

FIJI COMMERCE & EMPLOYERS FEDERATION

About Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation



The Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF) is Fiji's largest private sector organisation, with nine Councils that provide Government liaison services, labour relations services, member services, training, and representation to various Boards and Councils to promote good governance and leadership, excellence, and innovation that shapes and enhances the business environment.



Market Constraints

Despite employing 60% of Fiji's workforce, many Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Fiji slow down business operations around three years after they enter the market. Fijian MSMEs have highlighted that they are unable to grow, or even sustain, their operations largely due to the lack of support services. This includes support in the key areas of business plan development, strategic goal setting, maintaining good financial records, HR organisation and development, and sales and marketing. International programs and accelerators have attempted to address this but have rarely offered long-term relevant support or shown results, resulting in local MSMEs placing limited trust in available advisory services.

Intervention

Economic Recovery



Strengthening MSMEs through business counselling and mentoring

MDF piloted a Fiji Enterprise Engine business advisory service which focused on finding effective ways to deliver and blend classroom training with business coaching, mentoring and networking, specifically tailored to the Fiji context and based on MDF learnings from the field. This pilot model generated over USD 600,000 in additional revenue for the eight participating MSMEs and created 32 new jobs over 18 months.

Following the success of the pilot, MDF partnered with FCEF to establish the MSME business accelerator model in 2019. Now known as the FCEF Fiji Enterprise Engine (FEE), it is the Pacific's first private sector-led, semi-commercial, business acceleration program. FEE classes are delivered through a number of media including one-on-one mentoring with local business coaches (LBCs) and networking activities aimed at supporting participant entrepreneurs to accelerate business success. Twelve MSMEs graduated from the 2019 FEE program. The nine-month program is also supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport (MCTTT).

FREE WEBINAR SERIES



Following the postponement of the FEE 2020 program in March due to COVID-19, MDF supported FCEF to provide a free webinar series tailored to help local MSMEs respond and recover from the impact of COVID-19. Delivered through the FEE platform, the six-part series covered a range of useful and relevant topics. In addition, the FEE program offered free follow-up one-on-one business counselling services for MSMEs. These new FEE webinar and business counselling services were provided by an International Master Trainer and LBCs from the FEE program, with additional webinar support from the Australian Pacific Training Coalition.