Summary Survey Results from Nine Markets in Fiji

Partners to Improve Markets (PIM)

2011

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As part of the Partnerships to Improve Markets (PIM) Project, UN Women requested that market managerial staff at nine of Fiji’s thirteen municipal markets complete a detailed survey of approximately one hundred and fifty questions regarding infrastructural and socioeconomic issues facing market workers. The nine surveyed markets—Sigatoka, Nausori, Rakiraki, Ba, Tavua, Lautoka, Nadi, Namaka, Labasa—vary considerably in size, demographic characteristics, and the complexity of infrastructure and trade-related social networks. Although each market has unique features, with the number of vendors ranging from 200 in the Rakiraki Municipal Market to 2,400 in the Suva Municipal Market, and traders travelling distances as long as 168 kilometers to as short as 28 kilometers to sell in the market. All but one of these markets (Labasa) are located on Viti Levu, Fiji’s most populous island, and nearly all report significant difficulties with aging infrastructural, unsanitary work conditions, and lack of municipal or government investment in markets despite the considerable consideration markets make to Fiji’s local and national economies.

The following report analyzes information gathered from the survey questions by grouping responses into 38 related categories. These responses have been aggregated by market and are iterated in the attached excel document, which has numbers that correspond to each of the numbered categories in this report. Data solicited by the PIM Project, from the Foundation for Development Cooperation’s “Economic analysis report on four markets: Suva, Nausori, Sigatoka, Labasa”, is also included in the following report as supplemental information on these four markets. Notably, this report identified markets in Fiji as “an important hub of social, cultural, and economic activity that should be encouraged and fostered by all stakeholders, from market vendors and customers through to council market workers and local governments and town councils”. PIM Project survey results presented below thoroughly underscore this point.
Profile of the Markets Covered by the Survey

The Sigatoka Municipal Market is located near Viti Levu’s southwestern coast in a town of just under ten thousand people approximately sixty-nine kilometers south of Nadi, has a capacity of 800 vendors, who travel up to 128 kilometers to reach the market. The Nausori Municipal Market is in Nausori, a town of 50,000 and nineteen kilometers northeast of Suva on southeastern Viti Levu, and has a vendor capacity of 650 vendors who travel up to 100 kilometers to market. Rakiraki Municipal Market is in a coastal town of 30,000 in northeastern Viti Levu approximately halfway between Suva and Nadi, with a capacity of 200 vendors who travel a maximum of 28 kilometers to trade.

The Ba Municipal Market is located in an inland town of 7,000 people, and is 37 kilometers north of Lautoka and 62 kilometers north of Nadi, with a capacity of 500 vendors who travel up to 50 kilometers to come to market. The Tavua Municipal Market has 500 traders on its busiest day, none of whom travel more than 15 kilometers to market; the coastal town of Tavua, on northern Viti Levu, has a population of 1,309 and is located 91 km northeast of Nadi. The Lautoka Municipal Market is in Fiji’s second largest city, with a population of 52,220 in coastal northwestern Viti Levu, with 700 vendors on its busiest day, some of whom travel up to 100 kilometers to market. The Nadi Municipal Market in western city on Viti Levu serves Nadi, a city of 42,000, and has up to 400 vendors on busiest day, some of whom travel up to 100 kilometers to trade. Six kilometers northwest of Nadi is The Namaka Municipal Market, which has up to 120 vendors on its busiest days, some of whom travel up to 100 kilometers to market. The Labasa Municipal Market, in a town of 7700 on northeastern Vanua Levu, has 800-1,000 vendors on its busiest days, some of whom travel up to 150km. The Suva Municipal Market is located in Fiji’s capital city on northeastern Viti Levu, which has a population of 85,000 (one-third of Fiji’s population lives in the Suva-Nausori corridor comprising Suva, Nausori, Nasinu), with up to 2,400 vendors on the busiest days, who travel up to 168 kilometers to come to market.
1. Brief history of the market

The original market structures that form the basis of the 10 contemporary markets were built between 1935 and 1992. While market structures have expanded significantly since their construction due to larger numbers of vendors and greater demands for their services, municipal and national investment in improving market infrastructure has not kept pace with these developments. The Suva Municipal Market has been operational since at least 1891, with the market opening in its current location in 1950 and undergoing a substantial upgrade in 1990. Municipal markets were constructed in Nausori in 1935, Lautoka in 1952, Labasa in 1957, Nadi in 1966, Sigatoka in 1970, Ba in 1983, Rakiraki in 1987, Namaka in 2005, and Tavua in 1992.

