

***“O LE ASO MA LE FILIGA, O LE  
ASO MA LE MATAIGA TILA”***

***Each day brings its own views of  
what is on the horizon; each day  
brings its own choices.***



***Te Rau Matatini & Waka Hourua***

***WEBINAR***

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- **Acknowledgements**
- **Focus will be on the Exploration of Samoan Cultural Resilience for the Prevention of Suicide.**
- **The importance of remembering days of significant historical events – *O le Taea ma le Aso.***
- **Referring to these as “*Taea*” or mornings that impacted, in the main positively, on the lives of peoples, villages and motu.**
- **Mornings of Challenges are also recalled;**
- **In oratories, these recollections are told and re-told;**



- **Memories, therefore of significance are kept.**
- **Let us recall some historical events in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand and places like Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau.**
- **1848: eight years after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi New Zealand sought approval to take over Samoa;**
- **1878: New Zealand tries again with the Home Office**



- **1880's – 1900's: Great Britain, the United States and Germany vie for Samoa,**
- **1889: the three great powers brought in their warships and declared war on each other;**
- **A cyclone destroyed the warships.**
- **1899: A 'gentleman's agreement' in the partitioning of Samoa**
  - **The United States took Eastern Samoa;**
  - **Germany took Western Samoa in return, British interests in Fiji and Rhodesia were protected.**



- **1901: New Zealand's colonial acquisitions in the Pacific start with the Cook Islands and Niue;** *(Source: A Cultural Audit of the Lottery Grants Board, 2000)*
- **1914: First World War breaks out and New Zealand instructed by the Allied nations to take over Samoa;**
- **1914-1918: Military rule in Samoa with the village pass system operating;**
- **1918: Influenza Epidemic killing 25% of the population (official stats). The fatalities were higher at approximately 33% of the population were killed.**



- **1921: Samoa becomes a Mandated territory of New Zealand under United Nations**

*(Source: A Cultural Audit of the Lottery Grants Board, 2000)*

- **1926: Tokelau becomes a Mandated territory of New Zealand**

*(Source: A Cultural Audit of the Lottery Grants Board, 2000)*

- **1962: Independence from New Zealand rule. Throughout this period of Germanic and New Zealand colonial rule Samoa responded with “Mau o Pule”, “Mau o Tumua ma Pule”**



# Pacific migration to New Zealand

- **1950's – 1970's: migration to New Zealand accelerated;**
- **Firstly introduced through the urbanisation of rural Maori and populations from Iwi areas to the urban centres;**



- **Late 1970's – 1980's: economic restructuring**
  - **Rising unemployment**
  - **Rising housing challenges**
  - **Rising responses from indigenous and Pacific populations e.g. setting up Iwi and community based health and community services.**
- **Increased Maori and Pacific scholarship**



# ***“O le Aso ma le Filiga, o le Aso ma le Mataiga Tila”***

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- **This metaphor was gifted to the research team by the Faafaletui of Elder Samoan Men;**
- **This metaphor proposes that rather than being totalised or frozen into the moment of despair and darkness or *pogisa* one can be open to another day and its choices or another day and its perspectives.**



- **We have to recover our metaphors and our metaphorical language which opens space for another day, another set of choices.**
- **Metaphors and metaphorical language are key linguistic devices in cultures where relationships are central to the Self;**
- **Metaphors are premised on ‘Allusive’ language that gently opens space rather than being starkly defining.**
- **Put another way, metaphors because of their allusive quality open space for varying ways of interpretation and invites rather than defines meaning.**



# O le Aso ma le Filiga, O le Aso ma le Mataiga Tila: Investigating Pasifika Cultural Strengths and Prevention of Suicide

- 15 Fa'afaletui Focus groups
- 5 Fa'afaletui Focus groups for each of the 3 cultural groups;
- The cultural groups: Tokelauan, Cook Island and Samoan;
- Fa'afaletui Focus groups:

Pae ma le auli	Elder Women	60+
Toe ulu taia	Elder Men	60+
Matua	Parents	30+
Tupulaga talavou teine	Young Women	16-25
Tupulaga talavou tama	Young Men	16-25

