

Stronger Systems, Improved Collaborations – Enhancing Fiji’s HIV Response for the Future

Since the first appearance of HIV in the 1980s, Fiji’s Government and its people have shown resilience in building a response. What started as individual community organisations advocating for national changes has grown into an inclusive HIV response model empowered by a network that reaches from the grassroots to the national level. But that network has been under strain. Major external funding fell away in 2012, and HIV cases surged in 2025. Together, these pressures created the need for a response that is better coordinated and more sustainable.

Working through its established relationship with the regional Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network, Health Equity Matters shifted its program to help four front-line community organisations – the Rainbow Pride Foundation, FJN+, Strumphet Alliance and Survival Advocacy Network – grow stronger internally and more credible externally. Organisations that had long worked separately began coordinating as one, aligning their efforts into a single, unified HIV response based on community evidence, practical insights and targeted plans.

These stronger systems of leadership and safeguarding practices have established a successful peer community-led outreach model. Over 7,000 clients were reached in five months, demonstrating the potential to scale and reach populations that clinical health services alone could not engage. Peer outreach worker roles were also formally incorporated into the forthcoming national HIV Peer Outreach Guidelines and the newly released fourth edition of the National HIV and ART Guidelines, embedding community-focused outreach into Fiji’s systems and confirming the standing of community organisations in the country’s HIV response.

‘People trust us because we come from the same communities. What has changed is that we now have the training and the backing to do this properly. I want the workers who come after me to have that too.’

– Shalu Singh, Peer Outreach Worker, Nadi sub-division

The model has shown it can reach people at scale. Sustainability is the open question, as the 2012 collapse is a reminder that even the best plans and efforts will falter without reliable investment.

Fiji needs sustained, consistent funding to strengthen and encourage more opportunities for collaboration and coordination in the HIV response over the long term. It is the difference between a response that meets this moment and one that lasts.