



FIJI  
WOMEN'S  
FUND



# **FORGING AHEAD IN UNIQUE TIMES**

2020  
Annual Report



### ABOUT THE REPORT COVER AND DESIGN

Women already face extraordinary challenges everyday, and in 2020, COVID-19 decided to shake the world and put women at an even greater disadvantage with even more challenges. It is within this context of strife that the theme of the FWF 2020 Annual Report was born - "Forging Ahead in Unique Times".

The theme was inspired by the idea of evolution, metamorphosis, and rebirth so to illustrate these concepts, abstractions of butterfly wings stitched together like a poetry of patterns on a multicoloured tapestry were created to signify and show the beauty that is born within the nexus of chaos and pressure. Within this tapestry of broken butterfly wings, one can see a woman's face, and more faces are shown within the report's pages because they are inherent in this journey - the women themselves are the change that they are looking for.

The tapestry of the wings is carried into the inside pages to continue this journey and metamorphosis. And if you look closer, you might just find one caterpillar turning into a chrysalis, and then transformed into a butterfly being released at the very end - a symbol of the Fund's own transformation to its independence.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE FIJI WOMEN'S FUND

It goes without saying that 2020 presented the world with many storms. For the Pacific, these storms have been both figurative and literal. COVID-19 and the severe Tropical Cyclones (TC) Harold and Yasa delivered triple blows to Fiji and our Pacific neighbours. Devastation, disruption, floods, uncertainty, and struggle are just a few of the words that were used repeatedly to describe the year. Very few lives have been left untouched; the effects of these crises have been felt the hardest among the most vulnerable in our society – women, girls, gender non-conforming people and persons with disabilities.

The Fund's work towards eliminating gender disparities has become more critical because these disparities can quickly widen if we are not cognisant of the added impacts of a worldwide pandemic – one that shows no signs of abating anytime soon.

Yet, we are hopeful. It has been a year of learning, adapting, and responding – for ourselves and for our grantee partners, who have stepped up and stepped in during these trying times. While there is enormous acknowledgment of the struggles of 2020, there have also been many examples of resilience, growth, care, opportunity, kindness, and power. It is with this reflection that we have coined the theme of our 2020 Fund Annual Report – “Forging ahead in unique times”.

Within these pages, you will read of our grantee partners who have stepped outside of their core business and adapted to respond to the more immediate and pressing needs of their communities. Advocating to ensure timely access to services and channeling voices to platforms so that their experiences in these “new normal” times can be heard and felt by decision-makers.

For us at the Fund, we have continued to test whether our self-proclaimed organisational character as an adaptive and flexible Fund truly holds. We learned the importance of creating additional spaces and mechanisms to hear the needs and experiences of our partners, so that we are more responsive to them.

We have realised that adapting has also translated to an increased workload for ourselves and our partners. We have learned to prioritise self-care for resourcing, team cohesion and overall resilience.

While 2020 has thrown many challenges our way, we remain steadfast and optimistic that we can and will forge ahead to achieving our ultimate goal of becoming independent.

Of course, this journey would not be possible without the countless feminist allies, grantee partners, our governance committees and the Fund team who continue to persist.

*Nalini Singh*

Nalini Singh  
Outgoing Steering  
Committee Chair

*Georgina Naigulevu*

Georgina Naigulevu  
Current Steering  
Committee Chair

*Michelle Reddy*

Michelle Reddy  
Fund Manager

# SNAPSHOT OF 2020

## OUR IMPACT

Through regular programming,  
our grantees reached

**18,600**

people across Fiji



**67**

gender non-conforming people

**7,085**

men and boys



**10,947**

women and girls



**501**

people  
living with  
disabilities



**269** women and girls

**232** men and boys

## OUR GRANTS

Primary impact areas  
of our grants:

Managed

**32**

Initiatives

**22**

diverse  
partners

**18**

new grants committed  
in 2020 valued at

**AUD 839,947<sup>1</sup>**



## RESOURCE MOBILISATION

In 2020, the Australian Government through Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development and Australian Humanitarian Partnership, Mama Cash and the Global Fund for Women supported our work in gender equality and women's empowerment. Through these funders, we were able to mobilise

**AUD 1.8M**

<sup>1</sup> 8 initiatives received grants through the support from Australian Humanitarian Partnerships while 1 initiative was supported in partnership with the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Program.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the challenges in 2020, the Fiji Women's Fund continued to grow in strength, reach and impact. We supported **32** initiatives with **22** diverse grantee partners across Fiji. These grantee partners reached **18,600** people through regular programming: **10,947** women and girls, **7,085** men and boys, **501** people living with disabilities (**269** women and girls and **232** men and boys) and **67** gender non-conforming people. Through our humanitarian grants, **2,195** people were reached: **1,266** women and girls, **798** men and boys, **60** people living with disabilities (**45** women and girls and **15** men and boys) and **71** gender non-conforming people.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from disbursing **9** new grants focused on our thematic areas eliminating violence against women (EVAW), women's economic empowerment (WEE), women's leadership and decision making (WLDM), and women's coalitions for change (WCC), we also disbursed **9** additional grants to pivot to COVID-19 and TC Harold's humanitarian support.

In March 2020, when the pandemic first began to impact Fiji, we quickly reached out to our grantee partners offering support and to get a better understanding of their changing needs and the needs of their communities on whether to adjust programming, amend work plans, or extend project timelines. Many of our grantee partners have been at the forefront of the humanitarian response. Their work has reached some of the most marginalised communities and in some instances, the information they collected on the ground was shared with the Fijian Government informing national recovery efforts.<sup>3</sup>

This report's sections on EVAW, WEE, WLDM and WCC show how our grantee partner's work has responded to the new COVID-normal context. Violence prevention and response have become even more important in this climate. Grantee partners have supported businesses to adapt to the changing economic climate. Women leaders are stepping up and advocating for their families and communities. And women's organisations

and networks are collaborating in research and humanitarian response.

As a Fund, despite everything that a difficult year threw at us, we stayed the course and remain focused on our goal to become an independent locally managed Fund in 2021. We developed our Trust Deed which includes our vision, mission, and values. We also completed our search for Trustees for the Fund. We developed a resource mobilisation strategy and secured funds from Mama Cash, the Global Fund for Women, and the Australian Humanitarian Partnership. We went through an independent mid-term review which found the Fund is a credible and legitimate vehicle for supporting Fiji's women's movement and has helped empower women's organisations and increased their influence. Recommendations from the review have been incorporated and have led to the revision of our capacity development support, our grants mechanism, and other areas. We revised our Communications Strategy to take into account our accelerated work on the transition to independence and the global pandemic. As a result, we doubled our website and social media viewership.

In 2020 we learned that we needed to modify our grants mechanism to be agile and to adequately support the work of our grantee partners under the changing environment and that we needed to support core (operations) and movement building costs. Investing in organisations and movements strengthens the ongoing potential for change. We shifted the dates of capacity development support till after the lockdown and delivered support using virtual means. Given our imminent transition to independence, investment in change management and better capturing our institutional memory is an emerging need.

Over the coming year, we will be focused on developing our strategic plan, amplifying our resource mobilisation efforts and managing the handover of finances, human resources, operations, governance, and assets to the independent, locally managed Fund by December 2021.

<sup>2</sup> The Fund has reported on people reached in regular programming and humanitarian response separately as there may be some level of overlap between each category.

<sup>3</sup> The Fund works with Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Director Women sits on our steering committee since inception. She has played a vital role by being the conduit linking the Fund to the Fiji Government. Our grantee partners work with various ministries with whom they share MOUs as well, such as Ministry of Women, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Ministry of Defense (Fiji Police Force), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry, Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development.



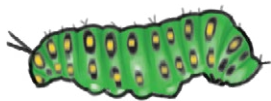
# ABOUT US

The Fiji Women's Fund (The Fund) was established in 2017 with the objective of reaching women in rural and remote areas and those who are marginalised, for example those living with disabilities or facing some form of discrimination. The Fund has committed up to AUD 10.5 million from 2017 – 2022 to support women's empowerment and gender equality in Fiji.

In 2020, the Fund received a collective total of AUD 1.8m from the following funders: the Australian Government through Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) and the Australian Humanitarian Partnership, Mama Cash, and Global Fund for Women. The Fund disbursed 56% on grants, 38% on operations (including personnel and technical assistance), and 6% on program activities such as grantee partners, capacity development and movement building under the Australian Government funding.

# OUR APPROACH

We provide women's groups, organisations and networks with the sustainable support that they need to improve women's lives, particularly those in rural remote areas. In line with this objective, there are three approaches that we use:



## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

We support women's groups, organisations, or networks to further develop their capacity to contribute to transformative change that improves women's lives. We do this in the following ways:

- \* Co-mentoring
- \* Ongoing Support
- \* Cross Learning
- \* Connecting Networks
- \* Annual Reflection and Planning
- \* Community of Practice
- \* Technical Assistance



## GRANTS

We provide grants to women's groups, organisations, or networks so they are more influential at transforming individual attitudes and behaviours and systems to contribute positively to women's lives. We have three types of grants:

- \* Type A (multi-year funding)
- \* Type B (one-year funding)
- \* Type C (less than one-year funding)



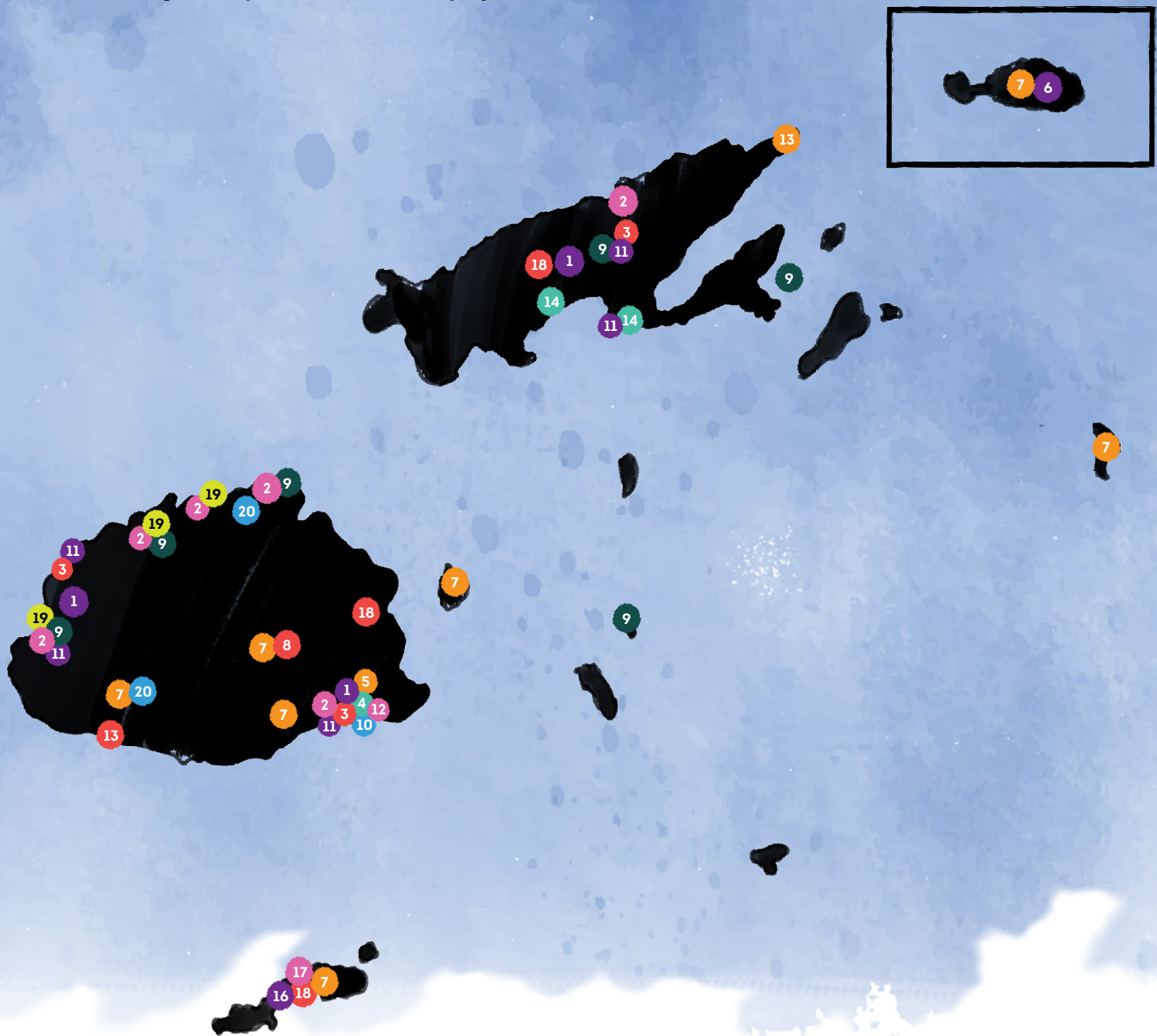
## INDEPENDENT

We are focused on transitioning to an independent local entity and securing funding from donors, private sector, and local philanthropy. We will influence the flow of resources and philanthropy locally and globally to Fiji women's and feminist rights organisations, networks, and groups for transformative gender justice.



