



# IMPACT STORIES

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



From  
the People of Japan



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

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# Table of contents

Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project	4
OutREACH Achieved (1 July 2015 – 31 December 2017)	6
<b>AWARENESS OF RIGHTS</b>	<b>9</b>
- Sign language on board for equal access to services and advocating for the rights (November 2017)	10
- Be empowered, be the change (July 2017)	12
- Upholding people's constitutional right to access services (December 2016)	14
<b>ACCESS TO SERVICES</b>	<b>17</b>
- People with disabilities encouraged to become more active through mobile service delivery (December 2017)	18
- Island communities overcoming remoteness through mobile service delivery (October 2017 & August 2017)	20
- Marriage ceremony on the mobile service delivery bus brings hope to the newlyweds (August 2017)	22
<b>INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING</b>	<b>25</b>
- Commencing innovative approach for service delivery	26
- 'REACH Mobile Service Delivery Buses' to deliver government's services to people across Fiji (April 2017)	28
- Government services will leave no one behind (February 2016)	30







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



The REACH Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness.

Fiji's geography poses unique challenges for basic access to social, economic and legal services, especially for those in urban informal settlements, maritime zones, and other remote rural areas. Fijian citizens, of whom many reside in rural, maritime and urban informal settlements and villages, usually cover long distances to reach government offices typically situated in urban and semi-urban areas. This results in citizens facing delays and challenges in addition to lost income as they bear additional costs of transportation, accommodation and so on, to be able to access basic public services.

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 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.



**PROJECT DURATION**  
2015 – 2018



**PROJECT LOCATION**  
Throughout Fiji



**PARTNERSHIP**  
The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission



**TOTAL BUDGET**  
US\$2.685 million



**FUNDS**  
Government of Japan and UNDP

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'.

**H.E. Takuji Hanatani,**  
Ambassador of Japan



#### The REACH project aims to accomplish the following key results:

- Increased awareness in urban, rural and maritime communities, of constitutional rights in the areas of social and economic wellbeing and justice, focusing on legal aid, through the provision of mobile teams.
- Enhanced delivery of the services provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission through the provision of mobile teams visiting urban, rural and maritime communities.
- Strengthened capacity of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission through support to strategic planning, monitoring of results and support of coordination for effective and coordinated service delivery to urban, rural and maritime communities.
- Policy making informed and based on evidence through research and analysis through a pilot initiative utilizing an innovative approach to track service delivery from start to finish and building on successful global initiatives being accessed through South-South Cooperation arrangements.

## Sustainable Development Goals

The Fiji Government has endorsed the Global Sustainable Development Goals which aim to ensure that no one will be left behind and endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.

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.





