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PACIFIC**

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COUNSELLING & SOCIAL SERVICES

EMPOWER PACIFIC NEWS



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE LAUNCHED

Ending gender-based violence is our shared responsibility and we all have a role to play, says the Commissioner Western Apolosi Lewaqai. Mr Lewaqai made the comments in Lautoka on November 25 while launching the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence organised by Empower Pacific. "Gender-based violence, whether physical, sexual, emotional or economic is recognised globally as one of the most widespread and persistent violations of the rights of women and girls," he said. "It is a universal problem; it cuts across geography, class and culture. It is certainly not unique to Fiji – and in other Pacific Island countries. "Gender-based violence is rooted in poverty, conflict and in unequal power dynamics. Evidence suggests that climate change is also contributing to gender-based violence. "Today, more than 20 years after the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993, one in three women experience physical or sexual violence. "This is unacceptable and reminds us to regroup and work together towards the eradication of violence against women and girls," said Mr Lewaqai.

EMPOWER PACIFIC
NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

World Mental Health Day

World Humanitarian Day

Reach Program

Psychosocial Support

Human Trafficking Workshop

Diwali & Pinktober

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY



Empower Pacific led the World Mental Health Day celebration in October in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Fiji Cancer Society.

The celebration was held at the Wainibuku HART homes in Nakasi on October 5 with counsellors Camari Nale and Keletu Rayawa from Empower Pacific and representatives from the MOHMS.

The purpose of the outreach was specifically targeted in the sub-divisional or rural setting to enhance and create awareness on how mental health is vital in our daily lives.

Participants included single mothers, divorcees, domestic violence survivors and families that are financially unstable.

Our presentation was focused on the definition of mental health and mental illness, the symptoms of mental illness and the eight ways in which to cope with mental health issues.

A group discussion was also held during which participants were able to openly share how mental health issues affect them and how they are able to deal with it.

Nurses from the Nakasi Health Centre conducted screenings for sugar and blood pressure.

Participants at the event were happy with the services provided by the different organisations.



VILLAGERS MARK WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Villagers along the Coral Coast gathered to commemorate World Mental Health Day on October 6.

The event at Taqaqe Village in Nadroga was organised by Empower Pacific in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Medical staff from Sigatoka Hospital and the Empower Pacific team made use of the opportunity to advocate for mental health wellbeing and spoke about the support and services available for people who are mentally challenged.

The Turaga Roko Tui Nadroga, Seru Nasagavale who was the chief guest at the event spoke highly of Empower Pacific.

"Although there are services available for people with mental disability, yet it is the duty of the 'vanua' and every individual to accommodate the needs of those who suffer from mental illnesses," he said.

Kiniviliame Naqaravatu and Naina Kaloukigau, both counsellors, spoke to villagers at the event.



WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY COMMEMORATED

Empower Pacific's Suva branch staff members participated in the World Humanitarian Day celebrations held in August 2022.

Our staff members set up a booth at the event in Nadave, Tailevu and displayed the work that we do.

It was organised by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) commemorates World Humanitarian Day on August 19 with the release of three stamps and a souvenir card to raise awareness and funding for humanitarian action.

The day every year brings together partners from across the humanitarian system to raise public awareness on humanitarian work, to advocate for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises and to call for the safety and security of aid workers.



WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY AT THE RFMF BLACK ROCK CAMP



Military officers based at the Black Rock Camp were part of the World Mental Health Day commemoration on October 25.

Empower Pacific counsellor Kiniviliame Naqaravatu and administration officer Lynette Josephine from the head office in Lautoka held discussions with the military officers at the camp situated in Votualevu, Nadi.

Apart from commemorating the day and the importance of mental health wellness, our staff were there to establish a healthy working relationship with the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF).

More than 100 military officers attended the event with Empower Pacific and other stakeholders present at the camp.

They were given the opportunity to visit the stakeholders booths where our staff had the opportunity to share with them the services that we provide and how they can access our services.

The RFMF chaplain and some senior officers were really interested in the services provided by Empower Pacific.

Enquiries were also made about the possibility of providing our services to the military officers during their pre and post overseas deployment.

It was highlighted that many officers experienced personal problems while on tour and it was only appropriate to provide them with the much-needed psychosocial support.



REACHING OUT TO ROTUMA



Distance is not a barrier for Empower Pacific when it comes to reaching out to people in need of counselling or social services.

A team from Empower Pacific travelled to the island of Rotuma in late August as part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) program.

The team stayed in Rotuma from August 29 to September 9 and provided services in Malha'a, Oinafa, Noatau, Juju, Pepjei, Ituti'u and Itumuta districts with the last day spent at the Ahau government station. Empower Pacific counsellors were part of the group led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in partnership with the United Nations Development Program.

REACH PROGRAM IN CAKAUDROVE

Empower Pacific had a successful outreach program in Cakaudrove province in October.

A team from our Labasa branch visited villages in Saqani district from October 12-14 and villages in the districts of Vaturova and Koroalau from October 17-21.

It was part of the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) program.

Despite the adverse weather experienced, our team was able to disseminate information and distribute pamphlets to villagers in the three districts.



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT ON KORO ISLAND

A team from Empower Pacific visited Koro Island with stakeholders as part of a Psychosocial Support program in September.

It was in partnership with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Fiji and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

The project objectives were:-

- To complete the provision of Psychosocial Support to those who were referred by ADRA, MOHMS staff and Police.
- To provide psychological and emotional support to victims of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence.
- To conduct community awareness on Child Abuse.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKSHOP

A three-day consultation workshop was held in July on the national referral mechanism for human trafficking cases. Empower Pacific was invited by the Ministry of Defence to participate in the workshop which was held at the Pearl Resort in Pacific Harbour.

The consultations had stakeholders from various government departments and relevant civil society organisations (CSO) that have worked in areas involving human trafficking.

The discussions led to the participants agreeing that all cases of human trafficking be reported to the Case Management Coordinator only if the survivor wishes to report it.

Another discussion/training program is expected to be held to assess and confirm the elements of human trafficking prior to reporting the case to the Case Management Coordinator.



STAFF CELEBRATE DIWALI



Empower Pacific staff members around the country celebrated the Hindu Festival of Lights, Diwali in October.

Pinktober



Female staff members of Empower Pacific participated in the events of October as far as the health of women is concerned. October is dedicated as the breast cancer awareness month every year and is commonly known as Pinktober. In Lautoka, female workers had an awareness session on breast cancer with Medical Services Pacific (MSP), had Papsmear done and were checked for the disease. A similar event was organised for female staff at our offices in Suva and Labasa, and in Kadavu. The events were held in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.