

Empower Pacific Conducts Basic Counselling Training

The International Organization for Migration sponsored a three-day training on Basic Counselling Micro Skills at the Pearl Resort in Pacific Harbour. The training was attended by 24 participants from members of the CSO, religious institutions and NGOs who are part of the International Organization for Migration Anti-Trafficking team.

The objective of the training session was to enable the participants to be able to recognise psychologically distressed individuals in their line of work and refer them to appropriate support services available. The training included role-playing, case discussion and other activities to help the participants get a more hands-on experience.

The training enforced values such as genuineness, active listening, unconditional positive regard, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity etc which is imperative for those individuals in the helping profession.

Newsletter Highlights

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

GOVERNOR GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA MEETS AHP PARTNERS

PFA TRAINING IN EMPOWERS COMMUNITY-LED DISASTER RESPONSE

EOC RECEIVES PFA TRAINING



Participants from International Organization for Migration Anti-Trafficking team. part of the training

This publication is proudly supported by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Children Provided with Educational Resources for the New School Year

At the beginning of the 2022 school year, Empower Pacific provided educational supplies to 16 children in Lautoka and Nadi. Their parents and guardians had requested this assistance by calling the Counselling Helpline on 5626 and through referrals made by our Counsellors.

We did not have educational resources to give out on hand but we could not let this affect the children's education that was already deeply affected by COVID-19 in the past two years. As a result, our Social Workers reached out to private donors for assistance and the Empower Pacific family also came forward with contributions to help the children. Collectively, we gathered enough to purchase exercise books, stationery and school uniforms according to the lists provided by the schools for the respective children.



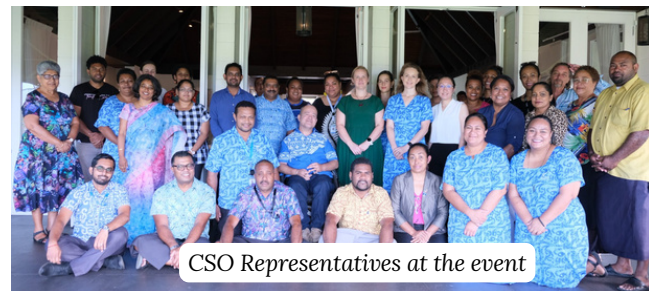
Vasemaca is a single mother of six. She received three set of exercise books for three of her children.



Vila sells mats for a living. Due to the pandemic, she could not sell as many mats which affected her flow of income. She was provided with exercise books, stationery and a pair of school uniform for her child.

New Zealand High Commission CSO Event

The New Zealand High Commission extended an invitation to attend a morning tea to thank all CSOs funded under MFAT for their contribution during the COVID-19 response over the last two years. The morning tea was hosted at the New Zealand Official residence from 10 am – 1 pm on Tuesday 7th June.



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The morning tea consisted of discussions on the localization approach and how the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign affairs & Trade (MFAT) is focused on using it in terms of working with CSOs in Fiji. Lessons learnt while combatting the global pandemic including challenges and countermeasures were highlighted by the Empower Pacific CEO Mr. Patrick Morgam. Other topics of discussion included the MFAT code of conduct – safeguards, guidelines and screening tools and opportunities.

Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia meets Fiji AHP Partners



Image: Fiji AHP

The Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia with the Minister for Natural Disasters Honourable Inia Seruiratu and representatives of the Fiji AHP Partners.

As part of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership in Fiji, Empower Pacific got the chance to meet the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia Mr. David Hurley at the National Disaster Management Office in Suva on the 27th of April. We were delighted to have the opportunity to share information on our role in terms of disaster preparedness and disaster response in Fiji. We also talked about our organizational activities and how we assist individuals with the various social issues that are rife among the Fijian community such as Child Protection issues and Gender-Based Violence.

The Australian Humanitarian Partnership is a 5-year partnership between the Australian Government - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Australian NGOs working in collaboration with 25 local NGOs, with an aim to save lives, alleviate suffering and enhance human dignity in the face of disasters



Image: Fiji AHP

The Governor-General acknowledges the impact of the partnership between Australia and Fiji on Disaster Management.



