

FDPF Lau Outreach
Scoping Data Summary and Analysis
Report
Eastern Division



3rd -18th August, 2025.

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awareness, and accessibility, which strengthened the impact and reach of the scoping activities in the Lau Group.

Background

The Lau Group, located in the Eastern Division of Fiji, comprises a series of islands spread across a vast maritime area. Despite their geographic isolation, the communities within these islands play an important role in Fiji's social and cultural fabric. However, due to their remoteness, access to services such as health care, education, transportation, and disability support remains a major challenge for residents — particularly for persons with disabilities.

In alignment with Fiji's national commitment to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the National Disability Inclusive Development Policy, the Fiji Disabled People's Federation (FDPF) and its partners have been working to identify, record, and respond to the needs of persons with disabilities across the country. The collection of this data from the Lau Group forms part of a broader initiative to ensure inclusive development, equal participation, and access to services for all persons with disabilities, regardless of location.

This report provides an overview of the number of persons with disabilities identified across the nine districts of the Lau Group — Cicia, Kabara, Lakeba, Lomaloma, Matuku, Moala, Mualevu, Nayau, and Ono. The purpose of this analysis is to:

- Establish a baseline understanding of disability distribution in the Lau Group;
- Identify districts with higher concentration of persons with disabilities for targeted interventions;
- Support planning, programming, and advocacy efforts for disability inclusion in remote maritime areas.

The information presented in this report will serve as a foundation for developing inclusive community programs, resource allocation, and collaborative partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, and community stakeholders to enhance the wellbeing and participation of persons with disabilities in the Lau islands.

Introduction

Between 3rd and 18th August, 2025, the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF), together with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD's), Medical Services Pacific (MSP), and Project Heaven Trust conducted a joint Disability Inclusion Awareness Training and Data Scoping Exercise across the Lau Group.

The activity was carried out in partnership with government representatives from the Ministry of Itaukei Affairs and representatives from the PA's office and community leaders, aiming to:

- Identify persons with disabilities across Lau's Island districts,
- Understand their demographic and impairment profiles, and
- Record their support needs and access to assistive devices or services.
- The findings serve as a baseline for planning inclusive programs and ensuring equitable access to services for persons with disabilities living in remote maritime communities.

The findings will assist stakeholders, including government ministries, development partners, and community organizations, to make informed decisions when planning programs, allocating resources, and providing direct support to persons with disabilities in the Lau islands.

Methodology

The data presented in this report was collected through a standardized data collection form developed by the Fiji Disabled People's Federation (FDPF) to ensure consistency and accuracy across all districts in the Lau Group.

Data collection was conducted in collaboration with community representatives, OPD's representatives and stakeholders who visited households within each district. The standardized form captured essential demographic information, including age, gender, type of impairment, and specific needs or areas of support required by persons with disabilities.

Once completed, the forms were verified by an officer at FDPF to ensure completeness and accuracy before being transferred to the central FDPF database. Following verification, data was entered into the database and subsequently analysed to identify trends, gaps, and district-level distributions of persons with disabilities.

The use of a standardized form and systematic verification process ensured the reliability of the data and provided a credible foundation for analysis and reporting.

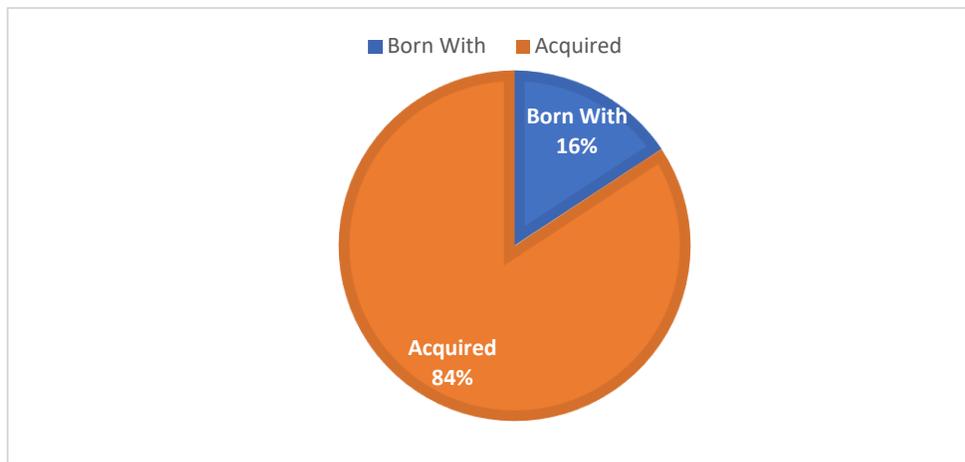
1. Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of persons with disabilities in the Lau Group reflects a diverse population spread across the nine districts. The total number recorded is 400 individuals, comprising both males and females of varying age groups and impairment types.

