



# **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **BETWEEN**

The Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (hereinafter referred to as the “Commission”)

## **AND**

The Research Advisor (hereinafter referred to as the “Advisor”)

## **1. Background**

The experiences of children with disabilities in Fiji have been sparsely documented, mostly relating to socio-economic issues such as education, poverty, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), access to justice, developmental health etc. While research and studies have been carried out on children, a comprehensive assessment of the protection and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities is lacking in Fiji.

Children and young people are one of the most vulnerable groups exposed to rights violations because they are not in a position of self-sufficiency and maturity to exercise their rights and therefore depend on adults. Children with disabilities face additional barriers and are at higher risk of human rights violations compared to children without disabilities<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission is therefore of the view that there is an urgent need for a broad assessment of the status of the protection and promotion of human rights of children with disabilities in Fiji, to inform the State of its responsibility as the duty bearer to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by children with disabilities.

In line with the Commission’s Strategic Plan 2022-2027, Priority 1 ‘Protection & Promotion of the human rights of the most vulnerable amongst Fiji’s communities’, the Commission is conducting a baseline study focusing on the status of the protection and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji (Baseline Study on Children with Disabilities). The assessment aims to highlight successes, and challenges, and identify opportunities to better promote and protect the rights of children with disabilities.

## **2. Overview of the Baseline Study**

The objectives of the Baseline Study on Children with Disabilities are to:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/press-releases/worlds-nearly-240-million-children-living-disabilities-are-being-denied-basic-rights>



## **Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission**

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- Identify achievements or what is working well in efforts to protect and promote the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji;
- Identify challenges and gaps in efforts to protect and promote the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji;
- Identify opportunities and recommendations on strategies to protect better and promote the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.

The Baseline Study on Children with Disabilities will result in a public report on the current status of the protection and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji, with recommendations for government, non-government stakeholders, the community, the Commission, faith-based organisations, and any others that the research may identify. It will also provide baseline evidence for monitoring and evaluating future interventions specific to the protection and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.

Following the release of the findings, the Commission will launch an advocacy campaign including workshops and dialogue with stakeholders to discuss the findings and support the implementation of recommended actions. The project will aim to strengthen networks and collaborations amongst key disability stakeholders.

### **3. Expected Outputs of the Baseline Study:**

- Baseline Study Report on the current status of the protection and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.
- Baseline evidence for monitoring and evaluating future interventions specific to the protection and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.
- List of key stakeholders in producing the Baseline Study.
- List of strengths and achievements in efforts to protect and promote the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.
- List of gaps and challenges in efforts to protect and promote the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.
- List of opportunities and recommendations to better protect and promote the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.

### **4. Expected Outcomes of the Baseline Study:**

- The Baseline Study on Children with Disabilities is recognized and used by various stakeholders to inform policies and strategies to better protect and promote the rights of children with disabilities in Fiji.
- Strengthened networks and collaborations amongst key disability stakeholders.

### **5. Research approach and timeline**

- The Commission is engaging with families and children with disabilities, Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), government agencies, non-government and civil society organisations, service providers, faith-based organisations, and communities.



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- Data will be collected through interviews, community discussions, and focus groups, an online public survey, a survey for children, written submissions, and an analysis of relevant literature, reports, and statistics.
- The Project Steering Committee (PSC) with the Project Lead, Commissioner Veena Singh, and Assistant Project Leads Commissioner Alefina Vuki and Commission Director Loukinikini Lewaravu, are overseeing the Baseline Study.
- An OPD Project Steering Committee will play a critical role in providing their expertise, guidance, and strategic direction with the research, including support with the data analysis and validation process.
- The study is being implemented over 18 months, with preliminary findings expected by December 2025 and the final report released in 2026. Stakeholders will also be invited to a validation workshop to discuss the preliminary findings as part of the research process. The study will be followed by a 12-month post-advocacy campaign.

## 6. Research Advisor Scope of Work

The Commission engaged Research Advisor, will provide technical, strategic, and ethical oversight and input throughout the research process. This includes:

- Providing expert research advice, direction, and guidance on the Baseline Study on Children with Disabilities.
- Reviewing and advising on methodology and tools.
- Providing specialist input and review of the ethics protocol and guidance on ethical standards, particularly regarding children and disability inclusion, to ensure a robust, disability and child-inclusive research approach, data collection methods, and analysis.
- Supporting training and capacity building of the research team.
- Contributing to data quality assurance and validation.
- Provide expert input on the preliminary findings and final report.

The Advisor will provide technical input and support in the research process, research validation, preliminary study findings, and final report.

## 7. Research Advisor Key Activities

The Research Advisor will undertake the following key activities:

- Following a briefing on the project by the Commission Project Steering Committee, review the work undertaken and make any necessary revisions to the research methodology and process.
- Provide technical input into and finalise research methods, including all data collection tools, specifically tools for community consultations and focus group discussions, interview guides for families with children with disabilities, a survey for children with disabilities, an online public survey, and the process for written submissions.
- Provide input into, review of, and finalise the ethics protocol to ensure a robust, disability and child-inclusive research approach.
- Design and lead training for the research team and Project Steering Committee on data collection using the tools and ethical engagement.



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- Participate in the training provided to the research team (testing of data collection tools; training in policies, including safeguarding and PSEAH).
- Provide oversight into raw data collected, ensuring the data is collected and analysed with rigour.
- Provide input and guidance on the validation process, content, and presentation of preliminary findings/report.
- Work with the Project Steering Committee and Research Team to finalise the report.
- Participate in Project Steering Committee and OPD Steering Committee meetings.
- Participate in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) processes including a reflections output on lessons learned.

## 8. Project Duration, Modality of Work and Remuneration

**Engagement Period:** July 2025 – June 2026

**Working Days:** 60 days on retainer

**Modality:** It is preferred that the Advisor work in hybrid mode, with occasional in-person meetings scheduled according to availability and subject to need.

**Remuneration:** FJD24,000 (VAT Inclusive). *Payments will be made in instalments based on key deliverables and completion of assigned days, as outlined above.*

## 9. Qualifications and Experience

The Advisor will possess the requisite qualifications and experience to provide Expert Advice for the Baseline Study. The successful applicant will have met the criteria for selection by the Commission. The Advisor should have:

- At a minimum, a postgraduate qualification in a relevant field such as human rights, disability studies, social sciences, research methods, or a related discipline.
- Demonstrated experience in research involving children with disabilities, with a strong understanding of ethical and inclusive methodologies.
- Expertise in developing research tools for diverse groups, ideally including children, and designing participatory and inclusive research methods.
- A track record of producing research outputs tailored to a range of audiences (e.g., policy briefs, community reports, infographics).
- Experience in community-based research or in community settings.
- Experience in producing research outputs tailored for the needs of different audiences.
- Knowledge of working in the Pacific, preferably in Fiji.
- Expertise in developing research tools for various groups (ideally with children and experience developing participatory and inclusive research tools).
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, including flexibility, cultural sensitivity, and a sense of humour.
- The ability to undertake some travel in Fiji, if required.



## **10. Values**

The Commission strongly encourages applications from people with lived experiences of disability, women, young people, and individuals from diverse backgrounds. Respect for human dignity, ethical integrity, and a rights-based approach are essential to this role.