Image: Fiji AHP

The Governor-General talks with the Empower Pacific's interim operations manager Mereisi Tavaiaqia.

PFA Training in Empowers Community-led Disaster Response



PFA Volunteers with their certificates after receiving training



Fire destroys home

A three-day training on Psychological First Aid was facilitated by the Empower Pacific Labasa Branch for 20 community Leaders of Naqaravutu Village, Tikina of Tunuloa, in the Cakaudrove Province, Vanua levu. The training came in handy as a few weeks later, a fire had destroyed one of the homes in their community resulting in six individuals and an infant to become homeless.

Five PFA volunteers who were part of the training were able to help the victims assess the situation with the community police officers. They also gathered resources with the assistance of the village members. This included the Leader of the Vanua who engaged with the community and collectively gathered clothes, household items and food.

EOC Receives PFA Training

A three-day Psychological First Aid training was facilitated for the members of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – Western Division at the Tanoa Waterfront Hotel, Lautoka. 16 participants attended the training. This included the Provincial Administrators, District Officers, other representatives of the Commissioner Western’s Office, The Fiji Police Force, Republic of Fiji Military Forces, National Fire Authority and District Advisory Councillors.

The Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) supports this initiative. Empower Pacific is supported by ChildFund Australia (CFA) under the Plan International Consortium.



Participants with their PFA Certificates



Group activity

REACH

Empower Pacific was part Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) Program targeting communities in the Nadarivatu, Tavua and Ba communities for two weeks. The program covered seven villages and four settlements. Individuals were provided information on Empower Pacific's services as well as common social and mental health issues such as - Domestic Violence, Child Protection, stress, anxiety, relationship issues, Grief & Loss & Trauma. Common issues for which counselling was provided included relationship issues, stress and anger management.

The program was active from 24th April – 7th May, 2022.

R I G H T S E M P O W E R M E N T C O H E S I O N



Counsellors in Rakavidi Settlement, Tavua. Attending to the members of the settlement that came to enquire about our services.

Lautoka Police Wives attend Outreach Session on Parenting Skills



Police Wives for attended the awareness session on Positive Parenting

the chance to talk about their responsibilities and explore the challenges that they collectively faced. The participants also realised how each family is unique with its own strengths and challenges.

The facilitator had also raised awareness of the emerging issues amongst children especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic such as teenage pregnancies, abuse of social media, drug abuse, truancy, behavioural issues, anxiety and relationship issues. The participants were encouraged to be actively involved in their children's activities and also to reach out for counselling and psycho-social support when needed.

An awareness session on parenting skills was facilitated for police wives as part of their church service at the Kalivari Methodist Church, Lautoka.

The session provided the participants with the opportunity to identify and develop strategies for dealing with difficulties encountered while looking after their children. The parents got

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking Day

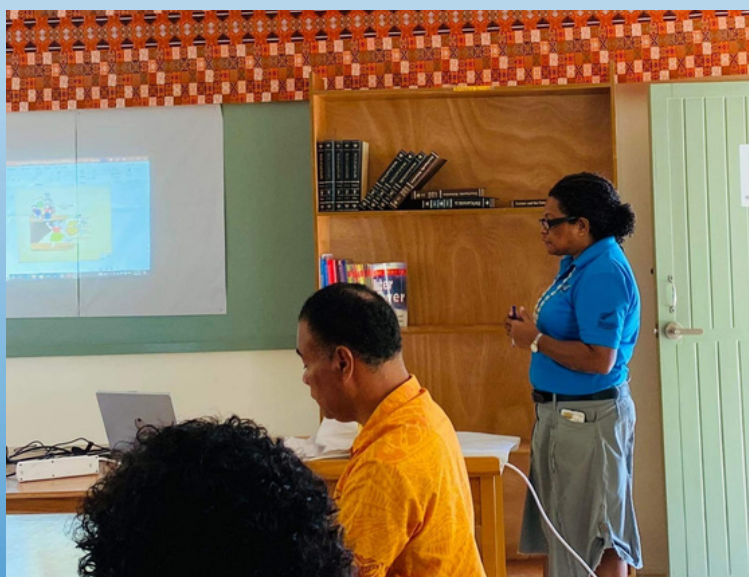
Empower Pacific was invited as a guest speaker to be part of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking Day at Saint Thomas Primary School on the 24th of June. The event was attended by Mrs Reshmi Singh - Counsellor and Team Leader Western. The students and parents present got to learn about the common types of drugs found in schools and the impact they have on one's physical and mental health. Common reasons for using drugs were explored and preventative measures against drug abuse were also shared.

