



Closure Report

Project Name:	Countering Misinformation and Hate Speech Related to COVID-19 in Fiji.
Governing Body:	International Republican Institute
Executive Sponsor:	United State of America Aid
Project Manager:	Viliame Qio
Date:	26/08/21
Partners	Fiji Council of Social Services and Ministry

Purpose: The purpose of the Project Closure report is to formally close this project and authorize the handoff from project to operations. It include final information about the project deliverables, scope, milestones and budget, as well as lessons learned.

1. Project Description

International Republican Institute (IRI) is a US-based nonprofit, nonpartisan, organization dedicated to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide, partnered with Diabetes Fiji Inc to counter misinformation and hate speech that may arise related to COVID 19 fear. Accessing to reliable information during the global pandemic, understanding how it is spread and citizens feeling confident they know how to prevent the disease are the best way to accomplish this mission.

If people are hesitant to get tested because of stigma, the spread of COVID-19 will proliferate and can endanger the lives of everyone, especially those that are additionally marginalized such as women and people with disabilities. Stigma around COVID-19 may also discourage marginalized groups, including at-risk individuals, from participation in political and public life.

Activities focus for this project includes:-

- Identifying misinformation and disinformation related to COVID-19 for purposes of mass dissemination;
- Identifying at-risk communities that may suffer from stigmas associated with testing positive for COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the virus;
- Developing and utilizing resources focused on educating Fijians on digital literacy;

- Conducting online and in-person trainings to educate Fijians on how information can be manipulated for malicious intent;
- Creating printed materials, or producing videos, movies, clips, or other multi-media to counter fake claims on ways to contract and spread COVID-19;
- Creating online resources to disseminate correct information around the transmission of the virus and proper safety measures;
- Supporting unity advocacy campaigns countering hate speech during the pandemic to promote harmony across communities and/or;
- Influencing governments leaders to mitigate stigmas against those who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the virus.

2. Scope Statement

1. Identifying misinformation and disinformation related to COVID 19 and correcting it by creating short video on awareness and interview video with WHO or MOHMS personnel to correct the misinformation. The information will be uploaded to media platform to reach out to the general Fijian population.

Video on personal reflection of person tested with covid 19 stigma and hate speech he faced

These misinformation includes:-

- a. The virus cannot survive long in Fiji because of the humid environment it will destroy the virus
 - b. People visiting Suva or main cities are likely to carry virus
 - c. Hot ginger tea taken every morning before breakfast kills the virus
 - d. If you have signs and symptoms present to your nearest health facilities.
 - e. Myth surrounding Covid 19 vaccine
2. Conduct outreach to the at risk communities that may suffer from stigma associated with testing positive for COVID 19.
 - a. The Waiyavi community where case no 1 resides. Case no 1 was a victimize in social media for transmitting virus to 7 others members who he associated with after returning from abroad.
 - b. The community of Soasoa, Labasa where case no 9 resides. Case no 9 was victimize for transmitting virus to 5 other member.
 - c.
 3. Conduct a one day training to Civil Society leaders, Faith Based organization, Corporates OHS officers,

3. Project Accomplishments

Activity 1:

Milestones	Deadline	Activity	Report
1	30 th April, 2021	<p>Development of 30seconds video on hate speech .</p> <p>As DF is collaborating with MOHMS, discussion on second video must focus on misinformation, and the area which the MOHMS wanted the focus to be on is correcting misinformation of vaccine to address the covid 19 pandemic</p>	<p>March:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. planning of video 2. interview with case no one on issues of discrimination faced by public 3. drafting of scripts <p>April:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Production of video
		Video loaded on social media	<p>In an effort to address hate speech directed to people tested with covid 19., the video was produced to bring peace and harmony and ensure that people tested positive are accepted in the society.</p> <p>In the loading of the video has come In conjunction with the second wave of local transmission and detection of the new variant B6167 in the country. The local transmission has created a lot of hate speech and discrimination to people tested positively resulting in people been reluctant to come forward for testing due to the stigma.</p> <p>The video upon its loaded has reached 28407, 4147 link clicks in day 1.</p>
	12 th May	Follow up with MOHMS on second video	Video been produced

