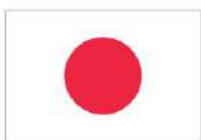


REACH IMPACT STORIES

2015-2017

RIGHTS, EMPOWERMENT AND COHESION (REACH)
FOR RURAL AND URBAN FIJIANS PROJECT



From
the People of Japan



Ministry of Women,
Children & Poverty Alleviation



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The REACH Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness. Project conducts awareness raising of the social, economic and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, provides access to the services associated with these rights, and also strengthens institutional capacity to deliver these services. A mobile service delivery approach is undertaken to reach communities throughout all of Fiji with the focus to reach the furthest behind first.

Sustainable Development Goals

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



The REACH Project supports the achievement of Goal 16 which is commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and Goal 5 which is commitment to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project

http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/rights--empowerment-and-cohesion--reach--for-rural-and-urban-fij.html



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Communities in Fiji gain gender equality awareness and access services

22 December 2017

Savusavu, Fiji – Marguerite Gain returned to her mother’s village after surviving domestic violence and for the past ten years she has been earning her livelihood sewing uniforms for students, dresses and shirts for her fellow village women and men using an old manual sewing machine.

The emotional scars that Marguerite still bears as a survivor of domestic violence did not stop her rising as a business woman. She enrolled in a university and studied with her son who was a university student at the time. With the certificate she earned from the university, Marguerite took another step forward and applied for a business license when the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) visited her village as part of the team of government officers. The business license will bring

her more opportunities to grow her business through accessing training and loans.

The awareness of gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence was unequivocally promoted by the team of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, and the Registrar of BDM. The awareness raising was conducted as part of the initiative to deliver their services to the doorstep of communities coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji. The team visited seven villages in seven districts in two provinces of the Northern Division during the global campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

From 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign is a time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

During the community outreach by the team with the slogan, ‘gender equality starts from the communities,’ the officers from the Department of Women discussed with the villagers that when violence against women and children does occur in the communities, it should not be ignored. They encouraged both women and men to talk about the issue in the communities.

While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals (including equal access to primary education between girls and boys), women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world and Fiji is not an exception.

Participating in the awareness raising and accessing the services in her village, Marguerite said “The discussion and advice given by the officers were so encouraging. I’ve learned that these different government agencies provide different services to us, such as social welfare schemes, legal aid, BDM registrations. I am excited to receive my business license that I applied for today.”

She was encouraged by the officers to participate in the training of trainers and become

a business skills trainer supported by the Department.

Iva Batiki, who has been taking a leadership role for Savudrodro village for more than 30 years, was among the participants in the awareness session conducted in her community. She was a graduate of the leadership training provided by the Department of Women.

Iva encouraged other women in Fiji to take leadership and gave her message, “Never be quiet and shy to talk about sensitive issues like gender-based violence. Encourage everyone to participate and talk to everyone equally. The key is to show your love to everyone.”

The Fiji Government has endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which calls for action by all countries to improve the lives of people and set its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among the 17 Goals, Goal 5 focuses on achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls as it defines gender equality as not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies. Goal 16 is a commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator, in his statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the 16 Days of Activism, said, “With gender



Marguerite Gain with her sewing machine

equality and violence against women now better integrated into the Sustainable Development Goals than in any prior development framework, we have an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen efforts to address and reduce gender-based violence.”

Through strengthening people’s awareness of the social, economic and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and access to the associated government services, the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji promotes gender equality and supports the achievement of these Goals.

The mobile awareness raising and service delivery was conducted by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project. The REACH Project is implemented by UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/12/22/communities-in-fiji-gain-gender-equality-awareness-and-access-services3.html>



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People with disabilities encouraged to become more active through mobile service delivery

7 December 2017

Ba, Fiji - "I am going to my farm again," Merewai Lewaniekuvu said with a large smile.

She had stopped going to her farm since she developed her knee pain over the last three years. The pain discouraged her to walk to and from her farm along the unpaved path from her village located on the hill and forced her to stay at home.

Her eyes were lit up when she received the walking cane and tested it in front of her house. She was visited by the group of specialists from the Spinal Injury Association (SIA), a non-governmental organization working in Fiji, who provides mobility equipment and technical assistance to people

in need of such kind of support.

With the support of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion for Rural and Urban Fijians Project (REACH), the expert group visited the remote communities in mountainous interior of Fiji as part of the REACH mobile team who conducts awareness raising of the social, economic and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and delivers associated services on doorsteps throughout Fiji. The initiative is coordinated by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji.

The access to the government services for the people in the communities is often challenged by the geographical location which is quite distant from the town center where the services and support are being provided and even if people can travel, often there is very rough terrain delaying the transportation.

This is more so for people facing limited mobility. However, due to the REACH mobile service delivery some of them have recently obtained the technical advice and walking aids for the first time, and some obtained readjustment or repair for the maintenance of their equipment provided earlier.

Merewai was among 222 people (103 women and 119 men) who received the REACH mobile service delivery during the four-day visit to the interior communities in Savatu District in Ba Province, Western Division. Among them 11 people (five women and six men) were directly assisted by the SIA.

Jane Savou from SIA said, "We assist people to regain their mobility they lost. We encourage people to walk by themselves with some walking aids, so they stay healthy and active."

"We were able to provide our services to the people who need mobility assistance but

had never been provided before,” she added.

The importance of the services for people living with various challenges was evident during the visit, and it is particularly vital for those experts to reach out to the remote communities and find out the needs so that no one will be left behind. It was enabled through collaboration with the REACH mobile service initiative.

In addition to the technical support, two applications for disability allowance were submitted during the visit. The social welfare officer from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation who was a part of the mobile service delivery, advised that the newly enacted disability allowance scheme enables individuals living with disabilities to receive economic assistance regardless of their family’s economic situation.

Fiji ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 7 June 2017. The Disability Unit has been established within the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and have been delivering disability allowance and associated support to people in need. The Disability Unit has also been working in collaboration with the SIA and other related groups and is an active part of the REACH mobile service delivery.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities which is 3



REACH mobile awareness raising and service delivery session at Buyabuya village, Savatu District, Ba Province.

December was commemorated in Fiji by various groups.

The REACH mobile service delivery was conducted by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project. The REACH Project is implemented by UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

The REACH Project aims to contribute to Fiji’s achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals with particular focus on the Goal 16 which is a commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and the Goal 5 which is to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.



Merewai Lewaniekuvu, assisted by the SIA staff to adjust her walking cane

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/12/07/people-with-disabilities-encouraged-to-become-more-active-through-mobile-service-delivery0.html>



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Regaining her strength through awareness of her rights and access to services

20 November 2017

Rakiraki, Fiji – Pranesh Lata was not aware of the social welfare services the Government provides to people in Fiji nor thought she would need it until her husband fell ill. Her husband was a carpenter and built the house where they and their two daughters are living comfortably in the Western part of Fiji. Sadly, one day her husband suffered a stroke while out at sea fishing for the family's livelihood. Shocked by what happened, Pranesh and her daughters immediately faced new challenges they have never experienced before.

“We were struggling hard to deal with the situation. I did not know about government services which could be

available to us. A local school teacher one day told me about the team who was coming to our community with some information and services,” said Pranesh as she recalled the events.

Fortunately, she was one of 37 people (15 women and 22 men) who attended the mobile awareness raising and service delivery session brought to her community at Nanuku settlement in Rakiraki District by government officers and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji. During the session, she learned her rights and the services she is entitled to, to support her family in the difficult situation.

People living in remote maritime or interior communities often face challenges in accessing the social, economic and legal services the government provides. People residing in close proximity to urban center where government offices are located are not always aware of the rights and services they could access.

Teams of government officers are going to communities to conduct awareness raising of the social, economic and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and provide immediate access to the services associated with these rights. The teams include officers from the Ministry of Children, Women and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and other related government agencies coordinated by the UNDP.

A mobile service delivery approach is undertaken using three buses custom designed and equipped as mobile offices to reach communities throughout all of Fiji with the focus to reach the furthest behind first.

A total of 8905 people (i.e. 4237 women, 3959 men and 709 children) from 526 communities in 85 districts across Central, Eastern, Northern and Western Divisions have benefitted from

the mobile awareness raising and service delivery since it commenced in September 2015 until September 2017.

Pranesh is regaining her strength to face the challenges, and has recently received good news – one of the social welfare services she applied for has been approved.

“The allowance will be a great relief for us since we have to manage the medical expenses for my husband and schooling for my daughters to continue their education,” she said.

She is hopeful that one day soon her husband will recover and be well enough to work again.

This is an initiative of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project that

aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. The three-year REACH Project is being implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

The initiative supports Fiji’s commitment to achieving

Sustainable Development Goals, particularly to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build

effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16); and to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (Goal 5).



