

Physiotherapy Department upsills participants

Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences' physiotherapy academic team is facilitating a week-long wheelchair service training for 27 participants from various ministries and social welfare department at the College's Pasifika Campus.

"The workshop is organised in conjunction with Spinal Injury Association and it aims to upskill social welfare officers on wheelchair assessment and prescription standards," Head of Department of Physiology and Physiotherapy, Venasio Ramabuke said.



Participants of the weeklong training with their instructors.

Ramabuke said the department was excited to run this training as part of their community engagement activities.

Irineta Macunaqio, a lecturer with the department, said this was the first time such training was provided to representatives from government departments that dealt with people living with disabilities.

She added that the participants were really enthusiastic about it and their responses had been great.

"It is a good opportunity for them to come and learn the proper techniques of handling assistive devices."



Joeli Susu, Technician Spinal Injury Association Fiji, shows the participants proper techniques of handling assistive devices

A representative from the Department of Social Welfare and Disability Unit, Niumai Marama, travelled from Labasa to undergo this training.

"This training is essential to me with regards to the work I do. This will enable me to better my service delivery to my clients," Marama said.

She said she would be keen to be part of more trainings that enhanced her skills in assisting people living with disabilities.

Another participant, Kevin Raikatalau, of Ministry of Woman, Children and Poverty Alleviation said he looked after people on the streets that were also disabled.

"This training has been helpful because the clients that we deal with, we are trying to make them more mobile. By learning on how to assemble and assess each client according to different types of wheelchair, I will be able to assist them better," Raikatalau said.

He said they were very thankful to the department for running this training.

"This is the first time for me to undergo such training and it gives me a lot of new ideas," he said.

Joeli Susu, Technician Spinal Injury Association of Fiji, said through the department they were able to reach out to different parts of the country.

"Partnering with the Physiotherapy Department has made things so much easier for us and I think we need to further build on this network. It (the partnership) will enable a small association like ours to deliver our services to the entire country," Susu said.