2. Infrastructural problems

Nearly all surveys reported infrastructural difficulties such as roof leakage, small size, inability to accommodate all vendors, ventilation and drainage problems, flooding, and an inadequate or unreliable water supply. A smaller number of markets noted concerns regarding a need for vendor sleeping accommodations, better lighting, and improved shelter.

3. Improvement or deterioration in the past decade

Half of all market managers surveyed responded that improvements had taken place in expansion and cleaning efforts. Similarly, half of all respondents noted that current market structures are unable to accommodate all vendors and patrons. Survey responses indicated improvements in market conditions in Sigatoka, Tavua, Nadi, and Labasa, while Nausori and Rakiraki noted deterioration, and Lautoka and Namaka observed no changes (the latter due to Namaka’s new status).
4. Weather impacts

Respondents noted that vendors are adversely impacted by rain, flooding, harsh sunlight, lack of shelter, and weather-related destruction of produce, all of which disproportionately negatively impact those who sell outdoors. Only Tavua Municipal Market reported that flooding does not constitute a problem.

5. Environmental health issues

Vendors face health risks from their generally unsanitary work environments, including foul odors resulting from blocked or inadequate drainage systems and diesel fumes from nearby bus stands or other high-traffic areas. Dust and car exhaust were cited as health risks for traders, as was the physically uncomfortable settings in which vendors work, particularly those who sit outside on concrete for large periods of time.

6. Estimated value of market infrastructure and source of funding for its construction

Estimated values ranged from FJD $500,000 to more than four million Fiji dollars at open market value. Older market structures were built by the colonial administration or on an ad hoc basis, whereas later town or city councils built market structures with funds from ratepayers. Labasa Market reported JICA’s funding a public convenience project at the market.
7. **Frequency of and budget for maintenance (including source of this funding)**

Town or city councils fund market cleaning, repair, and maintenance with an annual budget ranging from FJD$2,000 to FJD$90,000. The average annual amount spent for maintenance was approximately FJD$30,000, although some markets, such as Tavua, Rakiraki and Labasa, do not have (or did not provide) amounts allocated specifically for this purpose.

8. **Current and previous market master's gender and years in post**

Current market masters had held their position for between one and 14 years, with market masters in Nausori, Ba, Lautoka, and Tavua all having had their jobs for less than two years. Labasa and Namaka Markets reported markets masters who had worked in the position for more than 13 years. Rakiraki has the first female market master, but no other markets have employed a woman in a similar position. Most survey respondents attributed this to a lack of applications by “qualified” female applicants, but none explored the factors that might influence women’s decisions not to apply for such a position.

9. **Amount of government, donor, provided for market infrastructure in the past decade**

Six markets (Sigatoka, Nausori, Rakiraki, Ba, Lautoka, and Labasa) reported receiving no funds from these sources. Tavua received JICA funds for a market extension in 2004 and Labasa received JICA funding to improve the public conveniences in 2009. Namaka and Nadi both noted that all market improvements are carried out with Council funds but did not specify the amount.
10. **Amount of local government funds spent on market infrastructure spent on market infrastructure in the past decade**

Four survey respondents (Sigatoka, Rakiraki, Ba, and Labasa) reported that no local funds had been spent on market infrastructure in the past decade. Tavua noted that Council carried out minor repairs and maintenance works in the market from Council funds. Nausori, Lautoka, Namaka, and Nadi noted amounts for repairs and maintenance ranging from $22,545 (Nausori) to $200,000 (Nadi).

11. **Condition and management of toilets**

Problems cited include inadequate water supply, limited number of toilet facilities, and vandalism. Toilets in Sigatoka date to the 1970s, and others are similarly outdated or require replacement. Two markets (Nadi and Namaka) have two public toilets each for men and women, three (Rakiraki, Ba, and Tavua) have six to seven toilets each for men and women, and Labasa has 18 toilets. Labasa and Nadi both reported toilets in good condition.

12. **Water supply issues, including management**

All markets have water supplied by the Water Authority of Fiji. Survey respondents reported problems caused by water service disruption. This is particularly troublesome for areas of the market where fish is sold and for the toilet facilities. Tap leakages and damage to main water pipes were also cited as problems, as was low water pressure in the taps.
13. Position, gender, years in post, and main responsibilities of all market staff

All market masters/managers are men, as are the majority of the staff; of the 34 total staff reported, 30 are male and only four are female. With the exception of Rakiraki’s female market master, women’s employment in non-selling market occupations was restricted to toilet attendant and revenue collector.

