

**Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) and  
Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support (APIDS)**

**Capacity Development for Effective and Efficient  
Disabled Persons Organisations in  
Pacific Island Countries**

**Report on Tuvalu component of Research**

***March 2012***

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## **1. Introduction**

A Pacific-wide research program entitled “Capacity Development for Effective and Efficient Disabled People’s Organisations in Pacific Island Countries<sup>1</sup>”, commenced in February 2011 with the financial assistance of AusAID. The research process will cover 12 countries and continue until June 2012. Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) is undertaking the research in collaboration with Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support (APIDS). The research team comprises representatives from both organisations and includes in-country researcher(s) nominated by each national member Disabled People’s Organisation (DPO).

In September/October 2011, the research team undertook activities in Tuvalu. This was the seventh country to be visited, following the pilot study visit to Fiji in February 2011 and research activity in the Cook Islands in March 2011, Samoa in May 2011, Papua New Guinea in July 2011, Solomon Islands in August 2011 and Tonga in September 2011. The research team included one representative from PDF and one from APIDS as well as three in-country researchers nominated by the Tuvalu DPO, - Ioane Hawaii, Tinoi Teleke and Vaiki Ionatana. The DPO’s Project Officer, Matakina Simii also played an active support role to the team.

This report summarises the process and findings of the research.

## **2. The DPOs in Tuvalu**

In summary, the DPO situation in Tuvalu has the following features:

- There is one national cross-disability DPO – Fusi Alofa Association (FAA) Tuvalu – which was established in 2010

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<sup>1</sup> This research is being undertaken jointly by PDF and APIDS, and is funded by AusAID.

- FAA Tuvalu is a central non-profit organisation with a constitution, elected board, one paid staff, volunteers and secure office facilities.
- FAA Tuvalu has received small amounts of funding from AusAID, DRF, PDF and APIDS.

## **2.1 History of DPOs in Tuvalu**

The Fusi Alofa Association Tuvalu (FAA Tuvalu) is a newly established non-government organisation of people with disabilities. On 15 May 2009, in a meeting of people with disabilities in the capital of Tuvalu, Funafuti, they agreed to establish their own organization. The expectation was that the organisation would be a means to promote the rights of people with disabilities and especially to provide opportunities for children with disabilities.

FAA Tuvalu is the first organisation of its type in Tuvalu, i.e. an organisation of people with disabilities themselves. With assistance from their care-givers and also their friends and extended networks, the organisation has been established successfully. Prior to 2009, the interests of the people with disabilities were addressed by the Tuvalu Red Cross Society. Now FAA Tuvalu works closely with the Tuvalu Red Cross Society. FAA Tuvalu also assists Tuvalu Government Departments, for example, by contributing to the establishment of the national policy for people with disabilities.

FAA Tuvalu has an Executive Committee and it also has a Constitution which was prepared during the establishment phase in 2009. During the research visit, the researchers found that consultations for the development of the organisation's first strategic plan have already been held, and the final draft of the plan was about to be completed.

FAA Tuvalu has obtained small amounts of funding from AusAID, PDF and APIDS. They have used funding to cover the costs of activities such as life-skills training and human rights training for their members.

### **3. Research principles, approaches and methodology**

In addition to standard research principles relating to ethical considerations and the selection of a mix of accessible, culturally appropriate tools and processes, the research team approached the methodology with four particular principles in mind:

- We sought to mix the “extraction” of information with opportunities for research participants to learn about their organisations and ways of strengthening them (including opportunities to consider their own definition of capacity and their understanding of and plans for capacity development)
- We sought to focus on understanding the strengths of organisations, how they had been developed over time and how these strengths can be used as the basis for future planning (strengths based approach) and sharing this understanding between participants
- We sought to provide opportunities for DPO-nominated people to build research skills in country through collaborative planning and implementation
- We sought to make the research process accessible for people with a variety of impairments.

