

Tok Blong Pasifik

News and Views on the Pacific Islands

September/December 1996 Vol. 50 No. 3/4

published by

SOUTH PACIFIC

PEOPLES FOUNDATION

Featuring

To Market, To Market –
Micro-Enterprise for Women in Fiji

Credit Unions in Vanuatu

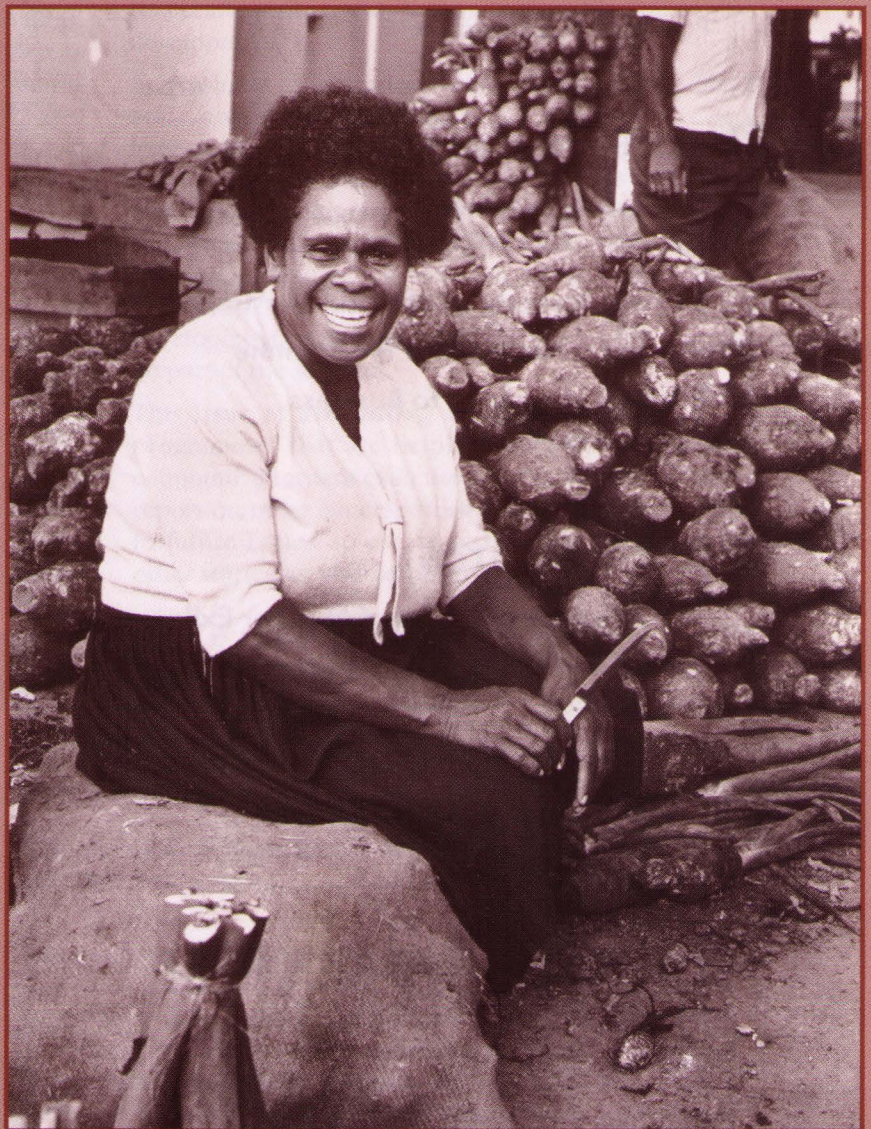
Small Business Training
in Papua New Guinea

Special Reports:

Remembering 50 Years of
Nuclear Exile

Pacific Women in Transition

Fiji's Constitutional Review



ASiua

Supporting Community Based Economic Alternatives

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Cover Photo: Woman selling produce in Fiji market.
Photo by Elaine Briere.

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ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

Tok Blong Pasifik is a phrase in Pidgin, a language used in parts of the Pacific. A rough equivalent would be "News from the Pacific". **Tok Blong Pasifik** (ISSN: 1196-8206) is published by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada (SPPF). Our aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, environment and other issues of importance to Pacific Islanders. Through the magazine, we hope to provide readers with a window on the Pacific that will foster understanding and promote support for Pacific Island peoples. SPPF gratefully acknowledges support for this publication from the Canadian International Development Agency.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

We welcome contributions to **Tok Blong Pasifik** and readers' comments and suggestions. A priority is placed upon contributions from Pacific Islanders and others currently living in the Islands. As an issues focused magazine, **Tok Blong Pasifik** often includes material that is contentious. Views expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPPF or financial supporters of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit material.

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Tok Tok



Creating Real Economic Alternatives

Tok Blong Pasifik has often carried articles that challenge the prevailing economic model that is shaping today's world and the future of Pacific Islanders. Whether it is the short-term-profit-for-long-term-loss

over-exploitation of forests in Melanesia, conflicts over mining, objections to the impact of tourism on Native Hawaiians, concerns about working conditions in garment factories, criticism about over-dependency on aid by Pacific governments, uproars over debt crises and structural adjustment programmes, or any of a number of other topics, there is no lack of debate over the issues.

However, the debate frequently seems to generate more heat than light. If current development paradigms fall short in addressing the needs of Pacific communities,

then what are the alternatives? Where are the creative options that offer people a third path that is neither the status quo nor a headlong rush towards the kind of "development" that marginalises people or leaves them worse off in the long run? How can Pacific communities harness the capacity of their own people to create meaningful, lasting community economic development?

Increasingly, these options are being developed. Small scale, community based economic alternatives - ecologging, alternative forest products, alternative tourism, local food processing and other forms of micro-enterprise development - are taking place throughout the Pacific. Support programmes in such areas as training and financing are also taking shape. These initiatives are not the whole solution to the development challenges facing the Pacific, but they can be part of the solution.

This issue of *Tok Blong Pasifik* reports on a few programmes that are helping to support small scale economic alternatives in the Pacific. We would like to report on other success stories in Pacific development in future issues, so please write to us with ideas for other stories we should be covering.



Trying to reach us?

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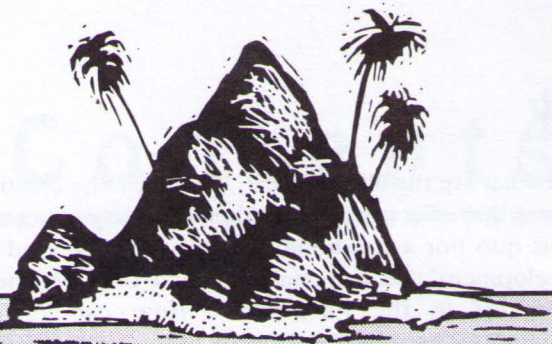
Former Board Members Join South Pacific Forum

Michael Mullins and Gayle Nelson, former members of the SPPF Board of Directors, have taken positions with the South Pacific Forum Secretariat in Suva, Fiji.

Michael has been hired as a Private Sector Development Advisor, working within the Trade and Investment Division. He will provide advice to the governments of Forum Island Countries on private sector development policies, assisting them to create a nurturing environment for the growth of small and medium size enterprises. Michael will also provide advice to business enterprise operators to help them strengthen management practices and increase their potential for export.

Gayle will work with the Economic Development Division, providing analysis, advice and training on gender issues to increase the capacity of the secretariat and other regional organisations to ensure gender equity in their programmes. Gayle will also work with projects being supported by the Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development Programme to ensure the integration of gender considerations into all aspects of the Canadian funded projects.

Both positions are being funded by the Canadian International Development Agency.



PACIFIC NEWS UPDATES

South Pacific Forum

[NB: SPPF's Stuart Wulff was in Majuro for the Forum meeting as part of the Canadian delegation.]

Forum Meeting Addresses Economic, Resource and Environmental Issues

Economic development and resource issues were highlighted at the 27th South Pacific Forum held in Majuro, Marshall Islands. Forum leaders had an "intensive discussion" on the Forum theme of "Pacific Solidarity for the Common Good" and agreed on a range of measures to promote economic reform and development. Leaders noted a desire for stronger links with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group of countries and addressed several "economic liberalisation" themes key to APEC, the World Trade Organisation and other economic globalisation initiatives: trade liberalisation, tariff reform, investment transparency, private sector development and reductions in the public sector. Media spokesperson for the leaders Sir Julius Chan of PNG was asked if they were turning their backs on 20 years of public sector based development since independence for Pacific Island countries. He responded: "I suppose so", remarking that now

countries which pursue private sector development are doing better. The Forum welcomed the imminent opening of a Japanese funded Pacific Islands Centre in Tokyo to promote greater trade and tourism links. Leaders urged the Forum Fisheries Committee to expedite the arrangements for sustainable management of the region's fisheries and called upon all Forum members to manage their forests sustainably. On the environmental front, the leaders highlighted their concern about the impact of global climate change on the Pacific and called for accelerated negotiations towards a binding international protocol on greenhouse gas emissions. Nuclear issues also received considerable attention. Leaders expressed concern about shipments of plutonium through the region and proposals for regional nuclear waste storage facilities. They welcomed the cessation of nuclear testing in the region, strongly supported taking the CTBT to the UN General Assembly, and also noted the World Court decision, Canberra Commission report, establishment of additional nuclear free zones and other developments (see related story under "World"). Forum leaders supported the UN Security Council bids of Japan and Australia and noted that they would welcome Malaysia as a Post-Forum Dialogue partner.

France readmitted to Dialogue Status

Forum leaders agreed during their retreat to readmit France as a Dialogue partner. France's suspension at the end of the 1995 Forum was a response to the resumption of French nuclear weapons testing in the region. There was considerable disagreement prior to the Forum meeting about whether France should be readmitted immediately or left out for a year. After what were reportedly long discussions, the leaders decided to readmit France immediately. The decision was condemned by NGOs meeting in a Parallel Forum, by some journalists and even by some members of the Pacific government delegations. But a Dialogue meeting with a French delegation took place on the Sunday following the completion of the other Post-Forum Dialogue meetings.

Canada to Fund Ocean Development

The Forum meeting in Majuro provided the venue for signing of



Signing of Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development Programme aide memoire at South Pacific Forum meeting in Majuro.

an aide memoire setting out the framework for Phase II of the Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development Programme (CSPODP). The five year \$14 million programme will be

Photo: Alfred Sasako

coordinated through the Forum Secretariat and channelled through four regional organisations: Forum Secretariat; Forum Fisheries Agency; University of the South Pacific; South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. Projects will take place throughout the region, addressing a range of fisheries, ocean development and marine environment initiatives. Signing for Canada was the Canadian High Commissioner to Canberra, Brian Schumacher. The Forum was represented by Secretary General Tabai, while senior officials signed for the other regional partners.

World

Nuclear Disarmament Receives Boost

The cause of nuclear disarmament registered several gains in 1996. In July the International Court of Justice ruled, in an opinion requested by the UN General Assembly, that "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law". The judges unanimously called for "nuclear disarmament in all its aspects". The World Court decision was followed in August by the Canberra Commission's report. The commission of "eminent persons" from several countries was established in 1995 by the Australian government to develop proposals for a programme to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The commission report emphasises the need to end nuclear weapons and lays out steps for moving towards this goal. September saw the UN General Assembly endorsing by a vote of 158 to 3 a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty brought to the UN because of failure to reach consensus at the



UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The significant holdout was India, which wanted to link the CTBT to a strong commitment by nuclear powers to negotiate a phaseout of nuclear weapons. While over 120 nations signed the treaty by October 15, it will be difficult to bring it into effect. In an unusual condition, 44 countries with nuclear potential - one of which is India - must unanimously sign the treaty for it to come into force. Despite this roadblock and moves by the US to begin "sub-critical" weapons tests, negotiating a CTBT marks a significant contribution to the momentum for disarmament. In a symbolic gesture concluding a year of advances, a group of prominent retired generals and admirals from many countries issued a statement in December calling for complete nuclear disarmament.

