



Youth painting a mural to raise awareness of COVID-19 in Vuniivi settlement Lami, Fiji.

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## Fostering a sense of inclusion around disaster risk reduction in the Pacific

Many Pacific Island countries are located along the Pacific Ring of Fire, making them prone and vulnerable to an increased risk of natural disaster. The region also faces many other challenges on the journey to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Most islands are heavily dependent on tourism as their main source of economic income, women are severely under-represented in politics and gender-based violence is prevalent. Disaster-related data collection and management in many of these countries also has significant potential for improvement.

UN Volunteer Yo Kunieda supported the work of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) in Fiji from March 2020 to March 2021. Her main contributions centred on a Small Island Developing States (SIDS) project, which supports small islands to better manage disaster and climate risk.

Emphasizing the importance of resilient and sustainable development

practices, the project aims to strengthen management and monitoring capacities, and to share experience with other states, regionally and globally. The focus countries for this project are Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Samoa and the Solomon Islands, as well as Pacific Resilience Partnership stakeholders.

During her time with UNDRR, Yo was involved in a variety of activities to support disaster risk reduction in the Pacific region. She provided capacity-building training to 12 SIDS in the Sendai Framework Monitor, collected and updated disaster loss data, and distributed communication materials to spread awareness about disaster reduction.

Yo wrote a series of stories highlighting stakeholder activities relating to disaster risk reduction, gender and disability inclusion. She advocated for accessible course fees and scholarships for people with disabilities to more readily participate in disaster risk reduction education.

“ By mainstreaming gender and disability in my work, I tried to promote collaboration and foster a sense of inclusion around disaster risk reduction in the region.  
--Yo Kunieda, UN Volunteer with UNDRR, Fiji

Yo's achievements and experiences as a UN Volunteer have left a lasting impact on her, her colleagues and those she supported during her time in Fiji.

“ I was so impressed with how Yo worked remotely from Japan for the first eight months or more. It was an incredible achievement. Since she came to Suva, she has continued this dedicated approach and has managed to support all our SIDS government partners on the Sendai Monitor. This greatly exceeded my expectations. --Andrew McElroy, Head of the UNDRR Sub-Regional Office in the Pacific

Working remotely did pose a challenge to Yo's ability to communicate with Pacific partners, while leaving her feeling somewhat isolated from her colleagues. However, overall, she had a very positive experience as a UN Volunteer in Fiji and her contributions supported Sustainable Development Goals 9 and 11.

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## Asia and the Pacific

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