

Australian Volunteers

for International Development

Assignment description

Information contained in this Assignment Description is subject to change, as host organisations' needs evolve. Australian Red Cross will work closely with host organisations and volunteers to ensure that key outcomes of roles are updated as regularly as possible.

1. General details	
Position title	Disaster Risk Reduction Adviser for Micro Enterprises
Advertising title (if different from above)	
Host organisation	Fiji Council of Social Services
Country	Fiji
Location	Suva
Duration	12 months
Proposed start date	September 2015
Pre-departure training date	July 2015
Assignment code	FJ66

2. Overview of program
<p>The ARC AVID Program in Fiji is working to improve the preparedness of Fijians and pacific islanders to respond to disasters, improve the health of Fijians and strengthen the capacity of the Fijian Red Cross and other organisations to deliver projects and programs.</p> <p>This assignment contributes towards disaster preparedness and recovery outcomes by supporting communities to better prepare for, and to be able to recover from disasters. ARC AVID does this by working with Fiji Red Cross Society and other humanitarian services to strengthen logistics and planning, and address the needs of women, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.</p>

3. Overview of organisation & assignment
<p>The Fiji Council of Social Services for over 57 years has strived to reduce disadvantage and poverty throughout Fiji. It has delivered programs and services to the communities and people who are most in need. It has been a leader for the civil society sector and through its leadership has helped the sector develop to what it is today. The Fiji Council of Social Services has always prided itself on speaking up for those without a voice. The services and programs provided by the organisation have continually adapted to meet the changing needs of Fiji. Currently it delivers programs and services that directly impact individuals and communities. Through training and collaboration, the Fiji Council of Social Services is also building the capacity of the community sector to indirectly reduce disadvantage.</p>
<p>Overview of the program</p> <p>The volunteer will be working with all Fiji Council of Social Services programs but specifically focusing on the Microfinance Unit. The mission of the unit is to promote and empower the community through entrepreneurial</p>

initiatives, capacity enhancement and microfinance services for sustainable livelihoods

There are four programs/activities currently initiated by the unit:

- Financial Literacy Training Outreach Program – providing financial literacy training to areas targeting low-income earners and the underserved communities in areas such as budgeting skills and encouraging savings among low-income individuals. Coverage of rural areas remain a challenge due to financial constraints and there are plans to extend the services to rural areas who have not accessed microfinance services.
- Business skills training – to clients who would like to take out a microfinance loan to ensure that they have the skills required to operate a successful micro-enterprise; thus the provision of sustainable livelihood to the underserved communities.
- Savings scheme - providing an accessible and affordable savings scheme to the underserved communities.
- Small loans – targeted at individuals who want to access loans to start or to expand a small business for sustainable livelihood.

Overview of the AVID assignment

The AVID assignment’s focus will be on integrating disaster risk reduction and management in all programs of the Fiji Council of Social Services, primarily on the activities of the Microfinance Unit.

There is a strong need to create awareness on disaster management as the communities the organisation serve cannot usually avoid disaster risk given their limited choice when deciding where to live and where to operate their microenterprise, which is their main source of income. Delivering services to the disadvantaged communities under these conditions has a number of implications to the organisation and to the members it serve as many are directly exposed to natural disasters. From past experiences, poor and disadvantaged communities bear the high cost of disasters which affects and at times totally destroy their microenterprises, thus affecting the income of many poor households and their livelihood.

The challenge is to create awareness and to assess potential and limitations in increasing the disaster risk management capacity of the Fiji Council of Social Services’ members and microfinance clients.

4. Expected Outputs and Key Relationships

Expected outputs of this assignment:

1. Disaster risk reduction elements are well integrated into Fiji Council of Social Services programs
2. Disaster risk reduction assessment tools developed for the microfinance program
3. Fiji Council of Social Services staff is well equipped to integrate and carry out disaster risk reduction components in their everyday work.

Volunteer’s supervisor

Officer In Charge

Counterpart / other staff

Microfinance Unit Manager

5. Volunteer requirements

Essential: Personal attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self awareness and cross-cultural sensitivity • Commitment to sharing knowledge and skills • Flexibility and adaptability • Resilience and ability to manage stress
Essential: Skills or experience relevant to assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in a development context • Experience in community based programming
Qualifications	Tertiary qualifications in disaster risk reduction, post graduate studies would be looked upon favourably OR equivalent work

	experience with private sector
Language skills and level required	Willingness to learn local language. Basic Fijian and Hindi classes are available at orientation and advanced classes can be sourced from different agencies.
Desirable: Further attributes, experience, skills or qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working with Red Cross Red Crescent or other humanitarian aid organisations • Some experience in working with micro enterprises • Experience in providing training in a development context
First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to mobilising all Australian volunteers are required to complete Australian Standard HLTF311A – Apply First Aid

6. Location and facilities

The assignment is primarily located at the Fiji Council of Social Services office in Suva. Normal amenities and facilities are generally available in Suva. Travel in Suva will normally be by foot, bus or taxi. The volunteer will have access to office space with desk, access to a computer, email, internet and telephone for work purposes.

