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New Year's Message

Bula vinaka! Namaste! And a Happy New Year to all! Welcome to Issue No. 1 of the 2010 TI Fiji Bulletin. This issue includes developments of the month of December 2009 as well as the most recent updates of the new year. TI Fiji's Chair and Board Director begin by elaborating on TI Fiji's vision for 2010 in our New Year's Message...



TI Fiji staff with the MixFM crew in Lautoka, after an on-air appearance. Details on Page 3.

Challenges Met

"A strong and dedicated Board enabled the organisation to grow steadily [in 2009] despite relatively high turnover in staff and some difficulty within the Board membership. We gained much from core funding commitments from our donor partners enabling us to plan staff expansion and activities with a little more confidence than in previous years."

"Strengthening of the Board and Management capacity during the coming year will benefit the organisation greatly. We hope for longer term commitment to core funding commencing in 2010 as it will enable us to plan more confidently for longer term programmes especially for youth and for greater community outreach."

TI Fiji Board Director, Suliana Siwatibau

Lessons Learned

"Without a medium-term funding commitment it is difficult to recruit and retain the right people. Without a strategic plan with well defined key objectives and outcomes - it is difficult to attract medium term funding. The days of being reimbursed by way of half yearly acquittals are over. Donors are now more interested in hearing not only what we have done with their funds, but more so, what has been achieved by way of positive outcomes with the use of their funds."

"At our Strategic Planning Workshop on February 12 and 13, we will concentrate on developing a focused Strategic Plan which is achievable with the manpower and fiscal resources we have available and we will spend more time monitoring and evaluating the outcomes."

TI Fiji Board Chair, Dave Aidney

Emphasis on Results at Pacific TI Workshop

Pacific TI Chapters gathered in Wellington, New Zealand on December 11 and 12 for a two-day workshop on strategic planning. TI Fiji was represented by Chair Mr. Dave Aidney and Director Mrs. Suliana Siwatibau at the workshop, which was aimed at assisting Pacific chap-

ters with strengthening their annual strategic plans and focusing on monitoring and evaluating.

"The emphasis was on results based planning and the discussion on monitoring and—
...continued on Page 2.



TI Fiji Director Suliana Siwatibau (far right) and Chair Dave Aidney (second from right) at the workshop in Wellington.



“...we will concentrate on developing a focused Strategic Plan which is achievable...and we will spend more time monitoring and evaluating the outcomes.”

Emphasis on Results at Pacific TI Workshop

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evaluation was interesting,” said Mrs. Siwatibau. “The advice is to try to build in regular monitoring and evaluation and to include its costs in the budget.”

TI Fiji’s representatives returned eager to share what they had learned. This will be vital in working to formulate an ambitious but achievable strategic plan for TI Fiji that is within resource constraints and produces measurable results.

“We gained better insight on

the elements of a good strategic plan and more confidence in our ability to help our own team with the process which we have to undertake early in February to prepare TI Fiji’s strategic plan for the next 3 years,” said Mrs. Siwatibau.

Aside from the technical know-how gained, for Mr. Aidney it was also an opportunity to meet regional colleagues and exchange ideas

“Being my first TI regional meeting, I also found the opportunity to meet the Chairs

and CEOs of the other Pacific Island Chapters. Very rewarding to learn from them and their key outcomes,” he added.

“At our Strategic Planning workshop on February 12 - 13, we will concentrate on developing a focused Strategic Plan which is achievable with the manpower and fiscal resources we have available and we will spend more time monitoring and evaluating the outcomes,” Mr. Aidney concluded.

Watch out for highlights of the new strategy in next month’s bulletin.



Top: A youth group auditioning in Nadi for ‘The Challenge’.

Bottom: Judges give their feedback.



Launch of ‘The Challenge Youth Drama 2010’

Youths take centre stage this year with the drama competition titled ‘The Challenge Youth Drama 2010’. TI Fiji launched the drama competition in the presence of the national media on Wednesday December 23 at the TI Fiji office in Suva.

The competition is part of the National Initiative on Civic Education (NICE) Project. It is coordinated by TI Fiji as an implementing partner of the NICE Project, which is wholly managed by UNDP, approved by the Fiji Government and supported by EU and NZAid.

Participants from the ages of 16 to 25 are required to write and

perform a 20-minute play exploring the topics of Democracy, Democratic Governance, Human Rights and Constitution and Constitutionalism.

At the launch, UNDP NICE Project Manager Mark Borg said this drama initiative marked an increased focus on youths as agents of change in civic education.

