

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

'Corruption'
Poster Artists
Receive their
Prizes 2

Youths Show
Flair for Drama 2

Forest Integrity
Governance
Programme 2

TI-S Rep Com-
mends TI Fiji's
Growth 3

Volunteer Profile 3

Radio Awareness
Update 3

Financial Integ-
rity Workshop 4

Have Your Say! 4

TI Fiji Reaches Out

Bula vinaka! Namaste!

Welcome to Issue No. 2 of the 2010 TI Fiji Bulletin.

The month of February has been an exciting one for TI Fiji, with community visits, workshops and visit from TI Secretariat representatives.

You'll find all the details of the last month's events in this Bulletin...

For the past 8 months, the ALAC Team of TI Fiji has been taking the anti-corruption message to the front steps of communities Fiji-wide. After ALAC was launched in April 2009, ALAC officers began visiting communities around the country, talking about corruption and providing legal assistance. According to ALAC Legal Officer Marama Tuisawau, members of the public have responded well to these visits and as a result, many have sought advice and assistance from TI Fiji for their corruption-related

problems.

"The response has been overwhelming. It has enabled the people of Fiji to ask questions they have been harbouring for too long and also empowered people to complain on corrupt activities in their communities," Mrs. Tuisawau said.

The community visits have taken place in areas including Burebasaga in Rewa, Korolevu on the Coral Coast, Nanukuloa in Ra, Waiqele and Batinikama in Labasa, as well as places in Suva and Nadi. The ALAC Team has even visited the Naboro Maximum Security Prison outside Suva to conduct anti-corruption awareness and answered inmates' questions about corruption. Villages, settlements and neighbourhoods have been visited, with ALAC staff providing information and answering questions from members of the community.

"The types of assistance are on-the-spot legal advice, following up with organizations on allegations of corrupt activities, drafting of letters for walk-in clients and referring clients to the relevant organizations suitable and available to deal with their queries," Mrs. Tuisawau added.

The visits have been made possible through networking with various community leaders, as well as through requests from community groups and their leaders.

"People are encouraged to write in and request for our visits, also to call in. We encourage those living in communities to see the approval and assistance of community leaders to inform people in advance and organize a meeting place," added Mrs. Tuisawau.



Marama (left) answers questions on corruption in Suvavou village.

"For those in villages, it's only proper that they seek the permission of the village headman or 'Turaga ni Koro', who can inform villagers in advance and organize for the use of the village hall."

TI Fiji's ALAC Team continues to visit communities and has received many invitations over the past few months. Mrs. Tuisawau emphasized the importance of such visits, saying they have been very effective in raising the profile of TI Fiji and empowering the public to know their rights and take a stand against corruption.

"These visits are vitally important in terms of creating an awareness of the very existence of ALAC and TI Fiji. They also empower people to come forward and report or complain on corrupt activities occurring in their society," she said.

TI Fiji Community Visits are FREE OF CHARGE. To request for a visit to your neighbourhood or community group, you can call the ALAC Office (3584 975), e m a i l (poalac@transparencyfiji.org) or visit our Suva office or Contact Centres in Lautoka or Labasa.



Tokasa and Marama of TI Fiji (at left) with members of the Laqere community.



Sanam of TI Fiji speaks with members of the Hindi-speaking community in Vanua Levu.



Above: TI Fiji community visits to the Northern and Western divisions.



TI Fiji Volunteer Setaita Tavanabola presents John Kamea with his prize.

"...performances were creative, filled with emotion, humour and action..."



Youth groups perform their dramatic skits for the judges.

According to World Bank reports, illegal logging costs at least \$10 billion with 80% of timber production being illegal...

'Corruption' Poster Artists Receive their Prizes

A primary school student and an employee of the UNDP were both recipients of prizes on Monday 15 February for their artistic efforts in the TI Fiji Art Poster Competition, staged during the PBS Miss South Pacific Pageant.

The poster competition took place at the TI Fiji Stall at the pageant venue Albert Park in Suva in November last year. During this day-long competition, visitors to the booth were briefed on the background of TI Fiji, its links to the

global TI movement and the various forms of corruption that take place around us.

To participate in the poster competition, they were then asked to draw an example of corruption.

Participation was open to all passersby who attended the initial briefing, and included groups of students, members of other NGOs and members of the public.

Prizes were awarded for the junior

and senior categories, with the Saint Anne's student claiming the junior prize and John Kamea of the UNDP topping the senior category. The prize winners were presented with a certificate and TI Fiji 'sulu' by TI Fiji NICE volunteer Setaita Tavanabola and Communications Officer Merewalesi Nailaitikau.

Go to www.transparencyfiji.org for the latest information on competitions and other awareness events that you can be involved in.

Youths Show Flair for Drama

Youths explored their flair for the dramatic on Saturday February 13 at Epworth House in Suva, as they auditioned for 'The Challenge Youth Drama 2010'. Organized by TI Fiji, the youth drama competition attracted several groups from various schools, NGOs and youth groups who performed 5-minute skits for the panel of judges. The skits are part of 20-minute plays written by the participants, who will perform them in full at the final audition to be held on Saturday March 13.

