

SAVER PLUS IN FIJI

Impact Report

November 2025





WITH SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank the participants in the Saver Plus Fiji pilot who contributed to this research by sharing their views and experiences before and after completing Saver Plus.

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Cover photo

Participants attending the Saver Plus graduation ceremony in July 2025.

Saver Plus Fiji pilot partners



For further information

More information about Saver Plus can be found at anz.com/saverplus



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CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	2
Executive summary	2
SAVER PLUS IN FIJI AT A GLANCE	3
SAVER PLUS IN FIJI	4
Introduction	4
Financial wellbeing in Fiji	4
About the Saver Plus pilot	5
Saver Plus participants	6
CASE STUDY	7
PROGRAM OUTCOMES	8
Method	8
Saving goals and outcomes	8
Change in financial wellbeing	8
Saving behaviour	11
Financial confidence	11
Participant reported benefits and outcomes	11
SUGGESTIONS FOR SAVER PLUS IN THE FUTURE	13
CONCLUSION	13
CASE STUDY	14
REFERENCES	15



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an evaluation of the outcomes from the Saver Plus Fiji pilot program 2024–2025. The data was collected in country using a pre and post survey completed by 52 participants at the end of the program.

Saver Plus is a matched savings and financial education program developed by ANZ and the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Australia in 2002. A pilot of the program was run in Fiji in 2024–2025 in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The 10-month Saver Plus program provides participants with financial education training and personal guidance, and ANZ matches every dollar saved up to FJD\$500.

There were 71 participants enrolled in Saver Plus in Fiji in July 2024, with 60 completing the program in April 2025 (85% completion rate). All participants were market vendors and microbusiness owners recruited through the Markets for Change (M4C) initiative, implemented by the UN Women Pacific Office and supported by UNDP. Through ANZ's partnership with UNDP, participants received financial education training, including MoneyMinded and Business Basics. Of participants who completed the program, the average age was 50 years, average fortnightly income was FJD\$733, most (70%) participants were part of a couple with children and 20% single parents.

Savings outcomes

- The combined participant savings over the 10 months was FJD\$36,981 and ANZ provided matched funds of FJD\$29,039.
- Participants saved for a range of purposes: equipment upgrades and stall renovations, business diversification, business expansion, and children's education.

Financial wellbeing outcomes

- The average financial wellbeing score increased from 40 out of 100 to 75 out of 100, a 35-point improvement.
- Participants were less likely to run short of money after meeting their everyday expenses, and more able to pay their bills and loan commitments without difficulty.
- Saver Plus helped participants build resilience to cope with financial shocks. Participants were more able to cover unexpected expenses equivalent to their monthly income, less likely to rely on a credit card for unexpected expenses, and better prepared financially by accumulating savings if they experienced a loss of income.
- Participants were more likely to report their current financial situation had improved after Saver Plus and felt more confident about their future financial situation.

Change in saving behaviours

- Participants' saving behaviour improved across several measures. The proportion of participants who:
 - try to save money to have something to fall back on in the future increased by 25 percentage points
 - try to save money regularly even if only a small amount increased by 13 percentage points
 - always make sure they have money saved for bad times increased by 33 percentage points.

Change in financial confidence

- Participants' financial confidence increased substantially by the end of the program:
 - 85% of participants felt more confident in their ability to manage their money day to day
 - 87% of participants felt more confident to plan for their financial future
 - 85% of participants felt more confident in their ability to make decisions about financial products and services.

Economic participation

- Participants experienced economic participation outcomes that increased their abilities to better provide for their family and manage their business ventures. These included 87%:
 - feeling that because they completed Saver Plus, they were better able to provide for their family
 - feeling more confident in managing their business
 - expecting the income from their business to increase.

Participant reported benefits

- The overall benefits from participating as reported by participants fell into four main categories:
 - saving skills and habits – learning consistency in saving behaviour
 - business improvement – motivated to diversify and grow their business
 - budgeting and money management – improved managing of household and business income
 - personal development and future planning – increased confidence and goal setting abilities.

Participant suggestions for Saver Plus

- Participants suggested improvements for future programs:
 - more frequent training sessions, including refresher courses every three months
 - extended program duration from 10 to 12 months
 - additional business skills training and business plan development
 - increased awareness among market vendors about program availability.



SAVER PLUS IN FIJI AT A GLANCE

Saver Plus delivers improved financial wellbeing for participants in Fiji ...

