



Building Innate Resilience Through Hearts Fiji (BIRTH Fiji)
Queens Rd, Lomolomo, Lautoka | P.O Box 4309, Lautoka, Fiji |
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Quarterly Report: July to September 2021

BIRTH Fiji braced the third quarter and the challenging times using innovative ways to reach out to those in need in our communities. Among other changes BIRTH Fiji moved its office from a small tin and wood flat to a new flat in a concrete building in a commercial area nearby. This has improved working conditions for the staff and provided much easier access to its clients.

Counsellors worked from home balancing their family life, safety for clients and themselves, safe space, keeping the passion/motivation to work and keeping professional boundaries well. This was possible by online trainings, supervision, devising management and monitoring & evaluation tools and compassion for staff and clients. The counsellors and volunteers did not hesitate to adapt to providing humanitarian support along with psychological and social work support. They networked with other organisations and individuals to enable timely assistance to those in need.

When Covid 19 restriction eased, counsellors were rostered on different days to work from office to update all the records without breaching Covid-19 precautionary measures. In September two new young volunteers joined the team. Now the organization has 5 full time staff, 4 full time volunteers, and two-part time volunteers which was a great help to the team. The increase in workload had all very busy and continued professional support was needed to keep all from burnout. BIRTH Fiji has to prioritise quality service provision and continue to work towards work plans to continue to achieve this goal.

Activities

(A.) Counselling

i. **423 Counselling sessions were conducted.** (107 New Clients and 316 Ongoing clients).

107 new clients as follows:

- stress case (Mental Health and Anxiety cases)
- domestic violence cases
- (abuse, relationship issues, socio economic issues etc.)
- child abuse/protection cases
- Socio-economy/unemployment

ii. **3 Family Therapies**

iii. **4 couple Therapies**

iv. **8 Home visits**

v. **4 Clients with Disabilities**

All the above cases have been provided with ongoing counselling and social work/advocacy support.



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The table shows the breakdown of clients from July- September

MONTHS	TOTAL CLIENT Sessions conducted	NEW	ON-GOING	Girls & Women reached				Boys and Men reached				LGBTQ	People living with Disability			Ethnicity		
				<18	18-60	>60	Age not record	<18	18-60	>60	Age not record		Women & Girls	Men & Boys	Indo	i-taukai	others	
July	129	41	88	0	23	4	6	0	5	1	2	0	0	0	30	10	1	
August	121	25	96	0	13	2	5	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	22	3	0	
September	173	41	132	3	23	4	2	1	8	0	0	0	3	1	28	12	1	
OVERALL TOTAL	423	107	316	3	59	10	13	1	16	1	4	0	3	1	80	25	2	

(B.) Covid-19 response activity

- i. Humanitarian Aid - Food packs distribution:
 - 117 (\$60) Food vouchers distributed donated by family and friends of BIRTH Fiji Staff.
 - 6 food packs distributed – provided by Satya Sai Organisation
 - 33 (\$60) food vouchers distributed – provided by Fiji Women’s Rights Movement
 - \$5000.00 emergency assistance (transport, medication, food, baby stuff etc) - provided by Women’s Fund Fiji.
 - 26 food packs were distributed to clients with the assistance of FRIENDS Fiji.
- ii. 10 vulnerable families with children (clients of BIRTH Fiji), were approved and are being given regular food assistance on monthly bases by Sathya Sai service organisation of Fiji (SSSPF).
- iii. Counsellors took up emergency relief work to assist their clients and those who reached out for help.
- iv. From the COVID 19 response funding received by FWF. BIRTH Fiji invested in face mask with BIRTH Fiji logo and disposal mask, face shields, Medical forehead infrared thermometer and hand sanitizers.





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(C.) Community Awareness Sessions

- i. BIRTH Fiji Sharing resources and information to strengthen the empowerment of young mums in rural communities. Sera works as a volunteer, a crusader taking her ministry into remote areas empowering people. This time she is working with group of young single mothers. Some as young as 15 years old. Reproductive health, healthy relationship and available services are the topics she is covering.



- ii. BIRTH Fiji supporting Lautoka Floriculture group planting cassava for project on food security.



- iii. BIRTH Fiji staff and volunteer assisting client move into safe accomadation





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iv. Adult diapers for our bedridden clients.



(E) Staff Capacity Building

- i. Virtual in house trainings has been conducted continuously to improve the quality of services. Following are list of refresher trainings conducted by counselors:
 - PCT & CBT therapy by Nisha
 - Role play on DV case by Alumita & Nisha
 - Suicidal case training by Makitalena
 - Cohesive control presentation by Alumita
 - Paralegal training (Access to Justice) by Makitalena
 - Discussion on Counselling Skills by Alumita
 - Discussion on psychological management Plan for Cancer patients by Deepika
- ii. New Counselors participating in Group Therapy on CBT with the team guided by counselor supervisor Alumita and Nisha



iii. Clinical skills supervision by Psychiatric Jenny Monson from Australia.





