



FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

NEWSLETTER

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Nothing's fair in All Fair

An advertisement that blatantly uses discrimination based on skin colour to sell its product caused an uproar when it hit Fiji screens a few weeks ago.

The advertisement was for a product called All Fair - a cream which supposedly lightens skin by destroying the cells that make melanin.

Many groups and individuals hit out at the manufacturers, saying that the advertisement was perpetuating beliefs that fair skin was more beautiful and socially acceptable than dark skin.

"It sends out the message that dark-skinned people are inferior and such advertisements promote racism," said FWCC Coordinator, Shamima Ali.



The range of skin-whitening products is increasing

She says it is everyone's responsibility, including manufacturers, to recognise and restrict advertising that contains racist and discriminatory messages.

"People don't realise how destructive this kind of advertising is. Not only does it generate dissatisfaction with dark skin, but it

also puts pressure on young girls to conform to how society thinks they should look," Ali said.

"Young people have enough problems to worry about without being made to feel that they have to change the way they look, and spend money in the process," she continued.

The Crisis Centre is also encouraging a general boycott of all so-called 'skin-whitening' products.



Children perform at the opening of PAFCO's child care centre, Levuka

Child care centres - a mother's blessing

The opening of PAFCO's child care centre looks to be of great benefit to the factory's female-dominated workforce.

The child care centre was officially opened in April. Funding assistance for the centre was given by Unifem Pacific. For around 50c per day, children between the ages of 3 and 6 can be left in the care of trained teachers and care-givers.

"Many women don't have access to the extended family network that usually offer child care to working mothers. Centres like this mean that women can continue working and earning money for their families, and are still sure of their children receiving the necessary care and attention during the day," said FWCC Coordinator, Shamima Ali.

The PAFCO centre is not the first of its kind in Fiji. The Kalabu Child Care Centre has been providing day care services to workers at 4 Suva garment factories, since it opened in May 1999.

The Kalabu centre provides care to children between the ages of 4 months to 6 years. It costs a total of \$25 per week for each child. \$10 is paid by the mother and \$15 by the factory management. There are also some places available for children whose parents are not garment workers.

The centre has the capacity for 50 children and since it opened it has been enrolling nearly that many children. However, recent months have seen the numbers drop to as low as 21 children, due to the lay off of many garment workers.

"It is very sad to see so many of these children being taken out of the Centre because their mothers have been laid off and they cannot afford it any longer," said Reshmi Singh, who is the Supervisor/Administrator of the Kalabu Centre.

Ms Singh says that the Centre has been extremely beneficial to the children who have been enrolled.

"Children really benefit from the facilities and the environment we provide. Mental stimulation is provided through all the books and games and other activities that we do," she said.

Ms Singh also pointed out how children benefit socially from their early interaction with other children of different ages. "Some of the children who have been here from when they were babies are now speaking 3 languages, regardless of what race they are," she said.

Savua blames murder on coup-related stress

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre has criticised police Commissioner, Isikia Savua's comments that stress may have been a factor after murder charges were laid against one of his officers.

Constable Tomasi Aisea was charged with the murder of his wife in the Ba Police Barracks in May. Post-mortem examination results showed that the 29-year-old woman had died of stab wounds to her throat and severe choking.

In a press conference, Savua blamed the incident on the stress and trauma experienced by police officers following the events of May 19th.

"He has shifted the blame from the perpetrator to the stress caused by the events of May 19th," said



Isikia Savua

Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's coordinator, Shamima Ali.

"Domestic violence within the family has always been there, even before May 19th and it is important to address that. Stress does not excuse murder or other types of violence," Ali said.

"The root of domestic violence is the inequality which exists within the home," she said.

"When the man feels he owns his wife, he then believes he is able to do what he wishes with her."

According to FWCC, domestic violence has always been prevalent in the security forces - not just in Fiji but in other countries as well.

"The sudden rise in police committing crimes in recent months is a concern and must be addressed immediately," said Ali.

25 complete regional training

Twenty five regional and local participants have successfully completed an intensive one-month training on issues relating to violence against women. Regional participants were from the Solomon Islands, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Bougainville.

There were also local participants, mainly women who were already working or hoping to find work in the area of violence against women.

Men from the region also underwent the training programme. "I know how important counselling is and I hope that my skills will be put to good use when I return home," said Paul, a community worker from Bougainville.

Many local participants have signed on at the FWCC as volunteers, eager to put their training into practice.

