



Localising water safety planning: Lessons from Vanuatu and Fiji

(Pacific Community Water Management PLUS research Program)

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**WATER
&
WASH 2023
FUTURES**

Achieving SDG6 in a Changing Climate

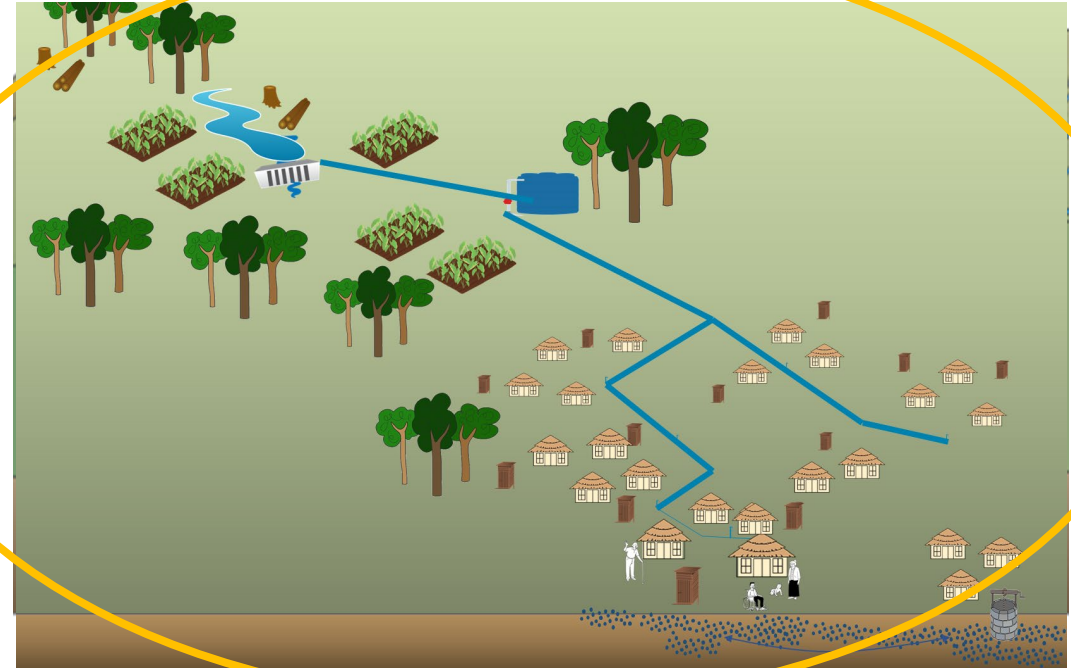


#WaWF23



Water Safety Planning

- Globally adopted approach to manage risks to water supply systems
- Evolved from focus on water quality to include water security/availability, and future hazards (e.g. climate change) → safe and sufficient drinking water supplies now and in future
- **Risk-based (proactive) approach**: identify hazards (now, future), and put in place controls (actions) to mitigate/adapt to these.
 - → linking water supply systems to broader water cycles and catchment activities affecting sources
- Who is involved?
 - **Water system managers** (utility operators, small water system operators)
 - **Technical experts** – identifying and controlling hazards, measuring water needs (now, future)
- **Often some localisation of the process** (local capacities, data availability etc)



The context....Pacific rural community water security



- Large (relative to urban) populations – often dispersed amongst many small communities, can be remote
- Water systems – **mix (multiple courses simultaneously) of self-supply and community-shared systems** (Shared rain tanks; Shared borepumps; Piped to tap/house from source (e.g. dam, spring, bores))
- No capacity for governments or private sector to operate rural water systems → **community-managed water systems**
- “Water managers” = volunteer community members – sometimes (hopefully) a Water Committee
- WSP approach needs to be suited to this context
- WSPs adopted in the Pacific (~2005), support from WHO, UNICEF

PaCWaM+ research:

What are the strengths and challenges of existing WSP approaches (Vanuatu, Fiji), and how can they be further localised?

(Solomon Islands – no adopted or implemented WSP approach – developed Community-based Water Security & Improvement Planning)

1. Building on 2-3 years of research understanding community water management strengths and challenges. Important in relation to WSPs:
 - **Water Committees** - Flux in membership, often small committees of over-burdened members
 - **Multiple water sources and systems** in a community; lots of variability across a community in accessibility – no “community-wide” water situation
 - **Zones** (geographical groups often linked to tribe, faith, other social factors) – **stronger community cohesion** (than whole communities) and better representation of **local water issues**
2. Formative research (workshops and interviews) with implementers
3. (Vanuatu) pilot a WSP-enhancing activity

Vanuatu localised WSP = Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning (DWSSP)

