

Connecting Urban and Rural Learning Initiatives – PASCAL Learning Cities Network (LCN)

Learning for Change: Social Learning and Innovation in the Fiji Landcare LIFE Project

Explore how collective learning in Fiji is transforming farming communities, and discover how social learning is creating real, on-the-ground change.

Date: 30 April 2026

Time: 8 pm AEST (Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney), 11 am (BST)

Zoom Link: CLICK [HERE](#) TO JOIN THE SESSION



Social Learning (with permission of Dr Mary Johnson)



Philippine-Fiji meeting on the beach (with the permission of Dr Mary Johnson)

Speaker: Dr Mary Johnson, Research Fellow, Global Urban and Social Studies RMIT University, Melbourne

The presentation provides an overview of the six-year *Fiji Landcare* research project funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). The project aims to strengthen smallholder farmer livelihoods in Fiji through improved food and fibre production, sustainable natural resource management, and collaborative learning across Fiji, the Philippines, and Australia.

A central focus of the presentation is **how project participants are learning**. The project demonstrates that transformative agricultural and community change occurs most effectively through *social learning*—where farmers, researchers, extension officers, and policy actors learn

together through observation, dialogue, experimentation, and shared experience. This learning is non-formal, relational, and grounded in real-world farm environments.

Key learning processes highlighted include:

- **Social learning** through observing peers, copying successful practices, sharing mistakes, and adapting techniques.
- **Experiential learning** via farmer-to-farmer, researcher to researcher, extension officer to extension officer visits, cross-site exchanges, and international study tours that expose participants to working examples of innovation.
- **Collective reflection**, enabling participants to make sense of what they observe, challenge assumptions, and co-create new understandings.
- **Experimentation and adaptation** as farmers, researchers and extension officers' trial new techniques and modify them for the Fijian context.
- **Digital knowledge sharing**, especially through Viber groups that support instant feedback, networking, and documentation of practices.
- **Multi-sector collaboration***, involving ministries, researchers, farmers, NGOs, and educators.
- **Trust-based learning**, built through shared experiences, meals and dialogue - key foundations for openness and innovation.

The session concludes by emphasising that the project's most meaningful outcomes did not come from classroom learning or formal accreditation. Instead, the gains emerged from community-driven learning, strengthened partnerships, and growing confidence among farmers, researchers and extension officers to innovate and experiment in a supported environment.

About Dr Johnson



Dr Mary Johnson, RMIT social science Research Fellow and fourth generation farmer, has worked extensively in agriculture, natural resource management, education, and community development within Australia and internationally. Mary's applied research is informed by participatory models of extension, collective action to problem solving, multi-sector collaborations and multilateral partnerships. Mary leads the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) funded research project *Landcare: an agricultural extension and community development model at district and national scale in Fiji*

that adapts learning from a previous eight-year project that improved agricultural extension in conflict vulnerable areas of Mindanao, Philippines. Mary farms in southwest Victoria.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO JOIN

Instructions To JOIN

Leone Wheeler is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Learning for Change: Social Learning and Innovation in the Fiji Landcare LIFE Project

Time: Apr 30, 2026, 08:00 PM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87326484560?pwd=3PIxjhksaNebaAJQIA6fDru1HeaUbi.1>

Meeting ID: 873 2648 4560 and **Passcode:** 309224

One tap mobile: +61280156011,87326484560#*309224# Australia +61370182005,87326484560#, *309224# Australia.

Join:https://us06web.zoom.us/join/87326484560?signature=A0Mo3ND7A8w2jIh9LS_lwzdOFDd8iDVjQWRkvD1AuGQ