"Violence against women is everywhere. We often think that the problem ends with the physical violence, no one takes into account the trauma that women and children experience in such situations," said Sadhana, a local participant. Sessions on media, human rights, CEDAW, CRC, gender and theatre were facilitated by other local and regional resource persons.

To date 120 people from around the region have undergone the Regional Training. The next training will be in October.

Alcohol does not cause domestic violence



Myths about alcohol and violence

Myth: Alcohol causes domestic violence

Fact: In about 50% of cases the offender is sober at the time of the assault. Often alcohol can trigger an assault, but it is totally wrong to think that alcohol is the cause of the violence. It has to do with the fact that the man believes he has power over the women and can treat her badly if he wants to.

Vakasama lasu: E dau vu ni veivakamavoataki na mateni.

Ka dina: E rauta ni (50%) na kisi ni veivakamavoataki, era sega ni mateni na tagane. E levu na gauna, na mateni e dau vakarawarawataka na kena vakayacori na veivakamavoataki. Na ka e vakavuna na veivakamavoataki, ni ko tagane, e vakabauta ni lewa na yalewa ka kaukauwa ka rawa ni vakayacora ga vua na i tovo kaukauwa.

Ko ira na tagane, ka ra dau veivakamavoataki ni ra mateni, e dodonu me ra kauwa ni dau mateni. E sega ni dodonu me i ulubale.

गलत धारणा

घरेलू हिंसा का एक कारण शराब भी है

वास्तविकता

घरेलू हिंसा की लगभग बीस प्रतिशत घटनाओं में अत्याचार करने वाला व्यक्ति बिलकुल होश में होता है। हालांकि शराब से हिंसा भड़क सकती है लेकिन यह मानना बिलकुल गलत है कि शराब ही घरेलू हिंसा का कारण है।

घरेलू हिंसा के अन्य कई कारण हैं जिनका संबंध शराब से नहीं है।

घरेलू हिंसा का सही कारण यह है कि पुरुष यह विश्वास करते हैं कि उनके पास महिलाओं पर अधिकार जमाने का बल है और अगर वे चाहें तो वे महिलाओं पर अत्याचार कर सकते हैं।

कुछ पुरुष जब शराब के नशे में होते हैं तो उन्हें अपना होश नहीं रहता है इस लिए वे शायद हिंसात्मक व्यवहार का प्रदर्शन करते हैं। लेकिन इस तरह के पुरुषों को यह तो मालूम होना चाहिए कि जब वे शराब पी लेते हैं तो उनकी क्या हालत होती है इस लिए उन्हें शराब के करीब जाना नहीं चाहिए। इस लिए शराब का नशा हिंसा का बहाना नहीं बन सकता है।

अब वह समय आ गया है जब हम सच्चाई के प्रति अपने आप को जाग्रत करें।

THE VIOLENCE CONTINUES

March 24 - A carpenter tried to rape a woman seeking his assistance to buy second-hand clothing. The 25-year old admitted to the charge and was jailed for 40 months.

April 4 - A 44-year old father is being investigated for having an incestuous affair with his 11-year old daughter. The Nadi man was suspected of the offence after the girl's stepmother reported the matter to the police. The girl is the man's youngest daughter from his first marriage.

April 5 - A man was sentenced for 2 years in jail for trying to have sex with a 10-year old girl.

April 7 - A man was jailed for 9 months for indecently annoying a woman

April 8 - Two Lautoka men were sentenced to a total of 13 months imprisonment for indecent assault in separate incidents.

April 10 - A man had his 6-year sentence for rape overturned by the High Court. The man had previously been sentenced by Chief Magistrate Salesi Temo on 2 counts of raping his daughter. The Magistrate's Court had been told that the accused had had sex with the victim on several occasions. However, on appeal, he was acquitted by the High Court. Justice Peter Surman

said there was insufficient evidence to convict the man.

April 14 - A man was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment after pleading guilty to a charge of incest.

He had started to commit the crime when his daughter had been in class 4. The man also admitted to 6 previous convictions.

April 15 - A 4-year-old boy was anally raped by his neighbour in a cane-farming settlement in Lautoka.

April 18 - A 30-year-old man was arrested for attempting to rape a 23-year old housewife in Nadi.

April 21 - A secondary school teacher was charged for raping his sister-in-law, a third form student. The accused had exposed himself to the victim on numerous other occasions.

April 25 - A 26 year-old housewife was tied up and assaulted by a young man, before being robbed.

