FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT
Balance
"HELPING TO BALANCE THE SCALES"
December 4/2011

Power and Control

THE Fiji Women's Rights Movement remains cautious, following the removal of the Public Emergency Regulations and the issuing of the Public Order Amendment Decree on January 7 2012.

"FWRM believes the only change that the decree brings in – is the granting of wider unfettered powers to the police and the military. This could be dangerous in this current political context because it allows for the potential abuse of power", said FWRM Executive Director Virisila Buadromo. "What's even more disconcerting is that like all other decrees of the regime, it also prohibits the general public from challenging any actions of the police commissioner, the Minister or any public official."

"So while we may no longer be governed under emergency laws, the effect that the imposition of the Public Order Amendment Decree is still the same – freedom of speech, expression, movement, and association continues to be under threat as well as the right to a fair trial."

Among other provisions, the decree states that an individual's movement can be limited and curtailed if the police commissioner is satisfied that any person or persons is undermining or sabotaging public order and safety including the economic and financial integrity of the country.

"Freedom of movement is a basic human right and denial of it results in the violation of other rights such as right to work, liberty, education, to family, freedom of expression and does not encourage political participation", said Buadromo.

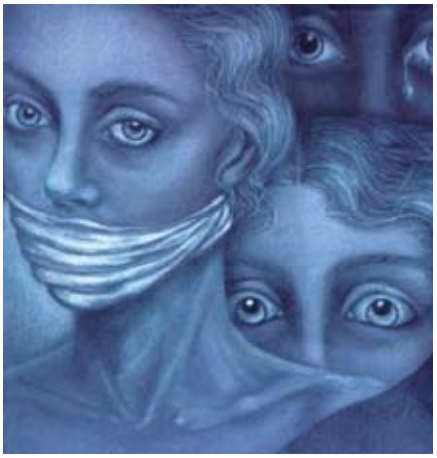


Image courtesy of *www.brotherpeacemaker.wordpress.com*

"The State has announced that the removal of the PER is to enable the public to be able to meaningfully participate in the constitutional and electoral processes. We hope that this will be the spirit by which the law is interpreted and enforced by the State."

"FWRM wishes to participate in legitimate constitutional and electoral processes. Legitimacy can only be achieved through the State's protection of our basic human rights and our right as human beings to assert these rights. As long as there is limitation to these rights, the likelihood of meaningful public consultation is slim."

While the police have briefed FWRM and other non-governmental organisations regarding events and meetings that do not require a permit and the permit application process, the Movement hopes that this will be implemented without prejudice and that the police ensure the protection of freedom of expression and opinion, and association for everyone especially for girls and women.

"On previous occasions we have been told that we do not require a permit, only to be shut-down later. It has been quite challenging for us for the last three years in facilitating dialogue with the women in the communities due to these restrictions and the fear of intimidation," said Buadromo.

The decree should promote wider protection and promotion of human rights given that freedom of expression and opinion and association plays a critical role in democracy and public participation in political life.

Reproduced from FWRM's Press Release PR01/2012

Some FAQ on the POAD

By **Roshika Deo**

Has the scope of terrorism expanded?

These clauses are ambiguous and broad for terrorism laws. The clauses can potentially result in the regime laying charges of terrorism to anyone perceived to undermine the actions of the military regime. It can potentially allow for legitimate activities to be curtailed. Advocacy, protest, dissent or industrial action that is not intended to cause serious physical harm or death, or create a serious risk to the public health or safety IS NOT a terrorist act. This should be stipulated in the decree. For example, protests by Namosi landowners against mining activities or anti mining advocacy by nongovernmental human rights organisation can be potentially considered a terrorist act pursuant to the decree.

The United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Anan in March 2005 said *"any action constitutes terrorism if it is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians and non-combatants, with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a Government or an international organisation to do or abstain from any act."*

Terrorism laws should be specific that it allows for the prosecution of criminal activities without infringing on human rights of the accused. Lobbying other countries or organisations to pressure the military regime to hold free and fair elections or to ask the regime to stop the inhibition of worker's rights can be considered a terrorist act under this decree.

The PER had a provision that allowed for the use of force and also in the event of harm or death it provided immunity to those using such force. Is this provision also in the new decree?

Yes, this provision has been drafted into the new decree. These provisions provide for immunity against criminal and civil liability to the police officer and any other person or member aiding. It also allows for the use of arms. By allowing for this immunity, the right to justice and protection of the law is denied. The civil rights system provides an avenue

Cont'd on page 2

25TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

Turn to pages 5-7 for gala dinner pictures and messages

From the Director's desk

Greetings from FWRM!

CONTINUING with the 25th anniversary celebrations, this is our final publication of the silver jubilee year. This publication was delayed to the beginning of this year as we wanted to showcase some of the celebratory activities. This included the honoring of 25 women and men who have played a pivotal role during our herstory (see p. 5); the hosting of the gala dinner at Vale ni Tadra, Lami (see p. 6-7) to commemorate the event and some of the merchandise that was produced as part of the jubilee. As an organisation – it was important that we took the opportunity to look back on our herstory, acknowledge, give credit, cry and reflect on our challenges as well as celebrate our successes

Many of the young and the young at heart, who attended the gala evening, found the night inspiring, rejuvenating and empowering - emotions that I too, shared. I am proud to be part of FWRM's herstory.