# WHERE WE WORK?

The map below represents the locations across Fiji where our grantee partners had active projects in 2020.



- 1 FDPF** Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation
- 2 FLK** femLINKpacific
- 3 FWRM** Fiji Women's Rights Movement
- 4 GWF** Graduate Women (Fiji)
- 5 HOS** House of Sarah
- 6 LRI** Lāje Rotuma Initiative
- 7 MSP** Medical Services Pacific
- 8 NWDG** Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group
- 9 RBTR** Rise Beyond the Reef
- 10 SWRC** Striders Women's Rugby Club

- 11 WEBC** Women Entrepreneurs Business Council
- 12 WiFN-Fiji** Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji
- 13 SSC** Soroptimist International Sigatoka Club
- 14 PCP** Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding
- 15 UPWI** Udu Point Women's Initiative
- 16 SVK** Soqosoqo Vakamarama Kadavu
- 17 WWC** Waisomo Women's Group
- 18 TO** Transcend Oceania
- 19 PRAN** Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network
- 20 TT** Talanoa Treks

# GRANTS

Over the last four years, we have successfully opened four<sup>4</sup> funding calls based on a contextual analysis of funding gaps in the Fiji feminist and women's movement.

From May 2017- July 2020, we offered grants under the following criteria:

- \* **Type A (FJD 150,000 or more):** multi-year funding with contributions to core funding.
- \* **Type B (FJD 50,000 to FJD 150,000):** one-year funding with contributions to core funding which includes human resource, administration or organisational support costs.
- \* **Type C (FJD 5,000 to FJD 50,000):** grants of less than one year. Applicants can be unregistered, small, developing, and rural-based organisations with no previous grant management experience.

In 2020, the Fund managed 32 initiatives<sup>5</sup> from various calls of funding.

1ST CALL (2017)	2ND CALL (2018)	3RD CALL (2019)	AUSTRALIA HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP	PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT
femLINK pacific	Fiji Women's Rights Movement	Rise Beyond the Reef	Fiji Women's Rights Movement	Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation
House of Sarah	Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji	Transcend Oceania	Rise Beyond the Reef	
Medical Services Pacific	Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group	Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding	Transcend Oceania	
Rise Beyond the Reef	Women Entrepreneurs Business Council	Soroptimist International Sigatoka Club	Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network	
	Lāje Rotuma Initiative	Soqosoqo Vakamarama Kadavu	Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation	
	Striders Women's Rugby Club	Udu Point Women's Initiative	Women Entrepreneurs Business Council	
	Graduate Women (Fiji)	Waisomo Women's Group	Talanoa Treks	
	Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation	Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network	Medical Services Pacific	
	Ra Naari Parishad	Medical Services Pacific		
	Adventist Development Relief Agency			

<sup>4</sup> While we opened the fourth call in November 2020, received Expressions of Interest will be assessed in February 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Initiative - refers to an activity being undertaken by a grantee partner.



# 14



## INITIATIVES

From the first and second call for funding, 14 initiatives continued implementing their long-term projects in 2020.

Following vetting by our Grants Committee,

# 9

## INITIATIVES

were awarded grants under the 2nd Call for funding. 7 of these initiatives began implementation in 2020 with 2 to begin implementation in 2021.

## 65 Expressions of Interest

were received for our 3rd Call for funding of which 11 Initiatives were invited to submit proposals.

In 2020, we also disbursed grants to

# 9

## ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

to pivot to COVID-19 response and TC Harold recovery efforts. 8 initiatives received grants through the support from Australian Humanitarian Partnerships while 1 initiative was supported in partnership with the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Program.

Between January - December 2020, the Fund successfully concluded **12<sup>6</sup>** initiatives.

<sup>6</sup>General grants: femLINKpacific, House of Sarah, Medical Services Pacific, Rise Beyond the Reef, Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group, Women Entrepreneurs Business Council, Graduate Women Fiji, Ra Naari Parishad, Adventist Development Relief Agency. AHP grants: Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Rise Beyond the Reef, Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network.

# NEW GRANTS MECHANISM

In 2020, we introduced a new grant mechanism for our grant call from November 2020 - January 2021. A Mid-Term Review (MTR) commissioned in 2019 recommended changes to our grant mechanism such as the categorisation of projects and the eligibility criteria which it stated was limiting projects from reaching their full potential. The MTR also recommended that the Fund consider committing long-term core funding to organisations that play an essential role in the Fiji women's movement and to explore scaling up or replicating successful but small activities that demonstrated lessons learned around improving women's lives.

The Fund also drew on the learnings from the dual crises of COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold. Both crises resulted in an unprecedented increase in gender-based violence, human rights violations and women's sources of income becoming increasingly precarious. Many of our

grantee partners were at the forefront of response efforts and many shared with us the need for funding that supports core operational costs to ensure the full realisation of women's and feminist rights. These crises also made us realise that our grants mechanism needed to be flexible and agile enough to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

We also put substantial effort into ensuring that our awareness and information efforts on the new grants could reach and entice new grantee partners to apply and to reduce some of the kinds of applications that did not fall within our grant's scope e.g., capital investments. The Fund team developed a grant call implementation strategy that ensured targeted information sessions with rural, remote women's groups. This allowed the Fund to travel to new locations and to interact with women's groups in Kioa and Rabi. We also experimented with virtual information sessions on Facebook Live and Zoom.



RBTR artisans preparing material for mat weaving.  
PC: RBTR, Rob Rickman



In November, we opened our 2020-2021 Call for funding under the following distinctions:

## SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS:

Grants that are used to support programs and projects as well as operating and program costs that will help enhance gender equality in Fiji. The scope and timeline of these projects can be determined by the intended short-term and long-term outcomes of the program or project. These grants will be available for core costs and long-term activities for registered and unregistered organisations. Maximum funding of FJD 150,000 per year.



## MOVEMENT BUILDING GRANTS

Support organising and participation in movement-building activities that will contribute towards achieving gender equality in Fiji. Maximum funding of FJD 100,000 per year. Grants will be available to women's groups and organisations that are willing to:

- \* Organise an event that contributes towards movement-building for gender equality.
- \* Participate in a local, regional, or international event that enhances their ability to achieve the long-term goals of their group or organisation.<sup>7</sup>
- \* Access resources as a group or for the capacity support of an individual member of their organisation. The group or organisation will have to demonstrate how their participation will directly impact the promotion of gender equality by their organisation.



## RESILIENCE GRANTS

Resilience grants support crisis management or crisis activities in the initial or the recovery period of the sudden onset of crises. Maximum funding of FJD 50,000 per year. These grants are only open to the Fund's existing grantee partners.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>7</sup>The Fund strongly recommends collaborative proposals from diverse partners of the women's movement in Fiji to foster movement building and women's coalitions for change.

<sup>8</sup>Grantee partners who have previously received a grant from the Fiji Women's Fund.

# GRANT DISBURSEMENTS

In 2020, we disbursed **AUD 975,489** towards **30** initiatives, which supported **22** women's and gender non-conforming people's organisations, networks, and groups. While we also committed **AUD 108,052.90** towards **2** initiatives from our 3rd call for funding, these grants will be implemented and disbursed in 2021 and thus not included in the tallies below.



## Eliminating Violence Against Women (EVAW)

**AUD 231,910**  
in grants

**3** initiatives

Our EVAW grants support initiatives that create awareness of violence against women and girls and contribute to the overall reduction in the incidence of violence against women and girls. We support grantees that integrate prevention, quality access to services, proper referral pathways and that work to influence national-level policy change.

## Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

**AUD 73,561**  
in grants

**6** initiatives

Our WEE grants support initiatives that have identified viable income generating projects and capacity-building in financial literacy, business development and product value-adding. We support the building and strengthening of networks and relationships, especially with the private sector. Most importantly, we fund projects that integrate gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and EVAW approaches that are culturally sensitive to the groups and communities they work with.

## Women's Leadership & Decision Making (WLD)

**AUD 350,038**  
in grants

**6** initiatives

Our WLD grants help improve women's participation in leadership and decision-making. We support initiatives that build the capacities and confidence of women, girls, and gender non-conforming people to become decision-makers and leaders at all levels of society. We also fund initiatives that encourage and forge their own spaces for leadership and decision-making.

## Women's Coalitions for Change (WCC)

**AUD 125,943**  
in grants

**5** initiatives

Our WCC grants support the activities of groups and organisations that work together across one or more of our thematic areas (WEE, EVAW and WLD). We believe that strengthening women's groups and coalitions for change, for a common purpose can bring about sustained positive results and increases the impact and reach of the organisations that we have partnered.

## Humanitarian Response

**AUD 364,947**  
in grants

**9** initiatives

Additional grants disbursed by the Fund to increase awareness and preparedness of rural and remote communities on health risks associated with COVID-19 and TC Harold, assist women to generate employment and livelihoods for their families and communities. The grant also supported activities that strengthen the resilience of women, girls, and gender non-conforming people in the aftermath of TC Harold.



# CONTEXT

Fiji was hit by multiple emergencies in 2020: COVID-19, TC Harold and TC Yasa. The impact of these events was strongly felt across the population and will continue to severely impact Fijian lives and livelihoods well into 2021.

Fiji's first detected COVID-19 case was announced on 19 March, followed by government-imposed restrictions: a lockdown of Lautoka City (no movement in or out of the city), nightly curfews, and the suspension of all operations deemed non-essential.

Three women's human rights organisations in Fiji warned that COVID-19 precautionary measures such as the lockdown could lead to a heightened risk of gender-based violence as women are confined indoors with their abusers. They called on the Fijian Government and authorities to prioritise may-be survivors of violence. Responding to the increase in violence against women and instances of human rights abuse, 8 civil society organisations (CSOs) also came together to form the Fiji CSO Alliance for COVID-19 Humanitarian Response.

Research shows that in an emergency, the impact of humanitarian crises most often affects women, girls, and gender non-conforming people disproportionately. Pre-existing gender inequality and discrimination tend to be further exacerbated, due to sudden shifts in gender roles and relations. Gendered social norms affect the ability of women and girls to make decisions, to propose solutions, and to lead, constraining women's lives and choices. In addition, they affect the ability of households and the wider communities to recover from crises.<sup>9</sup>

These pre-existing systematic inequalities that women human rights defenders and feminists have fought against for years were as evident as ever. The women's movement in Fiji called on the Fijian Government to step up its efforts to translate to vernacular, insist on the use of sign language interpreters and broadly disseminate information on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Many feminist organisations tried to dispel misinformation and to ensure that the most vulnerable - women, girls, gender non-conforming people and persons with disabilities - received accurate and timely information.

