Operating at the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Strengthening National GBV Systems, Lessons learned from Tropical Cyclone Yasa in Fiji

Presenter: Reijieli Mawa, Fiji Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA)

Co-collaborators: Jennifer Poole, MWCPA, Selai Korovusere, MWCPA, Sonia Rastogi, UN Women, Abigail Erikson, UN Women, Maggie Aylmore, UN Women.
Background: Fiji’s VAWG Context

64%  
2 in 3 women  
women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime

31%  
1 in 3 women  
have experienced physical and/or sexual assault since the age of 15 by someone other than an intimate partner

28%  
More than 1 in 4  
ever-partnered women have had their partner either take their savings or refuse to give them money
Background: Evolution of GBV Response Mechanisms

- Tropical Cyclone Referral Pathway 2016
- Fiji National Service Delivery Protocol for Responding to Cases of Gender Based Violence – launched in 2018
- Rapid GBV Service Delivery & Adaptation for COVID-19 & GBV – 2020

2016 – 2020
Background: Tropical Cyclone Yasa (category 5 cyclone)
Crisis as an opportunity to galvanize a GBV response system that adapts and functions before, during and after emergencies.
Operationalizing a national & sub-national GBV coordination mechanism

- Operationalized and elevated the **visibility of the national women’s machinery** (Ministry of Women) as the GBV coordinating body

- **Strengthened relationships between frontline service providers**, including provincial government at sub-national level

- Led to **local buy in to adapt national referral pathways to district level** inclusive of informal entry points (community leaders, faith leaders)

- **Practical experience** by GBV service providers and emergency actors (NDMO, Red Cross)
Increasing access to essential services
Advocacy across crisis response on GBV risk mitigation and PSEA with knock-on effects for post-emergency

Safety & Protection Cluster
Northern Division: Key safety risks and concerns

Shelter
- Lack of security around shelters increasing risk of violence, harassment and taking of personal belongings
  - ECs do not have a mechanism to monitor who comes in and who comes out allowing anyone to come in, increasing risk of violence, harassment and taking of personal items.
  - Tents set up in open environments without fencing or “lockable” doors. Stress and concern over anyone being able to enter and take their belongings or increase the risk of violence and harassment to family members.
- Families split between communities and ECs leading to girls and boys being left with minimal or no supervision ➔ adolescent girls are at increased risk of violence, abuse, harassment and other protection concerns

• Raising awareness and advocating – at the highest levels -- for a safer response among donors and first responders
• Critical role of CSOs and women-led organisations in informing advocacy and knowledge
• Lessons learned led to EVAWG systems strengthening and better preparedness for next crisis
Post-TC Yasa: led to a spur of momentum in strengthening the national EVAWG system to operate before, during and after emergencies

- Establishment of **Western Division WG**
- Strengthened **engagement between GBV service providers** at national level
- Set up for **COVID-19 response** in 2021 → GBV Administrative Data
- Cultivated a conversation on **preparedness as part of Fiji SDP roll out** → safety audits, who does what in emergencies

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For further information:

Reijieli Mawa, Fiji MWCPA, Raijeli.mawa@govnet.gov.fj
Abigail Erikson, UN Women, Abigail.erikson@unwomen.org
Sonia Rastogi, UN Women, Sonia.Rastogi@unwomen.org