



## Quarterly Report No.12 [October- December 2021]

BIRTH Fiji continued to provide its services in the community regardless of the challenges posed by the pandemic and the covid restrictions. As the need for its services continued to grow, the counsellors attended to the demand while they continued to coach new volunteers to empower and improve their skills. Challenges faced when attending to bedridden clients lightened up a bit when “Urgent Action Fund” supported our team in providing support to the bedridden clients including getting assistance from a certified caregiver. In the next few months, as we roll out this service, we will be better equipped to support those who are bedridden and their caregivers. BIRTH Fiji has also invested into renovating the office to provide another counselling room to accommodate the increased demand for services.

### Activities for the last three months

#### **(A.) Counselling**

- i. **331 Counselling sessions were conducted.** (85 New Clients and 246 Ongoing clients).

New clients came in with issues as follows:

- Stress, trauma, anxiety, attempted suicide, depression and panic attacks
- domestic violence and abuse issues
- relationship issues, socio economic issues etc.
- child abuse/protection and child behaviour issues. (an increase seen here)

- ii. 7 Family Therapy sessions conducted & 2 couple Therapy sessions
- iii. 93 Home visits
- iv. 12 Clients with Disabilities attended to and referred for further support
- v. 13 Child clients including special needs children (a surge in the number of child clients)
- vi. 3 Diagnosed with Mental illness (DMI)
- vii. 11 EMDR sessions were conducted
- viii. Continued networking with Fiji Cancer Society for clients who are cancer patients

All individuals who accessed our services were provided with ongoing counselling and social work/advocacy support.

#### **(B.) Community Awareness Sessions**

- i. To raise BREAST CANCER AWARENESS, BIRTH Fiji Team organised a special day for cancer survivors to provide moral support, empowerment, and awareness. The CEO of Fiji Cancer Society was the Guest of Honour for the Program. On request she travel from Suva for the day to support, be with and have lunch with the cancer survivors and BIRTH Fiji team. Together with the staff, volunteers, and supporters we were able to make this a successful event. The women who attended the program had the opportunity to meet others to share their own stories and helpful information. The information shared by Belinda the CEO of Fiji Cancer Society was very helpful to them.
- ii. BIRTH Fiji staff who are FWRM trained facilitators conducted two workshops in two of the villages in the interior of RakiRaki. The women of Nayaulevu and Naraviravi villages



attended workshops on “Improving Women’s Access to Justice” which included information on Gender, Domestic Violence, Law and Justice and Human Rights. This was only possible because the facilitators braved the travel to RakiRaki and then another hour and half to the villages and the sleep-over in one of the halls in the village. In the evening the counsellors home visited the bedridden individuals to provide psychological support and other assistance. In the evening the group had discussions on NCD and violence related issues in the village.

- iii. Lautoka floriculture group after completing soap making and charcoal workshop made soap and activated charcoal with support from BIRTH Fiji staff. They also got together to enjoy a break from home to work on the farm as a group, creating a bonding within the group and improving their mental and physical health. These women had attended the Activated Charcoal and Soap making workshop conducted by FRIENDS Fiji and hosted at BIRTH Fiji office. They received their soap making manual.
- iv. DCOSS and Shakuntala the local advisory counsellors conducted a workshop for 20 women on “Human Trafficking” at the BIRTH Fiji office. BIRTH Fiji staff actively supported the workshop from preparation to facilitation and wrap up.
- v. To mark the 16 days of activism BIRTH Fiji staff and volunteers wore orange to promote the awareness and continued to work to support women to be free from abuse.

### **(C.) Staff Capacity Building**

- i. BIRTH Fiji counsellors having virtual clinical skills supervision by M/s Jenny Monson from Australia.



- ii. Nisha Khan attended EMDR training Part two, through EMDR Institute NZ by Dr. Tom Flewett on Zoom. EMDR is a therapy in which a trained therapist works with a thought that triggers anxiety by reducing the emotional, mental and physical reaction to it. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) is a fairly new, non-traditional type of psychotherapy. It’s growing in popularity, particularly for treating post- traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD often occurs after experience such as military combat, physical assault, rape, natural disasters or car accident.
- iii. Weekly tea get-together for staff meetings and occasional lunch together.
- iv. Continuous Clinical supervision/group supervisions and briefing with counsellors.



- v. Case conceptualisation and management meetings
- vi. 3 BIRTH Fiji staff attended “Finance” training conducted by FWRM, adding another milestone to strengthening the organisation.

#### **(D.) Networking**

- i. Nisha, Alumita and Deepika participated in Virtual Annual reflections workshop with **Women’s Fund Fiji** where we shared Covid 19 experiences in a safe space. This program also featured panel discussion on Women’s Health services, vaccine hesitancy, challenges, and the lessons we learned.
- ii. Visit from Litia District Council of Social Service (DCOSS)
- iii. Nisha, Makitalena and Kirti attended a 2-day training organised by **Fiji women’s right movement** on finance and acquittals. The team of BIRTH Fiji enjoyed the learning’s.
- iv. The police officer Mr. Ajay Chand Varma of Lomolomo Police Post visited the office and referred a case for counselling support
- v. Meetings with staff of Model Towns Charitable Trust.
- vi. Emerging leader’s forum (**FWRM**) – shared about BIRTH Fiji and the work we do.
- vii. Zoom meeting with **AVI program** manager for Volunteer support
- viii. Mate Moce of **Fiji Red Cross Society** assisted the purchased urinals for our bedridden clients and brought some charts and pamphlets for community education sessions.
- ix. Referrals were made to **cancer society, FRIENDS, DV Helpline, and child helpline** for some of our clients.
- x. VSHC continued to provide their vehicle for use by the counsellors and MTCT (Kpita) continued to provide patrol reimbursements for visits to MTCT.
- xi. BIRTH Fiji continues to work with relevant stakeholders for the benefits of its clients.

