

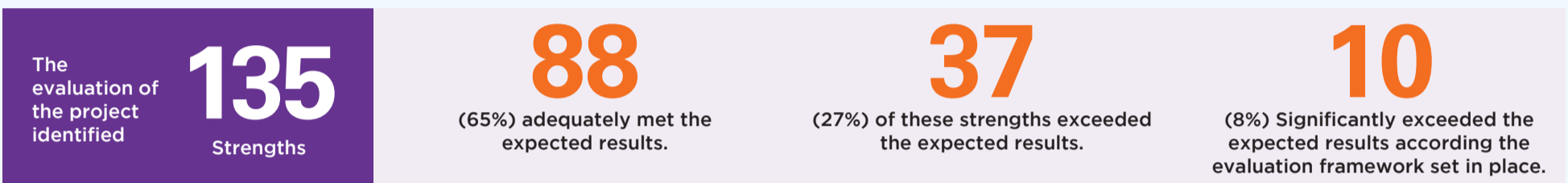


“Balancing the Scales: Improving Fijian Women’s Access to Justice” Summary of The Project’s Evaluation

Fiji Women’s Rights Movement (FWRM) is an organisation, works for legislative and policy reform to remove discrimination against diverse women and girls of Fiji through evidence based advocacy.

The three year “Balancing the Scales: Improving Fijian Women’s Access to Justice” project was part of FWRM’s ongoing women’s access to justice work, to better understand the situation of women and girls in accessing formal justice considering the progressive legislations in place.

Project strengths and opportunities for improvement were identified and classified using a framework that had the European Foundation for Quality Management¹ excellence mode at its core to assess how the project was Approached, Deployed, Assessed and Refined before attaining the Results.



The Evaluation found the following achievements of the project:

Approach

- FWRM utilized 8 complementary research methodologies in completing the project, this was done to ensure information from various sources were triangulated to form the findings of the research. The research methodologies were based on democratic principles and approaches and thus ensured inclusivity and participatory approaches in all steps of the project.
- FWRM had recruited Research Advisors to provide expert guidance to the project, whilst ensuring the research project was conducted and produced in house by the Research Team. Although this was not part of the initial proposal, FWRM saw merits in having expert guidance to ensure project is meaningfully completed.
- The scope of the project changed during the implementation phase, as there was recognition of findings. This led to the piloting of Training of Trainers for Community information session and reprogramming of activities to better understand women’s access to justice in Maritime areas.
- Through the project FWRM has been able to build and maintain partnerships with formal justice sector agencies, National Women’s Machinery, support service providers and community based organisations.

Deployment

- The project maintained proper consolidation and analysis of data between stakeholders to mainstream needs with constituency based data. For example, FWRM analysed data from formal justice sector agencies as well as support service providers.
- Through the consistent gathering and analysis of data, FWRM produced trend analysis of Sexual Violence against Women and Girls Rape case trend analysis 2016-2018.
- The research findings made recommendations to various agencies, which has been acknowledged and are gradually being achieved. For

example the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution produces sex-disaggregated data, Family Law Judgments are anonymised and made publically available.

- The project recognized FWRM’s role as a renowned organization working in the area of evidence based advocacy for legislative change.

Assessment and Refinement

- The project had a strong methodology in terms of being evidence based, for example, the community information session used findings from the research project to advocate for the improvement of women’s access to justice.
- The project took into account best practices in ensuring the messaging around the issue of women’s access to justice is understood within the communities. This was done through conducting community information sessions in vernacular languages.
- FWRM re-strategised the community information session by conducting familiarization visits to the CBOs to better understand the work of the CBOs and build relations and subsequently piloted the Training of Trainers to ensure that there is a greater reach of the information within the communities.
- The project reflected strong ethical approaches taken by FWRM in completion of the project. For example, a high level of confidentiality was maintained in handling the sensitive information gathered through the project.

Results

- The project provided FWRM an opportunity to analyse data from not only formal justice sector agencies and service providers but also from women themselves in terms of their experiences with the formal justice sector agencies This led to the key finding that on average women experience violence for 868 days before seeking assistance.

- Through the successful fulfillment of the recommendation made by the research project, Fiji is now the only country in the Pacific to have anonymized Family Law Judgments.
- The project highlighted that Fiji is a forerunner in publishing cases on PacLii maintaining high levels of transparency of judgments.
- The project highlighted best practices in handling sensitive access to justice

cases with diverse backgrounds. The research project discussed 5 case studies, which have set precedents for future litigation in the area of women’s access to justice.

- A 2 minute animated video was produced which captured the essence of the research and increased awareness of the audience on accessing formal justice.

Recommendations for FWRM:

- FWRM to consider strengthening its Communication team. To specifically identify, classify and target in terms of information gathering, sharing and pushing out short videos, info graphs and results dashboards for FWRM.
- A formal data analytics team be developed and trained
- FWRM an opportunity to train and develop its set of advisors in certain key areas and regularly expose them to regional projects
- Opportunity to become a trend setter in terms of establishing a library of best practices in research methodologies for other Pacific Islands to follow when implementing their own projects.
- As part of the stakeholder management plan, working with Sub-grantees may become a priority
- For FWRM to establish a stakeholder management team
- FWRM may consider putting in place a stakeholder engagement framework with its guiding documents to ensure that stakeholder engagements are consistent through project to project.
- FWRM would benefit in identifying certain areas of engagement for different types of consultations. Face to face. Small Group. Full Public or targeted.
- There is a further opportunity for FWRM to consider establishing an issue register to that it can register all issues it faces on its engagement activities and it can collate this and sort and classify.



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Evaluation was conducted by Nacuva Consulting.

¹ European Foundation for Quality Management. (2013). EFQM Excellence Model. Brussels: EFQM.