



# Quarterly Report: No.13

## (January to March 2022)

BIRTH Fiji Team continues to share responsibility for delivering quality service to the community and now as a Clinical Skills Supervisor, Child Protection officer and a Social Worker. A new volunteer is being trained as an admin staff assisting with finance as well. Currently BIRTH Fiji has eight staff which allows to the share of work load to prevent burnout and maintenance of quality counselling sessions and work with clients. However, this quarter have been challenging due to the number of intense cases seen and the restrictions imposed by limited funds to work with. We struggled with transport, communication, staff self-care and safety issues.

### Activities

#### (A.) Counselling

- i. **478 Counselling sessions were conducted.** (124 New Clients and 354 Ongoing clients).

**124 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. **12 Family Therapies**
- iii. **4 Couple Therapies**
- iv. **76 Home visits**
- v. **58 Clients with Disabilities**

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

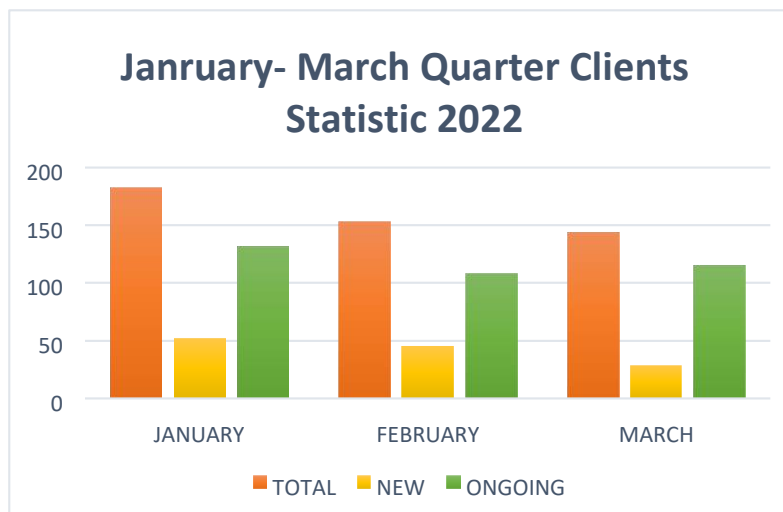


Figure 1: Shows breakdown statistic for January to March



*Care Giver Support Project*

PARTICULARS	TOTAL
<b>Total Clients</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>No . of Female Clients (Care Givers 31 females and 1 male)</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>No.of Male Clients (Care Givers 24 females)</b>	<b>26</b>
1. Home visits	93
2. Diapers	236 pkts
3. Food pack	45
4. Medicine	10
5. Toiletries	2
6. Wheelchair	7
7. Dressing pads	12
8. Urinal bottles	6
9. Walker	0

**Community Awareness Sessions**

- i. The team was able to successfully conduct two workshops on Access to Justice with different groups of women.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop - On the Womens International Day at Malolo Sangam Temple in Nadi.



Figure 2: Nisha presenting on Cycle of Violence



Figure 3: Group discussion



Figure 4: Group picture of Participants & Facilitators

- 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop was with Group of women from Lomolomo community conducted by BIRTH Fiji Team at BIRTH Fiji office.



Figure 5: Makitalena presenting on Preseting on Womens Rights



Figure 6: Participants actively participating in group presentation

- ii. Flouriculture group of women have been meeting regularly to empower women for financial sustainability.
- iii. Birth Fiji encouraging youths to attend Human Rights workshop.



Figure 7: Human Rights Workshop at Waterfront Hotel

- iv. BIRTH Fiji representation at FWRM Emerging Leaders Forum 8 Graduation at waterfront Hotel, Lautoka.



Figure 8 & 9: EFL graduation at Waterfront Hotel on January 29<sup>th</sup>,2022



### (C.) Staff Capacity Building

- i. Board member (Mereoni) visiting office to empower new counsellors and to attend board meeting.



Figure 10 & 11: Counsellors assisting Mereoni visiting new office

- ii. Workshop from UN Women: engaging/ providing services to survivor's online visibility. Target audience were CSOs/ service providers who are seeking to improve/ increase their outreach to survivors of violence and improve their online/ social media presence, so that survivors can find them more easily online. This was organised by FWRM.

a.



Figure 12: BIRTH Fiji staff participating in workshop via

zoom

- iii. In house group supervision by Clinical supervisor Anna and Counsellor Manager Makitalena.



Figure 13: Counsellors participating in group supervision on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2022

- iv. Case consultation meetings with Team Leader Nisha.



*Figure 14 & 15: Weekly case consultation meetings amongst Team Leader and counsellors*

- v. Staff participated in online Mental Health courses conducted by Mental Health Academy, Australia.
- vi. In-house refresher training on Micro skills, different types of questioning skills, 4 element therapy, and butterfly therapy.



