



Balance

"HELPING TO BALANCE THE SCALES"

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UPR: Reviewing UN Member States' Commitment To Human Rights

To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity – Nelson Mandela

THROUGH a mechanism called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Human Rights Council reviews on a periodic basis, the fulfilment by each of the 193 United Nations Member States towards their human rights obligations and commitments. Fiji's first round of UPR Review was on 11th February, 2010 where a significant achievement of civil society participations led to the 103 recommendations which touched on issues raised by Fiji NGOs. The Fiji State rejected six (6) of the recommendations whilst accepting ninety-seven (97).

Then it was on to the second round of UPR Review, held on 20th October 2014.

In March 2014, the NGO Secretariat submitted a final report to the UN HR Mechanism. The report was supported and endorsed by the following 11 organisations: Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC), Save the Children Fund Fiji (SCF), Citizen's Constitutional Forum (CCF), FemLink Pacific, Ecumenical Centre for Research and Advocacy (ECCREA), Social Education and Empowerment Program (SEEP), Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Peoples' Community Network (PCN), Fiji Media Watch and Fiji Public Service Association (FPSA).

Additionally, FWRM and FWCC submitted individual reports whilst international partners such as the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Reporters without Borders submitted shadow UPR reports. In preparation for the actual UPR session, FWRM's Daiana Buresova and CCF's Sandra Fong and Sina Mario were present for the UPR INFO organized Pre-Session on the 6th of October. The UPR INFO Pre-session is the only and strategic opportunity that national and international CSOs are able to utilize to speak up and raise concerns about human rights records regarding States to Permanent Missions, prior to the actual review.

17 countries were present at this pre-UPR session: Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany,



By Michelle Reddy

Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Namibia, Netherlands, Romania, Spain and Switzerland. International NGOs who also provided insight into Fiji State's human rights record were: Centre for Civil and Political Rights, Reporters Without Borders, Child Rights Connect and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

A few days before the actual review, CCF's Reverend Akuila Yabaki, FWCC's Vandhna Narayan and FWRM's Michelle Reddy presented at a side event on Tuesday 28th October, organised in conjunction with Amnesty International. The side event was well attended with delegates from the Permanent Missions of Pakistan, USA, UK, Switzerland, Australia, the Solomon Islands and Swaziland, and representatives from YWCA, Amnesty International, Oceanic Rights, UPR Info and OHCHR. The Permanent Mission of Fiji to Geneva was also invited to the side event.

At the actual review, Fiji had accepted 98 of the 137 recommendations, including engaging with Special Procedures Mandate Holders and ratifying core human rights instruments. However, it has not accepted the recommendation to establish a constitutional commission or review the Constitution.

Out of the 137 recommendations that were shared, four areas, comprising approximately 50

recommendations, were a result of direct interventions of the NGO Coalition:

1. Strengthening the Fiji Human Rights and Anti – Discrimination Commission in accordance with Paris Principles.
2. Establishing a Constitutional Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the 2013 Constitution and carry out national consultations to ensure that the Constitution is reflective of the will of the people.
3. Follow through on Fiji's commitments to the Human Rights Council to respond to visit requests by UN Special Procedures Mandate holders and issue an open invitation to all Special Procedures of UN HRC, the ILO and other international observers.
4. Repeal all policies and repressive decrees, in particular, the Public Order (Amendment) Decree, the Media Industry Development Decree, the Essential National Industries Decree and any section of a number of decrees that removes jurisdiction of the Courts to hear the validity and legality of government actions.

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement wishes to see a fulfillment of the States obligations to CEDAW, which is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, it is often described as an international bill of rights for women and was ratified by Fiji in 1995.

The Convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

In order for the State to truly fulfill its human rights obligations and commitments, a genuine commitment must be made to set up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.



From the Director's desk

Greetings from the Fiji Women's Rights Movement and welcome to the first issue of *Balance* for 2015!

As FWRM's newly appointed Executive Director, I look forward to both the challenges and opportunities that this year heralds, particularly with the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women just around the corner. The 'Pacific Bloc' was a force to be reckoned at the recent Beijing+20 Review in Bangkok, and are currently strategizing for CSW as a united force towards the regional and global progress of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Also on the rights agenda, was the successful lobby by the Fiji NGO Coalition at Fiji's Universal Periodic Review in Geneva last year, where significant recommendations on human rights were made as a result of direct interventions by Fiji NGOs.

While only 98 of the 137 recommendations have been accepted by the State, there are many opportunities to work for further advances in human rights in Fiji. In particular, FWRM is focused on the implementation of recommendations in relation to Fiji's Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission. It is vitally important that the Commission is supported towards becoming more robust, well resourced, with strong human rights Commissioners and Paris Principles-compliant legislation to govern it. Only then can it fulfill its role as an independent body to promote human rights and support those who have suffered human rights violations in Fiji.

On a lighter note, the office is in a hive of excitement, as we anticipate celebrations for International Women's Day! The global theme for IWD 2015 is 'Make It Happen', but we have decided to go one step further in our commemorating this special event with our own theme 'When I Was A Girl – Intergenerational Leadership', highlighting the importance of women and girls learning from the generations before and after us. In order for leadership to be effective and sustainable, we look to the future but also at our rich herstory, to ensure that the marginalized are part of all decision-making processes, enabling them to take charge of their destiny.

We look forward to your presence at Sukuna Park on Saturday 7 March, and thank you for your support and commitment to women's human rights. We know that it is not an easy road but as we reflect on the massive successes and disappointments of 2014, we know that we will get there one step at a time with a renewed sense of conviction, purpose and vigour.

In Solidarity,
Tara Chetty

Transitions



PRESS RELEASE

THE Fiji Women's Rights Movement is pleased to announce the appointment of Tara Chetty as its new Executive Director. She replaces Virisila Buadromo, who left in November after 13 years with the organisation. As FWRM's Programme Director for the past two years, Chetty was seen by the Movement's Governance Board as the most suitable candidate for the post following a stringent recruitment process.

Says Governance Board Chair Daiana Buresova: "We felt that Tara was the strongest contender for this position, given her academic credentials and her long history of involvement with the Movement. We have no doubt that she will carry out her duties effectively and add to FWRM's national work, as well as its credibility as an esteemed feminist organisation in the region."

A former Communications Officer for FWRM before leaving for the United States to pursue a Masters in Gender Studies, it is clear that Chetty has the confidence not only of the Board but also that of her former colleague, friend and mentor Buadromo.

Says Chetty's predecessor: "I am absolutely thrilled to know that Tara will now be taking over the reins as the new ED of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. This is a critical time for Fiji, especially in its current transitional phase and I believe that Tara will not only meet expectations, but surpass them. She is well-versed with the dynamics of the organisation and is a passionate feminist and

women's human rights defender."