[From: Media release, Jul 8/96; "Canberra Commission Calls for Nuclear Weapons Abolition" by Eric Fawcett;

In and Around the UN, Oct/96; *Statement on Nuclear Weapons by International Generals and Admirals*, Dec 5/96]

Regional

East Timorese Win Nobel Peace Prize

The 1996 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to two leading crusaders for East Timorese rights. Jose Ramos-Horta is the co-chairman and external representative of the East Timor resistance movement, the National Council for Maubere Resistance. He has been a tireless campaigner for East Timorese self-determination and has made proposals for how to resolve the conflict over Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. Catholic

Bishop of East Timor Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo has been the spiritual leader of his people and a voice for peaceful change. The Indonesian government condemned the Nobel decision.

[From: *Vancouver Sun*, Oct 15/96; *TAPOL Bulletin*, Dec/96]

Melanesia

Bougainville Premier Assassinated

The premier of Bougainville's transitional government, Theodore Miriung, was assassinated in October. Following initial confusion, reports began to focus on the PNG military as likely culprits in the shooting. Relations between Miriung and the PNG government and military had deteriorated as he continued to act independently to promote reconciliation rather than the more militant stance supported by the Chan Government and PNG Defence Force. In response to concerns about a possible PNGDF role, Sri Lankan Judge Thirnavkkarasu Suntheralingham was appointed to head an independent coroner's inquest. His preliminary report indicated sufficient circumstantial evidence to implicate seven soldiers and a PNGDF allied irregular fighter in the assassination. He said potential witnesses had been intimidated by the PNGDF. Gerard Sinato, former deputy premier in the pre-secession North Solomons Provincial Government, has been elected premier.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Dec 12/96; *The National*, Oct 17/96, Nov 19/96; *Sydney Morning Herald*, Oct 14/96, Oct 18/96]

More Musical Chairs in Vanuatu Politics

Vanuatu has seen several changes

of government in recent months; Barak Sope is a central figure in the revolving door politics. The coalition government of PM Maxime Carlot Korman (one Union of Moderate Parties faction) and Donald Kalpokas (Vanuaaku Party) began to unravel in August when Korman sacked Finance Minister Sope for his role in a financial scandal. The Vanuatu Ombudsman has issued several reports condemning Sope for illegal acts and financial irregularities. Sope and several ministers defected to the Opposition. Former PM Serge Vohor, leader of another UMP faction, patched together a coalition of smaller parties to win a September 30 non-confidence vote, with Sope as Deputy PM. But Vohor soon sacked Sope because of concerns about his "gross misconduct" in office, and several other ministers. A new coalition government was formed including Vohor's UMP faction, Kalpokas' Vanuaaku Party (with Kalpokas as Deputy PM) and Walter Lini's National United Party. The political turmoil has also seen the breakup of the brother-sister act of Vanuatu politics; Hilda Lini resigned from the NUP led by her brother after being disciplined by the party and then sacked from her cabinet position as Justice minister. Hilda Lini is launching a new political movement, Tu Vanuatu Kominiti, to push for a return to traditional leadership based on Melanesian and Christian values.

[From: Radio Australia, Oct 1/96, Oct 17/96, Dec 12/96; *Pacific Report*, Sep 3/96, Oct 4/96, Nov 1/96, Nov 28/96]

PNG Concedes to World Bank on Logging

In the face of World Bank threats to hold back the second payment of its funding, the PNG government repealed its controversial Forestry (Amendment) Bill in early October to support the

Chan Government's structural adjustment programme. The Bill, passed in July, had violated conditions of the SAP agreement promoting sustainable forest management and was strongly opposed by a PNG and international coalition of NGOs and environmental groups.

[From: *Post-Courier*, Oct 9/96; unpublished sources]

Solomons Government Adopts Logging Code

In October, the Mamaloni Government approved a National Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting, which it hailed as a "significant step towards achieving in the long term a viable forest industry within the framework of a sustainable forest management system". The code is to be binding on all logging operations and emphasises selective logging and biodiversity protection. Unsustainable logging practices in the Solomon Islands have received domestic and international criticism in recent years. Critics are waiting to see if the code will actually lead to environmentally appropriate logging practices.

[From: Media release; unpublished sources]

Polynesia

New Zealand Gets Coalition Government and Maori Deputy Prime Minister

As expected, New Zealand's first election with a multi-member proportional voting system left no party with a majority of seats. Indeed it took several weeks of negotiations for a coalition government to emerge. In the end, the National Party and Prime Minister Jim Bolger retained power by forming a coalition government

with the New Zealand First (NZF) party. NZF is led by Maori Winston Peters and includes several other Maori among its 17 MPs. The National Party made concessions on financial reparations to Maori and on funding of Maori social services to gain NZF's support. Peters was rewarded with the posts of deputy prime minister and treasurer. Two other Maori are among NZF's five MPs in Cabinet.

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, Dec 15/96]

Plebiscite Divides Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement

A "Native Hawaiian Vote", asking "Shall the Hawaiian People elect delegates to propose a Native Hawaiian government?", has deeply divided Hawaiian sovereigntists. The state supported vote is backed by some sovereignty activists, who see it as a useful step in re-establishing some form of state and federal government



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recognised native sovereignty in Hawaii; it is administered by a Hawaiian Sovereignty Elections Council (HSEC). But many of the largest sovereignty organisations condemned the vote as premature and illegitimate, claiming it could undermine a future referendum on



full self-determination or independence. Critics also claim Hawaiian sovereignty was never ceded and thus does not need US or state government recognition to be re-established. They thus reject any state initiated process. Despite dissension the vote took place in July-August, with opponents calling for a boycott. The results were announced in September, with both sides claiming victory. Proponents pointed to the more than 30,000 Hawaiians who voted and the 3 to 1 margin in favour of the question. Opponents pointed to the 61% of eligible voters who did not vote as evidence of a successful boycott. HSEC is proposing that delegates to a sovereignty convention be elected in November 1997.

[From: Media releases; briefing documents; *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Sep 10/96; *Pacific News Bulletin*, Oct/96; *New York Times*, Sep 14/96]

Tongan Jailings Draw International Protest

Imprisonment of Tongan Commoner MP 'Akilisi Pohiva and two Tongan journalists raised a storm of protest in the Pacific and internationally. The journalists were the editor (Eakalafi Moala) and sub-editor (Filokalafi 'Akau'ola) of the *Taimi 'o Tonga* newspaper. The three were arrested for contempt of Parliament when the newspaper published a story on September 4 containing the text of an impeachment motion against

the Justice minister. As the impeachment motion had not yet been introduced in parliament, the journalists were jailed for false reporting. Pohiva was jailed for providing the journalists with "libellous information". All three were "tried" by Parliament rather than the courts. A motion to impeach the minister was later approved, but the king then closed Parliament until further notice. The three were released from jail when the chief justice of the Tonga Supreme Court ruled that they were being held illegally.

[From: *Pacific News Bulletin*, Oct/96; email reports]

Micronesia

Revolving Doors Also Popular in Nauru

Nauru is taking a page from the Vanuatu political cookbook with its recent revolving door governments. An early November non-confidence vote toppled the Lagumot Harris Government and saw Bernard Dowiyogo returned as president. Dowiyogo lost the presidency to Harris after elections in late 1995. But his return to power was short lived as the Dowiyogo Government was defeated in turn on November 26. The new president is Kennan Adeang.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Nov 15/96, Dec 12/96]

Palau Loses Bridge, Plans New Capital

President Nakamura declared a state of national emergency after the bridge connecting Palau's two main islands of Koror and Babeldaob collapsed on September 26. The collapse disrupted water and power services as well as transportation. The government plans to rebuild the bridge.

The Palau government also contracted with Architects Hawaii Ltd. to design a new national state capital. The new capital, called for in the national constitution, will be in Melekeok State. The US is funding the design phase of the capital relocation project.

[From: *Palau Gazette*, Jun 28/96]

Canada

Calgary Firm Claims Major Gold Find in Indonesia

Bre-X Minerals Ltd. has claimed possible, probable and proven gold reserves of at least 60 million ounces at its Busang gold properties in East Kalimantan, based on new drilling results. Bre-X also announced a deal with Barrick Gold Corp., another Canadian company, to manage the property. The Indonesian government had ordered Bre-X to enter into a partnership with Barrick. Bre-X is left with a 22.5% stake in the new joint venture.

[From: *Globe & Mail*, Dec 21/96]

Ottawa Approves Diamond Mine

In August, Canadian Cabinet conditionally approved a diamond mine in the Northwest Territories. The mine, a joint venture of a small Canadian exploration company - Dia Met Minerals - and the Australian mining giant BHP, will be operated by BHP. Final approval is conditional on BHP negotiating an environmental agreement with the Canadian government and agreements with local Indigenous peoples to ensure benefits to them. BHP says 1/3 of the mine labour force will be Indigenous, traditional Aboriginal lifestyles will be accommodated and additional benefits will accrue to Indigenous communities.

[From: *Victoria Times-Colonist*, Aug 9/96]

Remembering 50 Years of Nuclear Exile

by Jeannie Hillie

The US government began testing nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands in July 1946. On July 25, 1996, the Marshallese community in Honolulu and friends in the local peace movement gathered to commemorate the 50 years of suffering which has resulted from the testing programme.

The sun was setting as people gathered at the old Stadium Park for a candlelight vigil in remembrance of those who have perished and those who still suffer from permanent exile and radiation related illnesses. Signs and banners were held along King Street protesting nuclear weapons. Honks from passing motorists produced smiling, waving children - mostly Marshallese - caught up in the excitement.

About 130 people attended the memorable evening. The Marshall Islands Ministry Church put together a wonderful programme. Elma Coleman, a community member, and Valentina Bobo, a member of the Iepjeltok Club of Bikini women, spearheaded the

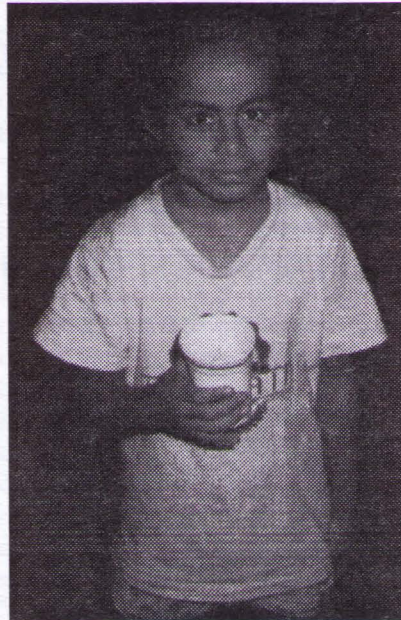


Photo: Jeannie Hillie

efforts. Speakers included Marshallese representatives and leaders within the Kanaka Maohi (indigenous Hawaiian) community. The church women's choir and young men's dance troupe performed a variety of songs and dances to heal the soul.