Also in this quarterly, you will get the chance to read about the three women who were awarded the 2011 Nobel peace prize. Another significant step for women's rights!

As part of our look back on women who have contributed to the movement's work – we talk to the first programme officer for FWRM's Young Women in Leadership Programme – Anna Padarath. Since leaving FWRM she has worked in the highlands of Papua New Guinea; completed her master's degree in the United Kingdom and has just taken up the gender advisor position at Care International, based in Goroka, Papua New Guinea.

These are just some of the stories captured in this edition. As always, if you have any feedback, send it to info@fwrm.org.fj.

Enjoy this edition!
In solidarity,

Virisila Buadromo

Wish you well, Naeemah

OUR long time programme manager, Naeemah Khan, departed the Fiji Women's Rights Movement nest in December last year, to embark on another adventure.

Naeemah started at FWRM in August 2005 and during her time at the Movement, has helped shape the organisation and its work.

Some of her achievements include the development of the FWRM's Security Policy, the Child Protection Policy and the Risk Assessment Policy. Naeemah also assisted in the recruitment and mentoring of several key positions – including the financial and administration positions and the research team.

The management board and staff wish Naeemah well in her future endeavours and hope that she will continue to remain part of the organisation in an informal manner.

When Naeemah finally closed the door to her office in December, she had not decided on any future plans. Her immediate plans were just focussed on spending more time with her 4 year-old-daughter, Laila.

Naeemah's successor is expected to start in March 2012.

Some FAQ on the POAD

from page 1

for the right of a person to be upheld to be free from police misconduct or abuse of power. It also compels the police to uphold the laws and rights of people. In addition, by allowing immunity to person/s to aide police, it encourages people with no relevant police training to become involved and even be involved in using force that is motivated by personal agenda or sentiments.

Pursuant to the PER, a person could have been detained for up to 10 days without charges being laid. Can a person still be detained for this duration under the decree?

Yes. A person now can be detained for a total of 16 days under the decree. No warrant is required to detain someone nor is a court order required. It can be at the discretion of the police and with the authority of the Prime Minister for further detainment after 48 hours. Justification of this provision by comparing to other jurisdictions have been made, however, other jurisdictions are a democratic society governed by the rule of law with legal recourses available in the event that rights are violated. Detention under anti-terrorist laws can only be extended with the order of the court in most other jurisdictions. This decree gives the Prime Minister, in this instance Commodore Bainimarama, to provide authority for further detainment of 14 days.

Other jurisdictions in democratic countries have court redresses and judicial review available to challenge (or seek compensation) detention or any action of the police/State. However the decree specifically stipulates that no decisions and actions of the police or anyone acting under the decree can be challenged.

The decree is not aligned to international human rights standards and law, and is not a progressive form of law. It violates the principles of a democratic system in which human rights are to be promoted, protected and respected. Furthermore in a rule of law governed State, in the event of a detainment, it is ensured that detainment is not arbitrary; is based on procedures established by law; the reasons for detainment is explained; the court is involved in monitoring and controlling the duration; and legal recourse including compensation is available if there is a violation of rights.

Is there a role for the military in this decree?

Yes, there is a replica of the provision that is in the PER on the "performance of prison and police duties by the Armed Forces" in the decree. The decree specifically mentions the Fiji Military Forces and allows them to perform the duties of a prison or a police officer. It grants them the same powers, protections and privileges, which basically means that the military will also benefit from the immunity provisions.

BECOME A MEMBER OF FWRM TODAY!

Do you believe in gender equality, women's and human rights, democracy and the rule of law?

If you've answered YES to these questions then WE want YOU to become a MEMBER of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement and assist us in removing discrimination against women!

FWRM is a 25-year-old women's movement and has achieved much over the years through its guiding principles of democracy, good governance, feminism and human rights.

Join Us!

Annual Fee:
Waged - $10 * Organisation - $30 * Non-waged/Student- $5

As a member you will receive our:
• quarterly newsletter • press releases
• invite to organisational events

Download a membership form from www.fwrm.org.fj and contact us on 331 2711 or info@fwrm.org.fj for payment details/queries.

AGM: FWRM will be holding its 2010 Annual General Meeting on Thursday March 22, 2012.
All members are welcome to attend.
Venue and time will be confirmed later.

Increasing Women's Political Participation

By **Roshika Deo**

THE Centre for Democratic Institutions in Australian National University held its 4th annual Women in Politics Training Course late last year.

The training programme was designed for women from East Timor, Indonesia, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. A total of 20 participants ranging from Member of Parliament to women's rights advocates attended the training.

The training covered a broad range of issues - from strategies to promote gender equity in politics, to the practicalities of running election campaigns. Participants attended a mix of lectures, external site visits, and participated in group work and forums with academics, female members of the Australian Parliament, officials from the major Australian political parties and a range of other experts.

Of particular interest to the Fiji Women's Rights Movement was the topic of electoral systems and Temporary Special Measures (TSM).

