

The

FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

July 1998



FWCC celebrates Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) began in 1908. Since then the tradition of having a special day to celebrate our achievements and express our solidarity all around the world has continued. The first march was organised by garment workers in New York. They demanded the vote for women, prohibition of child labour, shorter working hours, better work conditions and equal pay. The demonstration led to the adoption of 8th March as International Women's Day to focus on women's issues, to support all women in their struggles and to have fun with other women.

The FWCC has been commemorating IWD since 1987. This year, the NGO Coalition on Human Rights declared the month of March to be the "Women's Month" and several activities were organised to draw attention to issues of concern to women.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) began the month with a panel discussion on 'What are Human Rights?' and invited seven panelists to address the public on the topic. The speakers included Asenaca Uluiviti from the Fiji Law Reform Commission, Dr Asesela Ravuvu and Dr Vijay Naidu from USP, Isabella Waterschoot from UNDP, Attar Singh from the Fiji Trade Unions Congress, Losena Salabula from the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre and Anita Singh from the FWCC. The event was well attended and a lot of discussion was generated.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre commemorated International Women's Day



FWCC Reclaim the Night marchers

- photo: Fiji Times

with a Reclaim the Night March through the streets of Suva. A new IWD sticker was launched this year.

The march saw women, men and children from all walks of life, striding through the streets with candles, tambourines, placards, banners, whistles, stickers and loud hailer. The March ended at Government Buildings where the Co-ordinator of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Shamima Ali, re-launched a petition inviting our government to cut military spending and divert more funding to social issues such as the rights of women and children, poverty, disability etc.

Towards the end of March a second panel discussion was held on 'What are Women's

Human Rights?' It proved to be a very spirited evening. Speakers included Dr. Juliet Hunt from Australia who spoke on how donors view human rights, Mere Pulea from USP spoke on the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Sharon Rolls from YWCA spoke on the rights of young women, Dr Melinda Madew from the Philippines spoke on sexual orientation, Raijeli Nicole from the Fiji Women's Rights Movement spoke on women's employment rights and Edwina Kotoisuva from the FWCC spoke on violence against women.

The FWCC thanks all members of the public who showed their support during these activities and looks forward to even greater public participation next year!

VISITORS TO THE CENTRE

Visitors to the FWCC over the last six months included Penny Urwin and Paula Davidson from the Australian High Commission community, Senator Margaret Reynolds from the Australian Senate in Canberra, international folk singer Judy Small and her manager Sue Dyson, Naomi Mehta - the People's Lawyer from Tuvalu, Katy Tuituboa and Lt Col Richard Levan from the US Embassy, Janet Agar - a founding member of the FWCC visiting from New Zealand and Stuart Wulff from the South Pacific People's Foundation in Canada.



Edwina Kotoisuva, Kamla Arun, Shamima Ali, Lili King, Rosemary McKay (AusAID Canberra) and Paul Kelly (AusAID Suva) at the Project Co-ordinating Committee Meeting at FWCC in May this year.

