



Me and some of the teenage girls from the village I became friends with.

# BULA FIJI: MY LEADERSHIP-IN-ACTION JOURNEY

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The Sigatoka River.



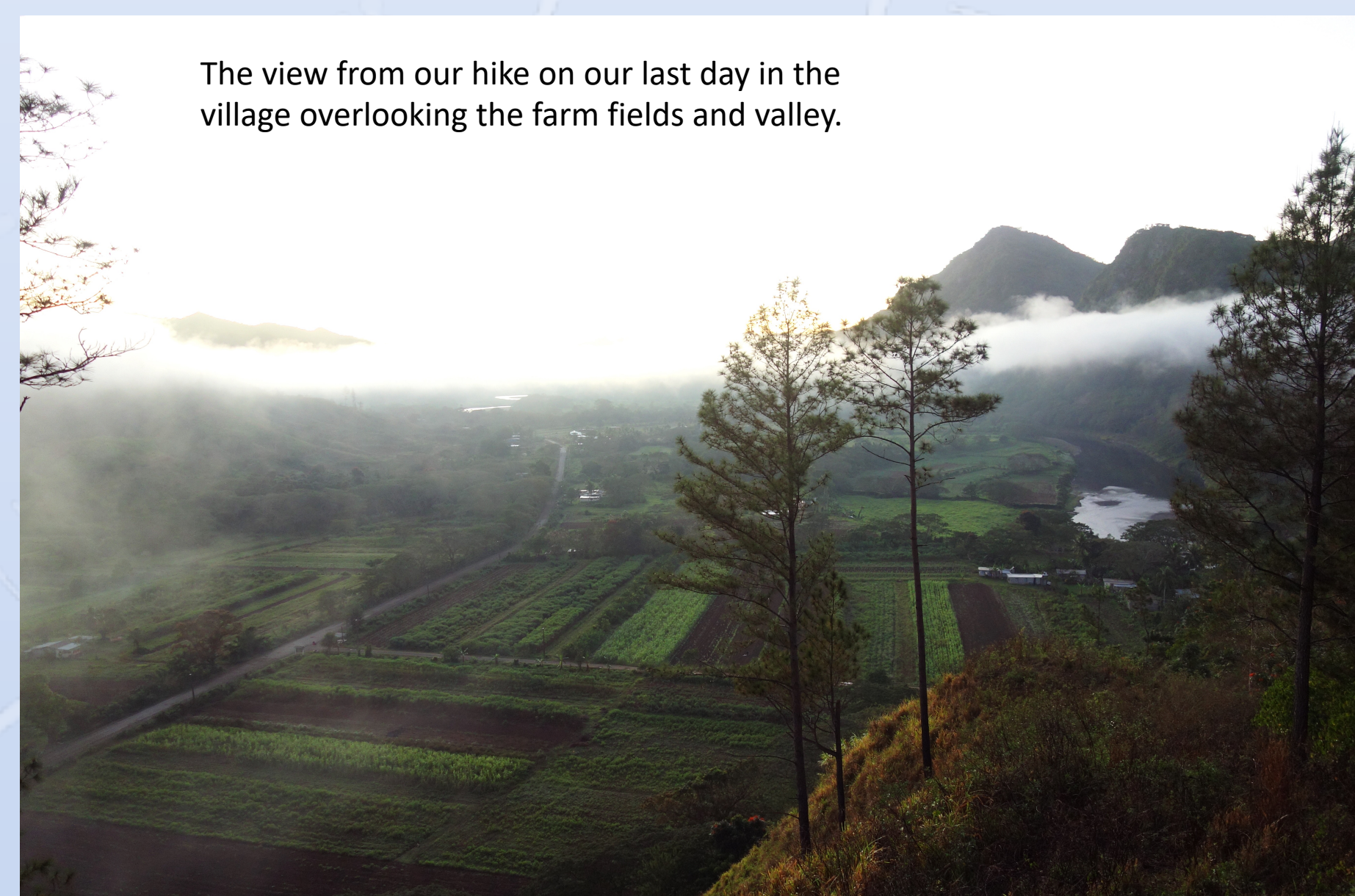
The village. I lived in the green house on the left.



My team immediately after arriving in the village standing in from on the Chief's house.



Celebrating Soti (a church fundraiser/event) where everyone in the village gathers on porches in teams to socialize and spend time together.



The view from our hike on our last day in the village overlooking the farm fields and valley.

I have learned so much about myself and community engaged leadership through this journey. Family and church are so important to the Fijian people, and they are to me as well. I am learning to live in the moment more and not be distracted by technology as much. It is important to value those moments with family and friends because when they are gone, they are gone. Nature is so calming, and I need to continue to make it a part of my life. The Fijian people are content with their simple life of farming, socializing, swimming, and sports. I am learning to be happy with the simple pleasures in life and enjoying these with other people. I have learned to be enjoy being around people more and want to make sure I maintain a strong support system of family and friends. Additionally, I have seen such generosity and kindness and love from strangers, I plan to reciprocate this to everyone in my life. Through this journey I have learned leadership is about so much more than telling people what to do, it is about communicating across differences, listening to other's ideas, inspiring thoughts, working with others, playing games, learning about who you are working with, from their culture to what they like to do for fun and beyond. If you know someone and their culture on a first-hand experience, you are more likely to be able to assess situations and facilitate discussions and lead in the best way. Also loving people and valuing them really helps in groupwork and leadership.

Having the opportunity to go to Fiji was a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience a culture so different from my own and to see it from the inside instead of just the tourist view was phenomenal. The experience was so much more than I could have hoped for or even thought was possible. I experienced so much growth within myself, my team, and the community. I will never forget my host family, the community and love I felt there, the strong friendships I made, and the beauty of Jubairata Fiji and I will cherish the memories forever.



The beautiful ladies on my team on our final day.



Irene and I with our nieces and nephew.



My wonderful host family.

**How to Treat God's Creatures**

**Basic Needs of an Animal**

- Food
- Water
- Shelter
- No harm → People do not need to make animals suffer for no reason.

★ Animals that are not harmed and scared are more willing to do their job (hunting, farming)

★ Animals who are hurting may attack children or adults

**BAD behavior**

- Kicking/hitting animal
- Throwing stuff at animal
- Harming animal
- Not treating wounds

**Better behavior**

- Shout at dogs, take big steps, and wave arms to scare dog away from child, food, or area
- Treat wounds
- Encourage children to be kind to animals or at least not harm them

**God Created all creatures in this world including dogs, horses, cows and humans. God tells us to rule over the animals and not to harm them but to value them.**

The animal welfare posters I made to help teach the children and community members about treating their animals humanely.



Me learning to make roti with Lewa.



We planted a casava field!

Thinking back, even though I may not have been a leader in the way I expected or in the traditional sense, I had the opportunity to lead and grow through different means, such as my talks with kids, interacting with my family, leading discussions during health clinics, helping kids with homework, working alongside my team, creating animal welfare posters, and helping to smoothly run the diabetes clinic for the village. My perception of leadership has changed throughout this trip as I had to adapt to changing plans, environments, and circumstances. Leadership can be unconventional and dynamic, and it is not about telling others how to do things but about working with the opportunities you are given and making meaningful connections with those that you are working with so there is exchange of ideas.



Everyone enjoying the river on a hot afternoon.



The whole village during a grog ceremony.