Pranesh Lata assisting her husband

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/11/27/regaining-her-strength-through-awareness-of-her-rights-and-access-to-services.html>



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Sign language on board for equal access to services and advocating for the rights

16 November 2017

Suva, Fiji - The inclusion of sign language interpreters provided persons with hearing loss access to social, economic and legal services and highlighted equal access to justice and government services as human rights during a recent outreach at the Nausori market coordinated by the government officers and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Members of the Fiji Association of the Deaf (FAD) communicated their needs to

government officers through sign language interpreters, who are not always available.

Director of the FAD, Krishneer Sen said, "Provision of sign language interpreters would help us access government services. The programme today was helpful because we had interpreters with us. We have now accessed the information we wanted through sign language."

Director of the FAD,
Krishneer Sen

He spoke to the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission about the need to have sign language interpreters in the courts, not

only in the capital city of Suva, but in other locations as well so that the deaf can have equal access to justice.

Social, economic and legal services are available and provided to persons in Fiji by the government but are not always known and easily accessed by all communities. Geographical location, language, economic, social and physical conditions can be barriers to essential government services. The need for increased awareness of the right to access to justice and the delivery of services that are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, has been identified as a priority so that no one is left behind.

A mobile service delivery approach to raising awareness of rights and delivery of services was initiated by the Fijian Government and UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji with support from the Japanese Government.

Teams from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, and other related government agencies use mobile offices to take their services to the doorsteps of communities. Buses were custom designed and equipped to serve as mobile offices to deliver the services.

Sign language interpreters were invited to the recent REACH awareness and service delivery sessions to provide the deaf community with easier access to the services.

A member of FAD, Asena Waqa, highlighted the challenge of accessing justice and services as a woman and deaf person.

“It is really hard for deaf persons to communicate on social issues such as domestic violence. Deaf women living with violence do not know where to go and how to seek assistance. It is difficult to communicate without sign language.”

“I obtained a lot of information during the awareness session which will be useful for my colleagues and friends as well. I requested the officer from the Department of Women to come and talk to deaf women to raise awareness of accessing the services,” she added.

Fiji ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 7 June 2017. The CRPD adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Aligning with the aims of the CRPD, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill was



The role of sign language interpreters is crucial for equal access to services.

introduced in Fiji Parliament in 2016.

The Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness by reaching the furthest behind first. The REACH Project is implemented by UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and Legal Aid Commission and is supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

It supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 which highlights UNDP’s commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and to provide access to justice for all, to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. It also promotes SDG 5 which seeks to achieve gender equality



Director of the FAD, Krishneer Sen advocate for the provision of sign language interpreters for equal access to services.

and empowerment of all women and girls.

*An advocacy video, ‘REACH service delivery in sign language’ which presents the REACH awareness raising and service delivery session with FAD members is available on UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji YouTube (<http://bit.ly/2hMQrDw>)

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/11/16/sign-language-on-board-for-equal-access-to-services-and-advocating-for-the-rights.html>



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Urban communities benefited from the evening mobile awareness raising and service delivery

7 November 2017

Suva, Fiji – Women, men and youths from three of Suva’s urban communities, Jittu Estate Veiquwawa, Wailea settlement and Tamavua-i-Wai settlement, actively engaged during evening sessions in the awareness raising and service delivery recently undertaken by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project.

The communities became more aware of their social, economic and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and immediately accessed services associated with these rights. The services were provided by the officers from the Ministry of Children, Women and Poverty Alleviation; Legal Aid

Commission; Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission; Fiji Police Force; and other related government agencies coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji.

Several people living in urban areas face specific challenges when accessing government services. Some may not be able to visit the government office during opening hours if they are employed, if they are taking care of sick family members at home or if they

are not aware of the services they are entitled to.

Shakuntala Wati was among other participants in Wailea settlement, who utilized the mobile service. She works at a food processing factory and came to the session after her work hours.

“I and my husband came to know that he will be eligible to the social pension scheme soon. And so, he talked with the officer how to prepare for his application. It is a very useful service,” she said.

People appreciated the recent change in the provision of the social pension scheme, in which the eligible age of persons expanded from 65 years and above, and with the increased allowance of FJD\$100 per month.

Mr. Pio Sovalevu, Community Police Coordinator for Jittu

Estate Veiquwawa said that this was very useful for people in his community, many of whom may be eligible to and could use the services but

did not know their rights and the services they could access. He was particularly impressed that the mobile service delivery team came right to



Shakuntala Wati (front left) was among other participants in Wailea settlement, who utilized the mobile service.

the doorstep and joined in with his community and families in the evening, he felt this was a very clear demonstration of the priority focus the government has on delivery of services to all Fijians.

This is an initiative of the REACH Project that aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. It is being implemented by UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Fiji, Mr Tomoaki Miyamoto joined the team in Tamavua-i-Wai settlement. He said, “I witnessed the needs of this mobile service delivery approach and the positive changes made in people’s lives since the Project commenced in 2015.”

“The Government of Japan, through the REACH Project, is proud of supporting Fijian people and the Fiji

Government who are passionately contributing to Fiji’s sustainable development.”

A total of 204 people (106 women and 98 men) participated in the mobile sessions conducted in the three communities.

UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Country Director and Head of Regional Policy and Programme, Bakhodir Burkhanov, participated at an evening session in Wailea settlement. He said, “The REACH Project was designed and is being implemented in

full alignment to Fiji’s socio-political, economic and cultural context.”

“This model offers much inspiration and learning to other countries in its overarching focus on putting people at the centre of development, and

reaching the furthest behind first.”

The REACH Project supports Fiji’s commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, particularly to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all

levels (Goal 16); and to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (Goal 5).



First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Fiji, Mr Tomoaki Miyamoto joined the team in Tamavua-i-Wai settlement

“This model offers much inspiration and learning to other countries its overarching focus on putting people at the centre of development,”

UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji
Country Director and Head of
Regional Policy and Programme,
Bakhodir Burkhanov,

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/11/06/urban-communities-benefited-from-the-evening-mobile-awareness-raising-and-service-delivery.html>



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People enjoyed government services made accessible at remote locations and market places

7 August 2017

Losavati Sovivi found herself passionately engaged in the awareness raising talanoa (talk) and found exactly what she wanted to know to make her family happier. The details of the social pension scheme and the importance of child protection inspired her, especially as she has dedicated herself to caring for her family members, raising her ten children – with the youngest at 11 years old – and she has been looking after her 82 year-old mother-in-law.

“It was an eye-opener, finding out how we as adults should talk to children, politely, paying attention to them and listening to them. I have a lot of experience in

communicating with children but I may not have always been mindful of the importance of those matters,” said Sovivi.

“I also obtained the information about social pension scheme. I’ve found I can apply on behalf of my mother-in-law and I can prepare all required documents to apply,” she added.

Sovivi was one of 75 people (46 women and 29 men) who gathered at the community hall at Naboutini village, located in Saqani district of Cakaudrove province. They became more aware of various topics on the rights

guaranteed by Fiji’s Constitution and exercised their rights by accessing social, economic and legal services provided by government.

The services were brought to the village by a team of government officers coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji, as part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project.

This team also provided mobile service delivery to market vendors and others at the Labasa and Savusavu municipal markets, where people accessed the services using a custom designed bus equipped as a mobile office to deliver services for the first time in the Northern Division. People at the markets could consult officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, and the Ministry of Justice.

Henry Barrack, a vendor at Savusavu market, supports his family by selling yaqona and vegetables. He was one of the many who accessed the services being provided by the mobile service delivery bus.

“I was able to start the legal process to adopt one of my grandchildren. I wanted to formalize it so I can fully welcome the baby boy to my family while his mother raises

two more children as a single mother,” said Barrack.

REACH Project Outreach Coordinator at the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, Salesi Savu said, "Some communities and individuals are challenged with geographical locations in accessing these services that more available in towns."

“Others like market vendors, found it difficult to find time to leave work and go to government offices. So, we take the services right to their communities or in this case the locations convenient to them such as the market place," said Savu.

The Fijian Government has endorsed the global Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to ensure that no one will be left behind in the path to sustainable development. Goal 16 is a commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. And Goal 5 is a commitment to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. The REACH Project supports the achievement of these goals.

The Project is implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children

and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission with support from the Government of Japan and UNDP.



Villagers arrived in numbers to take advantage of the services provided by the REACH bus mobile office.



<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/08/07/people-enjoyed-government-services-made-accessible-at-remote-locations-and-market-places.html>



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Marriage ceremony on the mobile service delivery bus brings hope to the newlyweds

7 August 2017

It had been longed for and came as a most welcomed surprise to Amani Rakula and Savaira Marama Rakula to be joined in civil union as husband and wife through the 'REACH mobile service delivery' that arrived at their remote village in Namosi province.

