

# Transcend JUSTPEACE TALANOA

Quarter 2 Newsletter October 2020

#### Transcend Oceania opens new office in Labasa

Transcend Oceania opened a new office in the North, located at 26 Ritova Street in Naodamu, Labasa. The organization has existed in the north from its beginning's with the presence of the Executive Director and her consistencies with being based in Labasa working from home; and having the office is a symbol of growth and progress for TO broadening a central space for its growing team members and communities sustainable engagements for easy access to TO services in a physical space. The board members, staff and trustee gathered to bless the new office space on 11th September, 2020.

The ceremony was a significant milestone for the development of the organization since its humble beginnings. During his convening speech, Father Frank Hoare stated that what makes Transcend Oceania work special, is that it seeks to find truth and healing in the midst of the structural messages given by the sources of influence and power in the country.

He further reiterated that Transcend Oceania's work expands to hear the call of ordinary people saying "come, we need you" and in congratulating the new board members and staff, Father Frank Hoare reminds the Transcend Oceania team to keep up the great work and at the same time for the front line workers and peacebuilders to take extra self-care.

The occasion, then proceed to the residence of the Executive Director where a traditional Fijian feast and I sevusevu was presented and shared with the guests. The memorable occasion and the success of having the office space were made possible with the kind support of Conciliation Resources EU and Fiji Women's Fund.



Father Frank Hoare (in white & green) with staff, board members and trustees of Transcend Oceania inside the new office space at 26 Ritova Street, Naodamu, Labasa.

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Mr. Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Director Programs)

#### **Editorial**

#### The COVID 19 Pandemic Crisis: Danger and Opportunity

Since the release of our first edition of JustPeace Talanoa in May 2020, the global crisis caused by the COVID 19 pandemic was at its peak with our first known positive case in Fiji recorded on 19 March. The official announcement sent shock waves and fear throughout the country. By then, thousands of lives were lost from the novel coronavirus mainly in countries in the northern hemisphere. The unprecedented rapid outbreak of the pandemic in addition to the unavailability of a cure and the merciless loss of lives created moments of widespread and extreme fear, hopelessness and helplessness. No one was prepared for the crisis caused by this infectious pandemic. The poor and the most vulnerable and marginalized were the most disproportionately affected. Some countries are currently experiencing a second and a third wave of the pandemic.

Because of the extreme danger the pandemic would pose for us, the Fiji government was quick to implement public health emergency measures including lockdowns, curfews and physical distancing, travel restrictions, and international border closures to prevent imported cases of the virus. To date, Fiji reportedly has 32 positive cases and two deaths recorded. COVID 19 has affected us as country in many ways. The most devastating are the socio-economic impacts. Thousands of workers in the tourism and aviation industries were denied their employments resulting from drastic decline in tourists due to boarder closures. It is estimated that 115, 000 workers have been affected by COVID-19. The loss of jobs caused unprecedented stress and uncertainty for countless families.

An old Chinese proverb says that the word "crisis" is composed of two characters; one representing danger and the other representing opportunity. COVID-19 was both a danger and an opportunity. As a crisis, it caused extreme chaos, fear, uncertainty about the future, hopelessness, helplessness, violence and the loss of more than 150,000 lives globally. Hidden amid these challenges and the pain are numerous opportunities for a brighter future. The coronavirus pandemic presented a window of opportunity for sustainability transitions into positive systematic change to tackle and end entrenched systematic failures, historic injustices and inequalities, violence, oppression, poverty and the exploitation of human lives and the environment.

Together, we can lean from the new realities we face, charting a new sustainable course towards a more just, peaceful, compassionate, stable, prosperous and healthy future for all. This is our chance to reflect on how we have lived our lives with each other and with mother Earth our common home. This is our chance to put things right and rebalance our relationships with each other especially the poor and the vulnerable and the earth that sustains us. This is our chance to move to a new normal rather than revert to our old ways that have failed us. This is the time to capitalize on this crucial opportunity for change!