	6 th June	Follow up with MOHMS on second video	Stay have been isolated after positive cases detected in the EOC team
	14 th June	Video produced	Loaded on Ministry site.
	28 th July	Video loaded on DF	Shared on the DF Instagram and media pages

Project Report:

The video was developed after interview with cases no 1. A 25year old Itaukei male serving the Fiji Airways Airline as steward contracted Covid 19 on the 12th of March 2020 on his return flight from Los Angeles, USA. The patients was faced with stigma and discrimination from not only the general community but from government leaders, front liners and general public. The impact it made to the patients led him to have depression and suicidal thoughts. This was only improved after the patient was referred for professional counseling.

Video 1: Countering hate speech on people test positive of covid 19

Link Clicks 10,055

Reach 59,215

Cost Per Link Click \$0.00

Ad Rating
Are you satisfied with this ad?
No Yes

Activity

- Post Engagement: 29282
- 3-Second Video Plays: 18709
- Link Clicks: 10055
- Post Reactions: 466
- Post Shares: 39
- Post Comments: 11
- Post Saves: 2

Details

- Status: Completed
- Goal: Get more website visitors
- Total budget: \$62.00
- Duration: 5 days

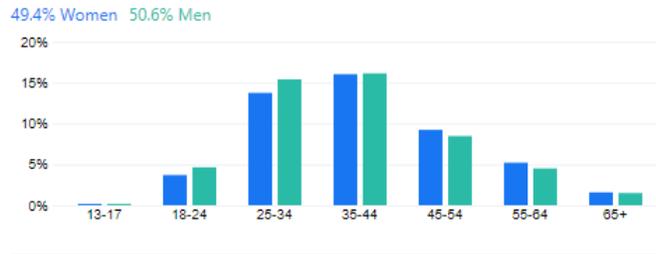
See All ▾

Preview

Audience

This ad reached 59,215 people in your audience.

People Placements Locations



Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/DiabetesFijiInc/videos/976845689727354>

Video 2: Countering misinformation on covid 19

The video focus on the misinformation of covid 19 vaccine. The biggest drawback of the vaccine campaign are people especially Christians not taking vaccine because of the belief and the ideology that the vaccine is anti-Christ mark on people.

\$10.52 spent over 3 days.

Messaging Conversations Started

12

Reach

8,831

Cost Per Messaging Conversation... \$0.88

Activity

Post Engagement

2255

3-Second Video Plays

1523

Link Clicks

634

Post Reactions

69

Post Comments

18

Messaging Conversations Started

12

Post Shares

9

See All

Preview

Countering Misinformation and Hate Speech Related to COVID 19 in Fiji



View Ad

Edit Ad

Details

Status Active



Goal Get more messages

Total budget \$45.00

Duration 9 days

See All

Preview

Countering misinformation on covid 19



View Ad

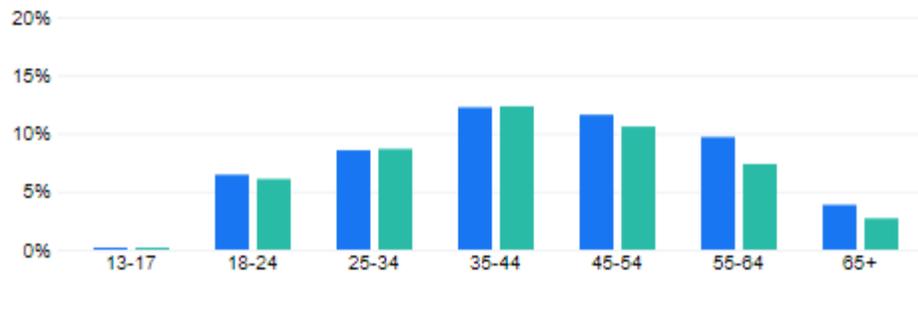
Edit Ad

Audience

This ad reached 8,831 people in your audience.

