

February Bulletin

Number 2 | February 2009

Transparency International

Fiji

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Bula Vinaka! Namaste! and Welcome to the second issue of TI Fiji's new monthly bulletin. In this edition you can expect monthly updates and information regarding what is happening at TI Fiji, current and up-coming events, as well as general topics affecting TI Fiji.

You can read more in the upcoming quarterly newsletter, *TI Fiji Update*, that will soon be available!

Local Updates

'Voice of Reason' launches

The writings of the late Mr. Savenaca Siwatibau was launched on 23 February at the AusAID lecture theatre in USP. Scholars, media bodies and other interested individuals were invited.

Mr. Savenaca Narube, Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji together with the Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific Dr. Rajesh Chandra, jointly launched the publication.

Update on NICE

From the 4th –17th of February 2009, a workshop was carried out by the UNDP on National Initiative on Civic Education (NICE) at the Pacific Theological Centre in Suva. Programme Officer, Zena Sherani attended the workshop and the activities were based on the project, "*Civic Education Framework-Developing National Curriculum for Community Civic Education*".

The purpose was to identify problems associated with democratic governance and prescribing a solution for it. Exercises included group work on formulating a "Tree of Life" and composing a song related to democracy song and role plays on selected topics.

On March 2nd, the NICE partners will meet to package the programmes messages.

ALAC commences operation

The Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) project is currently in its inception phase. Its main aims are to empower citizens to make and pursue corruption-related

complaints, and to consequently translate these concerns into structural changes.

Mrs. Ma'imoa Koila Kabu, formerly at NLTB, assumed duties as the new Programme Director from Monday 23 February and is committing herself to the launch at the beginning of April 2009. The opening of the Centre doors to cater for victims and/or witnesses should see the reception of corruption-related cases. The Centre will provide legal advice and assistance to such persons, help them pursue their complaints, and undertake advocacy for broader reform.

It will not undertake the investigation and prosecution of cases being brought forward by clients but will make a difference in the most vulnerable in our society.

TI Fiji Expects Review

There will be a three day visit by Dr. Ian Patrick from 9-11 March, to conduct a review of the work that TI Fiji has been and is currently engaged in.

The Review that will be conducted will assess experience under the Pacific Support Programme implemented by TI New Zealand with Pacific Island Chapters, funded by NZAID.

Communications Officer Appointment

After selection interviews for the Communications Officer's position, four final candidates were shortlisted on the basis of their production verification and publications skills.

The criteria for the appointed communications officer was drawn up last month with the help of TI Fiji Media Intern Morgan Hanks, who was at the time, carrying out the publications work for TI Fiji.

Mr. Jone Tuipelehaki Raqauqau, has been selected and begins work soon.

Upcoming Workshops

For the upcoming month of March, TI Fiji will be conducting workshops throughout the country to promote the issues that usually relate to TI Fiji's vision and mission. The workshops help TI Fiji in achieving their goals and objectives and makes the community a more active participant.

For the month of March, there will be three, one-day workshops altogether with the first beginning on 6 March in Suva, followed by one in Nadi on 20 March with the final one held in Labasa on 27 March.

Budget Transparency Project Enters Implementation Stage

With Fiji's poor ranking in the results of the 2008 Budget Transparency Project, TI Fiji in collaboration with FSPI and other relevant organisations, will begin work on executing the recommendations from the results of the Project.

Spearheaded by the Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington D.C, TI Fiji was part of a survey on measuring how transparent Government budgets are in 85 countries.

International Lessons

The Pros and Cons of local ACAs

Experience in the Asia Pacific Region about the establishment of Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) comes from the analysis of national ACAs. Local ACAs are not as common as national ones but the lessons learned about ACAs success and failure can be applicable to local ACAs.

It has become apparent that the size of the geographic area that ACAs cover may have an influence on their effectiveness, meaning that ACAs that cover a smaller geographical area may be more effective than those covering a larger one.

In developing a plan for local ACAs, attention should be given to the role of linking together anti-corruption efforts, particularly if the agencies have an analytical function and care should be taken to prevent competition between agencies from obstructing anti-corruption efforts.