Chetty is looking forward to the challenge of her new role and will officially take up her new post in February, 2015: "We have an excellent team here at FWRM, and a strong organisation built on the legacy of the feminists who have come before us. I look forward to continuing the work for women's human rights with my colleagues here at the Movement, and in the broader human rights community locally and internationally."

Bio:

Tara Chetty is a feminist activist from Suva, who has a long history of engagement with the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. She was a former FWRM Management Board member, Young Women's Working Group member and a former Communications Officer. Tara left the Movement in 2009, to pursue a Master of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies in the United States, on a Fulbright scholarship. In the course of her academic research, she worked with the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRDIC), then based out of the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University. After graduation in 2011, Tara returned to Fiji and human rights work in the Pacific, with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Pacific Regional Office.

She re-joined FWRM in March 2012 as Programme Director, before being appointed Executive Director in December 2014.

Beijing+20 In Action

IT'S been 20 years since the 4th World Conference in 1995, where the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action were conceived. Considered to be the most progressive blueprint ever created to advance gender equality and women's rights, the UNESCAP Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review reflected on past achievements and challenges last year from 17th – 20th November in Bangkok, Thailand.

Fiji's CSO delegation comprised of a broad coalition of feminist networks, LGBT activists and allies including Sharon Bhagwan Rolls of FemLINKPACIFIC, Noelene Nabulivou, Shirley Tagi and Viva Tatawaqa of Diverse Voices and Action for Equality (DIVA) Tarusila Bradburgh of the Pacific Youth Council (PYC), Nelly Caleb from the Pacific Disability Forum, Lily Boer of Voice for Change PNG, Seema Naidu of Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and Brigitte Leduc of Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), with others. The Fiji Women's Rights Movement was represented at both gatherings by its then Programme Director Tara Chetty and Communications Officer Genevieve Sukhdeo.

It is the challenges faced by this region in often-tumultuous political climates that sparked intense discussion amongst the Pacific's civil society sector, particularly at the Asia Pacific CSO Forum Beijing+20 prior to the actual Review. The Forum provided Pacific coalitions with opportunity for regional reflection to strategize in solidarity on long-standing issues and was held from 14th – 16th November.

In true Pacific fashion, 30 representatives from governments and civil society organisations in the region, set the pace for the high-level negotiations by attending the *'Pacific Intergovernmental Negotiations Preparatory Briefing.'* The briefing, which convened the day after the Asia Pacific CSO Forum, took place at the Royal Princess Hotel. The meeting played a significant role in preparing the Pacific delegation for the Beijing+20 Review, which officially opened on the same day.

The event was organised and facilitated by the Pacific CSO Steering Committee, namely FWRM, DIVA, FemLINK PACIFIC and PYC, along with SPC and PIFS. The Committee was also extremely grateful to UNESCAP, UNWomen and Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) for their tremendous support in coordinating the briefing.

Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and French Polynesia attended the preparatory meet.

The briefing allowed both regional delegates

By Genevieve Sukhdeo

and CSO representatives an insightful and participatory space to address their concerns regarding the Beijing+20 process. As such, the 'Pacific Bloc' stood firmly in solidarity on a broad range of issues on the first day of the Beijing+20 Review, marking a somewhat historic chapter in forging stronger partnerships and strengthening regional co-operation.

The Pacific delegations were among the strongest, most active voices in the room calling for the inclusion of 'women human rights defenders and feminist organisations' in the draft declaration. They also proposed that the text address the marginalisation of women on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, sexual and reproductive health and rights, specific language on the harsh realities of climate change affecting small island states, inclusion of gender in macroeconomic analysis and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) designed to be 'youth-friendly', among others.

Despite the inspiring display of solidarity and call to action by the Pacific on these key issues, much of the language deemed crucial to the advancement of gender equality was removed. However, despite this setback, the Pacific was hailed 'the most progressive' throughout the negotiation process and definitely stamped their mark at the Beijing+20 Review.

Civil society organisations were also recognised for their phenomenal contribution towards achieving gender equality on both a regional and global scale. The Executive Director of UNWomen, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka reaffirmed the critical role of CSO's in her opening remarks

in the form of a video presentation by pointing out that they provide a "constant, vigorous challenge to the status quo" and are "our greatest allies."

The observations at the UN Conference Centre was that the legacy of those who carried the Pacific flag through the decade of women and on to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women has been upheld throughout the negotiations - including in reaffirming the language of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action."

His Excellency Mr. Enele Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, chaired the Ministerial session with Pacific Ministers and country representatives' present, as well as civil society who read out statements. All Pacific delegations made strong statements on climate change issues, beginning with Tuvalu. The other delegations also cited a range of challenges remaining in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, including a call from Palau for both recognition and implementation of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Beijing+20 Review was officially closed on November 20th with a rousing rendition of Helen Reddy's renowned feminist anthem "I Am Woman." The Asia and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was adopted unanimously at 4pm (Bangkok time), when differences were finally set aside – for the moment.

The Declaration will be the Asia – Pacific region's submission to the global negotiating table, where it is hoped that the coming negotiations over the post-2015 development agenda will reflect the Universal truth uttered by Hillary Clinton on 5th September, 1995 at the United Nation's Fourth World Conference On Women in Beijing: "Women's Rights Are Human Rights!"



Young Women's Age Definition Consultation

By **Veena Singh**

LAST year on 29th November, approximately 60 young women from most parts of Fiji gathered to discuss their thoughts on 'the definition of a young woman' and "what age bracket they fall under." Young women are often viewed within the rigid and limited definitions of "wives, mothers, sisters and daughters" and as caregivers within the home front.

Young women are also seen as 'users' of reproductive health services and programmes. As a result of this, the complexity and diversity of young women is often overlooked. Even within the women's movement, the focus on young women and the definition of young women is unclear. On-going debates include: the real needs of young women, the inclusion and participation of young women, the donor's focus on the issues of young women, and whether young women's concerns are being accurately articulated within these political spaces both private and public.

The age definition consultation to define young women was crucial for the Fiji Young Women's Forum, especially for young Fijian women to share their thoughts and opinions on how they, as young women should be defined and perceived. The discussions from the 'age definition consultation' proved to be rich

and a form of emancipation for those who attended.

It articulated, highlighted and reaffirmed that young women are not a homogenous group and nor do they fit within a binary or normative definition of what our society often assumes us to be. The young women's age definition consultation deconstructed the normative definition of young women and also addressed and highlighted their findings from their own intersectional analysis during their group work.

Further to this, it has been documented in various forums and spaces that the presence of young women and their definition is often contested; that some older women within the movement (or in society in general) feel threatened by the inclusion of young women. This is reflected in the hierarchy of power and knowledge that is seen within the movement, which protects women who have been actively involved and have participated for a greater length of time.

The young women who had gathered for the consultation mentioned some of their individual challenges, but highlighted collectively that recognition must be made that both younger and



older women can co-exist, and their issues can be openly discussed without the need for either group to feel threatened or marginalised.