Many forms of electoral systems exist within the Asia-Pacific region with different benefits. However to increase women's political participation, a Proportional Representation (PR) system has been proven to work better. The PR electoral system is one in which all the voters get representation - the political parties are represented in legislature in proportional to the number of votes received. Under this electoral system, the district magnitude has multi-members and the seats in these multi-member districts are divided proportionally to the votes received by the parties or candidate. For instance, in a four member district if Party A received 25 percent of the votes, they will get one seat, if Party B received 50 percent votes then they will get two of the four seats and so on.

Cultural and patriarchal barriers prevent women's fair, equal and effective representation and participation at public and political levels. TSM's are a legitimate short term strategy to allow for women's political participation. The Convention on the Elimination of all Form of Discrimination Against Women stipulates the establishing of TSMs through constitution or legislations to accelerate the achievement of equality and genuine democracy. Measures such as quotas or reservations on average can allow for a higher representation of women in political leadership.

Women's participation in electoral reform consultations is very critical and a legal obligation that the State needs to adhere to. The State needs to develop policies that ensure that women have equal and effective representation and participation in all democratic governance systems. Women's involvement from the beginning will ensure that the processes and frameworks developed are reflective of all the citizens and their actual needs.

@DTI

By **Filomena Tuivanualevu**

THE fourth edition of the Development Alternative for Women in a New Era (DAWN) Training Institute (DTI) took place in Siem Reap, Cambodia from October 10th to 27th, 2011. It brought together 27 young feminist of the global south, which are Africa, South America, South East Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

All the sessions we attended during the three weeks were exceptionally interesting and thought provoking but the one that was really stood out to me was the session around Political Restructuring & Social Transformation (PRST).

I found this session interesting because of the current political context that we at the Fiji Women's Rights Movement work in and my personal journey as a feminist.

Our very first session on the topic began with a definition of political restructuring which is the reorganising of structures that define the modes of governance of a society. This can be done through: resistance and uprising, armed struggle, elections and military intervention.

As the participants were all from countries undergoing these processes, the discussions amongst us were fantastic. I noted that for those of us from countries operating under military rule or dictatorship, our experiences were very similar. Such similarities were evident in the censoring of the media, the absence of the right to assembly, freedom of expression and threat to security of activists in our respective countries.

Despite our countries predicaments, it was great to learn from each countries experience and learn practicalities that would allow for efficiency. An example of this was a shared experience where one participant stated that when her country came out of a situation of political conflict, the women did not focus enough on positioning but were more narrowly focussed on participation in elections only. In reflecting she wished they had instead offered that critical feminist analysis that was direly needed in that situation on top of the efforts to include women in elections. This is one of the many practical examples I brought back with me and intend to use it as Fiji builds up to elections in 2014.

Another interesting segment during the PRST session was the debate I participated in as part of the affirmative team for the topic: Military or other intervention by International Community is justified when sovereign state does not fulfil its responsibility to protect its citizens. In preparing for the debate we were able to educate ourselves further on the Right to Protect (R2P), when certain states had invoked their R2P where it was deemed necessary and the processes that had to take place in order for that to be invoked. This was also a great opportunity for us to weigh out the various arguments relating to the topic and whether impartiality is still possible or humane in extreme conflict situations.

On a personal level DTI built on my capacity as a young feminist of the South by deepening my analysis of issues and understanding the interlinkages between issues in relation to my advocacy for gender justice. Among numerous other things DTI was an opportunity for me to explore the multiple dimensions of gender justice that is economic, political, ecological, social and personal through a structured learning process. This rich environment of learning took place under the selfless and sincere mentorship of the DAWN training team and saw to stimulating intergenerational discussions and learning.

I am very grateful to the DAWN team for such a rich experience as well as to FWRM for allowing me to be a part of that.

Speak Out Continues...

By **Neomai Maravuakula**

THE final phase of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement's community visits to the Central and Eastern Divisions took place from November 21 to 25, last year (see October 2011 Balance for back-story).

This journey took the team to communities in the Navua, Delainavesi, Nasinu, Nausori, Naitasiri and Tailevu corridor where FWRM tried to ascertain the level of legal rights information and services available to women. A similar visit had been made to the Northern and Western Divisions in the early part of last year.

It was interesting to see that despite the differences in their geographical settings, women share similar experiences. In spite of being closer to the urban centers, it was evident that women in the Central and Eastern Divisions continued to silently suffer daily.

In addition to the lack of legal rights information available to the women in the communities, they also face the challenge of accessing essential services. This frustration leads women to resolve issues within their homes and accept these difficulties that they face every day as their fate.

The Indo-Fijian women of Waidalice and Nabilo play a major role in assisting their husbands in their root crop and dairy farms. However, despite being able to share the work load with their husbands, the decision-making role within the family is left solely to the husbands. Any issues faced by the women are resolved within their own families and are hardly shared with anyone outside.

Despite the daily challenges faced by the women in the communities, they were optimistic that legal rights training programmes can empower women to address the issues they faced. In addition, the women also shared their disappointment in not being part of the country's development-related consultations. These women want to be included in consultations in the bose-ni-koro as well as in meetings that are conducted in their communities.