It is possible that the volunteer may travel to branches in Fiji where particular program activities are being carried out. Some field visits may be made to remote locations, which may not have access to electricity or running water. In these circumstances, the volunteer will be travelling with members of the microfinance team and will be provided with additional support.

The workplace could be made suitable for people with a range of disabilities, however pedestrian walkways in Fiji are uneven or non-existent and public transport does not generally provide for people with disabilities. The safety of travel to rural and remote locations will be carefully assessed before travel.

Fiji offers a large range of secure and comfortable accommodation options. Food options also are plentiful.

7. Assignment support

All AVID volunteers are provided with the following:

- Return airfares to country of assignment
- Fortnightly living allowance (based on cost of living, adjusted for urban and rural areas)
- Accommodation allowance
- Pre-departure training and in-country orientation (including language training where necessary)
- Travel and life insurance
- Health & security support (including 24-hour emergency contact)
- In-country contact point

For more information visit www.redcross.org.au/support-and-preparation.aspx

Other support mechanisms

- The volunteer will receive comprehensive pre-departure briefing and in-country orientation will be provided
- The volunteer will be able to access volunteer networks in Suva and Fiji overall, which has proven to be a good source of support for volunteer
- The in-country team will provide support and guidance in relation to any issues that the volunteer may face while in Fiji

8. Local culture and language

Fijian culture is generally a relaxed one and while most tourists head for Nadi and the West Coast, Suva provides the business centre with a cosmopolitan Pacific outlook. In comparison with most other Pacific cities, Suva may

be bustling and like most cities of the world there are rougher areas and nicer ones too. The other divisional capitals of Labasa, Levuka and Lautoka are similarly large towns with most of the amenities that would be expected in a major city.

Learning common words of the different cultures is not difficult and should be able to assist with certain level of conversation and understanding.

The culture of Fiji is a mixture of indigenous Fijian, Indian, European, Chinese, and other nationalities (including other Pacific islanders). Indigenous Fijians make up the majority of the population. Fijian indigenous society is very communal, with great importance attached to the family unit, the village, and the vanua (land). Christianity is the predominant religion amongst Indigenous Fijians. There are also a large number of Fijians whose ancestors came from India, mostly descended from indentured labourers brought to the islands by Fiji's British colonial rulers between 1879 and 1916 to work on Fiji's sugar cane plantations. Fijians of Indian descent come from a variety of subcultures and religious groups, with major religions including Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Despite a diverse cultural background, Fijian Indians are generally united through the common experience of indenture, the use of Fiji Hindi, family organisation, cuisine and interests in sports and Indian movies.

Rugby union is the most popular sport in Fiji (particularly of the sevens variety). Other popular sports include soccer, netball, volleyball and outrigger canoe paddling.

Fijian, Hindi, and English became the official languages after independence in 1970. English is the language of interethnic communication, administration, government, trade and commerce, and education. Fijian and Hindi are often spoken at home and are used in religious contexts and on radio and television.

Attire is considerably more relaxed in Fiji than many cultures. In general, smart trousers with an open-necked, short-sleeved shirt is acceptable for men, while a similar style blouse with a skirt is fine for women. In Fiji as a whole, women should avoid clothes that are too revealing.

Main language(s) spoken in the community	English, Fijian and Fiji Hindi
Main language(s) spoken in the workplace	English

9. Health and safety

Many developing country contexts are challenging. You will face different, usually higher, physical and mental health risks than at home. As an Australian Volunteer for International Development, you will be required to have a good level of fitness, health and resilience.

You may be required to live and work in basic facilities and use local public transport. You may not be able to access the range or high quality of health services and facilities you are used to, and may not have ready access to a tertiary hospital, specialist doctors, or reliable supplies of your usual medication.

If you have a pre-existing health condition which requires ongoing treatment and regular medical checks, especially if it involves a risk of a medical emergency, consider carefully whether this type of work is appropriate for you. Seek early advice from your own treating doctor, ensure your condition is optimally controlled, and update your health management plan with your doctor prior to starting the Australian Red Cross Health clearance process. For many pre-existing conditions, we will require a detailed medical report from your treating doctor. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Australian Red Cross maintains strong policies on the use of vehicles, including motorbikes requiring at a minimum that users have a full Australian or New Zealand (not learners or provisional) license for the type of vehicle being operated, and in some locations and situations vehicles cannot be operated. Consideration should be given to this if volunteers intend to operate any vehicle or motorbike on assignment.

For further information refer to www.smarttraveller.gov.au.

10. Child protection

Australian Red Cross is a child-safe organisation and is committed to the prevention of abuse and neglect of children and young people. As part of the recruitment process, all candidates will be screened and assessed for suitability to work with children. Volunteers must make themselves aware of Section 6.9 of the AVID Code of Conduct and associated policies and documents for Child Protection.