

**TITLE: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN HEALTH PROMOTERS AND ACADEMIA: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PARTNERING WITH PACIFIC COMMUNITIES.**

Presenter: A Veukiso-Ulugia<sup>1</sup>

*<sup>1</sup> School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland, AUCKLAND.*

Tipping point - a time during a process when an important decision must be made or when a situation changes completely. Pacific communities in Aotearoa-New Zealand are living in a time of rapid cultural and technological shifts, however cross-generational taboos and sensitivity around sexual health issues remain. These socio-cultural pressures as well as resourcing constraints in the sexual health sector necessitate strong inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral partnerships to ensure quality sexual health promotion and provision for all communities, including Pacific.

This paper highlights important methodological questions for academia partnering with Pacific communities and vice versa. It explores cultural responses to three research issues arising from a partnership project between the Centre for Community Research and Evaluation (CCRE) at the University of Auckland and Village Collective, a Pacific-centric organisation supporting Pacific youth, families and communities with sexual health and wellbeing.

This partnership resulted in the development of an evaluation framework and extended the knowledge base of both parties. Robust community-engaged healthcare research requires a commitment to the spirit of partnership and responsibility, as well as genuine engagement and negotiation. Findings from this project raise important questions for further enquiry:

- How should limited resources and staff expertise be invested to enable the best possible assessment of programme quality and delivery?
- What institutional commitments are in place to promote successful academic-community partnerships?
- How can I as an (Pacific) academic pursue the advocacy and policy issues that emanate from the research?