In practice, the in-country research approach includes the following elements:

- Working collaboratively with the DPO in country so they have a good sense of “ownership” of the research, rather than consider that the research is being done by outsiders
- Emphasis on respecting participants and on putting them at ease during all stages, particularly in meetings and workshops
- Asking core set of questions for participants, adapted to suit different audiences (e.g. “what do you think are the strengths of your DPO?” or “what do you think are the strengths of the DPOs with whom you work?”)
- Respecting community protocols and customs

- Ensuring different disability groups are involved and included

The research process involves a mix of tools to maximize the chances to confirm any information collected from an individual source:

- Literature survey
- Small group discussions
- Individual meetings
- Workshops
- Case studies (of selected organisations)

### **3.1 Methodology in Tuvalu**

From September 2<sup>7th</sup> - October 4<sup>th</sup> 2011, the research team worked together to:

- Develop detailed plans for in-country implementation, giving specific consideration to the Tuvalu context
- Identify the questions within each research activity
- Allocate responsibilities among team members
- Undertake the research activities with local organisations in the disability sector and their stakeholders, including meetings and a workshop at the end of the week
- Collate findings at the end of the week of activities and identify lessons about how to improve the research process and methodology for subsequent country visits

Once planning had been undertaken, the following meetings were held during the week:

- A workshop was held on September 28<sup>th</sup> with Board and members of Fusi Alofa Tuvalu with the aims of:
  - identifying the organisation's strengths, capacity development options and how people would like to work with donors and development partners

- To introduce the strengths based approach concept, on which the research is based and which is relevant to capacity development planning
- Interviews with stakeholder groups, including education providers, support services, non-government organisations and government departments.

A final workshop of members of FAA Tuvalu was organised on the last day of the in-country visit, for the following purposes:

- To share initial findings and seek discussion and confirmation of these findings
- To discuss two terms: capacity and capacity development
- To provide an initial opportunity for collaborative planning for capacity development of FAA Tuvalu.

Annex 1 provides the list of research activities each day.

In summary, 37 people participated in meetings, interviews and the workshops. Of the total number of people met, 30 % are women, 70% are men and 38% participants have disabilities. A total of fourteen people with disabilities attended both workshops.

## **4. Findings**

The themes listed below emerged from an analysis of notes from all meetings and were discussed and endorsed at the members' workshop on Monday:

1. FAA Tuvalu has a strong Board, paid staff, volunteers and an office
2. FAA Tuvalu has a strong youth voice
3. FAA Tuvalu has active, enthusiastic and determined members who enjoy being together and have good family support
4. FAA Tuvalu members have many talents, including musical ability, craft skills and fundraising ability
5. FAA Tuvalu has a staff member who showed perseverance and leadership in assisting members to start the organisation and who

- runs the office, informs members about events and training and encourages members to participate in activities
6. FAA Tuvalu has a strong governance system including a constitution, Board meetings and plans to conduct an AGM and develop a strategic plan
  7. FAA Tuvalu Board and staff are skilled at asking other organisations – in Tuvalu, the region and internationally – for assistance
  8. FAA Tuvalu would like to further develop the skills of its members, including Board, in fundraising, governance, advocacy, IT skills and understanding of health issues
  9. FAA Tuvalu members would like to understand more about the CRPD, and how to promote it with government and the community
  10. FAA Tuvalu would like to work more closely with Red Cross, Tuvalu Family Health and government, to increase the involvement of people with disabilities in their activities
  11. FAA Tuvalu would like to send members for further studies so they can bring good things for development and use their skills for the organisation
  12. FAA Tuvalu would like to focus on the skill development of youth, including in relation to leadership, IT skills, sports and education
  13. FAA Tuvalu would like to advocate to government ministries on the signing and ratification of the CRPD
  14. FAA Tuvalu would like a vehicle for transportation of its members
  15. FAA Tuvalu would like donors and development partners to act in partnership by funding their priorities, which include capacity development activities, scholarships for study, transportation, sports facilities and equipment, medical treatment and musical instruments.