However, in order for this to be fully appreciated and acknowledged, there is a need for young Fijian women to determine and agree on an age definition. In addition to this, we also recognise that there is a huge gap, challenges and barriers to young women's participation and that there are not enough programmes, as well as limited funding for young women. So taking this into account, the young women who had gathered for this consultation came to an agreement that, "a young woman is someone who identifies as a woman and is between the ages of 18-35".

Pacific Young Women's Transformational Leadership Consultation

AS FWRM's Communications Officer, I was nominated by Tarusila Bradburgh of the Pacific Youth Council to attend the Pacific Young Women's Transformational Leadership Consultation. Organised by UN Women Pacific, the consultation was held at the Amari Watergate Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand from 9th – 11th November last year.

The consultation was aimed at empowering young Pacific women to engage in advocacy around the Beijing Platform for Action, and to strengthen their leadership and governance capacity, thereby encouraging their full participation in international and regional intergovernmental processes.

Young women representatives who attended the consultation would also be given the opportunity to apply to a fund to implement advocacy activities within their respective communities.

It was there at this intense, three-day affair, that I met and forged bonds with the following amazingly gifted young women from the Pacific: Sharon Yendevange (Papua New Guinea), Sia Uhila (Tonga), Kauai Oppenheimer (Nauru and the reigning Miss Nauru at that!), Christina Ora (Solomon Islands), Stephanie Edward (Pomphei - Federated States of Micronesia) and Evelynna Tikau Webb Pukoro (Kiribati). It was also a pleasure to have Tarusila from PYC join us as a mentor and focal contact for the participants.

Our two facilitators Martin Child and Tonni Brodber were instrumental in strengthening our technical capacities in the lead-up to the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum on Beijing+20 and the Asia and

By **Genevieve Sukhdeo**

Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review. I'd also like to acknowledge the workshop's Communications Specialist, Olivia Owen for all her assistance during the three days, as she was responsible for compiling a special publication filled with our 'creative writing', as well as recording footage from the event. Vinaka Olivia!

The participants reflected on past experiences, came up with effective communications strategies, practised different lobbying techniques, performed role-plays and honed our knowledge on CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), amongst other activities.

We were also able to gauge various situations from a human rights perspective, while those of us who worked with communities at the grassroots level were able to link the lessons learnt, with our work back home. To assess how much we learnt, we decided to implement social media strategies to effectively engage our online audience on specific issues affecting women, particularly young women.

As such, a Facebook page was created with participants ready and mobilised to engage in their national democratisation processes. Our page is titled 'Pacific Youth in Action – Being the Decisive Element' and is a platform created by young Pacific women for Pacific voices.

Sia Uhila, the Tongan Representative working with UNDP had this to say of her experience:

"My personal achievements were getting to know other inspirational young women from the region, their stories, their experiences and learning to work together and network for young women's betterment in the Pacific. I plan to identify ordinary people and tell their stories to help inspire young women from the Pacific, look for opportunities to help all young women with what they aspire to do and work with the networks I have to advocate for issues affecting young women in the Pacific."

The page aims to create awareness on social and gender issues amongst the diverse Pacific island communities, by disseminating information through its online audience. The information ranges from videos, creative writing, articles, photos and even topics to be debated on. Currently, there are 604 likes in total.

In conclusion, I must say that this was an incredibly life-changing experience, which boosted my personal and professional capacity not just as a young woman, but also as a feminist activist and communicator. I learnt a great deal and am immensely grateful for the opportunity to work and learn alongside some truly brilliant people. Thank you UN Women Pacific, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Tarusila and the Pacific Youth Council, and of course to Sharon, Sia, Kauai, Christina, Stephanie and Evelynna.

You are all an inspiration!

FIJI WOMEN'S FORUM & INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

“Public Perception of Women in Leadership”

By **Losana Tuiraviravi**

THE Fiji Women's Forum launched its study of 'Public Perceptions of Women in Leadership' in November, 2014. This study was commissioned by the Netherlands Government under the Funding Leadership of Opportunities for Women (FLOW) programme, co-ordinated in the Pacific by the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) and implemented at Suva's Holiday Inn by the Fiji Women's Forum, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, FemLINKPACIFIC and Commonwealth Local Government Forum Pacific. The lead researchers were Sarah Pene and Patrina Dumar.

Its purpose was to provide the Fiji Women's Forum with information on public perceptions of leadership and women in political leadership. This was done in order to guide and inform the Women's Forum and constituent organisations, regarding directions for voter education and advocacy for greater female political representation.

This study comprised a survey questionnaire administered to 1211 men and women from rural and urban communities around Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, 25 focus group discussions (with a total of 187 participants) and 8 key informant interviews.

Interestingly, 81% of respondents agree that women are under-represented in Fiji and 72% think

it would be better if there were more women in National government. Rather than a lack of education (15%) or experience (19%), the majority of respondents identified cultural barriers (60%), discrimination (59%) and a lack of support at the community level (53%) as the major reasons why fewer women than men stand for elections.

Ms Taufa Vakatale, Fiji's first female Deputy Prime Minister in the 90s, launched the research. She also shared her experiences during her time in Parliament as the lone woman in the House of Representatives with the challenge of working alongside fellow male MP's. She also spoke on some of her successes during her tenure as Minister for Education.

The result of the study encapsulated three key statements:

1. The majority of people in Fiji feel that women are under-represented in government and that changing this would be beneficial to the nation as a whole.
2. People recognise that the qualifications and attributes of leadership are not unique to men, but are common to both men and women.
3. Conservative viewpoints that favour male leadership are a small but significant minority in certain demographics; the strongest support for



female leadership is to be found amongst women and young people.

This was the first general study in Fiji to explore community views about women in politics and leadership. The research also analysed current attitudes, how this varies across Fiji's population and where change is occurring.

The launch was attended by various stakeholders, partner organisations, Fiji Women's Forum co-conveners, network members and researchers.

You can access this publication through the following link: <http://www.iwda.org.au/research/public-perceptions-of-women-in-leadership/>

Research on the Run - Women That Voted

FJI has been caught in a vicious cycle of conflict for the past two and a half decades with four military coup d'états since May 1987. In this environment, marginalised groups face greater and greater exclusion from decision-making exercises, with associated disillusionment and lack of faith in democratic processes. The effects of these crises have been, and still are, deep and wide-ranging. They have contributed to continued economic underdevelopment, rising poverty levels, serious social displacement, human rights abuses, along with a legacy of conflict trauma and victimization with each coup.

Women, particularly those from marginalised groups, bear the disproportionate burden of the current political and socio-economic environment. Unfortunately, it is these women that have the least access to decision-making on the critical issues affecting their lives. In times of crisis, women's participation is further discouraged and side-lined. If women can be empowered as citizens and leaders to take full ownership of their democratic affairs – for example, raising their issues publicly, engaging in dialogue, voting, and taking on leadership roles – they can have a say in the decisions that affect their livelihoods and communities and potentially disrupt the cycle of conflict in Fiji.

