

# TRAINING SUPPORT TO THE FIJIAN SUGARCANE INDUSTRY PROJECT

# IMPACT STORIES



## **About the European Union**

The European Union is an economic and political partnership between 28 European countries. It plays an important role in international affairs through diplomacy, trade, development aid and working with global organisations. Abroad, the European Union is represented through more than 140 diplomatic representations, known also as European Union Delegations, which have a similar function to those of an embassy. The European Union Delegation to Fiji, promotes the local projection of an image of the European Union that correctly reflects facts, policies, statements and decisions taken by the European Union.



## MESSAGE FROM **HIS EXCELLENCY MR ANDREW JACOBS**

HEAD OF DELEGATION AND  
AMBASSADOR OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE PACIFIC

On behalf of the European Union, I congratulate the Australia-Pacific Technical College on the achievements of our partnership in the EUR 4 million (FJD 9.4 million) *'Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project'*, implemented in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia.

The project, financed under the European Union's Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Programme, aims to *'improve the livelihood of the sugar cane dependent population by promoting income generation through sugar cane farming or alternative livelihoods'*.

Thanks to the project, since 2014, over 1,600 farmers, mill workers, administrative staff and industry managers, including over 210 females have completed Australian standard qualifications and skill sets as well as non-accredited workshops in areas such as welding, metal fabrication, electrotechnology, electrician, diesel fitting, fitting and machining, safety, project management, communication, business management and leadership. The new skills acquired will not only improve the employability of those trained, but will also bolster the productivity of institutions such as the Ministry of Sugar, Fiji Sugar Corporation, Sugar Research Institute of Fiji and the overall sugar industry.

In addition, the project responded in an innovative way to the dramatic consequences of Tropical Cyclone Winston by introducing a Certificate II in Construction course. Thirty-

three students from the sugarcane belt, including displaced mill workers, were offered an opportunity to acquire new skills whilst constructing forty homes for families in western Viti Levu whose houses were destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Winston. The Australia-Pacific Technical College partnered with Habitat for Humanity Fiji, which played an important technical role throughout the construction process. Habitat for Humanity Fiji was also a recipient of the European Union support under the 2010 Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol's 'Social Mitigation' Programme that constructed homes, which withstood the devastating effects of Tropical Cyclone Winston.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College project is part of the longstanding assistance that the European Union has provided to the sugar sector in Fiji, worth about EUR 50 million (FJD 117.5 million) to date. EUR 10 million (FJD 23.5 million) has also been made available in 2016 to help recovery of the agriculture and the sugar sectors after Tropical Cyclone Winston. For the future, the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund includes an envelope of EUR 20 million (FJD 47 million) to support the agriculture and sugar sector reform in Fiji.

To conclude, I encourage the continuation of the good work of the Australia-Pacific Technical College and partners, working hand in hand to respond to capacity and skills needs throughout Fiji's sugar industry.



MESSAGE FROM  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS AND TRADE**

**HER EXCELLENCY MS MARGARET TWOMEY**  
AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO FIJI

Recognising the high demand for a skilled and a capable workforce in the Pacific, the Australian Government is very pleased to be supporting the Australia-Pacific Technical College and technical education across the region.

Education is one of the main priorities of Australia's aid program because education opens up opportunities and develops more capable, stable and productive societies.

Through the Australia-Pacific Technical College, the Australian Government is providing greater access for Pacific Islanders to attain internationally-recognised trade and service qualifications. We are contributing to Pacific countries' ambitions to develop their workforces and improve employment opportunities for their people domestically, regionally and internationally.

I am pleased that Australia's partnership with the European Union, through a delegated cooperation arrangement, has been successful in directly helping Fijians in the sugar belt areas, as demonstrated by these success stories. This work has been particularly important in the wake of the destruction caused by Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016. I am proud of the contribution the Australia-Pacific Technical College has made to assist the ongoing recovery efforts.

One of the Australia-Pacific Technical College's strengths is its ability to partner with government ministries, educational institutions, the private sector and NGOs to deliver training that is in demand and will result in a better employment outcome for the graduate. In that respect, the Fiji Sugar Corporation and Habitat for Humanity Fiji should be acknowledged for their partnership with the Australia-Pacific Technical College in the effort to upskill those affected by the closure of the Penang Mill, and other issues affecting the sugar industry and Fiji's sugarcane growers.

I thank the graduates who shared their stories and wish them well in their future endeavours. I am pleased that the Australian Government's support of the Australia-Pacific Technical College has played some part in helping to make their achievements possible.

I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Australia-Pacific Technical College staff who pass on their knowledge and skills with great professionalism and passion.

I hope you enjoy reading these testimonials about the lasting difference that learning makes in individual lives.





MESSAGE FROM  
**AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

**MS DENISE O'BRIEN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

At the Australia-Pacific Technical College, success extends beyond the number of men and women who gain internationally recognised qualifications. In a region where relationships matter, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has embraced a partnering approach to successfully deliver the outcomes for the European Union Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project. This project has used multiple partnerships: firstly, between the European Union and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade who in turn engaged the Australia-Pacific Technical College to deliver the training.

