

Exploring the Disparity in SME Market Offerings in Fiji

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Overview of Presentation

- ❑ Problem Statement
- ❑ Body of Knowledge
- ❑ Research Approach & Methodology
- ❑ Key Findings
- ❑ Conclusions

Problem Statement

SME support services are not working in the context of Fiji

❑ Demand side

- expectations and needs of SMEs do not match the support offered in the market, or
- there is no special interest to buy the products and services

❑ Supply side

- support are driven to the market through external influence
- No input from SMEs in the design

Body of Knowledge

Are support services working?

- UK (Bennett 2008) and the European experience (Lambrecht & Pirnay 2005)
- African experience (Irwin 2011)
- US (Yusuf 2010) and the Canadian experience (Audet and St-Jean (2007)
- Australian experience (Breen & Bergin Seers 2002)
- World Bank experience

Factors attributed to support failure

- Cultural misfit (Irwin 2011, Dana 2007, Saffu 2003)
- Deficiency in knowledge & learning capacity (Henry, Hill & Leitch 2005)
- Limited sources of capital (Blumberg & Letterie 2008)

Research Approach & Methodology

- ❑ Research Approach - Qualitative
- ❑ Methodology – IPA
- ❑ Data Collection Method - ‘Mixed’ Talanoa
- ❑ Data Collation & Analysis – IPA and using Nvivo (software)

Three Key Findings

- ❑ A disconnect between the needs of those seeking assistance and the nature of support provided to meet those needs.
- ❑ Inadequate planning and preparation for business start-ups including the assessment of needs.
- ❑ Unwanted barriers to business start-ups and growth.

Conclusions

- ❑ A better understanding of the business and needs in socio-cultural conditions
- ❑ Context-specific support program and assistance required