Members of the TO Board, friends with TO Director cutting the cake to commemorate the International Day of Peace in Northpole Hotel in Labasa. From Left; Samuela Tuidravu; Adi Vasu Levu; Filimoni Vosarogo; Ro Miriama Cama; Dr. Haikiu Taukave; An-

The International Day of Peace was commemorated throughout the month of September, in collaboration with leaders of the three provinces and Transcend Oceania's implementation of the Trauma Informed, Preparedness, Resilience and Recovery Program (TIPR) in the Northern part of Fiji.

The event started in Cakaudrove during the TIPR program at the first week of September, participants who were community leaders took a moment in creativity and sharing of their peace messages on their banners, in solidarity with creative arts, poems, dances and dramas during the closing of the TIPR Program.

The event continued during the second week in Macuata province with leaders and participants of the TIPR program and on the other hand commemorated Peace Day with the presence of the TO Board members including the newest members (Mr Filimoni Vosarogo and Dr Haikiu Taukave).

Speaking at the Celebration in Labasa, TO's Board Chair Mrs. Julie Chang Tusulu stated that International Day of Peace is a day that calls us as a community to share love, compassion and kindness to others as peace-builders, a current challenge for us during the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby we have to work within our own bubbles.

"How then can we be peacemakers among so many restrictions?" she added. In TO's facilitation during the Trauma Informed Preparedness & Resilience training program in the past weeks, it been about listening and sharing and about being inclusive, most importantly "Leaving no one behind" in the work of shaping Justpeace together.

The event ended with a high note on 21<sup>st</sup> of September the actual IDP date together with the TO team we commemorated it with the leaders and participants of TIPR representatives from Bua Province. The IDP event was supported by GPPAC and in collaborative with the TIPR program, supported by the Fiji Women's Fund.

#### Trauma Informed Preparedness & Resilience

TO becomes Fiji Women's Fund recipient. In August 2020, Transcend Oceania received an Emergency funding from the Fiji Women's Fund through the Australian government to implement an Integrated Community Trauma Awareness and Healing program for the people of Kadavu and Vusuya, Tailevu who were badly affected by TC Harold. Transcend Oceania was able to implement this program in three districts on the island of Kadavu, namely Vabea, Nakasaleka and Yale which included leaders from eighteen villages, and one school.

The Integrated Community Trauma Awareness and Healing program helps communities to be trauma-informed and resilience-oriented.

It also help communities to understand and recognize trauma and ways to deal with the issue that will lead towards healing of self and others.

The program was deliberated to community leaders as a way of building their capacity, who will return to their communities to provide support and healing to those affected by disasters and violence.

When communities are trauma-informed, they are better prepared and more resilient to deal with disasters and violence in the future!

As a Waisomo Youth leader puts it, "these two days have helped opened my eyes and helped my role in learning new things to help young people in my community. I have learnt to remain calm during disasters and help those who face trauma during this time", said Veresi Loco.

Transcend Oceania was also one of the successful grantees for the type B grants that further supported the work of

Trauma Informed Preparedness and Resilience to be facilitated in the northern division during this year from August 202 to July 2021. The work aims at providing a platform and educational space to support women and community leaders in cyclone paths, and climate change effected communities to be trauma informed and are able to better prepared in times of disasters. With thanks to the support of the Fiji Women's Fund.



TO Director Adi Vasu Levu with Australian High Commissioner to Fiji Mr. John Feakes during the Fiji Women's Fund launch at the Holiday Inn in Suva, Fiji.

### The Aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Harold on Kadavu— Integrated Trauma Awareness & Healing Program

(Participant Testimonials)



I have a lot to take back to my community and to share with my family, the women and children of Waisomo village. As a Fijian saying goes "na kau se lailai ga se rawarawa ni loveci" — meaning children are easily taught when

young, but when they're old it will be hard to teach them. The women are the backbones of their families, so in sharing this information with them, they will be able to go and share it with their own family members. Not only do we have to share this information but also demonstrate it and live it out to our families and communities. "- Ana Maria (Waisomo Women's Club)



This program has really opened my eyes to view things from the perspective of the congregation. As a Pastor, a lot of time, when we teach and preach the word of God, that is the only perspective that we would tolerate but not knowing what the people are going through at an individual

level. We have discussed the benefits of attending this program with the Methodist Pastor and we've realized that it will help our role in listening to our people. This program has helped me understand the meaning of trauma and its psychological and emotional impact on people, which will help enhance my role in this community.—Joeli Turagavou, CMF Pastor Nakasaleka, Kadavu.