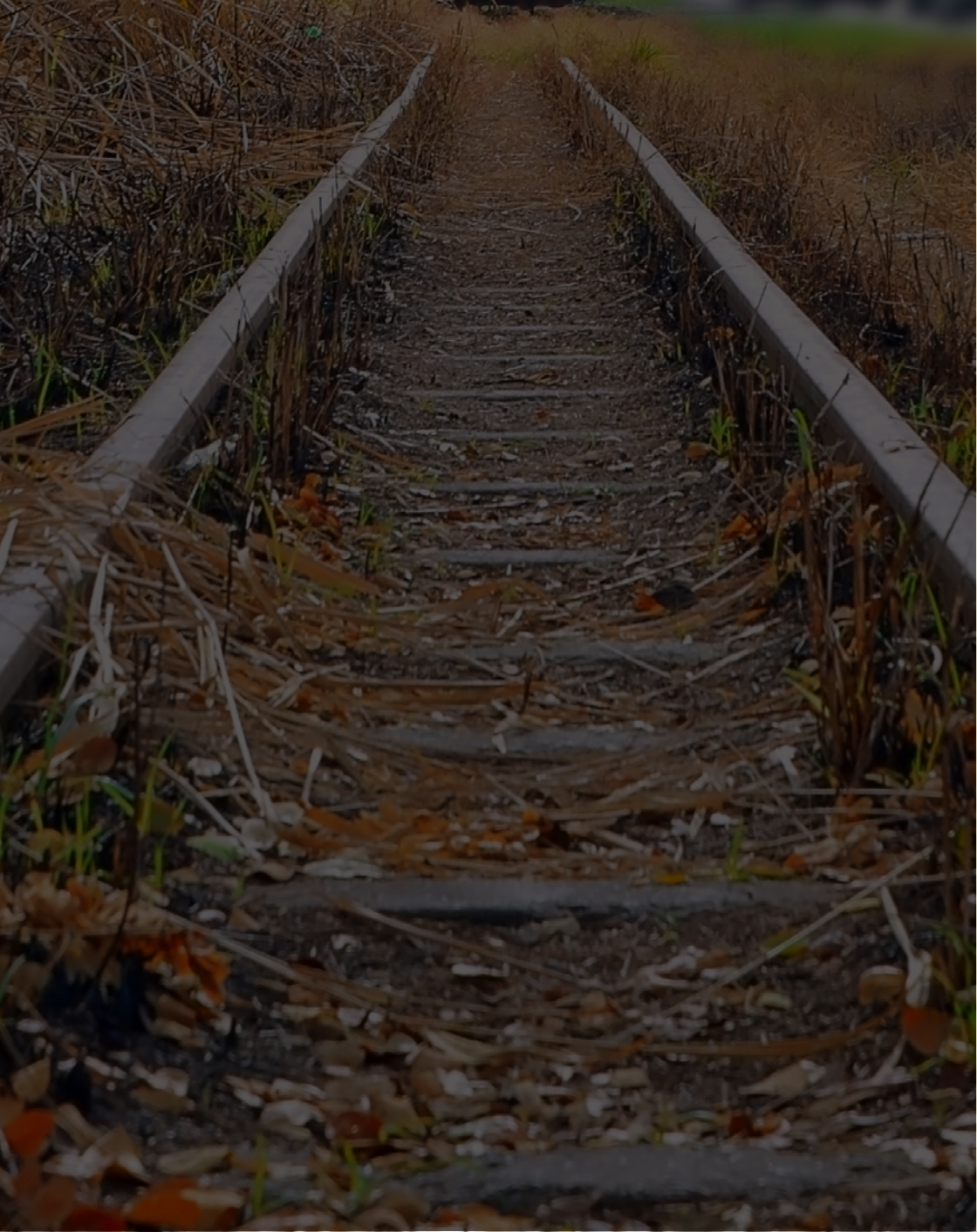
Similarly, Australia-Pacific Technical College has developed local partnerships with Habitat for Humanity Fiji, Fiji Sugar Corporation, Leader Farmers and other sugar industry stakeholders. The strength of these partnerships has enabled the project to exceed the 1500 people targeted for training across 24 accredited qualifications and skill sets and non-accredited workshops.

A skilled, qualified and capable workforce is integral to the success of any industry but success is also measured by the lasting impact of the difference that learning can make in the lives of individuals and the workplaces where they are employed.

This collection of stories highlights the impact of learning achieved by the Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project. There are many more stories of success that could have been told, that could have been highlighted in this document. The process of selecting the stories to be told was not an easy one. I wish to extend my gratitude to all those who so willingly shared their stories and gave their time to allow the writers to conduct interviews and research.

On behalf of all at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I hope you enjoy reading these stories. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to enhance opportunities for the sugar sector in Fiji.





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# TRAINING SUPPORT TO THE FIJIAN SUGARCANE INDUSTRY







# ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2014, the European Union signed an agreement of delegated cooperation with the Australian Government for the implementation of the Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project, complementing the Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Programme. The project aimed at improving the livelihoods of the sugarcane dependent population by promoting income generation through sugarcane farming or supplementary livelihoods. Given the European Union sugar preferential pricing system ends in October 2017, Fiji will enter a more competitive global market. The Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project focused on enhancing human resource capacity and complemented the efforts of all the stakeholders to strengthen the competitiveness of the sugarcane sector. The European Union contributed EUR 4 million (FJD 9.4 million) towards the implementation of the project. The Australian Government engaged the Australia-Pacific Technical College to deliver vocational education and training. Through the project, the Australia-Pacific Technical College engaged with sugar industry stakeholders to ensure the training delivered addressed skills gaps in the Fiji sugarcane industry.

TRAINING  
SUPPORT TO THE  
**FIJIAN**  
SUGARCANE  
INDUSTRY PROJECT

**1,600+**

TOTAL PEOPLE  
TRAINED

**210+**

TOTAL FEMALES  
TRAINED

**450+**

FULLY ACCREDITED  
QUALIFICATIONS

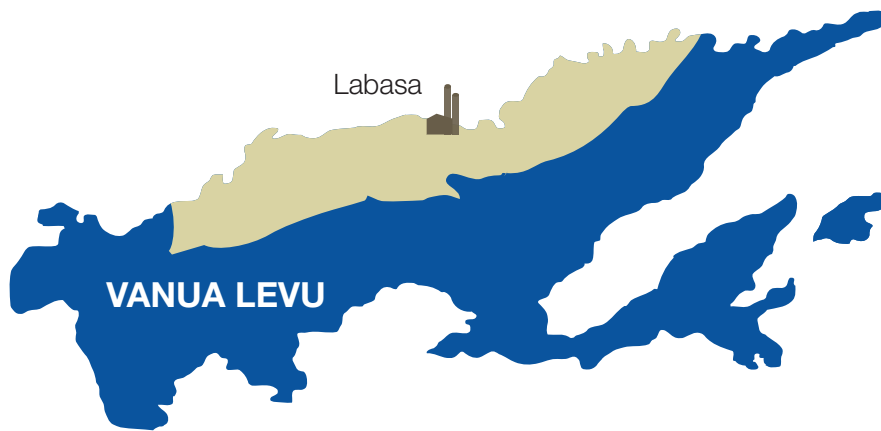
**600+**

ACCREDITED  
SKILL SETS

**1,000+**

NON-ACCREDITED  
SHORT COURSES





# FIJIAN SUGARCANE INDUSTRY STATISTICS



PEOPLE  
DEPENDENT ON  
INDUSTRY

**200,000**



**16,503**  
FARMERS  
IN FIJI

**3**  
SUGAR MILLS

FSC  
EMPLOYEES  
**2,100**



**39,000<sup>ha</sup>**  
LAND  
USED FOR SUGARCANE  
FARMING



SUGARCANE  
HARVESTED  
IN 2016 SEASON

**1,387,034<sup>tns</sup>**



SUGAR  
PRODUCED  
IN 2016 SEASON

**139,502<sup>tns</sup>**



**2.2%**  
GDP CONTRIBUTION  
TO FIJIAN ECONOMY

# IMPROVING SKILLS

The sugarcane industry is an important sector of the Fijian economy, with an estimated 200,000 people dependent on the industry.