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- iv. Virtual & Non Virtual Staff meetings on weekly basis chaired by staff on rotation to empower and build leadership quality in counselors as individuals. Discussion done on Finances, Funding's, number of clients, new and ongoing cases and follow-ups etc.
- v. On going case consultation and supervision by counselor supervisor Alumita and coordinator /senior counselor Nisha.

(F) Networking

- i. Liaising with Danam Fiji to secure a machinist position for some of our clients who needed job to stabilise their livelihood and become independent women.
- ii. Referrals to Koroipita for accommodation
- iii. Referrals by and to Cancer Society Fiji for assisting cancer clients.
- iv. Referrals from Koroipita for resident's support
- v. Receiving sponsorship from abroad by a supporter of BIRTH Fiji for the grandson of an elderly partially blind woman whose daughter is a divorcee and selling roti parcels to survive. The 20-year male received assistance to pay off his pending university fees for one semester, so he can continue to study. Once graduated and working this will be a step closer to breaking the cycle of poverty for this family of three generations.
- vi. Networking with Professor and Dr Swaran for client needs including our cancer survivors.
- vii. 4 Special needs children were provided with support including referral to Hilton Special school
- viii. 3 wheelchairs were given to 3 clients, via networking with Soroptimist, Veseisei Sai Health Centre and Fiji Cancer Society.



- ix. 3 day Fiji Women's Fund Leadership workshop by Fiji Girmit women's wing





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- x. Virtual workshop by FRIEND Fiji on COVID 19 Livelihoods support project funded by the USAID Pacific American Fund. Workshop was on Soap making and Activated Charcoal training.



- xi. FWRM Access to justice project meeting attended by Nisha
- xii. Invitation to join virtual launch for IRISH AID funded Livelihoods Project for single mothers that was implemented by FRIEND
- xiii. Nisha attended Talonoa session on Annual reflection workshop organised by FWF.
- xiv. Viseisei Sai Centre still assisting with transportation for home visitations



- xv. Discussions with Roshni VSHC for voluntary assistance regarding payroll, FNPF staff deduction and finance

(G) Achievements So Far:

- i. The group moved to a new office after renovations to enable confidential counselling rooms to be built. There is a restaurant on one side and a spare parts shop on the other side with the main highway right in front of the building. Even though the office is now located in a commercial area it still is based in the rural community thus having the advantage of both accessibilities by public transport and the privacy of a rural setting. The health center and the police posts are a few minutes away and very much within reach.

The team used diaper cartons covered with sheets to be used as tables and whatever furniture/supplies/equipment they could from their homes for use until BIRTH Fiji can acquire its own resources.



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- ii. Opening of a bank cheque account which enabled the transfer of funds to come in.
- iii. FNPF registration first submission June based on allowances paid in May.
- iv. On July 16th Back dated pay for volunteer's allowances from 15th of May,2021.

(H) Challenges

- i. Clients had difficulty reaching out and those who did could only talk while they felt safe to. Some of the sessions were impaired due to not being able to have to face to face sessions.
- ii. Keeping client records had to be adjusted to maintain confidentiality. Since staff didn't report to office daily there were challenging capturing data and productivity log had to be designed to capture activities carried.
- iii. Increase in child abuse cases and difficulty getting services for children due to lack of services/facilities available for children.
- iv. Increase in mental health cases received and again challenges in accessing mental health medical services.
- v. Funding applied for will last till January 2022 and the next round of applications starts in February. There is a gap in funding which would risk the development of the organization. The staff will not be able to get paid during the gap period. Better financial planning is need to provide sustainability.

(I)How did we cope:

- i. During covid restrictions counsellors were trained to work from home to facilitate quality and safe service delivery through phone counselling.
- ii. Counsellors conducted most work-related activities online and on phone.
- iii. Counsellors also spent out of pockets to assist clients and were then reimbursed later.

(g) Good Stories (one out of many)

Suicidal Client

The 30yr old FID lady walked in looking very stressed. In counselling she was very disturbed, emotional and stressed. She shared she had no reason or will to live anymore. There were times when she looked



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blank. She could not easily register everything we talked about so we had to go at her pace using therapies to bring her back to the here and now.

She seemed very stuck and after more than an hour in the session she was still very high on risk of suicide. She refused to be referred to the hospital and it was a concern to let her go in this state of mind. She finally agreed to be accompanied to the nearby health center to see Dr. Keshni, whom we had already contacted. After Dr. Keshni's assessment she was recommended for admission but again she refused. Even though she was sent home with preparation and agreement to keep herself safe, we kept in touch with her and took her to see the Mental Health Doctor at the Hope Centre.

There again, she refused admission but agreed to take medication. Her mother was engaged as a support person and she was provided with continued psychological support on phone. Ten days later when she was seen at the office again, she had a smile on her face, she was focused when spoken to. Her problems remain but she has learnt ways to cope without feeling suicidal. She shared she was ready to handle her issues and look at options available to her, including focusing on building on her relationship with her children.

She is now committed to attend therapy to learn and manage her emotions until confident so that she can manage difficult situation better.

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