

Break the Bias: International Women's Day

International Women's Day is a day for all of us to reflect and celebrate the meaningful contribution women have made in the progression of society to date. Under the theme – Break the Bias, Empower Pacific acknowledged and celebrated the contribution of Women in the past 28 years of existence. Did you know that 72% of the staff at Empower Pacific are women? Our branches in Lautoka, Nadi, Suva and Labasa are headed by women. Key roles within the organization such as Clinical Supervision, Monitoring & Evaluation, Finance, Media & Communications, and Program Managers are mostly undertaken by Women. In honour of the contributions made by women leading our organization, all branches of Empower Pacific held a small celebration. The women were acknowledged for their hard work and support in the successful day to day ventures of the organization.

Our team has been working tirelessly from the beginning of the pandemic to date. From adapting to the new normal and providing counselling support from home, facilitating COVID-19 Wellness screening, delivering COVID test results, providing Mental Health support to the Ministry of Health & Medical Services Staff at the Emergency Operations Centre, conducting awareness sessions for the youths all over the country, catering to the needs of individuals admitted in the hospitals, providing Psychological First Aid after Tropical Cyclone Cody at the beginning of 2022. The undertaking of many of these activities would not have been successful without the women in our organization.

Happy International Women's Day to all the women of Empower Pacific!

Newsletter Highlights

PFA CONDUCTED AFTER TC CODY

NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONER VISITS EMPOWER PACIFIC

LEGAL AID COMMISSION - MENTAL HEALTH SEMINAR

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY



Psychological First Aid



Tropical Depression O3F which later intensified into Tropical Cyclone Cody – a category one storm brought in torrential rain and a blackout in the Western Division of Fiji in the early days of the new year.

Minister for Disaster Management, Inia Seruiratu in a press conference on the 19th of January revealed that a total of 4550 individuals had to flee from their homes and take shelter in a total of 177 evacuation centers across the country.

Flash flooding was reported in many parts of the country and low-lying areas were severely affected. With the assistance of the National Fire Authority and the Police Force, many families and individuals were safely moved into evacuation centers.

After flood waters had receded and it was safe to travel, three teams of Counsellors and trained PFA (Psychological First Aid) volunteers were deployed to Nadi, Ba and Tailevu.



54
Communities
were assisted

959
individuals
received PFA

103
Awareness
sessions were
facilitated



Empower Pacific Counsellor delivers PFA in one of the villages in Tailevu

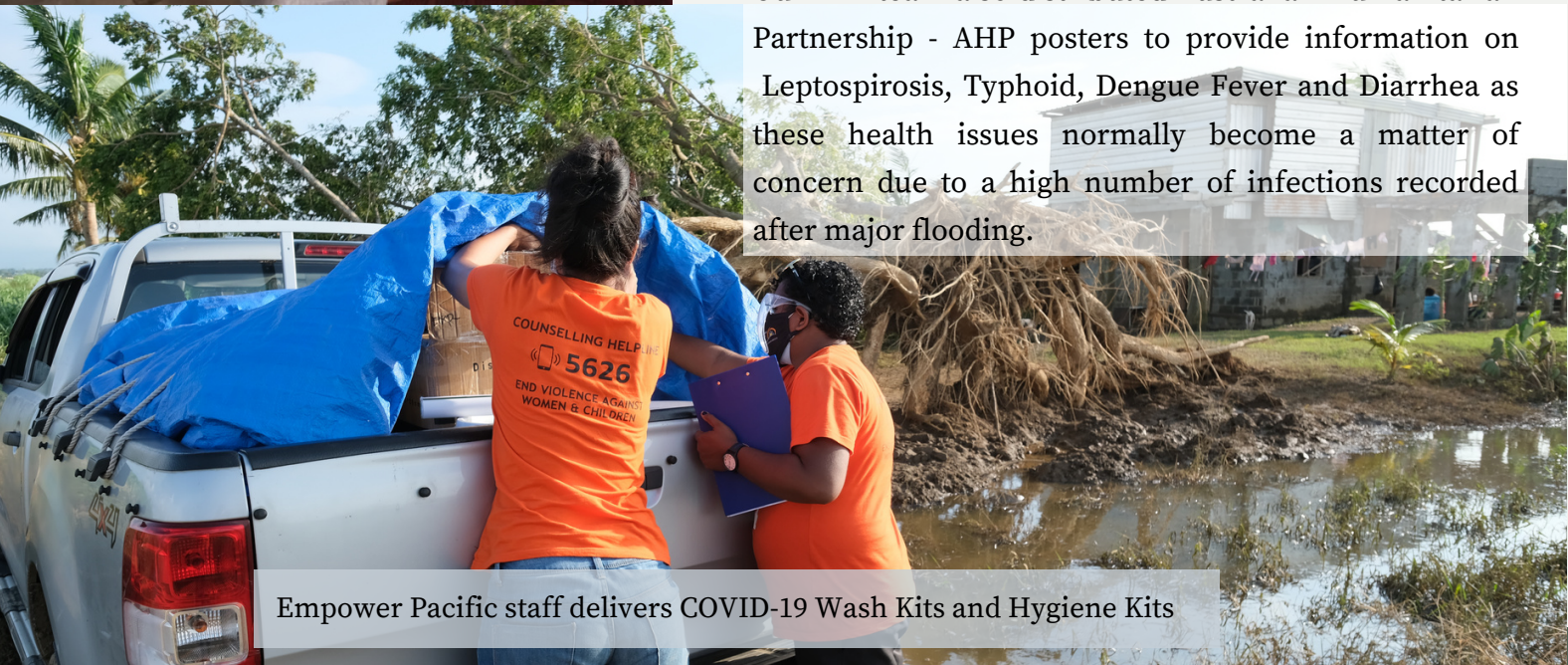
PFA is the first help provided to someone after a traumatic event or experience. Our teams went out with the goal of providing mental health support to boost resilience in the Fijian people. A total of 959 individuals were provided PFA. In addition to PFA, 400 COVID-19 Wash Kits and Hygiene Kits donated by the Latter-day Saints Charities were distributed to individuals/households who were identified upon assessment by our teams.