Given the significance of this industry in Fiji, improving the capacity of the Fiji Sugar Corporation and support agencies has been a major focus of the European Union funded Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project. To implement this project, the European Union partnered with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade who engaged the Australia-Pacific Technical College to deliver the training.

The industry training has resulted in over 800 employees of Fiji Sugar Corporation and over 100 employees of support agencies receiving training in the areas of business, communication, safety and trades in nine fully accredited qualifications, eight accredited skill sets and five non-accredited short-courses.

Fiji Sugar Corporation Chief Executive Officer, Mr Graham Clark said that it is very important for Fiji Sugar Corporation to have the right people to do the job, and the training that has been provided gives a very good platform for Fiji Sugar Corporation to build on and move forward.

“As we build our capacity with new investments in the factories, we have got to have the people to do the job. I think having well trained people with an opportunity for a good career in our sugar industry, will get us to where we are going,” he added.

Change in employee work ethics, better planning and execution of projects, and improved productivity have been some of the key outcomes of the training.

Fiji Sugar Corporation General Manager Human Resources, Mr Timoci Laqai, said that the impact of the training delivered through the project to Fiji Sugar Corporation employees is very visible.

“The improvement in knowledge and skills through the training has resulted in improved performance and productivity. The project motivates workers by recognising them as key members of the industry, and helps them to further enhance their skills to maximise their potential and output.”



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**800+**

FSC EMPLOYEES TRAINED

**100+**

SUPPORT AGENCIES EMPLOYEES TRAINED

**400**

FULLY ACCREDITED QUALIFICATIONS

**600**

ACCREDITED SKILL SETS

**200**

NON-ACCREDITED SHORT COURSES

# INNOVATION THROUGH TRAINING



Ms Agnes Rounds  
Fiji Sugar Corporation Ba Mill

Fiji Sugar Corporation employs over 2000 workers across its sugar mills on both Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. While the Fiji Sugar Corporation workforce is predominately male, the contribution of female employees is highly valued.

More than 60 females from the Fiji Sugar Corporation have been trained in nine different courses, receiving either full qualifications or accredited skill sets under the Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project.

Ms Agnes Rounds, an Industrial Nurse at Fiji Sugar Corporation Ba Mill since 2013, is one of the employees who benefitted from the training program.

In 2016, Ms Rounds graduated with a Certificate IV in Frontline Management and Certificate IV in Project Management Practice.

In her role as an Industrial Nurse, she is required to help keep the Ba Mill employees fit, healthy and safe at work. This involves identifying and helping mitigate potential health hazards in the workplace.

Ms Rounds believes the training has made her more aware of the importance of proper planning and people management to achieve organisational objectives.

“It gave me the confidence to innovate new things and I was able to speak boldly, and assist others if they needed my help,” she said.

By using an innovative approach and utilising resources that were easily accessible to her, Ms Rounds was able to establish an Information Centre with minimal set-up costs.

Today, the Information Centre located at the entrance of the Fiji Sugar Corporation Ba Mill serves as a directory for its workers and visitors to the site. It includes the organisational structure, a map indicating important locations, such as assembly points, first aid boxes and fire extinguishers, and the different departments at the mill.

“I remember the first day when I joined this organisation, I was lost because there were no directions for me. I was crossing the mill not knowing where I was going. After the training, I was able to come up with this project to help people who are new to the organisation to safely find their way around,” she said.

Ms Rounds has also implemented other small projects such as installing first aid kits around the mill and creating policy boards.

She hopes to continue implementing more projects to help improve accessibility and efficiencies at the Fiji Sugar Corporation Ba Mill.

“

It gave me the confidence to innovate new things and I was able to speak boldly, and assist others if they needed my help.

AGNES ROUNDS  
Industrial Nurse

”





Ms Vinita Prasad  
Fiji Sugar Corporation Lautoka Mill

For another Fiji Sugar Corporation employee, Ms Vinita Devi Prasad, the Australia-Pacific Technical College training has lifted the standard of her work.

“It has given me a boost in carrying out my work tasks and to be able to confidently speak to my colleagues, especially with males who are in leadership positions,” shared Ms Prasad, who joined the Fiji Sugar Corporation in 2012.

Ms Prasad graduated with a Certificate IV in Frontline Management and Certificate IV in Project Management Practice in 2016.

As a Shift Chemist, Ms Prasad is in charge of the laboratory at the Lautoka Mill. Her role is to manage the daily operations of production stations - from the time the sugarcane arrives at the mill until the production of sugar for export.

Ms Prasad explained that through the training, she has been able to improve her organisational skills.

“I did not plan my activities thoroughly. I just went ahead and carried out projects. The training provided me with the understanding on how to manage workloads and the best ways to efficiently conduct tasks with minimum time wastage,” she said.

One of the changes Ms Prasad has made after the training is to have a system of more regular meetings with her team. This has helped her to work more closely with her team members in meeting deadlines and completing projects within the given budgets.

“I can now say that I am able to deliver my message clearly to my workmates. I am flexible, tenable and adaptable to whatever situation comes my way,” she added.



# FIJI SUGAR CORPORATION GENERAL MANAGERS

An organisation will only grow if its people grow so the Fiji Sugar Corporation has benefitted in terms of our workers being upskilled through the European Union funded Australia-Pacific Technical College training. The employees are able to make sound decisions on their own with minimal instructions given to them.

**TAITO KAFOA**  
Ba Mill



We now have less repeat work and less breakdowns because people in the welding, fitting and the engineering areas are putting in quality work because they have been upskilled, resulting in a direct improvement in the mill operations.

**KARIA CHRISTOPHER**  
Labasa Mill



The highlights from the training for Fiji Sugar Corporation Lautoka Mill are that tradespeople are producing better quality work and the frontline supervisors are better managers of their teams.

**VILIAME SAVOU**  
Lautoka Mill



# TRAINED TRADESPEOPLE MAKE AN IMPACT



Mr Anitesh Kumar  
Fiji Sugar Corporation Labasa Mill

Fiji Sugar Corporation Labasa Mill General Manager, Mr Karia Christopher, believes there has been a marked improvement in the quality and efficiency of the work delivered by tradespeople at the Fiji Sugar Corporation Labasa Mill in Vanua Levu. He directly attributes this improvement to the training provided by the Australia-Pacific Technical College under the Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project.