The newlyweds have been together for the past six years but have never had the chance to officially be married. This was made possible and formally presided by an officer from the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Office in their village of Naraiyawa, located in Naqarawai district of Namosi province. A team of

officers from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) visited the community as part of the 'REACH mobile service delivery'.

The bridegroom, Amani Rakula said, "We had always planned to get married legally after living as a couple for six years. We've always wanted to be legally married. We are here in the mountains and most of the services we've come to know are just through hearsay. We understood well from the REACH awareness raising session today the

services that are provided by the Ministry of Justice through Birth, Death and Marriage Registration."

To access government services, the people in Naraiyawa village, catch the public bus very early in the morning to Navua or Suva, but have limited time to spend in town as they need to return on the same day. The bus fare expense is another barrier for them to access these services.

'REACH mobile service delivery' raises people's awareness on the rights enshrined in Fiji's Constitution and provides social, economic and legal services by the relevant service providers at the doorstep of the people in Fiji.

Savaira Marama Rakula, the happy bride said, "It will really change our life. We are very excited with being legally married. It will secure the equal ownership between us and our access to government services available for married couples as well as other services such as joint bank accounts. It will bring about socio-economic benefits to us."

A hundred and ninety-six people (120 women and 76 men) from three communities in Naqarawai district in Namosi province accessed information and services in the recent REACH service delivery using the mobile

office, a customized bus equipped to deliver services to remote communities.

The services provided to the people range from marriage certificates, bus fare assistance to women's club project support. Sixty people (32 women and 28 men) received legal aid services in regards to the civil, family and criminal laws, 97 people (67 women and 30 men) accessed social welfare schemes, and 153 women consulted officers from the Department of Women.

The Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness. A mobile service delivery approach is undertaken to reach communities throughout Fiji with the focus to reach the furthest behind first.

The Fijian Government has endorsed the global Sustainable Development Goals which aim to ensure that no one will be left behind in the path to sustainable development. Goal 16 is a commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. And Goal 5 is a commitment to achieve gender equality and

empowerment of all women and girls. The REACH Project supports the achievement of these goals.



REACH mobile service delivery bus at Naraiyawa village, Naqarawai district of Namosi province.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/08/07/marriage-ceremony-on-the-mobile-service-delivery-bus-brings-hope-to-the-newlyweds.html>



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Be Empowered, Be the Change

11 July 2017

Empowering a woman empowers a nation – this was recognized by women who were present at the recent Fiji National Women’s Expo and had the opportunity to access social, economic and legal services provided by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project.

Akanisi Tawa, President of Natogo Wise Women’s Club, Tavua, Western Division found an opportunity to apply for a ‘Care and Protection’ support through REACH mobile services at the Expo.

“I am a mother of four children and also a grandmother. I sell vegetables at Tavua market and some handicrafts through our women’s club. Those are our source of income, which is barely enough to support my family,” she said.

“I was explained the documents required to apply for the assistance. And then I was assisted by a Legal Aid Commission officer immediately and provided with further assistance. I was given the statutory declaration to submit for my application”.

“I am hopeful that my application will be accepted this time. I am glad that I took the opportunity provided through the REACH Project,” she smiled.

Empowering women has a positive impact on their families and communities at large. Access to information, social, economic and legal services gives Fijian women a sense of boldness towards change.

The Expo organized by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation,

brought women artisans to Suva, the capital city of Fiji and provided the platform to showcase their handicrafts and other products with the objective to promote their talent and provide them with access to new marketing opportunities. It included information and awareness raising sessions on health awareness and check-ups, financial products and climate change.

475 artisan women from the Western, Northern, Eastern, and Central Divisions of Fiji, many of whom are from rural and remote maritime communities, are now confident to make a positive change in their lives after the Expo.

Women and visitors at the Expo were able to meet and consult officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission who were part of the REACH mobile service team. The REACH Bus, also referred to as a ‘mobile office’ was showcased at the Expo and used by the team to deliver REACH services to remote and rural communities.

Women were also informed of their constitutional rights through videos featured in three languages - English, iTaukei and Hindi.

Mr. Seremaia K Waqainabete, the Deputy Director, Legal Aid Commission said, “During these outreach programs, the Legal Aid Commission has been providing services such as free legal advice, information on the rights of citizens under the Constitution, free witnessing of documents like birth certificates, academic transcripts, as well as assist in the filling of legal aid application forms for those seeking assistance.”

Amelia Diwabau was another who made a positive step to improve her situation.

“I am from Mudu Village in Koro Island. The Tropical Cyclone Winston was devastating and destroyed my house, and so I currently stay in Suva with my four children and parents.”

“The officer advised me what documents I need to submit to apply for the family assistance so I could continue sending my children to school as well as looking after my parents. I like this service provided while we are here.”

Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation talked to women and said, “It is very important that in times where we are striving to promote women’s economic empowerment, we create an equitable enabling environment for our women.”

“Under the coordination of the REACH Project, we saw this time as an opportune to bring to you essential services that you may not be able to easily access,” she added.

Mr. Ashwin Raj, the Director of Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, who took part in the awareness raising activities with the women participants, encouraged them, “Every Fijian has the right to know exactly what these rights are and how to access institutions to be able to materialize those rights as well as where to seek redress when those rights have been impinged upon.”

During Expo 82 people (70 women and 12 men), accessed the services on the REACH Bus and 79 people (67 women and 12 men) acquired information and assistance at the desk during the three days of the Expo.

Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov, Country Director and Head of Pacific Regional Policy and Programme, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji reported the result to-date, “the REACH mobile service delivery has reached 4,775 people in 48 districts across 11 of the 15 provinces in Northern, Eastern, Central and Western Divisions, on a mission to raise awareness of the social, economic and legal services available.”

Mr. Tsuguyoshi Hada Chargé d’Affaires a.i., Embassy of Japan, said, “Japan is happy with the overall progress of the REACH project since it started in 2015. I am very pleased to see that the REACH Project is a key sponsor of the Fiji National Women's Expo 2017. This is a practical contribution by the REACH Project, in line with its core objectives, which is to empower the women of Fiji.”

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals launched on 1 January 2016 with 17 goals, addresses the needs of people in both developed and developing countries - emphasizing that “No one should be left behind”. The REACH project will contribute particularly to achieving Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and Goal 16: Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The REACH Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. The project is implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission with support from the Government of Japan and UNDP.



Empowering Women to Empower More People

20 June 2017

A hundred women from Fiji's Eastern Division were able to access social, economic and legal services and increase their awareness on the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji during a workshop recently organized in Suva.

The workshop was coordinated by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission with support from the Government of Japan and UNDP.

The workshop aimed to empower women by providing opportunities to access information and services for the women who came from maritime communities of Lau, Kadavu, Lomaiviti and Rotuma who have particular challenge to do so due to their geographical locations.

They had the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge on issues they are concerned about such as gender equality and gender based violence. The women were also provided with individual services by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and Fiji Police Force to become empowered to address their issues of concern.

The Rotuma Women's Association President, Marieta Tiuhe'a said, "The social welfare services, legal aid services, information on the issue on child abuse and other information that was shared during the REACH programme was an eye-opener for us. It was very informative."

"We, 14 of us, are privileged to be part of the programme today. We don't have many chances to have this kind of awareness raising so we will share what we

learned today with our people back home," she added.

Head of the Nabukelevu District of the Kadavu Province, Livia Mariwa, found the REACH service delivery a good opportunity to obtain necessary information to assist elderly women in her women's club.

"In the rural area, we have limited opportunity to access information and services. I found the REACH programme is the chance for us to do so. It will assist for the needs of our elders who are the foundation of our women's club."

"I am getting information on how to obtain assistance so they can benefit from those services such as bus/boat fare assistance and social pension scheme," she added.

Providing the opportunity for women to have increased knowledge and access to information and services then enables women to support others who need assistance. Empowering women will result in empowering more people through them and further support gender equality which is a crucial condition for sustainable development.

The participants made their travel from their respective island communities to Suva to attend the Fiji National Women's EXPO 2017 organized by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation from 14 to 16 June 2017.

The women were warmly welcomed to the workshop by Minister for Women, Children

and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa.

“You, the women of the Eastern Division, from the provinces of Lau, Kadavu, Lomaiviti and Rotuma have travelled days ahead of the National Women’s Expo from so far away,” said Hon. Vuniwaqa.

“Rural women are leaders, entrepreneurs and service providers, and their contributions are vital to the well-being of families, communities and economies, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

“We saw this time as an opportune one to bring to you essential services under the coordination of the REACH Project.”

