	35. Nigeria	53. Vietnam 54. Wales
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## 2 PROJECT APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The CSI uses a wide range of research methods to obtain a comprehensive picture of civil society in a country. In Fiji this began with a broad agreement on the encompassing CSI definition of civil society. In the discussion a clear definition was difficult to attain but most agreed with the broad outline offered by CIVICUS. The CSI assesses the overall status of civil society in a country by examining four key dimensions of civil society, namely its structure, external environment, values and impact on society at large. Each of these four dimensions is composed of a set of sub dimensions, which again are made up of a set of individual indicators. These indicators then became the basis for data collection that included secondary sources, the community questionnaire, district consultations, key informant interviews and the media review. The indicators were presented to a second meeting of the National Advisory Group (NAG) for its assessment exercise. A national meeting of key stakeholders was then convened to identify specific strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations on key priority actions to strengthen civil society. In Fiji an additional use was made of the CSI exercise. Its findings were presented to the Annual General meeting of members of the umbrella organisation Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), which also served as the NCO for the Fiji CSI. It became a useful tool for the basis of members' planning to prioritise and address identified weaknesses. The CSI project definition of civil society, conceptual framework and research and assessment methodology are described in detail in the remainder of this section.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.1 CSI CONCEPTUAL & ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

#### *A. Defining Civil Society*

At the heart of the CSI's conceptual framework is obviously the concept of civil society. CIVICUS defines civil society as the arena between the family, state and the market, where people associate to advance common interests (CIVICUS 2003). In this respect and different from most other civil society concepts, the CSI has two interesting features. Firstly, it aims to go beyond the usual focus on formal and institutionalised CSOs and to take into account informal coalitions and groups. Secondly, while civil society is sometimes perceived as a sphere in which positive activities and values reign, CIVICUS seeks to also include negative manifestations of civil society in the assessment. The concept therefore covers not only charitable associations or environmental organisations but also groups such as skinheads and aggressive sports fans. The CSI assesses not only the extent to which CSOs support democracy and tolerance, but also the extent to which they themselves are intolerant or even violent.

In Fiji, the first NAG meeting discussed the definition of civil society and agreed with the CIVICUS inclusion of both “civil” and “uncivil” groups and elements in society excluding

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed description of the CSI approach, see Heinrich (2004).

only the public and the profit making bodies. There was also general agreement that common features of CSOs are nonprofit and volunteerism.

### B. Conceptualising Civil Society

The CSI exercise conceptualises civil society along four main dimensions:

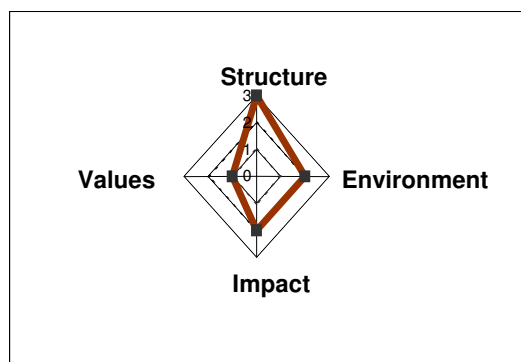
- The **structure** of civil society (e.g., number of members, extent of giving and volunteering, number and features of umbrella organisations and civil society infrastructure, human and financial resources);
- The external **environment** in which civil society exists and functions (e.g., legislative, political, cultural and economic context, relationship between civil society and the state as well as the private sector);
- The **values** practiced and promoted within the civil society arena (e.g., democracy, tolerance or protection of the environment);
- The **impact** of activities pursued by civil society actors (e.g., public policy impact, empowerment of people, meeting societal needs).

Each of these main dimensions is comprised of a set of sub-dimensions, which contain a total of 74 indicators. These indicators are at the heart of the CSI and form the basis of the data presented in this report. The indicator/sub-dimension/dimension framework underpins the entire process of data collection, the preparation of the research report and the NAG's assessment at the national workshop.

The exercise in Fiji followed the CSI conceptual framework closely using a total of 74 indicators to construct the final representation of its civil society status.

**FIGURE I.2.1: Civil Society Diamond**

The four dimensions are visually represented by the Civil Society Diamond tool<sup>6</sup> (see figure I.2.1 for an example). Each of the four arms of the diamond measures the average score of one of each of the four dimensions of CS. Each dimension score is the average of the sub-dimension scores, which in their turn are obtained by averaging the scores of their component indicators. The society diamond graph gives



a quick picture of the strength or weakness of CS in the four dimensions. This made it a useful tool for discussion about the nature and activity of CS in Fiji. This is indeed what it was designed to do. Unlike other international indices, the Diamond does not aggregate the dimension scores into a single score. It therefore cannot and should not be used to rank countries according to their scores on the four dimensions. The CSI exercise deemed such an approach inappropriate for a civil society assessment, with so many multi-faceted dimensions, contributing factors and actors. The Diamond also depicts a static, rather than a dynamic status of civil society. However, if applied iteratively, it can be used to

<sup>6</sup> The Civil Society Diamond was developed for CIVICUS by Helmut Anheier (see Anheier 2004).

chart the development of civil society over time as well as compare the state of civil societies across countries (Anheier 2004).

Since the CSI seeks to “assess the state of civil society”, the framework is designed in such a way that it adopts a “realistic” view, by acknowledging that civil society is composed of positive and negative, peaceful and violent forces that may advance or obstruct social progress. It also acknowledged that civil society is not a homogenous, united entity, but rather a complex arena where diverse values and interests interact and power struggles occur. The CSI has therefore also adopted a very inclusive and multi-disciplinary approach in terms of civil society indicators, actors and processes.

The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to CSOs and relevant stakeholders. The framework therefore strives to (1) identify aspects of civil society that can be *changed* and (2) generate information and knowledge relevant to *action-oriented* goals

## 2.2 PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methods used for collecting and aggregating of various data used in the project.

### *Data Collection*

A range of research methods<sup>7</sup> combined with a comprehensive implementation approach was used to gather valid data on CS.

A review of secondary data available for the CSI indicators was conducted. This review covered a wide range of different data sources, and based on this review an overview report on the state of civil society was prepared. This report was structured according to the CSI analytical framework and forms the basis of this final country report. This review also served to identify “data gaps” that determined the nature and extent of primary research that needed to be carried out.

The stakeholder surveys<sup>8</sup> were conducted in sample communities throughout Fiji. Samples were selected with the assistance of the Government Bureau of Statistics and stratified according to geographical area, physical profile and income level. A total of 32 communities were selected for surveys. Only individuals older than 16 years of age were interviewed from 10 randomly selected households in each community. Information was gathered through face-to-face interviews guided by a comprehensive questionnaire with a total of 86 questions. This sought information not only on individual attitudes and behaviour but also on community characteristics regarding selected civil society issues.

A media review was conducted using a group of four volunteers to monitor messages and facts conveyed by the media on social issues and civil society. The media monitoring process followed CIVICUS guidelines involving an initial screening of the media for civil society related news, before a classification of this news according to standardized

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to Appendix 3 for detailed accounts of the various Research Methods used

<sup>8</sup> Stakeholders Survey includes both the District Consultations & Community Samples



criteria. The media monitored included three daily English language papers, one vernacular Fijian weekly and one vernacular Hindi weekly.

Wide district consultations involving 135 different civil society leaders were held in six different centres of the two main islands of Fiji. This series of meetings used a simplified form of the CIVICUS questionnaire to solicit information. Participants filled in the questionnaire face to face during the meetings. Of the 135 who attended, 90 people completed the structured questionnaire satisfactorily.

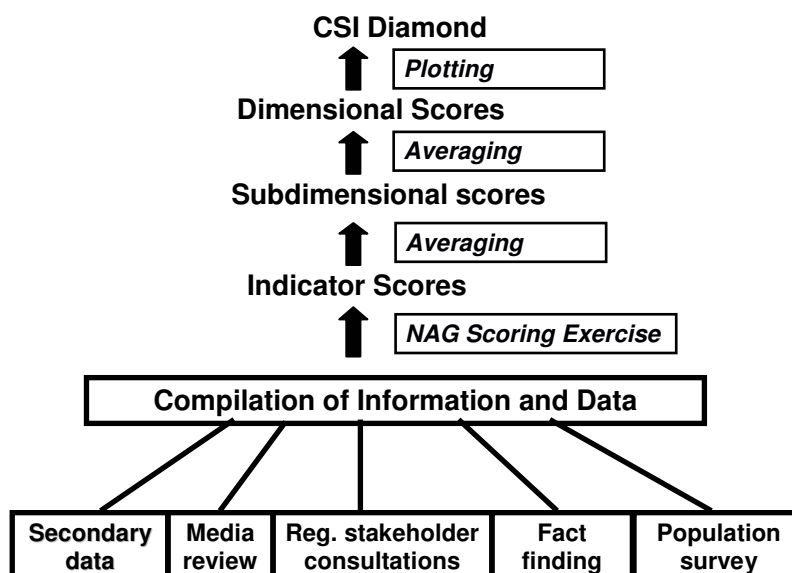
Additional fact-finding was carried out to assemble information about civil society that is usually not published or publicly disseminated. This particular aspect consisted of key informants' interviews and two special studies to gauge the extent of Corporate Social Responsibility and civil society's policy impact in a number of selected policy fields.

Together, these instruments collect the data required for scoring indicators and for preparing a narrative report on the state of civil society. Most indicators rely on more than one instrument. It is therefore possible to apply methods of triangulation<sup>9</sup> and crosschecks regarding the data sources.

#### *Data Aggregation*

A specially designed methodology (refer to Figure I.2.2) was employed to reduce the complexity and diversity of the information assembled through the CSI research to comparable and easily understandable outcomes. These outcomes are indicator scores (ranging from 0 to 3), which, in a further step, are aggregated into sub-dimension and dimension scores, eventually forming the Civil Society Diamond.

**FIGURE I.2.2 – Data aggregation**



<sup>9</sup> This is the procedure of using more than one data source to measure a specific phenomenon and to be able to compare the data across data sources and thereby establish the validity and reliability of each data source

A one-day national NAG meeting was convened for the indicator scoring exercise. This did not have at its disposal the findings of all the research activities. Both the media report and the community consultations results were unavailable at the time. The NAG made some comments on the indicators and gave scores to most of them with the understanding that they would have to be revisited after receipt of other data gathering exercises. The NAG felt that although people give small amounts to charity, civil society members in Fiji do give much in both cash and kind compared to their income levels. The indicator may be a little inadequate in reflecting donations in kind. Similarly, there may be under-representation in volunteering as it is extensive in Fiji where the extended family is still strong and people commit much time and effort to community and extended family work, as well as to other civil society activities.

Upon receipt of the media review report and that of the district consultations, the indicator scores were then finalised using CIVICUS guidelines. Another exercise took place at the Annual General Meeting of FCOSS where the member representatives received the report on CSI and discussed indicators, particularly those that showed weaknesses in Fiji civil society. A final scoring exercise by the NAG was convened shortly after the FCOSS AGM.

### **2.3 LINKING RESEARCH WITH ACTION**

The whole CSI exercise in Fiji was not the usual academic exercise but was participatory action-oriented research. From the very beginning, attempts were made to involve as wide a membership of civil society as possible and to hold discussions with them that enabled them to learn practical lessons from each other if not also from the exercise itself. For example, the NAG members comprised representatives from ethnic groups, social welfare groups, media, businesswomen's organisations, development NGOs, religious groups, trade unions, credit union movement and disabled people's associations. The social forces analysis that they undertook as part of analysing and identifying civil society was a learning exercise that identified several major civil society issues.

The district consultations lead to wide discussions about key issues for CSO attention such as communications, leadership and resources. It resulted in a series of resolutions for joint action.

The national annual general meeting of FCOSS, which received the CSI report, took the weaknesses identified and prioritized these within each district's context as part of the exercise of preparing district plans for the next 5 years.

During the duration of the CSI exercise, several newsletters were produced to keep stakeholders informed.

## 2.4 PROJECT OUTPUTS

The CSI exercise produced the following outputs in Fiji:

- A main report on the state of civil society in the country;
- A report of the district consultations with a series of recommendations for action;
- A survey report that will provide baseline data on the attitudes and behaviour of individuals in Fiji with respect to selected social issues;
- A report on media monitoring that will form the basis for similar exercises in the future.

Given that this exercise is still ongoing in Fiji, it is hoped that it will stimulate a few more activities and generate public interest.

## II CIVIL SOCIETY IN FIJI

### 1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Civil society has always been a strong force in Fiji, mainly in the form of religious organisations and their many social welfare arms. Fiji is unusual in the degree of involvement of civil society in the formal education sector. For example, over 99% of primary and secondary schools are community owned. A religious organisation runs the only national university. Services for the disabled and the destitute are largely run by civil society.

Christianity was introduced to Fiji in the 1830s when the first missionaries landed in the eastern islands known as the Lau group. Europeans began to settle in the Fiji islands earlier the same century. They brought with them the English system of education and medical care, and the first schools and hospitals were run by missionaries. Indentured labourers from India came into Fiji towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1879 to 1916). When these new immigrants settled as members of Fiji's society they also established their own schools and welfare systems. Through the years the descendants of Indian indentured labourers became the second largest ethnic group in Fiji, next to the indigenous Fijians. Other ethnic groups include Chinese, Europeans and a small minority of other Asians and Pacific islanders. Each of these groups has active civil society organisations, including faith-based groups, to meet their own particular needs.

Fiji was a British colony from 1874 to 1970 when it became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth of Nations. The independent government took over some role from civil society – such as responsibility for hospitals. However, the ownership of schools and much of the social welfare activities still remain in the hands of civil society with some assistance from government.

From the early 1970s to the early 1980s, Fiji's civil society became actively involved in a Pacific-wide regional movement against testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific Ocean.

This stimulated interest within civil society on issues of both the environment and political independence. Christian based organisations began to widen their areas of concern to encompass issues of justice, human rights and peace that became prominent in discussions over the use of this region for weapons testing. In recent years, as environmental issues have become a major concern worldwide, Fiji's civil society has also become more active in this area with links to several major international environmental NGOs. The latter include the WWF, Birdlife International, Conservation International, World Conservation Society and International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Political participation of civil society remained weak and politics was conducted mainly along racial lines with two major parties appealing to racial interests to keep them in power. This continued until the mid 1980s when corruption in government became an issue and trade unionists formed a Labour party to contest the elections and address corruption. They won and formed a government that for the first time was dominated by Indo-Fijians. In May and September 1987, the indigenous-Fijian-dominated military staged two coups that replaced the elected government with a military one. The country was excluded from the Commonwealth of Nations as a result. When it adopted a democratic constitution in 1997 and instituted popular elections again, Fiji became a Republic within the Commonwealth of Nations. Fiji's history of violent takeovers of the elected governments has given rise to the formation of a few NGOs that raise questions of a political nature and get involved in issues of justice and peace, including wide issues of economic justice and poverty.

## **2 THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

Civil society has been generally considered in Fiji to include groupings that are civil as opposed to uncivil and to be comprised mainly of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), faith based groups and other not-for-profit bodies; many of them characterised by a fair degree of volunteerism. This concept includes large and extended family associations that in Fiji play a significant role in keeping the social welfare of the community through traditional obligations of family support. The traditional unit of the 'vanua' within the indigenous population, comprises large extended families and traditional clan groups that can be considered as civil society organisations (CSOs) because they entail the involvement of groups of people (biologically related) working together for the advancement of their village or settlement. Similarly, for the Indo-Fijian, Chinese and other cultural communities, the familial ties remain strong driving forces for social, political and economic advancement.

### *The Concept of Civil Society Used in this Study*

After much discussion, the civil society definition proposed by CIVICUS was accepted by the NAG for the purpose of this study. The CIVICUS definition is of a much wider scope than most commonly used definitions and includes both civil and uncivil groups as well as informal forms of citizen participation. The Fiji project team found this broad definition a challenge. For most of the research, the team focused on formal organisations, especially on "positive ones". The informality of civil society and its

negative aspects only entered into the CSI assessment at certain points (e.g., informal and negative groups in indicators 3.3.1 or 3.3.2).

CIVICUS drafted a list of 20 types of CSOs to guide the civil society definition, e.g., in the regional stakeholder survey and stakeholder consultations. The task of the NAG was to adapt the list to the Fiji environment. It decided to keep to the list that CIVICUS had drawn up (refer to Table B1.1).

**Table II. 2.1 CSO Types**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith-based organisations</li> <li>• Trade unions</li> <li>• Advocacy CSOs (e.g., civic action, social justice, peace, human rights, consumers' groups)</li> <li>• Service CSOs (e.g., CSOs supporting community development, literacy, health, social services)</li> <li>• CSOs active in education &amp; training (e.g., think tanks, resource centres, nonprofit schools, public education organisations)</li> <li>• Nonprofit Media</li> <li>• Women's Associations</li> <li>• Student and youth Associations</li> <li>• Associations of socio-economically marginalised groups (e.g., poor people, homeless, landless, immigrants)</li> <li>• Professional and business organisations (e.g., chambers of commerce, professional associations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-level groups/associations (e.g., burial societies, self-help groups, parents' associations)</li> <li>• Economic Interest CSOs (e.g., Co-operatives, Credit Unions, Mutual Saving Associations)</li> <li>• Ethnic/Traditional/Indigenous Organisations/Associations</li> <li>• Environmental CSOs</li> <li>• Culture &amp; Arts CSOs</li> <li>• Social &amp; Recreational CSOs</li> <li>• Grant-making foundations &amp; fundraising bodies</li> <li>• Political Parties</li> <li>• CSO networks/federations/support organisations</li> <li>• Social movements (e.g., landless people, peace movement)</li> </ul>
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### 3 MAPPING CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS

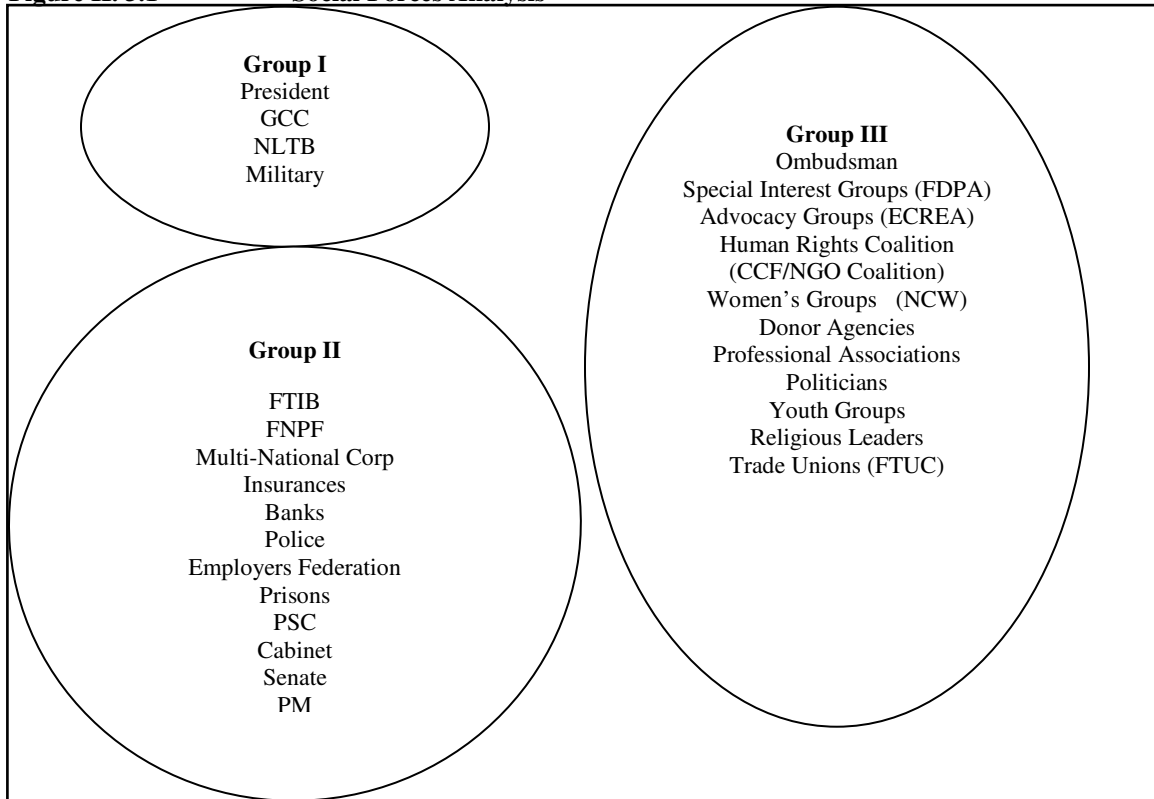
What does civil society look like in the Fiji Islands? How does it relate to broader social forces in the country? To explore these issues further, the NAG conducted a social forces and civil society mapping exercise (Refer to Figure B2.1). Drawing on participatory rural appraisal methods, these mapping exercises seek to visually present the major forces within society and civil society, respectively, and to investigate the relations between these forces.

The NAG identified the most powerful institutions in Fiji and placed them together under Group I. These included the President who is elected by the Great Council of Chiefs. (GCC). The membership of the latter institution comprises higher-level indigenous chiefs who still wield much power within the indigenous population. Because of their greater numbers and their ownership of land and natural resources, indigenous people hold a lot of power. The Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) is entrusted with the administration of native lands and therefore wields a lot of power. After having been subjected to the three coups since 1987, the Fiji society has recognized the power held by the military in the life of the nation.

The institutions under Group II were thought to be the next influential, as they are either part of government or work with the government and strongly influence government's policies and decisions. These include bodies outside of government that are economic and financial institutions - namely the Fiji Trade and Investment Board (FTIB), the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF), the multi-national corporations, banks, insurance companies and the Employers Federation. All of these, as well as social welfare bodies, get represented in various government committees for purposes of planning and monitoring government development activities. The other institutions included in Group II are government units. These include the prisons, the Public Service Commission

(PSC), the cabinet, the senate (which is the upper house of parliament), the Prime Minister and the Attorney General. The inclusion of the prisons is of interest as it has in its care several political prisoners who include powerful chiefs that were involved in the last coup that took place in Fiji in the year 2000. The Commissioner of Prisons can influence decisions to release such prisoners and hence can have important impact on the general political health of the country.