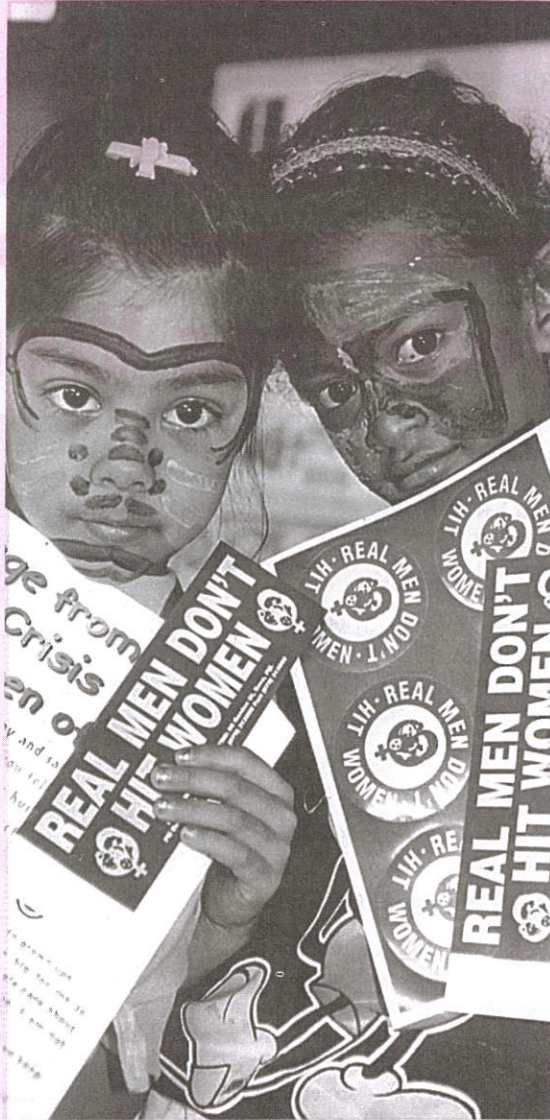
Domestic violence research starts

After months of preparation, the FWCC has begun its research into the incidence, prevalence and attitudes towards domestic violence and sexual assault in Fiji. As part of the first phase of the research, a small research team consisting of consultant Peggy Duncan from New Zealand, Mosmi Bhim, Salote Malo, Mere Vunibaka, Salote Tamanitoakula, Ashia Ali and Ritu Sabharwal have visited eight police stations around Fiji to collect data.

The research team would like to thank police stations in Samabula, Raiwaqa, Valelevu, Nausori, Navua, Nadi, Lautoka and Central Police Station for giving us access to their records. We would particularly like to thank PC Vasant from Raiwaqa Police Station, PC Sharma from Valelevu Police Station, CID Rakesh from Nausori Police Station, PC Susana from Navua Police Station, Kava and Suliasi from Lautoka Police Station and PC Uttam from Nadi Police Station for their co-operation and willingness to help. A very special thank you goes to Mr Ishrat Khan from Sigatoka Police Station for providing assistance that went beyond the call of duty.

This research is the first of its kind to be conducted in Fiji and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre also thanks the Department of Women and Culture, Asia Foundation and UNIFEM for their support.

Child abuse figures shock meeting



- photo: Fiji Times

FWCC coordinator Shamima Ali was invited to present a paper at a regional conference organised by ECPAT Australia, at the Forum Secretariat from June 2 - 3 this year. Over 90 delegates from around the Pacific participated in this conference to look at strategies to address the growing problem of child prostitution, pornography and trafficking in the Pacific.

Shamima spoke on the need to improve services for children who are abused in this way as well as the need for appropriate training for all welfare and law enforcement agencies that deal with children who have been abused. In her paper, Shamima quoted statistics on child sexual abuse cases seen by the FWCC over the last 14 years. These statistics showed that 38% of abusers were either fathers, grandfathers or stepfathers of the child, 23% were other relatives, 32% were family friends, neighbours, teachers, priests, or boyfriends, while only 7% were strangers to the child. This statistical breakdown shocked many of the delegates present and Shamima's presentation received considerable media coverage.

The conference ended with each participating country identifying national focal points for dealing with child prostitution, pornography and trafficking as well as the formulation of a regional mission statement on the issue.

Spreading the message around the region

Staff from FWCC have been busy responding to invitations from various parts of the Pacific who, in recognition of the Centre's experience in the area of violence against women, have invited our staff to conduct training with their staff as well as evaluate their programs.

Papua New Guinea

In May, a team of four FWCC staff, sponsored by Save the Children Fund (PNG) and AusAID, was invited to PNG to evaluate the women's programs in Simbu and Wewak as well as to look into the feasibility of setting up a new women's centre in Goroka.

Vanuatu

FWCC Co-ordinator Shamima Ali visited the Vanuatu Women's Centre in March in an advisory capacity to give her input into the compilation of their policy manual. FWCC's Counselling Supervisor Salote Malo was invited by the Vanuatu Women's Centre in June to conduct counsellor training with police, government and community workers.

