



TOOL 3

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CONTEXT - AN EXAMPLE FROM FIJI

1. **Proper planning & preparation** so that time in communities is productive and constructive to community interests.
2. **Isevusevu** or the **entry protocol**: when entering a Fijian village, or before conducting any research activity, permission must be granted by gatekeepers, such as the chief of the village or the head of the community. This will facilitate the support of community members.
3. **The talanoa or vitalanoa (multilogue)** stage where the 'rules of engagement' are discussed and also where the exchange of information will take place. *Talanoa* is the culturally accepted way of sharing information orally, in Fijian communities, by which important decisions, negotiations, dialogues and teaching in an Indigenous Fijian community is done.
4. **Reporting, analysing and validation** of information collected – at the end of the *Talanoa*, information gathered will be analysed and reported back to the community members to validate. Once accepted by the participants, it can then be used in research.
5. **Gifting or reciprocation** – reciprocating the intellectual property and knowledge shared by the community members is a significant aspect of working with Fijian communities. This should be done at the end of the activity or research before leaving the community.
6. **Itatau the departure or temporary departure protocol** where the researcher requests to temporarily leave the research site or community. Before the researchers leave the community, they should inform the community members that they are going to depart. During this protocol, the community will give their blessings for their journey.
7. **Reporting back or revisiting the research site or community.** After the research or project has successfully ended, it is appropriate to honour the vanua by informing them of the completion of the research or project. This is significant especially for an indigenous Fijian carrying out the research or project to do so that the community can know that their contribution was not in vain. In return, the community may organize a vakacirisalusalu feasting and dancing to mark the success of the research or project.

**Seven dimensions
of community engagement**
(Source: Nabobo-Baba, 2006; Lagi, 2015)