The overall mood was one of reverence mixed with longing and sorrow over the homelessness they feel. The hardship continues, with family members coming from the Marshalls to Honolulu to receive medical treatment for a variety of cancers and women who bear deformed babies or are not able to have children. Yet their hope remains for a better future for the children here, there and the world over. Their hopes remain for a nuclear-free Pacific and a nuclear-free world.

When we forget is when we are in danger of repeating the same mistakes.

Elma Coleman speaks about the commemoration

(excerpts from a radio interview)

Fifty years ago the people of Bikini began their permanent exile. In 1946 US military officials approached the elders of Bikini Atoll and informed them that their atolls had been chosen as targets for testing military weapons. They informed the inhabitants that the tests were safe, the people would return home soon after, and that by complying they were doing so for the betterment of mankind. One may wonder why these breathtaking atolls were given up so easily. The Bikini people as well as the rest of the Marshall Islands had endured harsh treatment under the Japanese Imperial Army. They believed and trusted their new benefactor. The intention of the people of Bikini to temporarily leave their homeland was pure. The intention of the US military was purely to display to the rest of the world how great and powerful a nation it was.

Continued on Page 21



Photo: Jeannie Hillie

Elma Coleman (left) speaks at "50 Years" event

To Market, To Market

Fiji's Micro-Enterprise Programme for Women

by Alison Gardner

"As a WOSED group member, I commit myself to the principles of Unity, Discipline, Courage and Hard Work. I pledge to abide by our policies, act honestly, and work together to achieve our goal of social and economic improvement in our lives, families, households and communities."

The WOSED Pledge

The Fiji government's director of the Department for Women and Culture went to a Malaysia meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and came home with an idea to help the women of her country. Sereima Lomaloma's attendance at the Asia-Pacific meeting on the economic advancement of rural women provided not only the information but the inspiration to create a Fiji micro-enterprise model which by any standard is looking very healthy in its fourth year of operation.

"Listening to speakers at the meeting talk about the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and similar programmes started in other developing countries, I was able to bring back papers describing a model that I knew could be replicated with modifications," she says. "Unlike the Grameen system, where a means test first determines the poorest of the poor in an area, we decided instead to use the criteria of family income, willingness to undergo training and experience in managing a micro-enterprise."

With initial support from Peace Corps small business advisors, the Women's Bureau of the South Pacific Commission and the Fiji and New Zealand

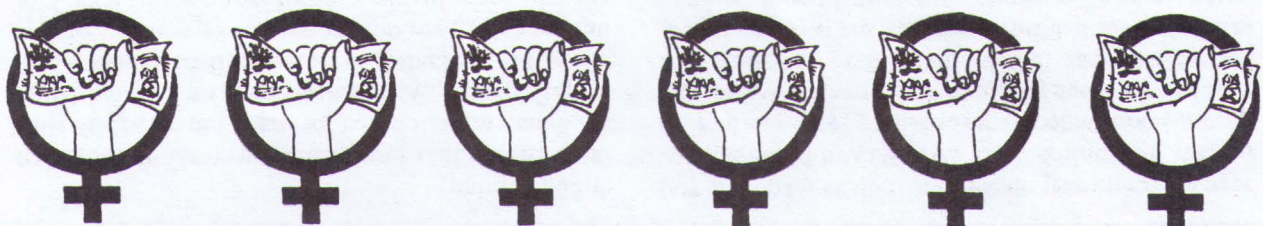
governments, the Women's Social and Economic Development Programme (WOSED) was born. Under the visionary direction of Ms. Lomaloma, WOSED co-ordinator, Karalani Bradburg, oversees the day to day operation of the programme in Suva and in the field. It is already making a huge difference in the lives of impoverished women and their families.

Launched with 27 women as a three-community pilot project in April 1993, WOSED has since moved into the expansion stage, providing business training and low-interest, collateral-free credit to more than 100 women in small income earning activities designed to supplement their household incomes. About 70% of all funded activities are agriculture-based. A long term goal is to prepare women for integration into the commercial banking system where they can access larger financial resources.



Photo: WOSED

WOSED groups, like this one in Savusavu, provide mutual support to their members



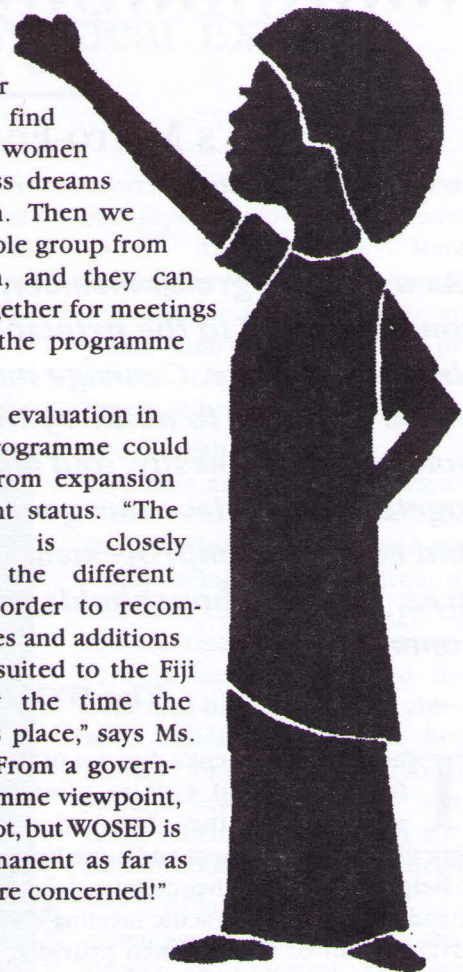
WOSED participants are joined into small groups for mutual support. Selected applicants undergo an initial seven week training programme combining business skills and social development. They then submit individual business plans for loan approval. Depending upon the nature of the project, loans with an interest rate of 8% can either be divided among the group members or assigned to one participant as the initial candidate from that group. First loans have a ceiling of \$500 which, if successfully repaid within the 18 month time limit, can result in a second loan of up to \$1,000. Not much by the standards of many countries, but a queen's ransom to those living in severe poverty.

Meeting once a week for "sharing and learning", each group is identified as a separate WOSED with an individual account. If one woman has been granted a loan, the repayments and interest from that loan can provide additional loans for other members. With a maximum of five to six participants allowed, the groups are kept small so as to be manageable.

"Women get to know one another. There is bonding because they share the problems they have and learn from each other," Ms. Bradburg emphasizes. "We tried creating groups with women from different but nearby villages and settlements, but they were often not able to find the time to leave their chores and families to get together. Now if one woman comes to us with a strong idea for starting her business, we encourage her,

but we ask her first to go back to her village and find several other women with business dreams like her own. Then we train the whole group from one location, and they can easily get together for meetings as often as the programme requires."

Following its evaluation in 1997, the programme could well move from expansion to permanent status. "The department is closely monitoring the different projects in order to recommend changes and additions particularly suited to the Fiji situation by the time the review takes place," says Ms. Lomaloma. "From a government programme viewpoint, it is still a pilot, but WOSED is already permanent as far as the women are concerned!"



Personal and Community Benefits Come with Success

Living in northern Viti Levu, Vani Navuase is the sole support of her disabled and unemployed husband, an adult son and three grandchildren. She received her first WOSED loan of \$395 early in 1995 to begin a village canteen selling basic food items such as sugar, bread, soap and tinned meat. With two short-term goals - to buy a glass front cabinet to display stock and to buy a freezer to store meat and fish - Vani hardly dared dream that her goals could be realized so soon. By the end of the first month of operation, she was able to purchase two glass front cabinets; in less than ten months she bought a freezer.

Since joining WOSED, this enterprising woman reports that the business training she received before getting her loan and the ongoing advice since that time have helped her in areas of her life which she didn't know needed improving. She learned to budget her money more wisely, even being able to save for traditional obligations such as weddings and

funerals. She now has her own savings account and a business bank account which allow her to meet the financial needs of her family and still have money left over for "luxury" items like the new carpeting laid recently throughout her house.

No longer having to trek into the nearest town, the entire village of Navuavua has also gained from Vani's WOSED funded shop. Her bread sales alone are evidence of this rapidly expanding business - from two dozen loaves per day to more than twelve dozen per day! Since the purchase of the freezer, she sells frozen foods such as chicken, ice-cream, butter and vegetables.

Perhaps most precious of all is the social legacy of her success. Vani now reads books as never before and helps her grandchildren with their school work. "Before I joined WOSED," she says, "I felt stupid when my grandchildren asked for help. I'm so happy with my business that I don't want to leave it except to attend church!"

On both first and second loans, the repayment performance of its pioneer entrepreneurs has clearly demonstrated that women are good borrowers and savers. By mid-1996 a total of 138 loans had been negotiated, including the milestone of making a third loan to one of the participants. Success is contagious. WOSED has been asked to advise similar initiatives that are being developed or considered in Western Samoa, Tuvalu, Tonga and Vanuatu.

WOSED's next incarnation will include turning itself into an NGO to take over credit management and programme delivery from the government and, if Sereima Lomaloma has her way, still further into the future lies the ultimate dream of an independent financial institution of their own modeled after the Grameen Bank.

Alison Gardner is a freelance writer and magazine editor, as well as a member of SPPF's Board of Directors. She recently returned from a visit to Fiji.



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A Real Family Affair!

As a single mother of eight, Sainimere Raikadroka has known grinding poverty since her husband deserted the family in the 1980s. With an initial loan of \$373 given to her and three other members of her community in mid-1993, they started a two-acre vegetable growing project by purchasing a wheelbarrow, knife, digging fork and hoe, a watering bucket, seedlings, manure and insecticide. She took vegetables to market once or twice a week depending on demand. Surrounding villages and even nearby resorts soon began ordering directly from the group.

Then disaster struck in the form of caterpillars and other insects; the pests resisted every effort to stop destruction of the crops. Happily for Sai, she had her own small plantation of yagona, dalo and other crops and was able to generate enough income to meet her family's needs and the loan repayment. With the WOSED experience, including confidence and skills which she had accumulated even in so short a time, she received some assistance through another government programme to start a fishing business for which she was able to hire three or four of her nephews and cousins. She even got married again!

Ever the entrepreneur, Sai received her second WOSED loan in June 1995, this time for \$901.22, which enabled her to start a piggery project with two sows and a boar in one location and a small poultry farm in another. She put her father in charge of the piggery and her daughter and son-in-law in charge of the chickens. Latest word is that she is into an additional family venture, having hired one aunt to sell her pounded yagona and cigarettes and another aunt to fish. Income gained from those agreements is divided in two: half to her aunts in wages and half to re-invest in her stock.

To her family and community, Sainimere Raikadroka is not only a shining example of business talent and energy. Now able to meet her family's basic needs and education costs, she still finds time to serve as group leader of her loan team and to offer advice, assistance and support to those who rightfully look to her as an inspiration. It's amazing what a little encouragement can accomplish!



Sainimere Raikadroka's garden project, while ill fated, provided her with the experience and skills to move on to more successful projects

Photo: WOSED

Building the Credit Union Movement in Vanuatu

by Bill Field

In Vanuatu, credit unions are giving rural people opportunities to build democratic, self-supporting organisations and at the same time decrease their dependence on outside aid. Credit unions allow low-income communities to increase their self-reliance in a way that balances economic and social goals. Where large corporate financial institutions are reluctant to tread, credit unions are forging effective links within and between communities. Credit unions have grown throughout Vanuatu by way of community initiatives and the efforts of the Vanuatu Credit Union League (VCUL).

