

Na Lali

CAN DO Fiji Quarterly Newsletter



**can
do**

Church
Agencies
Networks
Disaster
Operations



AHP

Disaster READY

Impact

Usa shares new
knowledge
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CAN

Do Consortium

Members: Fiji Council of Churches, Methodist Church in Fiji, Fiji Baptist Convention, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Salvation Army, Caritas, ADRA Fiji and Olafou. CAN DO Fiji also recognizes the following ANGO partners: Act for peace, Uniting World, ADRA Australia & Caritas Australia



Caritas

AHP

Australian Humanitarian Partnership

**Australian
Aid** 

FOCUS ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Evacuation Centre Construction Guideline

CAN DO Fiji through ADRA Fiji continues to work in various communities to ensure they are "disaster ready" by improving evacuation centres (EC) in Fiji.

This includes activities like identifying sites, conduct mapping and evacuation centre retrofitting, working closely with the Fiji National Disaster Management Office.

In February, our team was part of the Evacuation Centre Construction and Retrofitting Guideline workshop organised by Fiji NDMO at the Pearl Resort in Pacific Harbour to assist in the drafting of the Guideline.

This Guideline is to provide general principles for the design, construction and retrofitting of evacuation centres that are structurally sound and meet minimum humanitarian standard requirements.

The Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) Safe n Redi Project is now running for six years working with partners in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations Project Manager Daniel Taufaga had the opportunity to raise awareness on disaster preparedness with Fiji One twice in the first quarter.

Disaster Preparedness Awareness

It was an opportune time to discuss the

work being carried out by CAN DO, how they have been building capacities of church partners when it comes to disaster management and their focus on working towards building resilient communities in the last 6 years under the Australian Humanitarian Partnership 's Disaster READY program.

In his second appearance, Mr Taufaga reminded Fijians on the importance of building their home to the required standard and particularly to always consider building homes that are disabled friendly.

He elaborated on the work carried out by CAN DO in improving evacuation centres around Fiji to become inclusive



CAN DO Australia Visits Fiji

CAN DO Fiji partners had the opportunity to learn from Ms. Anna Szava, the Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Coordinator for CAN DO Coordination Unit from Australia in Fiji late last year.

The purpose of the training was to build the capacity of the partners on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) to be able to improve implementation in phase 2 of the Disaster READY program.

Also part of the training was Ms Joy Jino from CAN DO Solomon representing the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) at the training.

National Disaster Awareness Week

Representing the Fiji Australian Humanitarian Partnership at the National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW) celebration in November last year was the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) consortium.

Marking the beginning of the new cyclone season, the CAN DO partners used the opportunity to raise awareness on disaster preparedness and how best one can prepare at home and in schools/communities.





PFA Training to Support Young People (including children) project

Salanieta Lewavoco works for the Salvation Army Family Care Centre in Lautoka.

She has been working at this centre for years, providing first help to affected families, particularly those of domestic violence. According to Salanieta, the Psychosocial First Aid Trainings organised by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) have been really helpful to how she now conducts her work.

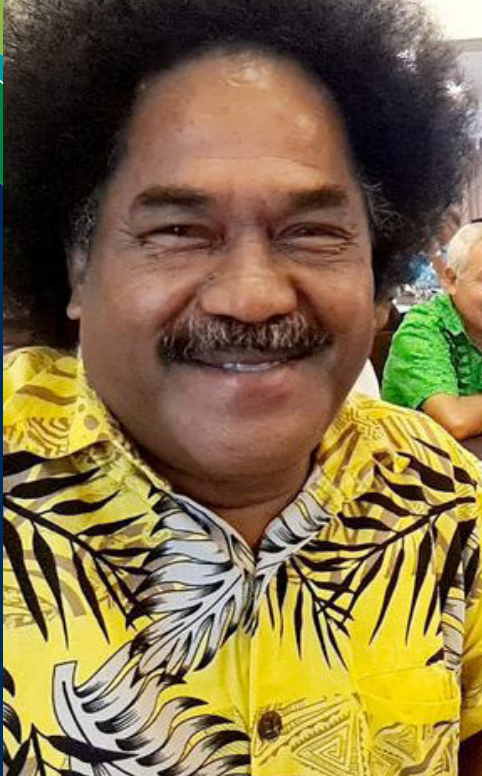
She attended the first Psychological First Aid (PFA) for PFA Volunteers at Divisional and District levels training in 2021 which was conducted using the national training manual for 'Psychological First Aid for Field Workers in Fiji' produced by the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) in Fiji. She said she was fortunate enough to also be part of

the PFA Training to support young people (including children) that was held in 2022.

"When we have victims of Domestic Violence coming to our Centre, I've had difficulties trying to get them to open up about their situation and often, they return home without completely heal thus they usually reappear at the Centre," Salanieta said.

"But thanks to the trainings, I've learned ways to deal with them whether - mothers and children alike. The way we talk to them is important so that they really feel safe to share their problem and they have been able to open up allowing us to provide first help before we refer them to professionals at Empower Pacific and Medical Services Pacific."

Inclusiveness during disasters



Apisai Usa, 58, is a church leader from the Waiyavi Methodist Church Circuit in Lautoka. His church is often used as an evacuation center during any disaster. The retired Police Officer is amongst the first responders representing the church to respond and visit communities in the aftermath of any disaster affecting the Western Division.

But according to him, he lacked the knowledge to carry out PFA supported to affected people. However, the Psychological First Aid training conducted in the West using the national training manual for 'Psychological First Aid for Field Workers in Fiji' produced by the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) in Fiji has helped him to understand his role better.