Group III consists of organisations that were thought by the NAG group to be important pressure groups that act to influence the other two groups in bringing about change. The first named of these, the Ombudsman, is an autonomous institution set up by government as an important component of the country's public integrity system. Donor Agencies were identified because they can influence government through the criteria and the priorities they set out for releasing aid to the nation. Politicians can influence change through debate in parliament and as members of Parliamentary Select Committees, even as backbenchers. The other bodies identified in Group III are non-government organisations that are prominent in the public arena because of the work that they are mandated to do. Special interest groups such as the Fiji Disabled People's Association (FDPA) can be powerful forces for change as they bring public attention to focus on their special needs. The Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA) is a faith-based body that works for economic and social justice, poverty alleviation and peace. The Human Rights Coalition led by the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF) is an influential body that advocates for a wide range of human rights including political and democratic issues. Women's groups often act and speak jointly through their own umbrella body, the National Council of Women (NCW). Youth Groups are not as vocal as women but nevertheless are prominent and are being listened to. Religious leaders and Trade Unions have always been powerful lobby groups and are recognized as such by the NAG members. Religious leaders are especially powerful because of the extensive role they play in delivery of social services in the country.

**Figure II. 3.1 Social Forces Analysis**

The NAG identified a total of 14 different powerful civil society groups. These comprise about 50% of the total social forces units mapped in the social forces analysis output presented in Figure II.3.1.

To explore the main actors within the civil society sector and their relations more deeply, a civil society map was produced by the NAG, employing the same approach as the social forces mapping exercise.

The GCC, an ethnic organisation the membership of which is determined by birthright, is the only CSO considered to wield a lot of power both within civil society and society at large. A large number of indigenous organisations are informal. Members qualify only by family or tribal links. These recognize the authority of the hierarchy of chiefs and thereby posit much power in the GCC.

Those in Group II are considered to largely act separately from those in Group III. Multi-National Corporations and Employers Federations as separate lobby groups were considered by the NAG to have much more influence on government decisions than the CSOs listed in Group III. The interaction of multi-national corporations with the rest of civil society has only begun to be realized through the activity of foundations such as the Vodafone Foundation, which is now an active philanthropic body in Fiji. The Employers Federation only interacts with the other bodies in the civil society sector through formal meetings organized by third parties. Individual employers and private sector bodies



however, do interact directly through financial and other support of civil society organisations' activities.

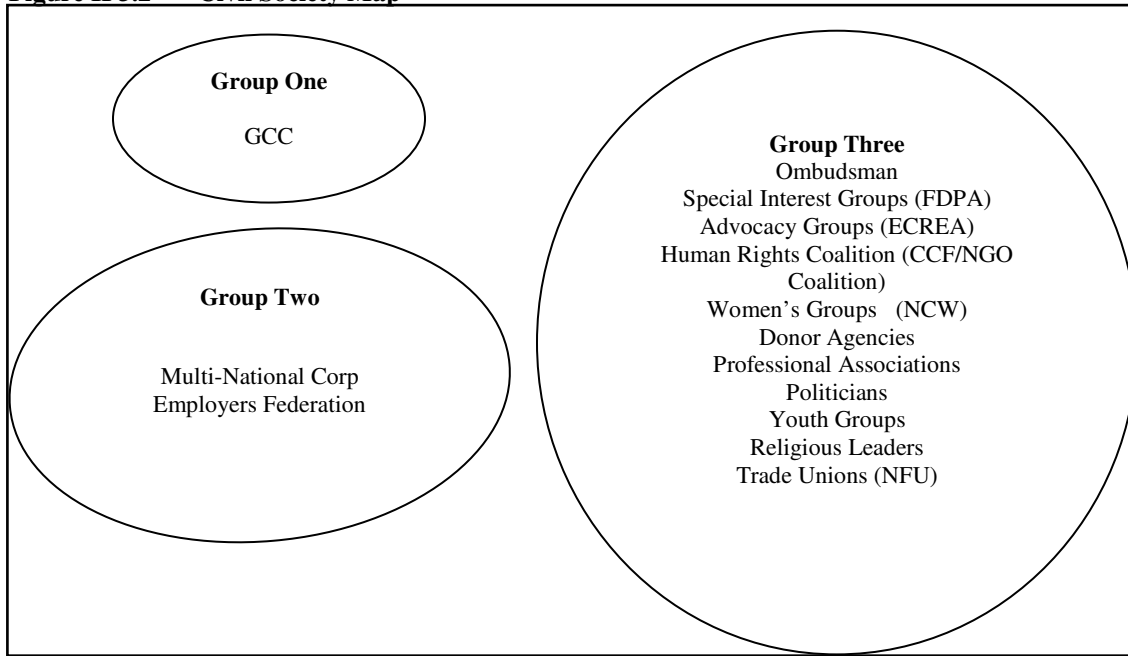
Apart from the Ombudsman and the politicians, other institutions in Group III do interact with each other to varying degrees. It was felt that this interaction could be strengthened in order to improve the effectiveness of civil society as a force in raising the standard of living for the people of Fiji. On their own, some of these groups are quite influential. For example, ECREA is now well known for its work on poverty issues and is engaged by international as well as local agencies in investigations on poverty in Fiji. People living in poverty, such as urban squatters, look to ECREA for support and for advocacy on their behalf. The NCW and youth groups, though sometimes effective, can be much more so if they work with other organisations that are skilled at advocacy work. Such organisations include members of the Human Rights Coalition of NGOs led by CCF. This group has had widespread community educational activities and is prominent in public advocacy for human rights. Special interest groups such as the FDPA can be effective lobbyists for public awareness and for change. These are often linked to international networks from which they may obtain assistance in lobbying skills. Special interest groups also include those that lobby for special treatment for indigenous people such as indigenous businesses. These, though small in membership, are nevertheless influential in getting government attention.

Professional associations such as those of lawyers and accountants very seldom interact with the other NGO groups. They have only done so when issues of national concern arise and civil society has needed to lobby together for change. During this CSI exercise, this happened when the government introduced a bill to grant amnesty to coup perpetrators. Civil society groups and individuals supported each other in protest against the bill.

Religious leaders interact with the rest of the groups in Group III only in an informal way. They do not usually associate with any of them for joint action. Trade unions also seldom interact formally with the rest of the NGOs in Group III. However, in certain circumstances other NGOs lend support to the advocacy of trade unions on human rights issues related to labour and employment conditions.

After the exercise the NAG noted the absence from its list of certain groups such as nonprofit media and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). It agreed that these groups make important contributions particularly for women's communication and in the case of CBOs, for the mobilization of local communities to serve themselves. They tend to be neglected from many NGO meetings and therefore have low profiles. NAG reminded FCOSS that this issue needs to be addressed.

**Figure II 3.2 Civil Society Map**



### III ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN FIJI

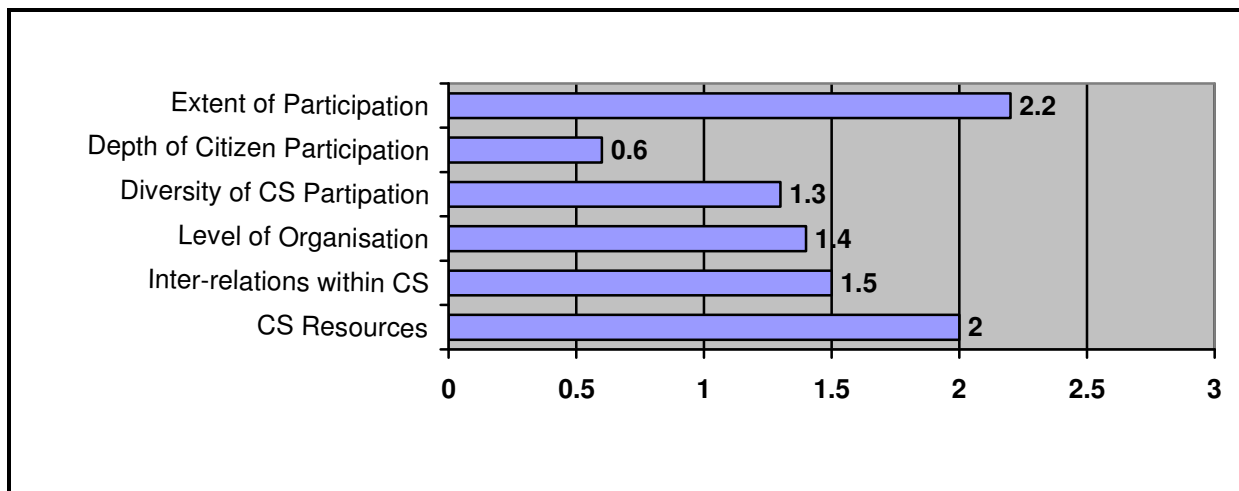
This section reports in greater detail the findings of the CSI exercise in Fiji. It is divided along the four dimensions: Structure, Environment, Values and Impact, which make up the CSI Diamond. Following guidelines from CIVICUS, each part begins with a graph that provides the scores for the sub-dimensions on a scale from 0 to 3. The score for each sub-dimension is derived by averaging the scores for the component indicators for that sub-dimension. These indicators are examined in more detail within each segment where separate boxes present indicator scores for each sub-dimension.

#### 1 STRUCTURE

The structure dimension measures the diversity, the size, the depth of relations and citizen participation, as well as the level of organisation of civil society in a country. This segment of the report describes and analyses the structure of civil society in Fiji as revealed by the CSI exercise. The score for the Structure Dimension for Fiji is 1.5, indicating that civil society's structure in the country is of weak to moderate strength. The graph below (Figure III.1.1) presents the scores for the six sub-dimensions within the Structure dimension. Specifically, these are resources (both human and financial), inter-relations within civil society, level of organisation, diversity of civil society participants, depth of citizen participation and extent of citizen participation.

The media review did not reveal much regarding the strength dimension of civil society. The three month monitoring of the media found 22% of the news items were related to civil society issues but skewed in favour of certain groups such as trade unions, sports groups, environmental organisations and advocacy groups. The media during the monitoring period did not examine issues to do with civil society structure such as membership or charitable donations or even organisational issues.

FIGURE III.1.1 Sub-dimension score in Structure Dimension



## 1.1 The Extent of Citizen Participation in Civil Society

This sub dimension looks at how far Fiji’s citizens participate in civil society. Whether they do so mostly at a local and community level or whether they also participate in wider issues at a national level that involve both charitable giving and actions in support of others’ concerns. Table III.1.1 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.1.1 Indicators Assessing the extent of Citizen Participation**

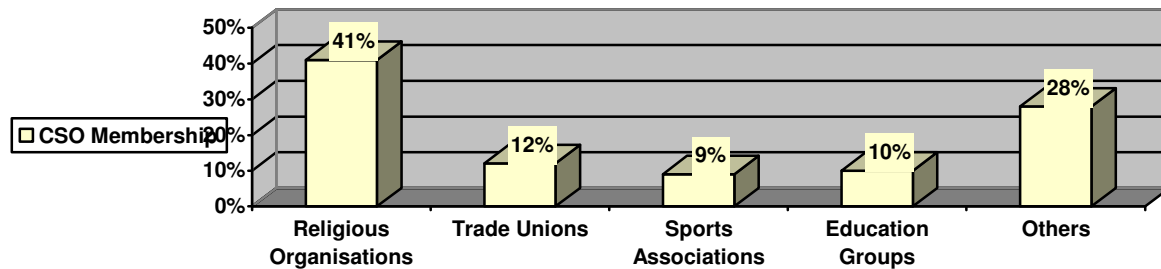
Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.1.1	Non-partisan political action	<u>1</u>
1.1.2	Charitable giving	<u>3</u>
1.1.3	CSO membership	<u>2</u>
1.1.4	Volunteer work	<u>3</u>
1.1.5	Community action	<u>2</u>

*1.1.1 Non-partisan political action.* The extent of non-partisan political activities in Fiji is rather modest. Of the 387 persons surveyed for the stakeholder and community groups, only 23% had either written a letter to a newspaper, signed a petition and/or taken part in a protest march or demonstration. The year 2000 coup appeared to have had little impact on such citizen participation, which showed only a slight decrease from 24% before to 23% after the event.

*1.1.2 Charitable giving.* The community survey revealed that as many as 81.2%<sup>10</sup> of people have donated either in cash or in kind to a charity over the last 12 months. This also supports the anecdotal evidence of widespread charitable giving, particularly as many people in Fiji regularly donate to various religious organisations as well as to large extended family or tribal gatherings where donations are shared and needy members benefit.

<sup>10</sup> This figure is not inclusive of ‘tithe offerings’ which was generally felt to be an obligatory donation even though it was given in freewill

FIGURE III.1.1.1: Membership in CSO types



*1.1.3 CSO membership.* The same survey showed that a majority of people (over 50%) belong to at least one CSO. It showed that religious organisations claim the greatest membership amongst CSOs with 50.4% of the 387 persons interviewed stating membership of a religious body. Given the multiplicity of religious organisations in the country, about 47% of those interviewed claimed membership of more than one religious organisation. Those non-religious organisations to which between 23% and 37% of interviewees claimed membership or at least some form of participation included sports associations, NGOs/CSOs, trade unions, women's groups, neighbourhood committees, education groups, youth groups and political parties/movements. Those that claimed between 5% and 10% of the interviewed population in their membership include cultural groups, professional associations, farmer/fishermen associations and health and social service associations. Other associations that attract less than 5% of the population include those for business, cooperatives, environmental and hobby organisations. Altogether the survey showed that the 387 people interviewed participated in some way in CSO activities for a total of 1,607 times. This is an average of 4.14 times per person. This shows a high involvement of citizens in civil society. This scoring is based on the average participation in both religious and non-religious organisations.

*1.1.4 Volunteer work.* The survey revealed that 66% of citizens are involved in voluntary work, while 33% are not and 1% does not know. When asked about the type of volunteering, 39% provide services for people, 13% provide physical labour, 9% donate money and time for weddings, 6% donate money and time to fundraising, 5% visit people such as hospital patients or prison inmates, 3% work for others school fees, books or spend time to transport kids to schools and 2% cook for others. However, the survey reflected that young people in particular were under-represented among volunteers. The most active age group volunteering is the forty-plus group.

*1.1.5 Collective community action.* To encourage collective action some settlements convene community meetings to discuss community events such as community clean up, crime prevention, fundraising drives and other social events. Of the 57% of survey respondents who remembered such meetings, quite a large proportion - 77% (8% one meeting, 48% several meetings, 21% many meetings) attended these meetings. This is 44% of total respondents. As for doing voluntary work for the community, 53% of all respondents remember people doing such work. Of these respondents who did remember such action, 72% actually participated. In summary, some 44% of the total survey

population attends community meetings and 38% actually become involved in community action.

## 1.2 Depth of Citizen Participation in Civil Society

This sub-dimension looks at the depth or extent of commitment of citizens through the various forms of citizen participation in civil society. This sub-dimension has the lowest score of all sub-dimensions at 0.6 Table III.1.2 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.1.2 Indicators assessing depth of citizen participation**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.2.1	Charitable Giving	0
1.2.2	Volunteering	2
1.2.3	CSO membership	1

*1.2.1 Charitable giving.* The survey revealed 68.4% of the surveyed population gave up to 100FJD (61.6 USD) worth of donations (in cash and/or in kind) in the last 12 months. The total value of material or financial donations last year did not exceed 150FJD for 73% of citizens making donations. The average per citizen was 75FJD. With the current average net income per annum of 15,787 FJD, this amounts to 0.5% of a person's annual income.

*1.2.2 Volunteering.* The survey revealed that 71% of the respondents spent at least 10 hours per month engaged in volunteer work. A total of 83% of all respondents had spent from 1 to 40 hours in voluntary work while 7% spent the entire month as volunteers. On average the surveyed population had spent an average of some 27.5 hours per month or about 7 hours per week in voluntary work. Volunteering reflected the pattern of charitable giving as most voluntary work was carried out for faith based or religious organisations. Unfortunately this score does not necessarily reflect the time people spend for extended family obligations, which is still quite strong and can take much time. These obligations come in spurts associated with events such as deaths, weddings, births, community fundraising events, or even church gatherings where extended families gather in support for members.

*1.2.3 CSO membership.* The survey showed that in total 47% of CSO members are members of more than one CSO. Membership of organisations in Fiji is skewed towards religious or faith based organisations to which just over 50% (195 of 387) of those surveyed claimed membership. The NAG meeting noted that membership of CSOs requires volunteering time and resources which is becoming difficult given the rising cost of travel and other expenses usually met by volunteers.

## 1.3 Diversity of Civil Society Participants

This sub-dimension examines how diverse and how representative civil society is and its activities in a country. It analyses whether all social groups participate equitably in civil society or whether there are any groups which are dominant or excluded. Table III.1.3 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.1.3 Indicators assessing diversity of civil society participants**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.3.1	Representation of social groups among CSO members	<u>2</u>
1.3.2	Representation of social groups among CSO leadership	1
1.3.3	Distribution of CSOs around the country	1

*1.3.1 Representation of social groups among CSO members.* We looked at the representation within CSOs of six specific social groups nominated by CIVICUS, namely (1) women, (2) rural dwellers, (3) ethnic/linguistic minorities, (4) religious minorities, (5) poor people and (6) the illiterate or “people with lower education” to assess the diversity of civil society participants. We enquired about the selection of these categories during the regional stakeholder survey. It was agreed that they were appropriate for Fiji. It was felt that as far as the representation of the poor, the illiterate and the ethnic minorities was concerned; the general opinion was that these groups are under-represented. Further, even if people of different social groupings are well represented in CSOs, the membership is usually segregated. A valid example is of religious organisations. Fijian nationals affiliate strongly with their religious groups and within these groups there is segregation by ethnicity, age and gender. For instance, a Hindu Ramayan Mandli group will be mainly composed of Indo-Fijian Hindu males, while a Zanana group will mainly consist of Indo-Fijian Muslim females, and similarly a Christian youth group would mainly comprise ethnic Fijian males and females. In gauging the representation of religious minorities and rural dwellers opinions varied. Like other religious groups, religious minorities stay within their own groupings. However, because of their small numbers, they tend to be left out of national decision-making processes. Such groups include the Bahai faith and small Christian denominations. Rural dwellers in remote locations like small isolated islands tend to be left out of CSO activities mainly because of the inadequacies in the communication channels. The general consensus is that the groups that are either severely underrepresented or excluded/absent from CSO activities in Fiji are the rural population (43% of stakeholders think so), poor people (43% of opinions also) and people with lower education (41% of opinions).

*1.3.2 Representation of social groups among CSO leadership.* This indicator looks at the extent to which the CSO leadership is representative of various social groups. It is slightly different from the issue of representative-ness of CSO membership. Stakeholders clearly saw certain social groups as being absent/excluded/severely under-represented or somewhat under-represented as leaders of civil society. This was particularly so for the poor (92% of opinions), people with lower education (87% of opinions) and rural populations (72% of opinions). Women who were thought to be equitably represented in membership by 52% of stakeholders were considered to be equitably represented in leadership by only 30% of stakeholders. Therefore, the indicator score for leadership is more negative than CSO membership. While membership is more inclusive, the leadership appears to be skewed towards better educated and well off urban males. This finding has not been discussed by the CSO membership as yet.

*1.3.3 Distribution of CSOs around the country.* This indicator looks at the geographical distribution of CSOs around the country. The survey revealed that while CSOs exist right around the country, most are concentrated in city areas and urban centres. Some 49% of

those surveyed were of the opinion that CSOs were largely concentrated in major cities and urban areas. Some 19% claimed a better geographical distribution with CSOs active in all but the remotest of areas on the country and another 17% claim that CSOs are present even in the most remote areas. The uneven distribution of CSOs in the country was discussed briefly at the FCOSS Annual General Meeting. The issue of resources to keep local community groups alive and at a national level to enable regular outreach was recognised as an important constraint. The servicing of remote locations is a continuing challenge that is difficult to meet given the lack of resources to provide CSO services, even to urban locations, and the demand on volunteers when travel and other costs for them is high.

## 1.4 Level of Organisation

This sub-dimension looks at the extent of infrastructure and internal organisation within Fiji civil society. Discussions at district and national consultations raised concerns over weaknesses in CSO organisational capacities particularly with issues of governance and with skills for programme planning and project formulation and management. It was felt that umbrella bodies such as FCOSS should do more to strengthen CSOs in this respect. Overall this aspect of civil society structure was considered moderately weak with a score of 1.4. Table III.1.4 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.1.4: Indicators assessing level of organisation**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.4.1	Existence of umbrella bodies	<u>1</u>
1.4.2	Effectiveness of umbrella bodies	<u>2</u>
1.4.3	Self-regulation within civil society	<u>2</u>
1.4.4	Support infrastructure	<u>1</u>
	International linkages	<u>1</u>

*1.4.1 Existence of umbrella bodies.* 77% of the stakeholders surveyed knew of CSOs that are members of an umbrella organisation, stating that 38% of all CSOs belong to an umbrella body. Notable umbrella bodies in Fiji include the FCOSS, the National Council of Women (NCW), the Fiji Organisation of Non-State Actors (FONSA), the associations of trade unions such as the Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC), the NGO Coalition on Human Rights, the Fiji Council of Churches (FCC) and the Association of Christian Churches in Fiji (ACCF). Most of these umbrella bodies are networks of national organisations. The sub-national members of these national organisations are often not members of the same umbrella bodies. However, these sub-national bodies may still indirectly benefit from activities of umbrella bodies. Surveyed stakeholders stated that 38% of CSOs they know of are not part of any umbrella organisation. Some 24% of respondents thought that only a small minority of CSOs belong to an umbrella organisation, 14% stated a minority did so, 20% thought that a small majority were members and 18% responded that a large majority belonged to an umbrella organisation. Some 23% did not know.

*1.4.2 Effectiveness of umbrella bodies.* In order to effectively measure the effectiveness of umbrella bodies, the objectives of these organisations as identified by participants were determined:



- The coordination of a joint approach by member organisations in respect of the public administration.
- The protection of the rights and interests of members.
- Improved access to financial resources for members.
- Support for the activities and development of members (e.g., technical support and expert advice).

Having understood the objectives, 15% of those surveyed judged the umbrella bodies completely ineffective, 5,4% thought they were largely ineffective, 40,5% considered they had mixed effectiveness while 39,2% of respondents felt that umbrella bodies were generally effective in achieving their defined goals. Whereas the effectiveness of improving access to financial resources for members was evaluated positively, a majority of respondents stated that umbrella bodies were still lacking in the provision of technical assistance for their members.