Before Saver Plus

40 out of 100

After Saver Plus

75 out of 100



... and its components



MEETING EVERYDAY COMMITMENTS

47

out of 100

80

out of 100



FEELING COMFORTABLE

46

out of 100

87

out of 100



FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

27

out of 100

59

out of 100



Saver Plus creates an ongoing saving habit

85%

of participants demonstrated a savings habit upon completion*

71

participants in Fiji saved a total of

\$36,981_{FJD}

with ANZ matching

\$29,039_{FJD}

* a 'savings habit' is defined as at least 8 out of 10 months saving during the program.

Saver Plus improves participants' financial confidence ...

"Because I participated in Saver Plus I feel more confident in my ability to ..."

Manage my finances day to day

85%

Plan my financial future

87%

Make decisions about financial products and services

85%

the outlook for their businesses ...

9 in 10

> felt more confident in managing their business

> were making plans to expand their business

> expected the income from their business to increase

... and their families

9 in 10

> felt better able to provide for their family

> felt they were securing their financial future

Participants saved for a range of business or education-related items





SAVER PLUS IN FIJI

Introduction

Financial wellbeing remains a significant developmental challenge throughout the Pacific region, where island nations encounter distinct economic pressures stemming from climate change, geographic isolation, and limited opportunities for economic diversification. In Fiji, despite considerable progress in financial inclusion, many Fijians – particularly women running small businesses – continue to experience financial difficulties.

The introduction of Saver Plus to Fiji in 2024–2025, delivered in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), constitutes a strategic response to these issues, building on the foundation established by ANZ's MoneyMinded financial education program.

This report presents the results from the evaluation of the Saver Plus pilot in Fiji, focusing on changes in savings habits, financial confidence and financial wellbeing. Additionally, the evaluation incorporates participants' perspectives on the benefits they gained from Saver Plus.

The pilot specifically targeted women market vendors and microbusiness owners – a demographic integral to Fiji's economy yet often underserved by formal financial education and services. The outcomes of Saver Plus support the objectives of Fiji's National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030, which aims to increase access to financial services and financial education and improve financial outcomes for women and microbusiness owners.

Financial wellbeing in Fiji

Fiji is comprised of 322 islands with a projected population of 900,869 (DFAT, 2025). Australia and Fiji share an important relationship that includes working together on the impacts of climate change, economic and trade activities, cyber security, and commitment to human development (DFAT, 2025). Fiji's financial landscape reflects a complex picture that includes a strong recovery post COVID-19 driven by the return of tourism but still characterised by persistent challenges that impact the financial wellbeing of Fijians.

Ongoing concerns for the Fijian Government and financial service providers include: increasing frequency of climate change induced disasters and the associated economic consequences for households and businesses; financial inclusion of individuals and small business owners; and provision of comprehensive implementation of digital infrastructure. Additional factors affecting household finances and the overall economy include shortages of skilled workers resulting from higher levels of outmigration (Australia-Fiji Business Council, 2024).

Progressing financial inclusion

Fiji has made considerable progress when it comes to financial inclusion. From 2014 to 2020, the number of people with access to financial services rose from 64% to 81%. Even though fewer people relied on informal credit, it was still used by 12%, while only 9% take up formal credit. About 36% of households save money, mostly for emergencies, retirement, social events, and home improvements while 21% put money aside specifically for funeral expenses (Reserve Bank of Fiji, 2021).

The Reserve Bank of Fiji has played a key role in improving financial inclusion with the implementation of a 3rd National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030 (Reserve Bank of Fiji, 2025). The Strategy has made an explicit commitment to improving the financial lives of women, rural communities, youth, people with disabilities, and micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) owners. This plan focuses on four areas:

- Helping more Fijians move from using informal to formal financial services and creating financial products that help people deal with climate change and economic shocks.
- Growing digital financial services, including investing in new digital tools that make it easier to access financial products.
- Supporting MSME finance, with products tailored to the needs of women, young people, and persons with disabilities.
- Increasing consumer protection and access to financial education especially for children and young people.

Supporting the financial wellbeing of Fijians

Aligning with the National Financial Inclusion Strategy, the UNDP has been a mainstay of support for the wellbeing of Fijian women. The [UNDP provides training and capacity building for the Markets for Change \(M4C\) Project](#), a UN Women initiative in partnership with the UNDP, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand Governments. It is a 6-year project that operates across a number of Pacific countries – Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa – to support the economic livelihoods of women who work in marketplaces. The project not only addresses issues women face in the marketplace such as violence, theft, and inadequate facilities but it also provides opportunities for greater access to financial services, financial education, and business skill development.

