



The Citizens' Constitutional Forum

Annual Report 2007

Project Information

Project Ref Number	41616
Project Title	STRENGTHENING FIJI'S DEMOCRACY
Country	FIJI
Grant Value	\$40000
Start/End dates of Project	1 January 2007-31 December 2009
Reporting period annual report	1 January 2007 to 31 December 2007
Project Leader Name	Rev Akuila Yabaki
Project website	www.ccf.org.fj

CCF Introduction

The Citizens' Constitutional Forum Limited (CCF) is a non-government organisation (NGO) based in Suva with more than 10 years' experience in community education and advocacy on Fiji's Constitution, democracy, human rights and multiculturalism.

CCF's vision:

To build a nation in which Fiji's people live together in equality, justice and peace, respecting the rule of law, under a Constitution that guarantees democracy and human rights.

CCF's mission:

Realise our vision through community education and advocacy on the Constitution, democracy, human rights and multiculturalism.

Executive Summary and Introduction

The 'Democratisation, Human Rights and Ethnic Group Reconciliation in the Fiji Islands' project (which commenced in 2004) was CCF's primary project for 2007. The project was a three year project and was extended to August 2007. It had a total budget of 2.2 million Fiji dollars, 80% funded by the European Union. This funding enabled the CCF to increase its staff to eight (plus consultants and volunteers), and expand its work even further. Activities in this project were organised into four themes and six sectors.

Themes

1. Group and Minority Rights
2. Democracy and the Rule of Law
3. Housing and Social Exclusion
4. Resource and Land Rights

Sectors

Rural Sector and Human Rights
Youth and Human Rights
Workers and Human Rights
Religion and Human Rights

At the end of the project CCF was forced by a lack of funding to reduce its staff and cut back on activities. However, with our new three year project, 'Strengthening Fiji's Democracy', CCF now looks forward to a new phase in its institutional development. It aims to modestly increase its staff, extend and fine-tune its activities of the past three years, and engage in a more sustained and effective way with its target beneficiaries. The organisation is hopeful that its work will continue to be aided, into 2009, by an improved national political situation. 'Strengthening Fiji's Democracy' not only invests in grassroots education, but also responds to one of Fiji's key development challenges - namely, racialised politics and coups d'état.

In the aftermath of the December 2006 military takeover, CCF was faced with the challenge of rebuilding democracy along with raising questions of justice for all in the political situation of racialised politics. This is evidenced through our media releases, promoted the removal of racialised politics, and CCF's programs and actions.

Report on Activities

(A) Project: Democratisation, Human Rights and Ethnic Group Reconciliation in Fiji islands.

Theme 1: Group and Minority Rights

1. Guidelines for Religious Leaders on Human rights: A workshop was held in 2006 with religious leaders on preparing guidelines for citizens that shows religious values on human rights. From this workshop 1000 copies of a brochure on guidelines for religious leaders on Human Rights was produced in February 2007 and distributed in the community.

2. Workshop for Rural women: CCF held a workshop in collaboration with the National Council of Women in Suva in March. Thirty participants, women and youth leaders from around the country participated at a weeklong workshop on gender equality and human rights at the FNA building in Suva on 26-30 March 2007. Participants came from within the Suva-Nausori area, western and northern Viti Levu and included women leaders from Vanua Levu. Its aim was to promote Gender Equity and Human Rights.

3. Production of new CCF posters: 2000 copies of posters promoting multiculturalism and peace were produced in 2007 and distributed amongst schools and other citizens of Fiji.

4. Group Minority Rights Workshop: In August a consultation was held at the Pacific Theological College on group and minority rights. Participants included NGOs, Religious Organisations and members from minority group communities in the Suva area. The consultation generated a lot of discussion and many issues were raised and discussed. Participants expressed appreciation for the consultation because it gave minority communities the space to raise their relevant issues, as these issues are often overlooked as public discussions are dominated by issues affecting the two major races in the country.

5. CERD Submission: CCF completed a revised CERD submission in August which was circulated amongst members of the NGO Coalition. This submission will be the NGO submission to the UN Human Rights in Geneva in February 2008.

Theme 2: Democracy and Rule of Law

1. Follow up to Youth Theatre: In January CCF hosted a follow up workshop in Suva to the Youth Theatre in collaboration with Women's Action for Change where we distributed 'Your Constitution Your rights' to secondary school students. The purpose of this workshop was to empower youth to participate in their constitutional rights as citizens of this country in promoting good governance and transparency. Some 25 youths from Suva and Nausori participated in this workshop and gained a better appreciation of their basic rights under Fiji's Constitution.

2. Seniloli Court Case: In April the High Court ruled that it would not squash the decision to release Ratu Jope Seniloli in November 2004 because he had now completed his sentence. This brought to an end the action initiated by CCF to challenge the release of Ratu Seniloli by the Attorney General of the day.

3. Report on Elections Audit: 300 copies of the report were produced in May and were circulated to participants of the workshop and donors.