## **4.1 Discussion**

This research attempted to understand perceptions of DPO capacity by DPOs themselves and their stakeholders, as well as perceptions of changes in capacity over time and factors which contribute to effective change. Importantly, this research did not attempt to “measure” DPO capacity.

In summary, FAA Tuvalu has many strengths in capacity terms and there are a number of factors which have contributed to its capacity. Most influencing factors have come from within the organisation itself and other factors reflect Tuvalu values or are related to the international disability rights movement.

### **4.1.1 Model for understanding elements of capacity**

While there are many models for understanding organisational capacity, the Baser and Morgan (2009) model has been selected for framing analysis in this research. This model, based on extensive international research, suggests that capacity comprises the following five elements:

#### **CAPABILITY TO COMMIT AND ENGAGE**

Includes the following:

- the ability to encourage mindfulness (being thoughtful about the impact of words and actions)
- the ability and willingness to persevere (to keep to goals and actions even when facing difficulties)
- the ability to aspire (to be ambitious; to dream)
- the ability to embed conviction (to make sure everyone is committed to working hard towards the shared goals)
- the ability to take ownership (to make sure that any plans to change the organisation and its work are completely “owned” by the organisation itself)
- the ability to be determined (to make strong efforts to achieve goals despite any challenges or setbacks)

## **CAPABILITY TO CARRY OUT TECHNICAL, SERVICE DELIVERY AND LOGISTICAL TASKS**

Includes the following:

- the ability to deliver services
- the ability to plan strategically (to reach longer-term objectives, not just short-term day-to-day work)
- the ability to manage the implementation of all the plans effectively and efficiently (with consideration given to different definitions of effectiveness and efficiency)
- the ability to manage the finances (in ways which comply with local laws, practices and values)

## **CAPABILITY TO RELATE AND ATTRACT**

Includes the following:

- the ability to buffer the organisation or system from intrusions (to protect organisations from outside destructive or distracting events or people)
- the ability to earn the trust of others, such as donors and partners
- the ability to combine political neutrality and assertive advocacy (to be able to achieve goals confidently without upsetting politicians and others through too much blatant criticism)

## **CAPABILITY TO ADAPT AND SELF-RENEW**

Includes the following:

- the ability to improve individual and organisational learning
- the ability to foster internal dialogue (to provide chances for people to talk with each other openly about things that are happening and what is planned)
- the ability to reposition and reconfigure the organisation
- the ability to incorporate new ideas
- the ability to map out a growth path

## **CAPABILITY TO BALANCE DIVERSITY AND COHERENCE**

Includes the following:

- the ability to communicate
- the ability to build connections (to work collaboratively with other organisations)

- the ability to manage diversity (to make the most of different ideas from people and strengths within the organisation)
- the ability to manage paradox and tension (to work out how to deal with information which is opposite from other information, and how to deal with people who have different ideas)

Using this framework, and based on the findings discussed below, FAA Tuvalu has a number of “stand-out” capacity strengths, including:

- the ability to start working towards a barrier-free, rights-based society in Tuvalu
- the ability to build connections with other NGOs, donors and development partners
- the ability to combine cultural respect and advocacy
- the ability to start building individual and organisational learning, particularly by making the most of opportunities for members to attend training, workshops, committee meetings etc.

#### **4.1.2 Contextual influences on DPO capacity**

Until the establishment of FAA Tuvalu, the Tuvalu Red Cross Society was the main voice on disability in Tuvalu. In the early days of Red Cross activities, the dominant perspective on the situation of people with disabilities was based on medical or welfare/charity models. In the Tuvalu case, this meant that carers and service provision ideas dominated the work undertaken with people with disabilities. In the few years before 2009, Tuvalu Red Cross Society officials were included in regional disability meetings and became aware of the critical idea of people with disabilities managing their own organisation. Until this awareness-raising at regional level, there was negligible official or broader community recognition about the rights of people with disability in Tuvalu, including the right to organise themselves. Tuvalu Red Cross Society then facilitated the development of FAA Tuvalu and has continued to support the DPO since its establishment in 2009.