Under this context, women's funds like the Fiji Women's Fund are an appropriate funding mechanism to ensure that the specific needs and rights of crisis-affected women, girls, gender non-conforming people, and persons with disabilities are met, and to achieve effective as well as rights-based humanitarian outcomes.

In our 2020 Annual Report, we captured the learnings and the changes we implemented to fit the new context e.g., by working remotely and virtually, supporting grantee partners in new ways, seeking additional funds, gathering data in new ways, and increasing the number of grants and diversity of grantee partners.

<sup>9</sup> The effect of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes  
<https://bit.ly/3d24hOD>



# CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Our support towards strengthening the Fiji women's and feminist movement is vital to developing their capacity to promote gender transformative change. We funded an array of activities of our grantee partners to enhance and complement learning in the delivery of their work in the different thematic areas and to strengthen their work in areas they had identified including, where needed, operating procedures and governance structures. Our grantee partners reported that the Fund's capacity development support and networking opportunities have been useful in project implementation and has helped them access further resources.

In 2020, we reviewed our Capacity Development Strategy drawing on the findings from the Fund's MTR and feedback from our grantee partners who voiced concerns on the compliance-oriented focus and the time commitments that these trainings required.

The revised strategy focuses on working with our grantee partners to identify the kind of training they felt they needed instead of what the Fund thought they needed. Additionally, we now provide a mixture of one-on-one and workshop-style packages and almost all training is delivered in-house by our staff rather than external providers.

The onset of COVID-19 restrictions from March-June 2020 affected our planned training support. Despite this, we kept in regular touch with our

grantee partners to identify needs which included re-programming, amending work plans, and providing project extensions where needed.

We conducted **13** workshops this year which included: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (2), Child Protection (1), Communications (2), Financial Management and Literacy (4), and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (4). 11 of these 13 trainings occurred between September - December 2020 following the easing of social gatherings restrictions. 12 of the 13 workshops were facilitated by the Fund Team. Only the child protection and safeguarding training was delivered by an external provider - Medical Services Pacific. Given the context in 2020 and a reduction of our overall budget, we paired training sessions to save on time and resources e.g., financial management and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL).

We also provided one-on-one support to grantee partners such as MEL, financial management, communications, and program management. For example, we provided one-on-one project management and resource mobilisation support to the WiFN-Fiji, FDPF and its four affiliates, femLINKPacific, HoS and MSP. We also provided communications capacity support to WEBC, FDPF, MSP and WiFN-Fiji. These grantee partners in the last few months have not only shown a vast improvement in program management but have also reported increased visibility leading to additional resources from new funders.

## Our capacity development training impacted:

84



Women (inclusive of 6 women with disabilities)

32



Men (inclusive of 6 men with disabilities)

10



gender non-conforming people

5



preferred not to identify their gender

Note: Some participants who identified as gender non-conforming people also identified as either male or female, so they are included in the total for women and men.

# ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women and girls in Fiji in 2020 was exacerbated by COVID-19 and TC Harold. Levels of domestic violence in Fiji were already twice that of the global average.<sup>10</sup> Despite this already high baseline, calls to the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's (FWCC) domestic violence helplines doubled during March and April in 2020 during the lockdown. Work to prevent and eliminate violence became even more important given this context.

The Fijian Government continued its important leadership role by progressing the development of the Fiji National Action Plan (FNAP) to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls. The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA) launched national consultations for the FNAP in November 2020. MWCPA will conduct two phases of consultation which will inform the development of Fiji's whole-of-government and whole-of-community, evidence-based, measurable, inclusive, and funded, five-year National Action Plan (2021–2026).

In 2020, we disbursed **AUD 231,910** to support the House of Sarah (HoS), Medical Services Pacific (MSP), and Transcend Oceania (TO) in their work towards ending violence against women (EVAW) in Fiji.

**House of Sarah (HoS)** completed its grant for the Preventing Violence Against Women in Fiji's Faith Settings (PVAWFFS) project in 2020. PVAWFFS completed 2 of its 4 phases with support from the Fund while the remaining 2 phases will be funded by UN Women.

HoS commissioned a mid-term evaluation (MTE) in 2020 to check progress to date and to inform

the remainder of the project. The MTE found that PVAWFFS is highly relevant, effective, and efficient. The MTE found that PVAWFFS has improved staff and community member knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour towards women. Community members interviewed for the MTR described the positive changes they have witnessed in their communities and which they attribute directly to the project. They also reported a decrease in the incidences of physical violence, crime and drunkenness; that has helped create a safer environment for women and children.

The MTE identified ways in which the program could improve its effectiveness and enhance efficiency. The MTE recommended further support and training for Community Activists who engage community members on issues of power and justice in human relationships and to develop and document the project's approach to risk and risk management. HoS will incorporate recommendations in the roll-out of the rest of the project.

**Medical Services Pacific (MSP)** is also in the final stages of implementing activities funded under our grant. In 2020, MSP continued to deliver sexual reproductive health and post-rape/sexual assault care services to women and girls. This includes psychosocial support and case management, emergency shelter and access to justice services.

MSP reached a total of 14,641 clients during this reporting period: 8,384 women and girls and 6,040 men and boys, 193 people with disabilities (99 women and girls and 94 men and boys), and 24 gender non-conforming people.

<sup>10</sup> FWCC, (2013), *Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business! National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/2011): A survey exploring the prevalence, incidence and attitudes to intimate partner violence in Fiji*.



Following the devastation of TC Yasa in Vanua Levu and Lau, MSP deployed a team to support the Fijian Government's Assessment team led by the Commissioner North. MSP provided psychological first aid, clinical services including SRHR, WASH educational awareness, child protection, and information on referral pathways for child protection issues and violence against women and girls. 300 WASH Kits and 300 Dignity Kits were distributed to families, women, and girls in the provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua, and Macuata. MSP worked closely with WASH and Health actors to reassess the target risk locations for disease spread, including the outbreak of Leptospirosis, Typhoid, Dengue, and Diarrhoea (LTDD), and identified measures that could be taken.

In response to COVID-19, MSP implemented social distancing measures at its clinics and put in place handwashing facilities. MSP was also a key hygiene promotion actor disseminating health messages in evacuation centres and during the distribution of relief packages. One of the main challenges faced by MSP in this reporting period was the heightened demand for counsellors. The uncertainty of the dual crises led to a 50% increase in people accessing psychosocial support compared to 2019. The increase in violence against women and spike in calls to the national child helpline during the

lockdown also forced MSP to increase its hours of operations to 24 hours/7 days a week. They also received curfew passes from the Fiji Police Force to provide their services to those who needed visitation. MSP also provided online counselling services and referrals to their clients. This increased programming put a strain on the organisation's human and financial resources. To address this, MSP recruited qualified and experienced volunteer counsellors which added value and capacity for MSP in responding to these demands. In addition, MSP now has a dedicated Case-Management Unit (although understaffed).

**Transcend Oceania (TO)** conducted its Trauma-Informed Preparedness and Resilience project. TO's baseline survey showed that 95% of the women surveyed in Bua, Cakaudrove and Macuata requested trauma preparedness and resilience training. TO facilitated gender and age-specific circles to discuss violence, trauma and decision making. Women valued these safe spaces and learned about the effects of trauma. For example, a trans woman also living with a disability noted: "Most of the time because of trauma we cannot respond proactively to protect ourselves from violence. Learning to understand trauma helps me to know what is happening to me physically and psychologically. Knowledge is power."



RBTR rural artisan preparing voivoi for mats.  
PC: RBTR, Rob Rickman

# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The impact of COVID-19 and 2 severe tropical cyclones, all in 2020, meant an uphill battle towards economic recovery. Women in Fiji make up over half of the informal economy, which in turn makes up 66.2% of the overall economy.<sup>11</sup> There is a need to empower the informal economy to develop a resilient economic base. Furthermore, women represent a considerable percentage of the labour force in the sectors that have been most impacted this year.<sup>12</sup> Despite this, several of our grantee partners persevered, innovated, and started new or diversified product offerings.

This year we committed **AUD 73,561** to 6 grantee partners: Rise Beyond the Reef; Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group; Soroptimist International Sigatoka Club, Striders Women's Rugby Club, Adventist Relief Agency Fiji, and Ra Naari Parishad.<sup>13</sup>

**Rise Beyond the Reef (RBTR)** began its second grant with us in October this year. Despite losing 75-80% of their planned income for the year due to the sudden tourism market closures, elements such as having a business continuity plan, innovating with products and creative marketing were key to RBTR's strategy to staying afloat. RBTR also focussed on identifying supply opportunities within Fiji's aid sector for women to produce goods for COVID-19 relief in their efforts to maintain a steady source of income for their artisans. For example, women in their communities are producing over 3000 health and wellness kits (includes immunity-boosting herbs sourced from their gardens – moringa, ginger, turmeric, lime) that will be distributed in 2 Vanua Levu provinces. The

new initiatives amount to about FJD 35,000 – FJD 40,000 however this is still only 35-40% of the income level RBTR budgeted for women to earn in 2020, which is reflective of the major market loss.

In 2020, RBTR made purchases from 158 women from communities in Ra, Ba, Nairai, and Macuata. These women collectively earned more than FJD 62,000 through the sale of arts and crafts and approximately FJD 7,000 for planting material (seedlings) sales. This is a reduction compared to 2019 when RBTR was able to purchase from 350 women. RBTR also distributed 500 food rations and hygiene supplies to their partner communities valued at FJD 25,000.

Our novated<sup>14</sup> grantee partner, **Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group (NWDG)**, continues to make its mark as a successful women's farming group in Fiji. For example, in the first half of the year, they recorded an increase in milk production and earnings. Women who own an average of 10-13 cows increased milk production from a previous 80-85 litres per week to 85-100 litres per week. Earnings per week increased from FJD 577 to FJD 679. This year the group's Secretary, Seruwaia Kabukabu qualified to become a shareholder with the Fiji Co-operative Dairy Company Limited (FCDCL). Becoming a shareholder requires a dairy farmer to produce a minimum of 362.87 kilograms (kg) of butterfat within a year. Seruwaia was able to qualify within three years of starting her dairy journey with NWDG. As an FCDCL shareholder, Seruwaia can attend and have a voice at FCDCL shareholder meetings, receive dividends and access further capacity development opportunities.

<sup>11</sup>Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Fiji" <https://bit.ly/3q6UlsF>

<sup>12</sup>Action on COVID-19 and gender: A policy review from Fiji <https://bit.ly/2MTr3j5>

<sup>13</sup>ADRA had finished the substance of their grant and the only activity that remained in 2020 was their external audit; Ra Naari Parishad's grant was terminated early due to internal governance conflict and only remained open to pay for utility bills in February 2020.

<sup>14</sup>Novated grants are new contracts given to grantee partners near the completion of an existing grant. These are offered to grantee partners who show potential in contributing to long-term change in the community.



Another example of success is a member living with a disability who used her oyster mushroom earnings to establish a canteen. She also diversified into other income-generating activities such as floral arrangement, screen printing, and weaving. In the last three months of 2020 alone, she reported earning FJD 1,200 from selling 60kg of mushrooms.

NWDG was also featured on RESET Fiji, a policy dialogue TV series on Mai TV funded by Oxfam that featured discussions on the impact of COVID-19 and ways forward. NWDG shared their experiences as women thriving in a male-dominated industry.

NWDG's success is testimony to their *solesolevaki* or collective farm-work approach. On a rotational basis, each woman receives help from the other group members on an assigned day to assist with her farm chores. COVID-19-related restrictions earlier in the year meant the women could not meet and had to work on their own farms with only their immediate household members to support them. Once the restrictions were eased, NWDG organised themselves into smaller clusters for collective work. This also allowed the women to maintain cohesion and support during a trying period.

