



Taking training to the people

The Government of Fiji became a member of the APO on 1 January 1984 to take advantage of the large pool of knowledge on productivity that had developed within member countries to assist in socioeconomic development of other members through mutual cooperation. Currently, Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity Filipe Bole oversees the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF), with the ministry's Permanent Secretary Taito Waqa acting as NPO Head and APO Director for Fiji. A Productivity Charter for the country was developed in August 1995 and approved by the Cabinet. This policy document for the government was developed by a roundtable conference of social partners representing government, employers, and employees with high-level APO-sponsored consultants in attendance as facilitators.

The TPAF's mission is to "work in the national interest, develop human capital, facilitate productivity improvement, and assist organizations to raise their performance." The offices are housed in pastel green buildings located in a quiet environment approximately eight kilometers outside the city of Suva, surrounded by beautiful natural greenery. The TPAF staff number approximately 200.

Fiji has benefited the most from APO membership in terms of human resources development. Numerous Fijians representing government and the private sector have attended APO projects. One advantage of the TPAF is its qualified people specializing in diverse areas, with a wealth of experience and excellent teamwork. The national levy and grant system,

proactive branding, and ISO9000 certification have given the TPAF a competitive advantage in terms of access to resources. The courses offered by Fiji's NPO are nationally and internationally recognized.

Flexibility in developing training allows it to target different markets throughout the country. The unofficial TPAF motto is "we take training to the people." At present, courses are mainly focused on industry, and there is thus an opportunity to develop more agriculture-oriented training projects, noted NPO Head Waqa.

A regular TPAF task is the publication of an annual *Training Handbook*. The handbooks outline the training programs offered and serve as tools to market the TPAF to potential clients. The *Training Handbook* is sent to all employers in the country, and the feedback received has been positive.


Looking to the future, NPO Head Waqa said that the goal was to "enhance capacity building and improve our service delivery. The main focus is our vision and mission and to live our values, i.e., customers first, information sharing and communication, integrity, teamwork, innovation, and empowerment." 



Photo courtesy of TPAF