In 2012, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement was awarded a European Union (EIDHR) grant for a period of two years to undertake a project titled 'Enhancing the political participation of marginalised women voters'. The

By **Menka Goundan**

project began in February 2013 and is contracted to end in January 2015.

The overall objective of the project was to enhance political participation of women from marginalised groups in national democratic processes.

FWRM had been working closely with these groups of women, with a focus on ethnic minorities and young women, to enhance their political participation. The organisation was therefore interested in the experiences of these women as voters in the lead up to, and during, the 2014 national elections. Hence, the research on 'Citizenship Rights for Women - 2014 Fiji Elections Follow-Up Research.'

Over the last three months of 2014, the research team at the movement conducted a study with structured questionnaires and focus groups, with three categories comprising of women from all over Fiji. The women were categorized as direct (women who attended the FWRM Electoral Toolkit training), indirect (women trained by the direct women) and random women who had not had any training by FWRM. The research team visited areas in Suva, Nausori, Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Sigatoka, Navua, Lakeba, Levuka, Nasinu, Lami and Labasa to gather data for the research.

During the fieldwork, there were a total of 385

interviews conducted out of 365 as anticipated in the sample size. There were 52 indirect, 64 direct, 261 random, as well as 3 polling day workers and 5 women candidates interviewed. In November, a total of 42 women participated in 7 focus group discussions of which 23 were direct participants of FWRM trainings.

During the research, it was shocking to note that most of those interviewed did not know that there were 44 women contesting the elections! They stated more awareness would have been helpful, in terms of the number of women who stood as candidates. They also stated that the research interviews provided them an avenue to gather information which they previously did not have.

One of the key challenges faced by the research team was the sensitivity of the subject, which hindered women's full participation in the interviews. Although women did not refuse to give interviews, they were cynical about answering certain questions.

With the field work completed, the research report is currently being compiled. The report will be published by March this year, with a more substantive analysis on women's participation in the 2014 Fiji elections.



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GIRLS Lead 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

By **Lillian Delana**

OUR GIRLS (Grow-Inspire-Relate-Lead-Succeed) programme took the lead role in advocating on important issues during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. These 10-to-12 year old girls used theatre arts to raise their voices against all forms of Discrimination, Peer Pressure and Bullying, as well as promote Gender Equality.

2014 was an exciting year for our young group of feminist activists who toured Vunimono Sanathan Primary School and Narere Primary School where students actively engaged in the GIRLS performance. This creative space allowed them to learn about Gender Inequality using methods more in tune with their level of understanding. The GIRLS also performed for two communities outside Nausori, which was met with much enthusiasm by those in attendance.

After each performance, the GIRLS took the time to sit in groups with the other students and

community leaders and discuss what changes we as individuals can do to improve our society. The school and public performances not only gave them the opportunity to interact with other students and the wider community, but also the chance to tackle issues of sexism, inequality, gender stereotypes and strengthening girls abilities.

The play, titled 'A series of unfortunate events: Fiji-style' emphasises how our society treats girls and boys differently. The stories in the play are authentic and embody strong messages of empowerment. Scripted by our GIRLS at the beginning of the year, the play also touches on violence against children, especially girls and the need for everyone to stand up and say no to violence!

To mark 'World Human Rights Day' on 10th

December 2014 and to culminate 16 Days of Activism, our GIRLS took to the stage at Suva's Civic Centre and performed for the last time to the general public.

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement has been focusing on girls to create and lead positive change within their communities. This has led to the GIRLS in our program taking up leadership roles at school and expressing themselves freely. The whole experience has encouraged them to become a source of inspiration to other young people and learn to question what is happening around them.

As Jamila Sahim aged 10 shared, "I have learnt a lot from the programme, especially on gender equality. GIRLS should not be discriminated and treated equally. I have learnt to discipline myself and follow all guidelines that are set out for me. I respect others' opinions when they are speaking and listen to what they have to say."

International Women's Day FIJI:

"When I Was A Girl – Intergenerational Leadership"

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated throughout the world every year on March 8th and serves as a strong reminder of the economic, political and social achievements of women in the past, present and future.

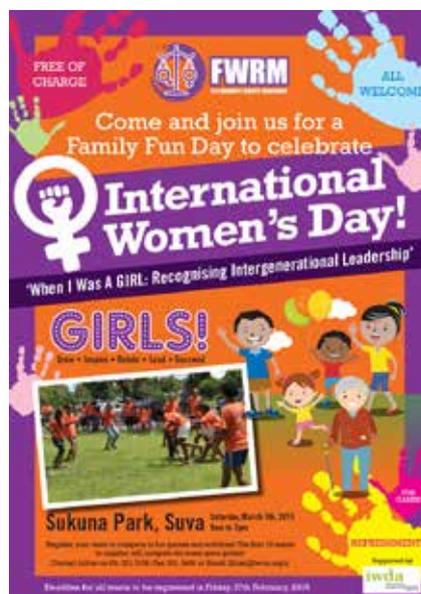
By **Genevieve Sukhdeo**

The first IWD event was run in 1911 as a tribute to 'Suffragettes', impassioned Women Human Rights Defenders who fought hard for voting rights for women. As such, women of diverse identities commemorate past successes and also reflect on what more needs to be done to achieve Gender Equality at all levels of society.

FWRM's IWD event, will take place at Sukuna Park in Suva on Saturday, March 7th from 9am – 2pm, since this year's IWD falls on a Sunday. This has led to our Young Women In Leadership team organising a 'Family Fun Day' the day before, designed to break the ice and bring generations together.

FWRM's theme for IWD FIJI is **"When I Was A Girl – Intergenerational Leadership"** while the global theme is **"Make It Happen."** The event falls under our GIRLS Programme within the YWIL team and is founded on a key organisational pillar, which is referred to as **'Intergenerational Leadership.'**

This is based on the long-term goal of the Fiji



Women's Rights Movement to see women in all their life cycle, specifically marginalized young women, girls and women above 65 with the agency, lobbying skills and feminist analysis to create and lead positive change in their communities.

In order to emphasize the importance of this pillar, The GIRLS, graduates of our Emerging Leaders Forum (ELF) programme and participants from our Fiji Young Women's Forum will be actively involved on the day. We are especially interested in witnessing the attendance of individuals from the more marginalized communities and groups to come join our FWRM team and be part of some amazing activities!

March in itself, is a critical time for Women's Rights and Gender Equality what with the 59th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59) scheduled from March 9th – 21st and set aside for the thematic area of Women and Girls in the European Year of Development 2015.