Solomon Islands

In March, a breakthrough visit to the Solomon Islands was made by Shamima. She was invited to conduct training on violence against



Adelle and Sulu at a meeting with NGOs in Port Moresby

women issues with the Solomon Islands Police Force. A second visit was made at the invitation of the New Zealand Embassy and the staff of the Solomon Islands Family Counselling Centre to work out strategies to implement recommendations made by an earlier consultancy.

Community education program continues

Community Education has always been a very important role of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. Over the last few months, FWCC staff have conducted awareness raising talks and workshops at the request of several groups.

● Salote and Mere spoke on FWCC services and child sexual abuse during the women's church service at the request of the Davuilevu Methodist Church Women's Circuit. Approximately 200 women from churches in the Davuilevu Circuit attended this service.

● Ashia and Alumita conducted a discussion on FWCC services and sexual assault with 40 women and girls from the Zenana Muslim League Youth Camp. Some of the issues that arose out of this discussion included how mothers could better educate their daughters on sexual assault issues and what the FWCC is

doing to address the problem. There were also many questions about paedophilia.

● Edwina conducted a session with Fiji Medical School students on FWCC services and domestic violence. FSM students showed particular interest in the psychological effects of domestic violence on women and children.

● A 2-hour workshop on sexual assault was conducted by Edwina with Fiji Institute of Technology Foundation students. She focused on breaking down myths about sexual assault. The session also included the definition of sexual assault as well as current laws on sexual assault and the need for reform of these laws.

● Edwina also conducted a discussion on domestic violence and family issues with University of the South Pacific Sociology students. These students had specific questions on how the FWCC counsels women and

children who visit the Centre and what steps we take to assist women.

● Shamima spoke on gender issues and leadership to 50 young people who attended the Rotary Youth Leaders Award. One of the major issues that arose was the role of women in the home, in the workplace and in the community.

● Shamima was also invited to address the St Joseph's Secondary School Parents Teachers Association AGM on the topic Teenagers to the Year 2000. She spoke on parental and teachers' responsibilities towards preventing child abuse and dealing with abused children.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre conducts community education talks and workshops upon request and looks forward to receiving invitations from schools, clubs, organisations and community groups. We welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge and experience on gender issues, particularly on the issue of violence against women and children.

Friends of the FWCC

Funding is a problem that all non-governmental organisations have experienced and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre is no different, particularly as violence against women has never really been considered a government priority.

After years of struggle, the FWCC received its first breakthrough in 1990 when we were given a four-year grant by AusAID (formerly AIDAB) through our Australian NGO partner - Freedom for Hunger Campaign/Community Aid Abroad. In 1995, FWCC negotiated another four-year grant from AusAID. This funding enables the Centre to run its violence against women programs, produce training material and conduct community education.

The FWCC also receives donations and support from local organisations and business houses and would like to acknowledge the following organisations and clubs for donations received over the past year:

Morris Hedstroms

Pacific Guardian-Cable & Wireless Shipping

Australian Embassy Social Club

Corona Women's Society

The FWCC also received a donation of books, bedclothes and other items for women and children who are in need from Lt Col Richard Levan, the US Defence Attaché with the United States Embassy in Suva.