The Minister also raised the issue on gender based violence as one of the most severe obstacle in the empowerment of women and identified the efforts made by the Government and communities to eradicate the violence, including the recently launched national domestic violence helpline.

“Gender based Violence is one of the most severe, detrimental, and inhumane obstacle in the empowerment of women. One thing we have understood well, is that gender based violence is a result of gender inequality.

She added, “I wish to remind you that it is your right to be safe, protected and to have access to justice through legal services. I hope you have taken good note of the services that are available for you and all Fijian women and that you will help anyone in need



Participants from the Eastern Division received the certificate of participation at the end of the workshop.

with relevant information regarding these services.”

UNDP Programme Manager for Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights, Christine Fowler, said, “As of 12 June 2017, 4775 people have benefitted from the REACH Project awareness raising and service delivery of which 2326 are women. Also, 3428 services have been accessed by people including 2158 services provided to women by the REACH team comprised of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission”.

The Government has endorsed the global Sustainable Development Goals which aim to ensure that no one will be left behind and endeavor to reach the furthest behind first. Goal 16 is a commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. For Goal 5, there is commitment to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. The REACH Project supports the achievement of these goals.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/06/20/empowering-women-to-empower-more-people-.html>



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Youths in Moturiki District recognized Constitutional values and rights

9 June 2017

It is crucial for youths to exercise their constitutional rights to constructively engage with their country's sustainable development path at all levels.

This was evident during a community consultation in Moturiki District in the Lomaiviti Province, located in the Eastern Division of Fiji, where young people were among those who recognized the values stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and could access the social, economic and legal services provided by the government.

People from all ten villages in the district were engaged in discussions on their constitutional rights and could access the information and services provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and other local government

offices and representatives such as Police, Judicial Department and the Provincial Council.

Coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji, the mobile service delivery team held awareness raising sessions and delivered services to the doorstep of communities.

In Navuti village, Elenoa Naidoleca, a single mother of 5 and 9-year-old boys was among the others who met with the mobile service delivery team at the village hall. It was her first time to meet the officers and discuss her living situation.

She is expected to make monetary contributions to various village and church activities in addition to making ends meet for her children and herself. Supported by families and other villagers, she could

provide for her children despite not having any source of income.

"I came to know about the assistance which I am entitled to, and I was given advice by Social Welfare Officer and Legal Aid Officer to apply for maintenance," said Naidoleca.

Youths from Yanuca village and Naicabecabe village attended the awareness and service delivery sessions at Yanuca village hall.

Pauliasi Racumu from Yanuca village said the youth group has been actively engaging in community work to recover from the damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Winston which destroyed the villages.

Savaia Baunaki from Naicabecabe village said, 'It would be good if we also organize ourselves and discuss various topics among youths.'

Raising awareness of constitutional rights and social, economic and legal services provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission is one of the ways which assist young people to tackle those issues they have been dealing with such as violence at home, in communities and schools, gender and intergenerational relations, poverty and education.

Alelia Rarasea from Yanuca village said, "We benefitted from the team who came to our village today. We are more aware of our rights and entitlements by directly listening and talking to the officers rather than getting

partial information from those who attend workshops in the towns or cities.”

The mobile service delivery is implemented as part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project which aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji.

The Government has endorsed the global Sustainable Development Goals which aim to ensure that no one will be left behind and endeavor to reach the furthest behind first. Goal 16 is a commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. For Goal 5, there is commitment to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. The REACH Project supports the achievement of these goals.

The project is implemented in Fiji by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission with support from the Government of Japan and UNDP.



Navuti village



Niubasaga village



Nasesara village

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/06/09/youths-in-moturiki-district-recognized-constitutional-values-and-rights.html>



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PRESS RELEASE



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‘REACH Mobile Service Delivery Buses’ to deliver government’s services to people across Fiji



12 April 2017 (Suva, Fiji) – Three new custom built buses were commissioned today in Suva that will allow the Government of Fiji to deliver social, economic and legal services to remote communities and raise awareness of Fijians of the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commissioned three REACH Mobile Service Delivery Buses as part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project that aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness.

The buses are custom designed and equipped to support the Government to undertake effective service delivery to rural and urban communities in Fiji, leaving no one behind – be it a child, an elderly person or a person living with disabilities.

Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation said in her Welcoming Address, “Geography and challenges faced by our clients limit their ability to access our services. Some live with disabilities, some have no access to affordable or timely transportation and some have absolutely no idea what kind of services are available for them. It is in this realization of the challenge in front of us that the REACH Project was born. Where people could not come to us, we decided to take our services to them.”

“Today’s occasion is very symbolic – through the Government of Japan’s financial assistance and the facilitation of the UNDP towards the REACH initiative we now have a strong platform to boost Government service delivery. Partnerships such as these go a long way in not only realizing our Ministerial mandate, they also forge our national efforts towards the realization of the sustainable development goals” the Minister emphasized.

Mr. Shahin Rafique Ali, Acting Director, Legal Aid Commission said, "The Legal Aid Commission is fully committed to creating awareness on the rights of Fijians in order to help them understand their legal rights and to also access the free legal services funded by the Fijian Government through the Legal Aid Commission.”

Mr. Ali also said, “It is imperative that all Fijians have access to information on their rights, have access to government services, but more importantly, they must have access to these services, regardless of where they live. If they cannot come to us, we must go to them. We shall leave no one behind.”

The Project conducts awareness raising of the social, economic and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, provides access to the services associated with these rights, and strengthens institutional capacity to deliver these services.

A mobile awareness raising and service delivery approach is undertaken to reach communities throughout all of Fiji with the focus to reach the furthest behind first. The mobile awareness raising and service delivery is undertaken by teams from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and UNDP. The Fiji Police Force have also recently joined the team. The ‘REACH Mobile Service Delivery Buses’ will support the team’s outreach across Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, and for maritime areas the teams will continue to travel by boats.

From September 2015 to March 2017, the mobile teams conducted awareness and service delivery to 132 communities in 28 rural districts in 10 of the 15 provinces in Fiji throughout Eastern, Northern, Western and Central Divisions. The mobile teams reached 3,138 people including 1,591 women, 1,379 men and 168 children. The mobile teams also delivered 2,388 services, 1,535 to women and 853 to men, such services that included advice on eligibility for poverty alleviation schemes, information on women’s empowerment, discussions on women and child rights, and legal advisory services.

H. E. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan said in his Official Address, “The mobile service delivery by the REACH Project will also lift the spirit of Fijians, when they see that despite the remoteness of their dwelling the Government cares for them and their rights ... with these buses we take the fight for women’s empowerment, access to legal and social services, and awareness of citizens’ rights preserved in the Constitution to all Fijians in the far and remote areas of the country. I reaffirm Japan’s commitment for providing continued assistance for the sustainable development of Fiji.”

Ms. Osnat Lubrani, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative said in her Official Address, “Recently UNDP, in partnership with the Government of Fiji, undertook the Pacific launch of the global Human Development Report 2016, which is entitled ‘Human Development for Everyone’. Human development is all about human freedoms: freedoms to realize the full potential of every human life, not just of a few, nor of most, but of all lives. That is why as part of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda there is the recognition that the global goals and targets must be met ‘...for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society’, and to endeavor ‘to reach the furthest behind first’.”

“The Project REACH is ground breaking in being aligned with the Human Development Report 2016 strategy to best care for those furthest behind. Through Project REACH we look forward to supporting the delivery of tangible and sustainable human development benefits to Fijians around the country,” stated Ms Lubrani.

The three-year REACH Project supports the Government’s implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal Five to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and Goal 16 to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The project is being implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.



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Government's social, economic and legal services made accessible at people's doorstep

13 April 2017

More people in remote communities are accessing social, economic and legal services provided by the Government which can provide substantive support to their lives when needed most. A hundred and eighty six people (113 women and 73 men) from seven communities in the Central Division accessed those services when officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly visited their communities.

The Government of Fiji provides a number of social, economic and legal services to people in need of assistance, but some of them

are not aware of the services they could benefit from or not many of them have submitted applications at the government offices in town. Partly because they have limited information, limited awareness or simply no means or time to travel to town to access these services.

To raise awareness among people about their social, economic and legal rights enshrined in Fiji's Constitution and deliver the associated services available to

them, officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and UNDP come together as a team to visit

"The session was very useful and informative especially for us, living in such an extremely isolated environment..."

Asinate Shane, Wainilotulevu village

community to community. This Mobile Service Delivery is coordinated as part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians, called REACH Project.

Between 28 to 31 March 2017, 187 people (81 women, 99 men and 7 children) learned about their rights and services available when the REACH Mobile Service Delivery team visited the districts of Rewa, Veinuqa and Dawasamu. People also obtained some additional advice on the related issues specific to their communities such as child protection, domestic violence, and income generation among others.

