

# Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

Newsletter



Volume 3, Issue 3

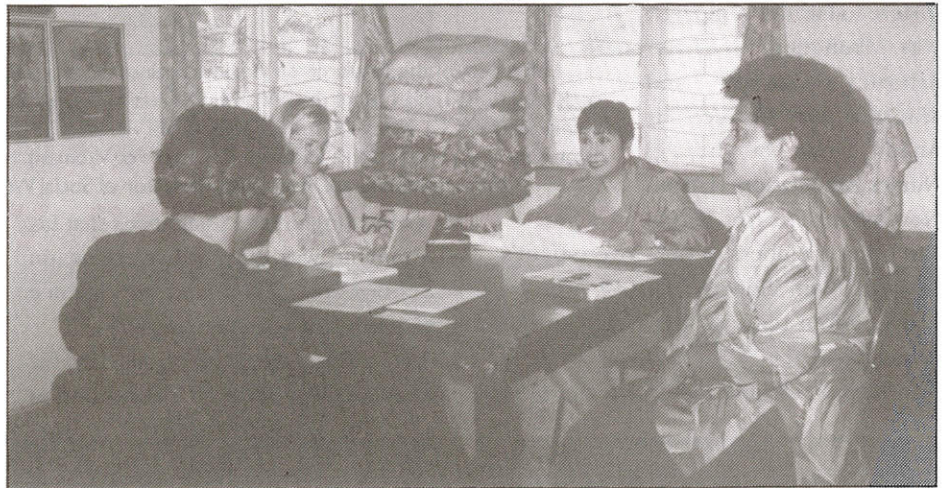
DECEMBER 1999

## UN special envoy visits

The UN Special Rapporteur on child trafficking, pornography and prostitution, Ms Ofelia Calcetas-Santos, visited FWCC and met with Vandhana Narayan (legal adviser) and Salote Malo (Counsellor Supervisor), to discuss the issue of child trafficking in Fiji and the need for legislative reform. Ms Santos was in the country at the invitation of the Fiji Government to establish the facts and investigate reports that Fiji is rapidly becoming a destination for child sex tourism.

FWCC, in its submission to the legislators, recommended various reforms to the rape and child sexual abuse laws, such as the inclusion of sexual abuse of boys within the legal definition of rape and sexual assault, and the elimination of 'consent' and 'appearance over 16' as defenses for the rape of children.

FWCC's submission also recommended gender sensitivity training for judges and magistrates, as well as the introduction of child-friendly court procedures. The need for special



(L-R) Vandhana Narayan (FWCC), Jennifer Philpot (UN Office, Geneva), Ofelia Calcetas-Santos (UN Commission on Children), Salote Malo (FWCC)

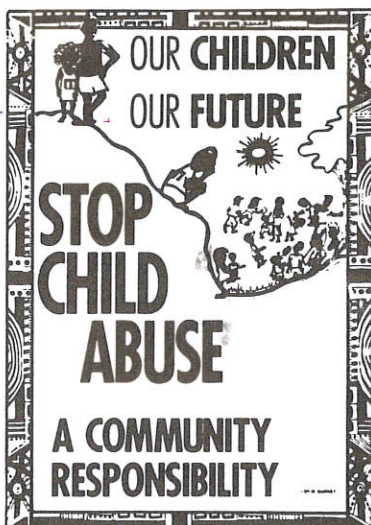
Juvenile Courts and specially trained judicial officers in all cases involving children was also highlighted.

Legislation also needs to be tightened up in adoption procedures, and the reform of current incest laws needs to include the provision of harsher sentences for child abuse.

There is also a need to increase the female age of consent to marry from 16 to 18.

FWCC also identified a serious need for refuges to be set up for women and children in domestic violence situations. There also needs to be more social welfare support for children in need of care, in particular the setting up of children's homes.

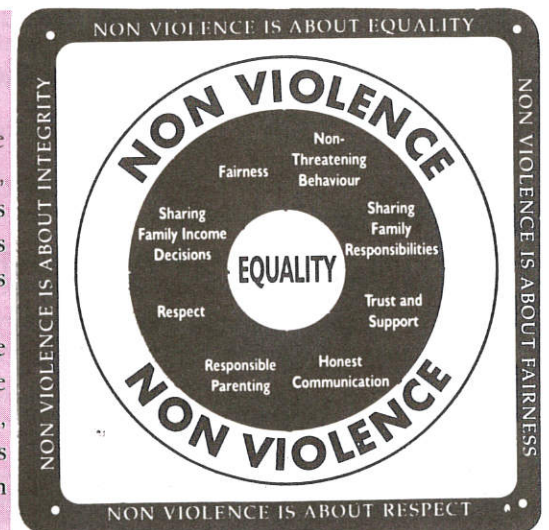
In addition, the submission called for the reform of maintenance laws to provide adequate maintenance for children living in broken homes.