14. Market location and proximity to wheeled and riverine transport

All markets are within close proximity to town centers, including bus, taxi, minivan, or truck stands, and/or river, sea or jetty landings. In almost all cases, such transport facilities are immediately adjacent to the market.

15. Population served by market

Three markets provided no response (Nausori and Rakiraki), one was illegible (Sigatoka), while others estimated the population served at from 35,000 (Tavua) to 80,000 (Lautoka and Ba). Nadi and Namaka, which are administered by the same market management, reported a total population served of 76,843, while Labasa noted that it serves customers from Vanua Levu, Rabi Island, Mali Island, and Taveuni.

16. Distance traveled by vendors from their place of residence to market, including mode of transport and cost

Vendors travel a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 170 kilometers to sell in the market. Predictably, larger markets such as Suva, Lautoka Labasa, Nadi, and Nausori attract more traders from greater distances, whereas smaller markets such as Ba and Rakiraki do not. In the FDC study of Suva, Nausori, Sigatoka, and Labasa markets, daily vendors spent an average of 20 minutes in Sigatoka and 90 minutes in Suva reaching the market, whereas weekend vendors’ travel times ranged from
73 minutes in Labasa to two hours in Suva. The FDC study confirmed the PIM Project results indicating that vendors “expend greater effort and expense for a chance at the greater income seen in the capital”.

17. Distance and main mode of transport for customers from their place of residence

Most customers come from surrounding areas via public transport, foot, or private vehicle.

18. Frequency with which vendors sleep in or near the market, number of nights, problems faced, and recommended solutions

Market traders regularly sleep in or near five markets: Sigatoka, Nausori, Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, and Labasa. Traders do not sleep in or near Rakiraki, Tavua or Namaka markets, or at Ba Market due to the Ba Town Council’s construction of a multi-purpose bure to house women market traders from remote villages. All respondents that reported vendors regularly sleeping in or near the market suggested constructing accommodation for the vendors to alleviate this problem.

19. Frequency with which vendors bring children to market, problems faced, and recommended solutions

Vendors bring their children to all but one market (Tavua). Respondents proposed allocating a special area for childcare or (less realistically) that vendors leave their children at home. Nausori noted that only a few traders bring their children to market.

20. Frequency of market cleaning, main problems with hygiene and sanitation, and proposed solutions

Three survey respondents blamed market vendors for the unsanitary state of many markets. All reported that conditions could be improved, whether through more
frequent cleanings or the introduction of a market-specific water supply to counteract the impact of water service disruptions. All respondents indicated that the market is swept daily and washed at least once a month.

21. Full capacity of the market, number of vendors on busiest days

All respondents indicated that the busiest market days are Fridays and Saturdays, with some including Thursday as well. The number of traders on the busiest day ranged from 120 (Namaka) to over 1,000 (Labasa) on the busiest day. Suva Market has more than double this number on its busiest days. The FDC Economic Analysis Report found that Suva Market holds 2,400 vendors at full capacity on the weekend (as opposed to original estimates of 1,200). FDC findings indicate that Nausori has 1,700 at full capacity (original estimates was 500), and Sigatoka 1,000 (original estimate was 400).

22. Demographic information on vendors, including gender, age range, and number of years working, and whether market traders are increasing or decreasing in number

The majority of market traders are female, with the lowest percentage of female traders in Lautoka (60%) and the highest percentage in Tavua (80%). None of the respondents gave an average age for traders, but noted that traders range in age from 18 to 76 years. Respondents indicated that most traders sell for between ten and twenty years of their lives, and that the number of market traders in increasing. Two (Lautoka and Sigatoka) cited worsening employment opportunities as the reason for this, with the decline in sugar cane farming cited in Sigatoka.

These findings correspond with FDC study results, which indicate that 87% of traders in the Suva, Nausori, Sigatoka, and Labasa Markets are female. Although the PIM Project survey did not disaggregate by ethnolinguistic community, the FDC
study found that 72% of vendors surveyed in these four markets were mother tongue Fijian speakers, with 27% mother tongue speakers of Hindi or other Indian languages.

23. **Number of daily/weekend vendors who sell from stalls, from the floor, with or without shade**

The number of vendors who sell from stalls ranged from 225 (Tavua) to 747 (Sigatoka). Three markets did not respond to the question regarding the number of vendors who sell without shade (Tavua, Ba, Rakiraki). Vendors who sell without shade range from 90 (Sigatoka) to 200 (Lautoka).

