

FIJI FRONTLINE NEWS

Habitat for Humanity's Climate Resilience Efforts in Fiji

VUNUKU VILLAGE DRR MASTER PLAN 2021- 2031



Habitat for Humanity Fiji (HFHF) is committed to addressing the pressing challenges faced by communities in the Pacific due to climate change. Through a holistic approach that integrates climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, sustainable resource management, and community engagement, HFHF is working towards creating affordable housing solutions and strengthening community resilience.

The trainings conducted in Vunuku Village, Rewa, in 2020, including Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter Awareness Training (PASSA), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Training, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) Training, have empowered community members to actively monitor, assess, and mitigate the impact of climate change. The development of a 10-year Vunuku Village DRR Masterplan demonstrate HFHF's commitment to long-term resilience building.

In the past three years, key accomplishments include revitalizing the ecosystem by reinforcing the river embankment by utilizing natural resources, installation of 20 solar street lights, construction of a boat shed. Furthermore, the investment in social enterprises such as crab fattening farm, traditional crafts made by the women's group using pandanus and coconut leaves and mushroom farming has significantly improved income opportunities for women persons living with disabilities.



Crab Fattening

This is a testament of a holistic and integrated approach to building climate resilience in communities. HFHF is committed to working alongside communities such as Vunuku whilst engaging with other development partners to achieve our shared goal.

This initiative was proudly supported by the people of Australia.



Connecting solar to borehole submersible pump

Droplets of Change: Togobula's Transformation

In partnership with UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity Fiji embarked on a mission to transform lives and communities by enhancing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) practices in Togobula Village in Nadroga. Before our intervention, Togobula Village faced the daily struggle of carting water from neighboring villages, a task that weighed heavy on every family. Attempts to find solutions, including wells and a borehole system, fell short due to the village's challenging water-scarce location and poor water management.

In these moments of uncertainty, households, totaling 264 people, were forced to rely on water carting from neighboring communities and government stations. The village got a borehole water system installed but the cost of fuel became a deterrent and they were unable to maintain a consistent supply of water. Mr. Jone Nagiri, the Turaga Ni Koro (Village Head), voiced the community's distress, "When the borehole water system stops operating due to poor financial support and mechanical failure, families always resort to water carting from neighboring communities and government stations."

HFHF replaced the system with a solar-powered submersible pump and installed two 10,000-liter tanks to increase the secondary water storage capacity. The location of these tanks were also strategically chosen so that the water pressure can support the flow of water. The revitalized Water Committee received comprehensive training on operation and maintenance of the WaSH infrastructure as well as a Financial Literacy training aimed to empower them in the area of sustaining their water systems operation and maintenance costs. HFHF aimed to not only address the physical water challenges but also help restore faith in the management and sustainability of the water infrastructure.



Solar panel installation

The transformation was more than physical; it was a restoration of trust and hope. Grateful for our efforts, 70 year old Sanimili Drau shared her joy, "The first day I opened the tap, I saw water running from the tap. I went inside the house and then returned to the same tap and opened it again. Yes, I just couldn't believe that water was running again from the tap until this very day."

Togobula is no longer bound by water scarcity; it's a community reborn. Through the collective spirit of collaboration, we witnessed not just a flow of water but a flow of newfound hope and empowerment.

Regional Conference on Gender Responsive Climate Policy and Environmental Governance



Habitat for Humanity Fiji actively participated in a two-day Regional Conference on Gender Responsive Climate Policy and Environmental Governance. This collaborative event brought together representatives from various sectors, including Government, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Youth organizations from Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

The primary objectives of the conference was to foster multi-sectoral collaboration among diverse organizations, raise awareness

regarding the implications of gender-blind policies on women in the context of climate change and environmental governance, and empower CSOs to advocate for the adoption of gender-responsive climate policies. The engagement sought to encourage CSOs to actively participate in policy discussions and initiatives in the Pacific region.

Habitat for Humanity Fiji, recognizing the critical role played by women and the LGBTQIA+ community in achieving climate resilience, disaster preparedness and response, is committed to providing holistic and resilient housing solutions. As part of our approach, we ensure that all our intervention programs are inclusive and empowering, addressing the needs and concerns of individuals from diverse gender backgrounds. The conference allowed us to meet with other stakeholders and realize our common goals and discuss opportunities for collaboration.

The conference was held in collaboration with the International Republican Institute.

Charting the Course for a Brighter Future

Habitat For Humanity Fiji staff engaged in a strategic business planning workshop to reflect on our journey, celebrate successes, and valuable learnings. During this collaborative session, staff identified key processes, organizational goals, and ways to harmonise it with the Global Strategy and the Asia Pacific Strategic Framework.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Habitat for Humanity Australia and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand for their invaluable support in making this workshop possible. Together, we are working towards forging a path towards sustainable impact and transformative change



Staff Unite to Construct Homes for Their Own

Habitat for Humanity Fiji, renowned for our dedication to constructing homes nationwide, has taken an initiative to extend its mission beyond the boundaries of construction sites. This time, it's about supporting our own staff and their goal of building a cyclone safe home.