### Coasters mark 16 days of activism

FWCC produced coasters on the theme of 'non-violence and equality', distributing them to bars, restaurants and nightclubs as part of the 16 Days Campaign, which this year was targeted at men.

FWCC in conjunction with the Government Taskforce on Violence Against Women and Children, produced a newspaper supplement as a means of raising public awareness on the issue of violence against women.



# Minister launches 16-day campaign

This is the 9th consecutive year in which the 16 days of Activism against Gender Violence (Nov 25th - Dec 10th) will be observed globally. The campaign starts on the anniversary of the ruthless murder of the Mirabal sisters under the Trujillo dictatorship in 1960, and ends on World Human Rights Day.

Here in Fiji, the campaign was launched by the Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Mr Anand Singh, at the Fiji Nurses Association Hall on November the 24th. FWCC and other members of the Government's Taskforce on Violence against Women and Children took an active part in the launch together.

In his address, the Minister for Justice,



Members of the Taskforce on Violence against Women and Children  
 Back row (L-R) Titilia Naitini (NCW), Kiti Makasiale (Department for Women), Shamima Ali (FWCC), Hassan Khan (FCOSS), Unaisi Vuniwaqa (Sexual Offences Unit)  
 Front Row (L-R) Hon Lavenia Padarath (Minister For Women), Hon Anand Singh (Attorney General), Aseri Rika (Director of Social Welfare)

Mr Anand Singh made assurances that his government was currently working on law reforms related to domestic violence as well as reforms to family law.

The Minister for Women, Ms Lavenia Padarath, acknowledged the contribution

made by members of the Taskforce.

She also announced that work on the domestic violence legislation was still on the drawing board and that we could look forward to next year and the announcement of the new reference. She also assured those present that the work of the taskforce will be further assisted by the \$154, 000 allocated for the Women's Plan of Action.

As part of the campaign, FWCC also

launched the 'White Ribbon Campaign', a global movement that commemorates the Montreal Massacre of 1989, when 14 female engineering students were shot dead by a fellow student.

## WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

MEN  
 WORKING TO END  
 MEN'S VIOLENCE  
 AGAINST WOMEN



WHITE RIBBON  
 CAMPAIGN

For more information contact  
 the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre  
 Ph: 313 300

The White Ribbon Campaign is a global effort to get men to show their support for ending men's violence against women. Supporters of the campaign distribute the ribbons at schools, churches, shops and workplaces.

As the Campaign has gained visibility in other parts of the world, men's violence against women is now a subject for publicity, discussion and debate. The ultimate goal is to develop a worldwide men's anti-violence network.

Wear a white ribbon during the 16 Days of Activism (Nov 25th - Dec 10th) and be part of a global movement opposing Violence Against Women.

# Away from our shores

In August, Edwina and Ashia travelled to Vanuatu to set up the accounts system at the Vanuatu Women's Centre. FWCC is now the managing agent for the Vanuatu Women's Centre.

Shamima attended the Regional Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in Colombo, Sri Lanka. She returned to Fiji via New Zealand where she attended the 'Pacific Court of Women' organised by the Nga Wahine Pasifika in partnership with the Asian Women's Human Rights Council.

Counselor Fiu Chand spent two weeks in Sydney on attachment to the Centre for Community Welfare Training, as part of FWCC's ongoing programme of counsellor training.

FWCC's regional administrator, Adele Khan, attended a high



Maie from the Vanuatu Women's Centre with Edwina Kotoisuva from FWCC

level inter-governmental meeting in Bangkok at the invitation of ISIS International Manila Media Team. The meeting was set up by ESCAP, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Participants reviewed the Jakarta Declaration and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

# Community education continues

FWCC staff have been very busy in the past few months with a jam-packed community education schedule. In July Edwina gave talks on Sexual Harassment to staff of the Bank of Hawaii.

In August Shamima addressed the Fijian Teachers Association on the issue of Child Abuse as well as speaking on Women's Rights to the Nadroga Branch of the Fiji Teachers Union.