Maselina Keresiqqa from Waisalulu Vutia community, Rewa District was one of the participants who felt more confident to deal with some issues in the community after the REACH Mobile Service Delivery.

"As a Sunday School teacher, I often talk with children and parents on various topics but we hardly discussed the issues such as child neglect and care. I feel more supported knowing those services available to us and confident to exchange ideas on those issues with women's group and others in the communities," said Keresiqqa.

People from Wainilotulevu and Nasoqo villages in Veinuqa District were particularly appreciative of the REACH Mobile Service Delivery given that their villages are inaccessible by road, requiring the REACH team to hike five hours in each direction to reach the villages.

Asinate Shane from Wainilotulevu village, said, "The session was very useful and informative especially for us, living in such an extremely isolated environment, pretty much we were unfamiliar with most of the Government services available."

The Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, aims to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. A mobile service delivery approach is undertaken to reach communities throughout all of Fiji with the focus to reach the furthest behind first.

The three-year REACH Project is being implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/04/13/government-s-social-economic-and-legal-services-made-accessible-at-people-s-doorstep.html>



(Photos: Wainilotulevu village)



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Services to empower women in Fiji to be bold for change

12 April 2017

People across Fiji, no matter where they live whether in the rural or urban, are stepping up towards empowerment of women and gender equality and are being encouraged to Be Bold For Change. A range of initiatives across the country are supporting such change, including the Mobile Service Delivery initiative undertaken as part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, and the launch of Fiji’s first Domestic Violence Helpline.

The REACH Project Mobile Service Delivery is supported by the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and is conducted by teams of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission. The

teams visit rural, urban and maritime communities to raise awareness of rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, and then immediately deliver any required legal, social and economic services.

A hundred and fifty one people (89 women and 62 men) in Nauluvatu village and Nabukaluka Village of the Waidina District in the Naitasiri Province received the awareness raising and services delivery sessions through the REACH Mobile Service Delivery team on March 7th of this year. A hundred and thirty nine people (131 women and 8 men) also gathered in Korovou Town located in the Namalata District of Tailevu Province to celebrate International Women’s Day and benefitted from the team’s visit.

Latileta Nainiwasa from Saukasa Village, who was at the celebration, could not imagine

how she could improve her livelihood to support her family and children until the REACH Mobile Service Delivery came to provide the awareness of the services available within the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

“I have been receiving social welfare services from the Ministry for my children but did not think about any other support I could apply for,” said Nainiwasa.

She added, “I learned the information of other schemes provided by the Ministry through the team we met today. I will plan to set up my small business with the support from the Ministry’s services, which will lift up my life, raising my children and sending them school.”

Pita Vakaravia was among the participants in the awareness raising and service delivery session conducted by the REACH Mobile Service Delivery team in Nauluvatu village, and was not sure about the various services provided by the Government.

“I am now well informed of the services provided by the Ministry and the Legal Aid Commission and understand my rights to the services stated in our Constitution,” said Vakaravia.

“Our geographical isolation may be a barrier to us obtaining information on the government services that is beneficial to us all. I am thankful that the team of officers came all the way to our community with all those information and services,” he added.

Another significant milestone towards the empowerment of

women and gender equality in Fiji was undertaken by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation on International Women’s Day in Suva.

Fiji’s Hon. Prime Minister Rear Admiral Voreqe Bainimarama officially launched the Domestic Violence Helpline, noting that the initiative is designed to encourage Fijian women to be bold and to seize control of their lives, their health and their economic well-being.

Anyone can access the 24-hour/7 day-a-week toll-free helpline by calling 1560. Hon. Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama further called on all Fijian men to protect and respect women and to join in the fight to end violence against women and children.

The Fiji National Women’s Expo 2017 was also launched during the International Women’s Day celebrations, further strengthening initiatives for the empowerment of all women across Fiji. The REACH Project is a proud supporter of the Expo, where a range of awareness raising activities will be undertaken in relation to gender equality and empowerment.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/04/12/services-to-empower-women-in-fiji-to-be-bold-for-change.html>



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Nauluvatu village



REACH Mobile Service Delivery team traveling to Nauluvatu village



(from left) Christine Fowler, Programme Manager, UNDP; Rear Admiral (Retired) Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji; Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation; and H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan in Fiji, at the Launch of the Domestic Violence Helpline and National Women’s Expo in commemoration of the 2017 International Women’s Day.



Reaching the Furthest Behind First

13 March 2017

Sigatoka, Fiji - Women and men in eight rural communities in four districts of Fiji's Western Division became more aware of their rights to legal, social and economic services provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission. Many of them were then able to immediately apply for those services which will make difference in their lives.

People in rural communities are often not aware of the services available to them by the Government. Sometimes it is difficult for them to travel all the way to a town where government offices are located and submit all documents required to apply for these services.

The awareness of rights and delivery of legal, social and economic services were brought to the communities through the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) Mobile Service

Delivery. The REACH Project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

The mobile teams, which consist of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission also including other government officers and UNDP staff, travel to rural, urban and maritime communities across Fiji and raise awareness of rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, and deliver legal, social and economic services provided by the Fiji Government at their doorstep.

Faiyaz Ali from Kulukulu settlement in Sigatoka, was among those that welcomed the REACH Mobile Service Delivery in the district. The session was conducted in the evening to

allow the working community to also participate.

"I found it useful to our community people. I encouraged some of them to consult the officers who are here. I will also share this with others who could not come today. I appreciate the service delivery that came to our community," said Ali.

REACH Mobile Service Delivery was also undertaken in Nadrau Village, in the District of Nadarivatu. Nadrau Village is remotely located in the highlands of Viti Levu and difficult to access that requires about two hours by vehicle from the nearest town of Tavua, heading through rough terrains.

Nadrau Village headman, Seru Raicula, said, "This is the first time for Nadrau village to receive a joint visitation by the Legal Aid Commission and the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation."

"We are blessed to have such services delivered to our doorsteps and we look forward to more similar visitation by the Government of Fiji ministries and departments," added Raicula.



Faiyaz Ali at the REACH Mobile Service in Sigatoka (Photo: UNDP/Tomoko Kashiwazaki)

The REACH Mobile Service Delivery commenced in July 2015 and has been delivering services in the Central, Northern and

Eastern Divisions. It has now made its first mission to the Western Division, as communities continue to recover from Tropical Cyclone Winston that occurred early last year.

Commissioner Western, Manasa Tagicakibau said, “The REACH mobile team met 299 people in eight communities in the four districts of Sigatoka, Lautoka, Ba and Nadarivatu in the Western Division during its four-day mission.”

He added, “This was much needed assistance to people to move forward. It empowered them, particularly for those that needed it the most but did not know how to access the services.”

The REACH Mobile Service Delivery will be strengthened by mobilizing the REACH Buses specially designed and equipped in Fiji for such service delivery. Three Fijian Made buses, one of which was publicly introduced last November in Suva, will provide service delivery more

HIGHLIGHTS

The mobile service team met 299 people (115 women and 184 men) from 8 communities in 4 districts (Sigatoka, Lautoka, Ba and Nadarivatu) in the Central Division.

The mobile service team delivered 425 services (253 to women and 172 to men) which was comprised of: Department of Social Welfare delivered 253 services (140 to women and 113 to men); Department of Women delivered 92 services (85 to women and 7 to men); and the Fiji Legal Aid Commission delivered 80 services (28 women and 52 men).

effectively using the built-in meeting rooms and various tools and technology. This will cater for travel in the coming months to communities in the Central, Northern and Western Divisions, delivering services to people and leaving no one behind.

Last year, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and

tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The REACH Project will contribute particularly to achieving Goal 5 that is, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and Goal 16 that is, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The REACH Project and its mobile service delivery approach to communities, attempts to reach the furthest behind first, and aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/03/13/reaching-the-furthest-behind-first.html>



People of Saru community in Lautoka, West of Fiji, during the REACH Mobile Service Delivery Service at their location (Photo: UNDP/Tevita Dawai)



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Upholding People’s Constitutional Right to Access Services

10 January 2017

Taveuni, Fiji - A number of villages on Taveuni Island are located so far from the island’s town that accessing public services can be such a strain. Their capacity is already stretched as they recover from the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Winston that hit Fiji almost a year ago, while other settlements located further from shore are enduring dry weather.

People in Lavena village and Waimaqela settlement of Taveuni travel to town by bus to apply for economic, social and legal services provided by the Government, the trip takes an entire day in order to catch the return bus home. Bus fare would cost a lot for them and more if they have to go a few times until they complete their applications.

Initiated through the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban

Fijians Project, also called the REACH Project, a mobile service delivery approach was designed to assist people in need of public services but find it difficult to access them in towns.