The visits also provided the FWRM team with an opportunity to experience the journey that many of these women make daily from their villages and communities to the urban centers to sell crops and handicrafts to provide an income for their families.

At the end of this expedition of discovery and learning, FWRM has heard countless stories from women around Fiji. Though we continue to advocate on behalf of women every day, being able to speak to these women provided us with a better perspective of the importance of the work we do. Their appreciation for the work that FWRM carries out was evident and there were calls for more visits to the communities. Despite the many achievements it is clear that the work towards eliminating discrimination is still a long and challenging one.

Using laws to create changes

By **Shabina Khan**

For someone entering Kiribati for the first time, a true welcome awaits. The sight from the aircraft shows a myriad of colors of the ocean and lagoon - a very rare and beautiful sight. As we arrived at the airport the sight changes from serene to chaos as passengers crowd around in a small space to locate the luggage out of the very basic baggage claim. The locals bring in a lot of goods ranging from electric goods to food products. The sight at the airport clearly shows how much the country depends on imported products.

On my way to the hotel in Tarawa, I could not help but wonder what it must be like to live in a place such as this – a place so beautiful but with such serious natural resource depletion concerns.

Women, however, seem to be the centre of the economic activities in the local communities. Roadside handicraft stalls, grocery kiosks and food stalls selling smoking fish are mainly run by women.

Recognising the importance of lobbying to create societal changes in Pacific Island countries, Secretariat of the Pacific Community/Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (SPC/RRRT), in partnership with the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), conducted a skills-building training for the civil society and government from December 7th to 12th, 2011.

Whether it was issues related to sanitation in the community; alcohol abuse or issues affecting the youth, the participants were able to formulate campaign strategies to address it. The aim was to develop the capacity of the organisations working closely with issues affecting the people and the communities to take immediate action.

The highlight of the training was the realisation by participants of the significance of including communities in coalitions and making a pledge to build alliances amongst the various organisations working on similar issues.

While legislations do bring about certain level of change, the training also aimed at imparting the skill of creating attitudinal changes brought about through collaborative processes within the communities. The emphasis was mainly to utilise the existing structures and institutions within the local communities and involve the support of the *'unimane'* (village elders) in dealing with issues.

The participants related that although it will be challenging organising inaugural meetings to form coalitions due to limited resource capacity, it is still an opportunity to build solidarity as the issues affect the people of Kiribati.

The next regional training will take place in Solomon Islands at the end of February followed by Tonga in March.

Acknowledging WHRD

To mark 25 years of balancing the scales, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement acknowledged the successes of FWRM and the broader women's movement through the contributions made by 25 Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD). The following WHRD's were acknowledged at FWRM's gala dinner last December.

Shamima Ali
• Feminist • Founding member of Fiji Women's Rights Movement • Coordinator of Fiji Women's Crisis Centre • Human Rights Commissioner (2004-2007)

Dr 'Atu Emberson-Bain
• Feminist scholar • Human rights activist and filmmaker • Senator (1999-2006)

Dr Wame Baravilala
• Fiji Women's Rights Movement Trustee since 2003 • Health rights advocate • Dean of the Fiji School of Medicine (1999-2004)

Angeline Chand
• Advocate for women living with disability • Fiji NGO CEDAW Committee member

Vani Dulaki
• Feminist • Coordinator of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (1993- 1995)

Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
• Feminist • Sister organisation

Ruth Lechte and Diane Goodwillie
• Eco-feminists • Ruth: Fiji Women's Rights Movement supporter; YWCA (1962-1994) • Diane: Fiji Women's Rights Movement Management Collective member and Management board member

Jacqui Koroi
• Fiji Women's Rights Movement Emerging Leaders' Forum Alumni • Pacific youth rights advocate • Pro-democracy activist

Edwina Kotoisuva
• Feminist • Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Deputy Coordinator • Fiji NGO CEDAW Committee member

Kuini Lutua
• Labour rights advocate • Fiji NGO CEDAW Committee member • General Secretary of the Fiji Nursing Association

Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi
• Vice President of Fiji (2004-2006) • Former judge (1997- 2000) • Commissioner, Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Noelene Nabulivou
• Feminist • Community Activist • Human Rights Advocate • Coordinator of Women's Action for Change (2004-2010) • Executive Committee member of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)

Richard Naidu
• Human rights and pro-democracy activist

Dr Wadan Narsey
• Activist • Supporter of women's human rights

Raijeli Drodrolagi Nicole
• Feminist • Fiji Women's Rights Movement staff member (1997 – 2000) • Executive Director of ISIS International-Manila (2002 -2007)

Susan Parkinson
• Pioneering nutritionist • Former Fiji Women's Rights Movement trustee (1987-1995)

Sharda Segran
• Community worker • Rural women's activist • Past member of the Fiji NGO CEDAW Committee

Praveen Sharma
• Feminist • Fiji Women's Rights Movement (1994 -1997) • FWRM Acting Coordinator (1995-1997) • FWRM Management Collective (1997-2000)

Niru Singh
• Fiji NGO CEDAW Committee member • LGBTQI activist

Claire Slatter
• Feminist activist scholar • Founding steering committee member of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and Coordinator (1997-2004)

Adi Kuini Vuikaba Speed
• Fiji Women's Rights Movement founding member • Politician • Deputy Prime Minister (1999, 2000)

Dr Helen Tavola
• Fiji Women's Rights Movement Trustee since 2003 • Gender and Education Expert

Luisa Tora
• Fiji Women's Rights Movement board member (2003-2009) • Feminist artist and writer • LGBTQI Activist

Arietta Tuitoga
• LGBTQI advocate • Fiji NGO CEDAW Committee member

FWRM thanks everyone who has stood in solidarity with the Movement over its 25 years. They include the families of FWRM staff members whose enduring support has m

A Night to Remember...