People Placements Locations

52.3% Women 47.7% Men



Link to the site:

[Instagram video by Diabetes Fiji • Aug 3, 2021 at 3:29 AM](#)

MILESTONE 2:

Project Report:

The closure of boarder has restricted travelling resulted in delay of our activity 2. The proposed activity was to conduct a community outreach to the communities and provides counseling support and gathers information for our submission to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

The community outreach was postponed with the intention that the boarder will be opened in a months' time. Unfortunately with the continuous rise in the Covid cases this was not possible. Discussion was made if this outreach could be conducted virtually.

Several attempts were made to secure a meeting with the Labasa community and the Waiyavi community delayed the activity due to personal commitment by our target audience (case 1 and case 5).

Milestones	Deadline	Activity	Report
2	30 th June, 2021	Community outreach	This has been delayed because boarders are still closed and we are unable to visit the community
	20 rd July		After discussion the possible way to advance with the community outreach is to conduct it virtually. Proposed 14 th
	26 th July		Staffs are in isolation
	2 nd August		All attempt to reach our target audience were unsuccessful
	13 August		Still unable to reach the target audience in Labasa
	24 August		Meetings were conducted through conference call and zoom

On 24th August we were then able to meet with our communities. Cases no.5 we were only able to speak to Mr Mohammed and his wife, unfortunately other members refused to be included due to continuous vilifications by the Ministry of Health, Police (frontliners) and Medias. These resulted in community stigmatizing the family. Due to the level of knowledge on zoom and other virtual platforms of communications, we are only able to do conference calls as requested by Mr Mohammed (Case 5) with a Fijian of an Indian decent as a mediator. We were able to gather many information and also provided counseling support.

As for Mr Soko Detroit and his family, we were able to conduct zoom meeting and also provided counseling support.

The zoom meeting was joined by a counselor from the Empower Pacific, a Medical Officer working with the Covid 19 patients, and the Project staffs of Diabetes Fiji Inc.

Issues rose:

1. Hate speech directed from those at higher positions
2. Lack of awareness resulting in many confusions and poor care. People were in panic as a result they were isolated with very little care and support.

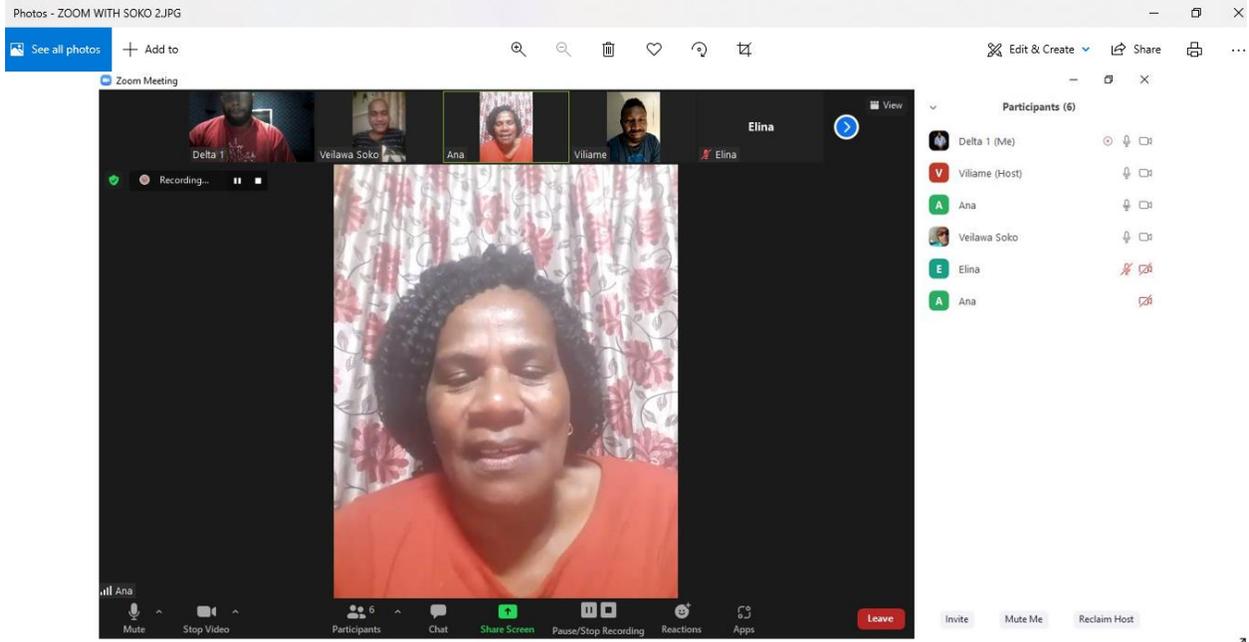
3. Lack of support from the communities and the general public. People did not wish to associate with them or disregarded them completely.
4. Stigmatizing by the general Fijian. These includes:-
 - a. Getting chased from public transports
 - b. Public transport such as taxis refuse to take them
 - c. Words of mouths spreads resulting in patients been labeled, ridiculed, sabotaged and even victimized by front liners
 - d. People refuse to buy produce and fishes from case no.5
 - e. Family of case no.5 were laid off from work
 - f. No psychological support provided, as a result the cases no. 5 undergo suicidal thoughts
 - g. Attitude of medical staffs were unprofessional and patients were continued to be victimized.
5. Quarantine facility were not well kept and equipped therefore patients had to travel to and fro Nadi and Lautoka to do shopping and gather beddings