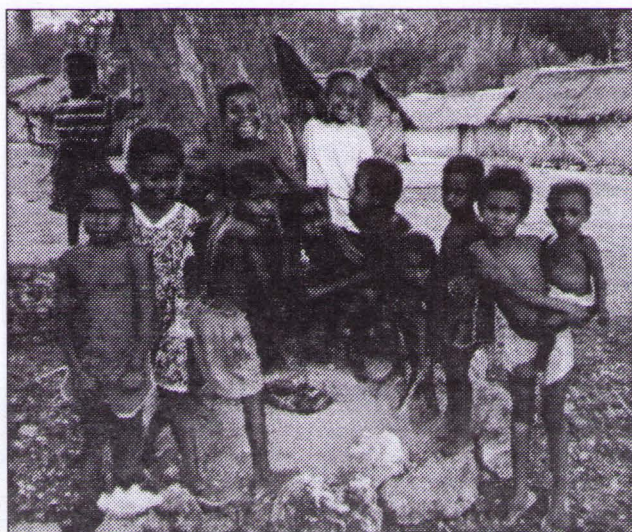


Photo: Bill Field

Credit unions benefit the local economy in communities like Tautu in Vanuatu

Like many developing nations, Vanuatu is encountering economic challenges of low economic growth, expanding population and aid dependency. The World Bank has recommended that the Vanuatu government cut back free social services, such as primary education and medical care, and implement user-pay schemes. While Vanuatu has the second highest cost of living in the South Pacific, per capita annual income on the islands falls below US \$600. Most island residents do not have salaried jobs; for their livelihood, they depend on sales of agricultural, fishing, and other primary commodities.

Through credit unions, local people gain new knowledge about participating in a cash economy. On his visits to the 82 islands of Vanuatu, VCUL Managing Director Noa Saksak frequently hears community

residents say they have no income and no access to credit for generating income. They tell him they can't see how a credit union could work, since it appears to them that no money is available in their area. By examining a community's discretionary spending, however, Noa shows the residents how and where money is being spent outside rather than being retained in the community. People learn that the community economy can indeed grow without government or foreign aid. Noa explains that by starting a credit union, they can save money, learn financial management skills and access credit to start small businesses.

The credit union model provides alternatives to development approaches which are centralised, capital-intensive and export-driven. VCUL is based on this model, in world-wide use, of a national organisation which assists local credit unions to reach their goals of:

- building local, democratic organisations which limit aid dependence;
- finding the balance between economic and social goals in communities;
- diversifying local economies where previous opportunities were limited;
- accumulating economic wealth in low-income communities;
- directing that wealth to community economic and social improvements; and
- connecting national economies through local community-owned credit unions.

VCUL, formed in 1989, was Vanuatu's first effort at coordinated credit union development on a national scale. Before that time, credit unions had been set up under the auspices of the Catholic Church and received only minimal support through the Catholic diocese. The movement had struggled to gain more widespread acceptance among ni-Vanuatu citizens of other religious denominations until the advent of VCUL. Now all ni-Vanuatu have an avenue for credit union representation.

VCUL's mandate is to strengthen credit unions by providing local and national skills training, advocacy to government bodies, audit services, loan administration/development and small business planning. Credit union representatives have identified these roles as

crucial supports for community economic development. VCUL employs a staff of three indigenous workers and one Canadian CUSO volunteer, who takes an advisory role. All Vanuatu credit unions are required to join VCUL and pay membership fees which support administrative operations. In return, they receive assistance in any matter pertaining to credit union development. VCUL staff have been key support personnel in establishing, building and expanding credit union operations in Vanuatu; the most successful credit unions have been those maintaining regular contact with VCUL.

In Vanuatu, credit unions tend to be rural. Their membership is often small in number and primarily non-wage-earning. Credit unions can operate within subsistence economies, offering financial services which improve quality of life. As well as providing financial products, credit unions emphasise education for their members to aid them in dealing with the cash economy. The growing cost of living on the islands necessitates an increased role for rural credit unions.

Credit unions in Vanuatu follow a common pattern of development. Credit unions are formed by committed community volunteers who learn their roles as the credit union grows. Growth is often dependent on the abilities of that core group. Startup costs are usually low; the office and almost all labour are generally donated. As a result of the people's dedication to the success of their credit union, a financial institution is established in a community previously rejected by private banking operations as an economic liability.

Initially, credit unions offer savings based on share accounts. During this important first step, volunteers learn the basics of credit union administration before taking on more complicated tasks. Vanuatu credit union members want access to some of their shares for regular small withdrawals; VCUL helps them set up both savings accounts with limited withdrawal rights and share accounts.

Credit unions prosper through lending money. They charge an interest rate for loans, fixed by the credit union board management, that covers operating expenses and returns equity to the members. In Vanuatu, it stands at 12 % per year or 1 % a month - below rates of the country's Development Bank and commercial banks. All earned revenues stay within the credit union, either dispersed as member profits in dividends or used for operations.

Forging Links Across Oceans

by Bill Field

What does a small credit union movement in Vanuatu have in common with credit unions in Canada, Germany, Australia, the Solomon Islands and other South Pacific nations? The Vanuatu Credit Union League has established partnerships with organisations regionally and globally to bring the credit union ideal to Vanuatu and to share knowledge of local applications with its partners.

As a young, small movement, VCUL is able to develop indigenous skills by tapping its foreign partners' experience. VCUL uses international connections in three key ways: working with other regional credit union leagues to expand the movement, making agreements with international credit union bodies to supply personnel expertise, and securing funding support to build a healthy domestic credit union movement.

I served as advisor to VCUL from VanCity Credit Union's International Development Program (IDP). VanCity, based in Vancouver, is Canada's largest credit union. IDP assists financial cooperatives throughout the world to develop according to international credit union movement guidelines - focusing on democratic decision-making, retention of income within the membership community, education and other development issues which build economic independence.

Learning from each other is the cornerstone of successful credit union development. VanCity values the insight organisations like VCUL bring and supports exchanges of personnel between Canadian and international credit unions. Our programme departs significantly from previous "aid style" development. Rather than directing development at another country's resources, VanCity's approach involves developing with international credit union movements.



ISLANDS on the EDGE of TIME

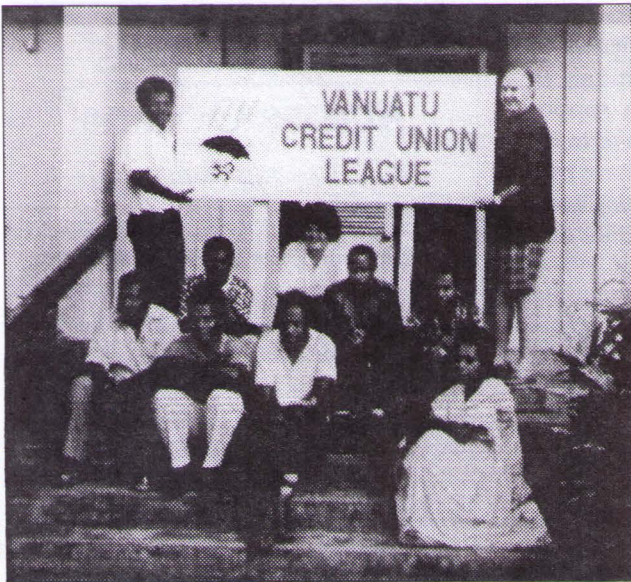
PALAU - Matrilineal culture meets militarism; history's first "green" national constitution meets the Pentagon; ecology meets corporatism. A microcosm of the planetary survival challenges facing us all. 1 hr. Video

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VCUL staff and volunteers

The case of credit unions in Vanuatu demonstrates that large corporate financial institutions lack the ability or expertise to serve informal and rural economic sectors in south Pacific countries. Island economies face high transportation costs, limited government services and a lack of human resource development.

Decreasing government financial resources mean fewer resources are directed to rural regions, and foreign private investment plays a limited role in Vanuatu. Credit unions in the South Pacific which develop local financial and human resource abilities provide low-cost and highly relevant services. Credit unions help build local economies which are not so dependent on external factors such as export-driven trade, government investment, foreign-owned enterprise, low-waged urban employment and natural resource extraction. They take advantage of local conditions and culture and the dedication of their members. Credit union members gain more access to capital as well as an education in democratic practices. A credit union looks beyond economic growth as the only objective; it views a community's health in its totality. Each community credit union chooses its own goals for "development" and provides its own resources - financial and physical - to work toward these goals.

Bill Field worked with the Vanuatu Credit Union League under the auspices of CUSO. His posting was supported by his employer, the VanCity Credit Union of Vancouver, under its International Development Program.

PROUD TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

You may not know it, but in addition to all we do in our local community, VanCity also has an International Development Funding Program. Over the last three years we have supported projects involving co-operatives and credit unions in South Africa, Vanuatu, and Nicaragua. The aim of our International Development Program is to encourage community development which is self-reliant as well as socially and ecologically responsible. For information on our 1997 IDP Program, call 877-7612.



Starting a Micro-Credit Programme

Canada's Calmeadow Foundation is playing a prominent role in international efforts to promote micro-enterprise and micro-credit programmes. They provide the following advice for anyone wanting to venture into micro-credit.

Muhammed Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank, once said, "micro-credit is not for amateurs." Too often we've seen resources wasted because micro-credit programmes were started without sufficient analysis and preparation. It is very difficult to turn around an unsuccessful programme, making it important to avoid pitfalls from the beginning. Careful thought must go into starting a programme and a thorough business plan should be developed.

Running a micro-credit programme is different from managing other development activities. Very different management and staff may be required. A business orientation is required in order to monitor portfolios and ensure that delinquencies are managed tightly. A client service orientation must replace a beneficiary orientation.

Board of Directors and Managing Director

A strong leadership group, with vision and the ability to get things done, is the most critical factor. The managing director should be committed to the programme and should have a sound knowledge of the client group and community. Experience with both community outreach and the financial services sector is an asset. Usually, the first years directly involve the managing director in the lending function. He or she must be comfortable in this, but have potential to assume full-time management once the programme matures.

The Board of Directors plays a crucial role during start-up. They assist with fundraising, lobby governments to ensure a favourable environment, contribute to the setting of vision and policies, assist with recruiting a strong management team, and assist with community outreach and business development. The Board of Directors should have strong representation from local community leaders, including members of the formal financial sector. International representation from the micro-credit community or other sponsors can sometimes be an asset.

Setting Clear Goals

The successful design of a programme depends on having clear goals. There are two primary dimensions:

- What is the target client group?
- What are the desired benefits or outputs?

As a minimum, the following attributes should be defined for the target client group: gender focus, urban versus rural, type of business (eg. large manufacturing or smaller commercial micro-businesses) and geographic coverage. The

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CUSO Working for Social Justice



CUSO cooperant Valerie Harrison is working with the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education supporting the study, affirmation and preservation of Solomon Islanders' culture. As Valerie explains, "...if cultural knowledge is not placed within an educational context, it will continually be eroded and devalued." Through the work of cooperants such as Valerie, CUSO is supporting community organizations in their ongoing efforts to build a social justice movement that is advocating for people-centered development.

How you can help...

Your gift to CUSO means a better life for people in the Pacific and for thousands of others in the 30 developing countries where we work. CUSO is making a long-term difference.