Covering the topics of Democracy, Human Rights, Constitution and Constitutionalism and Democratic Governance, the competition is an initiative of the UNDP-managed NICE Project. TI Fiji Programme Officer Zena Sherani said she and her team are pleased with the level of initiative and creativity shown by the participants who came to the auditions.

"Seven groups showed up and we would indicate that it was above average because participants grasped the concepts really well

and their performances were very creative, filled with emotions, humour and action," Ms. Sherani said.

"A mixture of ethnic groups participated during the auditions. In addition it was revealed from our findings that majority of the contestants were females and this was something encouraging because since we live in a patriarchal society where women are not given a chance to participate and express their views."

In addition to being a great opportunity for youth groups to practice their performances, the auditions also gave them the chance to hear feedback from the judges and find ways to improve.

"With comments from judges, they had raised constructive criticisms which allowed participants to improve on their play," Ms. Sherani added.

"Participants were also given a chance to defend the outcome of their play and to raise questions on

the judges' reflections on their performance. As observed, participants appreciated the comments that were provided to them by judges."

The final auditions will be held next month at the following venues and dates:

- Saturday 6 March
Yaroi Village, Savusavu
- Kshatriya Hall, Sagar Street, Labasa
- Saturday 13 March
TBA, Nadi
- TBA, Suva

Once the finalists have been decided, audiences can look forward to an exciting showcase of young talent, using drama to share the messages of Democracy, Human Rights, Constitution and Constitutionalism and Democratic Governance. According to Ms. Sherani, there will be something for everyone to enjoy.

Go to www.transparencyfiji.org or call 7471 723 or audition and competition dates and venues.

Forest Governance Integrity Programme for TI Fiji

TI Fiji turns its attention to the global issue of illegal logging this year, joining other TI national chapters in a programme which looks closely at corruption in the forestry sector. The Forest Governance and Integrity Programme (FGI) began its operations in 2009, tackling corruption as the major driver of illegal forestry activities.

Phase I of activities began in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, China, Malaysia and Indo-

nesia, addressing corruption at all stages of the logging production chain. Fiji joins in Phase 2, along with Vietnam, Cambodia, Vanuatu and Laos.

The EC-funded FGI Programme aims to address how corruption has enabled illegal practices to thrive, with detrimental effects on the environment as well as economies. According to World Bank reports, illegal logging costs at least \$10 billion with 80% of timber production being illegal in

countries like Papua New Guinea, Cambodia and Indonesia.

More consultations are yet to be held on the specifics of phase 2 of the FGI programme which TI Fiji is proposed to be participating in. However, it is known that it will involve Forest Anti-Corruption Analysis, Solutions and Advocacy. TI Fiji looks forward to further developments and stands ready to contributing positively to eradicating corruption in Fiji's forestry sector.



TI-S Representative Commends TI Fiji's Growth

TI Fiji has grown in leaps and bounds since its founding over a decade ago, said a TI Secretariat (TI-S) representative who visited the National Chapter in Suva last week. On the evening of Thursday 25 February, TI Regional Director for Asia Pacific and Director for Organizational Development Mr. Pascal Fabie and TI Programme Coordinator for the Asia Pacific Department Ms. Anna Thayenthal were hosted to dinner by the Board and staff of TI Fiji. Mr. Fabie and Ms. Thayenthal were on a three-day visit (24-26 February) during which they met with staff, Board members and stakeholders to assess the successes and challenges faced by TI Fiji.

Over dinner, they mingled with staff and local stakeholders and exchanged ideas on taking Fiji and the region forward in the battle against corruption. Speaking at the dinner, Mr. Fabie said that he was very impressed with the progress of TI Fiji since his last visit. With regards to the programmes and administration of the National

Chapter, Mr. Fabie commended the Board and staff for their good work and assured them that the TI Secretariat continues to take interest and offer support in the development of effective programmes for the elimination of corruption. He encouraged TI Fiji to make use of the advice, expertise and tools which the TI Secretariat continues to offer its National Chapters to assist them in fighting corruption successfully. Mr. Fabie also mentioned the professionalism that he encountered at TI Fiji.

"After meeting with staff here, it is good to see that there are people who know what they are here to do and are pushing in the same direction," he said.

Members of the Board and staff spoke at the dinner, including founding member Daryl Tarte and TI Fiji Board Chair Dave Aidney.

They thanked Mr. Fabie and Ms. Thayenthal for their advice and feedback

over the course of their visit. Mr. Aidney also took the opportunity to recount TI Fiji's humble beginnings, starting with a staff of 3 in a small office space on Carnarvon Street and now with a staff of 12, occupying two buildings at its current location on Pratt Street, with Contact Centres in Lautoka and Labasa.

While there has been much progress, Mr. Fabie acknowledged that there are still many challenges ahead, including the securing of long-term funding, the strengthening of existing programmes and continuing to raise the profile of TI Fiji and its services.

The two TI-S representatives left Fiji on Saturday 27 February for Vanuatu, where they will hold consultations with the National Chapter there.



Top: Mr. Fabie and Ms. Thayenthal (left) meet with Mr. Aidney and Mrs. Kabu. Above: Mr. Fabie (centre) at the dinner with Mr. Aidney and TI Fiji Board member Professor Chandra (right).