“Accessing the services is people’s right in our Constitution and if people have difficulty to do so, we the government officers should be able to come to them.”

Child Protection Project Officer at the Department of Social Welfare for the Northern Division, Vetaia Vuinakelo

Under the REACH project, small groups of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) go out to

visit communities, raise awareness on constitutional rights and deliver the social, economic and legal services people need.

A school master from Waimaqela settlement, Krishna Reddy, welcomed the REACH Mobile Service Delivery team at his community.

“It is very important for us to be able to access the awareness raising activities and services close to our community,” Reddy said.

Former Turaga ni Koro of Lavena village, Pelasio Manasewa, appreciated the assistance provided by the Mobile Service at his village. He was able to obtain a copy of his birth certificate, which he lost when Tropical Cyclone Winston hit his home; he used the opportunity to also apply for Bus Fare Assistance.

“I am glad that my photos were taken by the Social Welfare Officer during his team visit today which saved me from going to town a few times to apply for the service,” said Mr Manasea.

The Mobile Service Delivery to Taveuni this time carried a special theme - ‘Stand Up For Someone’s Rights Today’ - to commemorate the International Human Rights Day held on December 10th.

Child Protection Project Officer at the Department of Social Welfare for the Northern Division, Vetaia Vuinakelo said, “Accessing the services is people’s right in our Constitution and if people have difficulty to do so, we the government officers

should be able to come to them. The REACH Mobile Service Delivery approach is most appropriate in Fiji.”

“I talked to the participants on the importance of paying attention to their children particularly in the festive season of the year. I also talked to the children about the Child Helpline #1325 through which anyone, including children, can seek advice,” he added.

The REACH initiative is expected to further strengthen its Mobile Service Delivery through the commissioning of buses specially designed in Fiji for this purpose. One of the three buses was publicly introduced in Suva last month by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

“This is the first of the three buses or more like mobile offices for the effective execution of the REACH Project,” said Hon. Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Mereseini Vuniwaqa.

The three-year project is being implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.

Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, said, “The inclusion of this bus in REACH Project operations, followed by



(L-R) UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Country Director, Bakhodir Burkhanov; Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa; Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Rosy Akbar; and Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani (Photo: UNDP/Tomoko Kashiwazaki)

the other two in early 2017, will strengthen the outreach capability of the project and help mobilize resources and officials to the frontlines of the fight against violence on women and children as well as for women’s empowerment in general”.

The project aims to promote



The REACH Project Bus was introduced on 15th December 2016 by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in support of the Mobile Service Delivery (Photo: UNDP/Tomoko Kashiwazaki)

peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji.

UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Country Director, Bakhodir Burkhanov said, “The REACH Project is designed to do precisely that – to support the Government of Fiji to reach out to all Fijians to deliver on social,

economic and legal rights as enshrined in the Constitution.”

“Indeed, the Government has prioritized the provision of these services to all, which reinforces Fiji’s commitment to and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, which pledges to ‘leave no one behind,’” he added.

The REACH Project is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals particularly through achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls – Goal 5, and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels – Goal 16.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/01/10/upholding-people-s-constitutional-right-to-access-services.html>



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Providing the remote population of Naitasiri access to social, economic and legal services

13 December 2016

Suva, Fiji - Remote villages in the Naitasiri province, for the longest time, found it difficult to access social, economic and legal services. The people of Matailou and Wanimala District would travel for hours on foot or horseback to the nearby bus stand to get to the city where these services are accessed.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission is changing that for the people in 16 remote villages in the two districts through the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project.

UNDP Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights Programme Manager, Christine

Fowler said, "This project has put together a mobile service team that includes the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission representatives.

She added, "They go to these villages and provide their services to the communities rather than having them come to the main city which they find very difficult to do."



Participants at Lutu village, Wainimala District, Naitasiri Province

People from these remote areas have had to travel for two hours

on foot or horseback along the Wainimala River before getting on the public bus for another three hours to get to the main city area.

Social Welfare Officer for the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Laisani Bainivalu said, "Many applications for social services submitted from people in remote villages show the necessity of us officers to reach out to those who are disadvantaged in terms of accessing services".

"Now I've learned that I could apply for a financial support scheme. That will help us".

Karalaini Lewaiwau, from Matawaulevu village, Wainimala District, Naitasiri Province

"REACH mobile service delivery approach enables both the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission to come together and deliver our much needed services to the remote communities at their doorsteps," she added.

Karalaini Lewaiwau, from Matawaulevu village, met the team during one of their recent visits said, "My son was injured badly last year. He is recovering but I still need to take him to a hospital in Suva regularly which takes long walk and bus ride and costs me so much. Now I've learned that I could apply for a financial support scheme. That will help us".

Adi Ema Delaiwau from Lasalevu village looks after her two

grandchildren with her retired husband. Delaiwau has been receiving her Poverty Benefit Scheme but finds it difficult to feed all her family and send her two children to school.

“I asked the officer if the amount of the support could increase. She was helpful assisting me to obtain the required documents to verify my situation,” said Delaiwau.

From the recent mobile services provided, thirty new applications for economic and social benefits including the Poverty Benefit Scheme, Social Pension Scheme, Bus Fare Assistance, Care and Protection Allowance and Rural Pregnant Mothers Food Vouchers were successfully submitted to the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

The REACH Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji.

The three-year project is being implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan.

HIGHLIGHTS

The mobile service team met people from 16 villages in 2 districts (Matailobau and Wainimala), Naitasiri Province and the Central Division. Total number of participants: 250 (133 women and 117 men)

The mobile service team delivered 217 services (127 women and 90 men). The Department of Social Welfare delivered 105 (35 to women and 70 to men); the Department of Women delivered 73 (all to women); and the Legal Aid Commission delivered 39 (19 women and 20 men).



Riding on horseback to get to and from remote villages in Naitasiri (Photo: UNDP/Tomoko Kashiwazaki)



Nasava village, Wainimala District, Naitasiri Province



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<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2016/12/13/providing-the-remote-population-of-naitasiri-access-to-social-economic-and-legal-services0.html>



Awareness and service delivery provided in Fiji’s remote communities

6 December 2016

Kadavu, Fiji – Men and women from across 18 villages in the four districts of Kadavu Province, for the first time learned about the legal aid services available to them from the Legal Aid Commission Officers who recently visited their communities.

The Legal Aid Commission Officers were part of a mobile initiative for awareness raising and service delivery provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (HRADC) and the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP).

The initiative is part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, also called the

REACH Project implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission and local governments supported by the Government of Japan. The mobile team carried out the programme over a period of five days in the villages and primary schools of Nakasaleka, Ravitaki, Tavuki and Yawe Districts in Kadavu Province. The services were also provided under the tent at the provincial wide sports event,

“I heard about legal aid services for the first time and learned that the services are available for us for free. ... We are grateful that the group of officers came to this remote community all the way.”

Bulou Varanisese from Nakaunakoro village, Nakasaleka District, Kadavu Province

‘Yaubula Sevens Festival’ held in Vunisea, the center of the province in which more than 33 villages from all over the province participated.

Bulou Varanisese from Nakaunakoro village came to the neighboring Nakoronawa village in Nakasaleka District which hosted the REACH mobile team and had a chance to talk to the officers.

“I heard about legal aid services for the first time and learned that the services are available for us for free. I was able to learn how to process adoption formally. We are grateful that the group of officers came to this remote community all the way.”

“We would welcome more awareness programmes to be conducted at our community,” she added.

Like Ms Varanisese, people who participated in the awareness and service delivery sessions conducted by the REACH mobile team brought to the officers various issues concerning them, ranging from adoption, divorce, maintenance, deed poll (a legal document that proves a change of name), child custody, probate (the official proving of a will), transfer of assets, power of attorney, debt issue, land lease issue to matter of the registration of native landowners or *Vola ni Kawa Bula* (VKB).

Thirty nine particular individuals were provided with advice or referrals by the officers from the Legal Aid Commission during their visit.

Legal Aid Commission Senior Legal Officer, Keli Vulimainadave said, “People have been

encountering various issues, many of which can be solved with the legal assistance we provide. People should be able to access the social, economic and legal services they are entitled to and exercise their rights guaranteed in our Constitution”.

“Everyone, particularly those who has no means to do so, should be able to access legal aid services. This unique mobile approach enables people to access our services right in their communities even in remote areas,” she added.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals launched on 1 January 2016 with 17 goals, addresses the needs of people in both developed and developing countries - emphasizing that ‘No one should be left behind’. The REACH project will contribute particularly to achieving Goal Five, which is achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and Goal 16 that promotes just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The REACH project aims to increase people’s awareness about their constitutional rights and deliver social, economic and legal services provided by the Ministry and the Legal Aid Commission at their doorsteps.