*1.4.3 Self-regulation within civil society.* Only 24% of the CSO stakeholders surveyed stated that mechanisms for self-regulation are in place and are functioning effectively with a marked impact. Some 27% stated that mechanisms for self-regulation are in place but that CSO impact is limited. A further 16% claim that preliminary efforts are in place although the impact is extremely limited and a surprising 26% do not know about any mechanisms for self-regulation.

Over half (56%) of COs, however, abide by some collective code of conduct or some form of self-regulation. Fiji CSOs have discussed the possibility of setting a nation-wide code of conduct for themselves but have not progressed much in this direction. About 33% of these CSOs have internal regulations specifically for membership, with approval of application for membership endorsed by a governance board. Half of the bodies have a formal system for checking whether the regulations are followed and for applying sanctions in case they are breached. However, impact of these regulatory frameworks is still quite limited as there is no effort to actively enforce them. The Fiji Council of Social Services has had a Code of Ethics for its member organisations over some years but has not promoted it vigorously outside the membership.

*1.4.4 Support infrastructure.* The survey revealed that 58% of the respondents acknowledged that there was some level of support infrastructure while only 4% stated that the infrastructure - such as information databanks, technical assistance programmes and resource centres, were well developed. Upon probing during the consultations, it was found that many organisations are small in size and financial resources indicate the need for some support infrastructure to be made available for such CSOs. A few umbrella bodies such as FCOSS do provide resource centres and limited infrastructure for members. For technical assistance, many organisations relied heavily on the goodwill of their local volunteers or the assistance from donor agencies in the country.

*1.4.5 International linkages.* At present, international linkages is mainly at the level of umbrella bodies or large organisations with national representation. Fiji also has several national offices of international CSOs, especially environmental organisations such as the World Wide Fund for nature (WWF), Conservation International (CI) and Birdlife International. Trade unions are linked to international trade union movements and so are

religious groups. Nevertheless international linkages remain weak as many local CSOs do not have the capacity to keep the line of communication going with such bodies. Some 66% of those surveyed stated that local CSOs have some if not very few linkages with international networks.

## 1.5 Inter-Relations within Civil Society

This sub dimension analyses the relations amongst civil society actors in Fiji. It is assessed to be relatively weak with a score of 1.5. Table III.1.5 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.1.5: Indicators assessing inter-relations within civil society**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.5.1	Communication between CSOs	<u>1</u>
1.5.2	Cooperation between CSOs	<u>2</u>

*1.5.1 Communication between CSOs.* About 56% of stakeholders interviewed stated that there was only limited to very limited communication and information sharing between CSOs in Fiji. Formally there are periodicals (e.g., the Rights Quarterly, the PINAGO Link, Bula Nippon) focusing on civil society issues and activities of CSOs. Conferences and seminars at which CSOs and sometimes the public administrators or private companies participate take place regularly. With more CSOs (particularly urban-based CSOs) having access to the Internet, it was surprising that communication level between CSOs was rated to be moderate or significant by only 44% of survey respondents.

There is a certain degree of competitiveness between CSOs, which affects the flow of information and sharing of data. During the stakeholder consultations it was revealed that the perceived competition amongst CSOs was really personality clashes between individuals, which are the root cause for the limited dissemination of information. The tools for effective communication are there but according to the stakeholder consultations are used only to a certain extent.

*1.5.2 Cooperation between CSOs.* The stakeholder survey showed that only a minority of respondents could identify some (33%) or even numerous (7%) cross-sectoral alliances or coalitions of CSOs on issues of common concerns. A majority could remember only very few (42%) or even no examples at all (18%). Examples of cooperation were related to social concerns, environment, women's interests, cultural understanding, peace issues and health to name a few. Cooperation across sectors is only in its infant stage in Fiji. The greater realisation that multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary cooperation is needed to address many of our current concerns such as good governance and corruption, poverty, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and environmental degradation, has encouraged CSOs to come together in dialogue for possible greater collaboration. The survey responses show that CSO actors do co-operate on occasion over issues of common concern. This was strongly demonstrated when many concerned CSOs united in opposition over the introduction of a controversial bill known as the Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill in 2005 and managed to stall its passage. The strongest opposition to the bill was over its purported intention to enable the major perpetrators of the year 2000 coup to gain amnesty. The government was forced to withdraw the bill and later modify it. Survey respondents did give examples that can be identified of cross-sectoral alliances and

coalitions between CSOs in Fiji. The NAG members noted that CSOs co-operate at a number of levels from local community to national and across sectors. For example, during times of natural disasters, which are very frequent in Fiji; religious bodies, welfare organisations, disaster relief groups, service organisations, women’s groups, youth groups and more all cooperate to help the affected. In programmes to address poverty, several CSOs including church and religious groups, as well as welfare groups, women’s groups, development CSOs and members of the private sector all cooperate to different degrees to supplement each other’s efforts. A programme for sex workers has Women’s Heart in Action working with the Police, the Aids Task Force and other CSOs. Another programme that addresses environment conservation has the Soroptomists and the Rotary Clubs working with the conservation organisation – the National Trust for Fiji. Such co-operative efforts across sectors warrant a score of 2 for this indicator.

## 1.6 Civil Society Resources

This sub-dimension examines the resources available for civil society organisations in Fiji. The table below summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.1.6: Indicators assessing civil society resources**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.6.1	Financial resources	2
1.6.2	Human resources	2
1.6.3	Technical and infrastructural resources	2

*1.6.1 Financial resources.* The majority (58%) of civil society organisations surveyed obtain their finances from membership fees and individual donations. Only 10% receive funding from foreign donors while 8% have some form of government funding. A significant proportion (44%) considers their finances adequate or rather adequate while 40% think their finances are inadequate to completely inadequate to enable them to achieve their goals. Discussions amongst the NAG members noted that CSOs on the whole have most of the resources they require in terms of a pool of volunteers, donations in kind and of finances. What they lack is good management of volunteer services and efficient use of resources. The indicator was therefore given a score of 2.

*1.6.2 Human resources.* This was defined as the set of staff skills present in the organisation to achieve the organisation’s goals. Some 46% of respondents consider their CSOs human resources as adequate or rather adequate while only 12% stated that their organisations’ human resources was inadequate or completely inadequate. Many Fiji CSOs rely heavily on local volunteers to provide specialised skills such as accounting or legal expertise. A few national CSOs, however, also have volunteers with specialised technical expertise recruited through international formal volunteer organisations such as the UN volunteers, Canadian, Australian, United Kingdom and New Zealand volunteer schemes as well as the US Peace Corps scheme. This reliance on overseas technical expertise as volunteers reveals a weakness in human resources of Fiji CSOs, which they appear to underestimate. When overseas volunteers are unavailable, Fiji CSOs manage with local expertise, which may often be on a part time basis.

*1.6.3 Technical and infrastructural resources.* When asked to assess the adequacy of the organisation’s equipment and facilities to achieve its defined goals, 39% of respondents

stated these are adequate or rather adequate. Only 22% consider their equipment and facilities inadequate or completely inadequate. Generally, CSOs in Fiji have adequate office facilities with sufficient furniture, computers, telecommunications equipment and literature resources. Of course what is considered adequate is subjective. What may satisfy the CSOs in Fiji may not satisfy those in other countries.

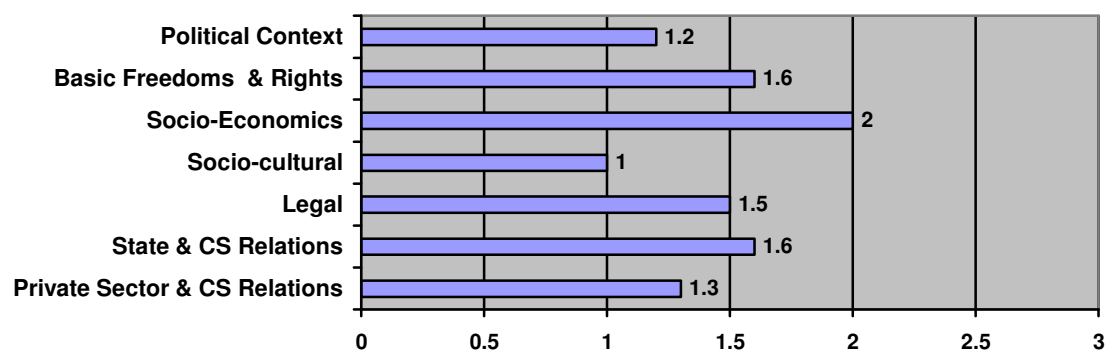
## **Conclusion**

The analysis of the structure of civil society in Fiji shows that it is only moderately strong with a score of 1.5. There are, however, some signs of strengthening as CSOs begin to forge alliances and joint activities over common areas of interests including those that specifically address their capacity building needs. While civil society did receive significant media coverage during the monitoring period for the CSI exercise, there did not seem to have been any media interest in issues to do with civil society structure. The structure dimension received an overall score of 1.5 on a scale of 0 to 3. The weaker indicators in this dimension include non-partisan political action, CSO membership, charitable giving, representational leadership and country distribution of CSOs, existence of umbrella bodies, support infrastructure, international linkages and communication within CSOs. Each of these received a score of 1 except charitable giving and CSO membership, each of which scored 0. The strongest components of CSO structure as assessed were the sub-dimensions on the extent of citizen participation with a score of 2.2 and resources with a score of 2.0. The relatively high satisfaction with the resources sub-dimension is interesting given the constant requests for training in fund raising activities and project proposal writing for funding applications. This may indicate that Fiji CSOs have adequate resources to do the task at hand but insufficient for further expansion of activities in future. The opinion of the NAG group about inefficient management of existing adequate resources indicates the need for more capacity building in good management and governance. While citizens involvement in civil society is quite high, the under representation of certain social groups, such as the poorer and less educated both as members of CSOs and in positions of leadership, is a cause for concern especially when most CSOs often emphasise the importance of equitable development right across the board.

## 2 ENVIRONMENT

This section describes and analyses the overall political, social, economic cultural and legal environment in which civil society exists and functions. The score for the Environment Dimension is 1.5, indicating a moderately weak environment in which civil society exists and acts in Fiji. Figure III.2.1 presents the scores for the seven sub-dimensions within the Environment dimension. It shows that the weakest features of the environment are the political context (score 1.3), the socio-cultural context (score 1.0) and relations with the private sector (score 1.3). The legal environment along with state relations and basic freedom and rights were considered moderately weak with scores of 1.5 or 1.6, while the socio-economic context was rated moderately strong with a score of 2.0. These scores are interesting given that the media coverage of civil society which the monitoring exercise found was mainly on reports on human rights issues, the environment, labour and corporate news as well as on unemployment.

FIGURE III.2.1: Sub dimension scores in Environment dimension



### 2.1 Political context

This sub dimension examines the political situation in the Fiji Islands and its impact on civil society. Table III.2.1 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

TABLE III.2.1: Indicators assessing political context

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.1.1	Political Rights	1
2.1.2	Political competition	2
2.1.3	Rule of Law	1
2.1.4	Corruption	1
2.1.5	State effectiveness	1
2.1.6	Decentralisation	1

*2.1.1 Political rights.* Citizens' rights to participate in political processes go hand in hand with their rights to participate in civil society. Additionally, without free and fair elections and independence of political parties, civil society actors lack appropriate channels and partners to further their interests in the political domain.

Fiji citizens enjoy some elements of political rights, including the freedom to organize quasi-political groups, free elections as well as relative freedom to use other means of

popular influence on government, such as marches and petitions for example. However, this political freedom is not comprehensive as it is somewhat restricted by the concern of government for public security in situations where underlying racial tensions may incite violent reactions from certain sections of society.

The point on unfair elections was echoed during the key informant interviews, with several interviewees stating that the recently introduced (1997) electoral system tends to hinder the right of eligible voters to democratically elect their representatives. A large percentage of votes cast in the last three national elections since 1999 were considered null and void. This was because the electoral system was too complex for most voters, particularly the less educated, to understand and to take part in. Not only were many voters disqualified due to invalid votes, but many could not vote due to incorrect registration procedures.

*2.1.2 Political Competition.* Historically, Fiji has had four main political parties with two dominant ones; the Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL), which is the ruling party and the Fiji Labour Party (FLP). As the country prepared for the May 2006 national elections, a plethora of new and small parties were established. There are now more than 20 political parties, the majority of which are indigenous Fijian formed parties. Most of these stood on the platform of issues related to special interests of indigenous Fijians such as greater participation in the economy, land ownership or return of political sovereignty. However, many of these parties are not well entrenched with little funds to continue actively from one election to the next. Although only two parties dominate the political scene, both parties are relatively young but well organised with branches throughout the major urban centres of the country. The two major parties that have dominated the political environment since Fiji's independence have both lost popular support with no representation in parliament since 2000. The older of the two current dominant parties first contested elections in 1986, while the other first appeared for the 2001 elections. A political system with a high turnover of political parties and/or frequent ideological changes of existing parties makes it difficult for civil society to find reliable partners and advocates for its causes within the political domain.

Political parties in Fiji are largely male dominated. Most of them have less than 30% women in decision-making positions. The Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) is dominated by indigenous Fijians and won the elections largely on appealing to indigenous voters' assertion of their rights to political power in their own country. The other major party, Fiji Labour Party (FLP), largely promotes labour rights and policies that favour the grassroots people of all races. It is, however, dominated by Indo-Fijians.

The structure of Fiji's political landscape comprises both traditional and modern political systems. The 2 major cultural groups in Fiji (the indigenous Fijians and the Indo Fijians) have political structures based on traditional groupings. For the indigenous Fijians, it is the traditional system of leadership centred on servitude to chiefs that continues to influence the nature of political participation of indigenous men and women. In the Indo-Fijian community traditional divisions based on family origins from India and on religion do exist and influence the nature of political participation of both men and women within the community.

*2.1.3 Rule of Law.* Ensuring an efficient justice system involves a consistent set of agencies or processes that necessitate collaboration between the police, the courts and the prison service. The independence of the courts is enshrined in the constitution.

The rule of law was seriously threatened when the democratically elected government was overthrown in 1987 and again in 2000. At both times the judiciary maintained its independence and advanced the rule of law. This was a strong factor in bringing the country out of chaos. While the coups demonstrated the fragility of Parliament and the Executive, the upholding and the strengthening of the rule of law by the judiciary at both times was an acknowledged fact (Shameem J.N 2004). The 2000 coup subjected the rule of law to great trials both during and after the event as the country began to rebuild its democratic institutions. With support from international institutions and Fiji's civil society, the rule of law has emerged scarred but intact. In fact, according to Fiji's current Vice President, "the rule of law is stronger for having weathered these sustained assaults on it". (Madraiwiwi, Ratu Joni).

In general, the public has high hopes that the three institutions of the Judiciary, the Parliament and the Executive will promote safe communities, greater social freedom and more confidence in the economy. At the same time there is a great fear and mistrust which is no surprise, especially when taking into account that while the percentage of reported crimes has gradually declined, the number of pending cases (up by 27% from 1993 to 61,847 in 1998) had markedly increased. Nevertheless the current government is making attempts to deal effectively with the backlog of cases and has increased court staff in the process.

Prisons are seriously overcrowded so that some convicted criminals have had to serve their sentences within the community. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but needs to be well planned and resourced. It could be an effective way of rehabilitating deviants of society and of increasing the respect for the rule of law.

The World Bank Governance Dataset for the year 2004 (<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2004/>) gives Fiji a score of -0.19 (on a scale from -2,5 to + 2,5) indicating serious problems regarding the entrenchment of the rule of law. Fiji's score is lower than 52% of all countries covered by this research. Fiji has since moved on in its effort to restore the respect for the rule of law. It began to restore widespread confidence in the police and the courts as these continued to bring to justice those who participated in the coup of 2000 including the imprisonment of high chiefs. Fiji held national elections in May 2006 when the two major parties again scooped most of the seats. They formed a multi party cabinet in accordance with the constitution. This brought calm and hope to the country. Politicians of both parties made attempts to work together, although it was not always harmonious. This was an experiment that most of civil society was pleased about as it had enabled representatives of the large Indo-Fijian community to share in government decisions with representatives of the indigenous Fijians. The concerted efforts of government to improve the law and justice sector and the greater co-operation of political parties in a multi-party cabinet in accordance with the constitution may have warranted a score of 2 for this indicator. Unfortunately, politicians

failed to work together for long and Fiji faced another military coup on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2006. The country is yet again in the throes of recovery while some international sanctions limit its ability to pull itself quickly out of economic difficulties and ever increasing poverty.

*2.1.4 Corruption.* Fiji appeared for the first time in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index report (CPI) in 2005. Fiji scored 4 on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is very clean. Fiji's index of 4 indicates that corruption is serious in the country. This agrees with the survey results that show that 45% of respondents consider corruption in civil society to be frequent to very frequent. A further 22% state that there is occasional corruption while only 17% state that it is very rare. Where there is perceived corruption in the judicial system, lack of proper acquittal processes and leniency awarded to convicted offenders were reasons provided for the apparent levels of corruption.

*2.1.5 State Effectiveness.* The Government of Fiji cannot fulfil its defined functions alone. It needs to promote cross-sector collaboration to do so. For example, social services for the marginalised, police services to rural areas or health clinics in outlying islands and even hospitals in urban centres are affected by lack of staff and resources such as transport and funds for materials. More than half of the respondents to the community survey (54%) have little trust in the central government. While the bureaucratic structure of government is acknowledged, it is perceived that state services are often incompetent largely due to the unwieldy nature of the system. The World Bank Governance Dataset (<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2004/>) gives Fiji a score of -0.57 (on a scale from -2,5 to + 2,5) indicating serious problems regarding the effectiveness of the Fijian state. Fiji's score is lower than two-thirds of all countries covered by this research. The Fiji government recognises its weaknesses and has begun to reorganise its institutions as well as reform its public service. This reform has been influenced by recommendations of the World Bank.

*2.1.6 Decentralisation.* Response to questions on Government's efforts to distribute its resources reflected that most people still feel that more can be done in this area. An example is the allocation of Fijian Affairs Board (FAB) Scholarships. Instead of mandating the various provinces to forward their own nominees, the government dominates the whole process of awarding successful applicants with scholarships. Another example is the decentralisation of the health sector that maintains the control over key staff recruitment and expenditure centrally. Hence, decentralisation is considered ineffective when much control remains centralised. All ministries have limited powers of staff recruitment, this being largely centralised in the Public Service Commission. Only lower level staff such as cleaners and office support staff can be independently recruited at local levels.

All budgeting is controlled and coordinated through separate ministries at the national level and submitted to the Ministry of Finance for approval. The national budget does not indicate sub-national divisions of total government funds as Ministries control their own budgets separately at national level.



## 2.2 Basic Freedom and Rights

This sub-dimension gauges the extent to which basic freedom and rights are guaranteed by law and in practice. Table III.2.2. summarizes the scores for the indicators under this sub-dimension.

**Table III.2.2: Indicators Assessing Basic Freedom & Rights**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
2.2.1	Civil Liberties	<u>2</u>
2.2.2	Information Rights	<u>1</u>
2.2.3	Press Freedom	<u>2</u>

*2.2.1 Civil Liberties.* The Freedom in the World Rankings 2005<sup>11</sup> survey conducted by Freedom House awarded Fiji a rating of 3. This rating indicates that according to global standards Fiji has at least partial compliance with virtually all checklist standards, which include freedom of expression, assembly, education and religion. This reflects the situation in Fiji rather well. In the period directly after the illegal overthrow of the Government in 2000, public get-togethers were not openly encouraged. Most applications given to the government for people to converge in large numbers for advocacy purposes were rejected. As Fiji recovers from the aftermath of the coup, restoration of civil liberties had slowly but steadily been carried out so that now very few restrictions remain on account of national security.

*2.2.2 Information Rights.* This indicator assesses how the law ensures public access to information and government documents. Legislation regarding public access to information is not yet in place. A bill has been drafted by the government and is expected to be tabled soon. It will then be publicised for public consultations and response.

While the government declares that most of its information is easily accessible, in practice it is difficult to obtain government documents. Respondents stated that difficulties stemmed from the failure of most government departments to archive information correctly, the lack of appropriate data and the lack of awareness or confidence of “desk-staff” to provide information as requested. Freedom of Information legislation will facilitate better accessibility of information for the public. It will also make the public more aware of their right to information and use it for their own development needs.

*2.2.3 Press Freedom.* Freedom House (2004c) awarded Fiji a score of 33,<sup>12</sup> which indicates a partially free media. The Government is viewed as respectful toward freedom of speech and print, but libel remains a criminal offence. There is one national television station and two regional television stations, which are both privately owned. There are less than 20 radio stations. The print media includes three daily English newspapers, two weekly papers in Fijian, one weekly paper in Hindi, one weekly for young people in English and about six monthly magazines. While the media is free in theory, its freedom

<sup>11</sup> Rankings in this survey reflect global events from 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2003 to 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2004 with ratings between 1- 7 (1 representing most free and 7 the least free)

<sup>12</sup> Scale: 0-30 means a free media; 31-60 means a partially free media and 61-100 means the absence of media freedom

has been fragile because the government has power to withdraw work permits of expatriate staff should media reports be deemed offensive.

### 2.3 Socio-Economic Context

In gauging the socio-economic environment in the country and its impact on civil society, the following criteria were used:

1. Poverty
2. Civil war
3. Severe ethnic and/or religious conflict?
4. Severe economic crisis (e.g., external debt is more than GNP)?
5. Severe social crisis (over last 2 years)?
6. Severe socio-economic inequities
7. Illiteracy
8. Lack of IT infrastructure

For each of these indicators a specific benchmark was defined which indicated that the respective indicator presents a socio-economic barrier to civil society. The benchmarks and data for these eight indicators for Fiji are presented below: Fiji's score for this indicator is 2 because only two of the conditions indicated in the above list are present in the country as explained below.

