

Evaluating with the Vanua
A practical framework for relational, place-based evaluation

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Purpose

- Introduce vanua-aligned evaluation principles
- Identify invisibility in Western tools
- Practice redesigning evaluation questions
- Strengthen culturally grounded evaluation practice



Vanua Ontology

- Land, people, spirituality as one relational system
- Governance through kinship, reciprocity, protocol
- Collective wellbeing over individual metrics
- Evaluation must honour these relational logics



Veiwekani: The Relational Spine of Evaluation

- Veiwekani is the primary currency of iTaukei governance
- It structures obligation, accountability, reciprocity, and protocol
- It determines who can ask what, who can speak, and how knowledge moves
- It shapes conflict resolution, decision-making, and wellbeing
- Evaluation that ignores veiwekani will misread behaviour, misinterpret data, and produce harm



Case Study: Invisibility in Fiji's Domestic Violence Act Design



Early IPV Data

- iTaukei conflict-resolution occurred in kinship systems
- Not captured in state reporting
- Early data reflected mostly Indo-Fijian cases
- iTaukei relational governance became statistically invisible

Imported Assumptions

- Australian family law model adopted
- Assumed nuclear families + individual reporting
- Relied on adversarial processes + individual compliance
- Overrode iTaukei relational controls

Invisibility Across Law, Data & Evaluation Tools

THE SAME PATTERN REPEATS ACROSS SYSTEMS

In Data

- Partial reporting → partial problem definition
- Relational governance not captured

In Law

- Imported assumptions override communal systems
- Individualistic logic replaces relational accountability

In Evaluation

- Individual as unit of analysis
- Kinship, place, protocol erased
- Tools cannot see relational governance

Key Insight

- Imported systems override relational systems because they cannot see them.

Mapping Template Overview

Purpose: To reveal invisibility in Western evaluation questions and redesign them using a vanua lens.

Template Components

- Assumptions: What worldview is embedded?
- Invisibility: What relational or cultural systems disappear?
- Relational/Cultural Risks: What harm or misalignment could occur?
- Opportunities for Redesign: What needs to shift?
- Vanua-Aligned Alternative: How would this look if it honoured kinship, place, protocol, and collective wellbeing?
- Veiwekani Implications: How does this question align with or disrupt relational obligations, kinship roles, or communal accountability?

Instruction: Use questions from the Western evaluation tool and map them using this template.





Mapping invisibility + redesigning questions

Refer to the questions from the Western DV Act evaluation tool on your table

1. Map assumptions + invisibility
2. Identify relational/cultural risks
3. Draft vanua-aligned alternatives
4. Prepare one example to share

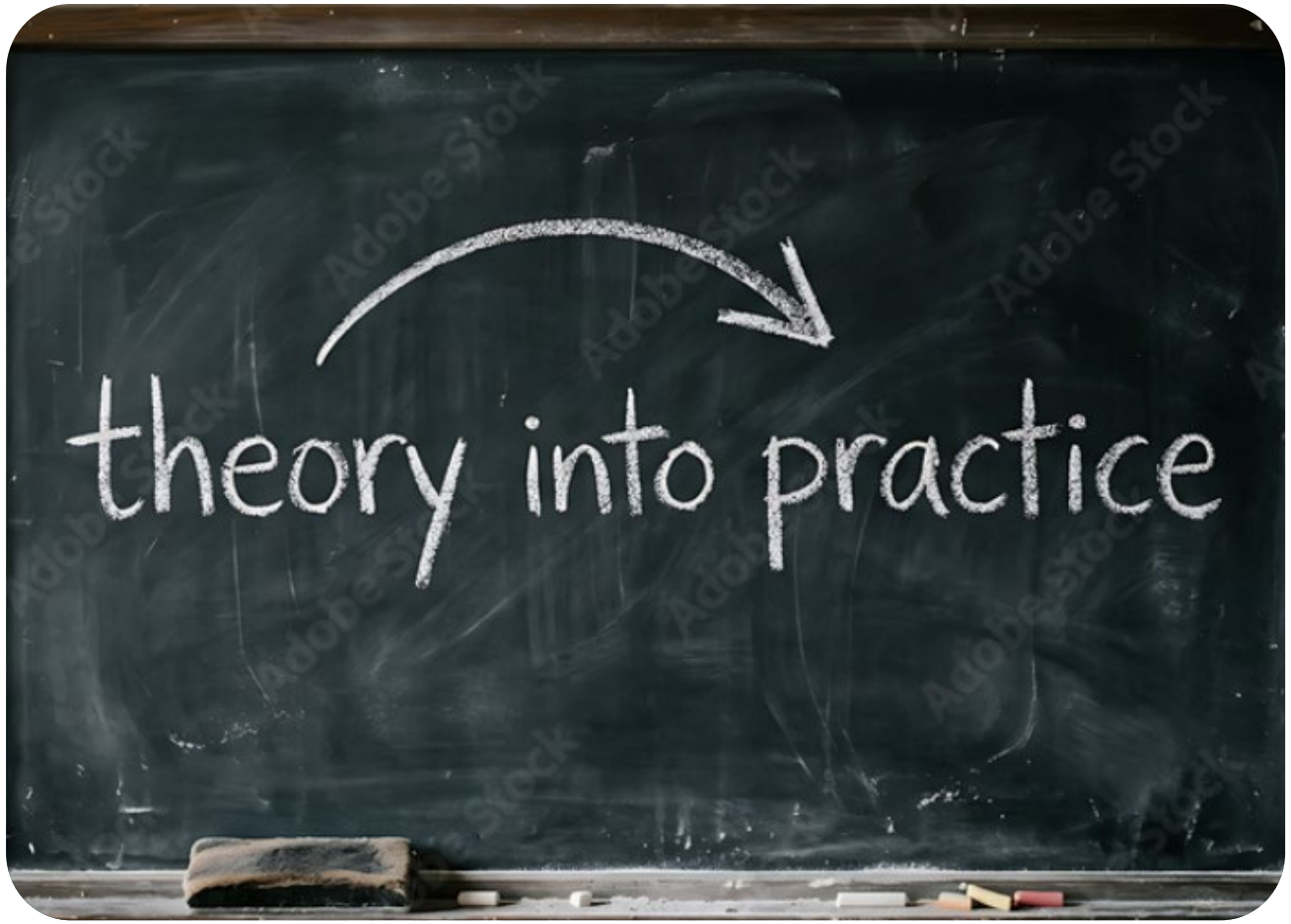
GROUP SHARING

Prompts:

- What relational gaps stood out?
- What shifts emerged in your redesign?
- What became visible when you applied the vanua lens?



Vanua-Aligned Evaluation Tool



Features:

- Relational integrity
- Place & protocol
- Collective wellbeing
- Reciprocity & accountability
- Cultural coherence
- Veiwekani-centred governance

Purpose: To show how evaluation can honour Indigenous governance systems.

Closing Reflections

What is one shift you will take into your evaluation practice to honour place and relationships?



Vinaka vakalevu for making space and valuing place for your iTaukei family.