The improvement in NWDG members' milk production and butterfat content is credited to their nurseries where they grow their own pasture for cow feed, increasing their self-sufficiency. These nurseries mean the group no longer needs to purchase costly imported feed. The 21 calves purchased from the FWF grant for the group in 2019 continue to show good health, indicating that the women have put their calf-

rearing training skills to good use. It is expected that in 2021, the calves will be mature enough to start producing milk. The women also continue to harvest their oyster mushrooms weekly, earning around FJD 120 per 6kg harvest. This depends on favourable weather, road access and customer demand.

Fostering the same spirit of supporting each other through this difficult period and continued economic downturn, grantee partner **Women Entrepreneurs Business Council (WEBC)** introduced a loyalty program for their members. Members are encouraged to purchase and promote the products and services of their fellow members with the added benefit of getting a 10% discount on their purchases. WEBC also conducted a training needs analysis to determine the growth needs of their members. The findings from this survey allowed them to connect members with mentors and organise training in financial literacy, toastmasters (public speaking) and information sessions with relevant government entities such as the Ministry of Employment, Productivity, and Industrial Relations. The training covered capacity in safeguarding their businesses such as drafting



A capacity development workshop for members of the Soroptimist International Sigatoka Club.  
PC: Sujita Deo





WEBC Women's Market at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva.  
PC: FWF, Navneet Narayan

contracts, and labour relations - especially regarding legally terminating employment due to the pandemic. WEBC testimonials show their members have strengthened their capacity after participating in these sessions and have developed greater confidence. This has resulted in a willingness of members to be featured in mainstream media to create greater visibility for their businesses. One member who owns a truck driving business reported receiving more applications from other women interested in joining her business after being featured in local media. In 2020, WEBC continued its *Bridging the Gap* training series focused on providing training and support to informal sector businesses and to women who want to start businesses. This year, many of the women who signed up for the training had lost their jobs in the tourism industry. WEBC also conducted training for rural communities and its AWEsome program. While these 2 activities are funded by other donors, core support such as secretariat expenses and the salary of its coordinator has been covered through our grant.

### **Soroptimist International Sigatoka Club**

hopes to inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls by advocating for equity and equality, creating safe

and healthy environments, increasing access to education, and developing leadership and practical skills. In 2020, the club completed a needs assessment survey with households within the villages of Cuvu, Kulukulu, Oloolo, Olosara, and Laselase in Sigatoka to help map out their activities under our grants. Among those surveyed were a few who had either lost their jobs or were working on reduced hours due to COVID-19-related challenges. The club provided vocational skills training and support to women in remote locations of the Nadroga-Navosa Province in the western part of Fiji. The club has completed a jewellery-making training for women in Laselase, which led to the formation of the Laselase Women's Jewels Creation group. In early 2021, they will also embark on an agriculture survey to determine what activities they can support.

**Striders Women's Rugby Club** conducted market research to determine the feasibility of their idea to develop Fiji's first women-only gym. From this assessment, the Club plans to develop a mobile gym servicing the fitness needs of women in the Suva-Nausori corridor and to hopefully become a space for women to work towards a positive body image and be free from harassment. The findings of this research are expected in 2021.

# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

Diverse feminist, women and LGBTQI leaders have been researching and documenting the experiences of marginalised and vulnerable communities and their needs in response to COVID-19 and TC Harold. This evidence has informed women leaders in their advocacy efforts on behalf of their members.

We disbursed **AUD 350,038** to support 6 grantee partners to focus primarily on women's leadership and decision making in 2020: femLINKpacific, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji, Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding, Waisomo Women's Group, and Graduate Women (Fiji).

**femLINKpacific** completed their two-year initiative funded by us this year. Their project has reported progress in the influence of women leaders through the strengthening of women-led community media networks. femLINKpacific convened spaces to advance women, peace, and human security priorities through face-to-face-based meetings and media productions. These convenings provided women leaders with safe spaces to share their narratives and amplify the issues faced in their homes and communities. These issues are also channelled through the Fijian Government's Humanitarian Inter-Cluster System that femLINKpacific is part of. For example, in this reporting period, the active lobbying of a single mother to the village headman led to her part of the community being listed for the extension of electricity.

The lockdown of Lautoka, Fiji's second-largest city on March 20, restricted the movement and physical gathering ability of femLINKpacific's Western rural women leaders' network. femLINKpacific quickly adapted by providing these leaders with mobile phones to help them tele-convene. This approach was also used to document pandemic experiences and to amplify the voice of women and gender

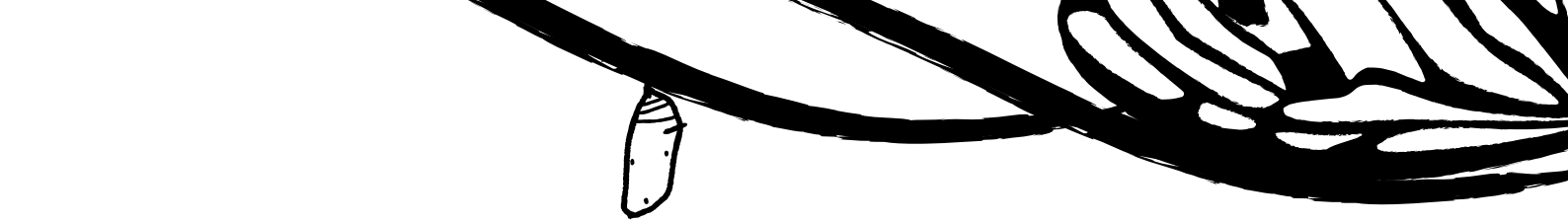


Financial Management Training with Udu Point Women's Initiative Group. PC: FWF, Kuini Rabo

non-conforming people in Lautoka and surrounding towns. They found that many of their communities reported increases in crime, a growing shortage of food, loss of jobs and the need for a coordinated humanitarian response. These stories were shared via various mediums including community radio, SoundCloud (online audio distribution platform) and social media. The project also ensured that women network leaders were kept informed of the latest COVID-19 State announcements to ensure that they could in turn inform and empower their communities to make appropriate decisions.

Also, during this period, the Rural Women Leaders Community Media Network (RWLCMN) used their collective voices to influence national policy. femLINKpacific together with its *We Rise Coalition* We Rise Coalition partner, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), joined the Fiji CSO Alliance for COVID-19 Humanitarian Response - as noted in the Humanitarian Response section of this report. This Alliance urged for, amongst other things, a Fiji National COVID-19 Budget that focused on the plight of rural women and girls including their food,





health, and economic security. This influencing work of community-driven issues was made possible through the analytical human security work done during convenings and in this case, immediately after the lifting of COVID-19 social gathering restrictions, which allowed face-to-face interaction. The project made two Fiji Budget submissions in 2020.

### **Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)**

released a research paper on *A rapid assessment of the impact of the pandemic (COVID-19) on young women and girls in Fiji*. Respondents detailed the additional care burden carried by them during the lockdown and the impact of the shift to online work and learning, including the difficulty of online access. Following this, National Learning Exchange sessions were held in the Northern, Western and Central divisions during the first three weeks of July to share the learnings from the rapid assessment. The sessions included the participation of the Director of Women, the Fiji National University Registrar and FWRM's Executive Director who shared a platform during an Intergenerational panel. The sessions became a space for young women and girls to voice their challenges and recommendations to national decision makers.

FWRM young women's program - Cohort 7 members of the Emerging Leaders Forum.  
PC: FWRM

FWRM also rolled out its 7th Emerging Leaders Forum (ELF) with a cohort of 15 young women in September this year. A pre-evaluation survey found that 60% of the new ELF intake had not previously participated in a workshop of this nature, showing that the program had successfully generated interest from a wider and more diverse network who are not part of FWRM or civil society spaces. The ELF program aims to strengthen the self-agency of young women through tools that unpack personal experiences and identify gender-based oppression faced by diverse girls and women, and how they can call out multiple forms of discrimination. Traditionally, the ELF program is year-long, however, with the pilot of its Young Women in Leadership toolkit, the program will now run from September 2020 - March 2021.

**Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding (PCP)** is a peacebuilding non-governmental organisation working in conflict analysis, resolution, and transformation with a vision for Pacific communities to embrace a culture of peace, justice, and non-violence. PCP began working with Naviavia informal settlement in Vanua Levu in July. In this settlement, some community members have voiced their limited access to essential services because of their informal status. PCP is documenting and addressing the voices, rights and status of women and children of Naviavia.





During a baseline survey conducted by PCP, community members identified a need for leadership and participatory training to develop their capacities and confidence to dialogue, converse and put forward their views and issues that are affecting them at the community level. The baseline survey has also shown that the women of Naviavia are reluctant to engage in interviews and provide information on their own challenges and needs and those of their respective families. PCP will work with the women to develop their self-agency.

### **Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji (WiFN-Fiji)**

conducted a rapid analysis of women fish vendors in the Suva, Bailey, Laqere and Nausori Markets. The survey of 100 fish vendors showed the extent of the impact of COVID-19 movement restrictions, the strategies vendors had employed to normalise their businesses, and the support they required. The survey and report were developed to inform a more gender-equal policy response to the pandemic. Respondents said that the curfew had meant a reduced income as they could not leave their rural villages before 5am while others said that they had not received any form of government support because they did not have retirement savings. WiFN-Fiji hopes that the survey may be used by the government to inform its recovery policy.

**Waisomo Women's Group** (aka Naibati Women's Club) comprises around 50 members from rural and urban areas in Kadavu. According to the club, women in their community are often isolated and lack capacity development opportunities. Due to their isolation, the community has limited access to information and empowerment opportunities as government services are all based in Vunisea which is quite a distance from Tavuki where the club is located. The club brought in an external trainer to help them strengthen their governance structures and to better understand the roles of various club positions held by the members. They have already drafted their constitution, financial manual and strategic development plan building blocks – vision, mission, goals, and SWOT analysis. The drafts will be revisited and finalised in training sessions in March and June 2021.

They also hope to develop and sustain livelihood opportunities for women in the village, in disaster preparedness and mitigation, as well as foster networks with stakeholders in Kadavu and Suva. The club intends to collaborate with civil society organisations and relevant government departments to implement this project. The club has begun financial literacy and leadership workshops to grow 3 small-scale income-generating projects.





# WOMEN'S COALITIONS FOR CHANGE

In 2020, women's coalitions and women leaders were active on the frontline response to COVID-19, TC Harold and TC Yasa. Fund grantees have been organising, gathering data and advocating for change. They have been making a difference for their members, who are often the most marginalised – rural women, women with disabilities, young women and gender non-conforming people. The sections below describe the work of our grantee partners.

This year we disbursed **AUD 125,910** to 5 grantee partners working in coalitions for change: Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF), Women Entrepreneurs Business Council (WEBC), Lāje Rotuma Initiative, Soqosoqo Vakamarama Kadavu, and Udu Point Women's Initiative. Additionally, Graduate Women (Fiji) contributed to outcomes in this area.

**Women Entrepreneurs Business Council (WEBC)** activated a Care Call program to connect with and support members during the pandemic. WEBC conducted a survey to determine the impact of COVID-19 on their members and to determine what support they might need in terms of reskilling, preparing business continuity plans and mentoring. WEBC and **Graduate Women (Fiji) (GWF)** have been instrumental in providing support to women who have lost their jobs in the tourism industry and were looking to find new sources of income or employment. WEBC has also lobbied with government and freight companies on behalf of their exporting members to reduce freight charges. Weekly webinars were also organised on topics to help council members adapt their businesses to the COVID-19 context. This included a Business Continuity Plan webinar.