Through the Fiji National Provident Fund, Iosefo was able to purchase building materials for his house. Given the limited funding, our team dedicated their time on weekends to help with the incremental build.

Six staff members, including plumbers and carpenters, led by our WASH Program Manager Marlon Atalifo used their professional skills to assist their fellow colleague with the installation of roof cladding. Underneath the sun, amidst the laughter and shared expertise, the staff members did not just build a roof; they helped bring their colleagues' dreams to life.

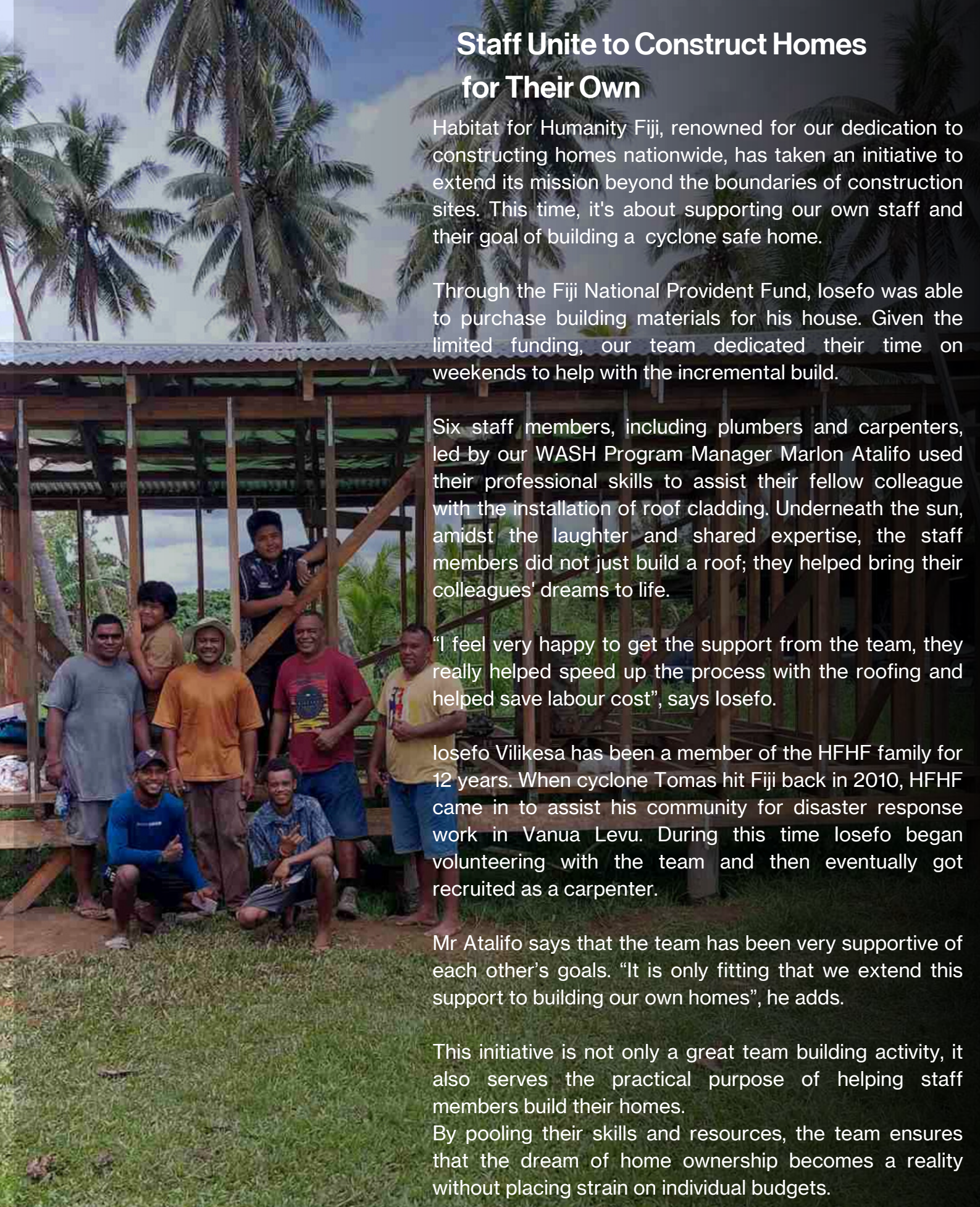
"I feel very happy to get the support from the team, they really helped speed up the process with the roofing and helped save labour cost", says Iosefo.

Iosefo Vilikesa has been a member of the HFHF family for 12 years. When cyclone Tomas hit Fiji back in 2010, HFHF came in to assist his community for disaster response work in Vanua Levu. During this time Iosefo began volunteering with the team and then eventually got recruited as a carpenter.

Mr Atalifo says that the team has been very supportive of each other's goals. "It is only fitting that we extend this support to building our own homes", he adds.

This initiative is not only a great team building activity, it also serves the practical purpose of helping staff members build their homes.

By pooling their skills and resources, the team ensures that the dream of home ownership becomes a reality without placing strain on individual budgets.



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