24. **Total number of stalls available, number currently allocated, daily fees paid, seating (and other) provisions for vendors, including percentage who bring their own seats**

The number of stalls available ranges from 259 (Rakiraki) to 1,800 (Lautoka), with a stall occupancy ranging from completely full (Sigatoka) to 50 (Nausori) to 231 (Lautoka) stalls available. The number of stalls currently allocated and being used ranges from 194 (Rakiraki) to 1,600 (Lautoka). Daily fees paid often range by type of product sold, with yaqona often the most expensive due to its higher profit margin, and vegetables the least expensive to sell. Outdoor traders, who often work without shade and need to sit on the ground, frequently pay the same amount as those who sell indoors. Vendors must bring their own seats to all markets except Labasa, where seats are provided (Rakiraki did not provide a response to this question).
25. Process of stall/space allocation and criteria used

Prospective vendors must submit a written application for a stall space, which are provided on a “first come first serve” basis in five markets (Sigatoka, Lautoka, Nadi, Namaka, Labasa). Ba and Tavua provided no response to this question. Some markets have unique arrangements whereby stalls are allocated based upon need (Rakiraki), for farmers especially (Sigatoka), or to those prospective vendors who can pay stall fee arrears for the outgoing vendor (Nausori).

26. Percentage of total number of stalls currently allocated, by gender

Markets reported having between 102 (Rakiraki) and 417 (Ba) stalls allocated to permanent vendors. The percentage allocated to women ranged from 40% (Lautoka and Nausori) to 80% to Labasa.

27. Major problems faced in stall allocation and awareness of past or present corruption/deception by vendors/management

Markets cited these major problems as including too many applications received for limited space, vendor preferences for stalls at the front or sides of the market (leaving the middle and rear sections empty or difficult to fill), and vendor attempts to sublet or sell stalls to others following a default on payment. One market (Rakiraki) noted that bribery was a problem prior to its incorporation as a town and formal oversight of the market by a municipal council.
28. Major problems faced in the use of outside space

These include arguments caused by unclear demarcations in selling space outdoors, lack of proper shelter, and pedestrian and traffic congestion.

29. Average space of one stall, number of stalls held per vendor, largest number held by any single vendor, number (and gender) of vendors who occupy more than 5-10 stalls

Stall space size averages one meter square. The average number of stalls held per vendor ranges from two to five, with the largest number of stalls held by any single vendor ranging from four to 32, with the majority of these held by males. The percentage of vendors with more than five stalls ranges from 10% to nearly 70% of all stallholders. Vendors who hold more than ten stalls constitute from three vendors to 20% of all stallholders, all of whom are male, with no one holding more than ten stalls in Sigatoka, Namaka, and Labasa.

30. Ownership, lease or rental agreement regarding the market, security of tenure, and issues/limitations on building

Land is generally either leased from government or owned by the Council. There are no land tenure issues or limitations on building except in the case of Namaka, where the market has a balance of fourteen years on their sublease.

31. Security, health, policing, social, banking, agricultural, and educational or training services provided at the market, including assessment of their adequacy

Security services provided by Council, police, or funded by the Market Vendors’ Association (Nausori) in all but two markets (Labasa and Rakiraki). There are no
health, social, banking, or agricultural services available at any market. Policing services are available in market police posts in Suva and Lautoka, otherwise this responsibility falls to the Market Master. There are no educational and training services provided with the exception of one vendor-organized financial and garbage segregation training. While most respondents assessed these as adequate, some noted the need for market vendor training in customer service (Lautoka, Nadi, Namaka), record-keeping and financial management (Lautoka).

32. **Main products sold at market, presence of cooking/cooked food and kava saloon**

All markets sell fresh vegetables and fruits, and many allow the sale of traditional/introduced processed and cooked foods as well. Cooking is not allowed in the market, with the exception of closed kiosks allocated for that purpose in Suva. The selling of cooked food is regulated by licensing and special locations in the market, although it is completely forbidden in Nadi, Namaka, and Nausori. All markets sell raw kava, and mixed kava is sold in kava saloon separate from the market structure in Rakiraki, Ba, Tavua, Lautoka, Nadi, Namaka, and Labasa, with Nausori in the process of creating such an area.

33. **Average weekday, Friday/Saturdays, weekly, monthly, and annual revenue collected from vendors’ fees**

The average weekday market earnings range from $290 (Tavua) to $5,600 (Suva). Earnings for Fridays and Saturdays, the busiest days at market, range from $340 (Tavua) to $14,000 (Suva). Average weekly earnings range from $1,300 (Rakiraki) to $33,000 (Suva), monthly earnings ranging from a low of $5,200 (Rakiraki) to $135,000 (Suva). Annual earnings are lowest in Rakiraki ($60,500) to $1,700,000 in Lautoka, with average total annual revenue for the past five years ranging from $100,000 (Ba)-$750,000 (Lautoka), with numbers higher for Suva.
Nausori and Rakiraki did not provide data on revenues for the past five years. Higher profits are estimated for Suva Market, although precise figures are unavailable.