Recognising women's roles as custodians of traditions, culture, resources and as nurturers within their communities, **Lāje Rotuma Initiative**

has been working in partnership with the Rotuma Women's Association (collective of 10 village clubs) to strengthen the leadership roles of women in Rotuma and support initiatives for sustainable livelihood and community well-being. Their project began with us in 2019 following a gender needs assessment that found women's representation in leadership was limited to informal groups and clubs at community levels, escalating loss of traditional knowledge, food preservation practices and craft making by the very few artisans who are skilled in cultural practices closely linked to the island's biodiversity and livelihood. This has a direct impact on resource management and the enrichment of children's cultural identity and the shaping of their eco-attitudes which take place through intergenerational sharing. The loss of traditional craft-making skills impacts the identity of both girls and boys and the potential opportunity for generating income and improving livelihoods. Rotuma Women's Association Strategic Plan of Action 2020-2022 was formalised by the completion of this project this year. The strategic plan of action presents the unified vision, mission, and objectives of the collection of women's clubs, to preserve and protect traditional culture, language and customs, strengthen the membership of the women's clubs and improve the development of women in Rotuma.

**Soqosoqo Vakamarama, Kadavu**, consists of 17 women's groups in 5 Tikinas in Kadavu. As identified by the members, women in their community lack confidence, leadership skills, and knowledge on how to raise women's issues at District meetings (Bose ni Tikina) which are attended predominantly by men. In traditional patriarchal structures, women's roles and contributions are often not valued or appreciated. Women often receive no support from their spouse or males in their families and village. The Soqosoqo Vakamarama Kadavu hopes to



strengthen the women's groups by building agency to actively participate in decision making in their families and provincial meetings. The project will provide capacity development support to its members through gender equality and social inclusion workshops, financial literacy trainings and provide awareness on health and wellbeing. They will collaborate with MSP to ensure that sexual and reproductive health checks and awareness training are provided for their members. The club also hopes that these training sessions will lead to increased livelihood opportunities for the women in these villages. The 10-month long project aims to strengthen leadership skills within strong governance structures that support their representatives to give them a voice across different levels of decision making.

**Udu Point Women's Initiative** is located along the northernmost point of Fiji and is our most remotely located grantee partner to-date. Geographical and communication challenges have been two of the greatest barriers to the community's ability to access and sustain income-generating opportunities. Travel to the nearest urban centre, Labasa, is a costly exercise that can take almost a full day of travel and costs up to FJD 600. This also means that many of the women have limited access to essential services and banking facilities. However, during the project inception period, the women managed these challenges and worked towards creating group cohesion for shared goals. To save costs and support each other, at least 2 representatives are appointed to take all the women's products to sell in Labasa.



Financial Management and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning training for Waisomo Women's Group and Soqosoqo Vakamarama Kadavu.  
PC: FWF, Kuini Rabo

Westpac Banking Corporation was also invited to Udu to provide financial literacy training. From this training, the women were motivated to start a savings club and appointed a trusted member to hold the savings box. At the end of the year, four members pooled their savings (from the savings club) to start a canteen while another member started a bakery. Both microenterprises now supply the surrounding communities with groceries and fresh bread.

COVID-19 brought new challenges for the women. They faced great difficulty in selling shellfish and large mats which would sell for around FJD 300 a-piece prior to the pandemic. The women used their bi-monthly Women's Group Collective Meeting, which is supported by the Fund, to share ideas on alternative income-generating initiatives. During one of these meetings, the women decided to create smaller handicrafts such as baskets, fans, earrings and smaller mats. The women are now receiving more orders from family members overseas and customers in Suva through social media. Their monthly earning has also increased from FJD 40 to approximately FJD 250 per month. The women were also able to make some long-term business connections from the Women's



Market held during our Annual Reflections event in October.

Between August – November 2020, the club earned FJD 2,572.50 from the sale of handicrafts.

### **Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF)**

participated in consultations for the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls Technical Working Group to provide their knowledge and support for women living with disabilities. They also participated in the National Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention Communications Campaign, led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and supported by UN Women through the Pacific Partnership. Their representative, Lanieta Tuimabu, joined high-level national and community leaders such as the Minister for Women, Commissioner of Police and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Coordinator in this campaign to discourage domestic violence, especially during a crisis, and

encouraged women and children to call the national helplines if they required support. The campaign will continue until March 2021.

FDPF's involvement in the Humanitarian Protection Cluster has increased their visibility as a referral pathway for other members seeking support and advice for persons with disabilities. They provided a disability lens to new guidelines for addressing GBV in the Safety and Protection cluster to address the impact of the dual crises. These guidelines include the Fiji Community Referral Guide for women and children and the Gender and Protection emergency phone tree. FDPF also successfully requested to be consulted during a review of the Fiji National Gender-Based Violence Shelter Standards. Eight women representatives from the FDPF affiliates sat with the Ministry of Women and UN Women to review the shelter guidelines and provided input around the specific needs of women with disabilities.

**Below are some updates from FDPF affiliates' activities funded under the grant:**

**1 Spinal Injury Association (SIA)** provided income-generating skills training for its members in areas such as tailoring, tie-dying, screen printing and jewellery making. Their members also used these new skills to train 40 women during the Fund's Annual Reflections event in October. This event brought many opportunities for SIA; they were able to supply 100 conference packages (handmade lanyards and tote bags), sell their arts and crafts during the women's market, and make new connections which led to them also securing £10,000 in funding from the British High Commission to assist with quality assurance and branding. With their new income, SIA says its members have become more confident about requesting more specialised mobility devices - something they would not have done in the past. For example, while many members would like motorised wheelchairs or scooters, they could not previously afford maintenance costs such as the replacement of batteries.

**2 Fiji Association of the Deaf (FAD)** actively promoted the use of sign language interpreters in the broadcast of important national announcements, especially for COVID-19. Their lobbying influenced the inclusion of sign interpreters on the nightly news broadcasts on two national television stations. FAD also worked with International Deaf Interpreters and the deaf community to collectively create signs to communicate COVID-19 terminologies. FAD also actively used social media platforms to update their members on the new signs and fielded questions from community members, especially during emergencies.

3

**United Blind Persons of Fiji (UBP)** conducted national surveys to register new members and to check on their current members. UBP also provided training on the use of assistive devices such as white canes. Due to the COVID-19 gathering restrictions, UBP made home visitations to its members, especially women, instead of having its usual quarterly meetings.

**Rise Beyond the Reef's (RBTR)** contribution to this thematic area is seen through their partnership with the National Disaster Management Office and the Ministry of Forestry. RBTR purchased a Portable Sawmill and will work with communities in the Bua district of Lekutu to process their fallen hardwood debris to rebuild their homes quickly after TC Yasa in December. RBTR is also ensuring that persons with disabilities, the elderly and single mothers are prioritised in the rebuilding process. Additionally, RBTR plans to implement its "Shelter from the Storm" program. The program draws from the learnings of post-TC Winston in 2016 when rural communities lost their main sources of income (e.g., raw materials for weaving), RBTR taught affected communities to use materials still available around them. This resulted in the creation of products such as tic-tac-toe, a children's game that uses pebbles. The pebbles were collected and painted. Another learning that RBTR has shared is the need to promote circular economies with the inclusion of rural remote women in the recovery process to create opportunities for a truly 'just recovery'.

4

**Psychiatric Survivors Association (PSA)** embarked on a national campaign working with villages and rural communities on mental health awareness and to identify community champions for mental health. Community Watch Zones were set up in Vanuabalavu (Lau), Levuka and Sigatoka. In these zones, mental health champions trained by PSA act as first responders to look after the well-being and safety of its registered members living in rural villages/communities. Champions identify signs and symptoms of psycho-social disabilities especially for community members who may be undiagnosed. Their role is to notify PSA, which, through the Ministry of Health, provides an appropriate doctor to make an assessment and provide treatment and support. Champions make weekly home visits to PSA members to check on their medication and assist with their personal hygiene. In times of disaster, these champions will also be tasked with ensuring that the PSA members placed in their care are well informed and if the need arises - are also evacuated with the rest of the community. PSA also worked with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation to find appropriate shelter for its members who were homeless especially during the lockdown. PSA has been actively lobbying for police officers to be trained in psychosocial support to ensure that their members are treated appropriately when under arrest.

Similarly, **NWDG** at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture continues to engage with piggery and horticulture groups in their communities to provide learning-exchanges and sharing of best practices from their *solesolevaki* model. They were also able to secure technical assistance, seedlings for pasture, pine posts, fencing material and a rotavator<sup>15</sup> for 5 of their members from the Ministry and the Fiji Co-operative Dairy Company Limited.

The completion of **Graduate Women (Fiji)'s** STEM camp curriculum and connections developed between **GWF** and Fiji National University, Nanogirl Labs New Zealand and the Australian National University Science Circus Pacific has laid the foundation for future camps.

<sup>15</sup> A rotavator is a farming implement that is attached to a tractor to help break up soil for seed bed preparation.



# HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Apart from our current grants, we were able to support 9 additional initiatives through a grant of AUD 200,000 from the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP). This grant allowed our grantee partners to provide urgent assistance for communities impacted by COVID-19 and TC Harold including:

- ✱ For women in affected Fiji communities to have an increased ability to generate employment and livelihoods.
- ✱ For women, girls, people living with disabilities and gender non-conforming sex workers to have strengthened resilience in the aftermath of TC Harold and COVID-19; and
- ✱ For rural and remote communities to have increased awareness and preparedness of health risks associated with COVID-19 and post-natural disaster diseases.<sup>16</sup>

Details of the relief provided by each of the grantee partners is outlined below:

In response to an outbreak of Leptospirosis, Typhoid, Dengue and Diarrhoea (LTDD) following TC Harold, **Medical Services Pacific (MSP)**

supported the Ministry of Health with door-to-door awareness and worked with communities on clean-up campaigns (clearing mosquito breeding places, cutting grass and removing any stagnant water) as well as proper hygiene practices that were also conducive to COVID-19 precautionary measures. MSP also provided Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Response awareness and education in 4 villages on Vatulele Island, which was largely affected by TC Harold. MSP worked with Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF) to assess the damage on the island. The partners carried out repair work on Vatulele District School's rainwater harvesting system, which was identified as a hazard to human health and contributing to LTDD.

**Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network (PRAN)** is a network of more than 80 members with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, homeless people, single mothers, people living with disabilities and former and current sex workers based in Lautoka, Ba and Nadi. COVID-19 restrictions such as the lockdown and continued nightly curfews have severely impacted the ability of its sex worker members to earn a living. After completing a

<sup>16</sup>These are the three Fund outcomes for the Recovery Response for COVID-19 and TC Harold. These outcomes are aligned to the Fund's intended outcomes in the area of Eliminating Violence Against Women, Women's Economic Empowerment and Women's Leadership and Decision Making.



MSP wash and hygiene awareness for communities post TC Harold.  
PC: MSP



needs assessment, PRAN worked on initiatives to help its vulnerable members receive relief supplies, pivot to alternative forms of livelihood and access healthcare services in partnership with MSP. According to PRAN, their partnership with MSP is the first time they have been able to access health services in a safe environment free of discrimination and judgment. PRAN provided tailored relief packages for members who needed assistance e.g., milk for mothers with babies and hygiene products for its homeless members. The network also helped its members start backyard gardens to build food security and are looking to plant long-term income-generating crops such as yaqona and cassava.

**Transcend Oceania (TO)** convened workshops on *Understanding and Dealing with Trauma* in the provinces of Cakaudrove, Macuata and Bua. The project was implemented as part of TO's broader response to the psychosocial needs of those people who suffered trauma after the devastation caused by TC Harold, explained further in the EAVW section of the report. The workshops involved 30 - 40 leaders and aimed to teach them to understand the causes and impacts of trauma. By the end of the training, each community developed its own Trauma Informed Preparedness and Resilience action plans.