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World Human Rights Day 2014

THE Fiji Women's Rights Movement marched alongside other civil society organisations and members of the NGO Coalition to commemorate World Human Rights Day on 10th December, 2014.

This marked an end to the annual 16 Days of Activism that began on 25th November with the international theme of "Peace In The Home, Peace In The World." Activities to mark this significant event on the NGO Calendar were staged on a global scale, with various countries calling for an end to gender-based violence and armed conflict. Fiji's national theme was "I-Care."

FWRM had been focusing on girls and young women during the 16 Days of Activism, using the GIRLS Programme. The play, titled 'A series of unfortunate events: Fiji-style', was performed in two communities during the 16 Days, culminating in a performance at Suva's Civic Centre on World Human Rights Day. "FWRM is celebrating Human Rights Day with girls and young women because

By **Genevieve Sukhdeo**

we believe in their leadership and power to make transformative change happen," said FWRM Executive Director, Tara Chetty.

The march commenced at the Suva Flea Market at 10am and ended with a Human Rights exhibition at the lower auditorium of the Civic Centre. FWRM also had a booth at the exhibition, sharing the space with other co-conveners of the Fiji Young Women's Forum, and graduates of FWRM's Emerging Leaders' Forum (ELF), which included a feminist photo booth! About 150 people turned up, representing various NGOs, members of the NGO Coalition for Human Rights, families and individuals who were unified in the call for a truly peaceful society free from violence, discrimination and intimidation.

A rich diversity of voices amidst a colorful sea of advocacy banners and t-shirts joined in the chorus of "We shall not be moved" before echoing

the chants of "What do we want? HUMAN RIGHTS! When do we want it? NOW!"

Concluding the annual 16 Days of Activism, participants rallied for their democratic right to enjoy an uncensored media, freedom of speech, safe spaces for women and girls, including safe modes of public transportation, access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and proper law enforcement.

Upon arrival at the Civic Centre, the usual formalities ensued before a highly energetic performance from the FYWF and ELF Alumni, who performed the '1 Billion Rising Campaign- Break the Chain Dance.'

It was agreed by all in attendance that World Human Rights Day was extremely successful and reflective of the steadily changing mindsets within the communities towards Human Rights issues, particularly the advancement of Gender Equality and Women's Rights.

When Equality Does Not Always Mean Justice

By **Angelyn Singh**

HUMAN rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, and so forth. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. Despite these rights being interrelated, interdependent and indivisible, not everyone is able to access justice with the same amount of ease.

In most of our Pacific Island countries, there are various challenges that women and children need to navigate in order to access justice. These barriers can include but are not limited to physical accessibility issues, socio – economic factors, cultural and religious barriers, as well as the lack of political will to address these impediments.

To increase the expertise of Pacific Islanders engaged in accessing justice for women, the Family Court of Australia hosted the Australian Leadership Fellowship.

AusAID sponsored academic Dr Rajni Chand of the University of the South Pacific, Ms. Barbara Malimali from law firm Pacific Chambers and Ms. Angelyn Singh, a Research Officer from the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement, were joined by Ms Lalii Sakuma, Chief Public Defender, Ms. Rebecca Koshiba, Programme Manager - Victims of Crime Assistance Programme, Senior Judge Honora E. Remengesau Rudimch, fellows from Palau accompanied by Chief Magistrate Nerrie Pinau, Senior Magistrate Rosie Johnson and the National Co-ordinator of the Family

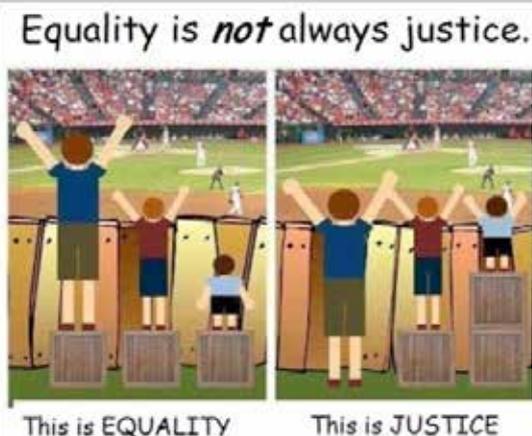
& Sexual Violence Action Committee Ume Wainetti from Papua New Guinea.

Leisha Lister and Cate Sumner were responsible for the fruition of the fellowship and because of them, the fellows were able to meet the Honourable Diana Bryant, the Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia.

The fellows were fortunate enough to attend the 7th International Conference held by the International Association for Court Administration (IACA) with the theme ‘International Perspectives on Justice Administration.’ The Pacific was represented by Chief Magistrate Nerrie Pinau and Senior Judge Honora Rudimch who were part of the panel on International Perspectives on Access to Justice & the Empowerment of Women Affected by Family/Domestic Violence.

In addition to the international perspectives, the fellows visited the different components working together to assist the work carried out by the Family Court of Australia. The fellows spent a day at the Parramatta Court Registry, where they met with Ruth Pilkington from New South Wales Legal Aid Services. Pilkington explained the role of the duty solicitor whilst Sally Mashman elaborated on the background of the National Enquiry Centre, where the fellows observed how the Centre provided information to clients.

A visit was also made to the Relationships Australia Victoria & Melbourne Family Relationship



Centre, where they observed court proceedings and heard about issues on child disputes from Steve Atkinson, Senior Family Consultant. They also met with Magistrate Anne Goldsborough who spoke about Family Violence cases in the Criminal Jurisdiction, and Justice Benjamin who informed the fellows about the ‘Role of The Judge’ in Family Law Trials.

We were especially moved after meeting with both Elena Down and Graeme Innes. Down is the Senior Technical Advisor on Disability Inclusive Development at CBM Australia and Innes is a former Commissioner for the Australian Human Rights Commission. They enlightened us on the Barriers to Accessing Justice in family law cases for people

Cont’d on page 12

SOGI Rights at the AG’s Conference By **Kris Prasad**

Last December, I spoke at the 16th Attorney General’s Conference in Natadola after receiving an invitation from the AG’s Office. The theme of the 2014 conference was *Law and Justice in Fiji: Developing Jurisprudence* and was attended by over 400 professionals within Fiji’s legal, private, diplomatic and economic sectors.

In a historic first for this annual Conference, there was a panel on *Gender Identity and the Law*. I was one of the panelists along with Shivana Singh from Amithi Fiji, a trans* advocacy organisation and Ferdinand Strobel, the Health and Development Specialist at the United Nations Development Programme.

A paper was delivered on behalf of Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan, Fiji’s Permanent Representative to its UN Geneva Mission. Titled ‘Gender Identity and Expression in International Human Rights Law,’ it was delivered by Namita Khatri and discussed the evolution of gender identity in human rights law and what it meant for Fiji.