Under the project, the Australia-Pacific Technical College delivered full Certificate III level qualifications in four main trade areas: Fabrication Trade, Electrotechnology Electrician, Diesel Fitting, and Fitting and Machining.

Mr Christopher believes the training provided to the mill's tradespeople has been very effective for two key reasons. Firstly, it has improved productivity and secondly, there has been an improvement in the quality of work being put into the engineering systems.

“We now have less repeat work and less breakdowns because people in the welding, fitting and the engineering areas are putting in quality work because they have been upskilled, resulting in a direct improvement in mill operations,” Mr Christopher explained.

He said in 2016, the Labasa Mill which employs almost 600 people during the crushing season, set a record for the least number of stoppages to operations.

“The standard of training delivered by Australia-Pacific Technical College is not available anywhere locally. They bring the standards for safety, equipment and procedures,” he said.

One of the Fiji Sugar Corporation Labasa Mill tradespeople to benefit from the training is Mr Anitesh Kumar, who graduated with a Certificate III in Electrotechnology qualification in 2016.

Mr Kumar, an Electrical Fitter by trade, was promoted to the position of Electrical Foreman after his training.

He attributes his career progression to his Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification, which made him the most qualified person, who had the desired skill set to fill the role of an Electrical Foreman.

The training provided was very relevant to Mr Kumar’s field of work and helped him realise the importance of maintaining standards to improve as a tradesperson.

“I used to disregard standards but that changed after the training. It has put me ahead of others at the workplace. When standards are drilled into the mindsets of all the tradespeople at the mills then the work carried out is easy for everyone,” he said.

Mr Kumar also takes an active role in ensuring proper operating standards are maintained by his co-workers.

“If my colleagues are doing something wrong then I help them correct their mistakes and explain what I was taught at the training so they can learn as well. If there is a common standard across the factory then it will be easy for everyone to know what is going on and the mill will run efficiently,” said Mr Kumar.

Mr Kumar believes that the training has helped him to become twice as good as an electrician, then he was previously and to contribute positively to the Fiji Sugar Corporation.

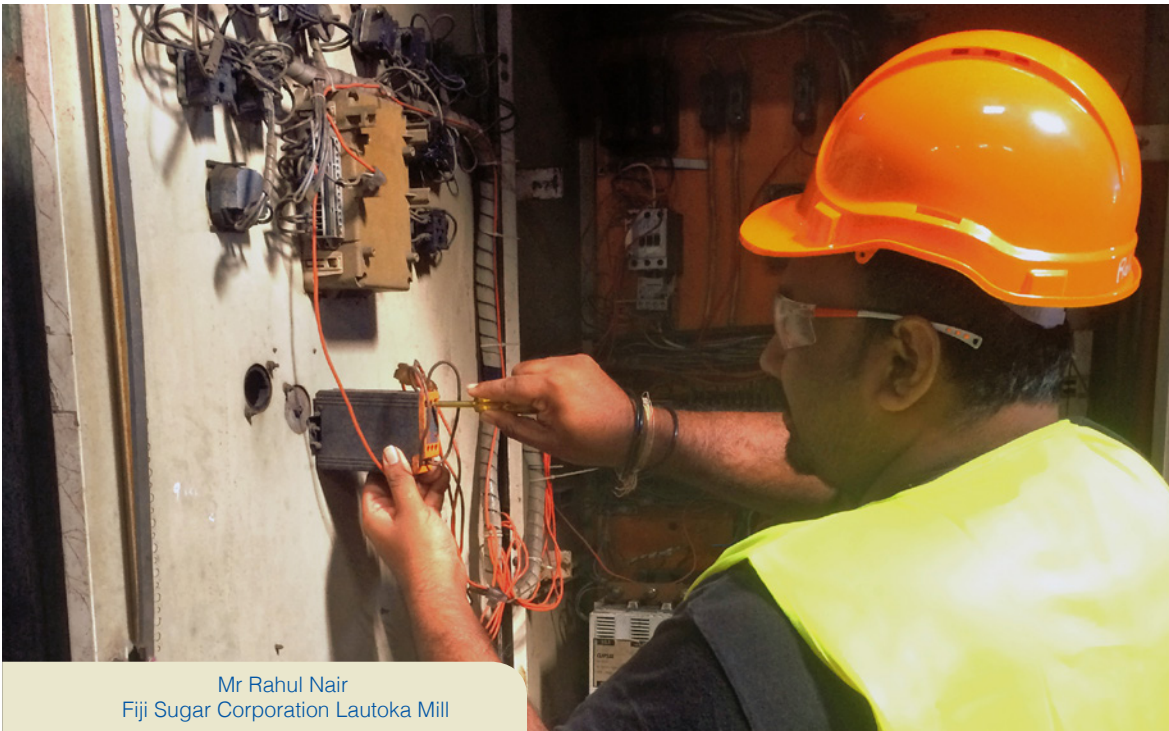
“

I used to disregard standards but that changed after the training. It has put me ahead of others at the workplace.

ANITESH KUMAR  
Electrical Foreman

”





Mr Rahul Nair  
Fiji Sugar Corporation Lautoka Mill

Mr Rahul Nair, who completed Certificate III in Electrotechnology, has been employed at the Fiji Sugar Corporation Lautoka Mill for 13 years.

Mr Nair started as an apprentice in Electronics Instrumentation Control in 2004, and is currently the Instrument and Control Foreman, with 13 other tradespeople working under his supervision. His role deals with the automation aspects of the Lautoka Mill

He believes the training provided by the Australia-Pacific Technical College was an eye-opener for him and his co-workers and it has come at a good time for Fiji Sugar Corporation tradespeople.

“The training in electrotechnology has helped me a lot, specifically in terms of working with standards. We used to work with old standards and had limited understanding of Occupational Health and Safety,” he explained.

“We learned how we can work safely and follow proper principles and procedures when working on electrical systems to avoid any Occupational Health and Safety issues. So the training was crucial in enlightening me to understand what is required by an Instrumentation Technician, with the resources we have and the procedures to be followed,” he added.

# SUGAR SUPPORT AGENCIES ADDING VALUE



Mr Sikeli Waqatakiwera  
Sugar Industry Tribunal

Support agencies like the Sugar Industry Tribunal, Sugar Research Institute of Fiji, Sugar Cane Growers Council, Sugar Cane Growers Fund and Cane Producers' Association play a key part in Fiji's sugar industry. These agencies were beneficiaries of the training delivered through the Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project.

Sugar Industry Tribunal Industrial Commissioner, Mr Timothy Brown, said the training has helped empower his staff, as many of them did not have higher-level qualifications.

