Post-disaster WASH risks amongst vulnerable population - Fiji perspective

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Fiji has a very young population

Fiji at a glance

- 2017 Census
  - 884,887 population count
  - 191,910 Private Households
  - 1,224 Institutions
  - Median age of 27.2 and 27.8
- Approximately 110/330 islands inhabited
- Viti Levu & Vanua Levu
Vulnerable population – the young and the old
• Water supply is not an issue in Fiji
• More than 90% have access to water supply
• 70% have access to treated water supply
• 63% direct water supply to DH
• Toilet facility not accessible to 0.4%
• 21% sewerage system connection
• 62% ST, access to SS??
• Access to water supply is crucial
• Proper disposal and treatment of human excreta is also vital
• Risk of seepage of untreated or raw sewage into water course is high
• Disaster or post disaster - risk of contamination is higher
• High percentage using Septic Tank system – how that is treated or disposed (bailed) is of concern given the extreme weather conditions Fiji has been having with floodings after a minimal rain. Seepage issues for health concern
Post disaster assistance

- Emergency services - Medical (sites - EH service)
- Shelter - development control (EH service)
- Water supply - Safe drinking water (WAF/EH service)
- Food services - Safe food handling (EH service)
- Sanitary facilities - proper & safe (EH service)
- Burial grounds - (EH service)

- EH services in Fiji - challenged - organizational structure, Local Authorities: Rural and Urban (Councils)
- Services that have been shifted from Rural to Urban - development control, licensing (inspection for business licenses) other related roles from stakeholder ministry
- Opportunity to make EH important again

Current Practice
- Disaster - EH serves as the peripheral agency looking at WASH and Safety of population
- Safety aspects are covered under OHS/Building Regulations/Vector Control/etc.
- EHO’s trained for OHS/Built Environment/ Sanitation/Disaster response/Food Safety Hygiene etc.
- Managed response and recovery - total health of population

Establishing an Environmental Health Ministry or Central Board of Health as Ministry
- Existing structure of the CBH (Rural /Urban)
- Align its services with line ministries or departments to come under one Ministry
Local Government/ Department of Environment/Town Planning/Housing/
Key partners - Water Authority/ Energy/ PWD/
Disaster - development control & WASH & energy mostly affected → vulnerable population

WAY Forward
EH service is a holistic unit in Fiji and key to Pacific Public Health
Unique in integrating Environmental Services of Public Health importance
EH services can forecast risks based on environmental conditions that can pose risks from exposures
Disaster is not predicted, prevention services through EH work can reduce more disasters..
QUESTIONS