It was night of reflections, reconnection, solidarity, feminism, laughter and dancing as the Fiji Women's Rights Movement marked its 25 years of triumphs and challenges.

Located in Lami town, the beautiful Vale Ni Trada played host to over a hundred members and friends of the Movement.

During the course of the evening FWRM launched its promotional video which briefly chronicled some of FWRM's significant achievements as well background on our current programmes.

The Movement also acknowledged the contributions made by 25 Women Human Rights Defenders to the status of women in Fiji.

Celebrations on the night were made possible through funding from AusAID.

Messages from members

"…FWRM has been part of my life for 25 years, one of the best parts of my life. I honestly think that most of the time we got it right, and when we made mistakes, we learnt from them. We have remained true to our FWRM constitution so far. It is a matter of organizational pride. It has cost us plenty, but it's been worth it I believe… (Excerpted from FWRM founding board member **Imrana Jalal**'s message)

"…it was a wonderful night and indeed memorable. 25 years is a long time and we have certainly achieved much despite our challenges. So many people shared with me snippets of the different work of FWRM what they found to be pivotal and strategic. I was certainly emotional on the evening because of all the wonderful memories and achievement and how we put our heart and soul in it… (Excerpted from FWRM Board Chair **Gina Houng Lee**'s message)

"…FWRM has come to be known far and wide as an enduring signifier of feminism and progressive politics, one more throbbing node in the inter-connected network of south-based women's organizations in transnational feminism. Together, let us continue to work for an alter-world that is free from systems of socially-marked domination, discrimination, exploitation and exclusions. Here's wishing you creativity, diversity and vibrant energy as you move on with your struggle for political, economic and cultural transformations in the next 25 years or more! (Excerpted from **Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era**'s message)

"…FWRM is celebrating its 25th anniversary under one of the most politically harsh times of our history. Her very mandate and existence is being challenged. Despite this, I continue to witness her standing her ground on human rights principles with grace and conviction. To this I say- WELL DONE and THANK YOU for remaining one of our beacons of hope… (Excerpted from FWRM ELF Alumni and WHRD recipient **Jacque Koroi**'s message)

"Thanks for a wonderful night. What an amazing achievement and so great to be able to share in the celebrations"
- **Vandhna Narayan** (via Facebook)

"Congratulations FWRM - wish I could have been there -looking forward to the next 25"
- **Praveen Sharma** (via Facebook)

"Congratulations, FWRM! Best wishes for many, many more"
- **Tupou Draunidalo** (via Facebook)

"We have come a long way and given our commitment we will be around for another 25 years and more" - **Priscilla Singh** (via Facebook)

"Congrats FWRM it was a night to remember, keep up the great work in empowering women in Fiji and the Pacific Region! Purple Power!"
- **Seema Naidu** (via Facebook)

Where is she now?

To mark FWRM's 25th anniversary, we have been speaking to some amazing women who have contributed to the Movement's work in realising women's human rights in Fiji and the Pacific. One such woman is **Anna Padarath** who worked at FWRM from 2002 to 2008 and was the Movement's first Young Women's Officer. She shared with Balance her experience with the women's Movement.

How did you come to work for women's human rights based organisation such as FWRM?
I had grown up with a strong interest in women's rights and had the opportunity to attend the Beijing Conference where I met Gina Houng Lee. Gina told me about FWRM and back in Suva when she saw me on the street she would ask if I had joined the Collective yet. It was really only a matter of time before I ended up working at an organisation like FWRM.

How long did you work at FWRM for?
Around five years. It was peanuts in terms of pay so I was constantly broke but the work was intensely rewarding and provided excellent opportunities for learning, travelling and personal growth.

What were some of the activities/projects that you worked on?
As the inaugural Young Women's Officer I was involved in setting up the Young Women's Programme. One of the first things we did was a diary called *GrrlTalk* which was done totally by young women for young women from the cover artwork by local artist Sangeeta Singh to the stories of inspirational local role models to the witty quotes by/about women. Laisa Bale, then Programme Manager, had come up with the original idea and it was brilliant to be involved in the development of an idea as it took shape. We had ordered 10,000 copies of *GrrlTalk* and as box upon box began to fill every spare inch of space in the FWRM office at Robertson Rd, it was part of my role to visit secondary schools around the country to talk about women's rights and distribute the diaries. I travelled from Levuka to Labasa to the back end of Rakiraki distributing a few hundred diaries at a time.

We also developed *Healthy Choices Workshops* to talk about sexual and reproductive health and rights with teenage girls. This was a collaboration with peer educators from what was then the Sexual Minorities Project of Women's Action for Change (later Equal Ground Pasifik).