1. *Widespread poverty - do less than 40% of Fijians live on less than 2 US\$ a day?* No. The last comprehensive report on poverty (1997) estimated a poverty line of 108 FJD /week/household or about US\$2:00/day/person. Under this definition the report estimated that 20% of Fiji's households were poor. It further reported that 6% of Fiji's households had an income of 39 FJD or less per week or about 1:40 FJD /person /day. These latter were considered to be "facing absolute poverty" (ADB 1999 page 225)
2. *Civil war - did the country experience any armed conflict during the last five years?* No. Whereas there was no armed conflict (Uppsala Conflict data), Fiji experienced a failed military coup in the year 2000. A few people were killed in exchange of shootings in different parts of the country. However, there was no widespread armed conflict as such. Peace was restored when the military installed a civilian government. Another military coup was staged on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, followed by human rights abuses that have resulted in three deaths at the hands of the military and the police. So while there has been no armed conflict during the last five years, violence has been a feature of a military led government over the last 10 months.
3. *Severe ethnic or religious conflict?* There is underlying conflict, but whether the condition is severe is arguable. People live close to each other, learn together, work together and eat together without animosity. Ethnic conflict, while not in the same proportion as that occurring in other parts of the globe, still exists. It underlies political life. Civil society is very much involved in efforts to address the issue and to minimize its impact. Many CSOs make serious efforts to recruit multiracial staff and to promote multi-cultural understanding in their programmes. The government has created a Ministry for Reconciliation and many citizens' groups participate in its

programmes. The country as a whole celebrates Prophet Mohammed's Birthday, the Hindu Diwali festival of lights and the Christian Easter and Christmas.

4. *Severe economic crisis – is the external debt more than the GDP?* The 2005 government budget stated a total of over \$28 million in external loan and a nominal GDP of \$4,774,559,000 (Government of Fiji Budget Estimates 2005). Fiji's external debt is thus less than its GDP.
5. *Severe social crisis (over the last 2 years)?* In the past two years Fiji has not faced a severe social crisis. However over the past two decades Fiji has had three coup d'état, which have generated social tensions.
6. *Severe socio-economic inequities, i.e., is the Gini-coefficient > 0.4?* Yes. The Fiji Poverty report of 1997 estimated a Gini coefficient of 0.46 (ADB 1999 page 226), which indicates serious income disparities in Fiji's society.
7. *Pervasive illiteracy - are more than 40% of the adult population illiterate?* Adult literacy was estimated to be 92% in 1995 (ADB 1999 page 185). Fiji does not have pervasive illiteracy.
8. *Lack of IT infrastructure – are there less than 5 IT hosts per 10.000 inhabitants?* No Fiji has a young IT infrastructure, with 5.97 hosts per 10.000 inhabitants (International Telecommunications Union<sup>13</sup> 2003).

## 2.4 Socio-Cultural Context

This sub-dimension examines the extent to which socio-cultural norms and attitudes are conducive or detrimental to civil society. Table III.2.4 summarizes the respective indicator scores for Fiji.

**TABLE III.2.4: Indicators Assessing Socio-cultural context**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
2.4.1	Trust	<u>1</u>
2.4.2	Tolerance	<u>1</u>
2.4.3	Public Spiritedness	<u>1</u>

*2.4.1 Trust.* The community survey revealed that Fiji nationals are quite apprehensive in terms of trust, as 79% of the respondents indicated that most people cannot be trusted. This is evident in the common practice of equipping buildings extensively with burglar bars and having security guards in many public premises.

*2.4.2 Tolerance.* On the basis of the community survey data, Fiji scored a Tolerance Index of 2.2 on a scale of 0 (most tolerant) to 5 (least tolerant). This placed Fiji in the same category as countries where there are active social practices of discrimination by dominant groups against minority groups that comprise at least 10% of the population,

<sup>13</sup> ITU is an international organisation based in Geneva within the United Nations System where Government and the Private sector coordinate global telecom networks and services

but no official sanctions. Responses gathered from the community surveys reflected this with 34% of respondents stating that they would not like people who have AIDS as neighbours. A further 39% stated that they would not like to have homosexuals as neighbours. There is also quite a high level of xenophobia as 45% of the population indicated that they would prefer having persons of their own race living next to them.

*2.4.3 Public Spiritedness.* CIVICUS defines this indicator as the extent to which citizens have a tendency to violate certain public norms, e.g., avoiding paying taxes, traffic fines, etc. As the survey shows, such behavioural patterns are in no way exceptional in Fiji society. They manifest themselves most frequently in a tendency to travel by public transport without payment. More than two-fifths of citizens in the community survey 44% of respondents stated that a journey ‘on the black’ is sometimes defensible. For every fourth interviewee it is considered not a problem to request a state benefit even though one is not eligible for it. Based on the community survey data, an index of public spiritedness (PSI) was calculated. Fiji has a score of 2.6 in a range of 1 (lowest level) to 3 (highest level).

## 2.5 Legal Environment

This sub dimension examines the legal environment for civil society and assesses to what extent it is enabling or disabling to civil society. Table III.2.5 summarizes the respective indicator scores for Fiji.

**TABLE III.2.5: Indicators Assessing the Legal Environment**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
2.5.1	CSO Registration	<u>2</u>
2.5.2	Allowable advocacy activities	<u>1</u>
2.5.3	Tax laws favourable to CSOs	<u>2</u>
2.5.4	Tax benefits for philanthropy	<u>1</u>

*2.5.1 CSO Registration.* To gauge the process of CSO registration the following variables were assessed: Is the process (1) simple, (2) quick, (3) inexpensive, (4) Following legal provisions and (5) consistently applied? Of the five criterion, respondents saw four in place, namely that the process is simple (69.2%), inexpensive (54.8%), consistently applied (73.1%) and follows some form of legal provisions (73.8%). On the other hand, 65.8% of respondents did not think that it was quick. The registration process as defined by law has no serious defects, though the registering organisations often encounter technical problems and delays in practice. Shortcomings of the registration process include lack of awareness on the whole process. Those who stated that they did not know of any of the registration conditions identified ranged from 53% to 71% of the total surveyed population. This is not surprising, as only NGO leaders would be involved in the process of registration and then only at the establishment of an organisation.

*2.5.2 Allowable advocacy activities.* There are no formal barriers to CSOs criticizing the government and public administration. There are, however, attempts (both direct and indirect) to restrict CSOs from criticizing the government. These include difficulties in accessing donor funding that is directed through government channels, or in obtaining official permission to hold protest marches and public demonstrations. Another example of state control mentioned was prosecution of union leaders. A total of 50% of the

respondents in the stakeholder survey considered that the state sometimes and frequently does attempt to control civil society. Several advocacy organisations; such as the Citizen’s Constitutional Forum, the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement and Women’s Action for Change; have sometimes been perceived by civil servants and politicians as impediments to the state’s activities. For example, one of these CSOs has on several occasions intervened in actions of government while they challenged its decisions in court as unconstitutional.

*2.5.3 Tax laws favourable to CSOs.* CSOs that are registered as charitable organisations are exempt from import duties and may apply to be exempt from Value Added Tax (VAT).

*2.5.4 Tax benefits for philanthropy.* Tax exemptions are allowed only for a limited group of CSOs that are not widely advertised. Most support for civil activities by corporate sector are for their own advertising benefits such as through sponsorship of sports events or scholarships. The general opinion is that the system does not provide sufficient incentives, is not receptive enough and does not motivate individual giving.

## 2.6 State-Civil Society Relations

This sub dimension describes and assesses the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the Fiji government. Table III.2.6 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.2.6: Indicators Assessing State-Civil Society Relations**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
2.6.1	Autonomy	<u>2</u>
2.6.2	Dialogue	<u>2</u>
2.6.3	Cooperation/Support	<u>1</u>

*2.6.1 Autonomy.* The debate on autonomy of CSOs with regard to the State in Fiji focuses mainly on the issue of their financial dependence on the state. In the regional stakeholder survey, respondents were asked whether the control exerted by the public administration regarding CSOs constitutes a problem. Some 69% stated that there is an element of government favouritism in the grant giving process and through this the government tends to covertly control the CSOs. Additionally, 16% of respondents referred to financial audits during the accounting of grants received from public administration as a problematic area that affected the independence of CSOs. Nevertheless, CSOs are relatively independent of the state in determining their priorities and activities.

*2.6.2 Dialogue.* There exist a host of mechanisms for dialogue between the state and CSOs. The Fiji government has a range of advisory bodies on which CSOs are represented. These range from District Advisory Boards for local community development issues, to National Task Forces servicing the National Planning Office in the monitoring of the government’s strategic plan. Several CSOs are also regularly consulted by the government on specific issues such as poverty alleviation. The media

review exercise showed that when the state enters into dialogue with civil society, in almost 62% of cases this involves trade unions or professional organisations.

While advisory bodies could be said to embody mechanisms for systematic dialogue with civil society, the question remains on how to evaluate the breadth of engagement. From the regional stakeholder survey it was revealed that a majority of CSOs, in particular the smaller organisations, are unhappy with the level of state dialogue with civil society: 17% found it to be non-existent, 41% to be limited, 31% assessed it as moderate and only 11% as extensive. The general feeling is that only a selected group of organisations are in constant dialogue with the State.

Because of the multiplicity of CSOs, government finds it difficult to dialogue unless CSOs can coordinate their input through one or a few channels. Hence government tends to favour network coordinating bodies to represent the interests and voice of CSOs. These bodies are based in the larger urban centres and often have little outreach to rural members. Such bodies include the National Council of Women of Fiji (NCWF) and the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS). Further, those CSOs that do not belong to any such bodies risk not being represented in the dialogue at all. In addition, the state tends not to invite strong advocacy NGOs that question them publicly.

*2.6.3 Cooperation/Support.* The general assessment is that while a moderate range of CSOs receives state resources (financial, technical and human) the government fails to carry out proper assessments to ensure equal distribution of its resources. It should be noted that only 8% of CSO funding comes from government (see under 1.6.1). Survey respondents felt that in most cases certain CSOs received funding based on political criteria or because they are willing to do the work for government despite a different programme mandate. Only 21 of the CSOs surveyed received government funding. Government funding to CSOs is usually considered along with submissions and with approval of relevant line ministries. For example, CSOs that deal with health would have to submit their requests through the Health Ministry, etc. The government budget does not show the total allocation to CSOs, as their funding support is incorporated in each line Ministry's programme budget.

## 2.7 Private Sector- Civil Society Relations

This sub dimension describes and assesses the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the private sector. Table III.2.7 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.2.7: Indicators Assessing Private Sector-Civil Society Relations**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
2.7.1	Private sector attitude	<u>2</u>
2.7.2	Corporate social responsibility	<u>2</u>
2.7.3	Corporate philanthropy <sup>14</sup>	<u>0</u>

<sup>14</sup> The NAG's task in scoring the indicator is to assess the significance of corporate support to civil society. Here, the score descriptions focus on two elements: (1) the overall size of corporate support to civil society, (2) the range of CSOs supported by the corporate sector. Please note that both elements are combined in the indicator score descriptions.

*2.7.1 Private Sector Attitude:* Public opinion in Fiji indicates that the Private Sector relations with civil society is generally good with 60% of surveyed population claiming private sector attitudes favourable or supportive and 50% stating private sector either sometimes or frequently supportive of civil society initiatives. However, a significant number of responses considered private sector's attitude as being indifferent (19%) and that the sector rarely joined broader civil society initiatives (21%).

*2.7.2 Corporate Social Responsibility.* In the stakeholder and community survey 38% of the respondents thought that private sector corporations serve the interests of all the people while 62% considered that the private sector corporations were mostly looking out for themselves. This indicates that private sector support for civil society activities evident under 2.7.1 is mostly for advertisement purpose.

The concept of corporate social responsibility has three main aspects: a responsible approach to employees, a responsible approach to the environment and a responsible approach to the community within which a company operates. A significant number of respondents were of the opinion that there were quite a few companies in Fiji that were meeting their responsibilities in all of these aspects. This was corroborated by the survey of annual reports of the largest companies in Fiji. These companies devote space to themes linked to care for their employees and most include the environment or publicly beneficial activities. A similar study showed that most large companies believe that they should actively engage in contributing to society. 76% of companies stated that they look after their employees and 44% mentioned the care for the environment, in addition to companies whose activities directly impact upon the environment (Business Leaders Forum 2004).

In assessing this indicator, CIVICUS suggested that the focus should be on large companies. However, it was frequently expressed that it is necessary to distinguish between small companies and large companies, often part of supranational corporations, since they have different approaches to civil society and corporate social responsibility. Large supranational companies are sensitive to social responsibility as foreign practices play a decisive role in the cultivation of the environment. This is evident in Fiji where the multinational company Vodafone has become a trendsetter in funding CSO activities through its foundation. Many larger local companies, as well as small ones, are yet unaware of the practice of corporate social responsibility as a recognised formal process, although they do practice components of it.

*2.7.3 Corporate Philanthropy.* No information on the scope of corporate philanthropy exists in Fiji. Only 3% of CSOs in the stakeholder survey claimed receiving some local corporate funding. One CSO has been very successful in establishing markets for rural women's home industry products through the generous co-operation of a large local company for marketing. Another local company has been involved in settling displaced poor farmers through the donation of land for housing. A third company gives funding support to needy children in primary schools every year. While there are no obvious large funding donations, several local corporations make donations in kind to support CSO activities. Some local business people leave sums in their wills to help build schools, which are almost wholly community owned in Fiji.

Most CSO activities are supported by people's donations, as in religious organisations, or through funding from official funding agencies that include government and non-government sources.

## **Conclusion**

Perhaps for the CSOs in Fiji, the most important finding regarding the environment dimension is the weakness of the socio-cultural sub-dimension. For a multiracial country, tolerance and trust are crucial for a healthy civil society. These are not widespread among Fiji citizens. Relations with the state and perceptions of effectiveness of the state are also low reflecting in low levels of public spiritedness. Corruption is perceived to be high, perhaps compounded by the lack of formal recognition of people's right to information through Freedom of Information legislation. Private sector relations should also be examined, as the business concerns can be effective supporters of CSO efforts to improve social conditions. Examination of tax laws and laws to promote philanthropic giving are other areas that will yield great positive returns for CSOs and civil society in general. Urgent attention to these weaknesses will contribute much to strengthening civil society in Fiji in general. The third area of weakness is the political context in which Fiji's civil society acts. Politics in Fiji is still dominated by racial divisions between two main races with other minor ones relegated to the margins. While civil society institutions are largely multiracial, some, especially religious groups, remain largely restricted to one race or the other. This has not helped attempts to reconcile races and also partly explains the low score for the socio-cultural indicator. The relatively higher scores for the indicators of CSO state relations; basic freedom and rights; the legal and the socio-economic context; reflect the attempts of the state to ensure a facilitating environment for civil society growth in Fiji.

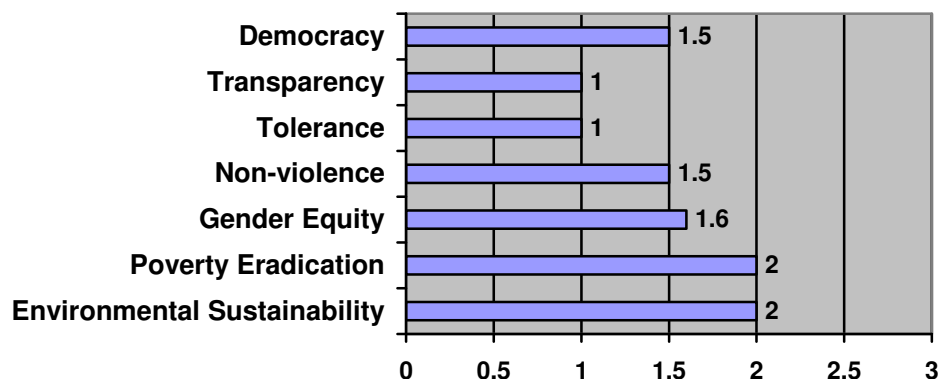
Although the socio-economic indicator shows a moderately fair environment for CSO activities in Fiji, constraints to voluntary work is stressing CSO activities due to increasing costs. While there is negligible absolute poverty, many families are struggling to make ends meet as fuel prices rise with the concomitant rise in the cost of living and unemployment rates. Greater political competition and relatively strong recognition of civil liberties including freedom of the press has strengthened respect for the rule of law.



### 3 VALUES

This section describes and analyses the values promoted and practiced by Fiji civil society. The score for the Values Dimension is 1.5, reflecting an overall weak to moderate adherence to values in Fiji's civil society. Figure III.3.1 presents the scores for the seven sub dimensions within the Values dimension. The low score for the transparency and for the tolerance sub dimensions stand out as problematic areas to address.

**Figure III.3.1: Sub dimension scores in Values dimension**



#### 3.1 Democracy

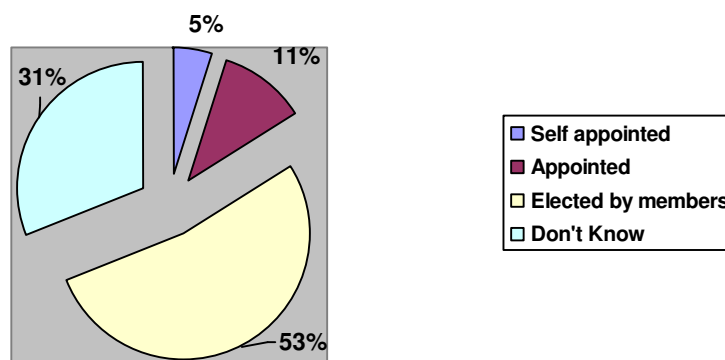
This sub dimension examines the extent to which Fiji civil society actors practice and promote democracy. Table III.3.1 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**TABLE III.3.1: Indicators Assessing Democracy**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
3.1.1	Democratic practices within CSOs	<u>2</u>
3.1.2	Civil society actions to promote democracy	<u>1</u>

*3.1.1 Democratic practices within CSOs.* The extent of internal democracy in CSOs was assessed by examining the method by which leaders were elected in an organisation and the extent to which members influence decision-making processes. The stakeholder survey revealed that 53% of CSO leaders are elected by members; 11% have their leaders appointed and a marginal 5% 'select themselves' (see Figure III.3.1.1). The balance of 31% do not know how their CSO leaders are chosen. This significant proportion of CSO members (31%) who do not know how their leadership is selected is of concern since it implies significant lack of interest in democratic participation of the membership.

**Figure III.3.1.1 Means of selecting CSO leadership**



The influence that members have on decisions within their organisations was rated as moderate to substantial by 51% of respondents and as limited to little or none by 16%. Again a significant proportion of 33% did not know.

**3.1.2 Civil society actions to promote democracy.** Only a small proportion of CSOs (6%) were considered by the stakeholder survey respondents to be actively promoting democracy at societal level. Only 20% of respondents could think of several to many examples of activities to promote democracy while 44% could think of none or only one or two examples. Only 7 kinds of activities were identified which included radio and TV programmes, awareness programmes, protest marching, working for human rights including for women and children, and working with the government's Ministry of Reconciliation. Only 12% of respondents knew of CSOs or networks with specific mandates to promote democracy. Only five such groups were identified. These were the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), the Fiji Human Rights Movement, The Fiji Women's Rights Movement and the Women's Crisis Centre. While these are only a few, their activities are widely known and supported within the general civil society. Some 38% of respondents considered the civil society's role in promoting democracy as moderate to significant. About 20% state that it is insignificant or limited while 41% do not know.

## 3.2 Transparency

This sub dimension analyses the extent to which civil society actors practice and promote transparency. Table III.3.2 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.3.2: Indicators Assessing Transparency**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
3.2.1	Corruption within civil society	<u>1</u>
3.2.2	Financial transparency of CSOs	<u>1</u>
3.2.3	CS actions to promote transparency	<u>1</u>

**3.2.1 Corruption within civil society.** Corruption is usually defined as the abuse of authority for personal gain. This usually involves two parties and also includes non-monetary exchanges such as in nepotism and abuse of traditional authority to obtain favours. The latter for example could apply to chiefs who may use their traditional

powers to get special treatment. Identifying cases of corruption within the public sector was fairly simple, as it was often reported in the media. However, identifying fraudulent practices in civil society in general proved to be slightly harder, due to lack of media coverage for this sector.

The Regional Stakeholder survey respondents were queried on the extent of corruption within civil society. 84% stated that corruption does occur. Only 17% stated that though it occurs, it is very rare while 45% consider corruption as frequent or very frequent in Fiji's civil society. Only 16% did not know.

*3.2.2 Financial transparency of CSOs.* CIVICUS proposed to use the proportion of CSOs that publish their financial statements as a measure of financial transparency. While almost all CSOs provide acquittal reports for completed projects, only 38% publish an Annual Report with audited financial accounts.

The issue of financial transparency generated long discussion in the RSC. Are organisations financially transparent if they do not cover up anything? Is it sufficient that everything is in order "if someone takes a peek"? Or does transparency mean the systematic publication of certain information? And if so, is there a system that would allow for de-facto transparency (i.e., best practices, instructions and well known models of what and how to publish)? These questions were discussed but led to no agreed conclusions.

*3.2.3 CS actions to promote transparency.* Only a relatively small number of CSOs are concerned with the transparency of the public administration and corporate sector. The stakeholder survey revealed that about half of those questioned could think of only one or two or no example at all of civil society actions to promote transparency in government (46%) or in the corporate sector (52%). Those who could think of several to many examples were 16% for the government sector and 48% for the private sector. This widespread perception of corruption is of interest given the media review finding of minimal media attention to the components of the value dimension as issues of interest. Most of these public actions were in the form of letters to the editors of newspapers or published comments by civil society leaders in the media on reports of the Auditor General or on reported misuse of public funds.

The RSC respondents stated that creating a strong monitoring role on instances of corruption might be more effective if associated with professional CSOs who have the technical knowledge and the network in both the government and the private sector. This is reflected in the response to the question of civil society's role in promoting transparency in general, in government and in the private sector. This was rated moderate to significant for government by 54% and for the corporate sector by only 40% of respondents. There is only limited civil society support for those CSOs like the Fiji chapter of Transparency International. This may also be due to ignorance of their existence. The stakeholder survey showed that only 17% of respondents knew of the existence of CSOs with a specific mandate to promote government transparency while even less at 14% knew of CSOs with a specific mandate to promote corporate transparency.

