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## Fiji Finance company to assist women's groups

Daniel Naidu

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THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation has established a partnership with Home Finance Company (HFC) which will assist local women groups in setting up businesses.

Minister for Social Welfare Dr Jiko Luveni said the partnership would make it easier for groups to back up financial needs by providing easier access to microfinance loans.

A statement from the ministry stated women's groups may be given a \$2000 loan to start-up and could reapply for another \$5000 loan on a two-year term once the first loan was paid off.

HFC branch manager Odille King said the institution had previously helped individual women start up businesses and to purchase homes and properties.

The first group to be assisted will be the Soqosoqo Vakamarama Nakaya in Tovata, Nasinu.

"We will assist the Nakaya Women's Group by providing them with start-up capital for their tailoring business.

"Through the microfinance loan, the women will purchase the material and produce sewing items for sales," Mrs King said.

Dr Luveni said the Nakaya Women's Group had shown great potential in sewing, and that one of the group members had been trained through the sewing centre in Suva.

Group president Marica Vakatalai said she was grateful to the ministry for the assistance provided which would greatly improve their livelihood.

"We are currently sewing and selling clothes and are able to make more than \$70 per week, and with this assistance we can expand our business," Ms Vakatalai said.