“Youths tend to be idealistic. In the current world we live in, perhaps a little more idealism is needed,” Mr. Borg told journalists at the launch.

Competitions will be held in Suva, Nadi, Labasa and Savusavu with youth groups at

each location vying for cash prizes of \$4000 (First Prize), \$2000 (Second Prize) and \$1000 (Third Prize).

Auditions began in Suva and Nadi on Saturday January 16. Further auditions will be held in Suva and Nadi on Friday February 13 and also in Labasa and Savusavu on Friday February 20. The final competitions in each of the 4 locations to be held in March.

Entry is free and groups of up to 9 members can register by calling or sending an SMS to 7471 713 or 7471 723 or sending an email to: thechallenge2010@gmail.com.

World Anti-Corruption Day Awareness Campaign

On World Anti-Corruption Day, observed on December 9 last year, TI Fiji took the opportunity to reach out to the citizens of Suva, with a special focus on youths as future leaders of society.

Preparations began with a training workshop for young volunteers at the TI Fiji office on December 7, where they learned the basics about various forms of corruption, their harmful effects on society and TI Fiji’s role in promoting a zero-corruption culture. The youths had become involved

as a result of awareness programs conducted by TI Fiji at the Miss South Pacific Pageant held in Suva in November.

On World Anti-Corruption Day, the newly-trained volunteers joined TI Fiji staff on the streets of Suva, handing out brochures, sharing information and answering questions from the public about corruption and the services provided by TI Fiji in combating it.

High on the agenda was the free legal advice and assistance provided by ALAC (the

Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre), based at the TI Fiji office.

Members of the public responded well and it was also observed that the experience was beneficial in providing people with clarifications in the Fijian and Hindi vernaculars. Spurred on by the response received during the day’s campaign, TI Fiji is currently working on producing awareness literature in Fijian and Hindi.



Young volunteers at the training session in December.



Contact Centres Open in Lautoka and Labasa

In response to a significant demand for anti-corruption advice and services, TI Fiji continues to expand with the opening of the new ALAC Contact Centres in Lautoka and Labasa this month. The contact centres are manned by TI Fiji-trained volunteers and were made possible through a partnership with the Ministry of Youth.

The contact desks are located at the Ministry of Youth office at Ro Tavaiqia House on Tavewa Avenue, Lautoka and at Ro Qomate House, Labasa. The desks enable members of the public in the Western and Northern divisions

to have access to free legal advice and assistance through ALAC as well as general information TI Fiji's programs and events.

TI Fiji's ultimate goal is that these contact centres will assist in improving accessibility, visibility and provision of services to the public for the most basic of queries.

"With the more serious queries and complaints, the ALAC Legal Officer and volunteer will have constant visits to these centres to attend to such complaints. It is envisaged that a monthly visit to the centres be made, to assist the contact centre officers," TI Fiji

Executive Officer Koila Kabu said.

TI Fiji volunteer Doreen Sharan will be the face greeting visitors to the Lautoka Contact Centre, while Moreen Prasad is her counterpart in Labasa.

An FSM graduate, Doreen says she is happy to do something new, which allows her to be exposed to interesting experiences as she contributes to curbing corruption in the country.



Top: The Lautoka Contact Centre desk. Above: Youth Officer Western Patrick Morgam and TI Fiji EO Koila Kabu meet at the Lautoka Contact Centre opening.

New Legal Officer Joins ALAC

Victims and witnesses of corruption who approach the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) for assistance will be greeted by its new Legal Officer, Marama Tuisawau. Ms. Tuisawau joined ALAC this month and comes from the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) where she worked as an Assessment Officer.

A qualified lawyer, Ms. Tuisawau says she had heard about the global efforts of TI and joined TI Fiji as a volunteer in October last year.

"I had always known that TI was an organization dedicated to fighting corruption. And so I decided to volunteer," Ms. Tuisawau said.

According to TI Fiji Executive Officer Koila Kabu, since it was launched in April last year ALAC has grown from being an independent project to being fully capable of integrating well with the goals of TI Fiji.

"The coherent working together of the ALAC staff, with newly gained experience from the ALAC workshop in Berlin, will see an ALAC that is capable and able to

assist victims and witnesses of corruption," said Ms. Kabu.

TI Fiji's new Legal Officer is expected to play a major role in expanding the services that TI Fiji is able to provide for those who have witnessed or experienced corruption.

"The new Legal Officer brings in a new angle to pushing for reform within our government systems, within our approach to better our services, and more importantly, to blend in with the path that the National Chapter (TI Fiji) is taking," Ms. Kabu said.