### **Rise Beyond the Reef (RBTR)**

helped bolster food sovereignty and income for rural remote women and their families that they already work with by supporting the establishment of women's farms and facilitating market access. RBTR also helped

these communities adapt to current local and export markets for handmade artisan goods and agricultural products. RBTR supported communities in producing products suited to the current context such as soap and health and wellness kits containing herbal and immunity-boosting products sourced from their garden.

**Talanoa Treks (TT)** supported women engaged in eco-tourism (trekking) activities in two villages to generate income from alternative activities, which can continue in tandem beyond 2020. TT supported women in partner communities to understand COVID-19 guidelines and adapt processes and governance structures to comply with COVID-19 best practices in 4 villages. TT also supported female guides from 2 villages to develop a short farm tour as another product offering. The women in these communities have also embarked on a value-adding project – selling jams and pickles.

### **Women Entrepreneurs Business Council (WEBC)**

focused on rebuilding resilience and economic recovery for their members. WEBC's members include women-led small businesses in formal and informal sectors that faced various shocks to their business operations. WEBC delivered 9 training and support sessions to help members



RBTR dropping off relief supplies to rural communities post TC Harold.  
PC: RBTR





create linkages to new market systems, innovate their products, build capacity, diversify livelihoods, and develop contingency plans to ensure business continuity.

### **Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)**

supported the Fiji CSO Alliance for COVID-19 Humanitarian Response. The Alliance members include the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND), Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Citizens' Constitutional Forum, Social Empowerment and Education Program, femLINKpacific, Rainbow Pride Foundation and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement – which also serves as the Alliance's secretariat with a core working group of 5 staff members. The Alliance works on the interlinking issues of community development, human rights, social justice, gender equality and violence against women. The Alliance continues to monitor the humanitarian situation and adapt their responses accordingly – both as a collective and through their individual organisation's work.

**Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation** received 2 humanitarian grants. The first grant was given to its affiliate Spinal Injury Association (SIA) to scope the needs of persons with disabilities impacted

by TCs Tino, Sarai and Harold for mobility aid and appliances and medical consumables. SIA sourced supplies from Physio Net from the United Kingdom and the Pacific Rehab Foundation in New Zealand. Our grant helped with the freight fees for these supplies. SIA also provided beneficiaries access to other networks and support systems during COVID-19. The second grant provided core funding (operational costs) to FDPF and its 4 affiliates (Spinal Injury Association, Fiji Association for the Deaf, United Blind Persons of Fiji, Psychiatric Survivors Association) to assist with budget shortfalls due to cuts in the financial year 2019-2020 post-COVID-19 revised budget. Responding to the dual crises, and apart from providing advice to the Fijian Government, FDPF also helped to set up the Disability Emergency Operation Centre. The Centre is activated during emergencies to ensure that persons with disabilities receive timely information and are not left behind during and after a disaster. FDPF's affiliates also provided critical support such as the issuance of personal protection equipment (gloves, mask, and sanitisers), hygiene kits tailor-made to the needs of people living with disabilities (to include diapers), distributed food rations, and, started food security program such as backyard gardens.



# INDEPENDENT FUND



This past year we have invested considerable time and effort towards becoming the Pacific's first independent national feminist and women's fund. We worked on the development of the Fund's Trust Deed, revitalised our resource mobilisation efforts by recruiting a Resource Mobilisation Adviser and developed our Resource Mobilisation Strategy.

Having sought legal advice in 2019 on the processes to register the Fund as a legal entity under the Charitable Trust Act of Fiji, a Consultant was hired in 2020 to seek the views of the feminist and women's movement in Fiji and our sister funds on the development of the Trust Deed. Using our Localisation Strategy (which includes a Handover Plan), the Consultant conducted a series of consultative exercises and contextual research which involved the steering committee, the grants committee, the Fund Team, grantee partners and the greater women's and feminist movement. The report and recommendations were tabled with the Transitional Steering Committee in September. It was hoped that the Trust Deed could have been filed with the Register before the end of 2020 however this was not possible given the delays

caused by TC Yasa. The Trust Deed will now be filed in early 2021. Despite this setback, the Fund's Transitional Steering Committee was able to endorse 3 members of the Board of Trustees and the changes to the Fund's governance structures including the development of the Fund's first Strategic Plan in 2021.

## Resource Mobilisation

Resource Mobilisation has also been a key outcome of our transition to independence. Part of the transition involves playing an active role in building and strengthening our relationships and partnerships to enhance our ability to garner a wide range of resources. Despite COVID-19, we were still able to participate through online platforms in national, regional, and global spaces for collaboration and knowledge sharing that bring together our partners, allies and colleagues for collective learning, reflection and strategising on ways to build a stronger feminist and women's movement.

A Consultant worked with us to develop our first resource mobilisation strategy which will be disseminated in early 2021. Seeking the input of the feminist and women's movement in Fiji, the Consultant was able to learn more about the feminist funding landscape and what resources (financial and non-financial) were required by women, girls, and gender non-conforming people.

Throughout the year, we actively submitted proposals seeking funding support from Mama Cash, Global Fund for Women, Women's Funds Collaborative and Prospera Asia and Pacific Chapter. The funds secured will help in the strengthening of the Fund's localisation exercise particularly in relation to change management, communications, and grant management.

We were also able to source additional funds from the Australian Humanitarian Partnership to support the work of 8 grantee partners pivoting their work towards COVID-19 response and TC Harold's recovery activities. Alongside that, we were also able to source funds from *Pacific Women* to provide core organisational support to the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation.

In addition to this, at the end of 2020, we entered discussions with the New Zealand Government to support humanitarian grants in 2021 – a measure that will be especially helpful given the frequency and intensity of cyclones occurring in Fiji lately.

During this reporting period, we also began an exciting partnership brokering exercise between the Urgent Action Fund Asia and Pacific, Women's Fund Asia and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Gender Equality Branch. The partnership aims to work collaboratively to design a program to support women's organisations in the Prospera Asia Pacific region. The intention is for the Funds to enter into a Consortium Agreement to receive funds from DFAT. The consortium has also taken on the role of resourcing the formation of the Pacific Feminist Fund.

## Mid-Term Review of the Fund

A Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Fund was undertaken in late 2019 – early 2020. The MTR was designed to assess progress towards key outcomes and to provide guidance and recommendations. Key findings include that the Fund:

- ✱ had established its place as a credible vehicle to facilitate support towards women's movements and had effectively built relationships with global women's funds to strengthen ownership, identity, and legitimacy,

- ✱ had established its legitimacy with global and local women's movements,
- ✱ had helped empower women's organisations through funding, capacity building, mentoring, and facilitating networking,
- ✱ had increased the influence of individual women and organisations within their communities with several identified examples of women's groups, organisations and networks gaining significant influence in their communities and at the national, regional, and global level,
- ✱ established a flexible, adaptive, and collaborative approach to working with partners rather than a hierarchical relationship (which was greatly valued),
- ✱ was able to balance the requirements of being an Australian Government-funded initiative while also maintaining the flexibility to advocate and support a range of projects and interventions relevant to women's organisations, and,
- ✱ had made progress towards becoming an independent entity by preparing a localisation strategy and handover plan.





The report also highlighted 13 key recommendations for the sustainability and financial security of the Fund. These ranged from suggestions on making changes to the eligibility criteria and the categorisation of grants, revision and improvements to the Fund's Capacity Development and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning processes, and the development of a detailed strategy for the Fund's transition to an independent locally managed Fund.

In 2020, the Fund progressed recommendations from the MTR in the following ways:

- ✱ Revised our Capacity Development Strategy to guide our role in brokering learning relationships with and amongst grantees. The strategy also incorporates feedback from partners that we tended to be more compliance-focused with our training. The strategy now guides us to work with our partners to identify their training needs.
- ✱ In strengthening and expanding facilitation and networking, we hosted our annual reflections and learning workshop. This included, for the first time, working with our grantee partner WEBC to host a public market. The market featured products and services of our grantee partners and allowed partners such as Udu Point Women's Initiative to promote their handicraft and secure large orders

for their handicraft. FDPF was also able to continue conversations with the British High Commission to secure funding to support their livelihoods initiatives. We also included exchange learning opportunities for new partners during orientation and capacity development.

- ✱ Our Grants and Steering Committee endorsed our new grant's structure, which was implemented in our fourth grant call. The call was announced in November. The new structure does not limit the number of years applicants of the sustainability grants can apply for, allowing us to make longer-term commitments to organisations that play an essential role in the Fiji women's and feminist movement. The structure also allows the Fund team to recommend scaling or replicating successful projects of existing grantee partners. Existing grantee partners do not need to go through the Expressions of Interest process.

- ✱ We continued to work with FDPF as part of a strategy to include people living with disabilities. FDPF holds 3 grants with the Fund; it continues to represent our biggest grant commitment. In addition to its existing multiple year grant with us, they were also recipients of a COVID-19 and TC Harold response to ensure their acquisition of mobility devices for their members in need. The Fund also supported FDPF with core funding and operational costs in response to budget shortfalls they experienced this year. We also



FWF 3rd Call grantees with the Australian High Commissioner H.E John Feakes at the networking event hosted by the Fund.  
PC: FWF. Navneet Narayan



brokered funding support for them from the Pacific Women Support Unit earlier in the year.

The Fund continues to provide programming support through an assigned Program Officer.

- ✿ To strengthen data and information collection, we have revised our grantee reporting templates to capture both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Data collection and reporting tools for partners have been developed and trialed with five partners. Some of these tools have also been translated into i-Taukei. We also worked with four of the six new partners in our third call to develop their monitoring plans and strengthen their MEL systems.
- ✿ We have reviewed our proposal template to include a risk management section with risk mitigation strategies. We also continued to use our monthly program meetings and Grants Committee meetings to include risk updates.
- ✿ As part of our accountability procedures, all members of the Fund's Steering and Grants Committees including the Fund Team are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest. In cases where there are areas of conflicts of interest, this is recorded and key actions are outlined and implemented.
- ✿ In working with DFAT for streamlined approval for our communication materials, approvals are now only sought for blogs and press releases. The process is smooth and turnaround time for approvals has improved greatly. The Fund has also been working on communications pieces that have been slowly embedding feminism and women's rights themes. As we get closer to transition, these messages will become more prominent as the Fund begins to openly identify as a feminist and a women's fund. We can already see from audience feedback and engagement that these are topics that are no longer contentious.

## Organisational Strengthening

Within this period, there were key changes to our 2 governing committees. In the Steering Committee, two additional members were appointed: Cathy Wong and Georgina Naigulevu. Nalini Singh's tenure as the Chair ended and Georgina was voted in as the incoming Chair. Our Grants Committee also included 2 new members, Susan Naidu and Sainimili Tawake. Since our inception, the composition of the Grants Committee has evolved. Originally, only members of the Steering Committee were nominated to be on the Grants Committee. This has evolved to now include 2 members of the women's movement and civil society.

We continue to invest in the capacity of our team by supporting their professional development. The Fund undertakes an annual performance appraisal which provides a great space for reflections and forward planning for each of the staff. This has also led to the revisions of our staff members' terms of reference.

The Fund also undertook a series of review and planning workshops to reflect on our work outputs and to re-strategise considering the recommendations of the MTR and how best to deliver them given the difficult year. The workshops also allowed our team to do in-depth training on communications, grants management, monitoring and evaluation and finance. A few sessions were also used to work with the Trust Deed Consultant on our new mission, vision, values and keywording for the Trust Deed which will be filed in 2021.





## Key Events

COVID-19 imposed restrictions on both social gatherings and international travel, which meant that many events that were planned for 2020 had to be postponed or cancelled. Despite this, we continued to engage in virtual meetings and events to continue our participation in movement building.