“

I identified supervisors who I can work with to prepare cane quality budgets. This will help lighten my workload and also give mill supervisors some form of ownership.

SIKELI WAQATAKIREWA  
Cane Quality Manager

”



“When your staff are provided with the opportunity to upskill their knowledge, they become creative in their thinking and how they manage their work. Prior to the training, my staff did not have certain skills, such as using Microsoft Excel to prepare spreadsheets. The training has helped Sugar Industry Tribunal staff in this area, and it has also helped them to be able to make decisions on their own with less input or interference from me,” he said.

Sugar Industry Tribunal’s Cane Quality Manager, Mr Sikeli Baleitubou Waqatakirewa was one of the recipients of the training, having completed the Certificate IV in Frontline Management and the Certificate IV in Project Management Practice in 2016.

In his current role, Mr Waqatakirewa oversees the testing and implementation of the cane quality payment system across all the sugar mills in the country.

He said the training has helped add value to his work by enhancing his management skills to get better results from his team.

“A key thing we learned was the importance of involving our staff in the decision-making process. This helps to ensure that tasks are delegated based on their competencies.”

One of the changes that Mr Waqatakirewa implemented after his training was to identify potential Fiji Sugar Corporation staff who are competent in preparing budgets.

“I have identified supervisors who I can work with to prepare the cane quality project budgets. This will help lighten my workload and also give mill supervisors some form of ownership and responsibility for their mill spending.”

Mr Waqatakirewa said after the training he was also able to develop an inventory control system in his workplace.

He explained that with the implementation of the inventory control system, the Fiji Sugar Corporation mills that work under the cane quality project have a good recording system of all the items that are in stock, those that are used, and those that need to be ordered.



Ms Jyotika Prasad  
Sugar Research Institute of Fiji

Another support agency that has benefitted from the project is the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji. Seventeen Sugar Research Institute of Fiji employees were trained under the project.

One of whom was Ms Jyotika Prasad, Manager of the European Union Projects for the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji. She undertook the Certificate IV in Frontline Management. She said the training has benefitted her professionally and has influenced her view on gender equality.

“As a manager, I attend a lot of meetings with various industry stakeholders. In most of these meetings, I am the only female in the room. I used to find it a bit awkward but now I am more confident and I would like to encourage the

participation of more females in the sugar industry,” she added.

After attaining a formal qualification in project management, Ms Prasad hopes to further advance her qualification and work on bigger projects in the future.

Another Sugar Research Institute of Fiji employee, Mr Amit Singh graduated with a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management.

Mr Singh, who works as the Senior Scientific Officer, said the training provided him with relevant skills to be a better leader in his area, and added: “As a leader, you motivate and try to find a solution by identifying the cause of the problem.”

“Australia-Pacific Technical College is one of the best training institutions. I have seen the difference the training has made in my day-to-day work. The topics that they teach are relevant and the skills can be applied at the workplace,” he said.



Mr Amit Singh  
Sugar Research Institute of Fiji

# SHARING IMPROVED TECHNIQUES OF FARMING

Fijian sugarcane farmers make a significant contribution to the sugar sector with over 16,500 farmers utilising about 39,000 hectares of land for sugarcane farming. In 2016, sugarcane farmers harvested a combined 1,387,034 metric tonnes of sugarcane for the Fiji Sugar Corporation to produce 139,502 metric tonnes of sugar.<sup>1</sup>

Training of sugarcane farmers has been a key component of the European Union's Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project. Training has targeted Leader Farmers and Farm Advisory Officers.

The 'Leader Farmer' concept emerged out of a need to pass on technical information to assist sugarcane farmers with improved farming techniques. The Australia-Pacific Technical College training has leveraged off this earlier work and targeted Leader Farmers and Farm Advisory Officers for skills training to assist them to improve the skills of the sugarcane farmers in their established networks.

The training workshops were designed to improve the confidence of Leader Farmers and Farm Advisory Officers to more effectively run workshops to disseminate technical information.

Follow-up training using a similar approach was provided to assist Leader Farmers and Farm Advisory Officers to develop leadership skills and to work with other sugarcane farmers to better manage their farms as a business.

Over 360 people have attended the workshops which have been conducted across the sugarcane growing areas on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. The workshops have upskilled Leader Farmers and Farm Advisory Officers and they are now better equipped to share valuable technical and business knowledge with other sugarcane farmers in their networks.

1. Source: Fiji Sugar Corporation (Data supplied as of 20 January 2017)







## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**16,500+**

SUGARCANE FARMERS

**360+**

LEADER FARMERS  
TRAINED

**560+**

NON-ACCREDITED  
CERTIFICATES ISSUED

# BUILDING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS



Ms Shahin Khan with link farmers

Ms Shahin Nisha Khan's interest in farming developed after she started to help her husband, Mr Mohammed Shamim Khan on the farm. Together, they have managed to increase their sugarcane yield by investing in land, starting with 13 acres and increasing to around 43 acres.

Ms Khan believes the type of relevant training provided through the Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project is needed to help Leader Farmers effectively pass on skills and knowledge to other sugarcane farmers.

The training has helped Ms Khan learn various skills like record keeping, innovative agricultural and business practices, and has improved her communication with stakeholders. Most importantly, the training has built her skills to think as an entrepreneur.

“The training was very helpful. I had the chance to learn more about farming as a business, and to meet with other experienced sugarcane farmers who gave me greater insight into sugarcane farming, which is valuable for me as a female farmer,” she said.

The skills that Ms Khan learned have helped her improve her finances, stock and record keeping. She believes these skills are helping her greatly in managing her farm, and have enhanced her understanding of the sugar industry - from growing to manufacturing and to retailing.

Ms Khan’s passion led her to become a Leader Farmer in the Cuvu sector in Sigatoka. This role enables her to mentor and share information and innovative farming methods with over 30 link farmers in her sector.

Over the past two years, Ms Khan has been working with increasing numbers of link farmers to help them adopt better agricultural and business methods to be successful entrepreneurial farmers.

Being a role model and utilising what she has learned in the classroom on her own farm is Ms Khan’s way of setting an example for the link farmers to do the same.

Ms Khan hopes to encourage more women to join the farming sector. She has been providing mentoring to six female farmers, assisting them with record keeping of expenses on their farms as well as helping their families implement better farming practices.

One such farmer is Ms Josnil Vikashni Singh, who has been expanding her farming business and even venturing into livestock (goat) farming.