There are at least four different models of ACAs which have been tried and tested. The first one is the universal model with its investigative, preventative, and communicative functions, for example The Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

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DID YOU KNOW?

That a recent survey by TI Fiji on Fiji's systems of governance revealed that corruption in its various forms exists at all levels of society. Unfortunately, many people perceive corrupt practices as part of business and general life. The problem of corruption is a national issue and every person in Fiji has a role to play in eradicating corruption and in promoting integrity.

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The second type is the investigative model depicted by a small and centralised investigative commission, example Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigative Bureau (CPIB). Both models are organisationally accountable to the executive. Third involves the parliamentary model which includes commissions that report to parliamentary committees which are separate from the executive and judicial branches of the country. This includes the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption which takes a preventative approach to fighting corruption. Last but not the least is the multi-agency model which includes a number of offices that are individually separate, however together they weave a web of agencies that advocate for anti-corruption.

The models described above include three types of responsibilities 1) investigation and prosecution of high-level and other cases 2) prevention work such as developing registers of interest for political classes, and 3) promoting anti-corruption public education programmes. While donors are willing to support these types of activities, approaches change leading to problems of sustainability for ACAs. When ACAs are given too broad a remit to carry out all of these functions, "mission overload" and lack of resources makes failure almost inevitable.

Refer to Article - (Local Anti-Corruption Agencies: Pros & Cons, U4 Helpdesk, Transparency International, 2007)

International Updates

Workshop in PNG

A workshop titled "Sub-Regional Melanesia Workshop on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption" has been scheduled to take place in Papua New Guinea from 10-12 March 2009.

TI Fiji Senior Executive Officer, Mr. Apisalome Tudreu will be representing the organisation in this three day long event.

TI Demands EU Documents

A European Union (EU) parliamentary committee has been urged by Transparency International to vote in favor of accountability and transparency.

TI is concerned that the revised regulation may bring insufficient improvement. The proposed phrasing for access to EU documents gives institutions too much scope to deny access, but the restricted access to documents from EU states means it is difficult for the public to scrutinise EU spending and EU funds beneficiaries.

Leading Activists Punished in Montenegro

Restriction in civil society activity in Montenegro recently reached the highest point when a leading activist from Transparency International's partner organisation Mreza za Afirmaciju NVO sektora (MANS). MANS filed a complaint on 5 February before Montenegro's High Court.

The Constitution of Montenegro guarantees every citizen the right to organise a civic petition, and the local legislation does not require official permission to be obtained in order to organise public civic action.

TI supports MANS efforts to bring transparency to the administration of public assets, its strong protest against the intimidation of civil society in Montenegro as well as the constitutional rights of civil society activists.

Journalists Win 2008 Integrity Awards

David Leigh, Investigations Editor at the *Guardian* (UK) and Roman Shleynov, Investigations Editor at *Novaya Gazeta* (Russia), have been honoured for their research and exposure of corruption in defiance of bureaucratic obstacles and the risk of legal action against them, in order to penetrate secret webs.

The 2008 Integrity Award (which is a yearly recognition of extraordinary contributions to the fight against corruption awarded by Transparency International) winners, were honored at a ceremony that was held on 17 February 2009 in London.

Now in its seventh edition, the Integrity Awards have honored individuals and organisations from Asia and Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Welcome to TI Fiji's new addition. In this section, individuals have the opportunity to write and express their opinions and views on topics that TI Fiji is advocating. Every month TI Fiji has a different topic so make sure to keep a lookout!



Can Ethics be Taught?
By Lina Scalzo
TI Fiji Financial Officer

"This question has been of interest to me ever since my university days, where one of our compulsory units included the study of professional ethics and integrity.

What sparked my interest then, and now, is whether ethics can be taught or whether they are innately part of us. Certainly, most of us learn from our earliest teachers-our parents and family, so in that sense it could be said that it is possible to teach ethics and integrity. And certainly it is a question that the great philosophers pondered in ancient times, and their theories continue to be discussed to this day.

The greater question for me, however, is how does one sustain their ethics and integrity in the wider world without compromise?"

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Say "No"
to
Corruption



& "Yes"
to
Integrity