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**Community-Based Urban Solid Waste
Management
A Case Study of Suva, Fiji**

A thesis presented
in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy in Development Studies
at Massey University, New Zealand

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2007

ABSTRACT

The rising solid waste generation and the change of solid waste composition to higher volumes of packaging materials have created concerning health and environmental threats in developing cities. Municipal authorities do not possess the necessary capacities to cope with current levels of solid waste generation and its increasing complexity. This often leads to inadequate solid waste services, in particular, in the poorer settlements such as low-income, peri-urban and squatter communities. With this concern in mind, this study attempted to explore effective ways for improving solid waste management in urban developing communities.

Using quantitative and qualitative data from three squatter communities in Suva, Fiji, solid waste management was studied in the context of a Pacific Island country. Household interviews, observations and informal walks were carried out in the selected communities. For the purpose of contextual knowledge, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several organisations and authorities concerned with urban development and solid waste management in Suva. This study argues that the usage of unsafe solid waste practices, such as burning, burying and dumping of waste in the approached communities, are a result of an absence of sound solid waste storage and disposal facilities, lack of awareness and knowledge, and the lack of partnerships between the communities and governmental authorities and also between communities and non-governmental organisations in Suva. Furthermore, this study argues that top-down communication caused through hierarchical structures, has created passive communities, which alone cannot manage external and internal pressures, including rising solid waste accumulation. At the same time, strained social structures due to increasingly diverse communities, pressing land issues and the disintegration of traditional networks, within the communities studied, have decreased community cohesiveness and thus the participation in communal activities, such as cleaning campaigns.

This study concludes that effective and trustful partnerships between communities and public and private agencies have to be established in order to successfully implement alternative solutions for the provision of solid waste services in urban communities. Considering the increasing heterogeneity and vulnerability of urban communities, affordable and holistic strategies, which address the root cause of rising solid waste problems, are necessary. Policy makers have to put more emphasis on the needs of the urban poor and marginalised communities in order to reduce inequalities and poverty.

*This thesis is dedicated
to my beloved grandmother Elsbeth Pooch,
to my supportive parents,
Sabine and Juergen Will
and to my loving brother, Mathias Will.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of this thesis has been an exciting and inspiring journey. Firstly, this study brought me far away from my home town, Berlin, in Germany and from my beloved family to an amazing place in the Pacific, New Zealand. During this year of study, I have not only gained academic experience and insights into the development field, but I have also worked together and formed friendships with incredible people.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and sincere thanks to Dr. Donovan Storey and Dr. Maria Borovnik, my two supervisors, for their excellent vision and academic support. It was great to develop my thesis under their professional guidance. Their constructive comments and suggestions helped form my ideas and skills, which were needed in order to complete my thesis. Their honest criticism and faith in my work encouraged me and gave me strength and self-confidence.

I am filled with gratitude to the different organisations and the three communities in Fiji, for taking the time to respond to my questions and helping me collect valuable data and information during my fieldwork. Special thanks go to all the participants in the settlements for their kindness, friendliness, and openness. I would also like to thank Semiti Qalowasa and his colleagues from the NGO ECREA, for giving me the opportunity to attend a very interesting workshop in one of the communities and for assisting me in contacting the community members. Many thanks also to Camari Koto, for allowing me to interview her community and also for recommending a great assistant and translator and for providing me with valuable information relating to my study. My warmest thanks go to my translators and assistants and to all those people who helped me with the data gathering process.

I wish to express my sincere gratefulness to the University of the South Pacific for providing office space and computer and internet access during my fieldwork in Suva, Fiji. Many thanks go to all staff and students at the USP and, especially to director Robbie Robertson.

I feel incredible thankful to Jenny Tuiloma Sowman for putting me in contact with some of her very close friends in Fiji, who made my stay wonderful and unforgettable. I fell in love with this amazing country and its loving and caring people. I wish to express my gratitude to Wilma Khan and her family, together with Aunti Kali and La and their niece, Susana, for their great hospitality, generosity and warmth.

Many thanks to my fellow students Swalihu Jusu, Farzana Shaugee and Tessa Buchanan – my constant support – and whose discussions were very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank Christine Beach for proof-reading my thesis and assisting me with difficult grammar questions.

Special thanks go to my best friends, Sandra Peiselt and Marcela Formiga, for their unconditional love and friendship. They have become the most important part of my life in New Zealand. They not only took care of me throughout my study but they also drank millions of great coffees and enjoyed the same number of discussions and laughs

with me. I wish to express my deepest appreciation to Anoop Prashanth for being such a caring and warm-hearted friend. I also would like to thank another very important friend of mine, Tania Hatch, who became so close to me only in the last couple of months of this study. My research would not have been so enjoyable without my friends' optimism, honesty and great humour.

My warmest thanks go to my fantastic friends in Berlin, with special attention to Anne del Castillo and Dirk Hinz, Doreen Theis, Nadine Siegmund and Waltraut Winkelmann, who have continuously believed in me and encouraged me to follow my heart and to fulfil my dreams.

I am truly grateful to Joshua Paul Joblin for his love and support and his patience and encouragement especially during the critical last months of my study.

Last but not least, I would like to express my love and thanks to my family, for supporting me while I was studying overseas. Words cannot express how much love I feel for them and how grateful I am to have such a caring and loving family. Special thanks go to my Aunt Christina Will for brightening up my study day with encouraging emails and phone calls. I wish to send my love and thanks to my mum Sabine Will and my grandma Elsbeth Pooch for teaching me to acknowledge the happy moments in life and never to give up. My love and warmest thanks also go to my dad, Juergen Will, who genuinely showed interest in my life and my dreams. Without him, this study would not have been possible. Finally, I wish to send my love and gratitude to my brother, Mathias Will, for giving me his unquestionable love.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
ECREA	Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMA	Environment Management Act
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EU	European Union
EXNORA	Excellent Novel and Radical
FLP	Fiji Labour Party
FSM	Federate States of Micronesia
FSPI	Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ISWM	Integrated Sustainable Waste Management
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSWMS-IC	National Solid Waste Management Strategy Implementing Committee
NSWMS	National Solid Waste Management Strategy
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency
PBC	Poly-Chlorinated Biphenyls
PCDF	Partners in Community Development Fiji
PET	Poly-Ethylene Therephthalate
PIC	Pacific Island country
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPP	Public-Private Partnership

SDL	Soqosoqo Duavata ni Levenivnua
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SKM	Sinclair Knight Merz
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SWM	Solid Waste Management
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USP	University of the South Pacific
VMSDFI	Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation Incorporated
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WHO	World Health Organisation