



UNDERSTANDING HELPS SOLVE COMPLEX ISSUES

A Dialogue Reflection by Rev Akuila Yabaki

Dialogue Fiji Vision:

A Fiji where people respect each others' differences and share a common will to build a free, peaceful, and inclusive nation.

Dialogue Fiji

Mission:

Engage with others to build capacity in Fiji's society to create inclusive spaces for dialogue and peace building.

Dialogue Fiji

Committee :

- Suliana Siwatibau
- Rev. Akuila Yabaki
- Virisila Buadromo
- Willie Kwansing
- Daryl Tarte
- Ratu Meli Vesikula
- Nemani Mati
- Nisha Buksh
- Kelerayani Gavidu
- Ricardo Morris
- Nemani Buresova
- Mereoni Chung



Dialogue Fiji Committee member, Rev Akuila Yabaki in pensive mood at the 2010 Dialogue Fiji Conference in Nadi.

Recognising the fear endemic around land issues in Fiji Dialogue and Peace building initiatives are necessary at the national level with key stakeholders.

To this end, several land owners and tenants workshops have been conducted by CCF over the last decade.

But in the last five years, and under media censorship, open debate on the conflict over the future of land use rights and administration in Fiji appears to have simmered down.

At present the conflict over the future of land use rights and administration in Fiji is ethnically and politically polarized at the state institutional levels between those who support the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act (ALTA) and those who reject ALTA and want native and state leases administered by the iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB) under the iTaukei Land Trust Act (TLTA).

The advocates of the latter position were previously indigenous Fijian leaders in the former NLTB, the Council of Chiefs and government coalition of the SDL/CAMV political

parties.

The landowners and tenants at the grassroots have little understanding of this division at the state level.

In the CCF experience of community dialogues and civic education, one of the lessons learned is that complex problems are better resolved when there is a good understanding of the issues involved by individuals, groups and stakeholders at the primary and local level.

"ONE OF THE LESSONS LEARNED IS THAT COMPLEX PROBLEMS ARE BETTER RESOLVED WHEN THERE IS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED BY INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS AT THE PRIMARY AND LOCAL LEVEL..."

For example with local tenant communities and the local land-owning group.

Such decentralised approaches can go even further in promoting local level dialogue based on a local level capacity to deal with all the dimensions of land conflict. Such an approach may reach even further to examine local level conflict resolution mechanisms.

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FAREWELL ZENA, WELCOME GEORGE



Outgoing Programme Officer, Zena Sherani (above) . Rev Yabaki (standing in top left hand photo) delivering the vote of thanks whilst Nemani Mati looks on during the farewell lunch. George Nacewa (bottom left hand photo) replaces Zena at the Dialogue Fiji secretariat.

Dialogue Fiji secretariat staff and committee in mid February held a farewell lunch for program officer Zena Sherani as she resigned to join the University of the South Pacific.

Zena, who had been with the secretariat since November 2010, said she appreciated the value of networks she had developed and the knowledge and experience of effective dialogue tools and processes.

"I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continuous efforts in dialogue and peace building initiatives from within your communities in Fiji," she said in a farewell note emailed to staff, committee members and stakeholders.

She thanked the DF secretariat team for their support during her stint at DF including the numerous late nights at the office to tie up loose ends before dialogue events.

She said she would remember "braving adverse weather conditions and driving in places with humps twice the size of bricks and roads which are narrow, curvy and filled with pot holes when meeting up with dialogue participants."

In her farewell note she also introduced her successor, George Nacewa and urged stakeholders to continue to provide their support to him after her departure.

George joins DF secretariat from Interfaith Search Fiji and is not new to Dialogue Fiji having been a past participant and a 2010 Dialogue Facilitator trainee.

George said he looked forward to working closely with all stakeholders as a member of DF Secretariat to bring about positive change in alignment with Dialogue Fiji's vision and mission.

ASSEMBLY CHOOSES BURESOVA & CHUNG AS NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Fiji Council of Social Services chairman, Nemani Buresova and youth advocate, Mereoni Chung are new additions to the Dialogue Fiji Committee for 2012.

The two were elected at the Citizen's Assembly that took place at the Studio Six conference room in Suva on February 9.



New DF Committee member , Nemani Buresova

Nemani, who has been a regular participant of Dialogue Fiji events, is also a Bishop with the Latter Day Saints Church while Mereoni is an employee of the Citizen's Constitutional Forum.

Mereoni holds personal interests in civil society work being a member of the Youth Coalition Fiji, Drodrolagi Movement and was a member of the Fiji delegation to the 1st Pacific Youth Festival in Noumea, Tahiti in 2006.

"The opportunity to be a member of the commit-



tee presents a chance to contribute directly to an organisation that promotes peace building and national development," Mereoni said.