Through the M4C project, close to 1,000 rural farmers and market vendors have benefited from ANZ's MoneyMinded financial literacy program across all 14 provinces of Fiji. The program includes training on budgeting, saving, smart spending and business skills, with women vendors learning to diversify their businesses and establish investment accounts.

Recent initiatives include grants proposal training and market business fairs that connect women vendors directly with financial service providers, helping address logistical barriers that previously prevented access to banking and investment services (UNDP, 2025). Through ANZ's partnership with the UNDP, the M4C initiative – implemented by the UN Women Pacific Office – has supported the recent introduction of Saver Plus in Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Island, expanding access to financial education and savings opportunities for market vendors and microbusiness owners.

About the Saver Plus pilot

Saver Plus is a matched savings and financial education program developed by ANZ and the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Australia in 2002. It aims to assist people on lower incomes build their financial knowledge and confidence and establish a long-term savings habit. In Australia, the program is co-funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and ANZ.

In Fiji, the Saver Plus pilot program provided participants with financial education and support over a 10-month period and save to grow a microbusiness or for their own or their children's education. Every FJD\$1 saved by a participant during the program is matched by ANZ with an additional FJD\$1, up to FJD\$500 for certain items relating to their business or education.

Saver Plus Fiji, incorporating MoneyMinded Pacific and MoneyMinded Business Basics education, adds the practical element of supporting participants to develop a saving habit. This gives participants the opportunity to apply what they have learned in real time to their money management behaviours, set a savings goal, and accumulate savings.

FIGURE 1 SAVER PLUS FIJI



Saver Plus participants

In July 2024, 71 participants enrolled in Saver Plus in Fiji and 60 participants completed the 10-month program in April 2025.

Just over half the commencing participants (55% n=39) lived in Suva with the remaining number divided equally between Nausori (23%; n=16) and Ba (23%; n=16). Of the participants who did not complete the program, seven were from Suva and four were from Nausori with no participants from Ba withdrawing.

FIGURE 2 MAP OF FIJI WITH SAVER PLUS LOCATIONS



Recruitment

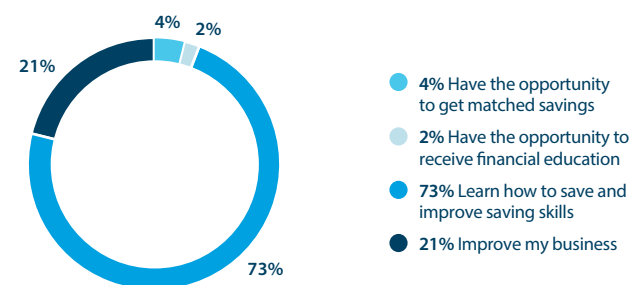
The participants were recruited through the UNDP-supported M4C, through which ANZ in partnership with UNDP, delivered financial education training including MoneyMinded and Business Basics. To be eligible a person must:

- Be 18 years or older
- Hold a voter ID card and TIN letter/card
- Operate a microbusiness or market stall
- Be on a lower income (less than FJD\$50 per day)
- Demonstrate a capacity to save after regular expenses are covered
- Have not received matched savings from a previous Saver Plus program.

Motivation for joining Saver Plus

In the evaluation survey, participants were asked to choose their main reason for joining Saver Plus from a list. Most participants, 73% (n=38)¹, joined Saver Plus to learn how to save and improve saving skills. The second most chosen reason (21% n=11) was to improve their business (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 THE MAIN REASON I JOINED SAVER PLUS WAS TO... (%)



Characteristics

Seventy of the 71 participants commencing Saver Plus were women. The average age of the 71 participants at commencement was 48.9 years. The youngest participant was aged 30 and the oldest was aged 68 years.

There was a statistically significant difference between the age of those who completed and those who did not complete the program. That is, older participants were more likely to complete Saver Plus. Of those who finished, the average age was 50.1 years and those who did not complete, the average age was 42.4 years.

Most participants (70% n=42) who completed the program were part of a couple with children and there were 20% (n=12) who were single parents.

Other participants were from household structures that included one couple with children and grandchildren, one couple living with their granddaughter, one couple without children, one single person without children, one living with their sibling and their child, one single person living with grandchildren.

The participants who completed had on average, lower income levels than those who did not complete. While this was not statistically significant it was an interesting trend. Those who completed had an average fortnightly income of FJD\$733 compared to the average income of FJD\$772 of those who did not complete. Similarly, the median fortnightly income for those who did complete was FJD\$600 compared to FJD\$700 for those who did not complete.

