

INDEPENDENT END OF PROGRAM EVALUATION DFAT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Prepared by: Bilateral Aid Section, Suva Post
Approved by: Christina Munzer, Counsellor Development Cooperation Fiji and Tuvalu, Fiji Post
Date Approved:

SUMMARY

Initiative Name	Fiji Community Development Program		
AidWorks initiative number	INK130		
Commencement date	16 May 2012	Completion date	20 May 2017
Total Australian \$	20,946,635.46		
Delivery organisation(s)	Coffey International Development PTY LTD		
Country/Region	Fiji Islands/Pacific		
Initiative objective/s	The Fiji Community Development Program aims to deliver social and economic benefits to the people of Fiji through strengthened civil society organisations (CSOs). The program has two objectives: to mitigate social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji by funding the community development work of CSOs; to strengthen CSO capacity to deliver relevant and efficient programs in these targeted communities.		

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Evaluation Objective:

The purpose of the end of program evaluation is to provide a systematic and objective assessment of the impact FCDP has made in delivering its two program objectives. This includes an assessment of the direct and indirect causal contribution as well as unintended impacts of the program.

The evaluation also seeks to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of FCDP's implementation approach, compile lessons learned and provide recommendations that can inform DFAT's implementation of the Australia-Fiji Civil Society Engagement Strategy 2016-2019. The Strategy was finalised in August 2016 and articulates how Australia will engage with CSOs to deliver its aid program objectives in Fiji, as outlined in its Fiji Aid Investment Plan 2015-2019.

Australia's support to CSOs in Fiji from May 2017 will be delivered through the Fiji Program Support Facility which commenced in January, 2017.

Evaluation Completion Date: 16 June 2017.

Evaluation Team:

Dr Keren Winterford – Team Leader/Researcher and evaluation specialist

Salaseini Tupou – Fiji-based Consultant/Grant management and organisational governance specialist

David Hesaie – Fiji-based Consultant/Civil society and community development specialist.

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The evaluation was managed by DFAT's bilateral aid section at Suva Post. An Evaluation Reference Group comprising the Counsellor Development Cooperation of Fiji and Tuvalu, three Senior Program Managers and two FCDP Program Executive Committee Members provided oversight of the process and quality-assured the evaluation products according to DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards.

DFAT considers the evaluation to be of good quality and has sufficiently addressed the questions in the Terms of Reference and subsequent Evaluation Plan.

The evaluation identified strong evidence that FCDP has achieved its objectives. Social hardship has been mitigated through the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation and health, especially in remote areas which have limited access. Economic hardship has been addressed through the provision of income generating projects, such as poultry raising and setting up local stores, and other means of saving money such as the use of solar power. Ownership and sustainability of results in communities are varied and influenced by a range of factors including strong community governance structures, the inclusion of women and youth, equitable sharing of tangible benefits, and strong engagement skills of CSOs.


FCDP has directly contributed to strengthening CSOs' capacity, particularly in community engagement, external relations, institutional policies, financial management and project management. FCDP capacity strengthening responded to the varied nature of CSO needs that were relevant to support effective grants delivery. Fundraising, program development and institutional governance are areas that CSOs need further support, especially for smaller organisations.

FCDP prioritised strong linkages between CSO activities with existing Government of Fiji (GoF) community development objectives, from 2014 onwards. This increased linkages between CSOs and GoF and is a potential area for further consolidation in future engagement with CSOs. This will also ensure DFAT's CSO engagement resources are coordinated with GoF resources and maximised to meet the priorities of the Fijian people.

The recommendations proposed in the evaluation are based on the stakeholder consultations, review of secondary data sources, analysis and aide memoire discussions. They relate to DFAT's implementation the Australia-Fiji Civil Society Engagement Strategy which articulates how Australia will engage with CSOs to deliver its aid program objectives in Fiji, as outlined in its Fiji Aid Investment Plan 2015-2019. The recommendations are also relevant to CSO funding and capacity building arrangements under the Fiji Program Support Facility and the Fiji Women's Fund.