The data indicates that larger districts such as Lakeba, Moala, and Mualevu have higher concentrations of persons with disabilities compared to smaller or more remote islands such as Kabara—since only the village of Komo was scoped.

Preliminary observations also suggest that the majority of individuals identified experience physical, visual, or hearing impairments, while a smaller number have intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. Most persons with disabilities live in rural village settings, where access to assistive devices, transportation, and specialized services remains limited.

This demographic snapshot provides important insights for planning inclusive programs and highlights the need for continued outreach and support services tailored to the realities of maritime communities within the Lau Group.



The high number of acquired disabilities (84%) highlights a strong link to aging, health-related issues, or accidents, emphasizing the need for improved preventive healthcare, rehabilitation services, and elderly care in the Lau islands.

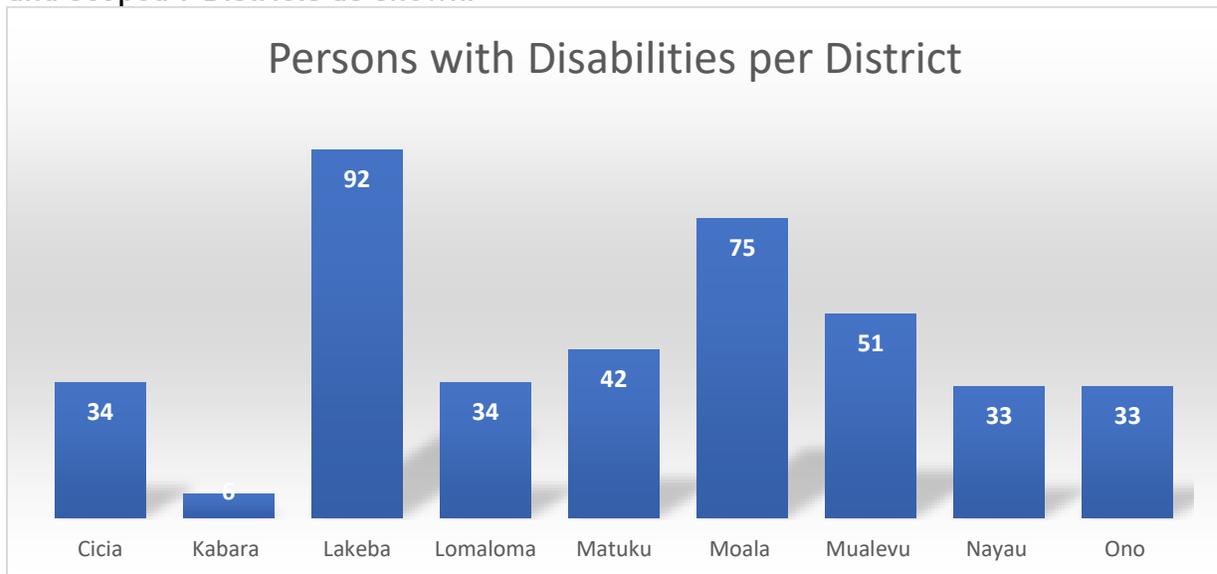
Summary of Villages Scoped

The data collection was conducted in 9 out of 13 districts, covering 48 of the 72 total villages in the Lau Group. This represents a district coverage rate of 69% and a village coverage rate of 67%. The exercise achieved full coverage in several districts

such as Lakeba, Moala, Cicia, and Ono, while other districts like Totoya, Fulaga, Oneta, and Moce were not reached due to logistical constraints

I. District-wise Distribution

There is a total of 13 Districts in Lau, from the 13 the team managed to collect data and scoped 9 Districts as shown.