Mrs Singh emphasised the importance of counselling and psycho-social support for students, teachers and parents and encouraged them to reach out for support when needed.



Awareness sessions continue...

Senior Counsellor Ms Emi Ucanibaravi visits Kadavu Secondary School and talks to teachers about stress management to help them better look after their health & well-being.



Whats New?
 We've updated our informational brochures on Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence



Senior Counsellor Mrs Vasemaca Natoga joined the ABC'S Radio Australia Show *Sistah's Lets Talk* to share her thoughts on female friendships in the Pacific.



UNICEF Program comes to an end

Children and parents have been experiencing increased psychological distress during this pandemic. Empower Pacific with the support of UNICEF has been providing Counselling support to children either directly or with the help of their parents and guardians. We have also provided mother-baby kits to parents in the COVID-19 positive wards and government-designated quarantine facilities. Additionally, recreational kits were also given out to parents to help keep their children engaged in fun activities. The program concluded in June this year.

FWCC Together with UN Women Conduct Basic Gender-Based Violence Counsellor Training

Empower Pacific was part of the Pilot Basic Gender-Based Violence Counsellor Training held at the Raddison Blu, Denarau, Nadi. The training allowed the participants to develop a strong foundation of rights-based survivor-centred and trauma-informed values and beliefs. Essential counselling skills were also practised so that victims of GBV are able to get the best support which would enhance their ability to be resilient in the face of adversity. The training session also focused on professionalism and ethical behaviour.

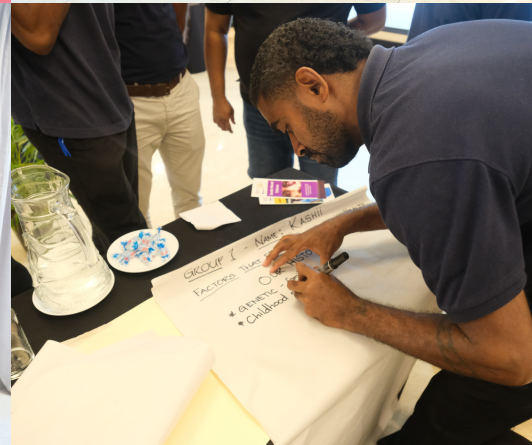


Empower Pacific team of Counsellors at the training.

Employee Assistance Program

Under the Employee Assistance Program, a training session was conducted for the company Essity on Stress Management and Psychological & Mental Health Well-being. The participants consisted of the Sales Executive, Sales Representatives, Warehouse Assistants, Merchandisers, National Accounts Manager etc.

In the first session, the participants were got to learn about the different types of stressors one experiences, how they can be addressed, the physical effects of stress and ways to reduce stress. The second session focused on raising awareness of mental health & well-being, identifying negative and positive effects of stress and healthy coping mechanisms.



**I am writing about the interaction I have had with one of the counsellors
- Camari.**

Camari has been a wonderful resource for me in this last month since I lost my wife of 44 years. Our calls have been productive and encouraging, and I always leave them feeling better and less despondent. Through her coaching, I am making progress.

Camari is able to strike the perfect balance between encouragement, support, and guidance. Talking to her I feel like I can do this, I can survive this most terrible experience of my life. I can tell she genuinely cares.

She has reached out to me on a regular basis since our first call to check on my progress and to remind me I am not alone.

I am extremely grateful to have her to talk to, she has made a real difference

- Client

Client Feedback