Students and teachers at Namalata Primary School learned about human rights at school from the REACH mobile team



Galoa village, Tavuki District

HIGHLIGHTS



The mobile service team met 199 people (81 women and 109 men) from 18 communities in 4 districts (Nakasaleka, Ravitaki, Tavuki and Yawe Districts) in the Eastern Division.



The mobile service team delivered 135 services (68 to women and 67 to men) which was comprised of: Department of Social Welfare delivered 70 services (39 to women and 31 to men); Department of Women delivered 11 services (11 to women); and the Fiji Legal Aid Commission delivered 39 services (14 women and 25 men); Huma Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission delivered 15 services (4 to women and 11 to men).



In addition, 106 (52 women/girls; 54 men/boys) students and teachers know more about their human rights through the REACH mobile awareness raising.



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<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2016/12/06/awareness-and-service-delivery-provided-in-fiji-s-remote-communities.html>



Government services reaching out further to people in communities

22 June 2016

Labasa, Fiji - Nai Nailevu raises four children who are attending primary and secondary school. She found it difficult to keep her family going after she separated from her husband. She did not have a paid job. She did not know if the Government could provide any support for her.

Ms Nailevu's situation is not unique in Fiji. Many people may not fully understand their rights under the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji nor understand the economic and social support and legal services provided by the Government that they could access.

“It was the first time the community received this type of awareness programme. We appreciated because it was very informative and educational.”

Umesh Prasad, Advisory Council for Korowiri and Tovata communities

To raise awareness among people about their rights and services available to them, officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission came together as a team to visit communities to raise awareness of services

available and to also provide service delivery during the visit. The ‘mobile service delivery’ is coordinated as part of the project, Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for

Rural and Urban Fijians, called REACH Project.

REACH mobile service was recently undertaken for people in Korowiri and Tovata settlements in Labasa District, Macuata

Province, Northern Division. With the sun setting, around 50 people gathered at a nearby primary school after completing their work of the day. People learned from the officers various economic and social services and support programmes provided by the Government of Fiji through the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. They also came to know how the Legal Aid Commission could help people in difficult situations. The mobile service delivery was also provided to over 70 people from Nubu, Nabukebuli, Nabutubutu, Naikelikoso and Wainaidru villages, Nadogo District, Macuata Province, Northern Division on the following day.

It was the first REACH mobile service for 2016 due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Winston and government being fully engaged in various recovery and support programmes to the communities. Previously between September to December 2015, REACH mobile teams comprised of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission conducted 17 days of awareness and service delivery to 48 villages and settlements in 10 of the 37 Districts in all three provinces of Bua, Cakaudrove and Macuata in the Northern Division, reaching 1,127 people including 464 women, 507 men and 156 children. These mobile teams also delivered 729 services such as advice on eligibility for poverty alleviation schemes, information on women and child rights, and legal advisory services. For the majority of the missions, representatives from the Commissioner Northern Office

and Provincial Councils also accompanied the mobile team and responded to many enquiries raised by community members.

REACH mobile service delivery will now be commencing throughout Fiji.

“It was the first time the community received this type of awareness programme. We appreciated because it was very informative and educational. The group session was useful and easy for us to ask questions to the officers. Now that people know what services are available, they are trying to apply for some services. Women’s group will be formed in the communities as well and will apply for the skill training the Ministry provide.” Umesh Prasad, Advisory Council for Korowiri and Tovata communities shared with the REACH mobile service delivery team.

Ms Nailevu was provided additional information on the poverty benefit scheme. She had previously applied and received the scheme assistance which has helped her continue to support her children’s education and more.

“The assistance enables me to pay to the schools for my children and buy daily necessities for my family. I also used the money from the scheme to help me start a small business at home so now I do not have to borrow money from others,” said Ms Nailevu.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals launched on 1 January 2016 with 17 goals, addresses the needs of people in both developed and developing



Women obtaining more information as group and individuals during the REACH mobile service delivery to people in Nubu, Nabukebuli, Nabutubutu, Naikelikoso and Wainaidru villages (Photo: UNDP)

countries - emphasizing that “No one should be left behind”. The REACH project will contribute particularly to achieving Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and Goal 16: Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, aims to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. The three-year REACH Project is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP.



Production of the REACH advocacy video was carried out during the REACH mobile service delivery mission.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2016/06/22/government-services-reaching-out-further-to-people-in-communities0.html>



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Talking about Human Rights and Law in Interactive Ways

27 April 2016

Suva, Fiji - Lawyers from the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (HRADC) and Law Professors and students from the University of Fiji learned and practiced various interactive methods of raising awareness on human rights and legal issues at the community level with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Public Legal Awareness Workshop was aimed to equip lawyers with interactive methods of teaching and raising awareness among the public on law and human rights, including gender issues. The workshop was organized by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, and facilitated by the world renowned clinical law teacher, Professor David McQuoid-Mason from the University of Kwazulu-Natal,

South Africa. This workshop is a continuation of previous workshops undertaken early this year with participants from the Legal Aid Commission, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, University of the South Pacific, and Fiji National University.

The participants were introduced to the rationale for using

“Social and economic rights are inextricably woven with civil and political rights. The REACH Project is an important embodiment of the intersectionality of these rights.”

Ashwin Raj, Director, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission

interactive teaching methods and given demonstrations of their use. They were then shown how to draw up a legal awareness lesson plan and divided into

three teams, each of which prepared and conducted a 30-minute presentation. The lessons chosen by the participants covered the topics of the right to education, prevention of domestic violence and what constitutes a crime. Following the presentations feedback was provided.

Jamie Anne Mayo Bancod was among the lecturers from the University of Fiji who participated in the workshop. She shared her feelings about the workshop, “I found the methods used at the workshop were exciting and informative. I teach first-year University students about legal methods and research and the methods I learned from the workshop would be effective to teach those young students.”

Laisiasa M. Rogoyawa, from the FHRADC, said, “I was particularly impressed by the session on formulating a logical oral argument on certain human rights issues, the learning from which I can put into practice in facilitating human rights education for school teachers and students.”

Ashwin Raj, Director, HRADC said, “Social and economic rights are inextricably woven with civil and political rights. The REACH

Project is an important embodiment of the intersectionality of these rights.”

The REACH Project aims to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. The three-year REACH Project is implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission and is supported by the Government of Japan.

Christine Fowler, REACH Project Manager said that the REACH Project this year will soon commence mobile services of awareness raising and service delivery throughout Fiji. “The mobile teams this year will be assisted with mobile units which are currently being designed and will be specially equipped for efficient delivery of services and effective awareness raising.”

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals launched on 1 January 2016 with 17 goals, addresses the needs of people in both developed and developing countries - emphasising that “No one should be left behind”. The REACH project will contribute particularly to achieving Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and Goal 16: Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/articles/2016/04/27/talking-about-human-rights-and-law-in-interactive-ways-1.html>



The interactive sessions were facilitated by the President of the Commonwealth Legal Education Association at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, Professor David McQuoid-Mason

In January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The REACH Project will contribute particularly to achieving Goal 5 that is, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and Goal 16 that is, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.



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Government Services will Leave No One Behind

29 February 2016

Suva, Fiji - Seventy three officers from the Legal Aid Commission and the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation have brushed up their skills of rights awareness raising, to facilitate improved service delivery to people in Fiji.

The Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, aims to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. The three-year REACH project is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission and supported by the Government of Japan.

Christine Fowler, REACH Project Manager reported that between September to December 2015, mobile teams comprising of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission conducted 17 days of awareness and service delivery to 48 villages and settlements in 10 of the 37 districts in all three provinces of Bua, Cakaudrove and Macuata in the Northern Division, reaching 1,127 people including 464 women, 507 men and 156 children.

“These mobile teams also delivered 729 services such as advice on eligibility for poverty alleviation schemes, information on women and child rights, and legal advisory services,” she said. “For the majority of the missions, representatives from the Commissioner Northern Office and Provincial Councils also accompanied the mobile team and responded to many

enquiries raised by community members.”

“Awareness and service delivery were conducted across all three provinces in the Northern Division, to remote and difficult to access areas, including outreach to maritime areas, with the end result being that these communities are now empowered with information and knowledge of their rights and also provided with services by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission right at their doorstep to access such rights,” Ms Fowler added.

The REACH project started the New Year with a workshop to get the officers ready to go to the communities, raise awareness and provide information and services. REACH Project will now commence throughout Fiji, commencing the mobile services in Central and Western Divisions, as well as visiting the Eastern Division, while continuing the awareness raising and service delivery in the Northern Division.