A family tied their belongings to the ceiling

Infant packs were distributed to mothers and adult diapers were also given out. Households in the low-lying areas were badly affected as floodwaters plunged its way into homes. A family in Ba shared how they had tied all their furniture to the ceiling of their home to protect it from floodwaters. They have become accustomed to flood water entering their homes and this was one strategy they used to save their belongings from getting damaged.

With the introduction of the Omicron variant into the country as well as the beginning of the third wave, our teams also conducted awareness sessions to remind individuals of the COVID safe measure that are currently in place and encourage individuals to actively practice these protocols to reduce the risk of catching and spreading the virus.



Empower Pacific staff delivers COVID-19 Wash Kits and Hygiene Kits

Our PFA team also distributed Australian Humanitarian Partnership - AHP posters to provide information on Leptospirosis, Typhoid, Dengue Fever and Diarrhea as these health issues normally become a matter of concern due to a high number of infections recorded after major flooding.



Ms. Reshmi Singh delivers her presentation

Empower Pacific was invited as one of the guest speakers for the Legal Aid Commission Corporate Staff Workshop on the 4th of February, 2022.

Ms. Reshmi Singh, Team Leader Western/Clinical Supervisor talked about Mental health, the importance of enhancing physical and mental health, triggers and signs of mental illness. Additionally, the effects of stress and ways to cope were also discussed.

Awareness was also raised on the common myths of mental health due to which people are discouraged from seeking support such as:

- Most people with mental health issues end up in hospitals
- One should not talk to anyone when facing mental health issues- it is a sign of weakness
- People are born with mental health issues
- You can tell someone is suffering from mental health issues just by looking at them
- People never recover from mental health issues
- People who suffer from mental health issues are mostly violent

Participants were also psycho-educated on coping mechanisms such as:-

- Having healthy and sufficient meals with adequate sleep
- Setting realistic goals
- Being assertive
- Maintain working boundaries
- Reaching out for counselling and psychosocial support



Legal Aid Corporate Workshop held at the Intercontinental Golf & Spa Resort

The participants at this workshop consisted of about more than 80 administrative staff from all branches of the Legal Aid Commission.



H.E Ms. Charlotte Darlow and her team with the Empower Pacific staff at the Lautoka Head Office

New Zealand High Commissioner Visits Empower Pacific

Empower Pacific had the pleasure of hosting H.E Ms. Charlotte Darlow, the New Zealand High Commissioner and her development team staff at the Empower Pacific Head Office in Lautoka on 22nd February 2022.

We took this opportunity to highlight our disaster response efforts during Tropical Cyclone Harold, Tropical Cyclone Yasa and Tropical Cyclone Ana that affected the country. We also shared our COVID Response efforts in terms of providing people with mental health and psychosocial support from the initial stages of the Pandemic to date.

The Higher Commissioner also got the opportunity to talk directly with our Counsellors and Social workers in regards to how they manage their workload, the support systems available for them as well as the challenges they have faced during this period of uncertainty.



