

A Seat at the Table – Community Voices in Fiji’s HIV Response

A persistent challenge in Fiji’s HIV response has been the improvement of rights for those communities who face stigma, social judgment and discrimination, such as women living with HIV, men who have sex with men, and transgender people. These pressures tend to drive late HIV diagnoses and treatments at advanced stages, putting more strain on the healthcare system. Community-led organisations, formed and led by the people most affected, continually fight for the right to services free of stigma and the right to represent themselves in the decisions that affect their communities.

When the country faced an HIV outbreak in 2025, Health Equity Matters worked with its regional partner, the Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network, to incorporate the voices of four front-line community organisations into the national HIV response: the Rainbow Pride Foundation, FJN+, the Strumphet Alliance and the Survival Advocacy Network. Drawing on their lived experience and their knowledge of the communities they serve, Health Equity Matters worked with all four to strengthen their standing in national decision-making. These organisations are now embedded in Fiji’s HIV response.

FJN+ co-leads civil society representation in the Fiji HIV Taskforce, and the Rainbow Pride Foundation co-chairs the HIV Taskforce Prevention Sub-Committee and sits on the HIV Board. The Strumphet Alliance’s leadership in the HIV Treatment, Care and Support Sub-Committee and its inclusion in national working groups have helped revive the Fiji Sex Workers Alliance, a five-organisation network. The Survival Advocacy Network, after years of exclusion, has been formally included in national discussions and is reporting a meaningful shift in attitudes.

‘For years, decisions about our communities were made without us in the room. Now we are at the table, and people listen. It has taken a long time, but it is starting to feel like a real partnership.’

– Seseieli Naitala Bui, National Coordinator and Founder of the Survival Advocacy Network

Work on stigma-free services and disability inclusion is also under way. Community organisations coordinate outreach for the Moonlight Clinic, an after-hours HIV and sexual health testing service delivered by Medical Services Pacific in urban nightlife areas. A planned collaboration between the Fiji Disabled People’s Federation and the Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network will make HIV-prevention materials more disability-inclusive and extend outreach into disability networks.

As more of Fiji’s national HIV decision-making is guided by those most affected, the challenge becomes sustaining that momentum. The country needs consistent financial support to strengthen community organisations and secure their place in decisions at the highest levels.