Officers from the Legal Aid Commission and the President of the Commonwealth Legal Education Association at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, Professor David McQuoid-Mason who facilitated the workshop

Sunil Sharma, the Director, Legal Aid Commission said, “the Legal Aid Commission is fully committed to going out and reaching all communities, in

order to help people understand their rights and also to access government services.” He added, “it is important to ensure that all Fijians have access to information on their rights, have the information on the services that can be provided by the Government and have access to those services, wherever they live in Fiji. Importantly we must have an inclusive approach to reach out to all Fijians and not leave anyone behind.”

The mobile team this year will be assisted with mobile units specially equipped and designed for efficient delivery of services and effective awareness raising. The information gained and lessons learned from the mobile team services

conducted in 2015, will inform the type and style of these mobile units (such as buses) and the processes to develop these vehicles have now commenced.

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals launched on 1 January 2016 with 17 goals which addresses the needs of people in both developed and developing countries, emphasising that no one should be left behind, the REACH project will contribute particularly to achieving the Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

“I am most pleased that UNDP though the REACH project, remains ready to continue to support and work in partnership with the Government of Fiji in its ongoing efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda particularly in those areas.”

Osnat Lubrani, UNDP Resident Representative, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

Osnat Lubrani, UNDP Resident Representative said, “UNDP is marking its 50th anniversary in 2016, leading the UN development system in over 170 countries and territories and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. With over five decades of experience in development work, I am most pleased that UNDP though the REACH project, remains ready to

continue to support and work in partnership with the Government of Fiji in its ongoing efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda particularly in those areas.”

H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador Extraordinary

and Plenipotentiary of Japan said, “Japan’s assistance for the REACH project aims to effectively improve people’s access to social services, especially for the women of Fiji in rural areas and informal settlements. This is in line with two of the main concepts for Japanese ODA, namely ‘Strengthening Human Security’ and ‘Encouraging Gender Equality’. I am pleased to acknowledge good progress made by the REACH project since it started in June 2015, also strengthening the partnership between Japan, the Government of Fiji and UNDP”.

Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Rosy Sofia Akbar said the Project will create new platforms for socioeconomic empowerment of rural communities.

“The REACH Project is a unique way to raise awareness on Ministry’s services, on social welfare programs, women empowerment and child protection. It includes information sharing on how to report cases of domestic violence, child welfare cases, positive parenting, male advocacy, gender equality, women’s reproductive health services and counselling services. We will capitalize on the REACH Project to create well-informed, united and resilient communities in Fiji,” Minister Akbar elaborated.

The REACH Project commenced in June 2015, with the initial focus to enhance delivery of services through the provision of ‘mobile teams’ visiting urban informal and rural communities in the Northern Division.

The Legal Rights Awareness Raising workshop was organized by REACH Project from 11 - 14 January.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/02/29/government-services-will-leave-no-one-behind.html>



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Support to Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion for Rural and Urban Fijians for Sustainable Development

16 October 2015

Suva, Fiji – The importance of building resilient social, economic and governance systems was highlighted as a key enabler for rural and urban Fijians to both contribute to and benefit from sustainable development by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the opening of the Fiji National Women’s Expo on 14 October.

UNDP is supporting Expo through the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project which is being implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of

Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission. The REACH Project aims to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of

legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji.

The three-year REACH project is funded by the Government of Japan and has commenced in

June 2015 with the initial focus being to enhance delivery of services through the provision of ‘mobile teams’ visiting urban informal and rural communities.

“... this is aimed at effectively improving the people’s access to social services, especially for the women of Fiji in rural areas and informal settlements.”

H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani Ambassador of Japan

The Hon. Rosy Sofia Akbar, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation stated, “The Fijian Government places a lot of importance on taking services to the people wherever they live. The REACH project is a wonderful fit to the puzzle and a means to do reach. This project will be the first of its type in Fiji and I am sure that a lot more space will make a big break for our “difficult to reach communities”.

Sunil Sharma, The Director, Legal Aid Commission said, ‘The REACH project offers us a platform whereby we are able to disseminate information on social and legal services to the women of Fiji. Our aim is to empower the women of Fiji through legal awareness programmes and the REACH project has literally enabled the Legal Aid Commission to reach out to the rural and remote communities of Fiji.’

H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan at the opening said, “Japan is a co-sponsor of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion for Rural and Urban Fijians Project...this is aimed at effectively improving the people’s access to social services, especially for the women of Fiji in rural areas and informal settlements. This is in line with two of the main concepts for Japanese Overseas Development Assistance, namely Strengthening Human Security and Encouraging Gender Equality.”

The Ambassador also urged the women of Fiji, “to realize your true value in society and recognize your rights. I

encourage you to come forward and take advantage of the REACH project and the wider empowerment initiative put in place by the Fijian Government and key stakeholders. It is only through ownership and participation by you, the women, in the programmes and policies initiated by the government, that practical empowerment of women can be realized.”

Akiko Fujii, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative said, “Since the REACH Project commenced in June 2015, there has been most positive feedback from those who have benefitted from the mobile services, as they consider the awareness and service delivery being provided at the community level by the Fijian Government, through the project as highly valuable.”

Prior to the Expo, on Monday 12 October, 120 women from the Northern Division who were selected to participate in Expo, attended a one-day workshop in Suva coordinated by the REACH Project and gained awareness on the social and legal services available to them and also to increase their skills in financial literacy.

"I learned about some important things in our life, such as registration of titles, caveat filing, preparing a will and more about the REACH Project in today's session," said Maopa Maibatiki, from Wailevu District, Cakaudrove Province who participated in the workshop.

Also during Expo on Thursday 15 October the International Day of Rural Women was celebrated. In his message, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon said, “this



The REACH project supporting the Fiji National Women's Expo (Photo: UNDP)



REACH awareness raising and service delivery session during Expo

year's observance of the International Day of Rural Women falls just after last month's landmark adoption by world leaders of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our challenge now is to seize the opportunity offered by this inspiring new framework to transform rural women's lives.”

In Fiji, the REACH Project is taking up this opportunity to contribute to the transformation of rural women's lives.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/10/16/support-to-rights-empowerment-and-cohesion-for-rural-and-urban-fijians-for-sustainable-development-.html>



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Better access to justice and services for people of Fiji

20 April 2015

Suva, Fiji – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Governments of Fiji and of Japan today launched the Fiji REACH Project to support the Fijian Government’s push to improve service delivery to disadvantaged populations, particularly for women, youth, minorities and communities in rural and urban informal settlements.

The Project for Improvement of Access to Social Services on Justice and Gender Related-Issues for All Fijians (REACH: Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion for Rural and Urban Fijians) aims to strengthen sustainable democratic governance by promoting peace-building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through raising awareness on equal human rights and domestic violence, creating better access to social services, legal aid and capacity

building of people and key governance institutions in Fiji. In doing so the Project aims to provide more effective, accountable and coordinated provision of social services to the poor and those in rural communities at the same time improving their access to justice and rule of law which will promote the rights of women, youth and disadvantaged communities.

This three-year, US\$2.49 million project will be implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and is generously funded by the Government of Japan.

Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Rosy Akbar said the REACH Project will be a pathway to expand the reach-out of government services to the rural and maritime communities in Fiji.

Hon. Akbar has acknowledged the great support given from the Japanese Government and the United Nations Development Programme for making this project a reality for the communities in Fiji.

“People centred initiative by the Government of Fiji is closely identifies two of the main concepts of Japanese ODA, namely ‘Strengthening Human Security’ and ‘Encouraging Gender Equality’ towards building resilient societies. I sincerely hope that this project will effectively deliver to the grassroots communities in harmonization with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, UNDP and relevant organizations and stakeholders. Based on its strong merit, I am confident that this project will also contribute to Fiji’s new phase of “Nation Building,” said H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan.

UNDP’s Resident Representative, Osnat Lubrani thanked the Government of Japan for its support and commended the Fijian Government for its commitment to strengthening delivery of social welfare, basic services and improve access to justice for those that are disadvantaged and living in rural communities.

“Support to inclusive and effective democratic governance and promotion of peace and social cohesion is at the core of UNDP’s work and is one of the pillars of its current Strategic Plan. This theme is also central to the current UN Development Assistance Framework. This new initiative builds on a long track-

record of UNDP support to Fiji in areas such as parliamentary development, civic education, local governance, gender equality, youth leadership, among others.

“We are very pleased by this opportunity to further strengthen our cooperation in particular the delivery of services to rural communities and those that are disadvantaged. Improved access to social services, legal aid and justice, which will promote the rights of women, youth and disadvantaged, are a Government priority we are looking very much forward to support,” Mr Lubrani said.

UNDP has been supporting Fiji through both country-level and regional governance programmes in the areas of civic education, local governance, gender equality and youth leadership. As Fiji prepares a new Roadmap in 2015, UNDP will continue to assist Fiji’s progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and participation in discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

<http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/04/20/better-access-to-justice-and-services-for-people-of-fiji.html>



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