### **Launch of the “Where is the money for women and girls in the Pacific” Scoping Study at the Australian Aid Conference – February 2020**

Working with Urgent Action Fund Asia and Pacific, the Fund produced four products in relation to the research (Full Scoping Study, Summary of the Study, Infographic 1-pager and infographic video). These pieces were launched during a panel discussion at the Australasian Aid Conference at a pre-conference launch event in Canberra, Australia. The scoping study was commissioned through the support of the Australian Government, Global Fund for Community Foundations, and the Foundation for a Just Society.

### *“Women and Girls in a Time of Crisis”*

#### **WOW Global 24 Film Festival**

On the weekend of June 27-28, alongside our grantee partner the Fiji Women's Rights Movement and sister fund, Urgent Action Fund Asia & the Pacific, we participated in the WOW Global 24, a free 24-hour online WOW Festival uniting women and girls across the world. The festival analysed the issues, explored solutions, spotlighted what is already being done and heard from women, girls and people of all genders who are working towards a better, post COVID-19 world.

### **ANNUAL REFLECTIONS AND WOMEN'S MARKET DAY**

**October 2020**

Every year, we work alongside *Pacific Women* to co-host a two-day cross-learning and sharing space for our grantee partners. This year the Fiji Reflection and Learning Workshop was attended by 40 initiatives supported by the Australian Government through funding from Fiji Women's Fund and Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*). Grantee partners shared challenges they faced and different ways of doing business in response to the crises of COVID-19 and TC Harold. Apart from the usual sessions, the workshop also featured new livelihoods skills building, which many of the grantee partners found useful given the economic downturn. At the end of the workshop, a women's market was hosted by the Women Entrepreneurs Business Council featuring the crafts and products of our partners. WEBC reports that each stall was able to sell out, generating more income than they had at other markets during the year.

#### **Panel discussion - October 2020**

### **“Promising practices in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in Fiji”**






The Fund partnered with grantee partners House of Sarah, Medical Services Pacific, Rise Beyond the Reef and the Reproductive Family Health Association of Fiji (RFHAF) to produce the “Promising practices in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in Fiji”. This paper is part of the Fund's ongoing research series that seeks to inform and support good practices with the aim of improving the lives of women and girls in Fiji. The paper shared four practices that the organisations use that align with practices that have been demonstrated as effective internationally. Grantee partners emphasise the importance of knowing the context and experiences of the specific women that each project works with, acknowledging that not all women are the same. They work at both individual and collective levels to address the risk factors and structural drivers of violence. Partners also engage men and boys. They develop contextualised tools to support conversations about preventing and eliminating violence against women. A panel discussion was held to close the two-day Annual Reflections event to launch the paper. The panel discussion featured Reverend Sereima Lomaloma, Ashna Shaleen, Tara Chetty and Michelle Reddy and was broadcast live on our Facebook channel.



"Promising practices in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in Fiji" panel discussion during the Fiji Annual Reflections event in October.  
PC: FWF, Navneet Narayan

## Communications

The Fund's Communications Strategy was revised in January and June 2020 taking into account both our accelerated work on the transition to independence and the global pandemic. These events motivated us to be innovative and to focus on using digital channels to reach our audiences. In 2020 we published **4** electronic newsletters, **6** press releases, **12** blogs (one published on Crawford University's Development Policy Forum Blog), **20** articles featuring impact stories from our grantee partners, **4** What's New articles, and **13** videos. These pieces led to increased traffic on our website and all our social media channels. Compared to 2019, our viewership more than doubled. This can be attributed to our increased efforts to publish more content. This year we were featured in **36** local and international news pieces. We also published several knowledge management pieces that incorporated the use of statistics, infographics and QR codes.

					
2019	Page views <b>14,509</b> Unique page views - <b>11,406</b> Users - <b>4,937</b>	Followers <b>2,227</b> Likes - <b>2,262</b> Reach - <b>873,428</b>	Followers <b>536</b> Impressions <b>196,284</b>	Followers <b>41</b>	Subscribers <b>6</b>
2020	Page views <b>34,349</b> Unique page views - <b>27,870</b> Users - <b>14,559</b>	Followers <b>3,878</b> Likes - <b>3,864</b> Reach - <b>922,253</b>	Followers <b>966</b> Impressions <b>69,300</b>	Followers <b>955</b>	Subscribers <b>15</b>



# WHAT WE LEARNED THIS YEAR

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning:

COVID-19 and the onslaught of tropical cyclones have changed many aspects of how organisations are working. Our MEL approach in 2020 has been one of reflecting, testing and learning to ensure we remain effective, efficient and relevant to our grantee partners. The Fund addressed feedback from our grantee partners, the MTR, and the Fund team, using several approaches. Some examples of these approaches are:

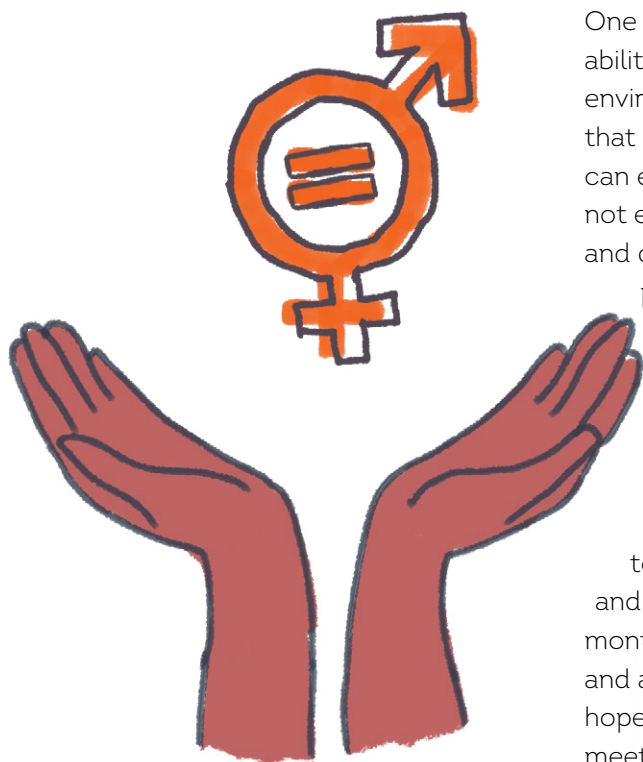
- ✱ We provided direct capacity development in monitoring and reporting to 5 of the 8 new grantee partners we engaged this year. The opportunity allowed us to trial MEL resources we developed for grantee partners and to include these resources in our MEL Resource kit.
- ✱ We streamlined data collection tools to match the capacity needs of specific partners. We revised our reporting templates and grantee partners used these in both their June and December reporting to the Fund. We also tested different reporting approaches with grantee partners.

- ✱ 4 grantee partners provided interview-styled reporting facilitated by the Fund and complemented this with data they collected using tools we provided. This helped strengthen our data verification processes.
- ✱ It was also the first time we translated some of our grantee partners monitoring tools and activity reporting templates into i-Taukei and conducted MEL capacity development in i-Taukei for partners who requested this. We look forward to expanding on this work in 2021.

Throughout these processes, we continued to be reminded to be versatile and adaptive in how we engage with our grantee partners for mutual learning, especially in these new normal times. We continue to use Impact Mapper in our reporting analysis but look forward to utilising the application to its full capacity in 2021. We continue to reflect on and capture learnings from our MEL processes to be included in the 2021 review of our MEL framework, which will be further informed by the formulation strategic plan.



## Grants: a shift in our grant mechanism to align more to the needs of the feminist & women's movement



One of our biggest learnings this year was our limited ability to respond quickly and appropriately to the changing environment and the increasing need for financial resources that diverse women and gender non-conforming people can easily access during times of crisis. Our grants could not effectively respond to the need for humanitarian work and during the earlier months of 2020, many of our grantee partners at the forefront of response efforts shared that they felt the strain of their organisation's ability to reprogram and effectively respond to the growing crises. We also realised and acknowledge that we need to build adaptive and flexible funding and networking processes to support our grantee partners during times of disaster and crises. From the beginning to end (application, due diligence, grant signing, orientation and disbursement), processing a grant could take up to 6 months. While we have streamlined many of these processes and altered our grant mechanism (with further testing), we hope to accelerate this process whilst ensuring that we are meeting the requirements of our various funders.

## Capturing institutional memory

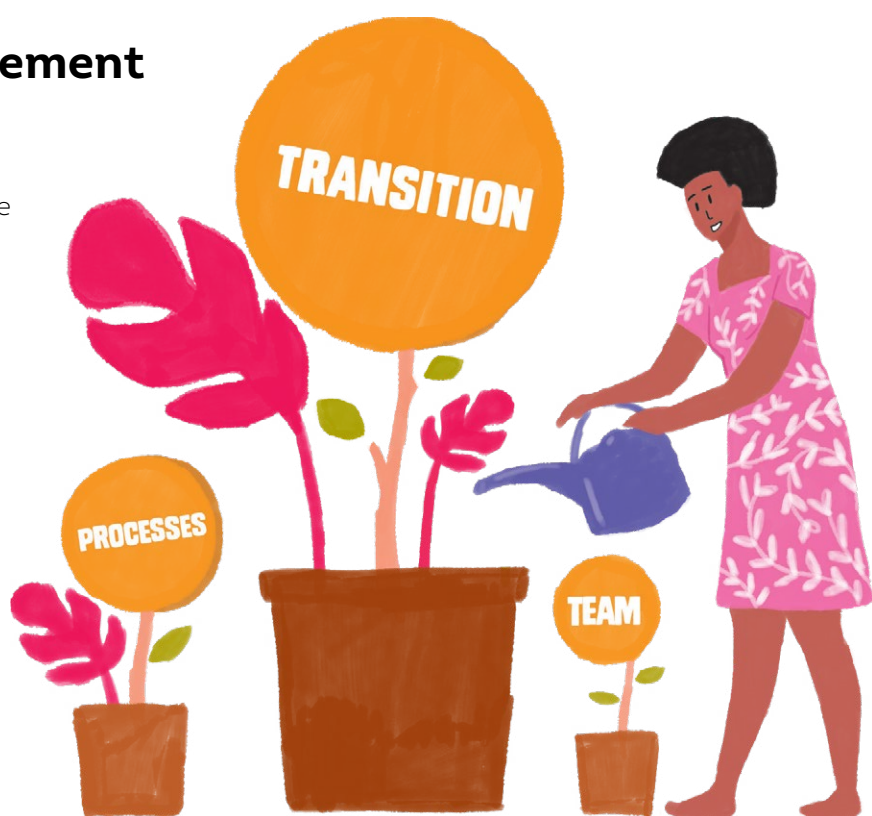
With the accelerated work toward the transition already underway in 2020 instead of 2021, we recognise the need to comprehensively monitor, capture and document the changes taking place and to ensure that we do not miss anything in the handover process. For the sustainability of the Fund, we need these institutional memories and to properly manage implemented knowledge, in order to draw from lessons in the future.





## Invest in change management

The transition to independence has been a difficult undertaking because relationships both internally and externally are shifting. We must ensure an empathetic and respectful approach that builds understanding among our grantee partners, donors, and the wider community of people that we work with while fulfilling the needs of an autonomous national women's fund. In 2020, we began working with a change management adviser to help our team, our grantee partners, and other stakeholders to better understand their changing roles, have a sense of ownership, stay informed, and manage expectations. We mobilised resources from sister Funds to support these important changes and we are grateful for their support.



