Executive Summary: Evaluation of the BIRTH Fiji Community Strengthening Program

Date: 30 June 2025

Project Code: MMT-CSP

Evaluator: Wati Kanawale

Executive Summary

Introduction

This is the final evaluation of the "**BIRTH Fiji Community Strengthening Program" –** a pilot project initiated by BIRTH Fiji and funded by Mary MacKillop Today (MMT). The project's aim was to deliver capacity building programme in two disadvantaged communities in Lautoka, Fiji. The project was implemented for a period of one year, from 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 with a budget of FJD$75,000.

Brief Project Background

BIRTH Fiji through the **Community Strengthening Program** organised and carried out a scoping and social needs analysis in two selected communities – Tomuka and Koroipita prior to the start of the project. The outcome of the analysis revealed that in the two communities – leadership, gender (including gender-based violence), positive parenting, substance abuse and waste management were some of the key issues which community members needed more information on. These formed the basis of the final workshop topics which were developed, finalised and delivered by two experienced training facilitators and monitored by the BIRTH Fiji project team.

The main objective of the project was to equip participants with knowledge and skills to better manage their personal lives, support their families, and engage meaningfully with their communities.

At the end of the program implementation an evaluation was initiated to assess the outcome of the program and whether it delivered its intended outputs and achieved its expected outcomes considering content relevance and effectiveness, workshop delivery, participant engagement and overall project effectiveness and impact on target groups.

Aligning to the assessment of the overall project effectiveness, the evaluation also focused on the review of the project design phase, examining the processes followed leading up to the implementation of activities and highlight the outcome and impact on the two communities.

The objective of the evaluation is two-fold as follows:

- Impact of the delivery of project activities on the mental health well-being of participants and if they have been able to hone new skills and increased knowledge on topics covered during the workshop; and
- Assess the relevance of the workshop topics and evaluate workshop delivery and engagement.

The evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach with its internal and external stakeholders throughout the process. The methods used to collect information and data for this evaluation process included a desk review of project documents and reports, the use of survey, one on one interviews with participants and key project stakeholders and observations. The major limitations encountered during the evaluation process included the unavailability of participants and external stakeholders to undertake the survey. Extended timelines were given to participants and also external stakeholders to ensure sufficient data were gathered for analysis.

Main Findings

A social needs assessment was carried out in the two pilot communities – Tomuka and Koroipita to gather information that would enable BIRTH Fiji to gather information about its background and community members. The outcome of this assessment resulted in the development of a total of 8 workshop topics delivered in the 2 communities. The evaluation was carried out to assess the following component of the project:

1. Content Relevance and Effectiveness.
2. Workshop Delivery.
3. Participant Engagement.
4. Assess Overall Project Effectiveness.

A review of the overall project design and implementation process was undertaken to gauge the overall project effectiveness. The following findings were made:

1. The timeline of project implementation was not aligned to the planned activities laid out in its multi-year work plan.

2. The project logical framework did not provide a clear flow and linkage of the project's objectives, its outputs, and the anticipated results.
3. The social assessment findings and the data collection method revealed loopholes in the processes undertaken and the sample data used from the two communities.
4. There was a clear lack collaboration efforts carried out with its external stakeholders therefore making it difficult to establish if there were support provided from relevant authorities.
5. Strengthening referral pathways was raised as an important need from participants and highlighted in the course facilitators report.
6. The resourcing of project staff to undertake project activities effectively in the community was also noted as a need for the project to establish and ensure funding is made available for support staff.
7. Diversifying the target groups under the project was highlighted through participant interviews and the course facilitator's report calling for workshops delivered to include other members of the community.

Conclusion and Recommendations

At the end of the evaluation process, there were a few points that were identified as being important as follows:

Conclusion 1: Scoping of new project sites

Recommendations

Tomuka could be considered as a site to be covered again in the next phase. There is a need to for BIRTH Fiji to develop and expand its stakeholders and include them in the project scoping phase.

Conclusion 2: Strengthening existing partnership and building new relationships

Recommendations

In the next phase BIRTH Fiji is encouraged to strengthen its relationship with its key stakeholders – government organisation, non-government organisations, and other partners

who operate in the same space. There is also a need to strengthen the existing stakeholder plan developed in the current phase.

Conclusion 3: Strengthening Referral Pathway

Recommendations

Referrals pathways to be strengthened and developed in the next phase and identifying the type of needs that will arise as a result of the workshop topics that will be delivered in the next phase.

Conclusion 4: Reconstructing the project model to account for the need of the community as a whole

Recommendations

The development of workshop programmes to have an inclusive approach and coverage of other categories of participants that exists in the communities. Collaborating with stakeholders is very important as they can support in the delivery of training in the community.

Conclusion 5: Strengthening the project design document for the next phase

Recommendations

The project team will require assistance in setting up their design document in the next phase. The donor will need to work with the project and/or hire a consultant to provide this support to the team.

Conclusion 6: Resourcing of Project Staff to undertake project activities effectively in the community

Recommendations

Project staff will need to be properly resourced in order for the project activities to be delivered successfully in the communities. Ensuring that the teams wellbeing and safety are also considered and resources are made available to support these needs for the team.