

Fijian Stories from the Heart of Communities

Building Homes, Building Bonds: Jackie Weber's 23rd Global Village Journey



Jackie Weber, bottom left

For Jackie Weber, volunteering in Fiji was a heartfelt response to “God’s call to service and loving your neighbor.” With 23 international Habitat builds behind her, she found this experience both familiar and uniquely touching.

Jackie noted that while houses in Fiji and the U.S. often serve single families, Fiji stands out for its deep sense of community. “Homes here are simpler in style but meet the family’s needs. In the States, we have more multi-living homes like apartments, but we don’t have the true community we experienced in Fiji,” she shared.

She believes decent housing is transformative: “Once a family has a home, other things happen. Kids have a place to study, you can invite people in, and it provides dignity and confidence.”

Her most cherished memory was the closing ceremony. “The village coming together and singing so beautifully to us left a place in my heart.” Jackie especially enjoyed working side by side with locals, saying it helped overcome barriers and create a sense of family. Beyond improved cement-mixing skills, Jackie treasures the emotional growth. “On a physical front, I improved in my skill of mixing cement! In the emotional front, I improved on stepping back and taking time to interact with the families and share our similarities.” she reflected.

Jackie volunteered in Namulomulo Village, Western Division of Fiji., where she and a dedicated team of 20 volunteers helped construct two new WASH facilities for the village’s after-school learning centre run by former teachers.

The centre serves more than 40 children and university students, providing a safe space to study and grow. Thanks to its strong community support, Namulomulo has proudly maintained a zero-dropout rate among its students.

With the addition of these new water, sanitation, and handwashing facilities, the learning centre is now even better equipped to foster academic success and offer a healthier, more supportive environment for every learner.



Invest in Impact: She Fixes It

Safe and adequate housing depends on reliable water supply and sanitation infrastructure yet basic plumbing remains an overlooked component of home safety. Women are typically the primary users and managers of household water. However, they often lack the technical knowledge to address minor plumbing problems, leaving families vulnerable to water loss, contamination, and unnecessary repair costs.



Guests at the She Fixes It Campaign Launch

On World Habitat Day, 2025, Habitat for Humanity Fiji launched its She Fixes It campaign designed to upskill women living in urban and informal settlements in Greater Suva with essential plumbing knowledge. The initiative shines a spotlight on women as leaders in making homes safe, resilient, and sustainable.

The campaign aims to raise \$100,000 to train 200 women in basic plumbing skills, equipping them to maintain their home water systems, fix everyday problems, and adopt water-saving practices. For women who are the primary users

and managers of household water, these skills are more than technical know-how, they are a lifeline to healthier families and stronger communities.

She Fixes It is part of Habitat for Humanity's global Home Equals campaign, calling for better housing policies and solutions in the face of today's urban housing crisis. As cities expand and informal settlements grow, access to safe water and functional infrastructure remains one of the most pressing challenges. This initiative puts women at the center of solutions.

"Too often, the conversation about housing overlooks what makes a home truly liveable," said Sangita Kumar, Interim National Director of Habitat for Humanity Fiji. "Plumbing and water systems are an essential part of family life, and women are at the heart of managing them. Through She Fixes It, we want to give women tools and training, we're investing in their dignity, resilience, and leadership. When women thrive, entire communities thrive."

"This campaign aligns directly with the Government of Fiji's commitment to women's empowerment and economic inclusion. "She Fixes It" will ensure that women not only have access to education, training, and employment but also the opportunity to participate and possibly lead in sectors traditionally dominated by men", shared Honorable Sashi Kiran, Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection and Chief Guest for the launch. To learn more about the campaign, please check out our [website](#) .

Meet Mereani



A fierce and determined single mother raising five children on her own — stepping into both mother and father roles with unwavering strength. After losing her job due to COVID-19, she didn't give up; instead, she began baking to put food on the table and keep her family afloat.

Before our plumbing training, a leaking pipe was a stressful and costly problem. She often found herself replacing entire pipes at around \$6 each, a significant expense for her. But now, with hands-on skills and knowledge, Mereani confidently fixes leaks by replacing small fittings costing less than 20 cents.

"There's a huge difference between paying \$6 and just 20 cents to fix a leak," she shares with a smile.

This training has not only eased her household expenses but also empowered her with confidence and practical skills that brighten her family's future.



Habitat Fiji team

Our Commitment to Accountability

Habitat for Humanity Fiji partnered with Mediation Pacific for a valuable two day training session focused on strengthening accountability. The interactive workshop explored practical ways to uphold transparency and responsibility, principles that guide how we serve communities and honor our duty to families, partners, donors, and volunteers.

“Accountability is at the heart of our work,” said Elizabeth Peters, Finance Manager at Habitat for Humanity Fiji. “This training reinforced that every decision we make, from managing funds to engaging with families, must reflect the trust that people place in us.” By investing in sessions like these, Habitat for Humanity Fiji reaffirms its commitment to delivering its mission ethically, transparently, and to the highest standards—ensuring the confidence of all who support and benefit from our work remains strong.



Habitat for Humanity International CEO, Jonathan Reckford

Housing at 80th UN General Assembly

Habitat for Humanity International CEO, Jonathan Reckford, recently attended and spoke at the UN-Habitat Inaugural High-Level Roundtable of Global Champions on Adequate and Affordable Housing, held during the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80). This was a historic moment, as it marked the first time in 80 years that housing was highlighted as a global urgency at the UN General Assembly.