"The first day's session was an eye opener – we felt the release of negative emotions, and started fresh today on the second day of the program. It's a new beginning for us and a fresh direction to where we want to go" - Ratu Isireli Raqasia, Traditional Leader, Rakiraki Yale Kadavu



"It was the first time for me to go through this kind of training, where it covers all aspects of our holistic self, spiritually, emotionally, physically psychologically. Since I look after the younger classes from class 1-3 and I've witnessed the different personality traits in children, this program has helped me a lot, especially when I look after the vulnerable

classes. The session s has helped me find ways to deal with issues early before it develops into their later years in school." - Kalisita Titoko, School Teacher Nakasaleka District School, Kadavu



"My farms were badly destroyed during the cyclone and I was emotionally affected as I had plans for my farm. Now, when I went to my farm after the sessions, I felt free from all those traumatic emotions, and I told myself that this was a new beginning for me"-Ratu Taito Baniwai, Lawaki Village, Nakasaleka Kadavu.

## Bua Participant Testimonials



"Through this awareness raising, I was able to differentiate between physical, emotional and psychological trauma that has better equipped me as a women leader to go back and help my people." - Adi Ana Ramatai (Soqosoqo Vakamarama, Bua)



"As a District Rep, there are a lot of issues that we go through and this awareness program has really helped me in terms of my own self awareness and has also given me the coping mechanisms to take back to my people" - Ovini Baleinamau—District Rep, Lekutu,



"When we go back to our District, we will concentrate on disseminating the information that we've learnt from this awareness program to the four villages on mainlad including Vuya, Wairiki, Navave and Nabouwalu. I am grateful to have been selected to be part of this training, it has helped me cope with the traumatic events that have we've gone through in the village such as the recent increase in the number of deaths in the village, therefore this program has helped in the past three days" -Unaisi Maria, Vuya Women's Club

#### Trauma Informed Preparedness, Resilience &

#### **Recovery Program for Northerners**

The Trauma Informed Preparedness and Resilience training in the North enabled community leaders to become trauma informed and resilience oriented.

Men, Women, Youth and organizational leaders were included in the program as it was able to teach leaders the skills to become aware of the situation and the ability to recognize the symptoms of trauma, identify ways to deal with it and provide support towards healing to those affected in their own communities.

Most of the people reported that this was their first encounter to hear the word "Trauma". Other say that even though they had been living with it for many years, they have never realized that it was trauma.

Conversation during the three days was very emotional and brought forth many personal stories, which indicated that participants have understood what trauma is and allowing them to heal during the process.

One of the Macuata young women even said, "Before I only had shallow understanding of the word Trauma, now I understand it better".

During the review session, facilitators could recognize that the information was well received with participants having a better understanding of trauma.

More personal stories were told, and the understanding accumulated. Some even identified members of their community who were going through trauma and reaffirmed their assistance as leaders after the program.

One of the young men from Macuata (who chose to be anonymous) stated that he was once labeled as a "person with mental illness". He always isolated himself after his wife and kid left him.

He said, "I usually isolate myself from others in the same household, and I usually write down whatever comes to my mind".

Most of the participants had experienced trauma as a result of personal experiences including Domestic Violence.

At the end of the process, emotions were high, and the level of knowledge about trauma increased and Transcend Oceania is grateful to the support of Fiji Women's Fund in making this process possible.



Participants of the Trauma Informed Preparedness, Resilience and Recovery Program in Cakaudrove Province. Pictured here with their International Day of Peace Banner as part of the 2020 celebration.

