

Cyclone Ravages Fiji



On Saturday, February 20th, tragedy struck Fiji as Tropical Cyclone/Hurricane Winston, the most powerful cyclone to hit the Southern Hemisphere, devastated the country. This storm ripped through Fiji causing at least 42 deaths, flattening villages and leaving debris in place of homes, and destroying crops and livelihoods in just hours. An estimated 35,000 people remain in 400 evacuation centers.

As the largest microfinance institution in the country, SPBD Fiji is in a unique position to help many families that have been devastated, many of whom are our members. We currently help more than 7,000 poor but entrepreneurial families across Fiji by providing them with small business training, unsecured credit, savings, and ongoing guidance and motivation to help them start and grow small, income-generating businesses.

Since the storm, we have reached 3,600 of our members, and our preliminary damage assessment shows 62% have been significantly affected. We know more than 1,000 members have lost their livelihoods, more than 400 have lost their homes and more than 750 have lost both their homes and livelihoods. These numbers will worsen as we reach more remote locations.

Since 2010, we have helped our members grow businesses, improve homes, ensure their children receive a proper education, and save for the proverbial rainy day--whose time has, unfortunately, come. Given the extent of the devastation we must do much, much more to help rebuild lives.

Operation Restore Hope needs you! MicroDreams will help fund SPBD Fiji's relief kits and emergency home and business reconstruction efforts for families in devastated villages. Please support our efforts at this time of enormous need.

Donations may be made to The MicroDreams Foundation:

1) Please mail checks to:

- 60 Park Place, Suite 520, Newark, NJ, USA, 07102 (U.S. and international donors)
- P.O. Box 33541, Takapuna, Auckland 0740 (New Zealand, Australia, South Pacific donors)

2) Donate online at <http://www.microdreams.org/donate-today>

MicroDreams will channel 100% of donations received to SPBD in Fiji to help with the recovery and reconstruction effort. Any amount is helpful and much appreciated. Please forward this to friends who may also be interested in helping.

All the very best,

Vinaka vakalevu,

Greg, Polly and The MicroDreams Team