“I have learned so many things from keeping records on what we have been doing on the farms, to speaking in public. I feel very proud of myself. Women normally don’t get into farming but I am happy that Ms Khan has been training me to be a better farmer. She has encouraged me to try new things to increase my production.”

Mr Karthik Kumar, who took up farming a year ago to help his father on his eight-acre sugarcane farm, said he is greatly inspired by Ms Khan.

“She taught us very basic but important things like different ways of planting and how to keep records to see how much we invest and spend on each activity,” he added.

“

I had the chance to learn more about farming as a business, and to meet with other experienced sugarcane farmers who gave me greater insight into sugarcane farming, which is valuable for me as a female farmer.

SHAHIN KHAN  
Leader Farmer

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# FARMERS IMPLEMENT SKILLS FROM TRAINING



Mr Emmenual Jit with link farmers

“What we learned at the training was that we need to have a plan and we need to keep good records of everything we do because any kind of farming we do is a business.”

This was shared by Mr Emmenual Sagar Jit from Labasa, one of the over 360 Leader Farmers trained under the Training Support to the Fijian Sugarcane Industry project.

He attended the 'Farming as a Business' and the 'Leader Farmer Business' workshops. These workshops were targeted to enhance business development and financial management capacities of Leader Farmers, who then pass these skills on to sugarcane farmers in their network.

A sugarcane farmer for 20 years, Mr Jit said he was able to transform how he conducts his farming. He explained that anyone can be a farmer but the training taught him how to be a "smart" farmer and to clearly understand the concept of farming as a business.

"As farmers, we need to have a specific goal and work towards it. We all know how to do farming but we need to do it the smart way, so we can support the livelihoods of our families and labourers."

"Sugarcane farming is a worthwhile business but farmers need to be creative and not rely on sugarcane alone. We need to work smart and do intercropping with other cash crops or have livestock. Then farming can bring maximum profit," he added.

One of the skills, he learned at the training, was the importance of record keeping.

"Now I record everything - amount of money I use, how much sugarcane I plant, the way I prepare the land, amount of fertilizer I use, and even the number of labourers. At the end of the day, I can calculate whether I am going to make a profit or a loss," he elaborated.

Mr Jit also utilises the presentation and communications skills he has learned at his monthly meetings with 13 link farmers in his sector. At these meetings, sugarcane farmers share new knowledge and exchange ideas. The visits by other sugarcane farmers to Mr Jit's farm have resulted in improvements for the link farmers.

"I did intercropping on my farm, planting sugarcane and watermelon. I was able to harvest FJ\$5,000 worth of watermelons and the other sugarcane farmers saw it and realised that is the way to go."

"Last year, my link farmers planted sugarcane and did intercropping on their farms and they received good returns," Mr Jit said.

“

As farmers, we need to have a specific goal and work towards it. We all know how to do farming but we need to do it the smart way, so we can support the livelihoods of our families and labourers.

EMMENUAL JIT  
Leader Farmer

”



“

The best thing about the training was that information was compiled and distributed in a way to help all farmers understand.

RAJNESH NAICKER  
Leader Farmer

”



Mr Rajnesh Naicker on his farm

A similar story was shared by another Leader Farmer, Mr Rajnesh Naicker, who said that the skills he has gained through the training helped him to grow as a sugarcane farmer, as well as to share those skills with other fellow sugarcane farmers.

Mr Naicker works with around 10 link farmers in the Lovu Sector in Lautoka, assisting them to adopt new farming practices and helping them get better returns from their farms.

Mr Naicker attended workshops on ‘Farming as a Business’ and ‘Leadership and Communication’ provided through the project.

“The best thing about the training was that information was compiled and distributed in a way to help all farmers understand,” he said.

Some of the skills Mr Naicker learned and is sharing with link farmers, are the importance of proper records and improved farm management styles as well as inter and dual cropping methods.

While Mr Naicker often finds it challenging to convince older and more experienced sugarcane farmers to implement new ways and methods of farming, he said, the communication skills he learnt during the training are helping him engage more effectively with sugarcane farmers.

“How you approach farmers is important. The leader and link farmer model is not a hierarchical system where one tells the other what they need to do. The first step is to ask farmers about the problems they face rather than telling them what they are doing wrong or what they should be doing. This approach helps them to identify the issue and come up with solutions.”

Mr Naicker makes regular visits to link farmers to help them maintain records and discuss ways to boost production, including weed control, rotational and dual farming methods.

Mr Atish Chand is one of the link farmers, who has recently started sugarcane farming on his 14 acres of land. Under the guidance of Mr Naicker, he has incorporated new methods of farming, including a system of weed control.

“Mr Naicker has been offering me advice on record keeping, farming machinery and how to cut down on bags of fertilizer to save cost. I have used that information to make my own innovative machines, which have worked well for me. I have even created my own irrigation system, which I am using on both my sugarcane and vegetable farms,” Mr Chand said.



# REBUILDING LIVES

Tropical Cyclone Winston struck Fiji in February 2016. The category 5 cyclone caused widespread devastation to the country and affected approximately 62 per cent of the population.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Fiji Government's post-disaster needs assessment report, the value of damages was estimated to be around FJ\$1.99 billion, with over 30,360 houses either partially or fully destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

Keen to support those affected, the European Union called on projects under their funding to submit suggestions on how they could realign funding to better support those most affected by this disaster.