"Forgotten all the time is the mental health of the people. We go out and distribute food and other assistance, but we overlook their mental state to help them rebuild their lives and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn today," Usa said.

"The session was more detailed and touched base on what we need. For instant I usually neglect SOGIESC members of the community. I mean - we deliberately leave them out, but I got to realize that I have to consider their psychosocial state because they are also human and there shouldn't be any discrimination against them."

Usa said he couldn't wait to impart this knowledge to members of the congregation.

Training Manual - Psychological First Aid for Field Workers in Fiji

This Fiji contextualized manual was initially drafted by CAN DO for CAN DO partners as a result of the work done by the humanitarian arms of the various Christian denominations. However, as the work progressed it became evidently clear that the training was needed for all responders, and not only Christian responders, and as such, the Christian component has been added as an Annex to this manual, whilst the entire manual is relevant and can be used to train all first responders in Fiji.

The primary objective of this manual is to train all first responders in line with

National Humanitarian Policy to :

(d) Conduct a national train-the-trainer program to progressively ensure that all communities have access to adequate local psycho-social assistance.

(o) To enhance recovery schemes to provide psychosocial and mental health services for all people and children, including children in need.

Sendai Framework:

Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

National and Local levels: 33 (O)

To enhance recovery schemes to provide psychosocial and mental health services for all people in need.

Responders after being trained in PFA using this national standard, are expected to respond to affected individuals through lenses that are gender sensitive, gender neutral are to be used as applicable, disability inclusive - mental, physical, mental disabilities as well as sensory impairments, practices Principles of Do No Harm, Informed Consent, Confidentiality; that recognizes that individuals, families and communities have changing needs, particularly during a crisis situation, and that being able to respond in a manner that ensures the required services and support mechanisms are offered to those in need within the confines of Fijian legislation, guidelines, policies, protocols and SOP where applicable,



Improving Access for Vulnerable Groups in disasters

Saunaka Village is one of the largest communities in Nadi, 5 minutes' drive away from Nadi Town and home to more than 1000 people. While it is nestled in land making it safer from the wraths of strong winds from cyclones and hurricanes, its location in the low lying plains of Nadi River makes it prone to severe flooding which usually causes severe damages.

Since 2009, major flooding in the area has become a worry as the villagers flee their homes for safety. The church has always been their go to place thus they have invested in building a bigger church to cater for them during times of disasters.

"We had major floods from the years 2009 to 2012, and only one flood after that. The church was used as an evacuation centre as the community hall is at a lower level. The church has been rebuilt twice, the first church was smaller and thus the EC was smaller compared to the church now," Village headman Apisai Toga said.

Mr. Toga also revealed the difficulties they often face during the evacuation process and more vulnerable to the situation are the people with disabilities.

"In moving people to the EC, we had to tie ropes from one Uto (breadfruit) tree to the church and send people across the flood waters. We had to lift wheelchairs up the church stairs."

But he is thankful to CAN DO for the retrofitting works conducted improving access for people with disabilities and elderly under the Australian Humanitarian Partnership.

"To date we have about 5 persons of disabilities and with the building of the ramp we might see them come to church often and will be very useful during evacuations as well for the elderly."

He said that with the new feature in the church, awareness has been carried out in village meetings (bose vanua, bose va koro and mataqali) on the use of the ramp for persons of disabilities and the elderly.



Retrofitted properties

In 2022, the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) Fiji handed over two church properties in Nadi to the Methodist Church of Fiji and the vanua at the completion of the retrofitting works done by Field Ready under the Australian Humanitarian Partnership Disaster READY 1.0 program.

The handover was made by the Commissioner Western Mesake Ledua to the President of the Methodist Church In Fiji and Rotuma Reverend Ili Vunisuwa and to the Vanua of Saunaka and Narewa.

The retrofitted properties are now being inclusive to persons with disabilities, women and the elderly following the work conducted by Field Ready based on the GIS mapping data of the CAN DO as part of the Safe n Redi Project under AHP Partnership Performance Fund, Disaster READY program.

ADRA Fiji and Field Ready had collaborated with the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation to improve potential evacuation centres.

A total of 10 church properties were retrofitted to become disable friendly evacuation centers inclusive to people with disabilities, women, LGBTQI and the elderly,

The Methodist Church is the lead in the West and the CAN DO consortium is made up of the Methodist Church, SDA Church, Salvation Army, Fiji Council of Churches, Olafou, Baptist Church Convention, ADRA Fiji and the Catholic Church through their humanitarian arm Caritas.



Inclusive Evacuation Centers

The Nadi District Women's Leader has acknowledged the retrofitted work done by the Church Agency Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO Fiji) to the Saunaka Methodist Church which is usually used as evacuation center for nearby villages.

Ivania Mocemusu said the improvement works conducted have addressed the continuous complaints she has been receiving regarding accessibility for persons with disabilities.

"Having accessibility to the evacuation

centre was one of the issues often raised. I am not from Saunaka but this issue has been brought to my attention by the villagers from Saunaka and the surrounding villages." Mocemusu said.



"I'm from Yavusania village, however as Leader of the Women for the District of Nadi, I'm here to assist the women of Narewa."

She revealed that with the new upgrades to the Nadi River conducted to solve the flooding issues of Nadi, they have however noticed that village which did not have floods before are now experiencing

flooding while some villages that are prone to flooding are no longer flooded.

Therefore, she believed that the plights of persons with disabilities, the elderlies have been considered thanks to the Safe n Redi Project.

"When warnings are given the elderlies and persons with disabilities are moved to the evacuation center. With the ramp, it will be convenient to move the vulnerable easily to the evacuation center."

She said it would also greatly assist women and children and other vulnerable groups.