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Bolstering Manufacturing Capacity for Rapid Response in Fiji

Due to geographic isolation and limited manufacturing capabilities, communities across Fiji and other Pacific island countries often lack access to sufficient water and sanitation facilities. As a result, when extreme weather events—including cyclones, flooding, and tsunamis—occur in the Pacific region, limited access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) supplies and other relief commodities often hinders local populations' ability to meet their immediate needs.

Considered an administrative and economic center in the Pacific, Fiji has the region's most developed manufacturing sector and is well-positioned to distribute relief commodities to nearby countries including Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Since 2019, with support from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA), Field Ready has worked to increase private sector manufacturing capacity to produce relief items needed in Fiji, enabling local engineers and technicians to produce essential WASH items—such as latrines and water buckets—on a larger scale.

Field Ready is also providing technical training to local businesses and public health officials, enhancing their ability to design and manufacture WASH items that adhere to international standards and can be easily transported within Fiji or exported to nearby countries in the event of a natural disaster.



Photo courtesy of Field Ready

With technical support from Field Ready, local entrepreneurs and craftsmen have produced foot-operated taps, latrines, and drinking-water buckets for natural disaster preparedness and response, as well as hygiene items to prepare for potential outbreaks of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

After Severe Tropical Cyclone Harold passed over Fiji's Kadavu Island in April 2020, Field Ready collaborated with a local business to design, construct, and transport more than 150 latrines to support WASH needs in affected areas. Compared to the cement toilets commonly utilized in the area, the latrines supported by Field Ready are less expensive and faster and easier to transport, install, and clean.

Field Ready has also supported community groups to construct foot-operated taps, handwashing stations, and privacy screens, for Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services, hospitals, and local health centers. This local production is increasing Fiji's resilience and self-reliance during the COVID-19 pandemic, as related border closures and travel restrictions have affected local economic opportunities and limited international access to communities.

By building on and strengthening local capabilities rather than relying on imported assistance and resources, Field Ready is advancing a new approach to humanitarian assistance that aims to make aid more efficient and communities more resilient.

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