Lakeba (92) recorded the highest number, followed by Moala (75) and Mualevu (51).

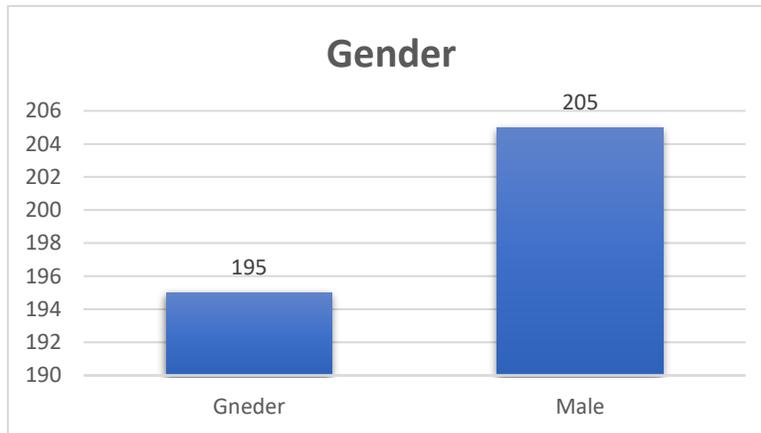
Kabara District, only Komo Village (6) had the fewest identified cases, possibly reflecting population size and accessibility challenges during data collection.

This district data highlights the widespread presence of disability across all Lau islands and underscores the need for targeted outreach in smaller, harder-to-reach communities.

The data confirms that disability exists across all districts, though some villages and four districts remain unscoped, indicating a need for continued data collection for full coverage.

II. Gender Breakdown

Gender representation is nearly balanced. Disability affects both men and women equally, suggesting the importance of gender-responsive approaches in planning community programs and services.



There is a slight predominance of males (51%) compared to females (49%) among persons with disabilities recorded in the Lau Group. The difference of 2% between male and female representation suggests near gender parity, indicating that disability affects both genders almost equally in the Lau context.

This balance highlights the importance of ensuring gender-responsive programming and support services that consider the specific needs of both men and women with disabilities.

III. Age Profile

The results indicate a predominantly elderly population among persons with disabilities. This suggests that age-related impairments (e.g., vision, hearing, and mobility limitations) are common.

- Average age: 60.5 years
- Most common age range: 54–73 years
- Children identified with impairments: 18

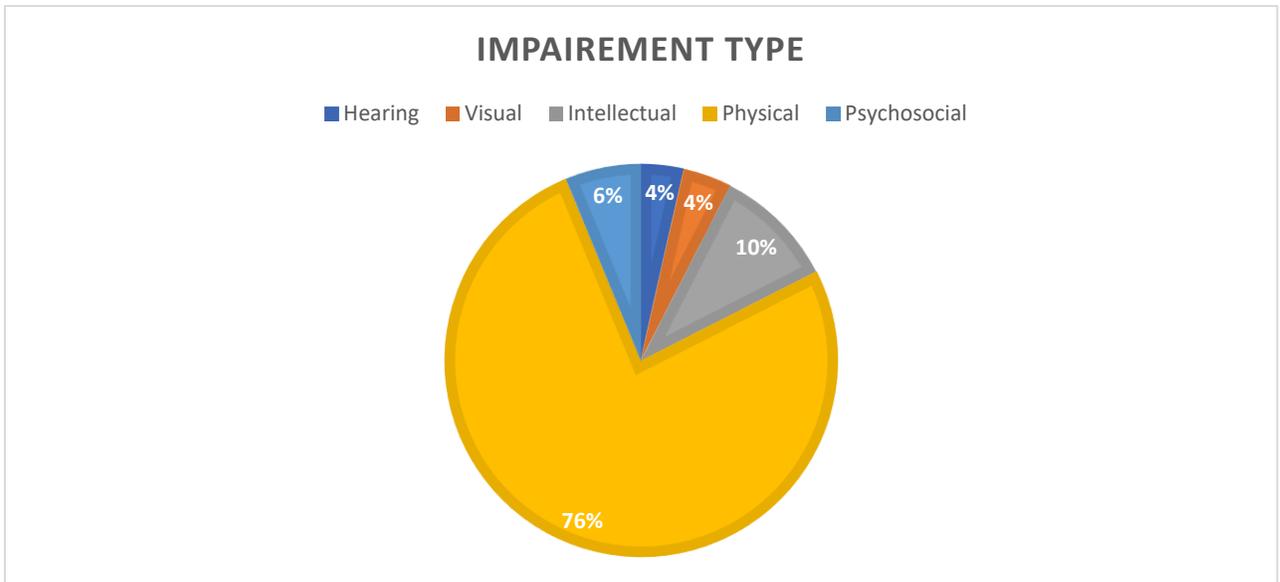
There is also a smaller group of children with disabilities (18) who require early childhood interventions, inclusive education, and ongoing family support.