### 3.3 Tolerance

This sub dimension examines the extent to which civil society actors and organisations practice and promote tolerance. Table III.3.3 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.3.3: Indicators Assessing Tolerance**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
3.3.1	Tolerance within the civil society arena	<u>1</u>
3.3.2	Civil society activities to promote tolerance	<u>1</u>

*3.3.1 Tolerance within the Civil Society arena.* A little less than a quarter (23%) of the RSC respondents stated that cases of intolerant behaviour, discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation and on social status are present within civil society, although not accepted under Fiji’s Bill of Rights. These elements of intolerant forces within civil society are considered dominant or a significant part of civil society by 23% of respondents while only 10% consider them isolated within civil society and only 4% state that they are strongly denounced by civil society at large. A majority of 62% do not know the relation of these intolerant forces to civil society at large.

*3.3.2 Civil Society activities to promote tolerance.* Only 31% of the stakeholders surveyed knew of civil society activities to promote tolerance, while only 23% knew of CSOs with specific mandates to promote tolerance at societal level. On assessment of the role of civil society in promoting tolerance, 43% thought they were insignificant or limited while 57% thought them moderate to significant. A majority of 51% knew of no specific examples although they knew that civil society does promote tolerance. 37% knew of only one or two examples, 9% of several examples, 3% of many examples.

The media review identified a relatively large number of CSOs involved in this area including religious organisations, disabled people’s associations, educational organisations, human rights organisations and peace groups. It is difficult to assess the degree of promotion of tolerance in general as some groups that are active in promoting tolerance for some areas – such as for racial tolerance – may be closed to others, such as tolerance for homosexual liaisons. The promotion of tolerance for all human rights recognised in the Bill of Rights is therefore rather lower than evident from the assessed civil society activity or the number of media reports on the subject.

### 3.4 Non-violence

This sub dimension describes and assesses the extent to which Fiji civil society actors and organisations practice and promote non-violence. Table III.3.4 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.3.4: Indicators Assessing Non-Violence**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
3.4.1	Non-violence within the CS arena	<u>1</u>
3.4.2	CS actions to promote non-violence and peace	<u>2</u>

*3.4.1 Non-violence within the CS arena.* The responses to the question of violent forces within civil society in Fiji are worrying. While one in four persons (23%) claim that there are isolated groups that occasionally or regularly resort to violence, some 19% state that there are significant and mass based groups that do so to express their interest. However, a relative majority of 37% state that the use of violence by civil society is extremely rare. Further, only 13% state that these acts of violence are always condemned by other civil society actors, while 29% state that this usually happens. 33%, on the other hand, state that this rarely happens and 25% claim that such condemnation never happens.

*3.4.2 CS actions to promote non-violence and peace.* In response to questions about civil society actions to promote non-violence and/or peaceful conflict resolution, 34% knew of none of such actions, 42% of only one or two. However, by and large, 43% of respondents thought civil society's efforts to be moderate, 19% significant while 9% thought them insignificant and 29% limited. CSOs involved in peace education and in promoting non-violence as means for negotiations include women's organisations, particularly the National Council of Women that holds monthly peace vigils, church related groups such as the Ecumenical Centre for Education and Advocacy with a peace education programme, other community education groups that work to develop understanding and empathy between different rural communities, Interfaith Search Group which brings different faiths together for sharing of beliefs, and some groups affiliated with international peace groups such as to the Moral Rearmament movement. These groups work closely with the government's Ministry for Reconciliation, which is charged with the responsibility of reconciling groups that had been torn asunder by the coups that overthrew Fiji's elected governments in 1987 and in 2000.

### 3.5 Gender Equity

This sub dimension analyses the extent to which civil society actors practice and promote gender equity. Table III.3.5 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.3.5: Indicators Assessing Gender Equity**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
3.5.1	Gender equity within the CS arena	<u>2</u>
3.5.2	Gender equitable practices within CSOs	<u>1</u>
3.5.3	CS actions to promote gender equity	<u>2</u>

*3.5.1 Gender Equity within the Civil Society arena.* To assess the equality of men and women in civil society, CIVICUS proposed to look at the extent to which women are represented in CSO management structures and as members of CSOs. Despite many years of advocacy by women's groups, the responses from the stakeholder survey indicates much work still left to be done in this arena. Women's representation in CSO management has increased particularly in trade unions, social service NGOs such as the Red Cross, and environmental NGOs as well as women's movements. Nevertheless women still occupy less than 30% of management positions in many CSOs. Some 23% of stakeholders felt that there are significant forces within society that are discriminatory

against women, whereas 37% consider them limited and 40% very limited. However, a two-thirds majority feels that gender discriminatory actions are rarely (40%) or never (22%) denounced by other civil society actors. What is worrisome, as it shows a lack of concern for the issue, is the large proportion of respondents who said that they did not know.

*3.5.2 Gender equitable practices within CSOs.* Only 21% of organisations known to stakeholders have written policies in place regarding equal opportunity and/or equal pay for women. It is disappointing to note that 59% of stakeholders did not know of this issue.

*3.5.3 Civil Society's actions to promote gender equity.* There are quite a substantial number of women's organisations in the country. While the public's knowledge of certain women's organisations (examples include FWRM, FWCC and the NCW) is extremely high, quite a large number of women's organisations are small community based groups with little public exposure. These local women's organisations, however, have considerable influence in their respective communities. Membership of these organisations is not based on the successful mobilisation of members around the question of women's equality, but rather on a long-term affiliation and the needs of women to meet for recreational and community development activities. The advancement of women's interests and the achievement of gender equity are not limited to women's organisations, but is an area where all CSO types are involving themselves. As Fiji is a party to a number of International Conventions,<sup>15</sup> including CEDAW, CSOs have willingly embraced the challenge to assist the Fiji government in fulfilling its commitment. Responses to the stakeholders' surveys showed that only 8% of interviewees could think of many examples, while 11% had several examples in mind. 59% could recall one or two examples and 22% could recall no examples. As far as the role of CSOs in promoting gender equity is concerned, 7% of stakeholders felt it was insignificant and 38% that it was limited. For a small majority, CSOs' role in promoting gender equity was either moderate (41%) or significant (14%).

### 3.6 Poverty Eradication

This sub dimension examines to what extent Fiji civil society actors promote poverty eradication. Table III.3.6 presents the indicator score.

**Table III.3.6: Indicators Assessing Poverty Eradication**

Ref #	Indicator	Score
3.6.1	CS actions to eradicate poverty	2

Knowledge of CSO action to eradicate poverty is high with 46% of respondents to the stakeholder survey claiming that they know of one or two examples if not several or many. About a third (33%) of respondents think that civil society's role in eradicating poverty is moderate, while another quarter found it to be significant. 31% consider it limited and 13% insignificant. Activities of CSOs to eradicate poverty include mounting microfinance programmes for the rural and poor urban populations, working with government to uplift the standards of living of the poor through skills training, making

<sup>15</sup> CRC, CEDAW, MDG's etc

input into government budgeting on behalf of the low income people, undertaking research into poverty and influencing government policies to address it. The CSOs microfinance programmes cover all the major divisions of the country and penetrate to the remote villages of the interior where physical infrastructure is poor. One or two such as the Foundation for Rural Initiatives in Enterprise and Development (FRIEND) work closely with the private sector in the distribution and marketing of goods produced by the microfinance participants. Skills training include those offered centrally in different divisions and those that serve people within their villages. These skills include business skills, bread baking for business, weaving from local plant fibres, papermaking, floriculture and coral gardening. Research includes engagement with official organisations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in investigating the status of the poor in Fiji. One CSO, the Ecumenical Centre for Education and Advocacy, for example, is well known for its work in this area and is often consulted by the government and its agencies. CSOs have always been active in social welfare work to meet the needs of the poor, but are also becoming more active now in programmes to change the economic situation of the poor.

### 3.7 Environment Sustainability

This sub-dimension examines the extent to which civil society and CSOs in Fiji practice and promote environmental sustainability.

**Table III.3.7: Indicators assessing Environmental Sustainability**

Ref. #	Indicator	Score
3.7.1	CS actions to sustain the environment	2

*3.7.1. CS actions to sustain the environment.* Over the years, more and more organisations have focused on environmental conservation. Increases in community-based organisations, with a particular focus on wise natural resource usage, have emerged, supported by international bodies such as the Japanese organisation OISCA, larger development national bodies such as Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF), academic institutions such as the University of the South Pacific (USP) and other stakeholders. An additional number of larger organisations (Live & Learn) concentrate on educational activities, hence supporting the initiatives of the smaller local organisations. Most of these organisations work closely with local communities where their work has been noticed not only in the local media, as has been the work of World Fund for Nature (WWF) in marine conservation, but also internationally such as the work of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA) group that won an international award.

When asked for examples of civil society public campaigns, actions or programmes dedicated to protecting the environment, 22% of respondents stated “none”, 33% only one or two examples, 12% knew of several examples, 7% of many examples and 26% did not know.

In promoting environmental sustainability, organisations are also addressing a wider circle of topics, including the protection of democracy and the promotion of citizen participation in decision-making processes. This is largely because natural resources are mainly owned by local communities and organisations have to facilitate effective

resource management by local community owners whose rights have to be recognised and strengthened. Media coverage on advocacy efforts of organisations, for example Greenpeace efforts against the transport of plutonium through the Pacific Ocean or Birdlife International reports on threatened endemic bird species, is quite regular and contributes to the inclusion and participation of civil society in administrative proceedings and consultations of government. The significant role that civil society plays in environmental sustainability was reiterated during the NAG scoring session. Respondents' assessment of CSO's overall role in protecting the environment was as follows: Insignificant -8%; limited -20%; moderate -21%; significant -10%; don't know -41%.

## **Conclusion**

In general, Fiji's civil society has a strong record in promoting positive values and norms. The low score accorded practising and promoting transparency stands out as a sore thumb. Issues of corruption, accountability and legitimacy are neither addressed effectively within CSOs nor within the state and private sector. The low score awarded here can be linked to the relatively weak governance systems in CSOs (C1.4) Other weaknesses identified that are being addressed but need greater attention include tolerance, non-violence, democracy and gender equity within civil society.

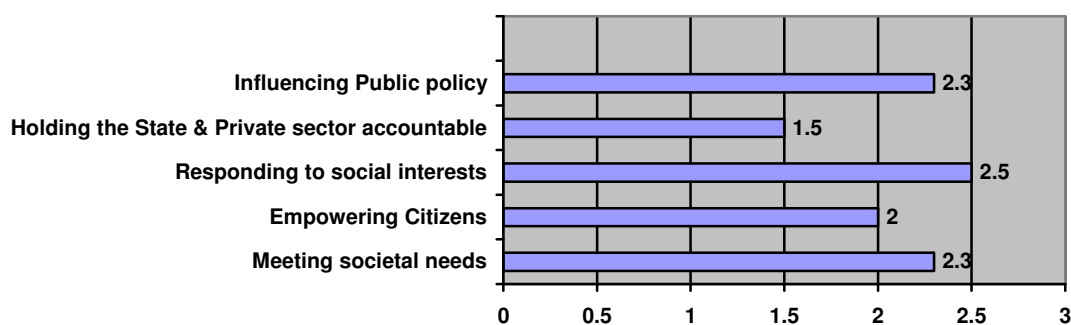
Dealing with the challenges of corruption, transparency and accountability is seen by both the NAG and the National Seminar participants as one of the top priorities for CSOs in Fiji.



## 4 IMPACT

This section describes and analyses the extent to which civil society is active and successful in fulfilling several essential functions within Fiji. The score for the Impact Dimension is 2.1, reflecting a better level assessment than the other three dimensions of civil society in Fiji. Figure III.4.1 presents the scores for the five sub-dimensions within the Impact dimension. This high assessment score for the impact dimension of civil society is echoed by the media survey. It showed that of the four dimensions the impact dimension clearly receives the most extensive coverage and the most positive representation.

**FIGURE III.4.1: Sub-dimension scores in the Impact Dimension**



### 4.1 Influencing Public Policy

This sub-dimension describes and assesses the extent to which civil society in Fiji is active and successful in influencing public policy. Table III.4.1 summarizes the respective indicator scores. To further assess civil society impact on public policy the project team also conducted specific case and overview studies.<sup>16</sup> The score for this sub-dimension is 2.3.

**Table III.4.1: Indicators assessing influencing public policy**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.1.1	Human rights policy impact	<u>2</u>
4.1.2	Social policy impact education, drug abuse elderly	<u>3</u>
4.1.3	Impact on national budgetary process	<u>1</u>

*4.1.1 Human Rights Policy Impact.* Fiji is the only Pacific Island country to have a Human Rights Commission. Fiji is signatory to several international human rights conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC). That Fiji has ratified CEDAW and is reporting on its implementation is largely the result of many years of advocacy by strong women's organisations such as the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, the Women's Crisis Centre and the National Council of Women (NCW). Women CSOs have worked in partnership with the women's unit in the government to produce reports, plans, strategies and policies for women at both a national and regional level. For example, the Pacific Platform for Action for women that Pacific governments

<sup>16</sup> Refer to Appendix & respectively

all signed to was a product of partnership between women CSOs and government women's bureaus. CSOs have been active in influencing government policy in other areas of human rights including, for example, the rights of the disabled and the sexual minorities.

One of the issues that has mobilised CSOs in recent years is the issue of water. CSOs in Fiji consider water supply as a basic human right. In 1999 the government announced its intention to corporatise water. Three major CSO networks; FCOSS, NCW and the Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC); organised a nationwide petition signed by 100,000 people and supported by 500 different CSOs to stop the process. The government shelved the idea. Now in 2006, the current government has announced its intention of privatisation. On immediate response from the CSOs it has changed its statement to corporatisation. The government set up a committee to look at the issue. It has no CSO representative. CSOs have again protested through submissions asking for CSO representation on the committee where they can influence policy decision. They have formed a separate committee on their own to strategise. So far the government committee has invited 4 CSO organisations to make submissions. Negotiations with the government are still underway, but CSOs are hopeful that in the end a positive outcome will emerge.

*4.1.2 Social Policy Impact.* Social policy impact focused on programmes and policies for poverty alleviation addressing the situation of the less advantaged in society. CSOs are represented in government task forces to monitor development plan implementation and to recommend policy and programmes for government consideration. The task force that monitors this area of poverty alleviation has 8 CSO representatives in a committee of 20. In gauging the impact of CSOs in public social policy, during the course of data collection the following issues were examined:

1. Education for all
2. Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse
3. Care for older persons

#### 1) Education for All:

The current practice of the Ministry of Education is to waver school fees for children whose parents jointly earn less than \$5,000 a year. The Ministry also provides a student loan scheme for students in tertiary institutions for low income families. CSOs offer adult education in a wide range of skills. Government recognises CSO's role and takes them into account in formulating policies. The task force responsible for social issues, for example, made several recommendations that included the following:

- To ensure school children are not pushed out of school for non-payment of trust funds; for students who pass Fourth Form external examinations with a "C" should be allowed to continue in the same schools.
- For external national examinations to be abolished.

These have been taken seriously into account in the government strategy for the next 10 years. 76% of respondents indicated that civil society was active on this issue of education for all with 67% expressing that civil society was successful in influencing education policies in Fiji. This would have resulted in an indicator score of 2. However, during the NAG scoring session, participants felt that these results on education for all did not reflect the situation accurately. The argument was based on the fact that 91% of

schools in Fiji are owned by CSOs, who are key partners of government in policy formulation and decisions. Further, most non-formal and informal education activities that address employment opportunities and life skills are run by CSOs who thereby gain the attention of government as partners. Therefore the activity level and impact of efforts by civil society to influence policy were altered to 3.

### 2) Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse:

Interestingly, this issue was not specifically covered by the task force that monitored government performance over the last development period and that made recommendations for the next plan period. This reflects the low priority given to this issue by government. Following that period, the government set up the National Committee for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse and invited the Fiji Council of Social Services to represent CSOs on it. The main concern of this committee is the increased use of cigarettes and marijuana smoking in Fiji – particularly amongst young people. The committee was set up mostly in response to an outcry from CSOs for some attention to the problem of increasing youth suicide rates and crimes often associated with drug abuse. One of the CSOs involved in highlighting the issue was the Great Council of Chiefs - a highly respected body in Fiji.

Of the respondents to the stakeholder survey, 30% thought that CSOs are active to a limited extent in trying to influence public policy in this area. Some 20% stated that CSOs are quite active, 27% stated they are very active and 8% thought CSOs are not active at all. Only 16% did not know. In terms of success in influencing policy, 26% thought CSOs have limited impact, 23% thought they had moderate impact 18% significant impact and 9% no impact at all. Some 24% did not know.

The formation of the National Committee, and involvement of CSOs on it, indicates government acknowledgement of CSOs as partners in addressing the issue of drug and substance abuse.

### 3) Care for older persons:

Traditionally, Fiji communities have always catered to their elderly members. However, both urbanisation and demands of the modern cash economy have stressed this custom so that more people are unable to do so. In addition to the government's single home, some church institutions have set up three separate and well kept homes for the elderly. These are, however, inadequate to cater for the population that needs such care, resulting in high waiting lists. Further, there are few special measures that recognise the need of the elderly such as subsidised fees at public recreation places or special fares on buses, etc. The facilities that have been set up and services offered are largely results of CSO actions. Government recognises the services for the elderly offered by CSOs such as FCOSS, St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Church.

A total of 77% of the respondents claimed that civil society was active in advocating this issue. These comprised 26% who considered CSOs active to a limited extent, 28% who thought they are quite active and 23% who state that CSOs were very active. Some 69% felt that they were successful with limited impact, 30% moderate impact 22% and significant impact 17%.

The Ex- Servicemen’s Association and FCOSS represent the interests of the elderly on the national task force committee that monitors the implementation of programmes and policies on poverty and makes recommendations for government policy and programmes including those for the elderly. Both are quite vocal on the committee.

*4.1.3 Civil Society’s Impact on National Budgeting.* This involved the assessment of CSO’s impact on the national budgetary process as well as the national budget itself. Government has responded to CSO requests for input into the national budgetary process by inviting two particular CSOs, the FCOSS and ECREA, to discuss the national draft budget with them. Other CSOs may make written submissions. However, the CSO input has always been at the end of the process when most of the budget inputs have been confirmed. FCOSS at its AGM this year provided a session on the national budgetary process to inform CSO members and assist them in strategise for more effective input into the national budget if they so wish.

In the area of the National Budgetary Process (NBP), 86% of respondents indicated that there was “room for improvement” on the part of civil society. The National Budgetary Process is still viewed as an area dominated by the state and the private sector with civil society making moderate impact which often came about at the end of the whole process.<sup>17</sup>

In examining CS impact on public policy and taking both activity and success level into account, it may be concluded that Fiji civil society is making headway at influencing policy-making. However, the impact of CSOs on the National Budgetary Process needs to be enhanced. This has been acknowledged as a priority area for CSO attention.

**Table III 4.1.1 Perceived Impact of civil society**

Issue	Active	Successful
<b>Care of Elderly Citizens</b>	77%	69%
<b>Education for All</b>	76%	67%
<b>Prevention of DSA</b>	77%	67%
<b>Access to Health &amp; Social Services</b>	77%	86%
<b>National Budgetary Process</b>	88%	14%

## 4.2 Holding the State and Private Corporations Accountable

This sub-dimension analyses the extent to which civil society is active and successful in holding the state and private corporations accountable. Its score is 1.5. Table III.4.2 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III. 4.2: Indicators on Holding State & Private Corporations Accountable**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.2.1	Holding the state accountable	2
4.2.2	Holding private corporations accountable	1

*4.2.1 Holding the state accountable.* The relationship between the State and CSOs is generally amicable except for a few advocacy CSOs mandated for promotion of

<sup>17</sup> More details of the NBP in relation to CS can be found in Annex

democracy, good governance and public integrity as well as social justice. The latter are tolerated, if not opposed by government. At least one such organisation had been deregistered by the state as a charitable organisation and had to register itself as a company. This has contributed to the stigmatisation of certain CSOs as meddlesome whilst others are ‘peoples champions’

Holding the state accountable and answerable to the actions it has taken has had some measure of success. This is indicated by the results of the regional stakeholder survey, which showed 64% of respondents stating the civil society is active in holding the state accountable while 38% think these efforts are either quite successful or very successful and 26% stating efforts are “not very successful”. The latter statement could mean both that the activity was considered unsuccessful or successful to a limited extent. It is therefore not considered a positive response in this report. Respondents indicated that the area of activity and success is mainly in assisting the poor and focussing state attention on issues of poverty. The role of watchdog played by civil society was acknowledged. However, the weak assessment of state response was attributed to the lack of technical support, which was the reason provided for the weak impact in holding the State accountable in other areas.

The instances where CSOs have advocated successfully for “public accountability”, particularly in legislative and constitutional matters, have received strong media attention

*4.2.2 Holding Private Corporations Accountable.* In comparison to Indicator 4.2.1 the results for this indicator were lower. Only 54% of respondents felt that there was some level of activity with 31% assessing this activity as being quite or very successful and another 31% stating it as not very successful. As for the responses to the same question under 4.2.1, the statement “not very successful” is taken as a negative response here.

**Table III.4.2.1 Perceived Impact on Holding the State and Private Corporations Accountable**

Issue	Activity	Success
State Accountability	64%	38%
Private Corporations Accountability	54%	31%

### 4.3 Responding to Social Interests

This sub-dimension analyses the extent to which civil society actors are responsive to social interests. It has a score of 2.5. Table III.4.3 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.4.3 Indicators on Responding to Social Interests**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.3.1	Responsiveness	2
4.3.2	Public Trust	3

*4.3.1 Responsiveness.* This indicator is an assessment of the degree to which civil society and the range of CSOs in Fiji respond to the current pressing social issues. Whether knowing of their existence they campaign for action to address such issues and how much success they achieve. The social issues selected as priorities were human rights, rights of children, HIV/AIDS prevention, women’s rights and prevention of drug

and substance abuse. The percentages of those who considered these campaigns quite successful or very successful were 58%, 58%, 64% 56% and 57% respectively, an average of 58.6%. While this indicates civil society is generally aware and active in responding to social interests, there does exist rare cases that do not gain the voice of CSOs. Such include the land needs and development priorities of small Melanesian immigrant communities in separate parts of Fiji.