Then there was the *Emerging Leaders' Forum (ELF)* for 18-25 yr-old women. This was the main activity of the Young Women's Programme and involved a major investment of time and effort by a number of people. A real strength of the programme was the

Young Women's Working Group who all contributed their time voluntarily to bounce ideas about things to do. It was a richly diverse group including Luisa Tora of the AIDS Task Force, Tarusila Bradburgh of the Ministry of Youth, Cresantia Frances Koya-Vakauta and Vivian Koster of the University of the South Pacific, and members of the ELF alumni at various times. The ELFs then developed further publications *HeadStrong* and *Dau Vosa*, and a short documentary *Be The Change* with then Communications Officer Tara Chetty.

What were some of FWRM's major achievements during your time there?
The enactment of the Family Law Bill after so many years of hard work. I was fortunate to be on board at the tail end of a long process that had started well before us with women like Shamima Ali, Peni Moore, Vani Dulaki, Gina Houng Lee and especially Imrana Jalal. These women had a tremendous impact on the lives of many others and the staff of FWRM was fortunate to be able to continue with the work that they had started and in particular to benefit from Imrana's continued presence on the Board for so many years. It meant that we managed to retain a good deal of institutional memory and stay true to the original vision behind the establishment of FWRM.

And I may be biased but I think that the ELF programme was also quite an achievement. The programme demonstrated what young women can do when given knowledge and opportunities to effect change. The ELFs went on to restart the defunct Women Students Association at the University of the South Pacific; they gave motivational talks at their old high schools; they remained involved in FWRM as ELF alumni; they challenged discrimination within their own families, at work and school; held awareness events at their schools; organised their friends to go on protest marches; had a column in a local magazine *Mai Life*; spoke out at national, regional and international events; and continue to support each other with reviewing CVs, preparation for job interviews, and/or any type of applications. At FWRM we seem to have managed to create the right environment so that young women empowered themselves, which is how true empowerment is supposed to work.

The ELF programme also turned out to be a recruiting ground for other NGOs. FWRM itself now has quite a few of its staff who are ELF alumni, including Roshika Deo, Neomai Maravuakula, Shazia Usman and Filomena Tuivanualevu. When I left FWRM, I was very pleased to hand over to an ELF2 alumni Michelle Reddy who in turned handed over to an ELF3 alumni Filomena Tuivanualevu when she left.

What were some of FWRM's major challenges during your time there?
Being seen as an organisation for the middle class and not representative enough, and having to constantly deal with the negative perception of feminism.

Where do you work now?
I live in PNG and will never be far from the area of women's human rights.

Would you like to say something to FWRM on its 25th birthday?
Congratulations and remember this too shall pass

ELFA in Action

Participants during an activity

Image courtesy of *ELFA*

By **Roshika Deo**

THE Emerging Leaders Forum Alumni (ELFA) with its new governance structure in place completed its first official project last year.

A one-day leadership training for student association members of the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Fiji National University (FNU) was delivered on October 15, 2011. The training was funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) under their Youth Visioning for Island Living program - a capacity building initiative that aims to empower young people in small islands to make a difference.

There were a total of 35 participants including members of the cell group at FNU and LGBTIQ student support movement, the Drodrolagi Movement. The leadership training was centred on the significance of understanding gender and human rights to be an effective and inclusive leader.

A pre-training evaluation was done which revealed that the term 'gender' was widely misunderstood. An evaluation carried out at the conclusion of the training revealed that the term was a lot clearer for people, and requests for more in-depth training sessions on gender, human rights and sexual diversity were made.

The training also received good media coverage.

The ELFA team is looking forward to delivering more projects in 2012 in line with our objective to create awareness and advocate for human rights and sustainable living based on the principles of feminism and humanity.

Some of the upcoming projects are the continuing advocacy work on the "Take Back the Street" project; advanced gender training by Fiji Women's Crisis Center for the ELFA members; and political empowerment leadership training for ELFA members and women in their networks and social groups.

Going Digital

By **Shazia Usman**

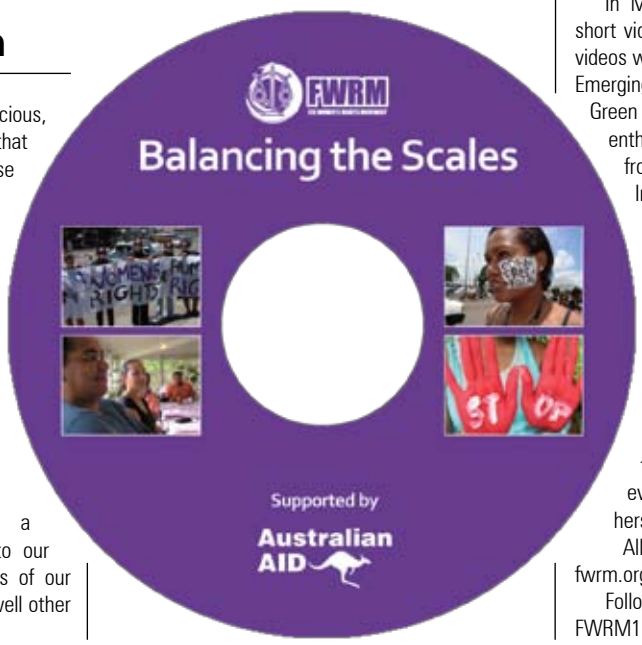
IN an effort to be more environment conscious, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement decided that wherever possible, it will save paper and use more digital forms of advocacy.