April 27 - An appeal in the High Court failed when the accused was told by

Justice Davendra Pathik that he had committed a serious crime for which the law provides 14 years in prison.

Driver accused of raping sister-in-law

A DRIVER of Lami appeared in the Suva Magistrates Court yesterday charged with raping his sister-in-law on Sunday afternoon. The driver depended on him. Mr Katonivalu said should have thought about his family before committing the offence.

years in jail.

The accused had anally raped a 14-year old boy and had been sentenced to 3 years in prison last year.

April 30 - A 16-year-old girl was raped by an unknown male at Vuna settlement.

April 30 - A special constable of the Labasa Police Station allegedly raped a 17-year-old girl. The incident is believed to have happened at the victim's home.

May 8 - A 36-year-old father was charged for allegedly raping his 9-year-old daughter. The incident occurred at Veisaru, Ba.

May 9 - A 38 year-old, Lami driver was charged with raping his sister-in-law. The victim was living with her sister and the accused in the same house and at the time of the incident she had been alone at home.

May 11 - A teacher who allegedly defiled his student was bailed by the Tavua Magistrate Court.

Rapist appeals for lighter term

A MAN who was sentenced to five years for rape yesterday appealed for a

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Man acquitted of raping daughter

MAN charged with raping his daughter walked out of the High Court free yesterday after he was acquitted. The 54-year-old villager had been sentenced earlier this year to 5 years in prison by Chief Magistrate Salesi Temo.

plence

Violence is no private matter

The women of Naelewai village have acknowledged the fact that violence is no longer a private matter. Domestic violence was the topic for discussion at a workshop carried out by the Ministry for Women and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre.

"Sadly, violence has been in our homes for such a long time that we started to see it as a private matter," said one of the participants.

The 18 women who attended the workshop were extremely responsive to the information and new ideas that the workshop generated.

"I felt that this workshop was extremely important as these women had never been given the opportunity before to understand their rights and the fact that domestic violence is a criminal offence," said the FWCC counsellor, Alumita Tuikenatabua.

The participants were also pleased with the outcome of the workshop. "It is very good that we are learning more about the issues that affect us directly. Despite our remote location FWCC has taken the opportunity to educate us, said one of the participants.

Their isolation is also becoming a fast-growing concern because of their lack of immediate access to police and medical services. This concern was raised when Tuikenatabua emphasised the importance for rape victims to make reports to the police and seek medical help as soon as possible.

The women were also familiarised with Family Law issues, in particular maintenance, divorce, custodial rights and separation.

This was the first workshop in the area that addressed the issue of women's rights.



FWCC goes to the islands

FWCC has been making sure that their message reaches right across the country. Taveuni and Lau were the focus of FWCC's community education programs during the month of May.

Taveuni needs more assistance

There is a grave lack of services and resources available on Taveuni. FWCC is concerned at the consequences this has for women in violent situations.

"There is only 1 doctor at the hospital. There is

knowledge on the issues of rape, domestic violence, child abuse and sexual harassment, as well as some basic counselling training.

Villages learn about police procedures

The villages of Lavena, Korovou, Naselese and Dama, also hosted workshops by FWCC Senior counsellor, Salote Malo.

"At all the villages there was a good response from the people. We saw over 150 men and women during the week, and they were very eager to learn more about the violence that women face," said Malo.

The participants were especially eager to learn more about the police procedures in handling cases of domestic violence and rape. They also raised their concern at the length of time it took police to respond to reports of violence.

"I was asked if it was alright if the victim's relatives took matters into their own hands and attacked the perpetrator of the violence, if the police were late in responding," said Malo. "I had to remind them that no one has

the right to take the law into their own hands," she said.

Lauan chief supports No Drop Policy

Lauan chief, Tui Cikobia has expressed his support of the Domestic Violence 'No Drop Policy'.

"It is good to know that the police have adopted the 'No Drop Policy'. Now domestic violence cases are actually going to court instead of being dismissed as unimportant, by the police," he said.



Women raise questions about police procedures, Waiyevo, Taveuni

Tui Cikobia made these statements during a community education workshop in Vanua Balavu and surrounding islands, which was carried out by FWCC counsellors in May.

Lauan children learn their rights

Over 160 men, women and children attended the workshops at Adi Maopa Junior Secondary School, Cikobia Island, Avea, Mago and Sawana village.

FWCC counsellors were in Lau to raise awareness on the very serious issues of domestic violence, child sexual abuse and rape.