IV. Impairment Types

Physical impairments (76%) are the most common across the Lau Group, largely due to aging, illness, or injury.

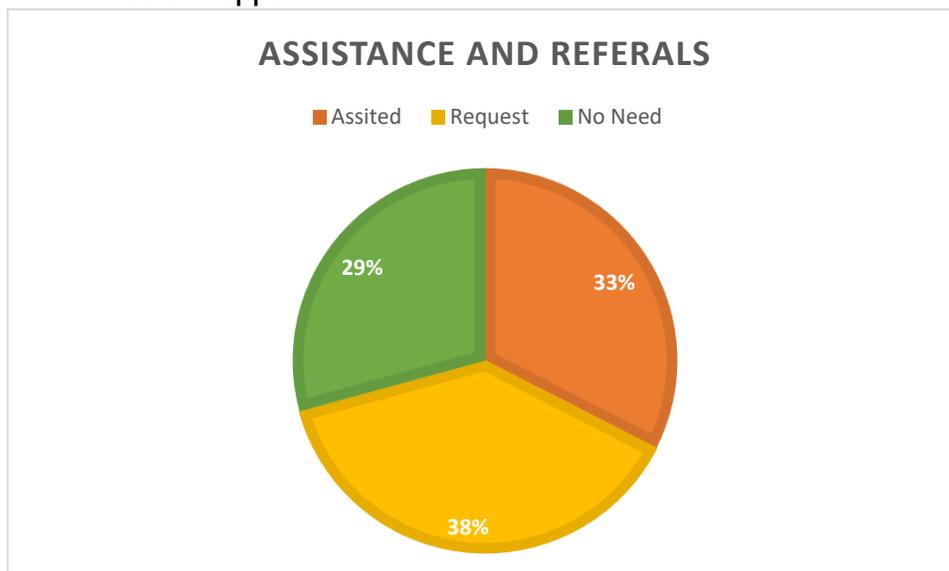
Intellectual (10%) and psychosocial (6%) impairments are also present, though often underreported due to stigma or lack of awareness.

Visual and hearing impairments, while smaller in number, have significant implications for communication and mobility within island settings



2. Assistance and Referrals

The scoping also captured data on persons who had already received assistance and those still in need of support.



Referral Agencies and Partners:

1. Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection
2. Ministry of Housing
3. Ministry of Health
4. Frank Hilton Organization
5. Project Heaven
6. Other relevant stakeholders providing disability support services

130 persons with disabilities (32%) have been assisted during the scoping and received support, an encouraging outcome of previous FDPF and partner interventions.

153 individuals (39%) remain in need of assistance, particularly in mobility and social welfare areas.

Continued coordination among stakeholders is necessary to ensure that all remaining cases receive appropriate follow-up and support.