*Figure 16: Nisha training new counsellor on 4 elements therapy*

- vii. Staff review treatment plans for various presenting issues and working together to document techniques that has proved to have a marked impact while working with mental health cases.



*Figure 17: Staff discussion on new treatment plans with Depression clients*

- viii. Two counsellors participated in three-day workshop on Regional Capacity Building training for Human Rights Defenders on Atrocity Prevention and Protection Strategies organised by Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and by United Nations Human Rights.



Figure 18, 19 & 20: Counsellor Kirti & Ana participating in workshop held at Hilton Resort, Nadi on 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2022

### (D.) Networking

- i. From this year every Wednesday two counsellors are on rotation, based at Veseisei Sai Health Centre to provide counselling support to patients in need which are referred by doctors.



Figure 21 & 22: Counsellor Deepika & Counsellor Makitalena working from VSHC

- ii. Continued working with Koroipita Home, Viseisei Sai Health Centre, Golden Age Home FRIENDS Fiji, and Fiji Cancer Society.
- iii. Nisha attended Virtual meetings of partners and allies with Fiji Women's Fund on 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 2022.
- iv. Meetings with Amita Prasad and Fiona Williams of AVI for the development and improving on BIRTH Fiji Child Protection Policy.
- v. Working together with Births, Deaths & Marriages registry staff to assist our clients with their children's birth certificate registrations. These clients had children ready for school but had limitations in terms of funds and skills to get the registrations done.
- vi. Networking with some of the school staff for assisting our child clients with getting school clearance to change schools due to family issues and for child's safety.
- vii. Taking assistance from Fiji Police with cases with issues between children and their parents.



Figure 23: Two counsellors filing report with 13 year old who run away from home



- viii. Acting High Commissioner Mr Paul Welsh visiting BIRTH Fiji office, having chat with counselors, understanding what are challenges faced by them dealing with mental health cases, how BIRTH Fiji counselors work with clients with Mental Health issues.



Figure 24: Acting High Commissioner Mr Paul Welsh visiting BIRTH Fiji Office on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2022

- ix. Meeting with Turaga ni Koro n matanivanua from Viseisei village regarding a community workshop in Vuda.



Figure 25 & 26: Meeting at BIRTH Fiji office in Lomolomo

- x. Receiving food packs by New world staff which was donated by Satya Sai Organisation Fiji for our clients.



Figure 27: Counsellor Deepika picking food packs from "New World" Lautoka

## (E. ) Achievements So Far:

- i. Care support for rural women through the caregiver project





Figure 28 & 29: Caregiver Bineeta delivering diaper & groceries to caregiving client    Figure 30: Caregiver cleaning sore for a client

ii. Diapers, information and social work support



Figure 31,32,33 & 34: Counsellors distributing food packs and diapers to clients

iii. Continued providing counselling service to bedridden clients

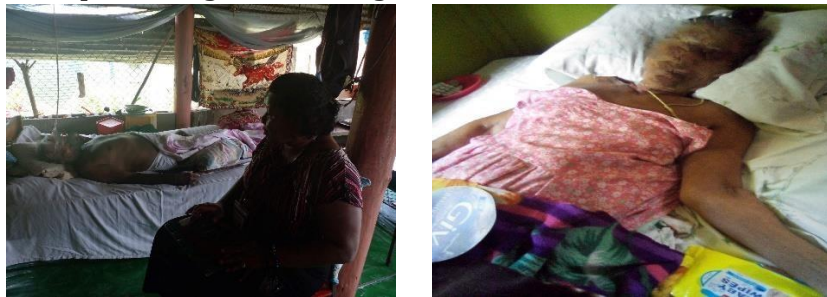


Figure 35 & 36: Counsellor Makitalena having counselling session during home visits

iv. This quarter BIRTH Fiji focused on strengthening on Child Protection Policy, Drafting and improving code of conduct.

v. First Board meeting for this year was held at Birth Fiji office. Discussing and working on plans to improving services.



Figure 37: Board members at BIRTH Fiji Office

vi. Discussion after financial training organised by Fiji Women's Rights Movement.





Figure 38: Friendly meeting after training

- vii. In dealing with the COVID19 impact on teenagers and the desperation seen in them, BIRTH Fiji had started small group workshops once a week for ten weeks this quarter, to help venerable young girls learn life skills that will help them to cope better and hopefully become advocates for change. The workshops focused on topics which included:
- Reproductive Health
  - Healthy v/s Unhealthy Relationships
  - Domestic Violence
  - Women's Access to Justice (including Gender)
  - Communication Skills
  - Conflict Resolution Skills
  - Coping strategies in difficult situations
  - Self-discipline
- viii. BIRTH Fiji also opened up the office for students who wished to have appointments on Saturdays as they could not come in the weekdays and were scared of stigmatization for having accessed counselling at school. This also allowed the parents to feel as ease to accompany their children to the office.
- ix. Received funding from FWRM which was approved by UN Women Pacific Partnership Programme for extra \$10, 000 to support for Staff salaries for month of February and March. This “Bridge the Gap Funding” provided by Fiji Women’s Rights Movement helped to sustain the programs and the trained staff to run the programs at the organisation.
- x. 100 copies of business card printed to increase our network and access for clients.
- xi. Approval by AVI for Child Protection Policy Development meeting minimum standards.
- xii. Application done for BIRTH Fiji Concept Paper with Pacific American Fund.
- xiii. New grant agreement signed with Fiji Women’s fund who has supported BIRTH Fiji for the second year now. This time the grant is for two years.