#### Oceanía Men & Boys Engage Baselíne & Research Activitíes

#### August—September 2020

The Oceania Men & Boys Engage is a three– year project that seeks to contribute to Gender Justice and Equality. The baseline objective was to explore the existing realities of violence against women, girls and other vulnerable members of the community in Fiji & the region. The research, however seeks to identify root causes, drivers and impacts of male violence in the Pacific.

In this issue, we acknowledge the villages, communities and rugby teams in Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata provinces, who participated in the Focus Group discussions and questionnaires. Below are a few of the pictures;



Nagigi Youths in the District of Nasavusavu, Cakaudrove after discussing issues of violence against women, girls and other vulnerable communities.



TO's Community Facilitator initiating a focus group discussion at the Naleba Multi racial community in Labasa.



Members of the Cakaudrove Rugby team who participated in the Focus Group discussions as part of the OMBE Baseline



The hardworking women at the Nabouwalu Market in Bua who took time to discuss critical issues relating to violence against women, girls and other vulnerable groups in their own communities.

#### JustPeace Talanoa Bure @COVID19

#### A thírteen epísode productíon by Transcend Oceanía and Fíjí Televísíon Límíted (July-October 2020)

Supported by a number of regional and international development partners, the JustPeace Talanoa Bure @COVID19 was a series of episodes presenting stories, experiences and opportunities about peacebuilding initiatives and community engagements from local community leaders, women, men, and youths. It was an initiative by Transcend Oceania, as a Peacebuilding organization could not turn its back on the rising conflicts, violence, and trauma during the time of COVID 19. That was the challenge during the shutdown, working through the fragilities of climate conflict, threads of diversity of cultures, genders, relationships, traditional norms. Adapting to the change, creating innovating Talanoa space was important to provide a safe space during the COVID19 Lockdown.



The initial conversation between Fiji TV Production Team and Transcend Oceania



Participants from the North and Western division in Nadi with Transcend Oceania staff and Fiji TV crew



Participants from the Central division with Transcend Oceania staff at the Fiji TV studio



Adi Vasu Levu in conversation with Gus Pichard at the Fiji TV studio in Suva



Fiji TV production crew busy at work during one of the episode shoot



Participants from the North with Transcend Oceania staff during the Nadi shooting.

#### JustPeace Talanoa Bure @COVID19 TV Episode Participant Reflections

"In representing the women and youth in my province, the JustPeace Talanoa has provided an opportune platform to share our views and to be able to share knowledge and ideas", says Selita Donu, Director of Hakwa Foundation, a newly established Non government Organisation in the province of Nadroga, Navosa.

Hakwa Foudation currently works in the 22 districts of Nadroga Navosa and 121 villages, promoting women and youth participation.



Dírector of the Hakwa Foundatíon, Ms. Selíta Donu (ríght), handíng over stationeríes to a recípient at Yako Village ín Nadroga.



"I am grateful to Transcend Oceania for the opportunity to be part of the JustPeace Talanoa, to share our experiences in the community in which we serve, at the same time learn from other participants," says Meresiana Sinu, a Womens' leader from the District of Sagani in Cakaudrove.

#### Inconsistent Clean Water for Naweni Village, Cakaudrove (A case study)

As a result of Transcend Oceania's PDA (Participative Democracy and Accountability) EU funded project, and community leaders conflict analysis, lobbying and solution oriented approach, shares a case study of a long standing issue of priority from Naweni village.

Naweni a coastal village in the province of Cakaudrove, has been suffering from inconsistent clean water for about 20 years due a dysfunctional water system that was built many years ago and only spills out dirty water.

This problem was aggravated when Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Naweni and the nearby villages in 2017. In the recent years, the people of Naweni have depended entirely on rain water harvesting and inconsistent water delivery from Savusavu Town Council about an hour away.

During prolonged droughts, the people have no choice but to use muddy tap water from the pipes or sea water for their household use.

The women are the most affected and challenged as they need safe water for their daily household chores. Complaints raised by women to men in the village meetings have continuously fallen on deaf ears.

Women experience a lot of violence from men in the homes because food preparation is late due to clean water shortage.

A group of women from Naweni village have been participating in the Participative Democracy and Accountability Action program with Transcend Oceania since 2018.

