

A brief SPAFH profile in 1995

VIKA TIKINITABUA*

The South Pacific Alliance for Family Health (SPAFH) is a regional non-governmental non-profit organisation (NGO) whose primary focus is the promotion of population, family planning and related reproductive health programs in its South Pacific member countries¹. The ten countries include: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. SPAFH's headquarter is located in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. A brief history by its first Secretary General showed an increasingly sophisticated regional organisation¹.

“ SPAFH's mission is to strengthen the efforts of both the private and the public sector in family planning and related reproductive health and population programmes ... ”

Mission and goal

SPAFH's mission is to strengthen the efforts of both the private and the public sector in family planning and related reproductive health and population programmes, as strategy to support socio-economic development in the Pacific.

* Senior Project Officer, SPAFH, G.P.O. Box 729 Nuku'alofa, Tonga Is. The contact address for SPAFH is: Secretary General, PO Box 729, Nuku'alofa, Tonga Is. Telephone: (676) 23133, Fax: (676) 24047

SPAFH was originated and developed in an effort to address these areas by helping people have better control of their fertility. In assisting family planning programs, SPAFH seeks to collaborate with government and NGO in implementing activities that are compatible and acceptable with the culture, customs and traditions of the Pacific. SPAFH also ensures that these activities are responsive to the expressed needs of the indigenous people.

Organisational development

SPAFH is unique because its mission is specific to family planning and related programmes and that its staff is made up of indigenous Pacific islanders who have in-depth understanding and appreciation of their own local cultures and traditions. SPAFH's prime objectives is to expand the availability and accessibility of family planning services to the target population, through the support and assistance to family planning programmes in the member countries.

The SPAFH Charter requires that the regional organisation is a composite of indigenous Pacific Islanders, with the motive of encouraging the local people to identify their own needs and to develop appropriate strategies to address these needs. It is governed by three constituent bodies: the Board of Directors which is the premier decision-making body, made up of the Directors and Secretaries of Health of the ten member countries; the Executive Committee made up of the Board Chairman, the two vice chairpersons and the Secretary General; and the Secretariat which comprises the staff members of the organisation.

In-country programs

The broad strategies in terms of country projects are to:

- assist and support the upgrading of the quality of family planning/reproductive health services through training and support for clinic improvements;
- expand family planning information, education, communication, and awareness in reproductive health among communities;
- assist and encourage countries to incorporate family planning and population activities in national policy;
- promote family planning through the implementation of social marketing of condoms and contraceptive pills particularly in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Funding

SPAFH is dependent on donor agencies for its operations and programs. Since its inception in 1987, USAID has been the main donor¹. AIDAB support came about in 1992. With the recent closure plans of USAID support for programs in the South Pacific, one of SPAFH's crucial focus is to generate funding from donor agencies to sustain the organisation.

Reference

1. Sukwianomb J. South Pacific Alliance for Family Health. *Pacific Health Dialog*, 1994; 1 (1): 73-75. □