DWSSP approach

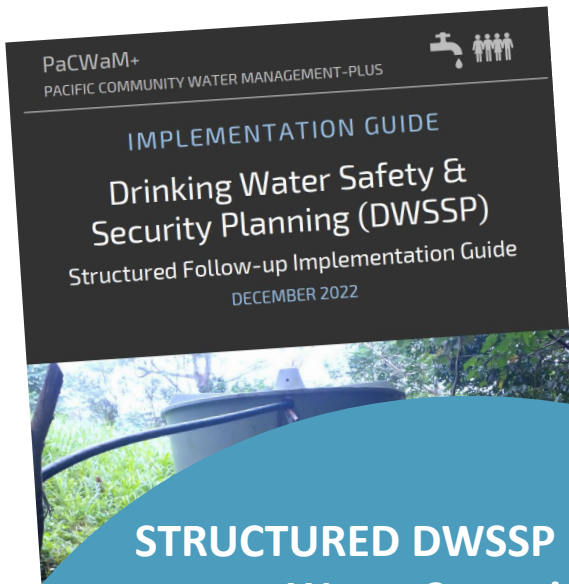
- Localised (with UNICEF) to increase climate and disaster-resilience of water systems
- Capacity building objective (communities can assess, plan and manage water system & risks)
- Whole-of-system (Water management, sanitation & hygiene)
- Includes low/no cost community-led actions
- Implementers well-trained and refreshed
- Implemented over 5 days (single visit), community facilitator + plumber
- Follow-up planned (check-list in place) but not typical
- Once no/low cost actions implemented – Capital Assistance Program can be accessed \$\$
- Rand et al 2022: 22% communities (199) implemented some no/low-cost actions (in following year)

Vanuatu DWSSP - formative research

Formative research – implementers & WCs

- Water Committees and communities **need ongoing, follow-up support** (c.f. Fiji, Solomon Islands)
 - **DWSSP** is education-based, (too) intensive, need more hands-on training
 - Water Committee membership not sustained (→ institutional memory)
 - Water is, typically, a **low community priority**
 - Community ownership of DWSSP action plan is low
 - **Social marketing approaches** may be a useful complement to the educational models currently being utilised
- Request for a pilot of structured follow-up added to DWSSP (to motivate and reinvigorate WCs and communities)
- Consider slower and progressive capacity building (5 days over longer time)





STRUCTURED DWSSP FOLLOW-UP Water Committee:

- Strong Water Committees workshops (membership, collective action, engaging communities – stories, social marketing, educational)
 - Risk assessment
 - Review of DWSSP action plan & follow-up checklist
- ### Community
- Water is Everyone's Business (video stories, social marketing – collective action)



Post-implementation assessment

- Change in WC membership
- WCs held community meetings to **share water information**
- Material actions in two villages e.g. Lelepa & Mangalilui
- (Social-marketing) **videos and structured discussions** were deemed engaging and effective (implementers & WC)
- Revisiting Plans and the DWSSP Follow-up checklist - **productive**
- **Zones** existed but not already used for water management purposes
- Some **unprompted reflection of gender** (women WC members more proactive in follow-up communication with implementers) noted
- Wide consensus that **follow-up should occur every 3 months**

Fiji: Localising the DWSSP



Key challenges identified by implementers

Need for community buy in

- many development priorities, and water or WASH not a priority
- Water not a priority

Training and capacity building too intense and not learner-led

- DWSSP needs to be about building capacity – not only producing an improvement/action plan

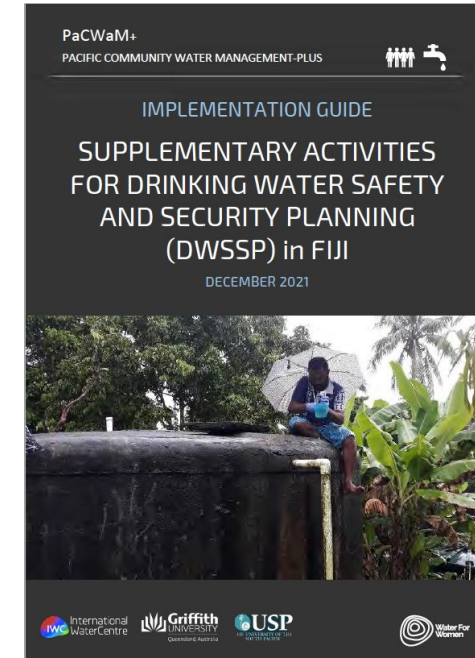
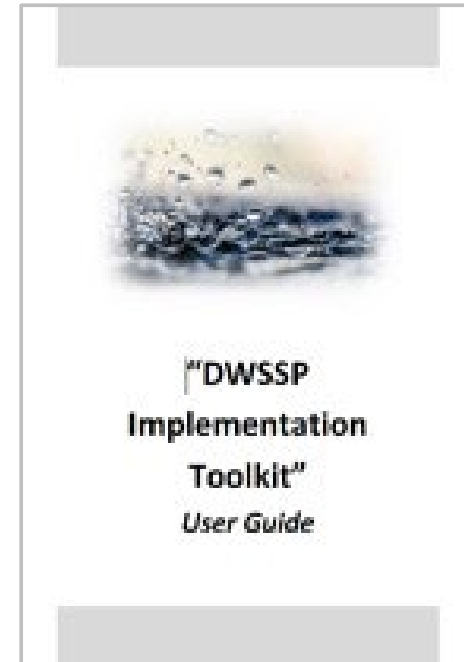
Intensive, costly training for individual communities

- the risk of disengaged participants or absences from the final days of training.
- requires significant investment of time and travel by facilitators as they conduct training in each individual community.