# OutREACH ACHIEVED

1 July 2015 – 31 December 2017

## WESTERN DIVISION

### REACHED



**143**  
Communities



**30**  
Districts



**3**  
Provinces

### AWARENESS RAISED



**3,482**  
People



**1,547** Women



**1,628** Men



**307** Children

### SERVICE DELIVERED



**4,379**  
People



**2,294** Women



**2,085** Men

### LEGAL AID

**388**

182  
206

### SOCIAL WELFARE

**1,818**

983  
835

### SERVICES FOR WOMEN

**466**

394  
72

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**40**

6  
34

### GENERAL

**1,667**

729  
938

## CENTRAL DIVISION

### REACHED



**165**  
Communities



**23**  
Districts



**5**  
Provinces

### AWARENESS RAISED



**2,967**  
People



**1,556** Women



**1,351** Men



**60** Children

### SERVICE DELIVERED



**5,284**  
People



**2,815** Women



**2,469** Men

### LEGAL AID

**570**

321  
249

### SOCIAL WELFARE

**1,389**

751  
638

### SERVICES FOR WOMEN

**845**

737  
108

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**168**

68  
100

### GENERAL

**2,312**

938  
1,374

## FIJI NATIONWIDE

### REACHED



**677**  
Communities



**113**  
Districts



**14**  
Provinces  
& Rotuma

### AWARENESS RAISED



**13,446**  
People



**6,287** Women



**6,253** Men



**906** Children

### SERVICE DELIVERED



**17,110**  
People



**9,412** Women



**7,698** Men

### LEGAL AID

**1,950**

954  
996

### SOCIAL WELFARE

**5,436**

2,897  
2,539

### SERVICES FOR WOMEN

**3,117**

2,814  
303

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**275**

91  
184

### GENERAL

**6,332**

2,656  
3,676



Division

## NORTHERN DIVISION

### REACHED



**272**  
Communities



**34**  
Districts



**3**  
Provinces

### AWARENESS RAISED



**4,464**  
People



**2,164** Women



**2,110** Men



**190** Children

### SERVICE DELIVERED



**5,360**  
People



**3,081** Women



**2,279** Men

### LEGAL AID

**713**

341  
372

### SOCIAL WELFARE

**1,410**

722  
688

### SERVICES FOR WOMEN

**1,276**

1,195  
81

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**24**

11  
13

### GENERAL

**1,937**

812  
1,125

Eastern Division

## INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING



**168**  
PEOPLE

94 Women

74 Men

from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and other key stakeholders further strengthened their capacity to undertake awareness raising and service delivery.

## EASTERN DIVISION

### REACHED



**97**  
Communities



**26**  
Districts



**3**  
Provinces & Rotuma

### AWARENESS RAISED



**2,533**  
People



**1,020** Women



**1,164** Men



**349** Children

### SERVICE DELIVERED



**2,087**  
People



**1,222** Women



**865** Men

### LEGAL AID

**279**

110  
169

### SOCIAL WELFARE

**819**

441  
378

### SERVICES FOR WOMEN

**530**

488  
42

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**43**

6  
37

### GENERAL

**416**

177  
239









# AWARENESS OF RIGHTS

The REACH Project aims at increased awareness in urban, rural and maritime communities, of constitutional rights in the areas of social and economic wellbeing and justice, focusing on legal aid, through the provision of mobile teams.



# SIGN LANGUAGE ON BOARD FOR EQUAL ACCESS TO SERVICES AND ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS

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.”

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.



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.

”

**Krishneer Sen**  
**Director of the FAD**



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.

**Asena Waqa**  
A member of FAD

”

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 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 and empowerment of all women and girls.

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





# BE EMPOWERED, BE THE CHANGE



July 2017

**Suva, Fiji** – Empowering a woman empowers a nation – this was recognized by women who were present at the recent Fiji National Women's Expo. Women from all over Fiji who participated in the Expo strengthened their awareness on and accessing social, economic and legal services provided by the Government.

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.

The Expo was also the venue to empower women through raising awareness of rights and accessing government services. The awareness and service delivery sessions were coordinated 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.

"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 and provided with further assistance. I was given the statutory declaration to submit for my application."

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, which is used to deliver REACH services to remote and rural communities, was showcased at the Expo as a 'mobile office'.

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.

Among them were a hundred women from Fiji's Eastern Division which is maritime area of Fiji. They traveled from respective islands, some of them takes more than a few days or a week, to Suva depending on the available maritime transport. They were able to participate in the REACH awareness raising and delivery of services organized prior to the Expo.

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.

**Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa,**  
**Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation**

”

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.

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.

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.







# UPHOLDING PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO ACCESS SERVICES

December 2016

**Taveuni, Fiji** – ‘Stand Up For Someone’s Rights Today’ – Communities in Taveuni Island commemorated the International Human Rights Day (December 10) and exercised their right to access to social, economic and legal services provided by the Government as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji. A team of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) brought to the communities awareness raising sessions and delivered the government services at their doorsteps.

A number of villages on Taveuni Island are located so far from island’s town centre 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.

A school master from Waimaqela settlement, Krishna Reddy, welcomed the team of the officers at his community.

“It is hard for people in this settlement to travel to town and apply for the government services. The bus 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.”

“It is very important for us to be able to access the awareness raising activities like today and services close to our community. I encourage women in the community to raise their awareness,” Krishna said.

Initiated through the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, also called the REACH Project, a mobile approach is undertaken to assist people who are in need of public services but find it difficult to access them in towns.

Former *Turaga ni Koro* (village leader) 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.

It is very important for us to be able to access the awareness raising activities like today and services close to our community.

**Krishna Reddy,  
Waimaqela settlement**

”

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

Project Officer for Child Protection at the Department of Social Welfare for the Northern Division, Vetaia Vuinakelo said, “Accessing the services is people’s right recognized 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 appropriated in Fiji.”

“I talked to the people in the communities we visited 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 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.