**Please join us
by contributing generously to CUSO.**



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The BEST approach to business development

Papua New Guinea's BEST (Business Enterprise Support Team) provides small business training and support to communities in PNG. BEST was started in 1988 as a project of the Canadian organization CUSO, and became an independent local NGO in 1991. BEST coordinator, Flavia Urerava, and the coordinator of BEST's Small Business Education and Consulting Programme, Chris Toli, attended SPPF's 1996 Pacific Networking Conference. Stuart Wulff interviewed them for Tok Blong Pasifik.

Photo: Gayle Nelson



Women who attended BEST workshops run coffee enterprise in Morobe Province

STUART:

Flavia, why was BEST formed?

FLAVIA:

BEST was formed after a CUSO evaluation on small businesses in PNG found that many people didn't fully understand what a business was or know how to make a business plan. We also learned that most businesses were run by men; women weren't involved. When people tried to start a village

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desired benefits should be identified in order of priority. Common benefits for micro-credit programmes include: income and wealth creation, employment, empowerment, health and education benefits, or social change. Another goal which must be decided from the beginning is whether or not the programme is expected to achieve sustainability (financial and/or operational) and in what time frame. This has a significant impact on loan delivery procedures and pricing. If sustainability is important, procedures must be as streamlined as possible and pricing

business, they didn't think about how they were to run the business and at the same time try to meet traditional obligations like looking after their extended families. Therefore, BEST was set up to focus on education. The first BEST programme provided workshops and consulting for small business; the next programme was designed for women. In 1993 we designed a new programme to train trainers - local people and government and NGO workers - to deliver our workshops.

In PNG, women's work is not recognized by the women themselves, their families, or the community. BEST did an assessment of five communities to find out what the women are actually doing and what they would like to share with their families, communities, and policy makers. We decided to run workshops to help women overcome a number of barriers. One is overwork; if women go into any new business, it is important for the family to take on some of the work. Two is lack of training; many families can't afford to send all the children to school, so they only send boys. Three is lack of confidence and leadership; women don't participate in decision making or planning. Awareness of the importance of women's contributions is not just for the women - it's for families, policy makers and politicians in PNG.

Our training incorporates a philosophy. We ask people to contribute by paying a small fee and providing food and accommodation for the BEST facilitators. We don't go into a community if women won't be involved. We support sustainable projects that improve the community - living standards, eating habits, or the way people treat each other. We bring in other NGO personnel to give talks and carry out awareness workshops on AIDS, STDs, women's health and rights, environmental issues and the impact of structural adjustment. Often it's the first time people have come into their areas to give them such information.

STUART:

Thirty thousand years ago, people in PNG practiced

must cover the programme costs. If sustainability is not an objective, it is essential to measure what long-term subsidy will be required and to determine whether or not these funds will be available.

Choosing the Right Methodology

Many lessons have already been learned in the field of micro-credit and "common wisdom" is developing regarding what works. When designing methodology, a programme should look to models of success around the world. During the

subsistence agriculture. Even today, PNG still has a strong subsistence economy when such economies are collapsing around the world. Given all that success, why are more and more people feeling the need to move into a cash economy?



Photo: Gayle Nelson

Marketing garden produce generates family income for women

FLAVIA:

In PNG, many feel subsistence economy is primitive and want to move into the new era. The importance of keeping some of our traditional ways of gardening is not being reinforced. Country people see all the things in town they need money to purchase and can't barter for. Our workshops help people understand subsistence, barter and monetary systems that operate in their community. Just because we're going into a monetary system doesn't mean we should do away with the other two.

CHRIS:

PNG is like other developing countries, increasing its population and caught up in a vastly changing commercialized world. Previously, there were fewer people, and more available land. People could do subsistence cultivation and use traditional monetary and barter systems. But now they need money to pay school fees, buy foodstuffs and clothing. Because they do not know how to run businesses, rural people are further disadvantaged. The BEST programme meshes business with community development, but it's a very difficult task. Some very

successful people in PNG decided to cut off from their family and traditional society, to be capitalist and profit-oriented. BEST does NOT want to put people into that situation. We want our people to maintain some traditional principles and values, and we also want to give them business principles so that they are successful. In PNG, people get into business because they need money for a specific purpose like school fees rather than from an interest in doing the business itself.

STUART:

Can you give examples of what you teach people?

FLAVIA:

BEST training starts off with confidence-building and leadership workshops, designed for women but also involving the men. In the past, we just worked with women. They gained confidence and leadership skills, but got bashed up by their husbands when they returned to their families.

Those interested in going into business attend our introduction to commerce and business. First, people define their basic needs and how they try to meet them. Then we look at advantages and disadvantages of traditional and contemporary commerce. Participants learn that money is not a need but a tool to get what they need. They look at the value of things that don't have any price tag, like the bush, the river or the sea. People realize that 90% of what they use in the village comes from the bush. This opens up their minds. We make people aware of all the business components they must think about and how to put them into a plan. At the end of the five-day workshop, we brainstorm business ideas that use local resources and participants' skills.

A month later, we run a nine-day workshop with the same group. We help them research their project and set up a cash flow analysis. They spend a day writing a simple business proposal they could submit to a bank, funding body or local MP. We try to connect them with the local resource people. Then it's up to them.



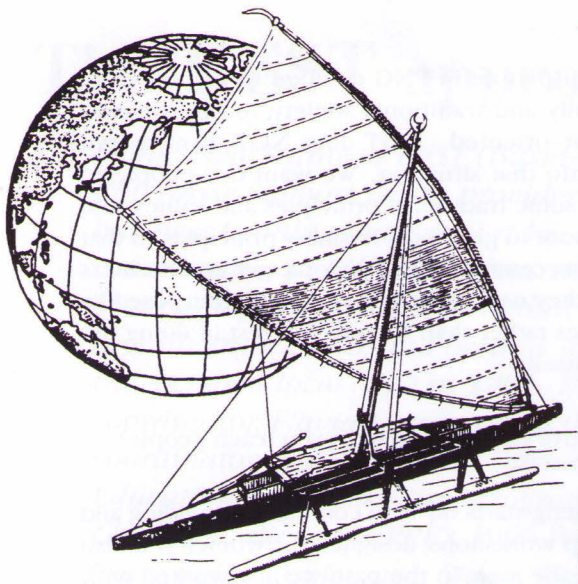
design phase, assistance from an experienced micro-enterprise development organisation can be invaluable.

Preparing a Business Plan

A business plan is generally the responsibility of the managing director or a consultant. There are two reasons to conduct a thorough business plan: to test whether or not the goals of the programme will likely be achieved; and to convince donors that the programme managers know what they are doing and deserve to receive funding.

A feasibility study/business plan should typically include the following elements:

- Goals for the Programme
- Definition of Target Market
- Customer/Market Research
- Product/Service Design and Methodology
- Promotion and Delivery Strategies
- Accounting, Administration, and MIS strategies
- Organisation and Required Resources
- Expected Results and Financial Modeling
- Projected Funding Requirements
- Implementation Strategy



SPPF in action

South Pacific Peoples Foundation



Women & Environment Project in Limbo

SPPF and many of our Pacific partners were saddened and angered to learn that the Canadian International Development Agency decided not to fund a major women and environment project for the Pacific, *Ecowoman*. The anger was partly due to the fact that CIDA approached SPPF initially, indicating that they wished to fund such an initiative, but wanted SPPF as an experienced agency to develop and manage the project.

Ecowoman was initiated by Pacific women who saw a need for grassroots women to have access to scientific knowledge and appropriate technology to protect their environment and improve their communities. *Ecowoman* was spearheaded by the South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology & Environment (SPACHEE), a Fiji based NGO. A pilot project, supported by the Canada Fund, sponsored women to the Fourth World Congress on Women in Beijing. CIDA then indicated its support for a longer term project and asked SPACHEE and SPPF to jointly develop a \$500,000 4-year project.

After a year of encouragement, CIDA's withdrawal was unexpected. SPPF has been told that the initial encouragement was due to a misunderstanding within CIDA and that CIDA does not plan to support additional major projects in the Pacific beyond the Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development Programme. SPPF asked CIDA to reconsider its decision and has been told that CIDA may support a smaller, 2-year project that could pilot some aspects of the original *Ecowoman* project.

Vancouver Fiji Community and SPPF Join to Support Fiji's Elderly

HelpAge Fiji, an organisation working to assist Fiji's elderly, is the beneficiary of a new partnership between SPPF and the Vancouver-based Canadian Committee for the Development of Resources for Seniors in Fiji. The Committee brings together members of Vancouver's Fiji community (both Indigenous Fijian and Indian) who were inspired to form their group after visits to Vancouver by representatives of HelpAge Fiji.

HelpAge Fiji was formed in 1990 and has developed a wide range of programmes to support Fiji's elderly. The funds raised by the Vancouver Committee were channeled through SPPF to support HelpAge training programmes for caregivers supporting the elderly.

SPPF looks forward to further collaboration with the Committee and members of the Vancouver Fiji community.

SPPF Attends South Pacific Forum

SPPF was represented by Stuart Wulff at the annual South Pacific Forum meeting of government leaders. This is the first time that SPPF has attended the Forum meeting, which was hosted this year by the Marshall Islands. Stuart was present as an advisor to the Canadian government delegation, which participates in the annual Post-Forum Dialogue which the Forum has with countries having significant interests in the region. Being present also allowed Stuart to make new contacts and gather stories, on both the Forum meeting and the Marshall Islands, for *Tok Blong Pasifik*. (See News Updates in this issue and watch for major coverage of the Marshall Islands in March 1997.)

Window On The Arts

Vatdoro Popularizes Pacific Reggae

by Simon Swale

The roots of reggae may be 10,000 miles away in the Caribbean, but the Pacific version, now keeping the beat in Vanuatu, has taken on a distinctive sound all its own. With lyrics and language reflecting more of a Melanesian flavour, this musical genre seems to be striking a chord with musicians right across the Pacific.

Thanks to the popular Vanuatu band, Vatdoro, which is rapidly becoming the leading exponent of the form in the region, Pacific reggae is definitely the biggest attraction at Port Vila's Club Vanuatu where they regularly play. Originating as a string band, Vatdoro's eight musicians say that reggae first grabbed their attention because it sounded like the traditional drum beats they grew up with, only played back with the power of amplified instruments. Reggae has inspired these young people in the same way that country and blues music, played by US GIs who came to Vanuatu in World War II, inspired a previous generation of musicians.

In addition to the band's popular shows in Port Vila, they have spread their Pacific reggae message through performances in Solomon Islands and New Caledonia. With a number of the band's cassettes already on the market, these musicians have recently unveiled *Vatdoro Coming Up*, the first commercial compact disk produced in Vanuatu,

featuring songs composed and arranged by lead singer and guitarist, Reynolds Herena.

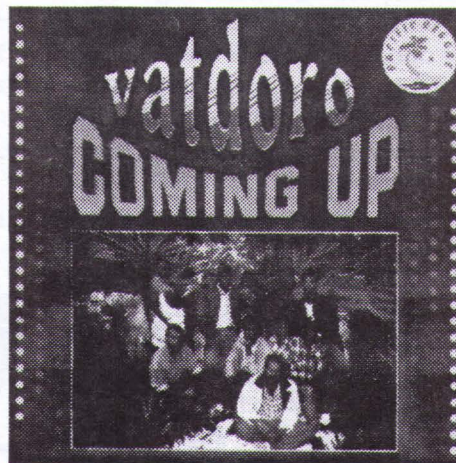
A common denominator, and the source of their cohesion and strength as a group of musicians, is the fact they come from the same village and speak the same language - an important point in a country of 250,000 people divided by over 100 languages. Because the band members have been together so long, they know each other's strengths and weaknesses well, and they can get over the usual aggravations and professional differences that can break up bands. They will always be more to each other than Vatdoro.