Way forward:

1. Counseling support was provided to both cases
2. A submission will be drafted to be forwarded to Covid management team of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. The submission included:
 - a. More awareness of the virus
 - b. Protection of people tested positive with covid 19
 - c. To criminalize those that stigmatize or post or say hate speech
 - d. Develop a Standard of Procedure with the Ministry of Health to ensure there are proper care given at the quarantine facility
 - e. Map other Civil Society Organizations that provide services such as ration, medical, counseling to collaborate with the Governments front liners and provide more synergies.
 - f. Modify the registration form to include family contact or close relative contact which can include neighbors etc that can provide support such as shopping or baby sitting, house supervision when people are taken into isolation. The psychological effect of all this has added adverse effect on people with covid 19 and especially if they are also living with other co morbidities such as Diabetes etc.

In conclusion the Ministry of Health has promised to work with Diabetes Fiji especially in the area of pre, intra and post care for people tested positive with covid. The Ministry of Health has always recognized Diabetes Fiji as Diabetes Fiji has been as advocate for People living with Diabetes, this has resulted in major improvement of care and recognition of People living with Diabetes in the development of protocols, standard of Procedures in the Ministry. A saying goes “Nothing about us with out us”. Along this wave line the management team is aware that the project team will be forwarding a submission.

Evidences of meeting:



We conducted conference call with Labasa covid case as he did not have any facebook or social media account neither familiar with zoom etc.

Our conference call included a medical staff, counselor, a project officer working with Northern Medical division, and project team



Activity 3:

The advocacy meeting was conducted prior to the activity 2 because the country was again hit with the second wave of community transmission and cases were drastically increasing. As identified last year many of people tested positive with Covid were not able to access continuity of care because of stigma

and discrimination also many health services were closed. There were many misinformation regarding cure of the virus and many Fijian especially those living with commodities such and Diabetes were high risk of hospitalization and death. Areas identified were continuity of care such as accessing medications, discussing condition, educating people on covid 19, provision of counseling support, provision of ration and transport of medication to people tested with covid 19 and are in isolations.