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

During the outreach on Taveuni Island, 335 people (150 women and 185 men) from 22 communities participated in the awareness raising sessions and 303 people (146 women and 157 men) accessed the services.



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.

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









# ACCESS TO SERVICES

The REACH Project supports enhanced delivery of the services provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission through the provision of mobile teams visiting urban, rural and maritime communities.





# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ENCOURAGED TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE THROUGH MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY

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 (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, 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

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.

**Jane Savou,**  
SIA



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 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.







# ISLAND COMMUNITIES OVERCOMING REMOTENESS THROUGH MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY

October 2017

**Rotuma Island, Fiji** – Fesa'itu Isimeli felt empowered to help herself after she applied for a government service which was made accessible for her at her house in Losa Village in Rotuma Island.

Fesa'itu, a 60-year-old retired school teacher, has been bedridden due to an accident she encountered. She sent her children to university using funds from her pension, which meant she did not have enough funds to sustain herself in suitable physical conditions. The Disability Allowance she applied for will now enable her to increase the degree of her independence in her community.

Rotuma Island lies 650 Kilometers north of Fiji, which is closer to Funafuti, Tuvalu than Suva, Fiji and irregularity in the transport services to the mainland of Fiji make accessing services across such a distance a challenge. It takes three days to get to Suva by boat when the boat service is available.

“We live far from the government station in Rotuma, and off course Suva is too far for me. The mobile service delivery to our village is exactly what we wanted. The services delivered directly to us by this REACH are providing both financial and moral support to people like us living in remote place,” she said.

She was among 635 people (338 women and 297 men) who took advantage of the mobile programme for awareness raising and delivery of government services brought to each of all seven districts on Rotuma Island under the REACH Project.

Recipients of social welfare schemes received vouchers at their homes during the mobile service delivery. Frank Fesa'itu, who was among them, received the vouchers delivered to his house in Paptea Village. He has walking difficulty and lives by himself with support from his fellow villagers. “I feel so fortunate to be included and not forgotten in the distribution of the voucher,” said Frank.

The mobile service delivery on Rotuma Island was conducted by the team of officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, other local government offices, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji.



We live far from the government station in Rotuma, and off course Suva is too far for me. The mobile service delivery to our village is exactly what we wanted. The services delivered directly to us by this REACH are providing both financial and moral support to people like us living in remote place.

**Fesa'itu Isimeli,  
Losa Village**







August 2017

**Lau Islands, Fiji** – It was an eye-opener and most encouraging for Masela Daukaseti that, during the awareness raising and service delivery sessions conducted in her island, Vanuabalavu, she learned that her family, many of her fellow villagers and indeed herself, could benefit from the government social, economic and legal services.

Vanuabalavu Island is located in the Northern Lau Group, one of the 30 inhabited islands in Lau Group, Eastern Division of Fiji, scattered in the southern Pacific Ocean. Some islands have daily boat transport service to Suva, capital city of Fiji and some only once a week, or even just once a month.

The geographical isolated conditions are obviously one of the biggest challenges that people in Lau Islands have to shoulder to access government services.

This time, however, Masela was able to access government services on her island. The awareness raising of social, economic and legal rights which are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, and delivery of associated government services were provided by a mobile team of government officers and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji.

Masela said, “I have been trying hard to make ends meet for my family in our daily life according to what I can afford. We have to deal with boat fare and other transport issues when we need to visit the government offices in Suva to seek advice.”

“Now I know that I am eligible for the assistance for our family. I have already asked the officers about social welfare schemes during the session here in the community hall.”

This programme is beneficial to people like us. It is helping us meet the needs of our family, particularly for my three children to continue their education.

**Tagilo Qalo, Ketei village**

”

Masela’s response to the mobile service delivery was echoed by others in Lau Islands who received the services.

Tagilo Qalo from Ketei village in Totoya Island is among them who felt relieved when they became aware that their daily struggle to meet the needs of families can be assisted by those services, and was further grateful to be able to access the services in their communities immediately without transport worries.

“This programme is beneficial to people like us. It is helping us meet the needs of our family, particularly for my three children to continue their education,” said Tagilo. She is hopeful that the situation will become better for her family with the services.

During the REACH mobile awareness raising and service delivery sessions conducted in Lau Islands, a total of 365 persons (175 women and 190 men) from nine communities in seven districts (islands) benefitted from the services.