Realizing that they represent their community and their culture when they produce an album or perform internationally creates a sense of responsibility that is unusual in the popular music business. Songs come to them in many different ways. In addition to doing great international hits,

they produce arrangements of custom songs, breathing new life into ancient messages for a new generation; restoring pride in traditional images using a contemporary form. It's these custom songs, such as *Taberavao*, based on the bolo rhythm of a custom dance, that the band enjoy playing the most. Friends and followers often offer poems they have written for the band to put to music.

When a new Vatdoro composition is under way, the lyrics always come first. They have love songs in their repertoire, but these days the subject is more likely to be about people's lives or political issues. A new song asks, "Children, where's your culture?", a pertinent question when 50% of the population are under 20 years old and people are moving from their villages to urban settlements.

Young people in the Pacific are barraged by the images and sounds of the dominant global culture - a subtle and probably more effective colonisation than anyone has experienced in the past. This makes the work of bands like Vatdoro a vital source of popular culture, resonating with ancestral voices and a rhythm from the drums of their own people.



To order the
Vatdoro Coming Up CD,
send US\$23 to:
Vatdoro Band,
PO Box 1487, Port Vila,
Republic of Vanuatu.

Pacific Women Strive for Greater Participation

by Laufitu Taylor

Laufitu Taylor is the chief technical adviser for UNIFEM's Pacific Advisory Programme. She is also the interim coordinator of the Women in Politics Pacific Centre (WIPPAC). This article was adapted by SPPF from a longer paper presented at SPPF's 1996 Pacific Networking Conference.

Globalisation has greatly affected Pacific Island women and their communities. In confronting this challenge, we find that our rich and diverse Pacific cultures have advantages and disadvantages and we are grappling to identify what traditional practices are still valid, practical or relevant today.

Recognizing that women count

Women make up almost half the population of most Pacific Island countries. We are responsible for the care and maintenance of our families. We are our children's first educators and the primary custodians of family health.

Pacific women's faith in themselves as family caregivers and home-makers is tested almost every day of their lives. As a "keeper of faith" (both traditional and cultural), the struggle for survival for a woman is a continuous battle as she is expected to hold the balance between her own basic needs and her main preoccupation, the welfare of her family.

Ten years ago, a woman would look to her extended family for any additional monetary, in-kind contribution, or emotional support that she needed to sustain her family. This is changing. Our togetherness, the social safety net, is slowly

disintegrating as values and practices evolve.

Women are involved in agriculture, fishing and handicraft-making for family consumption, with the surplus sold to meet the family's needs. With the increasing prices of goods and services, traditional cultural and religious obligations are becoming expensive to fulfil. Families are often alienated if they do not conform to certain norms and practices. Given women's family care and community roles, it becomes their responsibility to ensure these obligations are met even if they have to do extra work to generate some income.



FROM: Guam Bureau of Women's Affairs

The combination of high costs and heavy responsibilities is pressing more women into the formal labour force. However, because women do not have equal access to job skills training and tertiary education, few have reached managerial positions. The situation is worsened in female-headed households where a mother must decide whether her priority is to find a job and put food on the table for her children, or to stay at home and rely on her extended families to help her out.

Globally, women are advocating for equal rights and calling for equal participation at all decision-making

levels. Before embracing these principles, we Pacific women need to ask ourselves how these changes would improve our quality of life, relationships and those of our families and communities. An enabling environment to improve and enhance the quality of life of Pacific Island communities must be created that facilitates mental, physical, spiritual, emotional and religious growth but it must NOT be achieved at the expense of our families and communities.

Breaking new ground

Many people still think that a woman's place is in the home. Sex stereotyping in the media reinforces this image. Women have access to, but not control or ownership of, resources including land or fishing rights. Nor do we participate equally with men in planning and programming of development activities.

Women also face significant barriers in entering the formal job market. Women do not have equal access to training or education. They have a difficult task in trying to secure well-paid jobs and end up in jobs that pay poorly and are labour intensive and time consuming. Given the rising number of female-headed households, an increasing number of women are disadvantaged as sole breadwinners.

Women do not fully participate in development and even where they do, their contributions are not recognized or valued. In the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, women form the backbone of subsistence agriculture. However, there is gross under-reporting in census figures and data collecting is often gender biased.

The fragile ecosystem and narrow

resource base of most Pacific Island countries have made it difficult for them to cope with globalisation and economic recovery initiatives are underway in some countries. In the process, negative social impacts have been experienced by certain groups including women. We are experiencing the result of decision-makers who do not recognize vital social needs and undervalue the contribution of women.

The existing legal and social framework at the national level exacerbates the situation of women e.g., the absence of provisions for gender equality and equity in the Fiji constitution relating to citizenship, land ownership and gender biases in bank lending policies in the Pacific Islands. Most of these issues are best addressed at the national level, but this is dependent on political will and the gender responsiveness of decision-makers and government planners.

Some progress is being made. There is a growing appreciation of the potential role that women can play as advocates and watchdogs to ensure progress is made in addressing concerns that involve structural and procedural changes in legislation, policies and programmes in all development interventions. However, there must be concerted efforts by governments, organisations of civil society, traditional groups and the community at large, because women's issues affect the quality of lives of families, given women's multiple roles.

Measures must be taken to promote gender awareness within families, communities and men's and

women's groups at all levels of decision-making. Acquiring gender disaggregated data is also essential.

Becoming Political

Pacific women are a long way from achieving satisfactory involvement in their political processes. Traditional systems of governance in all Pacific countries have been either partially or totally replaced with the arrival of colonialism. Countries such as Western Samoa and Fiji try tenaciously to incorporate aspects of tradition into their adopted system, but the labour pains of marrying two different systems continue today. In countries such as the Cook Islands, attempts in the immediate past to re-establish the power and influence of traditional decision-makers were to some extent a disguise to reinforce the powers of elected people.

The involvement of women in decision-making at the national level continues to be minimal. For example, Western Samoa still adheres to the fa'a-Samoa or traditional system of electing Members of Parliament from among the Matai. As there have always been fewer female than male Matai, the lack of women in the political arena of that country is not surprising. The scenario is similar in other Pacific countries. Most have had one or two women parliamentarians at one stage or another. But viewed as a whole, the minimal participation of women is very obvious.

Increased participation by women will depend on women's motivation and supportive assistance by men. Both men and women must accept

some of the socio-economic changes which must occur if women are to add to their primary roles. We also need to resolve the detrimental aspects of the political party system introduced in much of the Pacific as part of the prevailing Westminster system. It has caused division amongst family groups, villages and island communities. Each Pacific country needs the most appropriate people-centered governance system which includes women in political decision-making. Until then, the aspirations and expectations of community people will not necessarily be addressed. Most women are motivated to enter "politics" to do effective community development more than to be decision-makers.

Many factors inhibit women in politics: lack of political education and training of women for public life; scant encouragement for women to become involved; fear of being seen as disrespectful by their partners or male seniors; the traditional monopoly of men as decision-makers in the public sphere; the evolution of politics into a social arena, as well as a power arena, for men; and the absence of proportional voting.

Transforming our governance

The following are some suggestions on how things can be transformed to promote a good and effective governance in the region:

1. Identifying and consolidating the strengths of traditional and modern politics to promote participatory governance that is transparent, accountable and effective.

Continued on Page 21



FROM: Fiji National Council of Women

SCOREBOARD FOR THE PACIFIC

Reprinted from the April 1996 edition of *Postview '95*, a publication of the International Women's Tribune Centre

COUNTRY	COMMITMENT
AUSTRALIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Extend Working Women's Centres to all States and make existing leave more flexible for-family responsibilities. •Ensure new information technologies meet the needs of women working at home. •Ensure women's contribution and participation is maximized through a Task Force on Women and Communication Technologies. •Develop an integrated national approach to address violence against women. •Develop a three year initiative to increase the appointment of women to private sector boards and establish a national body of women in business. •Address health inequalities for indigenous women and introduce health programmes specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. •Provide funds to non-governmental organizations in the Pacific Island nations to assist in the implementation of commitments arising from the Conference
FIJI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support women's self-employment through allocation of additional resources to develop small enterprises and expand government credit, and encourage financial institutions to review their lending policies. •Increase by 30 to 50% the participation of women on government boards, committees and councils by 1999. •Assign 50% participation of women in representation, training, appointments, and promotions at all levels of government and encourage the same in the private sector. •Promote elimination of domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment and child abuse. •Change laws that are clearly disadvantageous to women.
MARSHALL ISLANDS*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strengthen the Women's Affairs Division in the Ministry of Social Services and its NGO counterpart the National Council of Women. •Establish a contact point in each ministry and relevant agency to assist with implementation of the National Women's Policy. •Conduct gender sensitivity training at all levels of national and local government. •Require the Office of Planning and Statistics to include gender in all new data and studies.
PAPUA NEW GUINEA*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strengthen National Women's machinery and the establishment of gender management systems. •Continue efforts to establish an Office on the Status of Women. •Contribute 1 million (in PNG currency) to the Rural Bank for Rural Credit "Mini-Loan Scheme for Women". •Institute implementation mechanisms for CEDAW by 1997. •Pass and implement Maternity Protection legislation and "Law Reform Commission Report No. 14 on Domestic Violence".
SAMOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Grant women the right to vote and participate in decision-making on the selection of the country's law makers. •Complete the review of current legislation to eliminate any laws discriminatory to women. •Promote safe motherhood and services for reproductive health. •Strengthen efforts to promote self-employment opportunities for women in rural area and women in business.
TUVALU*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Involve women in economic activities, including business. •Provide access to qualitative education and health services. •Integrate gender concerns and considerations into all levels of decision making including subsistence, public, non-government, and private sectors.
VANUATU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Incorporate women's issues in mainstream development planning. •Increase the participation of women in economic activities. •Encourage active cooperation between all organizations working with women. •Strengthen the organizational structure of the network of island and areas councils of women. •Improve the health status of women and their families.



COUNTRIES IN THE PACIFIC SUB- REGION THAT HAVE NOT YET MADE COMMITMENTS

AMERICAN SAMOA*, CNMI*, COOK ISLANDS*, FRENCH POLYNESIA*, FSM, GUAM*, KIRIBATI*, NAURU*, NEW CALEDONIA*, NEW ZEALAND, NIUE, PALAU*, SOLOMON ISLANDS, TONGA*

Continued from Page 19

2. Promoting a governance model that fosters equitable and sustainable people-centered development and that takes into consideration the interests of men, women and their families. Political systems must also promote honesty, perseverance and diligence.

3. Preparing women for politics, including familiarisation with parliamentary procedures and developing their skills to appraise parliamentary bills, assess gender responsiveness and speak effectively in public.

4. Ensuring that women's voices are heard and that they participate in all levels of development, particularly in economic development.

Pacific women are organizing for action. The South Pacific Commission Women's Resource Bureau and UNIFEM Pacific are working collaboratively on priority programs for each of the Pacific Island countries arising from the Pacific Platform for Action developed for the global women's conference in Beijing.