4. Your Constitution, Your Rights, second edition in English, Fijian and Hindustani. 2000 copies were printed and circulated to grassroots communities around the country.

Theme 3: Housing and Social Exclusion

1. Squatter DVD: CCF commissioned the production of a documentary on *Struggling for a Better Living – Squatters in Fiji*, produced by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. The documentary was launched in April 2007 at the USP Marine Studies Lecture Theatre with approximately 250 people attending. The documentary has been publicised in the Fiji daily newspapers' feature articles and in various magazines. It was also screened to secondary school students in July 2007 at the local Village 6 cinemas. Of the 400 copies of the documentary produced, 300 has been circulated through the USP Book Centre and other means of distribution.

2. Policy Briefing Papers: CCF worked with ECREA in producing two policy Briefing papers entitled *Poverty in Paradise* and *No Way to Live*. These papers have been widely circulated in Fiji and also through the USP Book Centre.

3. Website Redesign: CCF has modified its current website so that the information is more user friendly to viewers. In 2007 the number of hits increased over 2006.

4. Trade Union Workshops: CCF worked with the Fiji Trade Union Congress and held four workshops in Lautoka, Labasa, Nadi and Suva with workers and trade union representatives on workers rights to produce pamphlets which would be informative to workers. A major outcome was the promotion of the Employment Relations Bill. A positive outcome of this was that participants then organised workshops for their own union groups arranged in the country disseminating information gained from CCF workshops. Further workshops were held with PACFAW and FICTU on the same issue.

Theme 4: Resource and Land Rights

1. Report on Labasa Land Workshop: The report on this workshop which was held in August 2006 was produced and circulated.

(B) Project: Media and Social Justice

A project commenced in March 2009, funded by EED and NZAID. To create a targeted and appropriate communications strategy for CCF to appropriately interact with rural and urban communities in Fiji on overarching human rights and social justice issues.

1. Script for Radio Plays: CCF and Women's Action for Change held a joint workshop in Suva in May which produced a script for the Radio plays. CCF had as one of its objectives to produce a 15 minute play which promotes human rights. Students at USP were recruited as characters to audition for the radio play, and rehearsals and recording of the radio plays began in September.

2. Budget Workshops: Two Budget workshops were held in Labasa and Savusavu in May 2007. Target audiences were low income earners including women and youth from rural grassroots communities. The Labasa workshop had over 60 participants and the Savusavu workshop had 45 participants. Following the North workshops, CCF prepared a Community submission to the 2008 budget which was sent to the Ministry of Finance and National Planning Office in June 2007. Participants of the workshop agreed that the topics addressed in the workshop were useful and they felt empowered to make submissions.

3. Submission for the 2008 National Budget: This was completed in June and sent to the Ministry of Finance.

4. Recording of Radio Play: CCF completed the recording of its radio play on human rights in September and by the end of November the second draft of the recording was complete. CCF is ready to air the play entitled *The Ex-Prisoner* on the local radio stations in 2008.

5. Annual Song Competition: CCF introduced the song competition by calling for expressions of interest amongst youth of Fiji in 2007. The event will be finalised early 2008.

6. CIVICUS World Assembly: In May the CCF legal officer attended a world assembly on participatory governance, which is a meeting of civil society representatives from around the world.

7. Pacific People Building Peace, a programme initiated by CCF which is a network of regional country members dealing with conflict resolution. Members had their first Strategic meeting in Nadi in April 2007 where they appointed an Interim Steering Committee whose purpose was to mobilise the programme.

(C) Strengthening Fiji's Democracy

Towards the end of 2007, CCF began the 'Strengthening Fiji's Democracy' project with the assistance from AusAid in September. Activities to the end of 2007 were:

1 Community Based workshops: Two one-day community based workshops, promoted constitutional rights for citizens, were held from in October and November 2007 in the Suva urban areas.

- In October a community based workshop was held with Squatter Communities in Raiwaqa, Suva. This workshop was very well attended and there was lively discussion on human rights for squatters. At the end of the workshop participants were more confident of their rights and how it can assist them in their situation.
- In November the second community based workshop was held with Indo-Fijian communities in Samabula. This workshop was poorly attended despite efforts made to publicise the workshop. There were 17 participants confirmed before the workshop but only 8 participants turned up. However the participants who attended the workshop expressed appreciation for the knowledge gained in the area of human rights and pledged to help publicise the next workshop and encourage more Indo-Fijians to attend. An encouragement for CCF was the attendance of one participant from Lakena in Nausori.

2 International Peace Day: On 21 September in honour of International Peace Day, CCF delivered a letter in support of Article 9 (renouncing war) of the Japanese Constitution to the Japanese Ambassador and participated in the Women's Action for Change Playback Theatre performance.

3 Annual Retreat: In December, CCF held its annual retreat which reflected on the achievements and downfalls of the European Union funded project which was completed in August 2007. The retreat also discussed learning experiences and better approaches to the continuity of the Citizens' Constitutional Forum's work in the new project entitled Strengthening Fiji's Democracy and how it would incorporate the recommendations by the Independent Evaluation Team which was hired by CCF to do its project review.