**4.3.2 Public Trust.** The level of public trust in CSOs compared to that given to other bodies was used as an indicator that the organisations are genuinely responding to social interests. From the survey of communities and stakeholders the level of trust given was a “great deal” or “quite a lot” for selected bodies as follows: Religious organisations (89%), NGOs (87%), the United Nations (78%), Fiji TV One (73%), the Press (56%), the Court Judges rulings (53%), Labour and Trade Unions (53%), Fiji Military Forces (53%), Major Companies (52%), the Police Forces (52%), the Leader of the Opposition (51%), the Government (44%), the Prime Minister (38%), Political Parties in general (29%). It is obvious from the results itemised that the CSOs (religious organisations and NGOs) enjoy the highest levels of trust in Fiji’s society.

## 4.4 Empowering Citizens

This sub-dimension describes and assesses the extent to which civil society is active and successful in empowering citizens, especially traditionally marginalized groups, to shape decisions that affect their lives. The score for this sub-dimension is 2.0. Table III.4.4 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.4.4: Indicators Assessing Empowering of Citizens**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.4.1	Informing /educating citizens	2
4.4.2	Building capacity for collective action	2
4.4.3	Empowering marginalized people	2
4.4.4	Empowering women	2
4.4.5	Building Social capital	2
4.4.6	Supporting livelihoods	2

**4.4.1 Informing Citizens.** CSOs are seen as very active in running educational programmes for citizens on a wide range of issues. The media review revealed that on all days there were notices in the “community diary” column on meetings, workshops and a variety of trainings organised by CSOs and open to the public. Several CSOs have their own newsletters and electronic systems of information dissemination. However, respondents pointed out that the lack of follow-up on such information-sharing sessions often left them dissatisfied. This was reflected in the results of the stakeholder survey where 71% of the respondents stated that civil society is active in undertaking public information/education while only 40% think that they are quite successful or very successful at it. In terms of follow up with assistance to communities, some 50% claim that this does happen.

**4.4.2 Building capacity for collective action.** The efforts of CSOs in building the capacity of people to organize themselves, mobilize resources and work together to solve common problems is widely recognized and acknowledged in Fiji. Community mobilization is common around specific development activities such as for building

schools, community water supplies, setting up environmental conservation areas, or even building bus shelters and doing litter clean ups. These efforts often require the setting up of management committees that require capacity building to continue the activities begun. Some 60% of respondents to the stakeholder survey stated that civil society is active in local level community capacity building initiatives. However, only 32% state that these were “quite successful” or “very successful” while 19% thought they were “not very successful”. That is a total of 57% who stated that CSO efforts do meet with some success. There have been significant successes demonstrated by Bua province youth group, which mobilized to plant taro as a cash crop and built homes for their community or the many village groups that got together to build village schools for their children, or the rural women’s groups that raised funds to build bus shelters for their communities, for example.

Fiji is composed of many islands with isolated communities to which state services are often inaccessible. Hence community mobilization to provide minimum services to these is often required. Extended family networks that span both rural and urban areas provide other strong forces for mobilization to provide basic needs of communities. This is the genesis of civil society. Because the economic and social gaps are growing wider and wider, and because of minimum or lack of effective public action, citizens learn to group together and volunteer to fill the gaps in the best way they can.

*4.4.3 Empowering marginalized people.* In organizing programmes, CSOs attempt to include a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. 61% of stakeholders revealed that CSOs have organized activities and offered services that target both the marginalized of society and the general population to ensure the inclusion of all. The marginalized recognized were women, the poor and those involved in small income generation activities. The assessment that these activities were “quite successful” or “very successful” was given by 44% of respondents while 15% considered them “not very successful”. There have been examples of success in all these efforts. For example the microfinance schemes have resulted in the successful development of several women’s businesses.

Examples of programmes cited as inclusive of the marginalized include:

- National Conference on Social Development: A biennial conference that facilitates deliberations and dialogue on pertinent social issue
- Legal Aid: Free legal services offered by a team of young lawyers. This is, however, a government service
- Micro-financing Institutes: A comprehensive savings & loan programme offered by a few organisations to assist low-income earners
- Sign Language Classes: To service the needs of the deaf in Fiji’s community
- Providing a school for the blind: Now many blind persons are successfully integrated into society.

*4.4.4 Empowering women.* CSOs that advocate for the empowerment of women operate in many sectors: health, family and childcare (Single Mother’s Club, Mother’s Centres, etc.), domestic violence and sexual abuse (Fiji Women’s Crisis Centres), women’s rights (Fiji Women’s Rights Movement), the professional development of women and the

position of women in the labour market (e.g., Fiji Association of Women Graduates, Soroptimist International, Women in Business, etc.) and many localised groups that cater for specific needs such as for sewing or handicraft or floriculture for income generation or training for care giving. The community survey showed that 21% of respondents knew of activities that specifically helped women and of these 79% participated in such activities. That only 21% of respondents claimed knowledge of activities specifically targeted at women is probably due to the fact that many CSO programmes are targeted at general community groups to come together around specific issues (31%); or to set up income generating activities (30%) or for the poor (31%). These are in most cases attended by women. Hence very few programmes need to be specifically for women.

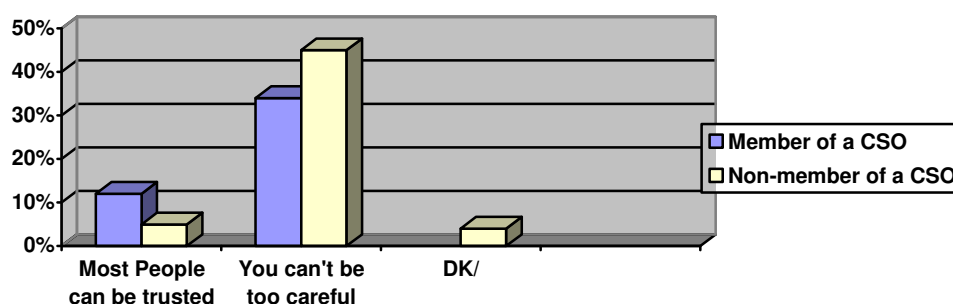
Projects on improving the status of women cover most of Fiji reaching into remote islands such as the women in fisheries project and inland villages such as the microfinance programme. While the women in fisheries project is specific to women, the microfinance is general but utilised mostly by women who form over 90% of the clients. Fiji has had a well established national women's organisation the Soqosoqo Vakamarama that caters specifically for indigenous women. This reaches to all indigenous villages and settlements through the indigenous institutional networks. It provides awareness activities and teaches some skills for economic gain. The notion that empowering women is essential for national development has been recognised and accepted. This has come about through hard and active lobbying by various women's organisations.

*4.4.5 Building Social Capital.* Civil society can be regarded as a source of social capital, which we have assessed by comparing the level of general trust stated by individuals who are members of CSOs and individuals outside the membership of any CSOs.

Whilst general levels of trust in Fiji's society as shown by the stakeholder and community survey are low, individuals belonging to CSOs (e.g., religious bodies) do trust each other more than those outside the CSO membership. The transference of this trust to an attitude on society at large is the contribution of CSOs to building social capital. The 17% of people whose levels of trust in society at large are quite high comprises 12% who belong to a CSO and 5% who do not. This is shown in Figure III.4.4.5, which presents the two groups of people, namely those who state that "most people can be trusted" or those who believe that "one cannot be too careful" - showing little trust. Of the former group, the greater segment in blue belongs to CSOs (12% of respondents) while the smaller segment in yellow is comprised of those that do not belong to any CSO (5%). Together these two segments comprise 17% of respondents who consider that most people can be trusted. On the other hand, of those that show little trust in society, the greater numbers (over 40% of respondents), represented by the yellow bar, do not belong to any CSO. Those who belong to at least one CSO are a lot less (just over 30% of respondents) and are represented by the blue bar. Hence, it appears that those who belong to some CSO are much more trusting than those who do not at all.



**Figure III.4.4.5: Breakdown of responses on ‘Trust’ indicator**



*4.4.6 Supporting Livelihoods.* A large number of CBOs have successfully created income-generating opportunities for their members. Larger organisations have supported these initiatives by providing trainings on how to successfully manage and sustain these projects. At least two CSOs have active microfinance programmes targeting the women, the poor and the rural communities. These efforts are strongly supported by government, which provides both funding and training. These efforts have been quite successful with several clients graduating out of their level of operations to qualify for normal commercial bank loans for businesses. These efforts, however, have not reached entirely throughout the country as demonstrated by the responses to the survey. This showed that only 30% of community survey respondents had heard of income generating activities set up by CSOs and of these 64% directly participated.

## 4.5 Meeting Societal Needs

This sub-dimension examines the extent to which civil society is active and successful in meeting societal needs, especially those of poor people and other marginalized groups. The score for this sub-dimension is 2.3. Table III.4.5 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

**Table III.4.5: Indicators Assessing Meeting Societal Needs**

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.5.1	Lobbying for state service provision	<u>2</u>
4.5.2	Meeting societal needs directly	<u>2</u>
4.5.3	Meeting the needs of marginalized groups	<u>3</u>

*4.5.1 Lobbying for State services provisions.* Lobbying the state to improve its services and meet pressing societal needs are considered a daily activity particularly by social welfare CSOs. Others include lobbying the state as part of their activity to varying degrees depending on their mandates and the needs of their members. Only 24% of the respondents to the stakeholder survey knew of specific examples of civil society lobbying government for public services. Subjects of lobbying activities include community and youth education, HIV/AIDS education, family law bill, better pay for teachers, funds for the poor, communication infrastructure, electricity supplies, water supplies, resettling evicted farmers, educating the poor, health and police services for rural areas, housing, poverty alleviation measures, welfare services and microfinance.

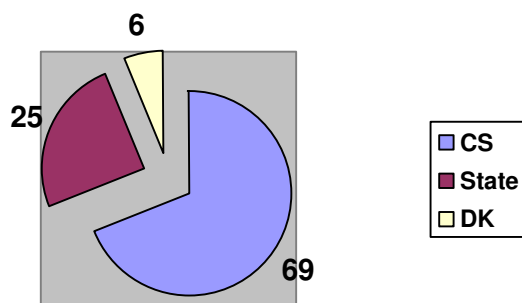
Respondents identified the following tactics that CSOs used to lobby the government: Letters to the Editors of major newspapers, organising public marches, multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions, giving press interviews, attending social functions where civil society actors ‘rub-shoulders’ with government officials and use personal connections. While some methods may seem unconventional, respondents stated that these often “opened doors” and “cut through the bureaucracy” associated with the Government.

That all these efforts by CSOs meet with success is considered to be so by only 30% of the surveyed population.

*4.5.2 Meeting societal needs directly.* The state continues to play a crucial role in the provision of services to meet societal needs. Civil society provides supplementary avenues for most forms of services and in rare cases are the only service providers to groups which have fallen through the net of state services. This is particularly the role of the various religious organisations active in the country. Such social needs include homes for the elderly and for orphans, refuge for women victims of violence, hot meals and a home for street kids, counselling for prisoners, programmes for unemployed youths and housing for the poor. Some 62% of the respondents to the stakeholder survey considered these CSO services as having limited to moderate to significant success. Areas of significant success include provision of homes for the elderly, addressing violence against women and providing a home and education for street kids.

*4.5.3 Meeting the needs of marginalized groups.* Generally it is said that CSOs are more effective at providing services to marginalized groups than the state. By “effective”, it is meant the better value for money derived from their services as the costs for the client care are seen as lower in NGO facilities. A second aspect is the higher satisfaction with the quality of services provided – through higher commitment of employees – in the case of CSO-administered services. Of the respondents to the community survey, 69% considered that voluntary organisations provide better services to the marginalised than government, while only 25% thought that government does so. However there is a concern that most services offered to the marginalised increase their dependency and does not necessarily contribute to their development.

**Figure III.4.5.3 Providing better services to meet the needs of the marginalized**



CS = Civil Society Organisations, DK = Don't Know.

## **Conclusion**

Civil society's impact on Fiji society is assessed as moderate to significant except for its influence in keeping both government and the corporate sector accountable. For the latter, civil society is considered weak. This relative weakness of civil society to address issues of governance is evident for all related indicators in this exercise. Another important area where civil society is weak is in the building of trust as a component of social capital in the country. This exercise has shown the positive role of CSOs in building trust within their membership and their potential to extend such attitudes to society in general. In Fiji CSOs are more active in meeting the social needs of the population including sports and cultural activities. However, it is in the provision of social welfare services and development needs of the poor and marginalized that CSO activities are appreciated and considered more successful than those of the state. Civil society's lobbying functions in getting the state to act on specific issues are considered fairly well developed and successful. The media review exercise echoes the assessments from the stakeholder and community surveys as well as those of the NAG.

## IV STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

This section contains a comprehensive summary of the outcomes of the National Stakeholder Workshop, which was held at the end of the project. Almost 90 stakeholders representing CSOs, academic institutions, media houses and the public administration attended the meeting. After the presentation of the index results, participants were invited to identify strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Fiji and to also make recommendations on how to strengthen civil society. Eight groups were formed with two groups per dimension.

### STRENGTHS

The following section captures the main strengths identified and discussed during the course of the National Workshop:

- *The extent of citizen participation:* Citizen participation in CS activities is widespread, with quite a large percentage of the general population having involved themselves with either one or more activity. This involvement, both as contributors and as beneficiaries, was not restricted to individuals who were financial members of organisations. This is a feature present right across the citizenry.
- *Volunteering:* The concept of volunteering is one that is firmly embedded in the traditional structure in Fiji in all cultural groups that make up its multicultural society. People volunteer within their groups at different levels but also across cultural groups. Further people are willing to make do with what little resources they have to contribute to community wellness. It came as no surprise therefore that this was reflected in the results.
- *Championing Human Rights:* Awareness of human rights is high in Fiji. Civil society organisations are strong advocates for various types of human rights including children's rights, women's rights, the right to employment for unemployed youth, indigenous rights and rights based development in general. The state does listen to these efforts because it is signatory to various international conventions that oblige it to affirm such rights. That the progress to achieving satisfactory levels of freedom to enjoy such rights may be slow is not due to apathy on the part of civil society but often to the capacity of the country itself to accelerate the process. This is usually the result of societal structures and the lack of resources for implementation and monitoring/policing.
- *Awareness and concern for the physical environment:* Despite the fact that the issue of the environment is a relatively recent concern in the history of civil society in Fiji, practices promoting environmental sustainability are commonly taken up by civil society groups. A few CSOs now exist that have mandates specifically directed towards sustaining the environment. Civil society efforts towards environment sustainability are widely appreciated as indicated by this CSI exercise. This is a strength that can be increased as it opens opportunities for greater partnership with government given the latter's obligations to protect the environment and to promote sustainable development. This obligation is

- underscored by the realization that our important tourist industry is very dependent on the maintenance of our pristine physical environment.
- *Social Responsibility:* The growth of civil society in Fiji began with religious based activities that catered not only for spiritual but also for social needs. This is deeply ingrained in almost all the faith-based groups in the country. Religious organisations enjoy the largest membership of all CSOs in the country. The value of caring for those in need remains strong - whether for education, health, employment skills, counselling, care for the vulnerable and disabled, housing or other basic requirements for life. CSOs in Fiji are active in a wide range of social services at which they are considered successful, even better than government in many instances. This commendable strength is now hampered by the stresses of modern life as poverty increases, and as consumerism encouraged by aggressive advertising robs savings and the availability of spare resources for charitable giving. It is also tampered by the decreasing levels of trust resulting in large measure from the occurrence of three coups in the country since 1987 as well as the increases in crime that accompany increases in poverty and unemployment.
  - *Impact:* As seen from the diamond score for this dimension, Fiji's civil society has made relatively strong impact on policy of government and in serving the special needs of society. The media study confirms this but notes the dominance of indirect reporting over direct quotes from civil society leaders thus suggesting the need to use the media more for direct communication with the public.

## WEAKNESSES

The CSI exercise identified quite a large set of weaknesses of the Fiji civil society. These are discussed here in general categories.

*CSO Organisation and management:* The national seminar as well as the FCOSS Annual General Meeting acknowledged this as an important weakness that needs to be urgently addressed. The following were itemized:

- Lack of effective cooperation between CSOs through lack of communication and sometimes through personality clashes between leaders.
- Where coalitions or umbrella bodies exist, these are usually weak due to lack of resources and technical expertise to co-ordinate effectively or to help strengthen the member organisations.
- Lack of transparency in financial management and decision-making compounded by minimum communications capacity.
- Lack of management expertise, particularly the lack of project/programme management including proposal preparation/writing.
- Lack of strategic planning skills.

*Issues of Governance and Democracy:* Fiji's civil society is generally weak in promoting democracy and good governance both within itself and for the wider society. This is explained in part by lack of widely disseminated information not only to educate the populace but to also to keep it informed of current relevant issues of concern. The scores for promotion of democracy, for transparency and for keeping both the state and private

corporations accountable were consistently low. Weaknesses itemized for this situation include the following:

- Lack of relevant information to members of CSOs
- Lack of confidence by CSO members due to Fiji's "culture of silence" that accepts whatever the leaders tell us
- Hesitancy due to unfriendly environment towards those who criticize government.
- Lack of expertise to know what to do and how to do it

*Erosion of Values:* The widespread lack of trust, tolerance and public spiritedness seriously concerned both the national seminar and the FCOSS Annual General Meeting. There are several key forces that impact this situation. They include the division of society along racial lines that has been deepened by three coups since 1987; the increase in poverty along with widening disparities between the rich and the poor; the rise in the number of unemployed youth with no sellable skills; the powerful appeal of media and modern advertising that swings people's values and desires towards a more consumer oriented society; and the breakdown of family values and care as people migrate to work and families split for economic reasons. That CSOs struggle to address these worrying tendencies in society may be due to weaknesses within CSOs themselves, which include the following:

- Existence of racially biased political parties that campaign on the basis of racial interests
- Existence of racially-based CSOs that rightly advocate for their self-interests, but with little dialogue with other racial groups leading to misunderstanding
- Lack of capacity for sufficient programmes to address the problems of family and of unemployed youth
- Lack of meaningful dialogue between leaders of faith-based groups to address the issues raised in the CSI exercise
- Lack of resources and expertise for CSOs to raise awareness as relevant on issues of consumerism and consumer protection/rights

*Impact:* An important area where CSOs have to make an impact is in influencing the government budgetary process and the priorities set by the budget itself. Both the National Seminar and the FCOSS Annual General Meeting recognised this weakness.

The discussions on the findings of the CSI exercise have only begun. These first analyses with the participants of the National Seminar and the FCOSS Annual General Meeting have led to a series of recommendations for action. These are presented in the next section. However, CSOs at local district level will examine the results further and analyse their own special situation from it. They will also identify their own priority areas of action.

## V RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are a collection of suggestions for action from four separate meetings. These were the stakeholder consultations, which included mostly the national CSOs, the second NAG and special NAG meetings and the FCOSS Annual General Meeting (AGM), which had a large representation of community based NGOs that cooperate through the District Advisory Councils of Social Services (DCOSSs). The AGM discussed the weaknesses identified by the CSI survey, prioritised those specific to each district and made recommendations to address them. The AGM also made recommendations for FCOSS action at national level. A special NAG meeting held after the AGM went through the indicators again and added further recommendations where these were considered necessary.

### *Citizen and CSO participation:*

Although it was recognised that citizen participation in CSOs and CSO participation in government activities and decisions had increased in the last 5 years, it was felt that this trend has to be encouraged and supported. Volunteerism, though strong, is dominated by more mature members of society in their 40s and 50s who are feeling burnt out due to greater demand for their services. The younger members of society appear not to be volunteering as they are finding it difficult to make ends meet for their own needs. This is also creating a problem of lack of young leaders to take over voluntary leadership positions. The following recommendations were therefore made:

- Equip CSO leaders with information so that they can participate meaningfully in government decision-making bodies at all levels
- Monitor that CSOs do participate at all levels of government
- CSOs to market their services professionally to attract young people
- To recognise volunteers annually in specific national activities
- Institute a programme to train and mentor young volunteers.
- CSOs to run a national volunteer service scheme
- Seek leaders of service organisations to make special provision for young members who cannot afford membership fees
- Establish a social leadership training institute in FCOSS that trains leaders for rural as well as peri-urban and urban areas. These trainers should be able to train others in rural areas in their own vernacular language

### *CSO Organisation and Management:*

Although Fiji has many CSOs at all levels, they are generally weak with only a few strong ones at a national level and focussing mainly on specialised issues. It was felt that CSOs would be strengthened through networking or other forms of cooperation to establish shared resources and joint advocacy. The following recommendations were made:

- Support umbrella bodies initiated by the people themselves
- Provide training of trainers' courses all around the country on project management and strategic planning skills
- Encourage establishment of resource centres outside of Suva

- Encourage CSO cooperation through one to one partnerships and informal NGO coalitions over special issues of common interest

*Issues of Governance and Democracy:*

It was acknowledged that most CSOs had strong constitutions, which they adhere to, but smaller ones needed guidance in the use of theirs. A condition of registration and of funding is the presence of a constitution. Most CSOs do practice internal democracy within the dictates of their constitutions. However, governance was weak in many cases due to weak leadership and corruption in some form or other is widespread in society. The CSO body could address the situation through:

- More sharing of lessons learned and promotion of NGO Code of Ethics
- Encouragement of greater involvement of religious organisations in addressing widespread corruption by running workshops for them.
- More leadership training on issues of democracy
- Education on critical and independent thinking.
- Leadership awareness training on financial procedures and management.

*The political context and basic rights:*

Although Fiji has been an independent democratic nation since 1970, its democracy remains fragile and people are generally unaware of or not inclined to assert their democratic and human rights. Some of the hesitancy may be due to a culture of unquestioning respect for authority that discourages enquiry into wrongs committed and acceptance at face value, of official statements issued. The following recommendations were made to address these weaknesses:

- Greater education about participatory democracy and citizen responsibility on leadership selection.
- Encourage acceptance of constructive criticism and learning to differ with respect
- Mount more training in rural areas on these issues.
- Mount more political education of voters on why and how to vote.
- Coordinate CSO advocacy for greater and more effective decentralisation of national bodies.
- Make information more accessible particularly through translation to the vernacular languages.

*The socio-economic and cultural context:*

All the meetings that dealt with the CSI exercise acknowledged the widespread increase in poverty in the last several years despite increases in national GDP. Efforts of CSOs to address poverty have not kept up with the rate of increase in families that fall below the poverty line because of lack of resources such as for microfinance programmes or for entrepreneurship development or for skills training for the unemployed.