1. Participants who had completed Saver Plus and responded to the evaluation survey at the end of the program.



CASE STUDY FROM VILLAGE DREAMS TO DAILY SAVING: A FIJIAN MARKET VENDOR'S JOURNEY WITH SAVER PLUS

In the bustling village marketplace, Milika tends to her nursery handicraft business. Milika's market stall is doing well, and she says she "feels very blessed" to be achieving her dreams. This wasn't always the case.

"We Fijians, we know we spend a lot, and we don't budget our money," Milika admits. Milika grew up in this same village and her parents had always run small businesses. As a young girl she had always dreamed of one day having her own market business. When that dream became reality through her handicraft business, supporting local women by purchasing their plants, she discovered that making money and managing it were entirely different skills.



Before joining the Saver Plus program, Milika's story was familiar to many small business owners who struggle to separate business revenue from personal expenses. Despite earning daily income from her market stall, money seemed to slip through her fingers: "I was always buying lunch in the market, and you know where my money is drained off."

The Saver Plus program introduced Milika to practical tools that changed her approach to money management. The simple concept of a "Money Box" became a symbol of her new financial strategy: "It will help my children that when they grow up, they managed to save something from that Money Box," she explains, revealing how her learning extended beyond personal benefit to generational impact.

But the real breakthrough came through systematic budgeting. Milika learned to allocate money purposefully: "I have set my money aside for family commitments, for education, for food, and for my savings." This meant that she was prepared when unexpected expenses arose: "When there is a family commitment like that, you know I have some money set aside to cover it."

Milika also changed from someone who struggled with basic budgeting to a daily saver who embraces digital banking: "I'm very thankful to being introduced to this Internet banking. I managed just from my store to do my saving through Internet banking." The convenience of mobile banking transformed saving from a weekly to a daily habit, making her feel, as she puts it, "like going to the bank every day to save money." This technological adoption is particularly significant in Fiji, where digital financial services are still gaining traction among small business owners and market vendors.

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of Milika's story is her frank discussion of overcoming poverty. "I managed to overcome that poverty life with my family," she states simply. Before Saver Plus, she lacked sufficient funds for her children's education and home improvements. Post-program, these goals became realities.

Her dreams have expanded too. Where once she focused on day-to-day survival, Milika now plans a two-week holiday in Australia – a goal that would have seemed impossible before developing her saving discipline.

BEFORE SAVER PLUS, SHE LACKED SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR HER CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND HOME IMPROVEMENTS. POST-PROGRAM, THESE GOALS BECAME REALITIES.

Milika feels a responsibility to share what she has learned from Saver Plus with her family: "I want to share my experience to my family on how to save money, use their money wisely, do their budget."

Milika has learned other lessons that have helped her reach her savings goals: "You need to say 'no'. And not to say 'yes' to everything that comes across to your family." In Pacific cultures, where saying "no" to family requests can be culturally challenging, this represents a significant mindset shift toward sustainable financial behaviours.

Milika's experience has convinced her that financial education should be more widely available. She specifically advocates for more training targeting market vendors, recognising that while "we have money every day – to control and to budget our money, it's quite a different story altogether."

Her recommendation post-program for additional workshops reflects an understanding that financial capability is not just personal – it's community development. When market vendors and small business owners learn to manage money effectively, the benefits ripple through families, communities, and the broader economy.

"It really changed my life of living, and it also changed my mindset just to focus on my daily saving rather than spending."



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Method

A survey was undertaken with participants who completed Saver Plus. The survey used a pre- and post-test approach to evaluate changes in participants' financial wellbeing. Collecting both pre-and post-program data within the same survey allowed participants to compare their circumstances before starting Saver Plus with their situation at the end of the 10-month program.

The survey included items measuring three main components of financial wellbeing – meeting commitments, financial resilience, and feeling comfortable (ANZ 2021). It also assessed changes in specific financial behaviours and confidence levels, which contribute to financial wellbeing.

Out of 60 participants who finished the program, 52 completed the survey.

Saving goals and outcomes

Participants who commenced Saver Plus (n=71) saved a combined total of FJD\$36,981. ANZ matched the savings with FJD\$29,039². All participants had set an individual saving goal of FJD\$50 per month.

All participants were owners of market stalls, so most were saving for items or goals relevant to their business endeavours. Most participants (n= 51) wanted to purchase new equipment for their existing businesses or upgrade / renovate their stalls. Participants purchased new fridges, freezers, or stoves, ovens, weighing scales, sewing machines, new sinks, pumps, tables, or juicers.

Ten participants indicated they wanted to diversify their business. Most market stalls were food based, and diversifying meant selling other products such as honey, virgin oil, or selling cooked food such as cassava. There were participants who wanted to diversify their products by including handicrafts or perfume.