## Capacity development support: re-examining the way we support our grantee partners by using virtual means

With restrictions on physical gathering, many of our planned trainings for the year were postponed or cancelled. The pandemic pushed us to think outside the box and to explore digital transformations. We created videos, used Zoom sessions and other digital platforms to stay connected and to continue to engage, teach and learn. For 3 months, even our schools

reverted to online learning. In 2020 alone, 66% of Fiji's

population had access to the Internet, 63% used social media and there was a total of 1.24 million mobile connections.<sup>17</sup> This creates a conducive environment and the right opportunity for us to build on these experiences and learnings and to implement these practices long-term. In 2021, we intend to work smarter, not harder by moving many of our capacity development support initiatives for our grantee partners to pre-recorded videos. We will share these through our social media channels and other video calling platforms. We will however monitor the effectiveness of these changes and if necessary, revisit our decisions.



<sup>17</sup> Data Portal: Digital 2020: Fiji - <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-fiji>

# LOOKING FORWARD

The Fund will focus on the following 4 priorities over the coming year:

## Governance Structures

With the appointment of a Board of Trustees and the successful registration of the Fund, appointments of the new Governance Board and Grants Committee members will take place in accordance with the Trust Deed. To foster a smooth transition, the changes in the governance structures will take into account a handover period.



## Strategic Plan Development

To foster local ownership, the Fund since its inception has deliberately adopted a genuine partnership approach with local feminist and women's organisations. Some of these have included obtaining input from the women's movement on the Fund's branding, grant mechanism, capacity development support, as well as key strategies including the development of the Fund's Trust Deed. In 2021, the Fund will begin to implement its handover plan in the areas of governance, finance, communications, MEL, and other areas. To guide the Fund's future direction, the development of a Strategic Plan is vital. Alongside this, we will also develop a finance plan that considers the financial and non-financial resources required for the implementation of the three-year Strategic Plan. We hope to bring our grantee partners and the wider community of people we partner with together for a two-day workshop where we will use our partnership model to craft our first strategic plan together. The development of the Strategic Plan will commence in March 2021 and will be finalised by May 2021.





## Managing the handover of finance, human resources, operations, governance, assets and various aspects

With the handover and localisation strategy accelerated, this now means that instead of the 24 months we initially had planned, we now only have six months to do this. A handover team consisting of the Fund management, staff and the Cardno team will be meeting monthly to check on the progress we are making. Guided by the Transitional Steering Committee, the handover team will provide progress on the different phases of changes. The smooth completion and handover of the Fund from a contractor model to an independent local entity requires planning and proper documenting. Given the nuances and complexity of transferring bank accounts, IT systems and knowledge management, we are ensuring that we take the time to meticulously record our progress. Cardno will be taking the team through a range of workshops that cover the functions currently performed by Cardno such as HR. At the same time, we will be scoping out suitable systems that the team will be comfortable using and that will suit the reporting requirements of major donors.



## Amplifying efforts in resource mobilisation

Simultaneously with the Fund's journey towards registration, the Fund is working towards diversifying its resources. Part of this includes the development of its Resource Mobilisation Strategy and engaging an adviser to assist in this area. At present, we are mostly funded by the Australian Government, DFAT and in 2020 we were able to secure funds from other organisations such as Global Fund for Women (GFW), Mama Cash, Women's Funds Collaborative and Prospera Asia and Pacific Chapter. With the Resource Mobilisation (RM) strategy as a framework, we aim to secure core, multi-year grants from several donors to cover the Fund's grant-making budget and operating costs until at least December 2022. As a women's fund, we believe in funding mechanisms that reflect and contribute to strengthening the institutional capacities, sustainability and resilience of feminist movements and women's rights organisations. We are undertaking and documenting a thorough scan of the opportunities that exist in multiple spaces and at different levels (local-regional-global) to expand our base of funding sources. At the same time, we are aligning our Communications Strategy to ensure that it is aligned with the RM and the shifting narrative of the Fund – being more feminist.

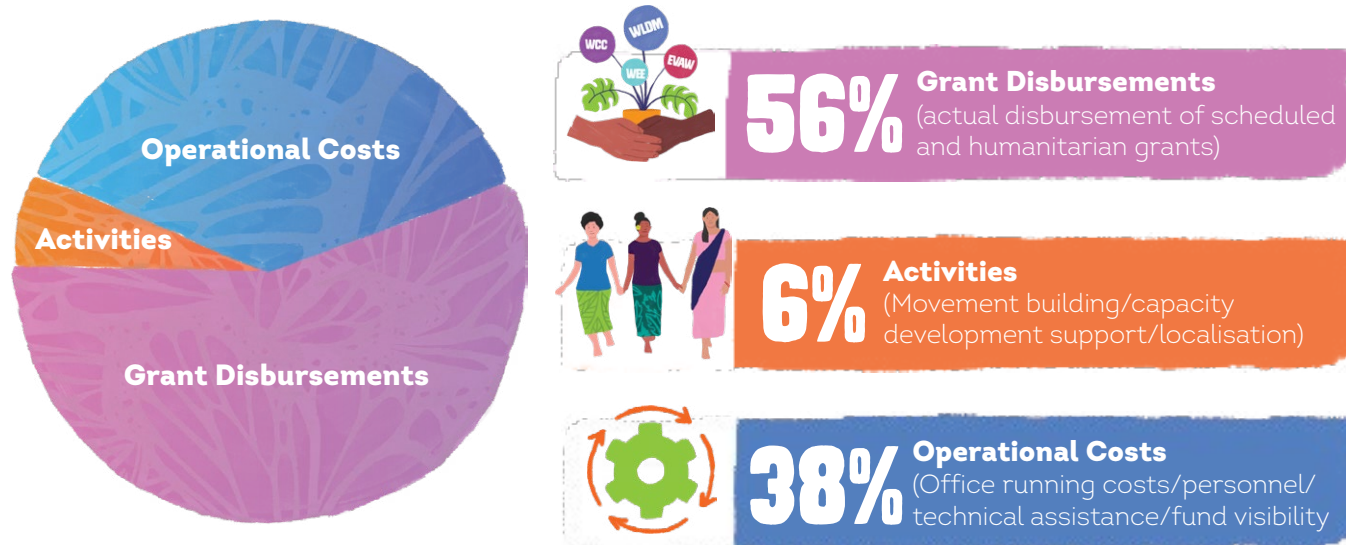


# FINANCIALS

Our total income received for 2020 was **AUD 1,840,030.16** and total expenditure was **AUD 1,791,717.37**

BREAKDOWN	DFAT (including AHP)	Mama Cash Solidarity Fund	Global Fund for Women	Total
Income	\$1,765,179.51	\$40,257.65	\$34,593.00	\$1,840,030.16
Expenditures	\$1,765,179.51	\$26,537.86	\$0.00	\$1,791,717.37
Operational Costs	\$655,613.07			\$655,613.07
Grants (1st call/2nd call/ 3rd call and AHP)	\$975,489.15			\$975,489.15
Activity Costs	\$134,077.29	\$26,537.86		\$160,615.15
Total income less expenditures	\$0.00	\$13,719.79	\$34,593.00	\$48,312.79

The graph below represents expenditure relating to DFAT funding.



## Fund Grants disbursed vs. Operations Cost

Year (January-December)	Operations ratio	New Grants by Call (DFAT funding 2017-2021)	Other new grants (new funding secured)	Total New Grants	Active Grants Managed from Jan-Dec
2018	30%	17	0	17	17
2019	31%	12	0	12	21
2020	38%	9	9	18	30



# ACRONYMS

<b>ADRA</b>	Adventist Relief Agency Fiji	<b>MTE</b>	Mid-Term Evaluation
<b>AHP</b>	Australian Humanitarian Partnership	<b>MTR</b>	Mid Term Review
<b>AUD</b>	Australian Dollar	<b>MWCPA</b>	Ministry of Wome, Children and Poverty Alleviation
<b>COVID-19</b>	Corona Virus Disease	<b>NCDP</b>	National Council for Disabled Persons
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organsations	<b>NDMO</b>	National Disaster Management Office
<b>DFAT</b>	Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	<b>NWDG</b>	Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group
<b>DIVA</b>	Diverse Voices and Action for Equality Fiji	<b>PCDF</b>	Partners in Community Development Fiji
<b>ELF</b>	Emerging Leaders Forum	<b>PCP</b>	Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding
<b>EVAW</b>	Eliminating Violence Against Women	<b>PRAN</b>	Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network
<b>FAD</b>	Fiji Association of the Deaf	<b>PSA</b>	Psychiatric Survivors Association
<b>FCDCL</b>	Fiji Co-Operative Dairy Company Limited	<b>PVAWFFS</b>	Preventing Violence Against Women in Fiji's Faith Settings
<b>FDPF</b>	Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation	<b>RBTR</b>	Rise Beyond the Reef
<b>FJD</b>	Fijian Dollar	<b>RFHAF</b>	Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji
<b>FNAP</b>	Fiji National Action Plan	<b>RM</b>	Resource Mobilisation
<b>FRIEND</b>	Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development	<b>RWLCMN</b>	Rural Women Leaders Community Media Network
<b>FWCC</b>	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre	<b>SIA</b>	Spinal Injury Association
<b>FWF</b>	Fiji Women's Fund	<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual Reproductive health and Rights
<b>FWRM</b>	Fiji Women's Rights Movement	<b>TC</b>	Tropical Cyclone
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence	<b>TO</b>	Transcend Oceania
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product	<b>TT</b>	Talanoa Treks
<b>GESI</b>	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	<b>UAF</b>	Urgent Action Fund Asia and Pacific
<b>GFW</b>	Global Fund for Women	<b>UBP</b>	United Blind Persons of Fiji
<b>GoF</b>	Government of Fiji	<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>GWF</b>	Graduate Women (Fiji)	<b>WCC</b>	Women's Coalitions for Change
<b>HoS</b>	House of Sarah	<b>WEBC</b>	Women Entrepreneurs Business Council
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation	<b>WEE</b>	Women's Economic Empowerment
<b>LTDD</b>	Leptospirosis, Typhoid, Dengue, and Diarrhoea	<b>WIFN-Fiji</b>	Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	<b>WLDM</b>	Women's Leadership and Decision Making
<b>MoHMS</b>	Ministry of Health and Medical Services		
<b>MSP</b>	Medical Services Pacific		

# STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## **Nalini Singh**

Executive Director  
Fiji Women's Rights Movement  
(Chair of the Steering Committee, 2018 - 2020)

## **Leonie Whyte**

Programs Lead  
*Pacific Women* Support Unit

## **Selai Korovusere**

Director Women  
Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation

## **Emily Elliot**

Program Manager, Bilateral Gender  
DFAT, Suva

## **Mareta Salacakau Fong**

Finance Manager  
ANZ Bank Fiji

## **Georgina Naigulevu**

Senior Manager Applications, Projects and Innovation  
HFC Bank  
(Chair of the Steering Committee, 2020 - 2021)

## **Dr. Litea Meo-Sewabu**

Lecturer and the Social Work Discipline Lead  
University of the South Pacific

## **Rochelle White**

Counsellor Regional Health, Education and Gender  
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs  
and Trade (DFAT)

## **Cathy Wong**

Physiotherapist  
Suva Physio Centre

# GRANTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## **Sainimili Tawake**

Regional Coordinator on Climate Change  
Pacific Disability Forum

## **Tara Chetty**

Partnerships Lead  
Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development,  
Support Unit

## **Susan Naidu**

Assistant General Manager for Strategic  
and Community Development  
Model Town Charitable Trust

## **Emily Elliot**

Program Manager, Bilateral Gender  
DFAT, Suva

# STAFF MEMBERS

## **Michelle Reddy**

Fund Manager

## **Menka Goundan**

Senior Program Manager

## **Devina Devi**

Program Officer

## **Roshni Chand**

Finance and Administration  
Officer

## **Kuini Rabo**

Program Officer

## **Shyana Ali**

Administrative Support Assistant

## **Tiriseyani Naulivou**

Monitoring, Evaluation and  
Learning Coordinator

## **Erica Lee**

Communications Officer