Continued from Page 6

Of 23 atolls which comprise the Bikini chain, 3 were totally annihilated. The fishing ground is contaminated with radiation. The lands are so toxic that they are uninhabitable. The fallout covered everything. The injury that was done to the Bikini people and the rest of the Marshallese population can not be measured. The people have suffered a whole range of alien illnesses including cancer, miscarriages, deformed fetuses and jellyfish babies.

The people of Bikini have endured much hardship over the years. Their primary wish is to have their traditional homeland free of radiation and returned to them in its original state.



Canada Funds Bridge

On Fiji's island of Vanua Levu, 50 km. from Labasa, there is a village that was isolated until recently by a deep creek. The village now has a permanent culvert bridge across the creek, thanks to local labour and financial support from the Canada Fund for the purchase of building materials. Fired up by their success with the bridge, the villagers are now working to improve their water supply and housing, this time drawing on support from the Fiji government's rural development programme.



Photo: Diane Goodwillite

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The Challenge of Fiji's Constitutional Review (Part 2)

by Satendra Prasad

A government appointed commission recently submitted its recommendations on amending Fiji's controversial 1990 constitution (see box). Now comes the difficult process of negotiating a constitutional solution that is acceptable to the diverse interests that make up Fiji. In parallel with the official process, there has been a Citizens Constitutional Forum. Satendra Prasad, a member of the CCF, reflects on the constitutional review and the role of the CCF. Part 1 appeared in the June Tok Blong Pasifik.

Why the Constitution Review Commission can only go so far

Some international observers have invested too much faith in the Constitution Review Commission (CRC). Its work came to an end upon submitting a report to the President. The report will no doubt command a moral authority no one can ignore. However, it will confront a structured hierarchy of power brokers who can retard, withhold or even veto the proposed reforms.

In effect, the CRC report will face a race-based political bargaining process. It will be referred to a parliamentary committee comprised of ten representatives each from the Fijian and other groups in parliament. Assuming progress, the report will form the basis for a new

constitution, drafted as either amendment(s) to the existing constitution or as a new one, for adoption by a Parliament of 37 Fijians and 27 others - all elected by ethnic constituencies under the 1990 constitution. Assuming agreement in Parliament, the bill will go to the Senate, comprised of 21 Fijians and nine others. Finally, the Council of Chiefs must agree that Fijian rights and interests are not weakened through the constitutional reforms. Indeed the 1990 constitution requires the Council to act as the ultimate custodian of Fijian interests and grants its representatives a veto. That is how tenuous the whole process is.

Back to the Future

Fiji Constitutional Review Commission Presents Report

The independent commission reviewing Fiji's 1990 constitution presented its report proposing major and controversial changes to a House of Representatives and Senate joint session in September. The report, *Towards a United Future*, asserts there is no constitutional way to guarantee the political paramountcy many Indigenous Fijians want without abandoning democratic principles. The recommended reforms strike a balance between protecting the interests of Fijians while limiting infringements upon the democratic rights of non-Fijian citizens (about 50% of the population). While some proposals are new, the philosophy underlying the recommendations is in many ways reminiscent of that which guided the constitution overthrown by the 1987 coups.

Ironically Prime Minister Rabuka, 1987 coup leader, now defends many of the commission's recommendations. Rabuka says Fiji needs a constitution that gives all citizens "a genuine sense of belonging and feeling that this is their home". Despite the prime minister's support, the recommendations will clearly face opposition from Fijian leaders.

Highlights of Report Recommendations

- President should remain a Fijian elected by the Great Council of Chiefs and ratified by the House of Representatives.
- Vice-president should be an elected non-Fijian.
- Prime minister should no longer be restricted to being a Fijian; the office should be open to any member of Parliament.
- Senators should be elected, not nominated by the chiefs and president.
- Changes to House of Representatives (70 elected members in all):
 - Indigenous Fijian seats reduced from 37 to 12.
 - Indian seats reduced from 27 to 10.
 - General voters (non-Fijian, non-Indian) 2; Rotuma Island 1.
 - Fifteen heterogeneous constituencies, each with 3 members elected at large.

Parliament, with one year to act on the recommendations, has set up a committee to prepare a draft Constitution by July 1997, using the commission's report.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Sep 18/96; *Pacific Magazine*, Sep/Oct/96]

There are no procedures or requirements for consultation with the people at any of these stages, so racially elected MPs have the mandate to decide the future constitution for all of Fiji. CCF has taken the contrary view - that for any settlement to be sustainable, the people must be genuinely informed. Within communities, people have diverse interests which can engender creative solutions when the political framework is not so driven by ethnic concerns. CCF's proposal for citizen-driven constitutional reform would pressure power holders at each political level to be accountable and to deal with the people's interests.

In a race-based system, it is important to develop mechanisms which shield organizations from ethnic merchants who sell communalism and ethno-nationalism that could rupture the tenuous threads of future constitutional consensus. The CCF has sought to express and reconcile the conflicting opinions and interests, thus setting the basis for a rather radical departure in Fiji's political evolution.

Some CCF Principles

Fiji needs a less divisive electoral system that frees people to exercise choices. They should not be locked into voting racially - but should be free to vote racially if they so wish. Small shifts in public opinion should not lead to major political changes in delicately balanced societies. Thus a compelling case exists for a system of proportional representation, multi-member constituencies and an independent professional electoral administration. CCF could play a constructive role in the massive public education required by such reform.

Moving away from a "winner-takes-all" system requires a power-sharing executive. Anchoring such shared power to constitutional provisions would both reduce the stake for

control of government and moderate elections-induced ethnic strife. Measures encouraging multi-racialism in the electoral process and new forms of accountability would also be required for good governance under such a system.

Excellent models now exist in the international community (e.g. South Africa, New Zealand and Canada) for constitutionally anchored safeguards for the rule of law and protection of human rights. People need to be informed about their rights and able to seek redress when they feel aggrieved as a result of state actions.

Constitutional safeguards for ethnic rights should not erode the priority that we attach to "the will of the people". To protect fundamental community rights, elected representatives of the different ethnic communities can have a second vote where different majorities are specified. At the same time, we need to ensure that communities are not fossilized, but are left free to evolve and adapt. Ethnic institutions need to be accountable and exercise their influence in a manner that does not disadvantage sections within the communities that they represent.

Disadvantages and inequalities in multi-ethnic societies readily become the basis for ethno-political mobilization. The CCF showed that many of Fiji's inequalities cut across ethnic categories, affecting different communities in a similar manner. Some disadvantages were more community specific - landlessness among Indo-Fijians and unacceptably low participation levels of Fijians in commerce. Such disadvantages clearly require affirmative interventions which, the CCF argues, need to be well-researched, transparent, time-specific, publicly accountable, means-tested and targeted.

It was proposed that CCF's

framework for constitutional settlement be developed into a citizens charter inspired by South Africa's Freedom Charter, which strongly indicates core principles that its citizens made the bases for their new constitution.

What Price for Change?

Fiji has already paid a price it can ill afford at this stage of its development. The global winds of change are against institutionalized racialism. Fiji can no longer live like an island. Nowhere in the world is an ethnic military a source for stability. Excluding from government the talents of half the population extracts a serious economic cost also. Claims for political paramountcy based on a draft declaration of indigenous peoples have been found wanting. All parties are worse off as a result of exclusionary politics.

On the other hand, it is difficult to find any other country where there is so much agreement about the nature of its problems and of solutions which take account of the different communities. By seeking consensus on an agenda of national issues, CCF helped outline a framework for tackling these problems in a world which no longer owes Fiji a living. There is a long and painful journey ahead for Fiji. Sadly in this era of globalization when many of the functions of nation-states are being swept away, Fiji still faces that difficult hurdle of creating a unified national entity. Either we collectively find the determination to solve our problems or we collectively choose to be worse off. Ultimately political change will occur when people know that everyone can benefit and when ethnic communities see that change can be on "win-win" terms.



Every Bit of Land Counts

On the low-lying, heavily populated atoll islets of South Tarawa, Kiribati, every bit of land counts. But each year, as much as 0.2 to 2 metres is washed away at some places along the shore. The loss of land has destroyed homes and threatens many other buildings.

Donald Forbes, a coastal geologist funded by the Canadian government and based at SOPAC, went to Kiribati mid-1995 to study coast erosion. The work done by SOPAC will be used for urban planning, sand resource assessment, environmental monitoring and public education on the negative impacts of foreshore reclamation, poorly designed shore protection works and beach mining.

"We are really trying to understand the natural erosion processes and to provide advice for coastal management," Forbes said.

Several important infrastructure facilities on the island have been threatened by coastal erosion. These include inter-islet causeways, a hospital, a high school and

saltwater intake pumphouses for the sewage system. The Turgaru Central Hospital, recently constructed at a new site without any thought for the shoreline erosion problem, was completed in 1991 at the start of a prolonged El Nino episode. The El Nino/Southern Oscillation phenomenon relates to shifts in the atmospheric pressure, wind patterns and ocean circulation across the central Pacific Ocean. In South Tarawa, El Nino events bring a switch from prevailing easterly trade winds to more prevalent westerlies. Waves move sand along shore toward the east, causing severe erosion at some sites and beach accretion at others. With the return of the easterly trade winds, the beach at the hospital is growing again, but the threat of another El Nino remains. There is no way to predict how long it will be until the next one, although the average interval is five to seven years.

Along with monitoring shoreline erosion, Forbes also helped Kiribati government officials to assess the quantity of sand and gravel in

various beach deposits. Removing sand from beaches can cause rapid shoreline erosion and increase vulnerability to storms and sea-level rise. However, beach and backshore deposits are the only presently accessible source of sand and gravel to support the growing demand for concrete and landfill in Kiribati. SOPAC has identified reserves of sand and gravel away from the shore in Tarawa Lagoon, but funding is required for environmental impact analysis and dredging equipment before offshore extraction can begin. In the meantime, SOPAC's coastal studies can help to identify sites where mining will cause the least long-term damage.

The government of Kiribati has started to take action to help the coast. As early as 1990, SOPAC was requested to help with producing coastal awareness publicity materials to assist with educating the masses on how best to protect the precious resource of their coasts. This request was what spawned the *Coasts of Pacific*

Continued on Page 27



Photo: SOPAC

Islets on the windward reef rim of Tarawa Atoll, Kiribati

SOPAC Faces Future without Canada

The South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) has been one of six Pacific partners involved in Canada's major aid programme to the Pacific, the Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development Programme (CSPODP). SOPAC credits Canadian support as "instrumental in building up the coastal management and minerals units to the point where the Coastal Programme is the largest programme at SOPAC". But that is about to change. The Canadian International Development Agency has decided to focus Phase II of CSPODP on only four of the original six Pacific partners, with SOPAC one of the losers. But a ray of hope remains. After expressions of concern from the Pacific partners, CIDA has agreed that SOPAC and the South Pacific Commission (the other organisation being dropped) could continue to receive funds as part of joint projects in association with one of the remaining four partner agencies.

Pacifica – A Cultural Voyage

An educational interactive CD-ROM from Juniper Films. Sydney, NSW; 1996. Also available: 3 video TV series; book; curriculum support material.

by Grant McCall

Juniper Films is well-known in the documentary field, especially for several series on the Pacific Islands. The recent series, *Pacifica*, with its two hours and 45 minutes, consists of 34 stories of varying lengths featuring myths, histories and tales from the Pacific. *Pacifica*, which has a book of the same name (by Nadine Amadio. Sydney. Angus and Robertson, 1993), tells us about the origins of surfing, Robert Louis Stevenson, Vanuatu land diving, Kiribati warriors and leprosy, to name a few of the topics covered.