Other participants (n=3) were keen to expand their existing offerings by, for example, purchasing more materials for a sewing business, extending their kitchen and purchasing more cooking items such as pots or purchasing bulk new products to sell in their canteen.

2. Matched amounts applied only to participants who completed the program.

A few participants (n=3) were saving for their children's education including products such as laptops.

Three participants bought livestock and one participant wanted to start a new business.

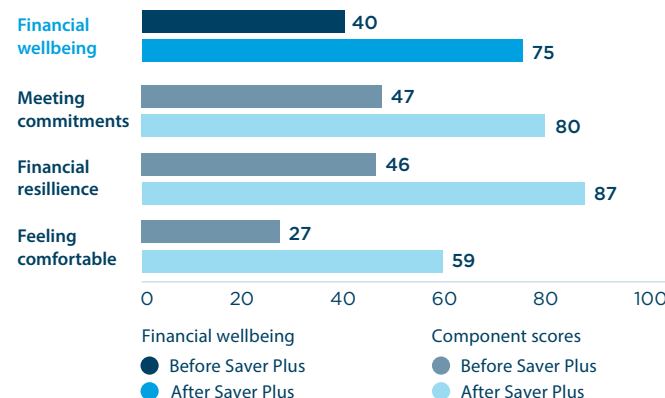
Change in financial wellbeing

The overall aim of Saver Plus is to help participants improve their financial wellbeing. It does this by showing the difference saving can make – materially and psychologically. Saving behaviour increases confidence, reduces stress, and improves financial situations now and in the future.

Figure 4 shows participants' financial wellbeing scores rose from an average of 40 out of 100 before the program to 75 out of 100 afterward, a 35-point increase.

The sub scores of the three components comprising the financial wellbeing score also increased. *Meeting commitments* increased by 33 points; *financial resilience* increased by 32 points and *feeling comfortable* by 41 points.

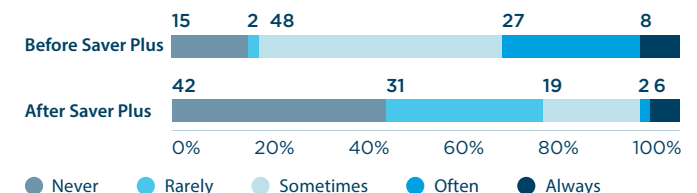
FIGURE 4 FINANCIAL WELLBEING AND COMPONENT SCORES, BEFORE AND AFTER COMPLETING SAVER PLUS (OUT OF 100)



Meeting Commitments

Participants were asked how often they ran short of money for food or regular expenses. Figure 5 shows that after Saver Plus, the proportion of participants who *sometimes* ran short of money fell from 48% to 19%, a decrease of 29 percentage points.

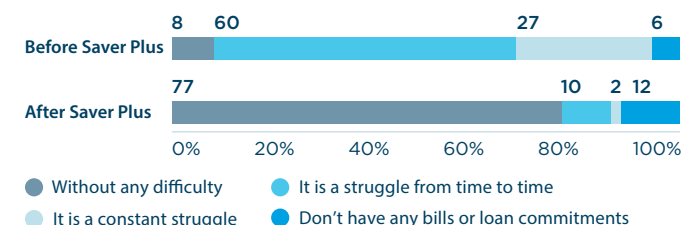
FIGURE 5 HOW OFTEN DO YOU RUN SHORT OF MONEY FOR FOOD OR OTHER REGULAR EXPENSES? (%)



Being able to pay bills and loans is a core indicator of financial wellbeing. Figure 6 shows that before Saver Plus, only 8% (n=4) of participants could do so *without difficulty*; after participating, this rose to 77% (n=40) – an increase of 69 percentage points.

Similarly, measuring how often in the previous 12 months participants were unable to pay their bills or meet loan commitments at the final reminder, gave an indication of their ability to meet commitments.

FIGURE 6 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES HOW WELL YOU ARE MEETING YOUR BILLS AND LOAN COMMITMENTS AT THE MOMENT? (%)





In thinking back to before they did Saver Plus, 48% (n=25) of participants said they were *sometimes* unable to pay their bills and loan commitments at the final reminder whereas when thinking about their current situation post-Saver Plus, this more than halved with 21% (n=11) reporting they were *sometimes* unable to pay their bills at the final reminder. There was also significant improvement in the number of participants who reported *never* having difficulty with this, from 17% before Saver Plus to 58% after Saver Plus.