The Tuvalu Government is a signatory to the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF). The Government of Tuvalu agreed in August 2011 at a Pacific Government focal point meeting in Fiji, to develop a Tuvalu National Policy for Persons with Disabilities by 2015.

A recent workshop to raise awareness of disability rights implemented by the Australian Human Rights Commission and PDF has been a source of information, confidence and skill for FAA Tuvalu.

#### **4.1.3 Internal Leadership**

Strong internal leadership within FAA Tuvalu by some members of the Board and management has enabled the organisation to successfully develop from a section within the Tuvalu Red Cross to a recognized cross disability DPO.

According to a respondent, the current office manager, together with a few members of the current Board, was instrumental in establishing FAA Tuvalu. Their determination and inspiration have encouraged members to develop their capacities. A member of FAA Tuvalu said: *I have learned new things from Fusi Alofa and now feel empowered. Usually I cannot speak in public, but now I can.*

FAA Tuvalu members have been supportive of their leaders. One respondent said: *if the committee plans something, members always adhere; they carry it out wholeheartedly and with cheerfulness.*

#### **4.1.4 Advocacy and awareness raising skills**

Advocacy and awareness-raising skills were highlighted as being significant for FAA Tuvalu members, with respondents commenting that these new skills are being used well by the Board. Recent awareness-raising activities include a session on CRPD for parents of persons with disabilities during the celebrations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of FAA Tuvalu in May 2011. In addition FAA Tuvalu is continuously using media to advocate and raise awareness on disability issues.

FAA Tuvalu's 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary celebrations contributed both to the empowerment of members and parents of children with disabilities so they can take greater responsibility for improving the lives as persons with disabilities. Some Association members spoke on Radio Tuvalu seeking support from the Government of Tuvalu. During the research visit in Tuvalu, the local radio station broadcast live media coverage of FAA

Tuvalu activities. Reference was made to FAA Tuvalu's attendance at the PDF Regional Youth meeting held in Fiji in September 2011.

In 2010, PDF and People with Disability Australia (PWDA) conducted advocacy training with FAA Tuvalu members. The training enabled members to conduct advocacy on CRPD for family members of people with disabilities and also to the general public. The training also empowered the members to better plan their awareness-raising activities such as media promotion, sports activities and advocacy training on CRPD.

The new FAA office and building space has enabled the members to organize their advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns efficiently. The space has particularly enabled members to prepare for drama and traditional dances, which are included in awareness-raising at the community level.

FAA Tuvalu's ability to attract media support and financial assistance was evident during the research visit. The organisation has secured a range of assistance from stakeholders as a result of effective advocacy and awareness-raising work. One respondent said *"we are able to get help from many others to do our work, including volunteers, Government of Tuvalu, NGOs, families, UNESCO and other UN agencies, APIDS, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, PDF, RRRT, SPC, the Social Welfare Department and the Health Department."*

Another respondent said: *"Fusi Alofa is becoming visible to the public"* and is *"now seen as being an implementing agency in the Government of Tuvalu's Strategic Plan"*.

#### **4.1.5 Link between DPO capacity and stakeholders**

FAA Tuvalu is a relatively young organisation and it is currently strengthening its relations with stakeholders in Tuvalu. During the research visit, it was evident that there was significant potential for developing the capacity of members and for developing the capacity of the organisation itself, through strengthening links with key stakeholders.

Tuvalu Family Health Association (TuFHA) highlighted the potential for it to work closely with young people with disabilities. Another potential area of collaboration is the inclusion of people with disabilities in awareness-raising work about HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

The Ministry of Health informed the research team that the inclusion of people with disabilities is one of the key areas in their proposal to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which is a coordinated funding mechanism by UN agencies in the Pacific to support key areas identified by Pacific Island countries. The expectation is that this proposal, if approved and funded, will enable FAA Tuvalu to access funding from the Government of Tuvalu to develop its capacity.