"Sexual assaults are on the rise throughout Fiji. Raising awareness on the issue, and making sure people, especially children, understand their rights and how to protect themselves, is very important," said FWCC Senior Counsellor, Salote Malo.



Participants at the Taveuni workshop

no Social Welfare office - so all welfare services have to be processed through the Savusavu or Labasa offices. There is no permanent magistrate either, so court cases have to be delayed until the circuit court comes to Taveuni," said Shamima Ali.

Officials receive training

FWCC carried out a 4-day training with officers from the education, health and police departments on Taveuni.

"These are the people that women and children go to when they are abused and it is important that service providers understand what these people are going through and how to deal appropriately with them," said Shamima Ali.

The training included improving their



Salote Malo explaining children's rights to Class 8 students of Cikobia Village School, Vanuabalavu

YEARS LATER...

I was born out of pleasure
My birth came as a surprise to my carrier
My dad didn't stay around
Mum had to raise me on her own
Growing up I'm always afraid
Of stepping out of my mum's protective web.

I'm afraid that I'd fall in the same snare
Mum fell into years ago
Now, all grown up, on the verge of womanhood
I'm faced with decisions.

Dad has finally come around
But what's the use?
How can he make up for all those years?
The years of neglect
Growing up without a fatherly figure
Mum played both mum and dad.

Now I stand at the crossroads
Afraid to love...
Afraid to even take a single relationship seriously
Afraid of that commitment
Feelin' that they'll all be like dad.

By Annie Robinson

Abused children may feel worthless

Abused children get the message that they are of little value - why else, they ask, would their parents or other adults misuse them physically, emotionally or sexually.



Visit the new fijiwomen.com

Our website, www.fijiwomen.com now has some new features. There is a daily news update featuring the main news story involving women. News from around the region will also be available.



So click on www.fijiwomen.com. Get informed and get involved!

Meet our staff

Yishu Lal

Yishu first joined the Centre in 1989, and underwent training to become a counsellor. In 1991, she became a full-time counsellor and over the years has undergone many other training programmes. She doesn't think of her work just as a job, but more of a daily inspiration and a challenge. She has also started to look at her life from a different perspective. She is able to analyse her past and present work and in doing so maps out future strategies that can assist her in becoming more focused.

"Violence in the home should not exist- all problems and conflicts can be solved through dialogue," she says.



Iisapeci Maria

Ili has been a volunteer with FWCC ever since she completed high school in 1999. As a member of the FWCC she has received training in the Regional Training Program in 2000. She was also an active participant in the Youth Forum during the 3rd Regional Meeting on Violence Against Women in February 2001.

"I was interested in working in this field and have been very fortunate to be part of FWCC. While working, I have learnt a lot about the issue of violence against women and have been offered numerous opportunities to develop skills and knowledge. Working at FWCC is a new experience every day."



Suicide hotline

On the last weekend of July FWCC will be running a Suicide Hotline. The hotline is open for all men, women and children who need to talk about their problems.

Call 313 300 or 312 945, from 4.30 pm Friday, 27th July, till 12.30pm, Sunday, 29th July.

FWCC's mobile counselling is on hold until after the August elections. However, the community education is still continuing. If you want someone from FWCC to come and talk in your community about women's and children's issues, please contact us.

Listen to us on radio every week

You can listen to FWCC staff on the radio talking about the work of the Crisis Centre and the issues that we deal with. These radio programs are available in English, Fijian and Hindi on the Bula Network.

Fijian: 3.15 pm on Bula 102 FM
Every second Sunday

English: 9.30am on Bula 100.4 FM
Every Tuesday

Hindi: 10.00am on Radio Fiji 2
Every Thursday

We'd love to hear from you

Letter to the Editor

I am an avid reader of the articles that are published in your newsletters. Due to the easy access (as it is inserted in the newspapers) I find it an effortless exercise. The articles are educational and beneficial, especially for girls. I can assure the FWCC that I have learnt a lot. As I have completed high school, I feel that I have now found my vocation- to help women and children who are in violent situations. I look forward to more interesting articles in your forthcoming newsletters.

Pinky, Nadi Airport.

We want to hear from you!
If you have any comments regarding current cases

of violence against women or wish to air your views on women's rights or on the work of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre - write to us via fax, email or post. Please include your name and contact details. We will select the best comments for publication in the newsletter and you could win an FWCC T-shirt.