Financial resilience

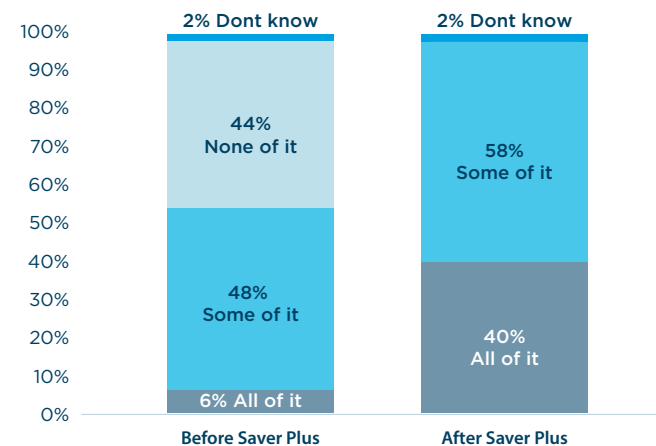
Being able to meet unexpected expenses without putting the household under financial stress is critical to financial wellbeing. We all face those times when a household item needs replacing, the car breaks down or there are unexpected medical bills. Having a financial buffer that allows us to get back on track without the extra financial stress gives peace of mind.

Before Saver Plus only 6% (n=3) of participants could meet *all* of the unexpected expense, equivalent to a month's income and after Saver Plus 40% (n=21) could meet *all of it* – an increase of 34 percentage points (Figure 7).

Participants were asked if they would need to rely on a credit card to cover an unexpected expense equivalent to a month's income. One-in-five (21%, n=11) participants said that before doing Saver Plus they *would not* need to rely on a credit card to cover an unexpected expense equivalent to a month's income. After Saver Plus, 73% (n=38) said they could cover an unexpected expense without using a credit card.

Participants were also asked how long they could cover their expenses without needing to borrow if their income fell by a third. Most participants (65%, n=34) would only be able to cover their expenses without borrowing, for *less than a month* before participating in Saver Plus. After Saver Plus the proportion fell to 13% (n=7) – a decrease of 52 percentage points.

FIGURE 7 IF TOMORROW YOU HAD TO MEET AN UNEXPECTED EXPENSE THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO A MONTH'S INCOME FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD, HOW MUCH OF IT WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO COVER FROM MONEY YOU HAVE AVAILABLE EITHER IN CASH OR IN YOUR BANK ACCOUNT? (%)



The primary aim of Saver Plus is to encourage participants to develop a saving habit. Having savings to fall back on when there are unexpected expenses is key to building financial resilience. Table 1 shows that before Saver Plus 46% (n=24) of participants would have had *less than 1 month's* income saved. After completing Saver Plus only 6% (n=3) of participants had *less than 1 month's* income saved.

There was an impressive change in the proportion of participants who were able to save more than 12 months of household income. This proportion of participants increased from 4% (n=2) to 20% (n=10) post-Saver Plus.

While adjusting spending can help to increase the amount of savings a household can accumulate, unless income increases it would be difficult to make significant differences to the amount of savings a household can make.

TABLE 1 THINKING ABOUT THE TOTAL INCOME OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD, APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY MONTHS' INCOME DO YOU HAVE IN SAVINGS?

	Before Saver Plus		After Saver Plus		Change
	No.	%	No.	%	pp
More than 12 months	2	4	10	20	^ 16
Between 7-12 months	3	6	10	20	^ 14
Between 3-6 months	4	8	11	22	^ 14
Between 1-2 months	12	23	17	33	^ 10
Less than 1 month	24	46	3	6	✓ 40
I don't have any savings	7	13	0	0	✓ 13
Total	52	100	51	100	

Note: 51 out of 52 answered this question for 'After Saver Plus'.

Feeling comfortable

Feeling financially comfortable is a key component of financial wellbeing along with meeting commitments and having financial resilience (ANZ, 2021). It means not feeling stressed and having some money left to enjoy life, after covering expenses and loan commitments.

Perceptions of one's financial situation are as integral to overall financial wellbeing as objective measures such as account balances and income levels (Netemeyer et al., 2018; Riitsalu & van Raaij, 2022). Figure 8 illustrates the shift in participants' attitudes toward their financial status from before they began Saver Plus to after program completion.



Saving behaviour

Before commencing and when they completed Saver Plus, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which a series of statements might *describe them very well, fairly well, only a little or not at all*:

1. ***'I try to save money to have something to fall back on in the future.'***

44% (n=31) of participants said that before Saver Plus, the statement *described them very well*. At completion of the program 69% (n=36) said the statement *described them very well* – a 25 percentage point increase.