Social network

Last year saw the creation of FWRM's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts. Using such sites has assisted us in informing the public of events instantaneously. It is also an interactive form of advocacy, seeing the creation of many a healthy debate.

Website

Our website has also undergone a major facelift – you now have access to our organisational constitution, archived copies of our newsletter Balance and press releases as well other relevant information on the Movement.



For better accessibility the website is still undergoing some work and we hope to see it completed in the first part of this year.

Videos

The Movement produced a total of six videos last year as we find digital stories a very effective form of advocacy.

In March of last year FWRM produced three short videos on Gender and Climate Justice. These videos were scripted and video recorded by FWRM's Emerging Leaders Forum 2011, starring the FWRM Green Girls - a group of young environment enthusiasts. The videos were made with support from the British High Commission and the International Women's Development Agency.

Then for the 2011 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, FWRM produced two videos on the issue of security and e-security. A total 38 participated in these vox populi style videos.

FWRM also launched its AusAID funded organisational promotional video at its 25th anniversary celebration in December last year. Produced by Pasifika Communications, this 8-minute video showcases significant events in the Movement's quarter-century herstory.

All videos are available on our website www.fwrm.org.fj and on our YouTube page: FWRM2011.

Follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/FWRM1 and Twitter: @FWRM1.

Image courtesy of *Shakesville*

Leymah Gbowee, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Tawakkul Karman

"Agents of Change"

We celebrate and congratulate Global Fund for Women grantees, Leymah Gbowee, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Yemeni pro-democracy activist, Tawakkul Karman, who share the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

By **Global Fund for Women**

"WE at the Global Fund are so happy and proud today," said Global Fund CEO, Musimbi Kanyoro. "Not just because the Nobel Committee recognised our grantee partners, but because in naming these three, they acknowledge and affirm that women are agents of change. These women, and millions of others like them, really are changing the world."

These were the first women to win the prize since another Global Fund grantee partner, Wangari Maathai, who died last year, was named as the laureate in 2004. Most of the recipients in the award's 110-year history have been men and this decision echoes our belief that women have creative and strategic solutions to the problems facing their communities.

"We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society," Norwegian Nobel committee wrote in a press release.

A Global Fund grantee since 2008, Leymah Gbowee founded Women Peace and Security Network Africa to mobilise and organise women across ethnic and religious dividing lines to bring an end to the long war in Liberia. The group campaigned to ensure women's participation in elections, and has since worked to enhance the influence of women in West Africa during and after war. Leymah's story is featured in the documentary, Pray the Devil Back to Hell, produced by Global Fund for Women board member, Abigail Disney.

"It would have been impossible for us to achieve what we achieved in Liberia had it not been for the fact that we had support both financially and morally from our sisters at Global Fund for Women," said Leymah Gbowee after her 2009 JFK Profile in Courage Award.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Market Women's Fund was awarded a Global Fund grant in 2008 to support the work of an international constituency of women activists with a mandate to create an empowering environment for Liberia's market women. The group recognises the significant contributions market women make to the health and wellbeing of their families, as well as the post-conflict reconstruction of their communities, and support them by providing business skill training, educational opportunities, and financial support.

Women Journalists Without Chains, established in part by Tawakkul Karman, received a Global Fund grant in 2006 to train and educate female journalists. In order to defend women's rights through various media outlets, these women work together to campaign, raise awareness and advocate for their equal rights.

It is the Norwegian Nobel committee's hope that the prize to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman will help to bring an end to the suppression of women that still occurs in many countries, and to realize the great potential for democracy and peace that women can represent.

Published October 07, 2011 on www.globalfundforwomen.org

Divergent

Excerpted from www.tampabay.com
on January 02, 2012

Review by **Rachel Mowat**

Author : Veronica Roth
Year : 2011

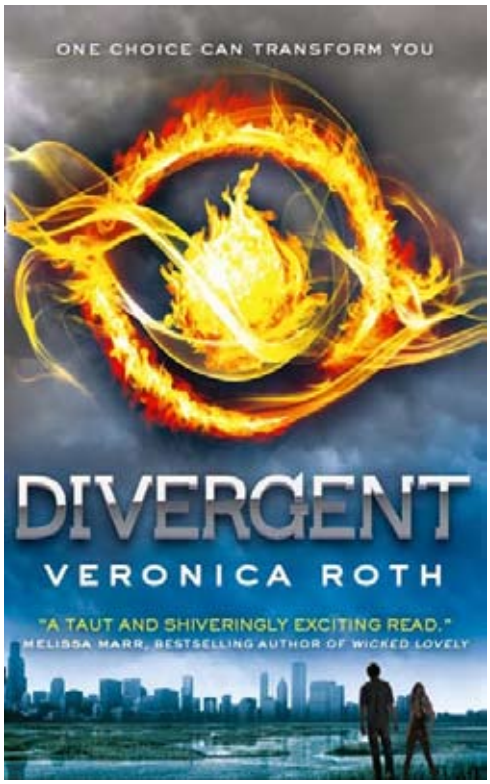


Image courtesy of www.mandasmovements.blogspot.com

H.G. Wells and George Orwell were masters of dystopian societies, and the subject has ignited in young adult fiction ever since: The Hunger Games, The Giver, The Uglies, Whither, Maze Runner, to name only some. Many have been made into movies.