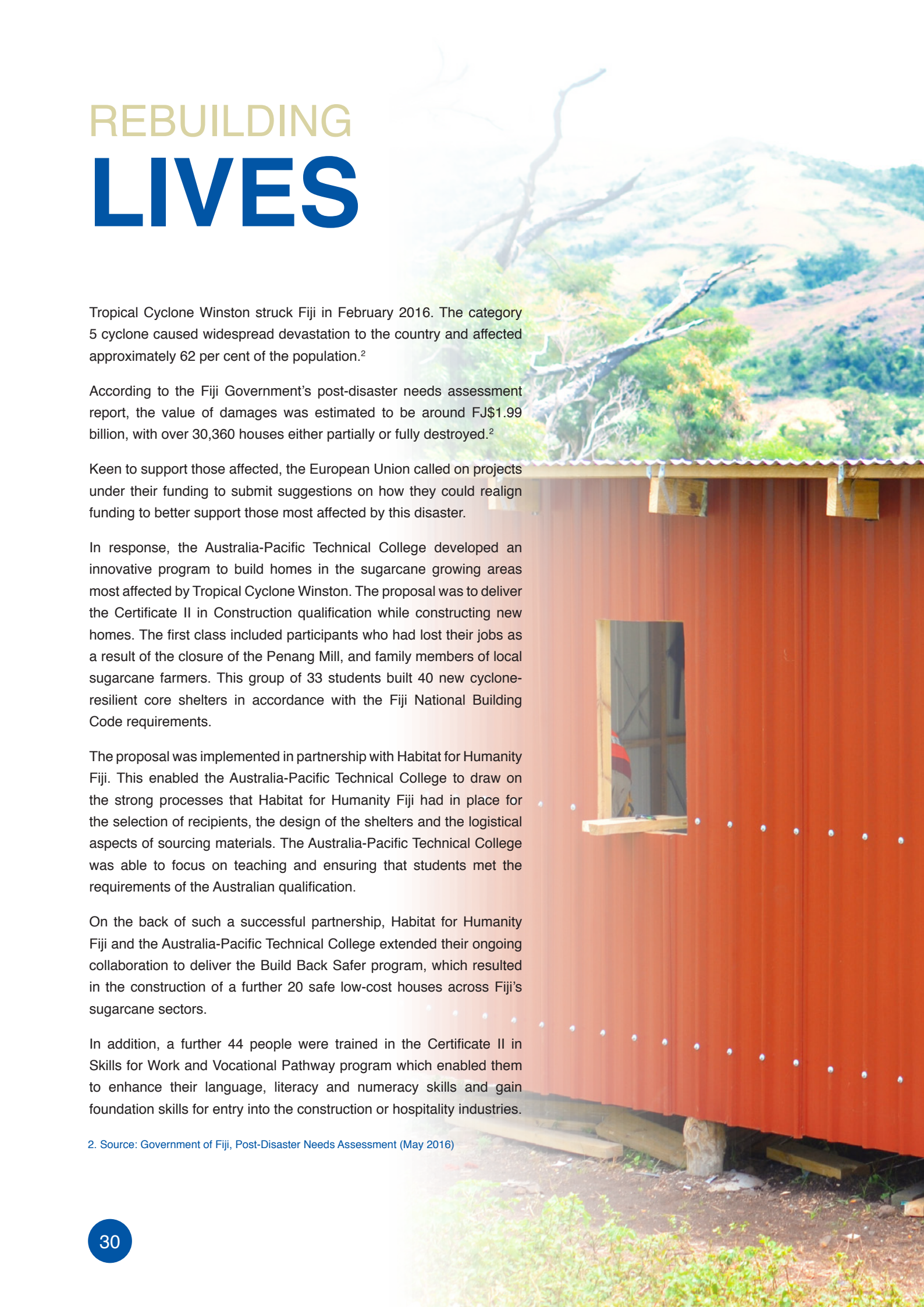
In response, the Australia-Pacific Technical College developed an innovative program to build homes in the sugarcane growing areas most affected by Tropical Cyclone Winston. The proposal was to deliver the Certificate II in Construction qualification while constructing new homes. The first class included participants who had lost their jobs as a result of the closure of the Penang Mill, and family members of local sugarcane farmers. This group of 33 students built 40 new cyclone-resilient core shelters in accordance with the Fiji National Building Code requirements.

The proposal was implemented in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Fiji. This enabled the Australia-Pacific Technical College to draw on the strong processes that Habitat for Humanity Fiji had in place for the selection of recipients, the design of the shelters and the logistical aspects of sourcing materials. The Australia-Pacific Technical College was able to focus on teaching and ensuring that students met the requirements of the Australian qualification.

On the back of such a successful partnership, Habitat for Humanity Fiji and the Australia-Pacific Technical College extended their ongoing collaboration to deliver the Build Back Safer program, which resulted in the construction of a further 20 safe low-cost houses across Fiji's sugarcane sectors.

In addition, a further 44 people were trained in the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathway program which enabled them to enhance their language, literacy and numeracy skills and gain foundation skills for entry into the construction or hospitality industries.

2. Source: Government of Fiji, Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (May 2016)







## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**30,360+**

HOUSES PARTIALLY OR FULLY DESTROYED

**70**

HOUSES BUILT

**300+**

BUILD BACK SAFER ATTENDEES

**92**

CERTIFICATE II GRADUATES

NEW HOMES

# BRING HOPE



Mr Jeremaia Camaira (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) with his family and Narewa village headman, Ratu Tuivavalagi Manaviwai in front of his new house

Narewa village was devastated by Tropical Cyclone Winston. Like many others in the village, Mr Jeremaia Camaira's home of 30 years was destroyed.

Mr Camaira was one of the 40 recipients of the cyclone-resilient core homes built through the partnership between the European Union, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Habitat for Humanity Fiji.

During the handover of the first of the 40 shelters, Head of Cooperation of the European Union Delegation for the Pacific, Mr Christoph Wagner said, "The European Union appreciates this partnership with Australia through its Australia-Pacific Technical College program and Habitat

for Humanity Fiji. We value this effort because it is about rebuilding structures over the short term, but more importantly, it is about rebuilding lives over the long term.”

Mr Camaira was handed over the shelter in December 2016, and lives in it with his wife, son and granddaughter.

“My family really enjoys living in the new house. We have water and electricity and we feel safe living in this house. It is much better than the old house we were living in that was blown away by Tropical Cyclone Winston,” he said.

Another recipient, Adi Selai Tawake said that after Tropical Cyclone Winston, her family did not know how they were going to rebuild their lives.

“Tropical Cyclone Winston was a terrifying experience for my children and me. We were so frightened. It was very hard for us because all our crops were destroyed from the strong winds and rain. We did not know how we were going to start our lives again,” she recalled.

Adi Tawake who used to stay with her parents before Tropical Cyclone Winston, said the new house has given her family a fresh start in rebuilding their lives.

Narewa’s *Turaga ni Koro* or village headman, Ratu Tuivalavagi Manaviwai feels that if the European Union, Habitat for Humanity Fiji, Australia-Pacific Technical College, and the construction students had not stepped in to help, the rebuilding of the village would not be as good as it is now.

“If villagers were not assisted, they would not have returned to the village. They probably would have moved away,” he stated.

Ratu Manaviwai said that villagers feel safer in the new houses because the structure is much stronger and will protect their families and children from cyclones in the future.

As the village leader, he is hopeful that the new houses will inspire villagers to build their houses using the same method.

“There are carpenters in the village who were helping during the construction of the houses and they were also learning and observing and I am sure that they can build the same way. I am happy to see that some of the villagers here are also considering building the same kind of house as those built by the Australia-Pacific Technical College students,” he said.

“

Tropical Cyclone Winston was a terrifying experience for my children and me. We did not know how we were going to start our lives again.