2. ***'I try to save money regularly even if it is only a small amount.'***

Before Saver Plus 54% (n=38) of participants said the statement *described them very well*. At completion 67% (n=35) said the statement *described them very well* – a 13 percentage point increase.

3. ***'I always make sure I have money saved for bad times.'***

Before Saver Plus 52% (n=37) of participants said the statement *described them very well*. At completion of the program, 85% (n=44) of participants said the statement *described them very well* – a 33 percentage point increase.

HAVING FREEDOM TO MAKE CHOICES IN LIFE IS IMPORTANT TO FINANCIAL AND GENERAL WELLBEING. BEING ABLE TO ENJOY LIFE AND DO THINGS THAT BRING PLEASURE CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIAL CONNECTION AND A HAPPY FAMILY LIFE.

Financial confidence

At the completion of the program, participants were asked to consider a series of statements about the impact of Saver Plus on their financial confidence (Figure 10):

1. ***'I feel more confident in my ability to manage my money day to day.'***

85% of participants *strongly agreed/agreed* that their confidence improved because of Saver Plus.

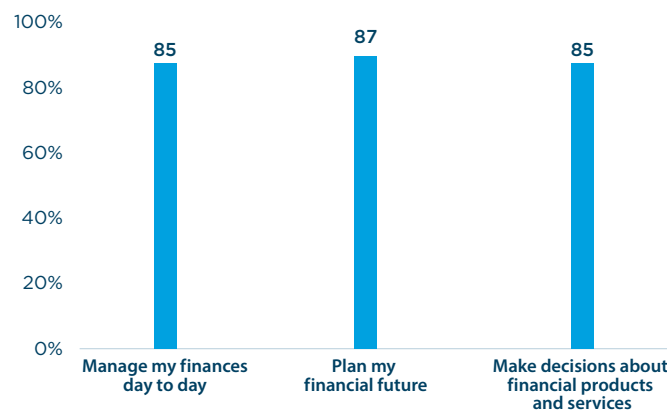
2. ***'I feel more confident in my ability to plan for my financial future.'***

87% *strongly agreed/agreed* that they felt more confident in planning for their financial future because of Saver Plus.

3. ***'I feel more confident in my ability to make decisions about financial products and services.'***

85% *strongly agreed/agreed* that it had.

FIGURE 10 BECAUSE I PARTICIPATED IN SAVER PLUS I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT IN MY ABILITY TO ...”(%)



Note: Financial confidence reported as a proportion of all 60 participants who completed Saver Plus.



Participant reported benefits and outcomes

At the end of the program, the participants were asked an open question about what benefits or outcomes they gained most from the program.

Participant responses fell into four main categories with 'saving skills and habits' and 'business improvement' being the two most common types of responses. 'Budgeting and money management' was the third most common and 'personal development and future planning' being the fourth category of responses (Figure 11).

These benefits are indicators of the program success. The objectives of the program included helping participants develop saving skills and most importantly adopt a saving habit. Consistency is a core element of habit forming and there were many participant comments that included learning to be consistent in their savings as being a key outcome.

Participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with three statements about economic participation outcomes³:

1. 87% of participants *agreed* (of which 50% *strongly agreed*) that they were better able to provide for their family because they participated in Saver Plus.
2. 87% of participants *agreed* (of which 60% *strongly agreed*) that they felt more confident in managing their business. This outcome indicates a potential for increased economic participation as does the following statement.
3. 87% of participants *agreed* (of which 57% *strongly agreed*) that they expected the income from their business to increase.

Similarly, 87% of participants were making plans to expand their business and the same proportion felt they were securing their financial future because they participated in Saver Plus.

3. Economic outcomes reported as a proportion of all 60 participants who completed Saver Plus.

FIGURE 11 PARTICIPANT BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES



SAVING SKILLS AND HABITS

"I can achieve my goals through saving"

"I was able to learn to be consistent to save money"

"It taught me to save and help my business"

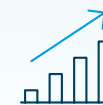


BUDGETING AND MONEY MANAGEMENT

"I learn how to save and budget my household and business"

"Helped me in budgeting my money well especially during emergencies"

"Helps me to allocate my money wisely"



BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

"I learn how to budget and manage how to improve my market business"

"Plans to expand my business, provide for family, secure future"

"Help to improve my business, grow, and save"



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PLANNING

"Strengthen my willpower, be assertive, invest for children's future"

"MoneyMinded improved my money skills and knowledge"

"Grateful for program, built knowledge and skills to run business"



SUGGESTIONS FOR SAVER PLUS IN THE FUTURE

Participants were asked to provide suggestions for how Saver Plus could be improved for future participants. The responses overwhelmingly emphasised the need for more frequent and ongoing financial education, particularly refresher training sessions to reinforce savings knowledge. One suggestion was for a refresher every three months.