Nemani said DF values and principles needed to be promoted for peace and nation building amongst all the communities in Fiji.

"As a citizen of Fiji, I feel greatly about the relationships that should exist amongst the communities," he said.

"DF's guiding principles of inclusiveness, independence, transparency, openness, space and empathy and those that are promoted in Fiji ... will lead ultimately to a long and everlasting peace for the people in Fiji."



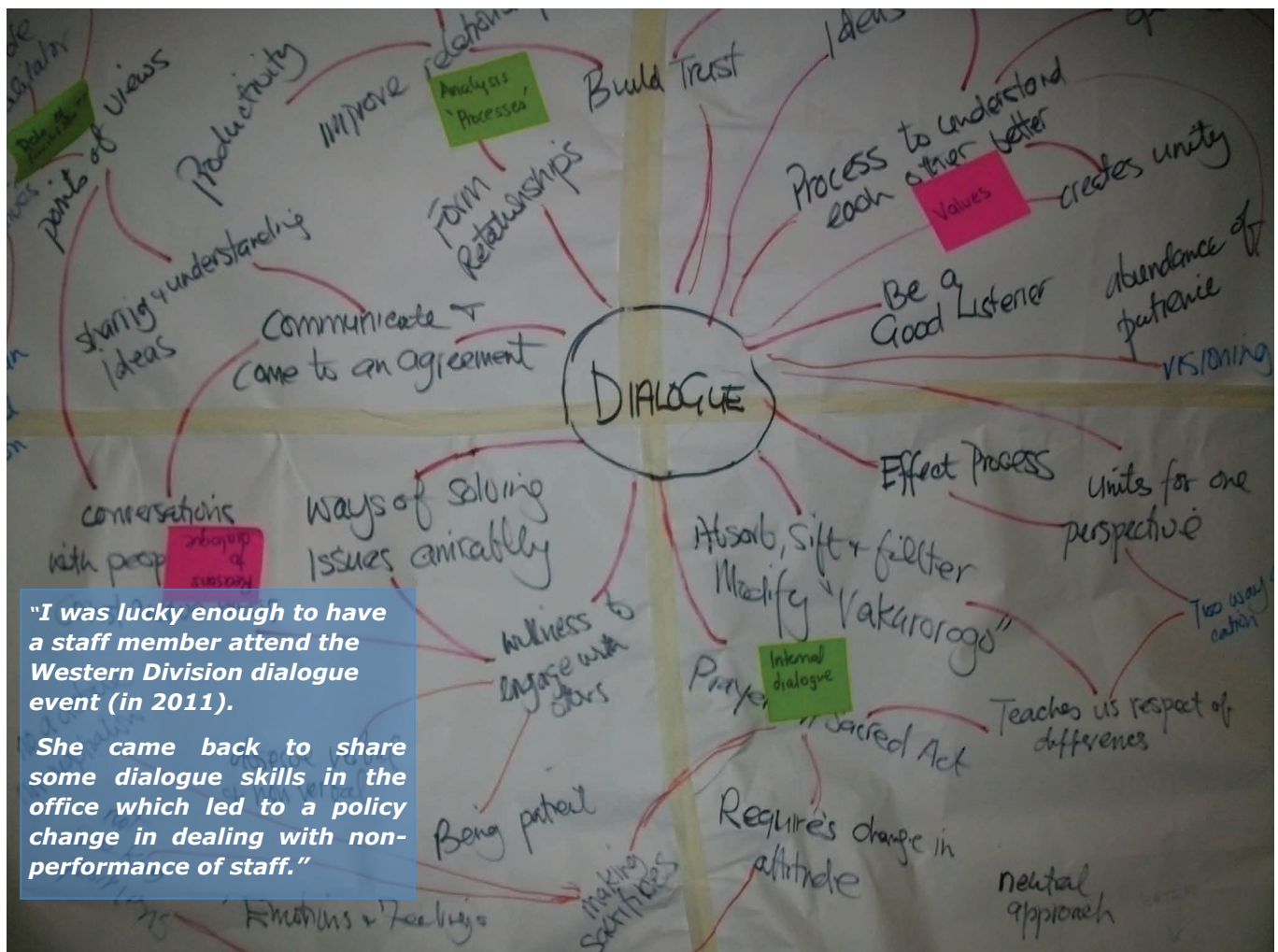
New DF Committee member , Mereoni Chung



Above: Mrs Siwatibau, facilitator, Paulo Baleinkorodawa and DF Coordinator, Sandra tally votes during the CA Right: CA participants during a group discussion session

SPREADING THE DIALOGUE INFLUENCE...

Below is an excerpt of a testimony of the impacts of a dialogue event organised by DF and documented from a follow-up meeting.



"I was lucky enough to have a staff member attend the Western Division dialogue event (in 2011).

She came back to share some dialogue skills in the office which led to a policy change in dealing with non-performance of staff."