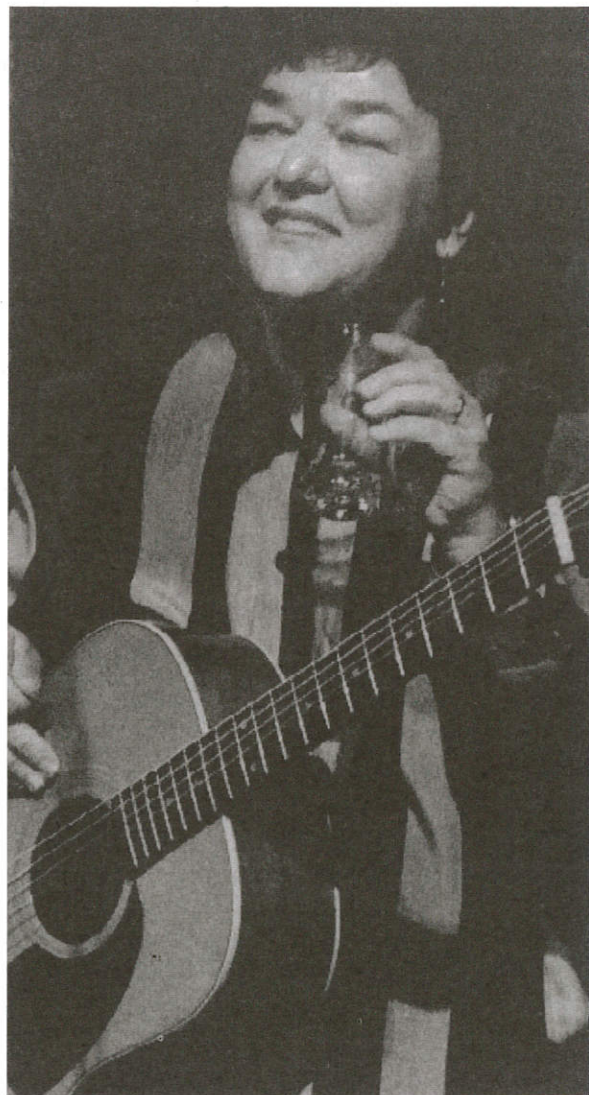
Numerous individuals have also shown their support to FWCC through their donations. The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre has worked hard to achieve the high profile it has in Fiji and the Pacific region and we acknowledge all our supporters for helping us to achieve this.

Judy Small thrills local audiences

The FWCC arranged for the internationally acclaimed Australian folk-singer Judy Small to perform three concerts in Fiji in February this year. This tour, which was funded by AusAID, was a curtain-raiser for FWCC activities that were organised in March to commemorate International Women's Day.