# MARRIAGE CEREMONY ON THE MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY BUS BRINGS HOPE TO THE NEWLYWEDS



August 2017

**Namosi, Fiji** – It had been longed for and came as a most welcome surprise to Savaira Marama Rakula and Amani Rakula to be joined in civil union as wife and husband 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.”

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**Amani Rakula,  
Naraiyawa Village**







To access government services, the people in Naraiyawa village catch the public bus very early in the morning to towns like Navua or Suva, but have limited time to spend in town 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 delivers social, economic and legal services provided by the government at the doorsteps 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. I feel fully part of the community, the land and the church. We should be able to 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.

It will really change our life. We are very excited with being legally married. I feel fully part of the community, the land and the church.

**Savaira Marama Rakula, Naraiyawa Village**

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# INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

The REACH Project works towards strengthened capacity of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission through support to strategic planning, monitoring of results and support of coordination for effective and coordinated service delivery to urban, rural and maritime communities.



# COMMENCING INNOVATIVE APPROACH FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Under the REACH Project, whilst mobile service delivery is being provided on-the-spot in targeted rural, urban and maritime communities of Fiji, the challenge lies in ensuring start-to-finish service provision, and being able to both track, monitor and update citizens in remote locations regarding the progress of their individual service delivery requests and their ultimate resolution. Further, having an open feedback loop with the ability for citizens and the concerned service providers within the Government to be able communicate one-to-one regarding the status of the request for the service provision and satisfaction at resolution is also missing at present.

For effective start-to-finish (S2F) service provision, tracking and monitoring of service delivery is proposed through an S2F pilot initiative to be undertaken in 2017 and 2018 linked to the REACH Project. The existing services provided through the REACH Mobile Service Delivery would form the base foundation. Under S2F, one topic area of the services currently delivered in communities is selected, and whenever these services are provided during the REACH Project, these would then be integrated into the S2F Service Delivery Tracker. At the pilot stage, the type of service delivery tracked will be limited to one socio-economic service delivered by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (e.g., poverty benefit scheme). The S2F pilot initiative will be undertaken in target villages and settlements of Fiji (potentially in the Eastern and Northern Divisions of Fiji, which are the most remote).

There is strong stakeholder support for improvements to service delivery to the most vulnerable and most remote communities, provided that the focus of the initiative is based on a sustainable and Fiji-contextually appropriate approach.

The concept, as it presently stands, has been further refined using a Human-Centred Design approach, which enabled quick on-the-ground research and testing of the rapidly developed prototype with target beneficiaries. The value of such an initiative was affirmed with key target groups, with suggestions shared by potential users for improvement. In November 2017 a consultation was held with NGOs, CSOs and youth from across Fiji, where feedback was gathered on technological use and uptake in Fiji, and particularly the challenges for actualization. On the whole, it was recommended to effectively integrate and digitize critical public services to best meet the needs of the vulnerable in remote communities of Fiji.