3. Key Findings and Observations

1. High incidence of acquired and age-related disabilities demands improved access to healthcare and rehabilitation in remote island communities.
2. Physical disabilities dominate the data, requiring consistent supply and maintenance of assistive devices and mobility aids.
3. Children and youth with disabilities remain a vulnerable group; there is a need for inclusive education and family-based support programs as well as economic empowerment program.
4. Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) should be strengthened as the most practical and sustainable service delivery model in maritime areas. ***CBID is a central element of Fiji's national disability policy, focusing on decentralized services and strengthening community engagement.***
5. Inter-agency coordination between FDPF, government ministries, and NGOs must be enhanced to address identified requests effectively.
6. Data collection should continue periodically to monitor progress, ensure accountability, and support policy advocacy at national and provincial levels.
7. **Un scoped districts and villages** remain data gaps that need to be covered for accurate planning.

4. Recommendations

1. Establish an FDPF Lau Branch:

Create a dedicated FDPF Branch in the Lau Group to coordinate ongoing programs, monitor follow-up actions, and strengthen local advocacy and representation of persons with disabilities.

2. Expand Disability Services in Maritime Areas – Increase outreach missions and partnerships with local health centres and government stakeholders in the Lau Group.

3. Enhance Transport Accessibility:

Collaborate with the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji, Fiji Roads Authority and local boat owners to ensure accessible boats, ramps, roads, and safe boarding processes.

▪ Maritime Transport:

Boats and ferries commonly used in the Lau islands lack accessibility features such as ramps, handrails, and safe boarding options for wheelchair users and persons with limited mobility.

▪ Land Transport:

Many roads and vehicles are not designed for accessibility, with limited or no transport options for persons using wheelchairs or crutches.

4. Strengthen Referral Mechanisms – Ensure consistent communication between FDPF, ministries, and service providers.

5. Enhance Community Awareness – Conduct regular community sessions to reduce stigma and promote understanding of disability rights.

6. Support Children and Families – Prioritize early intervention, inclusive education, and psychosocial support for young persons.

7. Provide Training for Local Leaders – Empower village health workers and district representatives to identify and refer persons with disabilities.

8. Maintain a Centralized Disability Database – For continuous data monitoring and evidence-based policy development.

9. Expand Coverage in Remaining Districts – Plan a second-phase data collection mission to cover unscoped districts and villages such as Totoya, Fulaga, Oneta, and Moce.

Conclusion

The Lau Disability Scoping Exercise paints a comprehensive picture of disability prevalence, demographics, and needs within the Lau Group. With 400 persons identified, the findings highlight both progress in service delivery and remaining gaps in accessibility and support.

Sustained collaboration between the FDPF, OPD's, Government Ministries, and community stakeholders will be critical in ensuring that no person with a disability in the Lau Islands is left behind in Fiji's inclusive development journey.

Appendix

Table 1: Born With Vs Acquired Disability

Category	Number of People	Percentage
Born with disability	62	15.5%
Acquired disability	338	84.5%
Total	400	100%

Table 2: District and Village Scoped

Indicator	Achieved	Total	Coverage (%)
Number of Districts Scoped / Number of Villages Scoped	9 Districts / 48 Villages	13 Districts / 72 Villages	69% / 67%

Table 3: District Distributions

No	District	Number of Persons with Disabilities
1	Cicia	34
2	Kabara	6
3	Lakeba	92
4	Lomaloma	34
5	Matuku	42
6	Moala	75
7	Mualevu	51
8	Nayau	33
9	Ono	33
	Total	400

Table 4: Gender -Female vs Male

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	195	49%
Male	205	51%

Table 5: Impairment Type

Type of Impairment	Number	Percentage
Hearing	14	3.5%
Visual	16	4.1%
Intellectual	40	10.1%
Physical	305	75.9%
Psychosocial	25	6.3%
Total	400	100%

Table 6: Assistance vs Referrals

Category	Number of Persons	Description
Assisted	130	Received assistive devices (wheelchairs, elbow crutches, walking sticks, underarm crutches)
Requests for Assistance	153	Requested assistive devices, social welfare, housing, or referral to other agencies
No Assistance Needed	117	Did not request or require additional support
Total	400	