- xiv. BIRTH Fiji has seen marked positive impact on referrals made for Diagnosed Mental Health cases which are referred by doctors, families & self-referrals.

## (F. ) Challenges

- i. Beginning of the year heavy rain was one of the obstacles for counsellors as it leads to flooding in many areas, it hindered their work. Nearby Counsellors managed to work together from home to continue to provide quality service to the clients.



Figure 39: Counsellor Deepika & Mere working from Suva as they were not able to travel to Lautoka due to flooding

- ii. Covid 19 has resulted in many social challenges that are on the rise. BIRTH Fiji in providing our services have come across (among other needs) child support needs for teenage girls who are vulnerable and stressed. These girls especially those who are impacted by GENDER norms, are stuck in situations which contribute to behaviors that are risky and harmful to themselves. Their traditional upbringing (with strong Gender Norms where girls have no say in the family) that confines them to their homes has robbed them of opportunities to develop life skills that would have helped them cope better in their situations and resulted in them trying to escape their situations by running away from home, attempting suicide, getting into sexual relationships for emotional needs and many other negative behaviors.

Since these girls are from vulnerable families who are struggling with socioeconomic issues where sometimes there is no food in their homes, we gave them an allowance for attendance on the days they attend the workshop. However, we had to discontinue due to financial constraints.

- iii. Finances - to provide basic needs to clients during this lockdown. Not able to assist all clients as we had limited funds and resources thus, we had to sus out clients who were in urgent need. It was a challenge to attend to all the people who reach out to us for assistance. We referred as many as we could.
- iv. Less home visits due to limited funds left.
- v. “Wantok Grant” duration ended in March and BIRTH Fiji is privileged and appreciative of a onemonth extension to provide the service to bedridden clients.

## (G. ) How did we cope:



- i. Provided telehealth support where possible due to limited resources for home visit.
- ii. visited only the most urgent face to face, couple therapy and family therapy cases. iii. Regular weekly meetings for counsellors and when necessary, during the week. iv. Case debriefing/consultations and staff trainings.
- v. Group therapy sessions and family counselling to engage support and safety

## (H. ) Good Stories

□ Out of the 5 families assisted with accommodation support in this quarter, one was a single mother with 3 children. The couple were separated, the husband had was in a relationship with another woman who was pregnant with his child. Our client was homeless, returned to her adopted parents place to be forced into another relationship through a religious wedding. She ran away from there and was homeless again. Her husband's employer's wife who knew her, gave her accommodation and reached out to us for assistance. She did not know how to get her children's birth registration done and could not send them to school. Her husband was not supportive to get the registrations done. BIRTH Fiji team assisted her in getting the children's birth notification from Ministry of Health and then getting Birth certificate done with Births, Deaths and Marriage registration office. Through continuous counselling sessions and moral support, the mother was able to arrange school for two kids who are now attending kindergarten and class one.

This mother who had lived under the control of either parents or husband had very limited skills on being independent and feared being on her own with her children. She is still having challenges but is managing very well with counselors' support to increase her self confidence and the growth promoting environment at Koroipita Homes.

BIRTH Fiji also is working with the father of these children to share financial responsibility via coparenting. It was very hard for the mother to get welfare assistance during COVID situation added with her not being prepared to take him to court for support. Thus, her counsellor engaged another counselor to advocate for the mother to engage the father who was very aggressive and angry in the beginning to finally shoulder his responsibilities towards his children despite the couple's separation, enabling the children to be equipped to go to school. This family continues to be supported through the challenges that lie for them to be completely independent.

To conclude, BIRTH Fiji staff faces lot of challenges and do their best to provide services to their clients, however there are some restrictions as we don't have enough funds to continue with home visits. But the team doesn't lose hope and does their best and goes out of their way to provide for needy clients. Some of the staff use money from their pocket to take travel by bus to court house, hospital, register office so they can provide moral support.

**APPRECIATION:** BIRTH Fiji is grateful to:

1. Women's Fund Fiji
2. Fiji Women's Rights Movement



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3. Urgent Action Fund
4. AVI – Child Safeguarding Volunteering Hub
5. Sai Organisation – client support
6. Individuals - food voucher support
7. Model Towns Charitable Trust – transport support
8. Golden Age Home – pickup and drop off of counsellors from GAH

For their support for the various activities done by BIRTH Fiji. Without this support we would not have achieved the above.

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