The program has strengthened their peacebuilding skills in analysis, advocacy, lobbying, negotiation, mediation and dialogue.

With their new acquired knowledge, skill sets and confidence, they were able to convince the chief, men and youth in the village in 2019 to immediately act on the issue of safe water. They did an analysis of the problem which they presented in the presence of the Chief and men during a village meeting.

With their improved communication skills, they were able to help the men understand the daily problems they go through including violence due to lack of safe water.

The young men were then assigned to assist the women. Together with the women, they worked to clean the water source and the pipes that channeled water to the village.







These photos depict the current struggle of these women in Naweni with clean water as a basic necessity.

#### Transcend Oceania, the Secretariat of GPPAC Pacific

Transcend Oceania's Executive Director, Adi Vasu Levu in her capacity as the GPPAC's Regional Liaising Officer attended the multi-stakeholder forum the inclusive peace-development and humanitarian nexus review, in collaboration with Shifting the Power Coalition, in June this year.

"Since 2015, the GPPAC network still think about peacebuilding as a post-conflict undertaking; but the sustaining peace agenda tells us that we need to look at drivers of conflict more comprehensively and across the peace continuum, and build on a more preventative and collaborative approach by engaging more collaboratively with regional peacebuilding networks" said Adi Vasu.

The commitment to sustaining peace requires attention to climate change as one of the drivers of fragility and crisis, as we see it in the Pacific.

Next, advancing the Sustaining Peace Agenda in the Pacific requires leveraging a cross-cutting transformative nature of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

"We in the Pacific know that climate change cannot be effectively addressed without 7) engaging women at decision making table; 2) advancing transformation towards human and non-militarized security; 3) engaging men to promote women's rights," she added.

- 1) Women's experiences bring attention to the factors that drive conflict in the context of climate change. In times of climate change induced national and local natural disasters, women and girls are more prone to increased cases of sexual violence in the context of displacement, due to the loss of their homes or traditional protection mechanisms. This drives violence in communities, and contributes to human security and most of all women are the most affected.
- 2) Engaging with women peacebuilders in addressing climate change helps to transform responses away from securitized approaches towards a human security approach that would empower communities and make everyone a stakeholder in peacebuilding. Our work in the Pacific is certainly a demonstration of the potential that engagement with women peacebuilders, with innovative approaches with indigenous knowledge creativity skills and expertise can bring about sustainable peace.

"Just recently, TC Harold was a clear reminder that we need to think seriously about doing things differently: shifting the power in disaster management and humanitarian systems to integrate diverse local women's knowledge and local innovation" said Adi Vasu.

We have examples of where the inclusive peace-development-humanitarian nexus works: Engagements between local women peacebuilders and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) led to the adoption by Pacific Forum Leaders of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

It further led to the collaboration with the UN system and the PIF via a series of consultative processes that resulted in the adoption of the regional Human Security Framework, a Conflict Prevention Framework and Security Sector Governance Framework.



Adi Vasu Levu makes a point at one of the GPPAC network meeting.



During one of the GPPAC Network meeting at the PCC Conference room in Suva.

### Transcend Oceania, the Secretariat of GPPAC Pacific (cont'd)

Through regional security consultative processes, women local peacebuilders lobbied strongly for the broadening of the definition of security to include human security, humanitarian assistance, environmental security, and regional cooperation in the 2018 Boe Declaration.

This is just one example where engagement of local women peacebuilders does not only bring attention to the situation of women and helps address women-specific issues; but rather transforms the notion of security and peace in a way that everyone can benefit from.

Now, we need to leverage the transformative capacity of the Boe Declaration to address the 6 priority areas identified by local peacebuilders:

- 1 Climate Change
- 2 Humanitarian Assistance
- 3 Resource Security
- **4 Transnational Security**
- 5 Cybercrime and Cybersecurity and
- 6. Enabling environment for implementation

"The COVID-19 pandemic offers another opportunity to drive a new response in line with the Boe Declaration: Through the Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster, local women peacebuilders and traditional leaders have developed a rapid human security assessment to determine the key risks, including economic, health and food security. This expertise should further be supported through decision-making" Adi Vasu said.