- **Facilitation of Fa'afaletui Focus groups carried out with partners from each community.**
- **Samoan Fa'afaletui Focus groups facilitated by Family Centre Pacific section**
- **Suicide prevention has attracted all of the cultural communities to participate.**



- **Cultural partners engaged in facilitation, translation, transcription and analysis;**
- **Fa'afaletui hosted at the Family Centre or Pacific community venues.**
- **Ensuring the highest protections for participants from Kaiga, Koputangata and Aiga;**



# Learnings : Some examples

- **Te Ra o te Waka Hourua assessors panel recommended inclusion of Matua Parents Fa'afaletui Focus groups.**
- **Parents Fa'afaletui contributed positively to the research;**
- **Parents Fa'afaletui identify challenges faced by the parental generation raising young people in New Zealand.**



- **Parents identified for example:**

- need for additional supports within their families and communities;
- help to find the appropriate language and ways of talking about suicide and its prevention;
- Parents felt suicide prevention was best handled as families within their own communities;
- Parents identified this would be more effective through specialised community based responses.



# **Languaging and speaking about suicide prevention**

- **It is not just Elders and Parents that find the issues of suicide hard to language;**
- **Young people struggle just as much to find ways to speak about suicide.**



# Elders

- **Few indigenous words or cultural stories of suicide;**
- **Suicide in home countries emerged from the late 1950's forward;**



- **The challenges included:**
  - **Identifying ways to work within the *tapu* boundaries;**
  - **Identifying ways that increase the protections;**
  - **Raising the next generations within an environment of powerful globalised influences;**



# Causes

- **The most common causes for suicide included socio-cultural, and socio-economic contexts of living in the Pacific and in Aotearoa New Zealand,**
- **Socio-economic contexts include the high cost of living, low wages, housing affordability and accessibility,**
- **Employment is the primary source of social and economic security and aiga agency. When employment is made vulnerable - sense of worth, collective resilience and agency are impacted.**



- **The socio-cultural contexts include the marginalisation of Pacific cultures, languages, identities and a place of belonging;**
- **Parents also identified the challenges they face in preparing the younger generation to parent and to lead the next generations.**



## **Pacific parents identified:**

- **the need for help to prepare a strong young Pacific generation that are culturally literate, with a strong sense of belonging to their families and to their cultures;**
- **Parents and Elders both identified the need to prepare the younger generation for courtship, love and all other types of relationships;**



## **Young People**

- **Tupulaga talavou teine identified their main strength was found in aiga, especially during a crisis;**
- **Tupulaga talavou tama wanted ways to work on challenges while keeping their aiga and relationships intact.**
- **Young people expressed their preference to address suicide prevention in small, gendered groupings in familiar settings.**



# Tokelauan Examples of Key Findings

- **The self is located in relationship to Kaiga, extended family, genealogical connection's and places of belonging;**
- **Suicide is conceptualised as 'Ta Vaka'**
- **This concept denotes departure from Motu or land, Kaiga and relationships;**
- **Concisely, it may mean departing on a canoe from motu, land and relationships,**
- **The focus is on the departure from land and relationships rather than on arrival at death.**



- **One may arrive at another motu or land space**
- **Interestingly, the point of departure and arrival at another motu provides a space for re-thinking the choices made;**
- **The shared point between us is that suicide was much less prevalent prior to the 1950's but is becoming more prevalent in Aotearoa New Zealand.**



# Cook Island Examples of Key Findings

- **The self is located in Koputangata, extended family and motu;**
- **Suicide is conceptualised as ‘Tari ‘(Aitutaki)**
- **In the Cook Islands each motu has a distinct language;**
- **This makes conceptual exploration rich but also challenging;**



- **The place of silence in community, Church and familial conversations about suicide stands in contrast with the insistence in the mental health field to name it, label it and bringing it out from the internalised to the externalised.**
- **Again courtship and love relationships seem to be at the heart of the present challenges.**



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