

International Year of the Family: Families in Tomorrow's Development Agenda

Question: Are families in Pacific Societies prepared for tomorrow's development agenda, socially and economically?

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A View from Social and Community Work Education

The following excerpts about and from young people begin to give us an indication on how young people view relationships in a family.

- The outgoing British High Commissioner to Samoa says more work needs to be done to change attitudes towards domestic violence. Vicki Treadell says she was shocked to hear statistics from UNs research that 50 per cent of teenage boys and 58 per cent of adolescent girls in Samoa thought domestic violence was normal. <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=266413> 23 April 2014
- "I did not know I was breaking the law." Participant feedback Youth Justice Forum – Vanuatu on the Issue of Domestic Violence. Personal Communication: Donna Evans, Legal Literacy Programme Coordinator, School of Law, Emalus Campus, The University of the South Pacific, 10 May 2014

This excerpt from the *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji 2013* provides social workers with guidelines about discrimination with regards to aspects of the family:

"...(3) A person must not be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly on the grounds of his or her— (a) actual or supposed personal characteristics or circumstances, including race, culture, ethnic or social origin, colour, place of origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, birth, primary language, economic or social or health status, disability, age, religion, conscience, marital status or pregnancy;" *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji*, Chapter 2 – Bill of Rights, Section 26.

As we can see the views of young people about domestic violence and the Bill of Rights with regard to Discrimination contained in the Fiji Constitution are at variance.

There is a disconnect between young peoples' views and the 'Law' on the 'families preparedness for tomorrow's development agenda'.

Question: How then can Social and Community Workers work with families so that they are prepared for the future?

Tools of Analysis for Social and Community Work Intervention

Issues of Power:

- The Politics of the Family – R.D. Laing
- Families are diverse and complex
- Families are resilient
- Families adapt and change

Contextualisation:

- Families must be contextually located
- Impact of social and economic policy on individuals, families and living groups, communities
- Aim - social and ecological justice

World Views:

- Corporate Globalisation – families as consumers
- Human Sustainable Development – families invited to participate in social and economic programmes and projects
- Social Transformation and Indigenous Movements – families have ownership of development

Approaches to Working with Families:

- Top down and community orientated – Government and Private Sector, Some NGOs
- Bottom – up and community strength - based development – NGOs and CSO and communities themselves

Question: Are families in Pacific Societies prepared for tomorrow's development agenda, socially and economically? Provide analytical tools and work with families (not 'for' families) to strengthen and empower them.