Fans of dystopian society books are always pleased that authors are turning out more of what they love: trilogies of the story lines, loaded with love, loss, violence, witty characters, enemies and more.

Veronica Roth is one such author, having released her first book and the first installment in her Divergent series.

In this first work, titled Divergent, 16-year-old Beatrice, or Tris, is facing the most important day of her life: Choosing Day. She must decide whether to stay with her family in their Abnegation faction, or she can choose to become a part of different factions: Dauntless, Candor, Amity or Erudite. As if this weren't enough pressure, Tris is carrying around a secret that could leave her factionless, or even worse, dead.

As Tris settles into life in her chosen faction, she begins to define herself not by others' standards but by her own. No longer invisible, she finds herself with a little romance, some friends and some desperate enemies. However, it quickly becomes clear that things might not be as calm as they appear. She realizes she is one of the few who has the ability to correct the world she lives in.

Set in a society where it is "faction before blood," Roth's tale balances the right amount of self-discovery and love with enough adventure and violence to keep readers entertained.

Roth, who recently gave Summit Entertainment the rights to produce a movie from her book, includes complex and relatable characters. One disappointment, though, she fails to include the history of how the factions came about.

Divergent is a great start to Roth's trilogy. Cue the countdown to May 2012, when the next installment, Insurgent, is due to be released.

Bol

Excerpted from www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com
on September 1, 2011

Review by **Nikhat Kazmi**

The film focuses on the travails of a lower middle class family in Lahore which struggles with poverty, orthodoxy and the stranglehold of a gender bias which treats women as the archetypal second sex. The highpoint of the film is the conflict between the eldest daughter (actress Humaima Malik) and her traditional father (actor Manzar Sehbai) who has fathered fourteen children, merely to fulfill his desire to have a male heir. Troubles compound when the last-born happens to be a hermaphrodite (intersex) and the father condemns him to a life of captivity, even as he tries to find desperate -and shocking - means to fend for his large family in increasingly hard times.

Director Shoaib Mansoor is fast becoming the flag bearer of a new wave in Pakistani cinema. Having already hit international headlines with *Khuda Kay Liye*, his highly acclaimed diatribe on fundamentalism and racial profiling in a post 9/11 world, he now returns with *Bol*, another hard-hitting indictment of the status of women in orthodox societies.

The film is a tour de force, both in terms of the performances by the two main protagonists, daughter Humaima and father Manzar and in the narrative which spills over with umpteen twists and turns, geared to shock and shake you up, with their horrific tenor. If Humaima Malik is picture perfect as the rebellious daughter who dares to question her father and even take drastic measures to ensure that justice prevails amidst all the inequity, then Manzar Sehbai is magnificent as the tyrannical man who is desperate to hang on to family honour and moribund traditions. The highpoint of Sebai's characterisation is the fact that he never turns up as the quintessential bad guy, despite his shocking deeds. It goes to the director's credit that he does not create heroes and villains and blames old-fashioned social mind-sets and blinding orthodoxy for the malaise. And the fact that the problem of gender discrimination is highlighted through the story of a single close-knit family adds to the emotional quotient of the film.

Image courtesy of www.entertainment-ganesh.blogspot.com

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: _____

Fiji Women's Rights Movement
Ph: (679) 3313156 Fax: 331 3466
website: www.fwrm.org.fj
Email: info@fwrm.org.fj
Mail: GPO Box 14194, Suva, Fiji Is

LOOKOUT!

CSW 2012

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement, in partnership with Asia Pacific Women's Watch, will be participating in the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, February 26 – March 9, 2012.FWRM is currently organising preparatory meetings with those attending, to discuss and learn about your plans for CSW. If you are attending CSW and are interested in collaborating email shabina@fwrm.org.fj

International Women's Day

International Women's Day will be celebrated on Thursday March 8, 2012. As always, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement is looking forward to celebrate the day in a big way but will release more details later.

If you would like to get involved or would like to know more, email info@fwrm.org.fj

Annual General Meeting

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement will be holding its 2010 AGM on Thursday March 22, 2012. All members are welcome to attend. Venue and time will be confirmed later.

For more information email info@fwrm.org.fj

AWID 2012

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement will be attending and hosting two sessions at the Association for Women's Rights in Development's (AWID) International Forum in Istanbul from April 19-21, 2012. FWRM's session's are on session on Implementation of 'gender responsive laws' - who decides allocation of resources? and on Trends Affecting Women's and Rights Funding: Global and Regional Perspectives (FWRM will co-host the second session with three other organisations).

For more information email info@fwrm.org.fj