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
- 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