Edwina gave a talk on Child Abuse and Child Prostitution to 3rd year students at Fiji School of Medicine, and on the same day addressed Sociology students at USP on Violence against Women and the work of the Crisis Centre.

She also addressed a group of Red Cross representatives on the services provided by FWCC, as well as speaking on the issues of human rights, domestic violence and the law to the Fijian Teachers Association Women's Network.

Salote spoke to doctors and 3rd year medical students on the Role of FWCC and on Violence Against Women. Edwina and Salote also addressed these students on Rape, Domestic Violence and Basic Counselling Skills during the month of September.

Later in September, Shamima and Salote conducted a two-week basic counselling skills training programme for Nadi District Council of Social Services (DCOSS). Salote carried out a



L-R Reena (DCOSS), Salote (FWCC), Ramesh (DCOSS), Mala (DCOSS) and Sulu (FWCC) at the DCOSS training in Nadi

two-week training workshop for YMCA members, raising awareness in the first week on the issues of Rape, Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment and Child Sexual Abuse, and devoting the 2nd week to basic counselling skills training.

# Staff attend workshops

As well as all the community education being carried out, FWCC staff themselves were undergoing workshops and training in various areas.

FWCC Counselling Supervisor (Salote Malo), Project Officer Labasa (Bimla Singh) and Project Officer Ba (Farida Khan) attended a week-long workshop on legal aid skills, organised by the Fiji Legal Aid Commission. The workshop was held to raise awareness on access to legal aid in Fiji.

Swasti attended a 4-day workshop at Marist Brothers High School organised by the Fiji Media Watch. The theme of this workshop was Media Education. Sarah and Shamima participated in a four-day conference on Gender and Communication Policy, organised by WACC, the World Association for Christian Communication.

# FWCC supports East Timor appeal

A group of concerned individuals and NGO's have formed the Fiji East Timor Action Group (FETAG) as a gesture of solidarity for the thousands of East Timorese who have been subjected to the deepest violations of human rights in their own country at the hands of the Indonesian military.

The group has launched an appeal for the East Timorese and the people of Fiji are urged to come forward and donate generously. Money can be deposited at any of the branches of the ANZ Bank or contact the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre for more information.



## STOP THE SLAUGHTER IN EAST TIMOR

### BACKGROUND TO THE EAST TIMORESE CONFLICT

In December 1975, Indonesian troops invaded East Timor massacring over 100,000 East Timorese in the process. Since then thousands more East Timorese have been tortured and killed in their struggle to regain their independence. Last week the people of East Timor were allowed to vote to decide whether they would regain their independence. An overwhelming majority voted in favour of independence. The response by the Indonesian government has been to declare a state of martial law and pro-Indonesian militia continue to massacre hundreds more people daily. The people of East Timor are fighting for their lives. We must not sit back and watch it happen.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

The Indonesian government is heavily dependent on international trade. Most of the international community has placed trade sanctions on Indonesia, refusing to buy their products until peace is restored to East Timor. You can do your part by refusing to buy any products that are manufactured in Indonesia. There are a lot of Indonesian products sold in Fiji, including food items, washing powder, soaps and a wide variety of clothing.

**DON'T BUY THEM!**

**DON'T LET YOUR MONEY BE USED TO FUND THE SLAUGHTER.**

Organised by the Fiji East Timor Action Group  
For more information:  
Ring 313 300

## Counsellors on the move

Our mobile counselling team has been very busy in their work and has had successful visits, providing counselling, support and information to women in remote areas. So far our team has made trips to Korovou, Navua, Nausori, Sigatoka, Rakiraki, Levuka, Taveuni and Savusavu.

Our December visits were as follows:

Korovou Health Centre	December 1
Navua Health Centre	December 7
Nausori Health Centre	December 9

Our Fijian, Hindi and English-speaking counsellors will continue to provide counselling services to the community next year. Counsellors will be available on our 24-hour hotline 313 300 over the Christmas break (Dec 24th - Jan 3rd).



## NEW RECEPTIONIST

Our former receptionist, Ms Lita Finau, left for greener pastures to the land of Dubai! We wish Lita well.

Ms Torika Tabua (right) joined the Centre on the 1st of November.



Ms Torika Tabua

**Merry Christmas**



FWCC wishes you all a Merry Christmas and lots of happiness in the new year. Let us hope that the new millennium will bring peace to our women and children.