Singh’s presentation focused on her community-based research, which explored sexuality, gender identity and the risk of HIV transmission in Fiji. She also highlighted the need for legal recognition of trans* people and the need for sensitization of the police

force when dealing with members of the transgender community.

Strobel focused on the UN’s commitment to promoting human rights for all, including those with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and global trends in LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer) rights. My presentation covered LGBTIQ rights in Fiji versus the lived realities, our experience in mobilising the community in the 2012 constitutional development process and the shortfalls in the Bill of Rights of the 2013 Constitution.

A lively discussion succeeded the presentations, with many lawyers speaking up in support of LGBTIQ rights and seeking ways to expand their knowledge on LGBTIQ issues.

The Attorney General, who was also present during the session, called for an attitudinal change towards LGBTIQ people, stressing that no one should be physically assaulted for being perceived as ‘different’. He also called on LGBTIQ groups to work with wider coalitions including the State for successful advocacy in promoting and shielding their rights.



Panelist’s (L-R): Shivana Gowin, Ferdinand Strobel, Kris Prasad, Namita Khatri and Seema Chand (session chair)

Young Women Leaders Converge for 3rd FYWF

By **Mamta Chand**

The 3rd Fiji Young Women's Forum came to an end with emotionally-charged, inspiring messages from its young women leaders. Their engagement in Fiji's democratization process was an impassioned and powerful journey.

The Fiji Young Women's Forum (FYWF) is co-convened by the Emerging Leaders Forum Alumni (ELFA), Diverse Voices and Action for Equality (DIVA), Young Women Producers and Broadcasters-FemLINKPACIFIC and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)"

The Forum brought together approximately 28 young women in 2013 from 8th-10th November, 24 young women from 14th-16th March, 2014 and 50 young women from 27th-29th November, 2014. Participants from the 3 national forums, totalling 102 young women leaders and activists aged 18 – 30 years, converged from around the country. They discussed barriers and strategies to young women's meaningful participation and representation in the democratization process in the 2014 elections and beyond.

The FYWF builds on the intergenerational Fiji Women's Forum first convened in 2012, as well as the rich tradition of activism and feminism by Fijian women throughout our national herstory. It allows young Fijian women with similar goals and perspectives, despite their diversity, to demand political change through collective action.

The co-conveners recognized the need to maintain the FYWF as a unique 'young women led' space that fosters strength through leadership and solidarity. The FYWF is a safe space for all participants including transwomen, young women

with disabilities, young women of both religious and non-religious beliefs, young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex women, aspiring young women politicians, young women sex workers, rural young women, young women mental health consumers and other young women in all our diversities.

Participants represent their Young Women networks and are actively engaged in the democratization processes and advocacy work, such as distributing the "My Guide to Voting" booklet (MG2V). This publication was significant in influencing not only young women, but young men and the elderly to vote in Fiji's recent elections. Approximately 7, 600 booklets were distributed throughout 100 communities.

"The booklet motivated a lot of young women to register and vote and helped them to make informed decisions" – Forum 3. Focal Network feedback

The Forum provided opportunities and training for young women, thus inspiring transformative change and encouraging them to engage directly with policy makers through dialogue. Through the Forum, the co-conveners are demanding accountability and connecting policy making with the lived experiences of Fiji's diverse young women. The forum provided the opportunity to directly link and recognize women's human rights as a national issue.

"Rule of law is the state of society. When it is ruled by law, rules are logical, fair, humans'/women's rights, democracy, maintaining the rule of law and

procedures apply to everybody. Active participation, law to be respected and implemented, governance is a working progress. Don't take for granted transparency, accountability, internal & external politics." – Forum 1 participant

With the presence of Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, Ms. Natasha Stott-Despoja, Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni, Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji and Politicians Roshika Deo and Lynda Tabuya, the Forum had the opportunity to listen to those who had successfully cracked the glass ceiling before us.

It was critical for the young women to realize the value of their active political participation at the community and national levels to bring about change and influence relevant policies. This served as a powerful enabler for them to challenge existing gender inequalities within the political system and encourage them to view issues from a feminist lens. As a direct result of all 3 national forums, the young women are better informed of their constitutional rights and are empowered to raise their voices concerning national agendas.

"People's voice. Important for young women to vote so that we can continue the fight, fought by women before us, women's rights, liberty & equality" – 26 year old Forum 2 participant

The forum intends to maintain the momentum in the lead-up towards the 2018 elections. Approximately 8 young women participants have shown keen interest to stand in the next elections, highlighting the importance of such spaces for young women to be informed, empowered and transformed as young leaders.



2014: a year of brave, inspiring, young feminists

From a seven-year-old who took on a supermarket to the girls who stood up to authority against violence, racism and inequality, these girls make the future look bright

In a year of incredible achievements for the movement and general feminist kick-assery, a wave of young women has demonstrated exactly why the future looks bright for gender equality. It's impossible to list them all, but here are a few of the trailblazers.



Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai won the Nobel peace prize, becoming the youngest recipient at 17 and sending the message to girls everywhere that they have the power to change the world.



Meltem Avcil

Meltem Avcil campaigns against the detention of immigrant women. Photograph: David Levene/David Levene
She has campaigned tirelessly to shine a light on the treatment of women and girls

seeking asylum. This year, Avcil saw her efforts pay off, as Labour pledged to end the detention of pregnant women and trafficking victims, and to launch an investigation into the treatment of detainees at Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre.

Fahma Mohamed and Muna Hassan

Together with a team of young women from youth charity Integrate Bristol, the activists successfully persuaded Michael Gove to contact every school about female genital mutilation (FGM), as well as collecting 250,000 petition signatures and winning



the backing of Ban Ki-moon, UN secretary general. Hassan's mum grounded her for telling the prime minister to "grow a pair" on national TV, but it was a small price for resounding success.

Muna Hassan, above, petitioned the government to educate students about female genital mutilation, with Fahma Mohamed. Photograph: David Levene/David Levene

Megan Beech

After exploding onto the feminist spoken-word scene, student Beech hit the headlines this year with the publication of her first book of poetry, entitled *When I Grow Up I Want to be Mary Beard*. With poems such as 99 Problems tackling sexism in popular culture, Beech uses poetry to explore and disseminate feminist ideas to a wide audience.

June Eric-Udorie

June is a passionate feminist activist who sits on Plan UK's youth advisory panel, writes for *Girls' Globe*, takes action to empower girls within her community and also campaigns against FGM. She became a powerful new voice in the blogosphere, advocating and spreading the word on issues from banter to victim blaming as well as flying the flag for wider use of the word vagina.

Yas Necati

Necati campaigned for No More Page 3, the Campaign4Consent, #SREnow and #PassItOn, blogged prolifically and written for *Powered By Girl* about intersectional feminist issues. She has given talks to other young people about



becoming a feminist campaigner, spoken at universities, taken part in panel debates, organised protests and championed consent on the BBC news. Just a quiet year then!
Yas Necati is a prolific blogger and

campaigner. Photograph: Perou

Maggie Cole

She may be only seven years old, but Maggie Cole proved herself a formidable feminist force to be reckoned with this year, persuading Tesco to change signs in its stores that referred to superhero

merchandise as "for a boy".