During the roundtable, the New York Declaration on Adequate and Affordable Housing was introduced. The declaration calls on countries to develop inclusive housing strategies at the national level and to establish housing as a permanent pillar within international development efforts.

Mr. Reckford emphasized Habitat’s support for the declaration, highlighting that “housing is the foundation for economic opportunity, health, and stability” and that investing in housing builds a better future for families everywhere.

Habitat for Humanity International was the only non-governmental organization present among heads of state and housing ministers. Reckford noted that while it is encouraging to see governments prioritize housing, support from donor countries remains critical in tackling the global housing crisis.

The event, hosted by President William Ruto of Kenya, brought together leaders committed to moving from ambition to action. Reckford shared that he left inspired by the collective commitment and reaffirmed Habitat for Humanity’s readiness to partner with governments, civil society, and the private sector to drive inclusive, sustainable housing solutions worldwide.

Recognizing the Unheard: A Reflection from GEDSI & Safeguarding Awareness Session

By: Tevita Senico & Divisha Deepti

In the village of Nataleira, Tailevu, we had the privilege of facilitating a training on Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Safeguarding—marking the beginning of an important shift in perspective and practice.

The training undertaken by 16 members of the community encouraged deep reflection on how women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly are often left unheard in decisions that affect their daily lives.

Too often, their voices are overlooked, not because they lack the ability to contribute, but because of deeply rooted perceptions that their contributions hold little value.

The discussions reminded us (the facilitators) that change begins when communities embrace a more intentional and consultative approach; one that is grounded in understanding, respect, and active support for those who are most vulnerable.

As the conversations unfolded, an important question emerged: Which committee truly represents the vulnerable?

A quick review of existing structures - health, water, development, youth, and women's committees - revealed a concerning gap. None had been specifically set up to amplify the voices of persons with disabilities or other marginalized groups. For example, while the health committee oversees sanitation and general wellbeing, it had not previously prioritized the unique health needs of the elderly or persons with disabilities.



Participants engaged in activities

This realization was a turning point. The *Turaga ni Koro*, together with committee members, acknowledged that they often struggled to capture and communicate the concerns of vulnerable groups through the village governance structure, particularly within the Integrated Village Development Plan (IVDP). These plans, usually prepared in consultation with community leaders and the provincial office, did not always reflect the lived realities of the most marginalized.

The training introduced new practices that enriched the village's existing consultative process. Committees are now committed to documenting discussions more systematically and presenting them at village meetings, a practice that was uncommon before. From these meetings, priorities will be minuted and formally shared with the provincial office, ensuring that the voices of women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly are integrated into IVDPs. This approach not only strengthens advocacy at the local level but also improves the quality and inclusiveness of development planning. Women expressed that, prior to the training, they often did not know how to articulate their challenges—many of which had become normalized over time. Issues of safety, security, wellbeing, and access to services were rarely raised. With new confidence and more inclusive and open governance structures for support, they are now able to bring these concerns forward, knowing they will be heard, recorded, and acted upon.

As the *Turaga ni Koro*, Ratu Savenaia Veilave, reflected:

“In my work as a *Turaga ni Koro*, one area where I felt uncertain was how to better support vulnerable people. This training has changed the way I make decisions, ensuring they benefit everyone equally; whether in village meetings or development work; because it is their basic right. It has truly benefitted not only this generation, but also future leaders, changing the way we prioritize the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, and the elderly. This training is a blessing to me and to our village.”

For Nataleira, the training marks the start of a mindset shift, from speaking for others to listening and creating space for them. True progress lies in ensuring that every voice, especially the quietest ones, is not only heard but also valued.



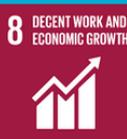
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A driver of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



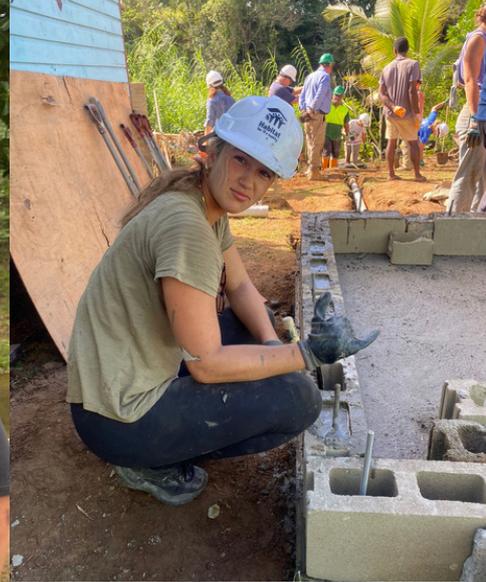
Direct contribution
to goals

Integrated part of goals



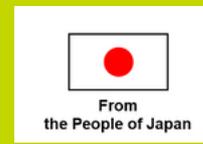
Indirect contribution to goals

Some highlights from our first Global Village build this year





VINAKA & THANK YOU 



VINAKA & THANK YOU TO OUR TITHE PARTNERS

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- Los Angeles Hfh Of Greater (Ca)
- Kershaw County Hfh Of (Sc)
- Ulster County Hfh (Ny)
- Hawaii Hfh Association
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