Above: A chart mapping dialogue definitions offered by participants at a Dialogue event in 2010.

I was lucky enough to have a staff member attend the Western Division dialogue event (in 2011).

She came back to share some dialogue skills in the office which led to a policy change in dealing with non-performance of staff.

Basically whoever was not performing was sent home without a thought to his or her family welfare.

However since the staff member attended and returned to share the lessons learnt, I as the head of the organisation adopted a new method for responding to low performance and productivity of staff.

Staff mentoring and counselling was introduced as a way of gauging the root causes of non-performance as we wanted to develop a more strategic approach to encouraging productivity.

I was moved when a staff I had counselled wrote an emotional apology for his lack of effort and explained the reasons behind his non-performance. He promised to "pull up his socks" which I did not doubt at all.

Not only did staff relations and productivity improve but the organisation managed to collect 96 per cent of the revenue it forecasted for the year. Dialogue awareness made us realise that our approach to revenue or rates collection had been wrong.

We realised that we were only lessening our chances of collecting any revenue at all because we were being confrontational when we wrote to ratepayers demanding that they pay "or else".

Instead we shared our commitment to dialoguing with them and for our part explained why we needed rates to be paid on time and how it would impact on services provided back to them.

The most significant example of the impact of this change was a ratepayer who had moved to New Zealand and had owed us \$6000. After the change in our approach for notifications, he flew in and settled his arrears in full.

BITS AND PIECES

DF Forecasted Activities, Mini Announcements & Anything Interesting

1. Dialogue Fiji is now on Facebook.

- 'Like' us on Facebook to get regular updates on Dialogue Fiji activities as well as developments on relevant dialogue and peace building initiatives from around the world.

**2. Incoming program officer profile****George Nacewa**

- Formerly employed at: Interfaith Search Fiji
- Interests: Social work, volunteering, politics and healthy living.
- Vision for Fiji: A country where the mindset is like a child but matured. A child knows no boundaries when meeting other children of different ethnicities and religion. Furthermore a country where we see the good deeds and the humanity in each other which we have lost as man have strived for power.
- I hope to gain more experience in dialogue and with the opportunities given through scoping and divisional dialogues, can better understand the needs out our Fiji.

- In addition, I wish to use my facilitation and communication skills to better support Dialogue Fiji staff in dealing with all stakeholders.

3. Profiles of New Committee Members**Mereoni Chung:**

- Employee of the Citizen's Constitutional Forum as Project Support Officer
- Background in Human Resources, Training and Development
- USP graduate with a BA in Management Public Administration and Applied Psychology
- Member of Drodrolagi Movement, Youth Coalition Fiji, Fiji delegation to the 1st Pacific Youth Festival

Nemani Buresova

- Chairman of the Fiji Council of Social Services
- Currently president of FCOSS
- A Bishop of LDS church.
- Previous work experiences in the government service at senior executive level and with LDS church.
- A graduate of Canterbury University, NZ, with Bachelors of Agriculture Science and also of University of New England, NSW, Australia with Master of Economics and a graduate diploma in Agricultural Economics.

Community Posts

DF welcomes past participants, stakeholders and supporters input into **Momentum** and will use Community Posts section to feature comments and feedback.



Another excellent edition here. Thanks DF for your hard work in putting it together.

Keep it up.

Paulo Baleinakorodawa

Vinaka DF for the wonderful work and Congratulations !!!! Keep up the Good work

Have a Blessed Day

Kinisimere Itana Waqa



Vinaka vakalevu na i tukutuku...
Rupeni Silimaibau



Dialogue is so important if we are to own the process of building a better country.

Netani Rika

DIALOGUE LESSONS

The Dialogic Approach as described in the publication *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners* takes on practical importance when it comes to the effort for cultivating a broadly shared sense of ownership in the dialogue initiative and outcome. The following table suggests the logical steps through which one can move from principles to a set of guidelines for behaviour and in ensuring that people are involved, making them feel included and encouraging them to participate actively in the process.



***INCLUSIVENESS
AND LEARNING
ARE TWO OF THE
FOUR GOVERNING
PRINCIPLES OF THE
DIALOGIC
APPROACH***

The Dialogic Approach			
Governing Principles	Goals	Qualities	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusiveness • Joint Ownership • Learning • Humanity • Long Term Perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage all part of the system • Create the conditions for change on the basis of important issues • Foster learning: facilitate deeper understanding • Create the sense of safety required for openness • Foster commitment to achieving sustainable change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectfulness • Transparency • Openness • Empathy • Authenticity • Patience • Flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquire to learn • Share what you know • Listen emphatically • Reflect back what you're hearing • Explore underlying assumptions – yours and those of others • Acknowledge emotions as well as ideas and opinions • Adjust course to reflect new knowledge or understanding