Many also suggested extending the program duration from 10 to 12 months to allow more time for learning and saving.

A smaller number of responses highlighted the importance of business-related training, such as developing business plans and understanding basic business skills.

Additionally, there were calls for increased awareness among vendors involved in the program as they noted that some of their co-market stall holders were not aware of the program.

CONCLUSION

The Saver Plus program pilot in Fiji demonstrated significant success in improving financial wellbeing among women market vendors. The combination of matched savings incentives and practical financial education resulted in measurable improvements across all aspects of financial wellbeing, from basic money management to long-term financial planning and business confidence. The program's alignment with Fiji's National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030 positions it as an effective tool for supporting women's economic empowerment in the Pacific region.





CASE STUDY FROM \$35 TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM: HOW SAVER PLUS TRANSFORMED A SINGLE MOTHER'S LIFE IN FIJI

Nanise's business journey began out of necessity rather than ambition. After her husband's death in 2016, her father offered her a table at Nausori market to sell bananas. With \$35 capital, she purchased her first shipment for \$30, leaving just \$5 to reinvest.

"I was praying, 'God, please just help me start from something,'" Nanise recalls of those early days. "I never turned back or looked back. I just kept running my business from that \$5."

Even before discovering Saver Plus, Nanise demonstrated an intuitive understanding of the importance of saving. From 2016, she opened bank accounts for both her daughters, setting aside whatever money she could spare for their futures. However, it wasn't until she encountered the Saver Plus program through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that her approach to saving became more systematic: "It was a little bit hard for me to save, but then I learned about the Saver Plus," she explains. "During the 10 months, they told us what is the meaning of saving."

The 10-month program proved challenging but transformative. Nanise describes the difficulty of consistently setting money aside while managing the daily uncertainties of market life – from produce spoilage to fluctuating prices. Nanise gave the example of how perishable items like pawpaw presented challenges, requiring quick sales before the fruit became overripe and unsellable.

The program taught Nanise crucial business boundaries. She learned to say 'no' to family members requesting free produce, understanding that such generosity could jeopardise the sustainability of her business: "I learned from the Saver Plus – whatever you have, you have to speak truly," she says. "I can't give you this because this will affect my business."

THIS BROADER PERSPECTIVE HAS TRANSFORMED NOT JUST HER BUSINESS APPROACH BUT HER FINANCIAL BEHAVIOURS. TODAY, NANISE MAINTAINS A RIGOROUS SAVINGS SCHEDULE, DEPOSITING MONEY INTO EACH OF HER DAUGHTER'S ACCOUNTS AND HER OWN.

One of the most significant changes for Nanise in doing Saver Plus was expanding her vision beyond the market stall. The program encouraged participants to think about diversifying income streams and building multiple revenue sources: "I have to do something else apart from the market," Nanise realised. "We have to look beyond the market. Like there's one basket, and from that basket there's a lot of things you have to take."

This broader perspective has transformed not just her business approach but her financial behaviours. Today, Nanise maintains a rigorous savings schedule, depositing money into each of her daughter's accounts and her own.

One of the most important outcomes of Nanise's experience may be her newfound ability to set and work toward long-term financial goals. One of her current saving goals is to take her 19-year-old daughter overseas for her 21st birthday – representing a shift from the day-to-day survival mentality that once defined her financial life: "I don't want to look back. I don't want to go back to how it was before – that is my new goal," she declares with confidence.



This goal-setting ability reflects one of Saver Plus's core achievements: instilling what Nanise repeatedly refers to as "wisdom." She emphasises how the program changed her "mindset," enabling her to think strategically about money rather than being reactive: "When I finished this program, the first thing in my mind is the wisdom. When you have the wisdom, you know how everything you want to change."

The changes in Nanise's circumstances haven't gone unnoticed in her community. Fellow market vendors have observed her expanded offerings, referring to her stall as a "one-stop shop" with consistently full tables. Even her mother has commented on the visible improvements in their family's lifestyle: "Even my friends in the market, they're talking about getting another Saver Plus program," Nanise notes. "They can see my tables – they see how I'm going now."

Her advice to others considering similar programs is unequivocal: "It's gonna change your mindset, how you're going to run business. When you come to Saver Plus, your mind is open."

For Nanise, the journey continues. "Right now, I have Saver Plus – it has given me a chance to achieve my goals."



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