There was general consensus that people were not as forthcoming in helping each other, as there has been increasing distrust of each other as well as decreasing tolerance across racial and religious groups. Further, that lack of trust and tolerance may also inhibit more generous giving to assist members of other groups in need.



Despite widespread efforts on promotion of the rights of women and of children, there exists strong gender biases and lack of respect for the rights of women and children. Violence against persons both verbal and physical is common. There seems to be little respect across religious groups, race, gender and age. Not enough CSOs are promoting a culture of non-violence.

It was suggested that the following might help:

- Consolidation of CSO efforts in poverty alleviation and cross-cultural understanding through scoping surveys to lead to more efficient collaboration
- CSOs to support the Virtues Project and extend its activities
- FCOSS to recommend the setting up of a Truth and Justice Commission to address crimes committed in past coups and encourage more meaningful reconciliation
- Media education for promotion of mutual respect across all groups
- Promotion of a culture of non-violence such as through the Ghandi Society
- Organisation of cultural exchange through FCOSS during volunteer week
- Encourage CSOs policy development in the areas of gender equality and for recognition of children's rights

*State-civil society and private sector-civil society relations:*

The review of the Charitable Trust Act currently underway is expected to protect civil society independence in forming themselves to CSOs and in the freedom of such CSOs to act without excessive interference from government. CSOs have functioned relatively freely with few exceptions to date. However, support of CSOs' work with resources from the private sector and the state needs to be strengthened. The following recommendations were made:

- Involve CSOs in the review of the Taxation Act.
- Strengthen CSOs to widen their involvement with the state.
- Advocate for greater state support for CSOs.
- Market CSOs more for support from private sector.

*Impact*

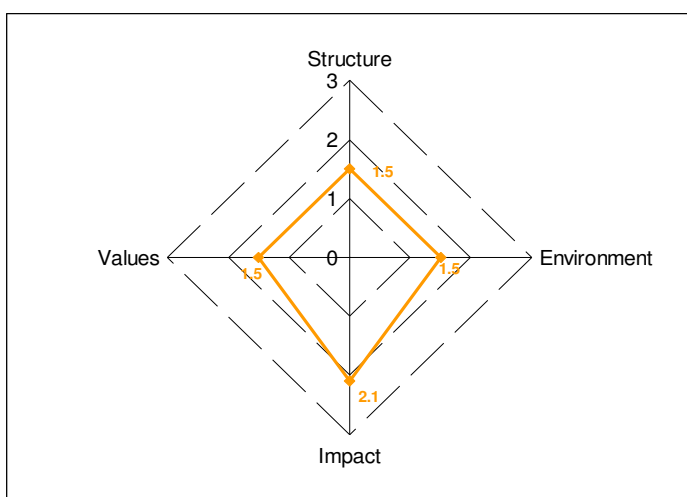
The NAG meetings confirmed the survey findings that CSO efforts often had significant impact on state policy and action. However, it was felt that this should not only be sustained but also further improved through appropriate capacity building to monitor and comment on government policies and programmes as well as act to hold private sector players as well as CSOs accountable. The following recommendations were made to address these:

- Build CSO capacity in monitoring and advocacy
- Organise more consumer education and work closely with the National Consumer Council
- Promote people-centred development that empowers people rather than social welfare development

## VI CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

This conclusion draws together the main findings of the CSI exercise in Fiji. It examines the structure of the civil society diamond so created and links this to the main recommendations aimed at improving the shape of the civil society as depicted by the diamond.

Figure IV.1.1 Civil Society Diamond For Fiji In 2005/2006



Fiji's Civil Society Diamond is slightly skewed in favour of the impact dimension, which emerged with a score of 2.1 compared with 1.5 for each of the other dimensions of structure, environment and values. This is represented in Figure IV.1.1. The exercise has revealed several interesting features of Fiji's civil society as well as areas of concern that require urgent attention by Fiji's CSOs.

The nature of CSOs as demonstrated by the structure dimension of 1.5 shows that Fiji's CSOs are only moderately developed. It is not surprising that the survey found that a large proportion of the population belongs to at least one CSO, gives to charity and offers volunteer work. However, the finding is interesting in that both the voluntary work and the charitable giving are only moderate in quantities at an average of less than eight hours per week work and less than 0.5% annual income given to charity respectively. The relative lack of representation of both membership and leadership of CSOs is also not surprising, given the difficulties of communications within the country and the disparities in income within the nation. Religious organisations have had a strong influence in the development and the role of civil society in the country today. They continue to garner the majority of CSO participants. Unfortunately, the different faith groups tend to be divided along racial lines so that many CSO groups remain mono-racial in membership. If Fiji is to progress more rapidly in its efforts to reconcile its communities, religious leaders need to come together in dialogue not only with each other but also with other CSOs concerned with building trust and understanding in society. Recommendations on promoting cross-cultural understanding, values education, promoting non-violence and gender equality are pertinent for both religious and nonreligious organisations to discuss together.

Some of Fiji's CSOs have organised themselves into networks under umbrella organisations while some have formed loose coalitions around issues of common interest. Only the larger national CSOs have international connections. A minority of CSOs make public their annual and audited reports. While the majority of CSOs are conscious about

practicing democracy within their own organisations, only a small minority promote democracy publicly. There is a need to strengthen CSO networks not only to strengthen their collective voice for democracy but also to set governance standards for themselves and to pool resources for capacity building. Recommendations for a sector wide code of ethics, for strengthening democracy within CSOs as well as for society in general, and general capacity building of CSOs in management and programme skills need to be seriously followed up on.

With a score of 1.5 for the environment dimension, Fiji's CSOs do not appear to have serious problems with the environment in which they function. They have relatively moderate autonomy, fair processes of dialogue with the state, fair taxation laws, relatively free press and recognised civil liberties (though sometimes restricted), and not too bad relations with the private sector. However, what is of concern and a surprise finding is the low levels of trust, tolerance and public spiritedness that are indicators of the socio-cultural context in which CSOs act. The lack of trust and tolerance is a reflection of the historical division that has existed since colonial times between the major racial groups compounded by parallel divisions based on religion and the association of economic power with one group while the other holds political power. The lack of public spiritedness is partially the result of the general lack of trust in the state as well as lack of trust and tolerance of others in society. These findings indicate an urgent need to address issues of tolerance and understanding across both racial and faith based groups.

The dimension of value again indicates only moderate development with a score of 1.5. The strongest value sub-dimensions are poverty eradication and environmental sustainability, each scoring 2.0. The weakest value sub-dimensions are transparency and tolerance, each scoring 1.0. With increasing unemployment and widening income disparities people have become more aware of the existence of and an increase in poverty in Fiji. CSOs have also had greater demands on their resources to address the issue, and have taken advantage of international resolutions and commitments to poverty eradication by obtaining greater donor assistance. Similarly, for environmental sustainability, Fiji CSOs have been active for many years in the area of environmental advocacy assisted by international concerns over global environment issues such as climate change and species extinction that are of acute concern to Fiji. The weak sub-dimensions of transparency and tolerance are of concern. Corruption is perceived to be widespread both in the public and the corporate sector as well as in CS. There seems to be little effort on the part of CSOs to address corruption. Although a small group of CSOs such as the Transparency International Fiji chapter and the Pacific Centre for Public Integrity are active in addressing corruption and transparency issues, most CSOs are not confident enough to do so, pleading lack of technical/professional knowledge. Intolerance in many forms is perceived to be strong in Fiji society with little effort to address it. Both of these issues are important conditions for the creation of an environment for CSO action conducive to the good of society. Fiji CSOs need to seriously consider addressing them. Recommendations on leadership training and on addressing corruption with collaboration of religious organisations should be acted upon urgently.

Despite relatively moderate scores for the structure of CSOs, the environment in which they act, and the values that underpin their activities, the score for the impact that they make in Fiji is relatively good at 2.1. CSOs were considered to be relatively effective in influencing public policies (score 2.3), in responding to social interests (score 2.5), in meeting social needs (score 2.3) and in empowering citizens (score 2.0). The only indicator in which CSOs were considered moderately effective is in holding the state and private sector accountable with a score of 1.5. Media coverage of CSO activities and concerns appear to be skewed but significant. The media report, however, advised CSO leaders that they may be able to use the media more effectively if they were to get the media to report their statements verbatim more often rather than in the words of the journalists concerned. This requires that CSOs spend time writing press releases. Recommendations on advocacy training, on consumer education and on development service for people's empowerment are pertinent.

#### *NEXT STEPS*

The CSI exercise can now form the basis for a nationwide discussion on the status and role of civil society organisations in Fiji. The report findings have already begun to be used by the members of FCOSS. However, it needs to be more widely distributed to include non-members of FCOSS as well as government, private sector groups and donor agencies. While it may have served the purpose of CIVICUS in gauging the health of civil society in Fiji, it will only be really useful to the country if it results in sector wide discussions and actions for change for a stronger civil society and for a more trusting, corruption free and tolerant national community.

## **ANNEXES**

### **LIST OF ANNEXES**

- ANNEX 1 - List of NAG members
- ANNEX 2 - List of civil society stakeholders consulted as part of the CSI project
- ANNEX 3 - Categories of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
- ANNEX 4 - Overview of CSI research methods
- ANNEX 5 - Overview of Survey Samples
- ANNEX 6 - Civil Society & the National Budgetary Process

## ANNEX 1. List of National Advisory Group Members

Name	Details
Mrs. Lorine Tevi	President of FCOSS and Chairperson of NAG, has double PhD in development and divinity. She worked in the Methodist Church Head Office for many years before taking up an appointment with the World Council of Churches in the late seventies and also undertook studies in Europe and USA. She returned to Fiji five years ago and rejoined the Methodist Church. She is currently teaching at the Davuilevu Theological College of the Methodist Church. Under her leadership a group of senior ecumenical minded community leaders have started the VEIQARAVI CENTRE, in New Town, Nasinu, which is a program for the rehabilitation of exploited and wayward young people. She was not able to attend as she was out of the country on a Methodist Church related mission.
Mrs. Suliana Siwatibau	Vice President of FCOSS and acted as the chair and facilitator for the NAG meeting. She is the foremost NGO/CSO expert in Fiji and the Pacific region. She is on the NIT of CSI. She serves as an advisor on a number of local and international CSO Committees.
Mrs. Dharma Chandra	The founder and president of Women's Information Network (WINNET). She works for the Institute of Population Studies of the USP, Suva and has in-depth knowledge about research and population issues.
Mr. Basilio Vanuaca	Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Savings & Credit Union League (FCUL). He is also a Justice of Peace and a member of a variety of community groups and committees including the Youth Framework Committee, Village & School Development Committee, and the Reconciliation Committee. He is a supporter of youth in Fijian settlements and villages within Suva.
Mr. Jagdish Chand	From the organization Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji, Jagdish is a member of the National Executive Com and also the Chairman for the Southern District Schools. He has assisted with UNDP programs on Good Governance. He is also a member of the Arya Samaj Movement in Fiji that deals with good governance, education for all, literacy and cultural and religious enhancement.
Ms. Paulini Matavewa	Acting Senior Economic Planning Officer for the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. She has diverse experience working within the government sector.
Dr. B. Sainath	President of the National Anti-Smoking Society of Fiji (NASSOF). Within this role he is prominent in campaigning against tobacco, alcohol and drug use through conducting workshops, lectures and radio programs amongst other things
Mr. Matai Akauola	Director of News, Sports and Current Affairs at the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd (FBCL). He is involved in promoting sports to young people as a way of making life more worthwhile and meaningful. He is also involved in Marriage Ministries International which helps couples learn to enjoy married life.
Miss Jennifer Yip	Secretary for the Roteract Club of Suva. Roteract, comprised of young members, is an organization that raises funds for a variety of community and vocational activities.
Mrs. Swasti Chand	Complaints Investigation & Resolutions Officer for Unfair Discrimination at the Fiji Human Rights Commission. As well, she is involved with Media Watch Fiji, Pacific Children's Program and Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. She previously coordinated the Citizens Constitutional Forum.
Mr. Tomasi Tokalauvere	General Secretary of the PAFCO Employees Union, and an affiliated member of the Fiji Trade Unions Congress (FTUC). He has formerly been a police officer and a probation Officer. He also works as a freelance investigative journalist.

The following individuals were invited to join the NAG Scoring Session, as a few of the original NAG members were unable to attend.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Details</b>
Miss Arieta Tagivetaua	
Mr. Peceli Rokotuiuvuna	National Liaison Units Program Facilitator for the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO); a regional network of CSOs. He is a young man who has a long history of working within the Civil Society community. A fluent French speaker, a flair which comes in handy especially when dealing with the Francophone nations in the region
Mrs. Filomena Koroï	
Mrs. Barbara Farouk	
Mrs. Nafrue Arapio	
Mrs. Ambalika Kutty	
Mrs. Basundra Kumar	

**ANNEX 2. List of Stakeholders Consulted**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1. Alanieta Caucau	Rabulu Womens Club
2. Apakuki Nakauta	Christian Mission Fellowship Youth Group
3. Arieta Naloqi	PRWIDE
4. Chandra Sudhakar	Ba Red Cross/ Ba Arya Samaj
5. Elena Lawakeli	St Vincent De Paul
6. Iisapeci Nasau	MYF Tavua
7. Inoke N	Ba Christian Outreach Center Youth Group
8. Irene Kumar	PRWIDE
9. Ivona Salusalu	Catholic Women's League
10. Khalid Ali	Fiji Muslim League
11. Makelesi Moce	Catholic Youth
12. Mereilivani Vulavou	Veilomani Club
13. Merewai Turaganikeli	Ba Christian Outreach Center Youth Group
14. Norma Brown	Sorptimist International
15. Praveen Chandra Naidu	Tavua DCOSS
16. Pritka Sanehi	Promoting Rural Women's Initiative, Development & Education (PRWIDE)
17. Priya Nandani	PRWIDE
18. Roshni Padarath	Sorptimist International
19. Saikun Hussein	Fiji Womens Muslim League
20. Satya Bali	Senior Citizens Ba Community Centre
21. Satya Wati Nand	PRWIDE
22. Sera Kurulo Lawakeli	Vatulaulau Sanatan Dharm Sch
23. Shakuntla Singh	Sattya Sai Service Organization Ba
24. Soni A Devi	Shree Sanatan Dharm Naari Sabha
25. Tavo Bokini	Tavualevu Women's Club
26. Veena Devi Ratnam	Sattya Sai Service Organization Ba
27. VK Sharma	Vatulaulau Sanatan Dharm Sch
28. Zohra Bibi Hassan	National Muslim Womens League
29. Kushma Wati	South Pacific Evangelistic Fellowship
30. Kusum Naiker	Vatamai Womens Club
31. Anita Devi Ram	Drasa Kindergarten
32. Sareeta Krishna	Maarthar Sangam
33. Chandra Goundar	Ltk DCOSS
34. Neel Sami	Rifle Range Maathar Sangam
35. Marie Maharaj	Natokowaqa Neighbourhood Watch Zone
36. Yashoda Lok	Maathar Sangam
37. Lora Buatava	Housing Assistance & Relief Trust
38. Lineta Tamanikaiyaroi	Women's Heart in Action (WHA)
39. Angeline Rao	Methodist Church Ltk
40. Rebecca Roshni James	Methodist Church Ltk
41. Nazmeen Nisha	Fiji Muslim Zanana League
42. Donald Roy	Natokowaqa Neighbourhood Watch Zone
43. Susie Banuve Seru	Siva Youth Club
44. Ema Lovodua	Western Disabled Peoples Assoc
45. Saral Chand	Family Support & Education Grp



46. Alita Waqabaca	Family Support & Education Grp
47. Nauleen Peter	Ltk DCOSS
48. Nur Begum Abdullah	Fiji Muslim Women's League
49. Elizabeth Cokomata	Lautoka Baptist Church
50. Narendra Prasad	Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji
51. Suruj Kumari Sharma	Vatamai Womens Club
52. Lin Chetty	Soroptimist International
53. Kavita Reddy	Ltk DCOSS
54. Kata Naloma	Christian Youth Development Assoication
55. Marie Maharaj	FRIENDS
56. Vani Drauniniu	Fiji Bible College
57. Usha Reddy	TISI Maathar Sangam-Ltk
58. Mosese Finau	Family Support & Education Grp
59. Uttra Devi Prasad	Ltk Advisory Council
60. Renu Ranjina Ram	Ltk DCOSS
61. Bimla Naidu	Natokowaqa Neighbourhood Watch Zone
62. Makereta Vatuloka Dean	Western Disabled Peoples Assoc
63. Rohit Sharma	Barara Youth Club
64. Ritesh Sharma	Barara Youth Club
65. Josua Kasowaqa	Voua Methodist Youth Fellowship
66. Naomi Vudogo	Nadroga DCOSS
67. Litia Vaka	Sgtk Womens Grp
68. Penina Kotobalavu	Soroptimist International-Sgtk
69. Sheik Samsher Ali	Road Safety
70. Pravin Kumar	Farmers Union
71. Kaliappa Goundar	Nabaka Primary School
72. Ganga Singh	Sgtk Methodist Primary Sch
73. R. Chetty	
74. Panduman Lal	Sgtk Police Force
75. Nilesh Kumar	Sgtk Police Force
76. Mili Fong	Assoc of Anglican Women
77. Lachman Murti	Andra Primary Sch
78. Shalen	Ministry of Health/
79. Peniasi Vakili	Fiji Association of Social Workers
80. Subramani Krishna	Nadroga Sangam Sch
81. Setaita Kurisaru	Girl Guides
82. Suman Lata Lal	Soroptimist International-Sgtk
83. Erami S	Nadroga/Navosa Provincial Council
84. Maikeli McMillen	Nadroga/Navosa Provincial Council
85. Pelenaise Soakai	Nadroga/Navosa Counselling Centre
86. M. Goundar	
87. Ramesh Naidu	Andra Sangam
88. Akesa Naveilevu	Sgkl Methodist Womens F/ship
89. Kelera Vakili	Sgkl Methodist Womens F/ship
90. Raja Ram	Andra High School
91. Sitiveni Kunaika	Nadroga DCOSS
92. Abel Nand	Methodist Church
93. Adi Vasu Chute	P/Intercultural Awareness & ECREA
94. Aporosa Robaigau	Nadogo DCOSS
95. Asinate Bobi	Seaqaqa Methodist Women's Club

96. Dora Tagi	Lekutu District School
97. Emmanuel Nnopus	Labasa Divisional Hospital & Rotary International
98. Erami Biaunisala	Nabala Secondary School
99. Gyatri Wati Raj	Sri Sathya Sai Service Organization
100.Kamla Prasad	Social Welfare Dept & Shiloh Church
101.Kandasami Naicker	T.I.S.I Sangam
102.Maya Reddy	Pacific Children's Programme
103.Mohammed Rizwan	Macuata Muslim League
104.Nitya Wati Chand	Vanua Levu Arya Mahila Mandal Member
105.Pradip Kumar	Vanua Levu Arya Samaj& Arya Samaj Sec. Sch
106.Pranita Devi Sagar	Nasea Arya Samaj
107.Prem Lata	Labasa Women's Forum
108.Rabbul Takki	Red Cross (Labasa Branch)
109.Sarita Datt	Labasa Women's Forum
110.Sarita Jare	Salvation Army
111.Siteri Nai Gonelevu	Labasa National Penticostal Church
112.Vetaia Vuinakelo	Prison Fellowship
113.Joeli Vula	Kavula Village Youth Club
114.Bimla Singh	Women's Crisis Centre- Labasa
115.Vijay Kumar	Bayly Welfare
116.Arieta Tagivetaua	Strategic Planning & Research Unit - DSW
117.Ravindra Kumar	UNDP
118.Lynda Miller	Bamboo Association of Fiji
119.Bimal Narayan	Japan International Cooperation Agency
120.Sunipa Tevi	Veiqaravi Youth Centre
121.Tarun Kumari Singh	WINNET
122.Wilisoni Qarasoumaki	Community AIDS Centre
123.Tina Ben	Fiji Citizens Freedom Movement
124.Ravuama Lalanabariavi	MFU- Waqanisila
125.Inoke K	Makoi Community Watch
126.Professor Rajesh Chandra	University of the South Pacific
127.Rabbul Begum	Red Cross- Labasa Bran
128.Marica Draunimasi	Veivanua Women's Club
129.Lanya Kaukimoce	Malau Mother's Club
130.Iliana Koroilagilagi	FLP Labasa Women's Network
131.Aliti Susau	World Wide Wide Fund for Nature
132.Anare Kadalala	AOG Church
133.Dr Anand Chand	Kabir Panth Samelan of Fiji
134.Abdul Rafiq	Fiji Muslim League
135.Dr Biman Prasad	Univeristy of the South Pacific

The above list does not include those who participated in the Community Sampling Survey nor those who requested to remain anonymous.

**ANNEX 3. Categories of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**

<b>Civil Society Organisation</b>	<b>Examples</b>
1. Faith-based organisations	Seaqaqa Methodist Women's Club
2. Trade unions	Farmers Union
3. Advocacy CSOs (e.g., civic action, social justice, peace, human rights, consumers' groups)	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
4. Service CSOs (e.g., CSOs supporting community development, literacy, health, social services)	Family Support & Education Group
5. CSOs active in education & training (e.g., think tanks, resource centres, nonprofit schools, public education organisations)	Fiji Girl Guides Association
6. Nonprofit Media	Fem'Link
7. Women's Associations	Women's Heart In Action
8. Student and youth Associations	Barara Youth Club
9. Associations of socio-economically marginalised groups (e.g. poor people, homeless, landless, immigrants,)	Western Disabled Peoples Association
10. Professional and business organisations (e.g., chambers of commerce, professional associations)	Soroptimist International
11. Community-level groups/associations (e.g., burial societies, self-help groups, parents' associations)	Natokawaqa Neighbourhood Watch Zone
12. Economic interest CSOs (e.g., co-operatives, credit unions, mutual saving associations)	AGLOW Microfinance
13. Ethnic/traditional/indigenous associations/organisations	Great Council of Chiefs
14. Environmental CSO's	Live & Learn Environment
15. Culture & Arts CSO's	People Intercultural Awareness Group
16. Social & Recreational CSO's	Senior Citizens Community
17. Grant-making foundations & fund-raising bodies	Housing Assistance & Relief Trust
18. Political parties	Fiji Labour Party
19. CSO networks/federations/support organisations	Fiji Council of Social Services
20. Social movements (eg. landless people, peace movement)	Inter-faith

### ANNEX 3. Overview of the Research Methods

The Civil Society Index (CSI) project in Fiji employed the following research methods:

1. **Community Sample Survey**
2. **District Stakeholder Consultations**
3. **Media Review ( This was not completed.)**
4. **Fact finding studies**

These research methods are discussed in greater detail below.