#PassItOn Campaigners

Supported by Everyday Sexism, a group of inspiring young women came together to launch #PassItOn, a campaign by and for young people aimed at tackling misconceptions about sexual consent. Using Tumblr, Facebook, and other social media platforms, they're empowering their peers to unleash their creativity and spread positive messages about healthy relationships.

Girlguiding UK

After proudly flying the feminist flag in 2013, members of Girlguiding UK took direct action by launching Girls Matter, a powerful campaign lobbying politicians to commit to eight concrete actions for gender equality.

Student feminists

Across the country, students decisively rose up to show their determination to tackle gender inequality. The National Union of Students has thrown itself into fighting to reclaim campuses from sexual violence, while feminist societies have sprung up and thrived and student government has taken action on sexual harassment. Student bloggers have kept attention and pressure on the importance of campus consent. Students also led a focus on intersectional feminism, from new NUS resources to efforts to tackle the intersection of sexism with homophobia, transphobia and racism on campus.

Purple Drum campaigners

Purple Drum, another brilliant campaign, was set up by the young women's team at Imkaan, a black feminist organisation dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls. They launched a new series of workshops where young women can use their creativity to challenge inequality in popular culture.

Powered By Girl team

Beautifully named, beautifully executed, *Powered By Girl* is run by girls who aim to "interrupt media sexism in all its racist, classist, homophobic forms with humour, satire, and the online tools at our disposal". The results should provide ample inspiration for any aspiring young feminist campaigner. Campaigner Fahma Mohamed at the Girl Summit 2014. Photograph: Christian Sinibaldi



The Unfinished Revolution - Voices from the Frontline in the Global Fight for Women's Rights

by **Natalie Novick**
 Edited by: **Minky Worden**



At 15, Elise was taken from her home by soldiers to be kept as a sex slave. Stripped naked and trapped in a hole, she was raped daily before escaping six months later. Elise's experience unfortunately is not isolated in her home of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The UN has estimated over 200,000 women and girls have been subject to sexual violence in the DRC since 1998. However, so often when comprehending the magnitude of these injustices, individual stories like Elise's are lost.

The *Unfinished Revolution* brings Elise's experience and many others like hers to light, by telling the stories of those working on the forefront of the global fight for women's rights. Edited by Minky Worden, the Director

of Global Initiatives for Human Rights Watch, this text draws upon a remarkable selection of passages by some of the world's most important and distinguished advocates for women and girls. With contributions from Nobel Laureate Jody Williams, former Irish President Mary Robinson, alongside work by academics, policymakers and other tireless campaigners, this text presents a multifaceted view of the current state of women's inequality worldwide.

The word revolution, is used in the title in its most literal sense, as an effort seeking change from one power structure to another. The current systems of patriarchy and the structures that have maintained unequal rights for women worldwide are long standing. The goal of this book is to recognize how entrenched these systems are, but also to expose the cracks in the system and show how these systems can be dismantled. As Christine Amanpour relates in the introduction, this book aims to serve as a "road map" for solutions that can work to improve human rights all over the world. Taking a global approach, this text gives attention to all world regions and addresses some of the most pressing issues for women and girls worldwide, from domestic violence, to conflict, to economic inequalities, political constraints and the unequal consequences of medical care. Divided into eight sections and succinctly organized by theme, each chapter gives the perspective of a different campaigner or activist the opportunity to contextualize the systemic structures of inequality through narrative.

Written from the individual perspectives of its over thirty contributors, this text excels at bringing the human story to the forefront. In a piece on forced marriage by Georgette Gagnon, the director for Human Rights at the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, we meet seventeen year old Samira from Afghanistan, who was sold by her father and later by her husband to pay familial debts. Through extensive research across Afghanistan, Gagnon's team found that traditional practices of child marriage, forced marriage and the selling of daughters remain commonplace in the region. Unfortunately, there also remains few alternatives for these women, and nowhere to turn should they flee from this violence.

The ineffective and absent responses to systemic injustice and violence against women are echoed in many pieces in the text, with cases ranging from Los Angeles, to Nepal, to Iraq and China. Gauri van Gulik tells the story of Selvi, a young mother from Turkey who was left without recourse after authorities turned a blind eye to the horrible beatings she received at the hands of her husband, despite her pleas for help. Elaine Pearson shows that even when women are rescued from cases of injustice, sometimes the outcome is not always much better than where they were before. Champa, from Nepal, describes her horrifying experience of being trafficked as a young girl, that upon rescue, was forced into a detention like "treatment" center that subjected girls to physical beatings, malnutrition and enslavement.

However, this text is not just an exercise in storytelling. Each of these narratives is used to put the greater systemic outcomes of inequalities into context. The *Unfinished Revolution* provides a snapshot account of the present state of women's rights, an account that its authors hope to improve in the future. What is made most clear through these narratives is not actually the presence of inequality, injustices and violence, but rather the uneven or in many times absent responses to the existence of these injustices, further illustrating the hostile environment these human rights campaigners are working within. One example of the challenges faced by those working on the forefront of women's rights is shown in the case of Nadia, an NGO worker from Afghanistan. Rachel Reid, a senior regional adviser for the Open Society Foundation, recounts how Nadia, had to quit her job in response to a Taliban letter on her doorstep threatening her life if she continued to work. Unfortunately, cases like Nadia's are all too common.

The harsh realities faced by the human rights campaigners illustrated in the text shows the "revolution" for women's rights remains unfinished. Indeed, a more developed, collective consciousness for global women's rights as called for in the conclusion seems far away. But by shining a light on the work being done around the world, and recognizing those who work so hard against such odds, this text shows this is a revolution that we haven't given up. The *Unfinished Revolution* succeeds at presenting the global fight for women's rights in a way that is relevant to a wide variety of audiences. By putting names, stories, and even pictures to the women affected by these worldwide inequalities and injustices, The *Unfinished Revolution* makes the challenges faced by women and girls around the world real. The message of this text is clear, and its thoughtful organization and structure make it easily accessible to anyone interested in human rights, women's issues or global inequalities. This volume would additionally make a brilliant accompaniment in an academic setting, especially for courses on human rights, inequalities, stratification or women's studies.