Pacifica – A Cultural Voyage is their latest production aimed, I would argue, at the home as well as the education market. The multimedia CD-ROM opens with music and zooms in on a stylised yacht, where we are welcomed on board by Captain Moana Roberts. In her cabin, we see a computer and small CD-ROM library (three titles), a "Pocket Guide", a map of the Pacific, a ship's wheel, a photograph on the bulkhead, a book labeled "Culture" and a mysterious bottle on a shelf.

The Pocket Guide is a short guide to each of the 12 countries featured in the rest of the materials. The map is a quick tour ("by yacht") of the 12 countries with brief graphics for each, but one cannot control the length of the stop or direction of the tour. Perhaps the map should be highlighted as the first orientation stop for the traveler?

Moving to the computer and CD-ROM library, there are three

stories, derived from the video series, from which to choose. "Island of Exile" is about the Makogai leper colony. There are life stories, photographs, details on the disease and other materials. The Gauguin programme traces his life and some of his works. The Solomon Islands "Living History" displays the biography of a man's passage through change, including the terror of the Second World War, "The Big Death".

The book labeled "Culture: South Pacific Issue" is a series of stories



from the *Pacifica* video series. With the three stories and the several "culture" topics, ranging from tattooing to pan pipes, skull deformation and artificial islands, *Pacifica* is a unique resource in text, sound and video.

Finally, the mysterious bottle. When one selects it, it "falls" shattering and Captain Roberts tells us that she must have this medicine every day. As we've broken her only supply, we must go on a voyage to find the materials to make the remedy. Through this device, the viewer must navigate through various places using the resources on the disk. It is a game as well as a series of exercises.

The CD comes with a concepts paper written by a curriculum expert, showing how the programme may be used in schools, probably secondary. Advanced upper primary students probably would benefit. There are other materials built around "*Pacifica Tours*", an exercise in travel and tourism which students may do to use the database.

I think there will be people who will buy this disk just to enjoy it, to see the images and to learn from the information it contains. It is a very attractive product, full of music, voices from the Pacific and plenty of colour from Australia's Island neighbours.

As a specialist in the Pacific Islands, I welcome the first interactive CD-ROM dedicated to Australia's important neighbours in the region. *Pacifica* is a unique resource and one that will be attractive to several markets, including the armchair traveler. Schools probably will want to obtain the *Pacifica* video series as well, perhaps with a copy of the book.

Grant McCall teaches at the Centre for South Pacific Studies at the University of New South Wales.

Pacifica - A Cultural Voyage

is available in CD-ROM for Macintosh and Windows (US\$78). Curriculum support material and the 3 video *Pacifica* series are also available. For full prices and ordering contact:

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Land Issues in the Pacific

by Ron Crocombe and Malama Meleisea (eds.). Christchurch, New Zealand: MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury. 1994.

by James A. Boutilier, Ph.D.

It is difficult for many people to realize just how important land is to Pacific Islanders. Speaking of the Solomon Islands, Leonard Maenu'u captures the significance of land: "To the people of the South Pacific, land is a mother. It is their home. It represents everything life can provide. As a mother, land is unalienable" (p.86). Land provides sustenance, identity, an element of worth and a sense of history anchored in location. This timely and comprehensive analysis addresses the dilemma at the very heart of Pacific Islanders' lives, how best to use the meager inventory of land at their disposal.

Nineteenth century colonialism distorted most of the subsistence-based land tenure systems in the islands. Colonial authorities substituted rigid concepts of land tenure, based on individual ownership and outright alienation of land, for the highly flexible and adaptive land tenure systems based on communal ownership then in place. Furthermore, they established plantations where traditional short-term root crops were replaced by long-term tree crops like coconut, cocoa and coffee. This shift was part of the monetisation of island societies and, while customary land tenure survived in many places (eg. 97% of the land in Papua New Guinea is still subject to customary tenure), it was transformed inexorably nonetheless.

A fundamental challenge facing island administrators is how to provide for burgeoning populations within limited land areas.

Conventional wisdom maintains that the key is agricultural development and a central debate in this book is over how best to achieve that. Proponents of development point to the importance of aid as a catalyst for increasing agricultural productivity; customary land tenure, with its fragmentation and multiple ownership, is seen as a major obstacle because lending agencies are unable to mortgage customary land as collateral for their loans. Critics of this position argue that there is nothing in customary land tenure inherently opposed to greater levels of productivity and that the essential problem is the planners' failure to understand the intricacies of customary ownership adequately.

Even when ownership is determined and long-term financing is in place, the tendency is toward the aggregation of land, the enrichment of the few, and the displacement of agriculturists from the land. What these phenomena point towards is something truly historic and deeply disturbing - the possible creation for the first time of a class of landless people in the Pacific Islands. *Land Issues in the Pacific* is an indispensable guide to the complexities of land tenure and the almost impossible choices involved in squaring modernisation strategies with neo-traditional concepts of customary land tenure.

Dr. Boutilier is the president of SPPF and an internationally recognised expert on Asia-Pacific security issues.



Photo: Gerry Schuurkamp

The beginnings of a garden in a Papua New Guinea village. The role of customary land tenure in promoting or binding agricultural development is a focus for debate.

South Pacific Handbook (6th edition)

by David Stanley. Chico CA: Moon Publications. 1996 (914 pages, US \$22.95)

by Michael Cooper

The 6th edition of **South Pacific Handbook** continues the high standard established by David Stanley in previous editions. It is unmatched as a comprehensive guide to the Melanesian and Polynesian islands south of the equator and evidences a deep concern for local perspectives that sets it apart from its competitors.

This latest edition is a fastidious updating rather than substantial revision. The format remains the same. There is a long introduction to the region ranging from natural history through settlement of the islands to the current political structure. The sections on each of the island groups cover history, government, economy and culture before turning to the usual guidebook fare of how to get around, where to stay and what to see. The Appendix contains a useful list of contacts and an extensive bibliography.

Though written more for the independent traveller than the pampered tourist, the **South Pacific Handbook** reveals the Pacific in a way that both intrigues and emboldens the reader. The attractions are thoroughly detailed, as are the dangers and how to deal with them. I would take the travel

credo from page 75: "One of the golden rules of the independent traveller is the more you spend, the less you experience." However, Stanley manages to sing the praises of low budget, independent travel without being dogmatic about its virtues. For example, each area's list of accommodations includes camping spots, up-market hotels and all that is in between.

Both as travel guide and general reference, the **Handbook** reveals David Stanley's passionate concern for the region and its people. He views the oft termed "paradise" with a clear gaze that does not flinch from the issues and challenges that Islanders face. It is apparent that he feels a true appreciation of the region can only come about through an understanding that goes beyond where the best shopping and beaches are, though these are well covered. His is a cheerful, "warts and all" affection for the Pacific Islands that, for example, encompasses both concern for the growing problems of alcoholism and crime in and around Honiara, and the opinion that the Solomon Islands is "the best kept secret in the South Pacific."

I heartily recommend David Stanley's **South Pacific Handbook** as I know the staff of SPPF do when they get inquiries from people intending to travel in the Pacific.

Michael Cooper is an SPPF Board member.

protection of foreshore land as public domain. This provides a mechanism for licensing and managing sand extraction from the beaches. Traditionally, property rights were considered to extend from the beach to the reef. Many people have undertaken small-scale reclamation as land is scarce and

Continued on Page 28

SOUL OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

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Contact: SPPF or the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji. TEL: 679-304649. FAX: 679-304755. <pcrc@pactok.peg.apc.org>

3rd Pacific Indigenous Business Development Conference

December 8-15. Sydney, Australia. Brings together people from Australia, Aotearoa, the Pacific Islands and Americas with an interest in business development by indigenous peoples.

Contact: Bluepeace Pacific, PO Box 185, Strawberry Hills, Sydney, NSW 2012, Australia. TEL: 612-9319-4803. FAX: 612-9319-6334.

Abolition 2000 - A Global Nuclear Disarmament Conference

January 20-28. Tahiti & Moorea. A conference for activists in the global Abolition 2000 movement. Hosted by Hiti Tau.

Contact: Abolition 2000, PO Box 220, Port Hueneme, CA 93044-0220, USA. TEL: 805-985-5073. FAX: 805-985-7563.

RESOURCES

France's Decolonisation Process in New Caledonia: Conflict on the Path to Self-Determination

Working Paper by Nic Maclellan & Sarimin Boengkih

Provides an assessment of the Matignon Accords and of prospects for the 1998 referendum on self-determination for New Caledonia and the indigenous Kanaks. Aust\$5.00 from: Centre for Asia-Pacific Studies, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia.

Resources on Micro-Credit

The Calmeadow Foundation has a range of publications on micro-credit that may be of interest to groups hoping to establish such programmes. Publications include *Financial Management Training: Accounting Module* and *Financial Management Training: Finance Module*, which cover basic financial management and accounting principles as applied to micro-enterprises. Each module has been designed for self-study or as a workshop. They include a study guide (US\$30) and a facilitator's guide (US\$35).

Contact: Calmeadow Resource Centre, 365 Bay Street, Suite 600, Toronto, ON M5H 2V1, Canada. TEL: 416-362-9670. FAX: 416-362-0769.

<calmead@inforamp.net>

Continued from Page 27

considered a symbol of wealth and prosperity. A typical reclamation is a seawall with two sides that create a rectangle. It is then filled with sand and coral rock. Apart from the need for fill that must be obtained somewhere else, the structure can also cause damage by trapping sand on one side and starving the beach on the other. By creating a barrier to longshore transport of sand, the reclamation structure can induce scour on the downdrift side and at the base of the seawall. On the other hand, a proposed public reclamation project adjacent to the port of Betio will help to solve the solid waste disposal problem while providing new land in the urban centre, in a location where it will not interfere significantly with natural coastal processes.

"In the end, there is no substitute for field data on coastal processes", Forbes said. "These provide the essential knowledge required to make informal coastal management decisions."

Reprinted from SOPAC News, Jan-Mar 1996.

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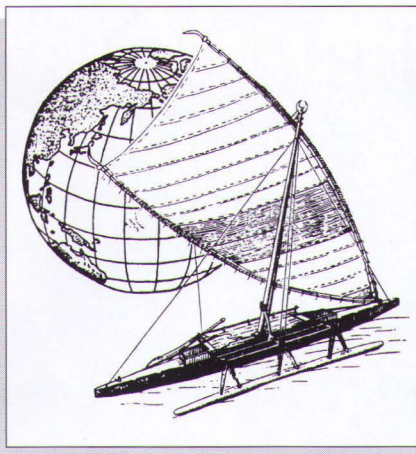
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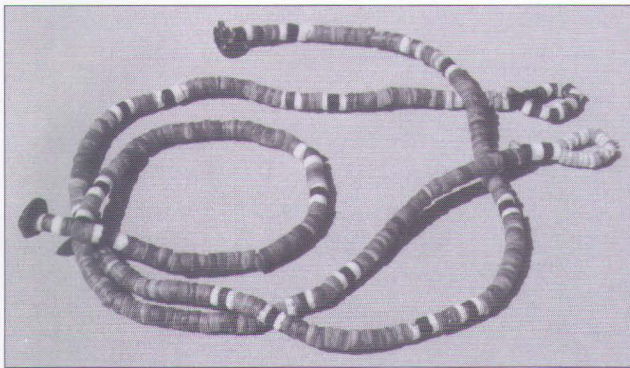
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