



MDF Fiji  
Enterprise  
Engine

## Creation of MDF Fiji Enterprise Engine helps Fijian MSMEs generate FJD1.2 million in additional revenue

How learning key business skills and understanding local markets drives small and medium-sized businesses growth in Fiji.



### The Context

In Fiji, MSMEs struggle to deliver results, largely due to a lack of knowledge regarding the processes involved in operating a business. This is due mainly to the internal challenges that they face in growing their businesses, where skills such as bookkeeping, business planning and relevant training are not well understood or practiced.

Previous incubation systems have attempted to address these issues, but have often failed to make the content of their support relevant to the Fijian issues or have been too generic in their delivery.



### MDF Fiji Enterprise Engine (MFEE)

Building on its experience working with MSMEs as part of its Market Systems Development (MSD) activities, MDF developed a pilot business acceleration program in 2016. Aply named the Fiji Enterprise Engine (MFEE), it was created to provide a more effective way of supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through an outcome-oriented program. MFEE was designed to help businesses focus on growth and develop their business skills and internal processes, it would work with MSMEs to move towards a sustainable and scalable business model that improves their chances of success in the Fijian economy and the region.

Ten MSMEs from the tourism, horticulture and export processing sectors participated in the pilot phase and were chosen in close consultation with the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF), Young Entrepreneurs Council (YEC) and Women Entrepreneurs and Business Council (WEBC) and the Fiji Export Council (FEC) members.



### The Challenge

Most of the MSMEs in the program were family-owned and operated. This sometimes caused issues in decision-making and finances, while other issues – such as a lack of market intelligence, marketing and branding, basic book keeping, and strategic planning – emerged as MFEE progressed.

Additionally, each business faced its own set of challenges, requiring tailor-made solutions. This meant that a careful balance was needed between supporting family-owned and individually-owned businesses, and when dealing with the wide variety of attitudes and ways of communicating between and amongst them.



## The Solution

MDF set about creating customised, hands-on learning programs suited to the specificities and peculiarities of MSMEs in their local context that would allow them to build on their current knowledge and provided new insights on business growth.

This was made possible through access to a group of experienced international and local business trainers, complemented by MDF's rich sectoral knowledge base and through coordination with other stakeholders and peers in the business and regulatory environment, such as the Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority, Fiji National Provident Fund and financial institutions that offer business solutions; BSP, ANZ, Westpac, HFC and the Fiji Development Bank.



## The Companies

**Vou (Dance) Fiji** – Entertainment services

**Rusiate Charcoal** – Producer and seller of natural charcoal to the local market

**Niu Venture Creations** – Suppliers of rough and sewn timber for local and export market

**Allied Print Design** – Custom design of garments and signage

**Samson Lee Designs** – Designer and supplier of resort wear

**Aswhy Enterprises** – Supplier of mahogany crotch logs

**The Mushroom Garden** – Producer and seller of oyster mushrooms

**International Resort Supplies** – Sources handicrafts from outer islands for export, seafood supplier for local and export market.

## The Results

Enhancing participants' **business skills, self-confidence** and equipping them to make sound **strategic business decisions**.



Additional sales revenue of **FJD1.2 million**



Created employment opportunities for **32** men and women



The success of the MFEE model acted as a catalyst for an MDF and Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF) partnership to develop MSMEs in Fiji.

Participants have shown encouraging results since entering the MFEE program and have been able to apply the different learnings to their businesses. The creation of the 'learning space' and the use of mentors contributed positively to enhancing their business skills, boosting self-confidence and equipping them to make sound strategic business decisions.

This initiative has resulted in the additional sales revenue of FJD1.2 million for 8 MFEE participants and has created employment opportunities for 32 men and women.

The success of the MFEE model acted as a catalyst for an MDF and Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF) partnership to develop MSMEs in Fiji through the first private-sector-led business acceleration system targeting FCEF members. These include members of the Young Entrepreneurs Council (YEC) and Women Entrepreneurs & Business Councils (WEBC).