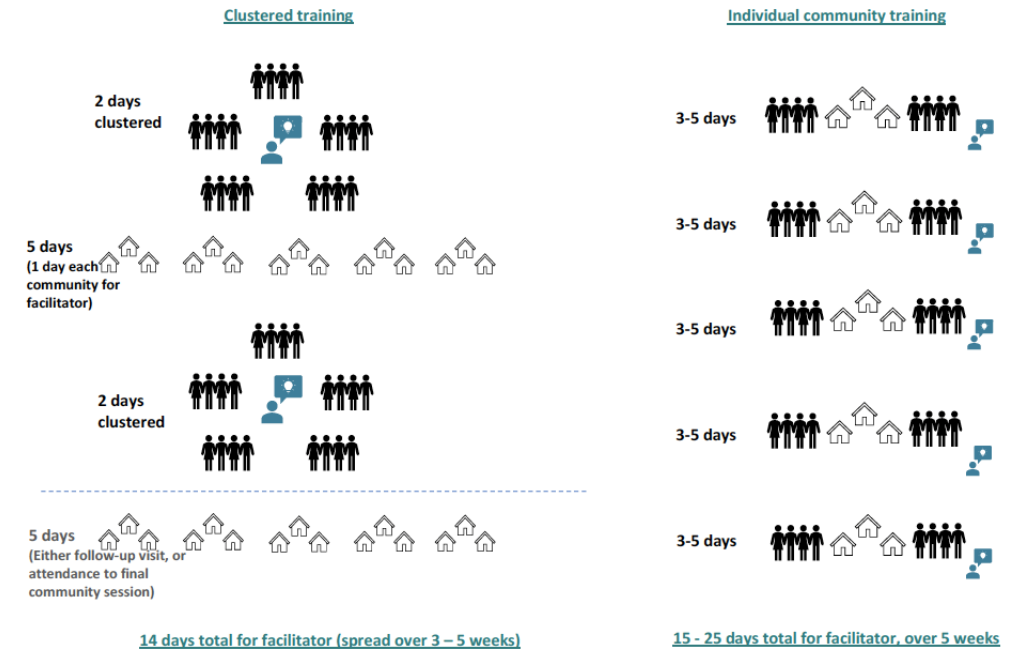
Supplementary guide: DWSSP

- Co-developed with MHMS implementers
- Used in conjunction with the MHMS DWSSP Facilitators Guide
- Purpose of modifications:
 - better localise DWSSP to the Fijian context
 - Improve the sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience of rural water supplies
- Activities draw on participatory, dialogic and Pasifika community development approaches



DWSSP supplementary guide: key features

- **Strengthen the Water Committee** - membership, ways of working with community
- **Improve collective action:**
 - Social marketing (Water is Everyone's Business)
 - Zone-level actions
 - Household actions (non-infrastructure)
- **Improve socially-inclusive processes and water outcomes** (zones)
- **Localised pedagogy** for more effective capacity building:
 - non-intensive (5-7 days, over 3-5 weeks)
 - hands-on training
- **Clustered training approach**
 - Cost-efficiencies
 - Peer-based learning
 - Informal inter-community Water Committee networks
- Format of training resources (less powerpoint)



Clustered training (some training activities conducted with several nearby communities together), compared with conventional community-by-community-training

Summary of findings – localising WSPs for Pacific Island Countries

- Localisation is critical to improve effectiveness (much ineffective implementation)
- Strengthen Water Committee membership, motivation and ways of working
- Accommodate assessment and management of multiple supplies, and multiple uses
- Have capacity development as a priority outcome – not too intensive, participant-led
- Incorporate promotional (or social marketing) information can assist with the prioritisation of water in communities
- Emphasise the importance of non-infrastructure-based improvements (self-reliance)
- Disaggregating the assessment, planning and community engagement aspects of WSP to within-community spatial levels (e.g. zones) – improve social inclusion during WSP, socially-inclusive water outcomes, action implementation (collective actions)
- Clustering WSP training may offer cost-effectiveness and informal Water Committee networks
- Follow-up visits are critical for creating accountability of WASH Committees, & bestowing continued authority and agency to WASH Committees

→ embed WSP in a Community Water Management PLUS model (ongoing support, motivation and accountability of Water committees & Communities)

Pacific Community Water Management + (PaCWaM+)

Research Project (2018 – 2022; 2023 – ongoing)

www.watercentre.org/research/pcwm

PACIFIC COMMUNITY WATER MANAGEMENT +
COMPENDIUM OF TOOLS to SUPPORT COMMUNITY
WATER MANAGEMENT in FIJI and SOLOMON ISLANDS

- Community Diagnostic Assessments
- Water is Everyone's Business
- Strong Water Committees Strong WASH Communities
- Water Committee Backstopping
- Water Security Planning
- Leveraging Social Networks

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Logos: IWC, Griffith, USP, SINU, PLAN, LIVE & LEARN, Water For Women, Australian Aid



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