ADI SELAI TAWAKE  
House Recipient

”



House recipient, Adi Selai Tawake and her family

# IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**



Australia-Pacific Technical College Carpentry Trainer, Mr Paka Wakanivonoloa (left) working with students

Tropical Cyclone Winston caused major damage to the Fiji Sugar Corporation Penang Mill in Rakiraki. This resulted in a cut back on mill operations, affecting the livelihoods of a number of seasonal workers previously employed at the mill.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College saw an opportunity to collaborate with Habitat for Humanity Fiji to develop the construction skills of 33 displaced workers from the Fiji Sugar Corporation Penang Mill and family members of local sugarcane farmers who were adversely affected by Tropical Cyclone Winston.

The Fiji Sugar Corporation supported the first group of staff to undertake the course and the students as part of their practical training built 40 core shelters in the Rakiraki area.

A second group of 20 students completed the construction of 10 homes in Lautoka and Ba.

Australia-Pacific Technical College Trainer in Carpentry, Mr Paka Wakanivonoloa, who closely worked with the students in constructing the shelters, said that the students not only benefitted in acquiring new construction skills but also managed to use the techniques and methods they learned in the Certificate II in Construction program to rebuild their own homes damaged by Tropical Cyclone Winston.

He added that the villagers also learned a lot from the project.

“The villagers frequently visited the sites where the houses were being built and watched what the students were doing. There were a few houses that the villagers built next to the core shelters that we had built and they tried to replicate the methods and techniques we used,” he said.

One of the students, Mr Joji Waqata Miller, said that the training has made a big difference in his life.

The 36 year-old from Narewa village in Rakiraki, started work for Fiji Sugar Corporation in 1996 as a locomotive driver at the Fiji Sugar Corporation Penang Mill.

“I am a skilled person now and this will open up more opportunities for me. I will continue to further my skills by doing a Certificate III in Carpentry at the Australia-Pacific Technical College,” Mr Miller added.

Mr Miller is part of a group of 17 graduates from the Certificate II in Construction program who will be transitioning to the Certificate III in Carpentry program starting in Semester 2 2017.

Another student, Mr Ravnil Chand, a Fiji Sugar Corporation employee for five years, believes the training has given him a pathway to explore alternative job opportunities.

“After the training, I can now understand a building plan, as well as the tie-down and roofing schedule. If a plan is given, I can read it and build a house,” he said.

Mr Chand added that the training will help him to support the livelihood of his family.

“

The villagers frequently visited the sites where the houses were being built and watched what the students were doing. There were a few houses that the villagers built and they tried to replicate the methods and techniques we used.

PAKA WAKANIVONOLOA  
Carpentry Trainer

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Carpentry students at work

# BUILDING BACK SAFER



Mr Ravnil Prasad (left) and Mr Divikash Nair (right) standing in front of a Build Back Safer program house

The Australia-Pacific Technical College and Habitat for Humanity Fiji have extended their collaboration to deliver the Build Back Safer program by constructing 20 safe low-cost houses in each of Fiji's sugarcane growing sectors.

The Build Back Safer program trained over 300 community carpenters including farmers and homeowners from across all the sugarcane growing sectors in Fiji. The workshops focused on safer, simple and effective construction techniques. The structures remain available for participants and other community members to make ongoing checks to confirm they are continuing to use the correct building methods to enhance resilience.

Habitat for Humanity Fiji National Director, Mr Masi Latianara said, "The aim of the Build Back Safer program is to multiply the effect of this training by bringing together communities who will then

be available as an informal network to assist families in the reconstruction of their homes.”

“Building demonstration houses will help people develop skills to construct safer dwellings, especially those rebuilding after Tropical Cyclone Winston,” said the Chief Executive Officer of the Australia-Pacific Technical College, Ms Denise O’Brien.

A total of 16 structures were built in the sugar belt areas on Viti Levu, ranging from Sigatoka to Rakiraki. Four similar structures were constructed on Vanua Levu. One location where a Build Back Safer house was constructed was at the Vivekananda Technical Centre in Nadi.

Mr Ravnil Prasad and Mr Divikash Nair, who work as Agricultural Instructors at the Vivekananda Technical Centre, attended the Build Back Safer training. They both acknowledged that the Build Back Safer training was very beneficial and helped them learn the basics of building a cyclone-resilient structure.

“One of the things I liked about the training was that it was practical. We did not have the skills to build a house and the training provided us with that. It did not focus too much on classroom learning. Mostly, we used our hands, and the more we practiced, the more we learned,” Mr Prasad explained.

Mr Prasad highlighted that he is able to use the skills from the training in his current role at the Vivekananda Technical Centre, to help farmers build greenhouses and storage houses using the same construction method that he learned at the Build Back Safer workshop.

Like Mr Prasad, his colleague Mr Nair also acknowledged that the skills and knowledge he acquired from the Build Back Safer training is helping him to share information about best practices in construction.

“We have been recommending the building techniques that we have learned from the Build Back Safer training to farmers and other people that we work with in the communities,” he said.

Most farmers that Mr Nair and Mr Prasad work with are from remote areas and are vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters such as cyclones.

Mr Nair explained that this makes it important to teach these farmers how to build safely so that they do not have to lose out on three to four years of their hard work.

“

We have been recommending the building techniques that we have learned from the Build Back Safer training to farmers and other people that we work with in the communities.

DIVIKASH NAIR  
Build Back Safer Program Participant

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# RESPONSE TO TROPICAL CYCLONE WINSTON

LOCATION OF CYCLONE-RESILIENT SHELTERS







**40**

CYCLONE-RESILIENT  
CORE SHELTERS  
ACROSS 6 LOCATIONS



**20**

BUILD BACK SAFER  
PROGRAM HOUSES



**10**

CYCLONE-RESILIENT  
CORE SHELTERS  
ACROSS 8 LOCATIONS





Ms Amelia Uluivada  
An outstanding female graduate

A further 44 people were trained in two Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathway courses. A total of 23 people completed the course in December 2016 and another 21 completed in June 2017.

The Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways program enables students to enhance their language, literacy and numeracy skills and gain foundation skills for entry pathways into the construction or hospitality industry.

Ms Amelia Uluivada, from Rakiraki village, was one of the youngest students undertaking the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways program delivered in 2016.

Ms Uluivada successfully completed this program and moved on to complete a Certificate II in Construction course in 2017 which was funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

“I completed my Certificate II in Construction and want to extend my level of qualification in order to get a good job and support my family,” she said.

## Disclaimer

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