Empower Pacific CEO, Mr. Patrick Morgam greets H.E Ms. Charlotte Darlow



Empower Pacific donated another set of Adult Diapers to the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation



"By the end of the month or halfway through the month, you only have a certain amount of money left (from the DSW assistance of \$90 under the disability scheme) you have to pay for your food, medicine, your diapers and sometimes contribute some money to the family you're living with. They don't work and they need all the care, so they need a lot of assistance".

Ateca Mataitoga
Secretary -Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation
(Nadi Branch)

Whats New?

We've opened a new
Employee Assistance Centre -
EAP in Suva.



Empower Pacific staff at the new EAP Centre

The Empower Pacific Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a specialized service aimed to deliver quality professional services that focus on employee wellbeing, resilience and improving workplace productivity. Our EAP Office in Suva is located at Flat 3/337, Sarita Flats, Waimanu Road just across Extension Street.

Following COVID protocols and with the growing number of staff, the need to prioritize our clients to be able to access a confidential and safe environment prompted us to look for more office space. We attend to clients from all works of life.

We provide critical incident debriefs, usually following a very difficult situation that has left groups of employees or students struggling. The debrief sessions enables small groups to share emotions, thoughts and worries using a strength-based counselling approach and discussions to explore various coping and self-care strategies.

Psychological First Aid Training Continues...

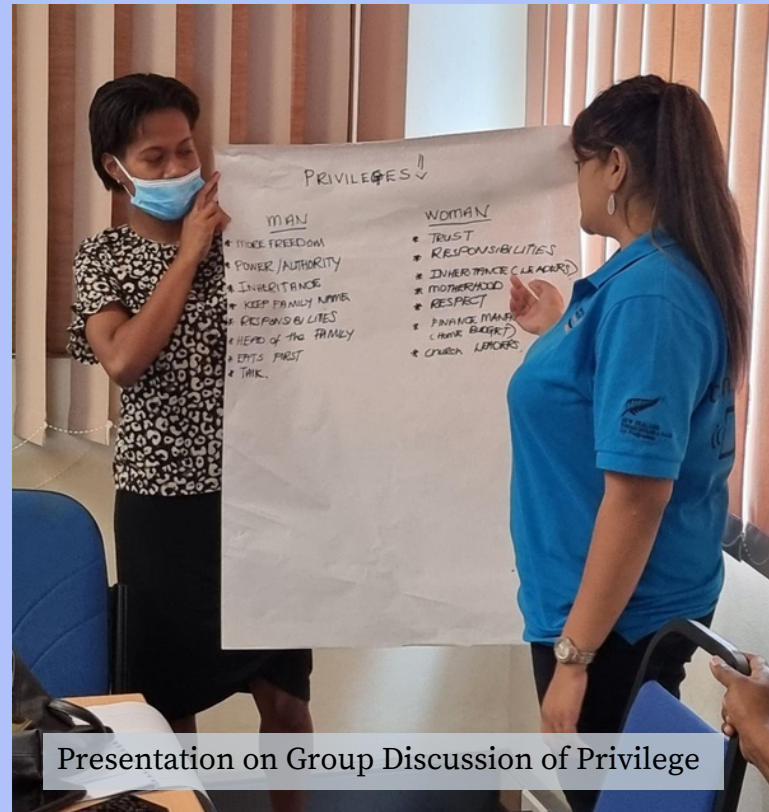
A total of 12 individuals were part of the two-day Psychological First Aid (PFA) refresher training on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment (SEAH) and Child Protection.

The refresher training was facilitated to community volunteers who had already trained in PFA and deployed to provide support in the aftermath of recent natural disasters such as Tropical Depression O3F which later intensified into Tropical Cyclone Cody in January this year.

The aim of the session was to provide participants with knowledge on gender and power; sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; identifying child protection issues, forms of child abuse; and referral pathways to be used when issues relating to SEAH and Child Protection are identified.

More training will be conducted in the coming months.

PFA is the first help given to someone who is experiencing some form of Trauma or Distress



Presentation on Group Discussion of Privilege



Participants having a group discussion



Participants receive their certificates



TALK

FOR YOUR OWN WELL-BEING...



Toll Free Counselling Helpline

5626

Sometimes life can be hard...you can feel overwhelmed and alone, call **Empower Pacific** counselling helpline, our trained counsellors are waiting to help you.

Empower Pacific's telephone counselling service provides emotional support and guidance for people facing difficult times. Our **24hr helpline** numbers are accessible to everyone nation wide.