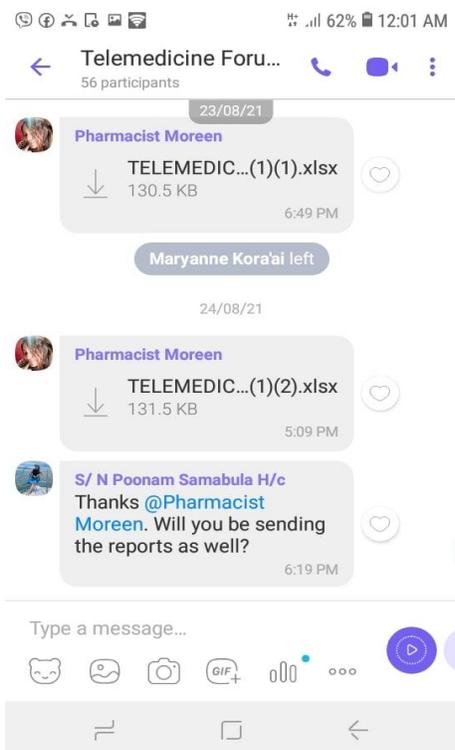
The meeting was chaired by the Head of Wellness Unit, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Dr Devina, World Health Organization, Dr Mareta, Project Officers in the divisions, FRIENDS Fiji, Medical Service Pacific, Fiji Cancer Society, Empower Pacific, Pacific Eye Institute, Cure Kids Fiji, and Diabetes Fiji. Diabetes Fiji was able to put a Standard of Procedure that was approved by Permanent Secretary of Health which resulted in the establishment of telehealth helpline 165.

Evidence:



zoom meeting conducted on the 26th of June.

Milestone achievement: set up of the helpline 165. Below is the viber chat group of all the support bodies (govt and CSOs) behind the 165. As of today 26/08/21, we been able to reach out to more than 200 positive cases needing support, this are only those needing assistance of medications many have accessed this numbers and data are been compiled by the Ministry of Health.



Reaching out to Positive Patients in isolation to provide chronic condition medications.

Activity 2:

1. Project Milestones

Milestone	Target Date	Completed Date
Activity 1: two videos to be created to reach 4000 fijians. A total of 18,831 Fijians reached	20/04/21	14/06/21

Activity 2: community outreach to two communities. The outreach was conducted virtually. Psychological support and counseling was provided to Positive cases	30/06/21	25/08/21
Activity 3: An advocacy meeting to conducted. This was conducted earlier than activity two as we were not expecting second wave to hit very early and more aggressive than last year. The success of this activity was the set up of telehealth helpline 165 to ensure covid 19 patients are not discriminated and fijians are able to call for virtual education on covid 19	31/07/21	26/07/21

2. Financial Summary

Project Costs	Project Budget	Project Actuals
Activity 1	\$2000.00	Awaiting Payment
Activity 2	\$2000.00	Awaiting Payment
Activity 3	\$1000.00	Awaiting Payment
Other		

3. Transfer to Operations

Diabetes Fiji will be working with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services on submission made from Patients tested positive with Covid to improve care, and awareness.

4. Lessons Learned

1. Assign a responsible person to be contact person within the Ministry of Health in regards to the project. This resulted in many miscommunications especially in the production of second video, as it was delayed.
2. Secondly strengthening our divisional partners that can assist in community outreach. We had to wait hoping the travel restriction will be normalize unfortunately it did not therefore the activity was conducted virtually after been postponed twice.

5. Project Manager Comments

The project was made very much impact especially in terms of improving of care and lobbying to leaders in the government. The Production of our video on hate speech and discrimination saw leaders delivering messages to combat hate speech. The video was send to Ministry of Health before it was loaded. The second video saw on misinformation of vaccine saw message responses and many privately messaged to enquire on the vaccine. Our activity two meeting with positive cases was an eye opener to many issues faced by people tested positive with covid and Diabetes Fiji and Ministry of Health will be working together

to ensure that awareness and care are improved. The activity three was the advocacy meeting that resulted in the set up of telehealth helpline in the central division 165. Many called for information regarding covid especially to those living with chronic conditions.

Lastly we wish to thank International Republican Institute (IRI) and Fiji Council of Social Services in having for awarding Diabetes Fiji with the project.

Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in activity 2 and part of activity 1 as the second wave made huge impact on our service deliveries and also as front liners many became positive of the virus delaying many works within the Ministry of Health Covid team and Diabetes Fiji,

6. Project Completion Acceptance

Project Role	Name	Signature (Electronic is acceptable)	Date
Executive Sponsor	Ms Elenoa Fuli		
Chair- DFI	Mr Taabish Akbar		26/08/21
Project Manager- DFI	Viliame Qio		26/08/21