

## Fijian Stories from the Heart of Communities

### Daulomani: The Language of Love

In Fiji, Daulomani means to love. It is the act of truly seeing and accepting another in their entirety – their flaws, their beauty, their struggles – and choosing, again and again, to walk beside them. This essence of love and compassion is what defines the Daulomani Safe Home.

In response to the increasing hardships brought on by the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Edwina Biyau founded the Daulomani Safe Home. As living conditions grew unsafe, many people found themselves without a place to call home. The crisis intensified the challenges faced by those from diverse gender backgrounds, survivors of domestic violence, and individuals struggling with financial stress.

Uncertainty, fear, stigma, and discrimination adding to their vulnerability, left many in desperate need of shelter and support. *"I saw the need—individuals neglected or cast aside by society needed homes,"* shared Edwina. Her personal journey shaped the mission of Daulomani. *"At 13, I found myself living on the streets. I had to learn how to survive on my own and find the strength to keep going."*

She started with a single, properly built structure, but as more people sought refuge, she expanded by using tents and sheds to ensure everyone had a place to stay.

However, this brought its own set of challenges. Each person who arrived at the shelter had unique needs. The elderly, people with disabilities, and children required extra care and attention. Ensuring there was enough food, proper sanitation, clean water, and other basic necessities was a constant struggle.

Fortunately, Edwina's dedication, along with the support from various individuals and organizations, garnered much-needed resources. Donations of essential items helped meet daily needs, but living in tents and makeshift shelters was not ideal for the residents' health and wellbeing. In a disaster-prone country like Fiji, such temporary living conditions were unsustainable. [continue on next page]



Residents of the Daulomani Safe Home



**"Love is the key to life. It's what gives you hope, activates your strength, restores unity, and heals us."**

**Edwina Biyau, founder of Daulomani Safe Home**





*"I would wake up the whole night till morning to make sure everyone has a dry clean place",* Edwina recalls. Recognizing the urgent need for adequate housing, Habitat for Humanity Fiji built two proper homes for the residents of the Home. These new houses with another planned to be completed soon, is equipped with proper sanitation facilities, and can accommodate at least 12 individuals, ensuring a safer, healthier, and more dignified environment. This initiative marks a vital step towards improving the residents' quality of life, providing them with stability and security.

For Edwina, love is the foundation of it all. *"Love is the key to life. It's what gives you hope, activates your strength, restores unity, and heals us."* This deeply resonates with Habitat's vision of putting God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities, and hope. The spirit of collaboration is evident in our partnerships with Habitat for Humanity South Korea, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand, and the JP Bayly Trust, who have come together to help make the Daulomani Safe Home a reality. Through this love, the Home can welcome anyone in need, making sure no one gets left behind.

## Whilst We Construct, We Also Upskill

Fiji and other Pacific Island nations are on the front lines of climate change, with vulnerable populations at high risk of losing their homes or experiencing severe damage. In the aftermath of disasters, over 90% of households are forced to self-recover, using whatever resources they can find in to rebuild or repair their homes.<sup>[1]</sup>

Our Build Back Safer (BBS) program empowers these communities by providing them with the knowledge and skills to construct stronger, more resilient structures that can better withstand the impacts of natural disasters, such as tropical cyclones. In Narikoso Village, 19 participants completed a BBS training, where they gained valuable skills in resilient construction. The training covered essential practices, including identifying safe building locations, designing homes with the right shape and orientation, constructing solid foundations, reinforcing structures, incorporating bracing, forming secure joints, and building durable roofs.

Through this initiative, communities are not only rebuilding but building back stronger, ensuring greater security and preparedness for future challenges. Alongside the BBS training, we also offer vocational carpentry training in collaboration with the Fiji National University, providing community members with a Certificate Level II qualification. This helps equip them with the skills to continue constructing cyclone-safe homes, fostering long-term resilience and adaptability in the face of climate change.

[1] Flinn, B.; Schofield, H.; Morel, L., 2017. "The case for self recovery", in: Shelter in Displacement, Forced Migration Review. University of Oxford.







## Mobilising Communities to Strengthen Climate Resilience

By Taraiasi Wara  
19/07/24

Togobula is a village situated in Malomalo district about 10 minutes from the Queens Highway and Batiri Road junction in the Nadroga/Navosa province. As part of our ongoing work with the community, we will be installing a rainwater harvesting system in 10 homes with support from UNDP. Before we could progress with this, it was crucial for our team to understand the needs around accessibility and availability of water by collecting data from the community.

We had a Safeguarding Awareness training followed by a rainwater system examination. I had been unwell and anxious about leading the safeguarding activity, a sensitive and new topic that required careful handling. Fortunately, the team's preparation and support made all the difference. The community groups—youths, women, and men—engaged meaningfully in the discussions, reflecting on real-life scenarios and successfully choosing their safeguarding representatives. Despite a rocky start, it turned out to be a rewarding experience.



On the technical side, we scoped 10 homes for rainwater harvesting systems. I was impressed by the participants' eagerness to learn, especially seeing more women involved than in previous sessions. As we try to encourage more women to participate in our programs, this felt like a significant step forward.

I was truly inspired by the community's commitment to improving their access to water. Together, they raised over \$20,000—an incredible achievement—for the expansion of their water system and the development of a new borehole. Seeing them take such proactive steps to enhance their quality of life reassured me that our efforts have made a meaningful impact.

Reflecting on the day, I'm proud of what we accomplished. The experience deepened my appreciation for community mobilization and the importance of centering projects on the people we serve. Despite the challenges, everything came together in the end, and I'm filled with relief and gratitude for the collective effort.



**GOOD  
NEWS**

The JP Bayly Trust made a generous donation of \$20,000 FJD to fund the electrification of the Daulomani Safe Home, as well as upgrading of the kitchen facilities and appliances.







VINAKA & THANK YOU 



- *Habitat for Humanity of Greater LA*
- *Williamson-Maury HFH*
- *Sisters HFH*
- *Ulster County HFH*
- *HFH of Lenawee County*
- *Columbia Gorge HFH*
- *Livingston County HFH*
- *Hawaii HFH Association*
- *Ohana Kava Bar*
- *Griffin Area HFH*



For more information, please visit  
[www.habitatfiji.org.fj](http://www.habitatfiji.org.fj) OR scan the QR code.  
 Ph: (+679) 331 2012  
 Email: [info@habitatfiji.org.fj](mailto:info@habitatfiji.org.fj)  
 Address: Lot 1 Foster Road, Walu Bay, Suva, Fiji.



 @habitatforhumanityfiji

 @habitatforhumanityfiji

 @habitatfiji

 @habitatforhumanityfiji