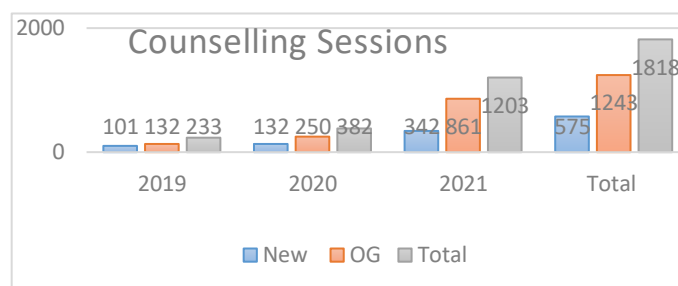


#### **(E.) Achievements So Far:**

- i. BIRTH Fiji featured in Shanti Dutt (Hindi Diwali Paper in Fiji). The article features about the organisation, the work we do and organisations we network with.
- ii. Received masks and hand sanitizers from **FRIENDS Fiji**
- iii. Receiving 900 masks from **Koroipita** (Model Towns Charitable Trust).
- iv. Purchased two office tables at \$109.00ea with funds provided by **Fiji Women’s Rights Movement** from the community awareness budget.
- v. Staff refresher on Child Protection Policy and plans to update child protection policy
- vi. Staff ID cards made to make their work easier especially when doing field visits.
- vii. EMDR therapy available to our clients
- viii. Improved facility to accommodate more clients.
- ix. Retention of trained personal resulting the increased ability to attend to the client load
- x. Increase in the number of volunteers who support us.
- xi. Great outcomes from our work in the community.
- xii. Many clients were supported with medication, wheelchairs, accommodation, filing of court forms, diapers, information/skills training on caregiving, food etc etc



- xiii. 6 women with children who had no where to go, were assisted with safe accommodation and other needs for survival.
- xiv. The increase in the number of cases over the last three years. Thanks to the organizational strengthening support provided by **Fiji Women's Fund**.



### **(F.) Challenges**

As usual the challenges are the resources available, however with funds from **Women's Fund Fiji**, BIRTH Fiji has leaped ahead in being able to serve those that approached us for support. The most important asset of the organisation is the qualified staff who have been trained which we were able to retain through the **organisational strengthening project**. This led to being able to get more funds to run projects such as "Humanitarian Aid", "Improving Women's Access to Justice" and "Supporting the bedridden".

We do need office supplies such as a printer/ photocopier, computer, a few chairs, tables, projector, projector screen, etc etc., however we have managed well with support from people who have faith in the work we do and allowed us use of these equipment for services when needed. There are times though that we struggle to get our work done on time due to the difficulties especially when reporting and acquitting.

### **(G.) How did we cope:**

- a. Taking care of our staff
- b. Case management meetings – care and quality service for our clients
- c. Clinical supervision, inhouse trainings and debriefings
- d. Referrals for support where needed and networking with stakeholders and the community.
- e. Accepting assistance to use material/supplies we did not have.
- f. Being culturally sensitive and aware of the challenges in the community

### **(H.) Good Stories –**

A 38yr old mother of four children was confined to her home due to one of her children being a special needs child. This child was born with the disability and since the child's birth 11 years ago, the mother has been confined home taking care of the child. They had never received any support from anywhere for the child.

She shared that she could not go anywhere as the child needed full time care. Her husband who was a casual worker was stressed trying to provide for the family and sometimes lashed out at her. We gave information about available services for the family and the child. The mother was given information on her rights to be free from abuse and violence and services available for them.



The child had skin infections all over her body and looked very emaciated. The parents were supported to take her to the nearest health centre for treatment in a hired taxi. Within weeks the team of counsellors had provided psychological support to the mother and the family. Through networking, the child was provided a wheelchair, had started to heal from her infections, had been enrolled into the local special school and was placed on social welfare benefit scheme. Her referral to Hilton resulted in ongoing support for all her needs including caregiving support for mother, food rations, specially fitted wheelchair and medicals.

A month later, when one of BIRTH Fiji staff was in Nadi, she saw the child in town while the mother was marketing. She was sitting in her wheelchair happily surrounded by her siblings and looking very healthy. She was overjoyed to show off her wheelchair and being able to come out to town with her mother and siblings. She seemed very happy and confident.

### **Good Story – Community Based Awareness Sessions**

While planning “Improving Women’s Access to Justice Program” workshops, BIRTH Fiji chose to take the workshop to a remote village that had requested for awareness sessions stating that they never had any awareness programs in the village.

The workshop was prepared to maximise the benefits for the village women using translated material and contextualised role plays that the women could relate to. The learnings were an eye opener for the women, most of whom had experienced violence in their own lives and seen other women subjected to violence. This was the first time they learnt about human rights, identifying violence and abuse, how to support other women, their legal rights, how to access justice, and where to reach out for assistance. These women had the opportunity to ask questions that helped them:

- differentiate the roles of a good leader and an abuser.
- Treatment of children – physical & verbal abuse and its impact.
- The cycle of violence, The power & control wheel, Gender, Gender equality and Domestic Violence.
- Address some of the cultural norms that contributed to the problems in the community.
- Challenge some of the thinking patterns and value systems they had.

For some women, even though they learnt a lot, found it hard to accept gender equality and felt that women should be subservient to men. However, all of them requested for the training to be made available to the men and women in the village. They all agreed that domestic violence was an issue that needed to be addressed through more awareness sessions.

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