Volunteer Profile: Koresi Qereqeretabua

Koresi Qereqeretabua first heard of TI Fiji through various workshops and events that took place in his neighbourhood. Today, he is a Volunteer at TI Fiji, lending his time and skills in working with local communities for the eradication of corruption.

Mr. Qereqeretabua, who brings with him skills and experience in IT, currently assists with media monitoring, community visits and IT problem-solving. Before joining TI Fiji, he was a part-time IT tutor at the Commercial School of Australia and a customer interaction agent for Optus Mobile.



"I have assisted with going out on workshops, and I'm also interested in knowing more about corruption and how we can fight against it as a whole, from our society, to friends, to our working environment and even as a

family," Mr. Qereqeretabua said.

He added that he looks forward to contributing to TI Fiji, especially in terms of his IT expertise and assisting with communications and community visits. With the involvement of young, committed and skilled volunteers, TI Fiji continues to involve youth in bettering and expanding on its areas of assistance in fighting corruption.

For information on how you can join TI Fiji as a volunteer or a member, visit our website www.transparencyfiji.org.

Radio Proving Effective in Raising ALAC Awareness

Since January this year, TI Fiji has taken an active role in reaching out to the community through radio talk shows. Thanks to the kind collaboration of local radio hosts, TI Fiji has been able to promote ALAC services and community visits as well as invite youths to participate in the NICE drama competition 'The Challenge 2010'.

Since the beginning of the radio appearances, ALAC staff have noticed a marked increase in walk-in clients who

are seeking assistance for their corruption-related problems.

"The response has been overwhelming. The majority of people who now come in to seek ALAC services tell us in their initial interviews that they heard about us on the radio," said ALAC Legal Officer Marama Tuisawau.

She added that these clients are from all cultural backgrounds, including speakers of English, Hindi and Fijian.

Staff and Board members of TI Fiji have visited radio stations in Suva and

Lautoka, answering questions from listeners nationwide and providing legal assistance for their corruption queries.

During their visit this month, TI Secretariat representatives Pascal Fabie and Anna Thayenthal paid a visit to Lautoka-based radio station MixFM when they travelled there to visit TI Fiji's Western Contact Centre, based at the Ministry of Youth Office at Ro Tavaia House.



TI Fiji's Mere and Tokasa (right) talk to DJ Tora of GoldFM in Suva.

TI Fiji Participates in Financial Integrity Workshop

TI Fiji joined representatives of ECREA and the Suva City Council (SCC) on Friday 19 February for a workshop on 'Governance, Auditing and Forensic Accounting'. Held at the SCC Chambers, the half-day workshop was facilitated by Rosie Langi, a forensic accountant and member of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), an international anti-fraud body. The workshop came about as the result of an initiative between TI Fiji and ECREA Boards to undergo training for their staff.

Ms. Langi, a Board member of TI Fiji and head of its newly-formed Audit Committee, presented participants with an interactive and proactive approach to fighting fraud globally. The workshop covered the importance of internal auditing to NGOs and the various 'red flags' that can be referred to when recognizing fraud. Ms. Langi emphasized in her presentation the importance of honesty, transparency and financial savvy in the workplace.



Guest Speaker Alok Mishra addresses participants at the workshop.

Participants discussed ways of managing risk within their own organizations to minimize the possibility of corrupt practices. Further insight was provided by Guest Speaker Mr. Alok Mishra, an internal auditor who has previously worked in India and Fiji for the Bank of Baroda. Mr. Mishra currently works for the Housing Authority in Suva. He shared his experiences and outlined the importance of working with fellow employees to encourage positive changes in attitude and

behaviour towards fraud prevention.

TI Fiji Executive Officer Koila Kabu said the workshop has been a step towards staff continuing to improve their understanding of fraud in all its forms and methods of recognizing and preventing fraudulent practices.

"Staff now have a fair knowledge on the importance of clean and proficient work," Mrs. Kabu said, adding, "All the projects will be reflected in their individual financial reports, and at this stage, staff are able to comprehend that their work holds accountability, integrity and honesty."

Mrs. Kabu said there are plans to conduct future workshops in collaboration with ECREA and other partners. TI Fiji's Audit Committee will serve many functions. According to Ms. Langi, these will include reviewing an Audit Committee Charter, raising awareness on risk management and reviewing specific accounts and areas as needed.

Have Your Say!

We encourage you to tell us what you think about corruption-related topics. 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:

Usually only "big" corruption schemes in government and private organizations gain media coverage and attention. How can small-time corruption in villages and rural settlements be better addressed?

Other Highlights...

- Update of TI Fiji's financial system using MYOB to be completed by the end of March.
- ALAC in-house training on Friday 5 February.
- Fijian translations (1st editions) of TI Fiji and ALAC brochures produced on Wednesday 17 February.
- FCOSS Social Justice Day launched on Monday 22 February and attended by TI Fiji Programme Officer Zena Sherani.
- Due to the postponement of the Annual Planning Meeting, updates on TI Fiji's new Strategic Plan will be in the next Bulletin.



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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
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