According to the Government of Tuvalu, people with disabilities are able to access support through health programs and services.

The Government of Tuvalu disability focal point is confident that *people with disabilities in Tuvalu will be stronger with the full support of Government*. This means that the Government will aim to ensure that people with disabilities should be included in decision-making about issues which are relevant to them. It also means that the Government will move towards developing and endorsing its national policy on disability as well as ratifying the CRPD.

#### **4.1.6 External factors which contribute to capacity**

FAA Tuvalu expressed its appreciation to APIDS for agreeing to fund its proposal for a livelihoods training workshop for women with disabilities. This has enabled its members to develop new skills in handicrafts and sewing, which is something the women with disabilities prioritised themselves. The skills acquired from these training activities have allowed the organisation to raise funds for its ongoing advocacy work.

In 2010, the Australian Human Rights Commission in partnership with PDF conducted Human Rights training on the CRPD in Tuvalu. This gave members of FAA Tuvalu the opportunity to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Convention and since then, they have further

developed their own ability to conduct training sessions on the CRPD in Tuvalu.

PDF's provision of funding through the DPO Fund has enabled FAA Tuvalu to establish a dedicated office and space for its members. The funding has also allowed for a staff member to be employed to administer and manage the operations of FAA Tuvalu.

As a full member of PDF, FAA Tuvalu has been invited to participate in PDF regional meetings and training. Representatives to these meetings and training events have been enabled to transfer the skills and knowledge to members in Tuvalu.

#### **4.1.7 Fusi Alofa's future capacity development objectives**

The members of FAA Tuvalu identified six capacity development priorities, including:

- developing the skills of its members, including Board, in fundraising, governance, advocacy, IT skills and understanding of health issues
- understanding more about the CRPD, and how to promote it with government and the community
- working more closely with Red Cross, Tuvalu Family Health and Government of Tuvalu, to increase the involvement of people with disabilities in their activities
- sending members for further studies so they can contribute to Tuvalu's development and use their skills within the organisation
- developing the skills of youth, including in leadership, IT skills, sports and education
- advocating to Government Ministries on the signing and ratification of the CRPD.

#### 4.1.8 How DPOs want partners to assist in future

FAA Tuvalu would like partner organisations to assist people with disabilities in Tuvalu by:

- providing a vehicle for transportation of its members, in recognition of the absence of public transport in Tuvalu
- funding their priorities, which include capacity development activities, scholarships for study, transportation, sports facilities and equipment, medical treatment and musical instruments.

#### 4.2 Summary

This research concludes that:

- Fusi Alofa Association in Tuvalu is *“a small young organisation that has progressed a lot in development and management”* with *“membership increasing quickly”*.
- the dedicated office with sufficient space has been a particular source of strength for the organisation as members are able to meet and share with other colleagues with disabilities including young people
  - *“We learn many things from this organisation – for example, we learn how to use the internet as well as gathering indoors”*
  - *“We get to know each other and we get along with each other and we learn our human rights from Fusi Alofa,”*
  - *“We are happy to learn and share our experiences as people with disabilities and what we can do with what we have”*
- FAA Tuvalu has a lot of strengths with potential to improve through working closely with stakeholders
- FAA Tuvalu has advocacy skills that enabled it to attract assistance from development partners and it would like partners to continue to assist by providing funds for their priority objectives.

## **Annex 1: List of research activities**

### **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September**

Meeting of research team

### **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September**

Workshop with members

### **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September**

#### **Interviews with:**

Tuvalu Red Cross – Mr. Tataua Pese

Tuvalu Family Health Association – Mr. Lono Lenuoti

### **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September**

Ministry of Health – Dr Stephen Homasi

Ministry of Home Affairs – Mr. Pusinelli Laafai

#### **Interviews with:**

### **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

Workshop with members