"I had always known that TI was an organization dedicated to fighting corruption. And so I decided to volunteer."

TI Fiji on the Airwaves

Corruption was the topic of conversation this month when TI Fiji staff and Board members took to the airwaves, appearing on various national radio talkback shows.

Speaking on English as well as Hindi and Fijian vernacular radio programs, TI Fiji representatives were able to answer questions about corruption and provide essential information about anti-corruption services available to listeners.

Stations visited included the Lautoka-based MixFM as well as Suva-based stations GoldFM, VitiFM, Radio Fiji 1 and Radio Fiji 2. Topics of the on-air discussions included the history of TI Fiji, ALAC's free legal assistance and referral services as well as the NICE youth drama competition 'The Challenge 2010'.

TI Fiji staff who participated in these discussions were pleased to note the positive response from listeners, who called in to offer

comments, ask questions and many also contacted the TI Fiji office for assistance.

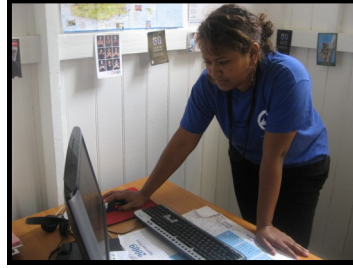
In the coming year, TI Fiji hopes to continue to raise its profile for the benefit of the greater community, ensuring they are equipped with accurate, relevant information that will empower them in the fight against corruption.



TI Fiji staff talk corruption and answer listeners' questions.

New Year's Resolutions

As a new year awaits us, TI Fiji continues its work in spreading the anti-corruption message and advocating for better integrity systems in our communities, organizations and government. TI Fiji Staff share their visions for taking on the challenges ahead, as they answer the question: 'What do you hope to achieve for TI Fiji in 2010?'



ALAC Programme Officer Tokasa Ramaqa sets up her desk at the new ALAC Office at 62 Pratt Street.

"Secure commitment of youths as volunteers and members of TI Fiji and also getting private, public sector, community leaders and civil society organisations involved to promote zero culture of corruption in Fiji. Also to ensure that TI Fiji programmes are ongoing and out-

reach is concentrated to people in urban and rural areas. Last but not least, to ensure that I uphold integrity in my daily relationship with my colleagues, friends and family members."

- Zena Sherani, NICE Programme Officer

"To try and contribute as much as I can to the growth and development of TI Fiji and its programmes. Not only for ALAC related issues but on TI in general. And to learn as much as I can about the way TI works and its contribution towards combating corruption in the country."

- Tokasa Ramaqa, ALAC Programme Officer

"To build, encourage and inspire the organisation. This role was given me with the main aim of taking TI Fiji forward. With the few months of learning the ropes and how things work, this year will see a lot of application. The organisation, by the way, consists of the young, spirited, and committed staff. By maximising our output, we will be able to assist the Board in their governance of TIF and its principles."

- Koila Kabu, TI Fiji Executive Officer

Have Your Say!

We encourage you to tell us what you think about corruption-related topics. In each issue, we'll choose a topic and pose a question for our readers to respond to. Email us your answers at oa@transparencyfiji.org and you could win a TI Fiji T-shirt or sulu and have your answer printed in the next bulletin. Please note that your answers must be free from any political, religious or ethnic bias or criticism.

This month's 'Have Your Say' topic is:

TI Fiji envisions a Fiji free of corruption. Is the "eradication" of corruption a realistic goal?

In the next issue...

- TI Fiji to participate in European Commission-funded Forest Governance Integrity Programme
- Highlights from the drama competition 'The Challenge Youth Drama 2010'
- Updates on TI Fiji's new Strategic Plan
- Meet TI Fiji's new volunteers



Transparency
International Fiji
2010

Contact Us

SUVA
62 & 72 Pratt Street
PO Box 12642
Ph: 3304 702

Email: oa@transparencyfiji.org

LAUTOKA

TI Fiji Contact Centre at the Ministry of Youth Office

Ro Tavaiqia House

LABASA

TI Fiji Contact Centre at the Ministry of Youth Office

Ro Qomate House

Transparency International (TI) Fiji is a watchdog against corruption. TI Fiji envisages a Fiji free from corruption for the just development of our citizens and a sustainable future for our nation. Our values include transparency, accountability, integrity, justice, equality, courage, democratic governance and peace and stability. A programme of TI Fiji known as the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) provides free legal advice and referrals to members of the community who have been victims or witnesses of corruption.

For more information about TI Fiji, contact our Communications Officer via email: co@transparencyfiji.org

Join the global coalition against corruption.