"The Supreme Price" - Documentary

by **Ella Taylor**
 Directed By: **Joanna Lipper.**

Had she relied solely on archival footage of Nigeria, a country riven by tribal, religious and political conflicts, Joanna Lipper's "The Supreme Price" would count as a solid if familiar



primer on the struggle for democracy in Africa's most populous nation. The difference is that women — many of them reared to be submissive, if not downright invisible — now lead the drive for political and social reform in oil-rich, poverty-ridden Nigeria, and Lipper teases out that story through the eyes of a charismatic woman whose mother was killed for her outspoken activism. With beauty, brains and dignity to burn, Hafsat Abiola inherits her mother's mantle and offers riveting insight into the contradictions of a dynasty of reformist aristocracy, as well as a country that has yet to recover its 250 schoolgirls abducted last April by the terrorist group Boko Haram.

As pro-democracy movements go, the Nigerian struggle to free itself from dictatorship is Sisyphean. Ruled by successive military juntas since the country's independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria is an oil-rich nation with a tiny billionaire elite and the rest (173 million and rising) mired in desperate poverty. Corruption, along with tribal conflict is endemic, political assassinations routine.

Patriarchy rules, and yet, according to Lipper's lively documentary, the robust movement for political and social reform is driven by women — which is both remarkable and to be expected in a society where women are schooled in submission and excluded from public life. Along with archival footage, the film opens a window into that struggle through the women of one family, whose famous patriarch was the reformist millionaire M.K.O. Abiola. He was fairly elected president in 1993, ousted by yet another military coup, and died mysteriously in prison a couple of years later.

As told by his smart, stunning, Harvard-educated daughter Hafsat, this is less his story than that of his wife, Kudirat, an uneducated woman who honed her natural charisma and political smarts on the campaign trail for her husband, then took over the fight for democracy after he was thrown into prison. She, too, paid a heavy price on many fronts. Through Hafsat and others of his seven children, we learn of Kudirat's unhappiness as one of her husband's four wives who also had to put up with his serial womanizing. (His son boasts proudly that Abiola fathered "about" 55 children.)

Like her mother, Hafsat became an activist. Like her, too, she has had to make tough personal decisions that may look strange to reformers who live in more open societies — not the least of which was to leave her husband (a British secular Jew) and small children at home in Brussels and return to Nigeria to take a position in a new civilian government and continue to organize and train women for public life.

To get the measure of their resolve, drop in on a training meeting of Hafsat's NGO, and see why, along with the world's most fabulous millinery, these women carry symbolic brooms to demonstrations. To get a sense of what they are up against, even under nominally more enlightened civilian rule, listen to a man who was raised to know better (Hafsat's brother, who runs a mosque in the family's compound) explain cheerfully why women have no business running for office. If his sister turns out to be one of the women who do, one can only say, "Good Luck, Jonathan."

About us

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural non-governmental organisation committed to removing discrimination against women through institutional reforms and attitudinal changes.

By means of core programmes and innovative approaches, FWRM practices and promotes feminism, democracy, good governance and human rights. We strive to empower, unite and provide leadership opportunities for women in Fiji, especially for emerging young leaders in Fiji, indigenous and locally-born women. The FWRM vision is for the women of Fiji to be free from all forms of discrimination, have equal access to opportunities and to live in a healthy environment where the principles of feminism, democracy, good governance, multiculturalism and human rights prevail.

Join us

YES! I want to support the
Fiji Women's Rights Movement

ANNUAL FEE:

Waged - \$10 • Organisation - \$30

Non-waged/Student - \$5

Name: _____

Address: _____

Ph: _____

Email: _____



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International Women's Day FJI:

"When I Was A Girl – Intergenerational Leadership"

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The 12 thematic areas or themes are as follows:
January – **Europe in the World**, February – **Education**, March – **Women and Girls**, April – **Health**, May – **Peace and Security**, June – **Sustainable Growth, Decent Jobs and Businesses**, July – **Children and Youth**, August – **Humanitarian Aid**, September – **Demography and Migration**, October – **Food Security**, November – **Sustainable Development** and finally, December – **Human Rights**.

Says Debbie Singh, the EU Pacific's Press Officer and Head of the EYD 2015 regional communications activities: "The European Year for Development is a global campaign which provides an excellent opportunity for all of us to share stories of the impact of the European Union's development support all over the world. These will be shared with Europeans, with each other and with the rest of the world. Communications is of course, at the heart of the EYD campaign as it's all about story telling. And with the Pacific's oral history – this is something that we do best."

As a result, all EU Delegations around the world will be submitting various stories on how the EU has

impacted regions and countries through the support of its programmes. The stories will be shared on its website <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/fiji>, where you can also access more detailed information on #EYD2015.

Since story-telling would be a phenomenal way to share women's experiences and lived realities, we at FWRM feel that it would be a powerful and symbolic gesture if you were to share your personal stories of successes and triumphs in the lead-up to International Women's Day.

Or better still, your reflections on the past and strategies for the future, as there is still a tremendous amount of work to do in the quest for achieving Gender Equality in Fiji's various processes, institutions and patriarchal mind-sets. You can easily find us on Facebook and Twitter so get writing!



When Equality Does Not Always Mean Justice

from page 8

living with disabilities. Particular issues faced by women with a disability in family violence cases were also discussed. The former Director General of the traditional courts in Indonesia, Bapak Wahyu Widiana and Ibu Nani Zulminarni of the National Coordinator PEKKA (Empowerment of Female Headed Households CSO) informed the fellows about the strategies they had assumed to address the hurdles faced in increasing access to justice for Indonesian women.

Continuing the Access to Justice theme, FWRM linked up with the Regional Rights Resource Team in November to host the Law and Gender Workshop where over 42 lawyers and legal professionals from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu convened, to call for Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW), as well as Family Violence.

The outcome statement available from the RRRRT office states that while there was new legislation on family and sexual violence, generally, sentencings for domestic violence offences are too low to serve as deterrents for perpetrators. Consideration must also be given to the challenges faced in fully implementing domestic violence legislation, with the document urging Pacific Island Governments and stakeholders to continue the dialogue on ensuring that the legislation works effectively in addressing the high rate of domestic violence in our countries, including a review of penalties for domestic violence.

The outcome statement consisted of four

areas to address barriers in accessing justice for persons with disabilities:

1. The provision of accessible information and support, including information on law enforcement processes, government services, legal aid and judicial processes in formats accessible for persons with disabilities.
2. Support for training and education for law enforcement personnel, government officers, and court officials on the issues faced by persons with disabilities in accessing justice and empowering them to recognize and address these issues.
3. Review legislation and policies that may have an adverse impact on persons with disabilities, and initiate legislative and/or policy change in consultation with disabled person's organizations (DPOs), in order to develop and implement the required changes.
4. Review the accessibility of police stations, government and private sector service providers and the courts to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities. This may include the provision of sign language interpreters, assistive devices, and/or the renovation of buildings to ensure wheelchair accessibility.

Making courts and justice more accessible benefits everyone. Equality does not always mean justice, one size does not always fit all and abuse of unequal power dynamics ensures that justice is only guaranteed to a few. Therefore, a good test of any system of justice is to measure how truly accessible it is to the marginalised.