2007 CCF Publications

Type *	Detail
Brochure	What is CCF
Brochure	Na Idusidusi Ni Veidokadokai Vakamatalotu (ALTA/NLTA)
Publication	Election Watch III
Publication	YCYR Fijian
Brochure	ALTA NALTA Part 1 - Hindi version
Brochure	ALTA NALTA Part 2 - Hindi version
Brochure	ALTA NALTA Part 1 Fijian
Brochure	ALTA NALTA Part 2 Fijian
Brochure	What is CCF Brochure 2nd print
Report	Poverty in Paradise - No Way to Live (Research paper by ECREA)
Cards	CCF Greeting Cards
Publication	2006 Annual Report
Newsletter	Tutaka - CCF newsletter
Posters	CCF Posters promoting diversity, multiculturalism, hope
Report	Squatters in Fiji: the need for an attitudinal change (Research Paper by Fr Kevin Barr)
DVD documentary	Living in Fiji - SQUATTER DOCUMENTARY

Key Achievements and Lessons

In the past 3 years, through the project entitled **Democratisation, Human Rights and Ethnic Group Reconciliation in the Fiji Islands** CCF was successful in educating the public through workshops, media releases, and publications.

CCF is confident that the work promoting human rights and the constitution could be further strengthened with the new phase of work entitled **Strengthening Fiji's Democracy**, which is to be implemented from 2007 to 2010.

CCF has been able to work with Women's organisations in the NGO sector and government, Trade Union groups, Youth and Religious groups, marginalised groups in raising discussion amongst women in this country about gender issues and in building awareness about human rights.

Monitoring, evaluation and lessons:

CCF commissioned an independent evaluation in May 2006. A separate evaluation was also carried out by the European Union in 2006. In 2007 CCF commissioned an independent evaluation team to evaluate the Impact Assessment of its European Union funded project.

The primary Lesson from these evaluation reports is that CCF needs to continue to educate its citizens on their human rights, their rights as citizens, their rights to participate in government decisions and

discussions, but CCF needs to concentrate on certain geographical areas in order to properly assess the impact of its work.

The 2007 evaluation team in its assessment concluded that:

- CCF is very effective in educating the public there workshops, media releases, and through publications.
- Media releases have been consistent.
- Publications are well distributed throughout the nation
- Workshops at grassroots level are well distributed to cover both rural and urban areas, all the four national divisional.
- The Multiplier effect of the project activities was effective resulting in the large scale coverage of the project activity effects.

The project was deemed a success and needs to be continued in future. These have clearly showed the effect of the project and its success.

This evaluation was conducted through focus group discussions, structured questionnaires and observations. Through this evaluation, CCF noted that citizens were discussing the constitution and human rights in small groups more than before the project began. Generic issues discussed by the public were useful as a guide for future projects.

CCF realises the importance of continuing its activities in Fiji so as to implement a culture of change in all citizens so that they can be proactive and participate more in their citizenship. This work will ultimately help in the effective governance of our country in its upward road to democracy.

Project expenditure – See Financial Report below

CITIZENS CONSTITUTIONAL FORUM
Financial Report on Aus AID funds in 2007

Amount received from AUS AID \$ 39,990

Expense Item	Budget	Actual
Staffing		
Chief Executive Officer	\$ 20,000	\$ 14,393
Secretary / PA	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,105
Bookeeper	\$ 2,000	\$ 6,725
Services		
Auditing	\$ 1,400	\$ 3,375
Photography	\$ 500	\$ -
Administration		
Rent & service charge	\$ 11,108	\$ 4,800
Utilities	\$ 500	\$ 1,259
Stationery & Consumables	\$ 500	\$ 920
Telephone & Internet	\$ -	\$ 1,436
Office Expenses	\$ -	\$ 848
Bank charges	\$ 200	\$ 229
Activities		
Workshop Expenses	\$ -	\$ 3,256
TOTAL	\$ 40,208	\$ 40,346

CONCLUSION

2007 was again about living in Fiji in unusual times. The country is under an unelected regime following the December coup of 2006. At CCF the year began with heightened level of activities to finish off the EU funded projects under the project `Democratisation, Human Rights and Ethnic Group Reconciliation in the Fiji Islands_ which was followed by what was essentially a short period of low activity. For this reason we are grateful to Aus AID for their support towards CCF over the last four months of the year. We were able to conduct workshops with considerable participation of women from squatter settlements; we were able to bridge the divide between FTUC and FICTU and conducted awareness workshops on the Employment Relations Bill in both camps. Finally we held our citizen awareness workshops on human rights where CCF staff had the facility to conduct these workshops in the three languages Fijian, Hindi and English.

Looking forward to 2008, we are hopeful that we will receive funding to enable us to continue our community education on human rights while our advocacy and media work is ongoing.

Rev. Akuila Yabaki
Chief Executive Officer

Suva
7th April 2008