



Mandate Spotlight: 035 MWCPA Fiji

Strengthening Capacity for Gender Responsive Governance in Fiji

Location: Fiji

Beneficiaries: Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA) and Ministry of Economy (MOE)

Consultant: Alinea International

Start: Jul. 2021

End: Sept. 2022

CTIF Contribution:
CAD \$157,331

Context

In Fiji today, however, these goals remain an aspiration. Stemming from gender-specific and structural barriers and unequal power relations, women cannot fully exercise their rights to decent work and full participation in economic activities. This reality is borne out by official statistics: the labour force participation rates in Fiji stand at 76.4% for men and 37.4% for women; unemployment at 2.9% for men and 7.8% for women; and persons engaged in paid work at 234,059 for men and 106,680 for women. Preliminary findings from a 2015-2016 Employment and Unemployment Survey also highlight significant gender differences in hours spent on unpaid domestic and care work: 39 hours for women and 14 hours for men in the 30-34 age group. Moreover, only 19% of businesses are registered to women in Fiji, and most are micro and small enterprises.

The Government of Fiji acknowledges that the extent of informal and vulnerable employment among women issues faced by female entrepreneurs and the inherent nature of activities in the informal economy represent several policy challenges. If more inclusive and pro-women policies, programs, and budget investments are adopted and implemented, women's economic and social empowerment can be an important achievement. However, Fiji lacks a transformative, comprehensive, and coordinated institutional capacity-building strategy and interventions, as well as a shortage of context- and sector-specific guidelines, tools and checklists to address these challenges across various ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) at the policy and program levels.

Brief Description of the Mandate

Coordinated through the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA), this mandate strengthened the enabling environment for government agencies and officials to identify and apply women and girls' needs, interests, concerns, contributions and perspectives into policies, programs, budgets, and reports. It raised the profile and capacity of MWCPA as the national/central gender policy-coordinating unit within the government and as Fiji's National Women's Machinery (NWM). The mandate equipped MWCPA with tools/knowledge products and the capacity to fulfil their mandate as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming across government.

Select Achievements

- **Rapid Gender Analysis (RGAs) Knowledge Products:** The RGAs provided a situational analysis in each sector to identify and analyse key gender issues with an emphasis on the key constraints faced by women in each sector. This included the presentation of gender-disaggregated data against key indicators while also highlighting key achievements relating to gender equality, as well as the extent to which the sector's policies, programs, and services address gender issues and constraints. In total, 7 RGAs were produced under this mandate for the following sectors: agriculture, fisheries, forestry, education, youth & sport, Fiji police force and trade & tourism. In parallel, the *Gender Transformative Institutional Capacity Development Initiative Publication* was also produced.
- **Sector-Specific Training Sessions for MDA Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups:** The training sessions were an essential component to enhancing the capacity of targeted Fijian Government ministries to undertake gender analysis to inform the development of sectoral strategies, policies and programs. As a result of the sessions, participants understood core gender concepts better and could confidently apply them in their day-to-day work; undertake gender analysis to identify issues relevant to their sectoral policies and programs; identify practical strategies for project planning and budgeting to respond to gender challenges;

and assess whether existing program budgets were adequate to implement the required gender-responsive strategies.

- **Train-the-Trainer Program Developed:** The TOT program was designed for MWCPA, and MOE Lead trainers assigned the responsibility for implementing sector-specific transformative gender mainstreaming training. The training materials and program were developed by drawing upon the RGA knowledge products as well as a capacity assessment of the Lead trainers, in order to ensure the training was tailored to meet the Training Lead's specific needs. Overall, 7 Lead Trainers from MWCPA and 7 Lead Trainers from MOE participated in the TOT workshops and have been imbued with the skills to deliver similar trainings to other members from their respective government departments.
- **Animated Video on Transformative Gender Mainstreaming Approach:** The animated video was a component of the knowledge resources provided to MWCPA and MOE to use for their GRBP training and awareness activities. The video highlights approaches to raising awareness on GBRP training, while advocating for a gender transformative approach within MDAs, in order to ensure the integration of women and girls' needs into policies, strategies, programs, and budgets.

Environment & Climate Change

A climate change lens was applied to ensure findings and recommendations considered the risks and impacts of climate change-related events and the gendered dimensions of these. Emphasis was placed on the linkages between climate change and environmental issues and gender equality, as well as women's vulnerabilities to climate change.

The RGAs, knowledge products, and training packages developed an integrated analysis of climate change and environmental issues and risks as they related to gender equality within each of the sectors, including how these issues impact women's livelihoods, access to means of production and economic opportunities. Further, these knowledge products explored ways in which the exclusion of women, including in the decision-making and leadership roles, was a detriment to the efficacy of policies and programs on disaster risk reduction, climate change and the achievement of environmental conservation and sustainability goals.

Follow-up Support

CTIF's consultant has been asked to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress across pilot MDAs, supported through this mandate, on their ability to integrate the key principles of gender equality.

Testimonials



Figure 1: Gender Mainstreaming Lead Facilitators with the Director of Women (far left) at the gender-responsive planning and budgeting training for government ministries and agencies in March 2022

Gender and Social Inclusion

This mandate supported progress towards Fiji's gender equality commitments and goals encoded in the Fiji 5- and 20-year National Development Plans and the 2014 National Gender Policy.

The RGAs, knowledge products and training packages employed an intersectional approach to gender equality and social inclusion, recognizing the multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion of people in Fiji, especially based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, educational and socioeconomic status. As a result, data and analysis of gender issues within the Fijian context provided opportunities for the target audience to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the experiences and barriers diverse cohorts face in different sectors. Thus, allowing for more reflection and discussions about the structural inequalities underpinning many of these differences.

"The training materials is a boost and guidance as we used these and assisted us to know when and how to facilitate a session, the coaching of us, facilitators, have helped us improve, to be able to influence the pilot ministries to be more aware and to be able to develop gender-responsive programs and budgets."

- Gender Mainstreaming Lead Facilitator