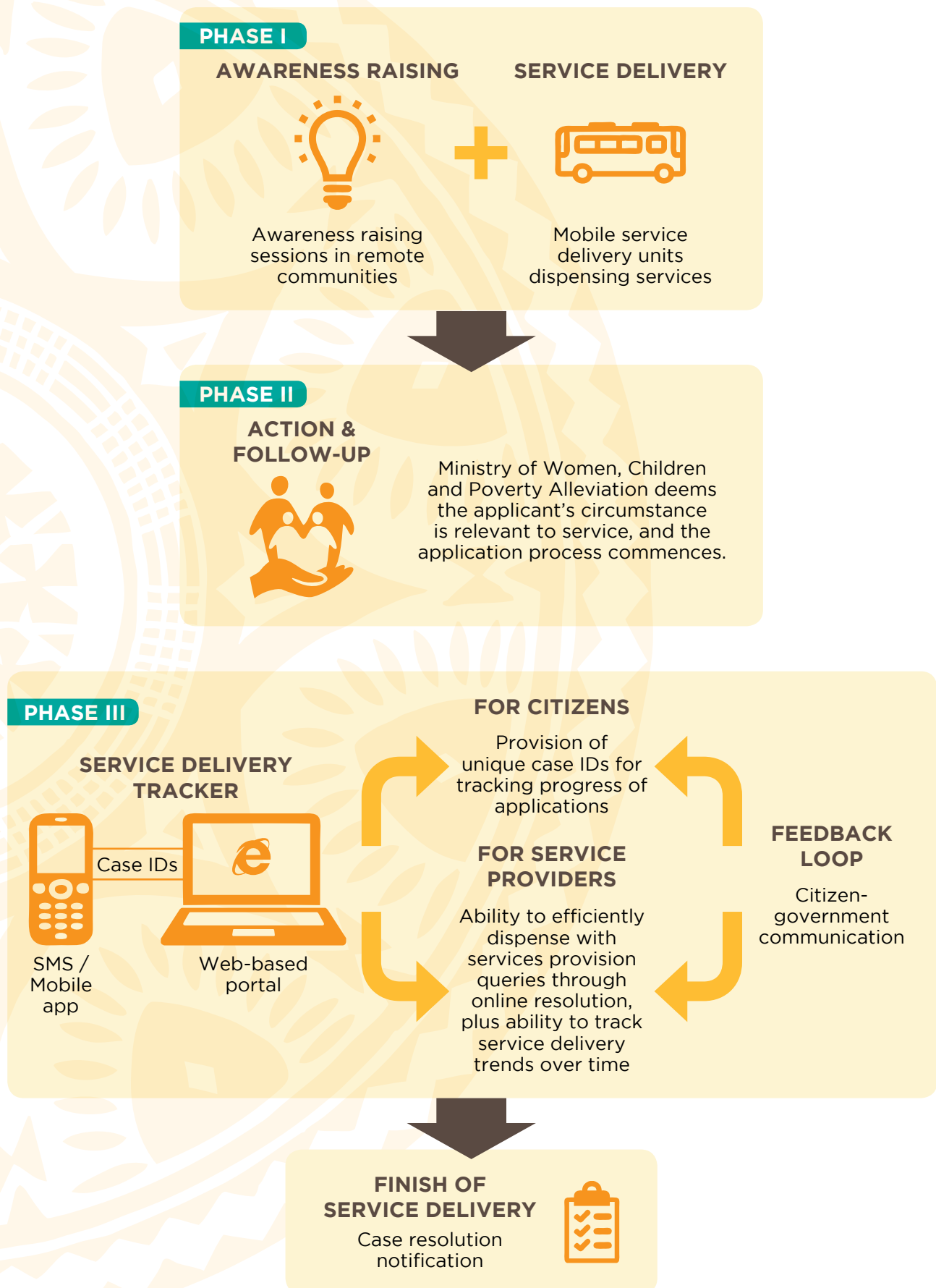


In support of enhanced delivery for the services provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, South-South knowledge transfer on innovative approaches for improving public service delivery is being undertaken between the Access to Information Initiative (a2i) under the Prime Minister's Office of Bangladesh and the REACH Project, UNDP Pacific Office. a2i has successfully piloted as well as operationalized 'One Stop Service Centres' and the 'National Portal' in Bangladesh, amongst other successful innovative service delivery initiatives, which are of direct relevance and applicability in the Fijian context. a2i, UNDP Bangladesh is providing advisory support for successful development and implementation of S2F.

Concurrently, an implementation plan for S2F is in development, with a view to initiate the testing of the pilot in early 2018 and its subsequent roll-out in identified pilot communities in targeted divisions of Fiji. User acceptance testing and feedback will be a dedicated part of the programme to ensure that the design ultimately best meets the needs of users, and enables more efficient public service delivery across Fiji.



# Start-to-Finish (S2F) Service Delivery Tracker for Fiji





# 'REACH MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY BUSES' TO DELIVER GOVERNMENT'S SERVICES TO PEOPLE ACROSS FIJI



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. 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.

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."

"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," he added.

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 has 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, 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. ... these buses will 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."

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

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**Shahin Rafique Ali,  
Acting Director,  
Legal Aid Commission**

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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 Lubrani.





# GOVERNMENT SERVICES WILL LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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

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," 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. The REACH Project will now commence throughout Fiji, commencing the mobile services in Central and Western



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, UN Resident Coordinator and  
UNDP Resident Representative, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji**

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Divisions, as well as visiting the Eastern Division, while continuing the awareness raising and service delivery in the Northern Division.

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.

Osnat Lubrani, UN Resident Coordinator and 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. 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.







*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

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