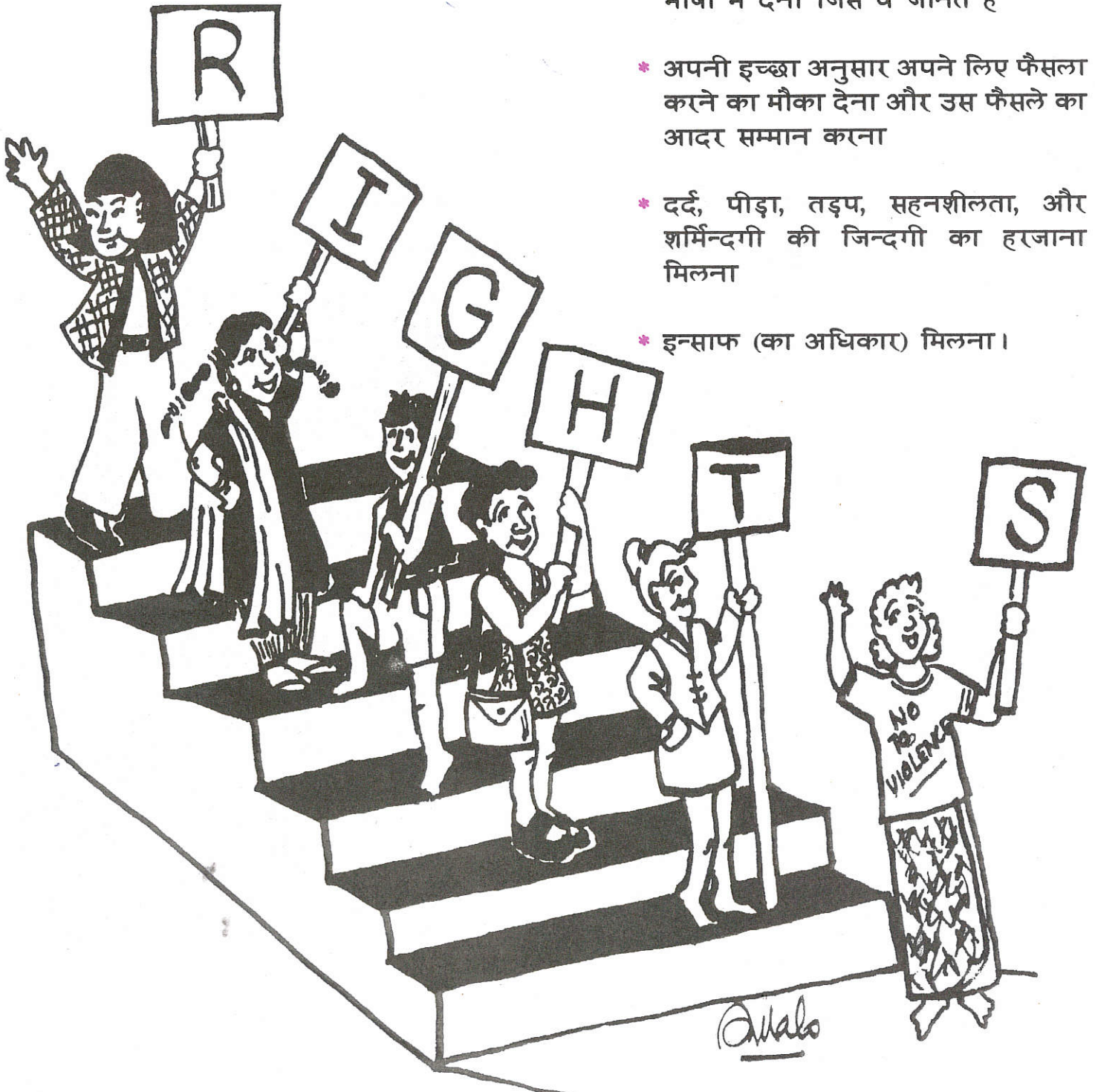
Small's first concert was hosted by the Australian High Commissioner and his wife at their residence in Suva, followed by an equally successful second concert hosted by the Suva Travelodge. The third concert was organised by the Nadi Soroptomists and held in Nadi. All three concerts were promoted by local radio station - FM96.

Judy Small's music and lyrics are strongly influenced by popular Australian folk music of the 50s and 60s. She began her singing career over 15 years ago and has produced nine albums, many songs and a song-book. Her songs are about peace, justice, love, hope and fun. Judy had her Fiji audiences in stitches with songs such as *IPD*, (the male version of the *IUD*), the rousing "*Golden Arches*" and the "*French*" song. Judy Small's concerts are occasions for laughing, crying, thinking, and going away with a warm feeling that lasts long after the concert is over.



Na Yalewa era kucuvi se ra vakasagai

- e dodonu me ra vakabauti
- e dodonu me ra lomani, taqomaki ka kauwaitaki
- e dodonu me dau maroroi na kedra i talanoa ka kua ni ra dusi
- e dodonu me ra vukei ka vakasalataki ena vosa era kila
- e dodonu me ra ciqomi ka soli vei ira me ra digidigi
- e dodonu me saumi vakailavo na mavoa kei na rarawa, e yaco vei ira
- Sa na qai yaco na lewa dodonu



अश्लील हरकत और बलात्कार हुए लोगों का अधिकार है कि..

- * उनका विश्वास किया जाए
- * उनके साथ आदर और सम्मान का व्यवहार किया जाए
- * सभी जानकारीयां गुप्त रखना
- * उन्हें सही सलाह और जानकारी उस भाषा में देना जिसे वे जानते हैं
- * अपनी इच्छा अनुसार अपने लिए फैसला करने का मौका देना और उस फैसले का आदर सम्मान करना
- * दर्द, पीड़ा, तड़प, सहनशीलता, और शर्मिन्दगी की जिन्दगी का हरजाना मिलना
- * इन्साफ (का अधिकार) मिलना।