Individual management response to the recommendations

Recommendation	Response [Note: Select one option from the column below, delete others]	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe [If practical, please specify timeframe here]
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Establish different types of funding support and capacity development arrangements for CSOs, for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core funding with project implementation and capacity strengthening 2. Twinning / partnership grants with capacity strengthening 3. Transition grants for community-based and faith-based organisations (CBO/FBO) with capacity strengthening 4. Sector level support through a Community of Practice (CoP) 5. A disaster and emergency rapid response fund. 	<p>Agree</p>		<p>DFAT recognises that CSOs in Fiji have diverse strengths, capacities and needs. To be effective partners in delivering long-lasting results, CSOs should be able to access relevant funding and capacity development arrangements.</p> <p>Bilateral programs partnering with CSOs will consider these arrangements in their designs and implementation.</p>	<p>2017-2022 under the Fiji Program Support Facility (the Facility) and the Fiji Women’s Fund.</p>



Recommendation	Response <i>[Select one, delete others]</i>	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe <i>[If practical, please specify timeframe here]</i>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Integrate inclusive community development planning processes across CSO activities that DFAT supports.</p>	<p>Agree in part</p>	<p>DFAT supports a variety of CSO activities. Not all CSOs activities that DFAT funds have a community development planning focus.</p>	<p>DFAT will require all CSOs implementing activities with community development objectives employ inclusive processes in its planning and management.</p>	<p>2017-2022 under the Facility and the Fiji Women’s Fund.</p>



Recommendation	Response <i>[Select one, delete others]</i>	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe <i>[If practical, please specify timeframe here]</i>
Recommendation 3 Ensure partnerships between CSO and GoF for community development activities at sub-national level are an explicit part of CSO community development grants.	Agree		DFAT supports community development activities that meet the needs of communities and align with Fiji Government priorities. CSOs accepting DFAT grants to deliver community development activities will be required to deliver their activities in partnership with national / local government.	2017-2022 under the Facility and the Fiji Women's Fund.

Recommendation	Response <i>[Select one, delete others]</i>	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe <i>[If practical, please specify timeframe here]</i>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Establish a Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework to draw out good practice and disseminate learning to stakeholders (CSOs, GoF, development partners) on civil society engagement.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>New civil society engagement arrangements under the Fiji Program Support Facility are currently being finalised. Following this will be the development of a MEL framework which will be finalised in 2018.</p> <p>The Fiji Women’s Fund MEL framework is being finalised and includes strategies to draw out good practice and communicate learning to program stakeholders. The Fund’s MEL will be finalised in 2018.</p>	<p>December 2018</p>

Recommendation	Response <i>[Select one, delete others]</i>	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe <i>[If practical, please specify timeframe here]</i>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Maintain divisional field offices to engage CSOs, support place-based communities of practice (CoP) and promote connections with GoF processes.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>DFAT’s new Fiji Program Support Facility has established offices in the Central, Western and Northern divisions in 2017. These offices will provide networking spaces and support services which will be accessible to all CSOs.</p> <p>The Fiji Women’s Fund is located in Suva and will be able to use the Facility offices for CSO support meetings and capacity building activities when required.</p>	<p>December 2017</p>

Recommendation	Response <i>[Select one, delete others]</i>	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe <i>[If practical, please specify timeframe here]</i>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Form a Program Executive Committee or a Steering Group to support the implementation of the Australia-Fiji Civil Society Engagement Strategy administered by the Facility.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>A Program Executive Committee (PEC) will be set up upon finalisation of the new civil society engagement arrangements under the Facility. The PEC’s engagement and terms of reference will consider the limitations of the FCDP PEC, as outlined in the evaluation report.</p> <p>The composition of the PEC is yet to be finalised but may include representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiji CSOs • Government of Fiji • Development partners and donors • DFAT • Fiji Women’s Fund • Disabled persons organisation • Private sector. 	<p>June 2018</p>



Recommendation	Response <i>[Select one, delete others]</i>	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe <i>[If practical, please specify timeframe here]</i>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>Employ a strengths-based approach as part of DFAT’s engagement strategy with civil society and community.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>DFAT will ensure a strengths-based approach as part of its engagement with CSOs. It will focus on identifying and using local strengths and building on what is already working in communities.</p> <p>This recommendation will be included in action plans for Recommendations 1-5.</p>	<p>On-going until December 2019</p>