We were grateful to be invited to the recent Pacific Islands Forum Virtual CSO Forum, where we worked to integrate peacebuilding and conflict prevention into the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway. However, the progress should include all stakeholders; processes cannot be separate.

"My hope is that today we would be able to better unpack these and many other examples of the work being done in the region to advance the nexus through an inclusive and transformative approach to identify how the United Nations system could better support and contribute to strengthening the <u>joint</u> implementation of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region, stated Adi Vasu Levy

### Strengthening the Role of Civil Society Climate Change and JustPeace Communities in Fiji

### (Project funded by EU and supported by the MFAT with CR as the lead partner)

In line with the Global Objective on Climate Change, the project action focuses on building the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Fiji, as governance and development actors, particularly in the climate change and peacebuilding sectors. In this project action Transcend Oceania in partnership with Conciliation Resources, engages with communities who are at risk from negotiating, or impacted by climate change-related relocation to build a climate-resilient society through community-centered work.

The community engagements arm of the project is translated through a the banner of "Building Justpeace Communities in Changing Environment and Climate" hereon with part of this years activities TO engages with Naviavia and Vunidogoloa. The project aims at enabling a platform for meaningful dialogue and community empowerment processes that will contribute to change by building the capacities of communities to develop the tools, skills and strategies needed to mitigate and manage climate change related conflict.

In Fiji, communities are already facing displacement and relocation as a result of climate change, and in this engagements community leaders reveals areas of needs that communities advocated, for example the lack of tools and skills needed for sustainable adaptation and resilience of communities through peacebuilding and conflict analysis skills.

COVID 19 impacted the implementation and the progress of the project as it arrived at the first quarter of this year. Storytelling dialogue and face to face meetings were restricted and delayed. To intervene and ensure a non violent health free approach in building dialogue spaces, Transcend Oceania engaged with the Fiji TV towards the production of community-led storytelling that enabled an opportunity for leaders to dialogue and keep priorities visible, As a result in total there were thirteen episodes produced that were viewed for 13 weeks featuring community leaders, women, youths, persons with disabilities and diverse groups participation in a thirty minutes episodes called the "Justpeace Talanoa Bure @ COVID 19"

The Justpeace Talanoa Bure COVID 19 can be found by the same name on Facebook and also on Transcend Oceania You tube channel.

# Staff Capacity Development vital for TO's long term sustainability

On July 10th 2020, Transcend Oceania conducted its organization capacity building human resourcing and development at the Raddison Resort in Nadi.

This is an important arm of growth and sustainability of the organization with consistencies in providing peacebuilding educational processes within, enhancing team building engagements and staff resourcing capacity building and development.

As peacebuilding facilitators at the forefront, sharing lessons learned and processes to better understand the different types of conflicts and the various components of conflicts and appropriate approaches to peacebuilding is vital for TO.

In understanding these concepts, it is important to note how to manage conflicts in ways that detest violence and encourage constructive peaceful approaches that leads to non-violence and positive behavioral changes.

TO prioritizes its team engagements and bonding that embraces in better equipping itself, staffs and volunteers with Peacebuilding skills and approaches that seeks to prevent, reduce and transform violent conflicts and emphasis on peacebuilding efforts.

"The session enabled me to understand the peace building concept, analyzing root causes of conflict and ways to address it, said Justine Maravu, TO's Project Officer.

In Solidarity with CR supported by MFAT.



Transcend Oceania Staff—From Left; Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Director Programs); Lanieta Matanatabu (Research/ Communications Officer); Loraiwaqa Tupou (Community Facilitator); Adi Vasu Levu (Executive Director); Justine Maravu (Project Officer); Leba Vakalalavanua (Finance Manager)



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#### Staff Profile

Meet Ms. Tara Tabetí who is TO's Administration and Logistics Officer. Tara has been one of the pioneers at Transcend Oceania and it has been one of her passion to work with communities in understanding issues and addressing them. Tara's work has been the backbone of the Program logistical activities.