The FDC study results indicated an average weekly earnings of $314.17 for weekly vendors and $147.06 for weekend vendors in Suva, Nausori, Sigatoka, and Labasa markets. The FDC study noted that “Of this amount, an average of $154 is spent on family and village expenses, $10.30 goes to transport costs per day (for some this could amount to over $60 in a week), $21.66 is apportioned to tools and other materials, and stall costs come in at $32.42 per week. The amount paid to an employee/s (if the vendor had them) was an average of $25.57 per week. The average number of days spent at the market is 5.85, which can effectively be rounded up to 6 days, with the average number of hours worked per day at 9.94, which can again be rounded up to 10 hours...Overall, the amount spent on wholesaling came in at an average of $194.19 per week...participants in Suva and Labasa indicated that this figure was more likely to be per day at the very least.”

34. Annual market budget (income vs. expenditure), ten (ranked) main annual market operations and administrative expenses

Annual market income ranges from $127,420 (Tavua) to $891,800 (Lautoka), with expenditures from $20,293 to $176,596 in the same markets. No other sources of funding are available in any of the markets, and audits range from daily (Labasa) to weekly (Sigatoka) to monthly (Ba) annual audits by the Auditor General (Labasa, Lautoka, Nadi, Namaka). Rakiraki, as a new market, has never been audited.

The FDC study results calculated a national market income by extrapolating the proportion of market vendors in a district to account for the entire country. Results indicated that approximately 1.6% of Fiji’s population work as market vendors; employing the average weekly market vending income of $216, the FDC calculated a National Market Vendor Income of $134,784,000. This amount is 2.78% of Fiji’s GDP of $4,871,000, a percentage comparable to the fishing and construction
industries. The FDC found that, unlike these more highly respected industries, 50-75% of marketplace income directly supports families and communities through direct expenditure on necessary household goods.

35. **Impact of natural disasters’ over the past decade; impact on management, vendors, and main strategies for recovery**

These include loss of revenue and the costs of repair and cleaning for management, and the loss of goods, produce, and revenue for vendors. Permanent vendors are especially impacted because they still need to pay for stalls even when these are not used due to disaster-related market closure. Main steps for recovery include repairing damages and cleaning.

36. **Harassment, bullying, or other forms of violence faced by market traders, and proposed solutions**

Two markets reported that such behavior did not occur (Tavua, Labasa), with one rather strongly asserting that “women vendors in the Labasa market operate independently and free of prejudice”. Nadi and Namaka noted that “to some extent women vendors are experiencing abuse. Sigatoka and Lautoka both attributed harassment to “personal disputes” (including extramarital affairs) amongst traders. Two (Rakiraki, Nausori) reported harassment from wheelbarrow operators and produce sellers.
37. Process for developing market policies, by-laws, ordinances, and budgets, and vendor involvement in this process

The question regarding the process for developing policies, by-laws, ordinances, and budgets was misunderstood or left incomplete by three respondents (Ba, Tavua, Lautoka). Nausori and Rakiraki are still in the process of developing their market policies and by-laws. Sigatoka noted it develops these through a “public participation exercise” and Labasa develops these in conjunction with the Finance and Health teams of the Council. Nadi and Namaka noted that “policies are made by Council wherever its required for proper management”. In most cases, vendors are informed of these changes by vendors’ associations or market staff after decisions have already been made. Nearly all markets recommended involving traders to a greater extent in the development of such policies, and nearly all expressed a vision for the market that involved a safer, cleaner environment for vendors to work.

38. Names and contact information for individuals who completed the survey

All surveys were completed by senior market managerial staff. Five markets added comments in the space provided for additional thoughts. Nausori noted that providing accommodations for women vendors would be advantageous in that this space could also serve as a training room and additional room for selling other commodities. Nadi and Namaka also voiced the need for additional infrastructure, particularly in the wake of devastating floods. Labasa reaffirmed Council’s commitment to improving market infrastructure and to “entering a joint venture project towards such objectives”. Tavua noted the need for market traders to form an association to “voice their concerns as a team”, while Lautoka noted that the frequency of flooding in Ba, Nadi, and Sigatoka markets puts enormous pressure on the Lautoka Council “to provide required facilities”.