Reversing the NCD trend in the Pacific

Promising results from a three-year pilot, testing behaviour science applications and “edutainment” to address Pacific’s most intractable problem

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What is the Pacific Island Food Revolution

Why we believe it works

What are its future projections and sustainability
An NCD crisis in the Pacific

- 84% Percentage of NCD-related deaths in Fiji, the worst in the world
- 3 Number of diabetes-related amputations per day in Fiji, the worst in the world
- 75% Percentage of death in the Pacific that is NCD related
“Pacific Island Food Revolution ... is a crusade to revitalize Indigenous foodways in the guise of a genial cooking competition.”

The New York Times
November 2020
attitudes of young people to their environment,
WE LAUNCHED IN 2018

LOOK AT US NOW

5M
Number of weekly viewers reached via TV in the Pacific

20
Number of TV networks that air the PIFR TV show prime time in the Pacific

12
Number of Pacific Island countries that screen the PIFR TV show on prime time

OUR REACH INTERNATIONALLY

TV1 New Zealand
Maori TV New Zealand
ABC International
USA PLACEMENT (Coming Soon)

Asian Food Network
SBS Food Australia (Prime Time)
CHINA PLACEMENT (Coming Soon)
EUROPEAN PLACEMENT (Coming Soon)
5.6M
Number of people reached on Facebook in 2020

636,485
Number of people who engage with PIFR on Facebook in 2020

4
Number of PIFR radio shows in local languages in 4 countries on prime time

100
Number of PIFR recipes that we share with our #FoodWarriors in the Pacific and around the world
Ongoing investment in monitoring, evaluation and learning throughout the program

**Formative qualitative research**
- Refined PIFR’s ToC; removed ‘pride’ as a barrier and added ‘mood’ and ‘cooking skills’ as determining factors of food choices.

**2018**

**Causal lab experiment**
- In cooperation with USP
- Found that women are 18 pct points more likely to choose a healthy local meal after watching PIFR.

**2019**

**Pre/Post exposure mixed-methods surveys**
- Strong evidence of PIFR messages being internalized by the target audience.
- Need for radio shows to better reach ni-Vanuatu
- Need for time-efficient recipes

**2019-2020**

**Year 3 impact assessment mixed-methods surveys**

**2020-2021**
The purpose of the research was to assess if exposure to PIFR can be associated with shifting diets away from unhealthy foreign food towards local, nutritious and healthy food.

- To what extent can we see any correlations between watching PIFR and shifting dietary behavior?
- How do external factors, such as COVID affect PIFR’s opportunity to impact dietary behavior?
Our methodology had 4 distinct phases

Initial workshops with local partners
Busara created the quantitative instrument, which was then presented to local partners for their input and feedback.

Quantitative data collection
In-country partners collected data from 330 respondents using the co-developed survey instrument. Data was collected from Dec 2020 - Feb 2021.

Follow-up workshops with local partners
Busara presented findings from the quantitative analysis, and the qualitative guide was co-developed with their participation.

Qualitative data collection
In-country partners revisited a pre-selected group of previous respondents for an in-depth qualitative interview in Feb-Mar 2021.
Engagement with PIFR:
How familiar were the respondents with PIFR content?
Firstly, we found high levels of engagement with PIFR among respondents - especially in Tonga and Samoa
Dietary behavior:
Did we see a difference between people who watch PIFR and people who do not?
Key finding #1: Watching PIFR is associated with positive self-reported shifts in diets

Respondents were asked “Do you think your diet has changed over the past year?” - “If yes, how so?”

Calculating share of respondents who specifically said the shift is towards more local and healthy food, we find that those who have seen PIFR are more likely to report they have changed their diets in this way than those who have not seen PIFR.

Figure 2.1. Share of respondents reporting shifting their own diets towards more local and healthy food over the past year, by country
Key finding #2: Countries where PIFR is more viewed correlates with larger relative shifts in diet improvement between viewers and non-viewers

Figure 2.a. Share of respondents actively following PIFR

Figure 2.b. Percentage increase in reported positive dietary shift for PIFR followers
**Key finding #3:** Watching PIFR is associated with believing that local food has become more popular over the past year

Across all countries, except Vanuatu, we see that respondents who have seen PIFR are more likely to consider local food as having gained popularity in the past year. However, the level of respondents in Vanuatu who believe local food has become more popular in the past year is already high.

This finding is key as it suggests that PIFR influences perceptions of social norms related to popularity of local food.

Figure 3. Share of respondents believing local food has become more popular over the past year, by country
### The COVID-19 pandemic

**Did COVID create a conducive environment for PIFR’s goals?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Increased prices on imported food</td>
<td>- Tongans experienced strict price controls on imported food keeping the prices low.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Decreased incomes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- More time at home</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Increased focus on health and well being</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, we saw the biggest relative differences between Tongan respondents who have watched PIFR and those who have not, which indicates PIFR’s ability to impact dietary behavior even when the external environment poses a challenge.
Future Projections & Sustainability
The financials

- NCD treatment costs conservatively estimated at 2-4% of GDP across the Pacific (Helble and Francisco, 2017)

- Based on the latest GDP data, this amounts to USD $137.6 million per annum to USD $275 million per annum (or AUD $183.76 million up to AUD $367.51 million) across the four countries (World Bank, 2021)

- At an annual cost of AUD $2.8 million, PIFR has the potential to result in delivering net economic benefits if it were to reduce NCD prevalence by just 1%
Cost and financial returns estimates if 1%, 5% and 10% of viewers change their diets over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PIFR cost per annum (USD)</th>
<th>1% uptake (individuals)</th>
<th>Benefit (USD)</th>
<th>5% update (individuals)</th>
<th>Benefit (USD)</th>
<th>10% (Individuals)</th>
<th>Benefit (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>2,716</td>
<td>755,048</td>
<td>13,582</td>
<td>3,775,796</td>
<td>27,164</td>
<td>7,551,592</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>5,460</td>
<td>1,517,880</td>
<td>27,843</td>
<td>7,740,354</td>
<td>57,044</td>
<td>15,858,232</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>8,231</td>
<td>2,288,218</td>
<td>42,817</td>
<td>11,903,126</td>
<td>89,913</td>
<td>24,995,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>11,030</td>
<td>3,066,340</td>
<td>58,540</td>
<td>16,274,120</td>
<td>126,068</td>
<td>35,046,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>13,856</td>
<td>3,851,968</td>
<td>75,049</td>
<td>20,863,622</td>
<td>165,839</td>
<td>46,103,242</td>
</tr>
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But let’s not forget the human cost
Acknowledgements

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