



FIJI DISABLED PEOPLES ASSOCIATION

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FIJI DISABLED PEOPLES ASSOCIATION UPR REPORT

Introduction & Background:

The Fiji Disabled People's Association [FDPA] is a national, self-help non-profitable organization whose headquarters is situated at Qarase House Brown Street, Suva, Fiji islands and was established in 1984 to advocate for the full recognition of the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities in the country, their active participation in all areas and at all levels of society as well as to provide essential services that are otherwise unavailable to such persons.

It has conducted some successful programmes like Community Bases Rehabilitation for women with disabilities, Branch Development, Pathfinder for youth with disabilities, Domain Home for Women, Wheelchair and Data Base projects. FDPA has only one staff member at present and the management of the organization is largely the responsibility of the Executive Committee the arm of the National Board of Representatives.

However, changes in foreign aid policies, the difficulty often experienced by the Association in marketing its advocacy programmes, the low priority given to disability development by local and national governments, and the ever-increasing unmet and unrecognized needs of people with disabilities in the country have forced this organization to review its philosophy, vision, mission statements and plans. FDPA also has four affiliates which advocates on single disability issues and they are –

- Fiji Association of the Deaf
- Psychiatric Survivors Association
- Spinal Injuries Association
- United Blind Persons of Fiji.

National Context

Early services for people with disabilities in Fiji started with the development of mental health services which were first established in 1884 with the construction of a single ward to house psychiatric patients. Since this time St Giles Hospital has evolved and grown to accommodate larger numbers of patients to meet a growing demand for mental health and psycho-social services and has become an integral element of Health Services in Fiji.

A wider range of services for people with disabilities in Fiji began in the mid 1960's in the form of a Suva-based special education school for a growing population of children who had suffered from poliomyelitis. The Fiji Crippled Children Society, the Society for the Blind and the Fiji Red Cross were the early pioneers of disability services in Fiji. Over the following decades other special schools were established in the main urban centres of Fiji and various organisation of persons with disabilities (DPOs) established themselves as advocacy and 'rights' groups.

“Nothing About Us Without Us”