#### 1. Community Sample Survey

Community sample research (CSR) involved face-to-face interviews with individual respondents. This method sought to obtain information on the *individual's* attitudes and behaviour, and also on certain *community* characteristics regarding civil society issues. This included information on the extent of individual participation in CSOs in the community, but also about the characteristics of civil society as a whole in the specific community. The CSR respondents were selected in a three-stage sampling process:

1. A sample of communities was selected from Fiji-wide sampling frame;
2. A sample of households in the selected communities was selected for interviews;
3. In each household, a specific household member was identified as the target respondent.

The community sample research method involved the following steps:

- ☒ Select communities
- ☒ Prepare questionnaire
- ☒ Select and train interviewers
- ☒ Pre-test questionnaire
- ☒ Select households
- ☒ Conduct interviews
- ☒ Input data in database
- ☒ Analyse data

Selection of communities: A purposive sample\* of communities along different community types was used for this research. A list was drawn to identify different community types in Fiji. Some of the variables used for the identification of the community type were:

- ☒ Geographical area: rural, peri-rural, small town, peri-urban, urban, metro
- ☒ Physical profile: formal planned, formal unplanned, informal planned, informal unplanned
- ☒ Income level: high, middle, low.

In consideration of the above, areas identified were:

- ☒ Savusavu – Town area, Naidi village and Yaroi village;
- ☒ Labasa – Tuatua Housing area, Cawa-i-ra Settlement, Nasekula and Bulileka village;
- ☒ Sigatoka – Lawaqa, Volivoli village and Vatukarasa;
- ☒ Nasinu – Nakasi (Nakasi Rd.), Nakasi (Vishnu Deo Rd.), Nadera and Vunivaivai settlement;
- ☒ Suva – Namadi Heights, Samabula North and Wailea settlement,
- ☒ Nausori – Lakena settlement, Raralevu and Nausori Town area,
- ☒ Ba – Varadoli, Yaralevu, Rarawai and Navoli village,
- ☒ Lautoka – Simla, Tuaniveibona settlement, Drasa, Naviyago settlement,

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\* Purposive sampling- the method in which the researcher selects a specific sample on the basis of some clearly defined criteria; in Fiji's case, a specific community type  
CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report – Fiji Islands

- # Nadi – Nasoso Rd., Kerebula settlement and Sabeto.
- # Ovalau- Levuaka Town Area
- # Taveuni- Somosomo Village

Preparation of the questionnaires: The questionnaire prepared by CIVICUS was used for the interviews. However, some minor adaptations were made for the questions to fit the Fiji context.

Selection and training of interviewers: An advertisement was placed at the University of the South Pacific for hiring research assistants. Persons were selected in consideration of previous experience in similar work and their place of residence. It was a cost-effective option for research assistants to conduct the interviews in their own areas. Following the identification of interviewers, one day training was conducted by the principal researcher. Topics covered were:

- # The background of this research: meaning of CSO related terminology
- # The importance of interviewer attitude, honesty, objectivity, organizational skills and professionalism
- # Issues around confidentiality of the respondent
- # The importance of following the exact wording and recording verbatim responses
- # The purpose and use of probing and clarifying techniques
- # The reason for and use of classification and respondent information questions
- # A review of instructions and questionnaires
- # The importance of the respondent's positive feelings about survey research

Project Briefing: The principal researcher prepared clear and detailed interviewer instructions covering the random household selection, the interview process and other important elements of the research design. Using these instructions, a personal briefing session was held. All interviewers were instructed on the following:

- # Type of study
- # Sampling procedures
- # Handling of materials
- # Interview length
- # Termination points and qualifiers for eligible respondents
- # Reading of interviewer instructions
- # Reading of questionnaire
- # Review of skip patterns and rotations
- # Review of probing and clarifying techniques as they apply to questionnaire
- # Interviewer check of each finished questionnaire before the editing process
- # Completion of a practice interview

Pre-test of questionnaire: A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted by the interviewers during the briefing session and a few interviews were conducted amongst the USP community.

Selection of households: The Fiji Bureau of Statistics were consulted for the identification of the area boundaries for sampling. In each selected community, a random sample of 10 households was selected. The total number of houses in the selected community was estimate in consultation with the Bureau of Statistics. The CSI toolkit, which is a guide for all countries participating in this research states that a random sample of 100 households per community was to be randomly selected. However, in consideration of small total population of 800,000 and a population of .....aged between 16 to ....years in 2004\*, therefore, the present sample was considered relevant. The central division of Fiji has more than a quarter of all the national population. This

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\* Estimates provided by the Bureau of Statistics  
CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report – Fiji Islands

was taken into account in the sampling. About 32% of the community sample was selected from Suva, Nausori and Nasinu areas to make the study representative.

For each community a map was provided to the interviewers with clear markings of the location and starting point for interview. Any diversion from this was discussed with the principal researcher. For uniformity in all communities, the sampling interval of 4 identified households and interviewers were briefed on to use the random walk procedure. Once the appropriate dwelling was identified, interviewers were instructed to inquire whether there is more than one household in a particular dwelling. The number of households per dwelling was defined as the number of families sharing a single kitchen. If one to three households were in that dwelling, all were interviewed. In the absence of anyone at home, interviewers were instructed to substitute the household with the next dwelling to the left.

Only household members older than 16 years were eligible respondents. A gender quota of 50% was established. Amongst the individuals living in the household, the respondents were identified via the next-birthday rule (i.e., interview the respondent whose birthday comes up soonest). If the identified respondent was not available, the interviewer substituted with the next person whose birthday came up the soonest. If the next respondent was also not available, an appointment was made to return at a later date. If the respondent was still not available, the interviewer continued with the *household* selection process.

Data input and analysis: CIVICUS created SPSS template was utilized after a few relevant revisions for data input. The data was analysed using the CIVICUS toolkit on Indicator Data Sources and Link to the Questionnaires. This was done to maintain consistency and to provide appropriate data for scoring purposes at a later stage.

## **2. District Stakeholders Consultations**

In order to gather information regarding the state of civil society, regional stakeholder consultations were held in Suva, Ba, Lautoka, Nadroga, Nasinu & Labasa with participants coming from Tavua, Rakiraki, Nadi, Bua & Cakaudrove besides the previously mentioned districts, to represent urban/rural, centre/periphery, affluent/poorer composition of the country. A total of 135 persons\* attended these consultations and 90 completed the structured questionnaire.

The locations for the regional stakeholder consultations were selected by the NIT. Participants were selected based on their known affiliations and participation in their organisation. The NIT prepared the consultation program, sent out invitations, followed up for confirmations and cancellations.

The participants were requested to fill in questionnaires during the face to face stakeholder consultations. This approach was slightly different from the one recommended by CIVICUS. This decision was made after initially sending the questionnaires to 10 persons and receiving uncompleted and confusing responses. The consultations begun with an explanatory session followed by a probing exercise to solicit views and opinions of participants on the questions identified in the stakeholder structured questionnaire. Arising out of these, very open and interesting discussions were held with the convenor and other team members. The consultations were facilitated by the NIT and some volunteers. Completed questionnaires were later analysed by the researcher.

In total 200 persons were contacted for the consultations. However, only a handful responded positively by the given deadline. The NIT worked frantically and quite late into evenings to

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\* Refer to Appendix 1 for the List of Participants  
CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report – Fiji Islands

catch people at their homes in an attempt to contact them outside the participants busy work hours. The initial questionnaire, which followed the CIVICUS sample one closely, was found to be confusing for the participants. Questions were revised and wordings simplified in the final questionnaire.

### Data Input and Analysis

CIVICUS created SPSS template was utilized after a few relevant revisions for data input. The data was analysed using the CIVICUS toolkit on Indicator Data Sources and Link to the Questionnaires. This was done to maintain consistency and to provide appropriate data for scoring purposes at a later stage.

### 3. Media Review

The media review serves to:

- (i) gather information about civil society activities reported in the media. This will provide data especially for the values and impact dimensions, which rely strongly on examples of civil society activities on the respective indicators.
- (ii) provide insights on how the media perceives and portrays civil society. This information is not captured in a specific indicator, but it offers important information on the portrayed image of civil society in the media.

Ideally, the media review should cover print media as well as TV/radio, however, in Fiji's case only the print media was monitored. Monitoring was done by individuals with a journalism background.

In selecting the media samples the following criteria was used: (1) frequency, (2) geographical coverage (3) ownership of media (4) language used (5) Popularity. As such the following samples were chosen:

	<b>Language</b>	<b>Geographical Coverage</b>	<b>Popularity</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Fiji Times	English	National	Most popular	Private	Printed daily
Daily Post	English	National	Average	Private	Printed daily
Fiji Sun	English & Fijian	National	Average	Private	Printed Daily
Volasiga	Fijian	National	Mostly with older citizens	Private (published by the Fiji Times)	Printed Weekly
Shanti Dutt	Hindi	National	Mostly with older citizens	Private (Published by the Daily Post)	Printed Weekly

After consultations with CIVICUS, it was agreed that back issues from October– December 2003 of each of the above newspapers would be monitored despite the review commencing in March 2004.

News articles and reports were selected based on two general guidelines: (a) they dealt with civil society; (b) they dealt with an organisation that belongs to the types of CSOs listed by CIVICUS. Articles mentioning or referring to civil society actors or activities were included as well. The presence of a civil society actor in an article was sufficient, either as a participant in an activity or as a directly or indirectly quoted commentator regarding an event. The article did not have to be explicitly concerned with civil society as such

Prior to starting proper with the review, the 4-member monitoring team carried out a sampling exercise to ensure accuracy and uniformity of the whole review. Unfortunately returns from the monitoring team were never completed so that this exercise made little input into the report.

#### Data Input & Analysis

The CIVICUS-created MS-Access Database was utilised to log general information (date, country of origin, medium type etc) for all items that satisfied the pre-determined criteria. The following details were also entered:

- type of item (character of article/report, whether it was a short report, opinion, interview, analysis, etc.);
- topic of the item (primary and secondary topic, both taken from a list of 37 themes, e.g., education, work and unemployment, accommodation, children, sport, agriculture, human rights, etc.);
- geographical scope of the item (i.e., international, national, regional, local);
- type of organisation (i.e., what types of CSOs appear in the item, i.e., written about or provide a comment on an event; according to a list of 23 CSO types);
- prominence of the item within the issue (press: article published on page 1, television and radio: report broadcast 1<sup>st</sup> in sequence; the importance of the article or report); and
- presentation of the CSO (i.e., was the CSO presented in the article, as positive, neutral or negative).

The Indicator Data Sources contained in the CIVICUS toolkit was utilised for analysis of all data gathered via this research method. This was done to maintain consistency and to provide appropriate data for scoring purposes at a later stage.

#### **4. Fact Finding Studies**

The fact-finding research consists of several different research methods and studies, including desk reviews, key informant interviews and two specifically designed studies to gauge the extent of corporate social responsibility and civil society's policy impact in a number of selected policy fields.



## ANNEX 5. Overview of Survey Samples

### 5. A. Community Survey Sample

A total of 297 persons were interviewed for the Community questionnaires. Some 57% of the respondents were from a formal planned neighbourhood, 20% from Informal unplanned and so on, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1- Neighbourhood profile**

Type of Neighbourhood	No.	Percent
Formal planned	168	57%
Formal unplanned	47	16%
Informal planned	23	8%
Informal unplanned	59	20%
Total	297	100%

### Gender

Forty nine percent all persons interviewed were females and 50% males. This is similar to the national representation of the population (Table 2).

**Table 2 – Gender**

F.2. Sex	No.	Percent
Female	146	49%
Male	148	50%
Did not mentioned	3	1%
Total	297	100%

### Ethnicity

Thirty seven percent of all the respondents identified themselves as a Fijian national first, than as a member of some ethnic group second. This trend is interesting, as it is a common perception that people identify strongly with their different ethnic groups in Fiji. Table 3 shows the breakdown of the other respondents.

**Table 3 – Ethnicity**

F.5 Which of the following best describes you?	No.	Percent
a) I am a Fijian national first and a member of some ethnic group second	109	37%
b) Above all, I am a Part –Fijian	11	4%
c) Above all, I am a Indo-Fijian	96	32%
d) Above all, I am an European-Fijian	1	
e) Above all, I am a Chinese-Fijian		
f) Above all, I am a Ethnic Fijian	63	21%
g) I am a foreign resident in this country	13	4%
h) Other	3	1%
DK/NA	1	
Total	297	100%

### Language

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents were Indo-Fijians (53%). As people usually speak their native tongue at home, we could assume that this is also reflective of the ethnicity of

the respondents. In line with this assumption, we find that 63 (51%) of 124 Fijians identified with their ethnic group directly while 49% might have identified as a Fijian national first. 96 (62%) of 156 person identified as Indo-Fijian first, and only 38% identified as a Fijian national first. Therefore, it could be said that Fijians have higher nationalist pride compared to other ethnics groups in Fiji.

**Table 4 - Language**

What language do you normally speak at home?	No.	Percent
[English ]	14	5%
[Fijian]	124	42%
[Hindi ]	156	53%
Other	2	1%
DK/NA	1	
Total	297	100%

## Religion

Table 5 indicates that 41% of the respondents were Hindus, 49% Christians (including the three denominations of Christians and Others), and 9% Muslims. This closely resembles the national statistics on religion.

**Table 5 - Religion**

F.4. To which denomination do you belong?	No.	Percent
Roman Catholic	7	2%
Protestant	7	2%
Methodist	98	33%
Muslim	27	9%
Hindu	122	41%
Other	36	12%
DK/NA		
Total	297	100%

## Income

Majority (36%) of the respondents fell in the lowest quintile of \$0-\$5000 annual income. Collectively 77% of all respondents had an annual income ranging from \$0-\$15000.

**Table 6 – Income**

F.6 Annual income	No.	Percent
We would like to know in what group your household is, <b>counting ALL wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes that come in a year.</b>		
\$0-\$5000	108	36%
\$5000-\$10000	88	30%
\$10000-\$15000	33	11%
\$15000-\$20000	32	11%
\$20000-\$30000	22	7%
\$30000+	10	3%
DK/NA	4	1%
Total	297	100%

## 5. B. District Stakeholder Consultations Sample

A total of 90 persons were interviewed for the Stakeholder questionnaires and of these 31% of the respondents were from the village/rural area and 27% from the City/suburban areas as shown in Table 1.

Table 1- Neighbourhood Profile

F.1. In what kind of community do you live?	No.	Percent
Village / Rural area	28	31%
Small town	7	8%
Town	17	19%
City/Suburban	24	27%
Other	14	16%
Total	90	100%

### Gender

Of the 90 persons that answered the stakeholder questionnaire, 57% were females, 24% males and 19% did not identify their gender (Table 2).

Table 2 - Gender

F.2. Sex	No.	Percent
Female	51	57%
Male	22	24%
Did not mentioned	17	19%
Total	90	100%

### Ethnicity

Twenty eight percent of all the respondents identified themselves as a Fijian national first, than as a member of some ethnic group second. Table 3 shows the breakdown of the other respondents.

Table 3 - Ethnicity

F.5. Ethnicity- Which of the following best describes you?	No.	Percent
a) I am a Fijian national first and a member of some ethnic group second	25	28%
b) Above all, I am a Part -Fijian	1	1%
c) Above all, I am a Indo-Fijian	34	38%
e) Above all, I am a Chinese-Fijian	1	1%
f) Above all, I am a Ethnic Fijian	11	12%
g) I am a foreign resident in this country	7	8%
h) Other	1	1%
DK/NA	10	11%
Total	90	100%

### Language

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents were Indo-Fijians (44%). Similar with the community research findings the stakeholder consultation findings indicate that compared to Indo-Fijians the Ethnic Fijians tend to have higher pride of identified as a Fijian national first than their ethnic group. On issues of ethnicity, the tendency to affiliate strongly amongst own ethnic group first was also noticed during the consultations. On the same issue, people generally find it easier to affiliate with person on another race if they speak their own language.

Table 4 - Language

What language do you normally speak at home?	No.	Percent
[English ]	13	14%
[Fijian]	27	30%
[Hindi ]	40	44%
Other	1	1%
DK/NA	9	10%
Total	90	100%

## Religion

Table 5 indicates that 31% of the respondents were Hindus, 50% Christians (including the three denominations of Christians and Others), and 7% Muslims. This resembles the national statistics on religion.

Table 5 – Religion

F.4. Religion -To which denomination do you belong?	No.	Percent
Roman Catholic	10	11%
Protestant	1	1%
Methodist	16	18%
Muslim	6	7%
Hindu	28	31%
Other	18	20%
DK/NA	11	12%
Total	90	100%

## Income

Twenty six percent of the respondents fell in the lowest quintile of \$0-\$5000 annual income. Collectively 67% of all respondents had an annual income ranging from \$0-\$15000. Considering that this is the counting all incomes to household within a year, this is relatively low as in Fiji its common to have an average of 5 persons in a household.

Table 6 – Income

F.6 Annual income	No.	Percent
We would like to know in what group your household is, <b>counting ALL wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes that come in a year.</b>		
\$0-\$5000	19	26%
\$5000-\$10000	17	24%
\$10000-\$15000	12	17%
\$15000-\$20000	10	14%
\$20000-\$30000	9	12%
\$30000+	5	7%
DK/NA	18	* % calculated from 72 to exclude DK
Total	90	100%

## **ANNEX 6. Civil Society & the National Budgetary Process**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Like other democratic nations, Fiji's governance system comprises three major arms. These are the legislature (Parliament), the executive arm (Cabinet and the Public Service) and the judiciary. The executive arm manages the country on behalf of the legislature, which represents the people. The executive therefore has to obtain consent of the legislature for its programmes through the approval of the annual budget.

The budget is prepared by the Ministry of Finance which invites all the other government Ministries as well as statutory bodies to present it with their proposed programmes for the next year and estimated funding requirement for each. The Ministry of Finance puts together estimate of expected incomes from taxes, loans and other sources as well as from aid agencies. In its attempt to balance the budget it often introduces policies for raising extra income for the government that may adversely affect the poorer members of society more than the rich. This has happened for example with the introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT) system for example. Sometimes more powerful members of society will lobby for policies that favour them at the expense of the public such as the removal of the Capital Gains Tax. Given the continuing rise in poverty in Fiji to over 30% in 2006, it is important that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) be vigilant and vocal in ensuring that national budgetary policies and programmes distribute the burden and the benefits equitably amongst the people of the country.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION**

During the last four years the Fiji Government has regularly invited CSOs to make inputs into the government budgetary process. Two particular Non Government Organisations (NGOs) that have been active in this are the Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECEA) and the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS). The former is well known for its research and advocacy activities in the promotion of social justice and for its programmes for squatters and the poor. The latter is the largest network of NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Fiji. Legislators – both in government and in opposition parties - seek their views and respect their input into the annual national budgets. ECEA is less than seven years old while FCOSS has been in existence for well over 40 years. Both organizations have also gained the confidence of the media and the public in their ability to analyse the national budget with respect to the interests of the marginalised of society.

Both organizations have been supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to run training workshops for NGOs in order to help them understand the national budget and budgetary process and to make input into them.

When ECEA makes submissions to government for the budget, it raises issues of concern and suggests some possible solutions based on its research findings. On the other hand, FCOSS makes submissions that take into account the inputs from its network members scattered throughout the country from local community level to national level groupings.

FCOSS participation each year begins between January and March when the staff travels around the country for general consultations with the District Council of Social Services (DCOSS) as well as the network of rural women's groups (PRWIDE). The staff simultaneously gathers input into the government budget which is to be presented in parliament later in the year in November. The letter of invitation from the Minister of Finance to FCOSS is usually received in March requesting submission for the national budget by May.

FCOSS does not receive any funding assistance for its consultation exercise for the budget. Hence it has not been able to provide training to its members to enable them to better understand and make use of the national budgetary process in order to influence government programmes. The assistance from the ADB mentioned above enabled FCOSS to obtain technical assistance from its Australian equivalent – the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) to provide the necessary training. This was conducted in 2005. It was a one off event but has improved NGOs and CBOs engagement with the budget process through FCOSS.

### IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Despite limited inputs from members through the years, FCOSS is of the opinion that its participation has sometimes met with success. Examples include the increase in family welfare allowances, the concessions on bus fares for older persons, the increase in grants to NGOs and greater range of funded activities for poverty alleviation.

Nevertheless, much more can be done to encourage wider participation of civil society not only in the formulation of the national budget but also in the implementation and monitoring of national programmes funded through it.

For more effective monitoring of the budget itself, it is important that sufficient information is provided to the public. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had proposed in March 2004, a number of changes to the budget information to improve transparency and accountability to the public. These were as follows:

- List all new policies that affect the Budget
- Estimate their cost over the next three years
- Strengthen the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament
- Publish details of all revenue of Ministries (including fees, etc.) and expenditure from Trust Accounts
- Reduce arrears of tax revenue, publish estimates of the annual cost of tax concession (tax subsidies), remove Ministerial discretion over tax levels and introduce an identification number to stem tax evasion
- Provide estimates of the budget outcome half way through each year (midyear budget review)
- Legislate to give the public a right of access to key budget documents and estimates
- Develop measurable objectives for public programs and publish date on outcome against these objectives
- Strengthen accountability for “out of budget” expenditure and expenditure control generally.

The suggested changes by IMF will help CSOs monitor Budget implementation more effectively. During the training workshop in 2005 participants were informed of the government’s invitation for CSO participation in Summit Working Groups of the National Economic Development Council. These groups not only prepare draft policy papers for a national summit but also monitor the implementation of the national development plan. Unfortunately the CSOs were discouraged from participating mainly because of the difficulties of wading through voluminous technical papers. Most CSOs lack technical expertise for meaningful participation. Appropriate training will increase their capacity to do so and to contribute significantly to increased participation in the financial governance of the country.

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