



FIJI TEACHERS UNION

(THE CHILD OUR HOPE)

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Affiliated to EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL, FTUC, Fiji Teachers Confederation & COPE

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FIJI TEACHERS UNION

PRESS RELEASE

NEW RECRUITS EXPLOITED BY EDUCATION MINISTRY

In the 2015 budget announcement, the Finance Minister had said that 348 new teachers would be taken in 2015, 142 additional primary teachers and 206 new secondary teachers.

The Minister for Education has appointed some 653 teachers into the system without any increase in the budgetary allocation.

That is why they have all been placed in the ED9A Grade with salary of \$12,360.00. His rhetoric is that the teachers would be placed on ED8A in the second year upon satisfactory reports on performance!!!

In the third year the Graduates [Degree Holders] would be placed on ED 8G.

Last year, 2014, the Ministry of Education organized a Workshop at Holiday Inn, involving the entire Teacher Training Institutions and other stakeholders in Education.

Each of the Institutions clearly stipulated its course content for the teacher training programme. Each emphasised the fact that upon graduation, each teacher was competent to enter the classroom and teach. This is also recognised by the Teacher registration Authority and thus the issuance of "registration to teach."

The Honourable Minister is castigating the teacher training institutions in Fiji. He is saying that FNU is incompetent in its teacher training programme. For the record, he was the senior Dean of FNU and now the Chairman of FNU Council.

All teacher training institutions have "School Experience" and "Practicum" components for the students graduating as teachers.

All correspondence to the General Secretary Fiji Teachers Union, Please.

Branches: Suva, Nasinu, Rewa, Tailevu, Ra, Tavua, Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Sigatoka, Navua, Labasa, Bua, Taveuni, Savusavu, Levuka.

At Corpus Christi Teachers College, the school experience component is a developmental sequence of three modules. These modules apply skills, techniques and processes learned in various courses taught at the College. In these modules students will have the opportunity to work in different class levels under guidance of experienced teachers, called the Associate Teachers.

At Fulton College, their programme consists of Curriculum Studies [11-12 Modules], education studies [9 modules] Religious / Philosophical Studies [4-5 Modules and Complementary Studies [1-2 modules]. They also have to go through practicum. They are assessed through 7 assignments requiring the application of theory to practice. The education studies capture classroom management, questioning techniques etc. Lecturers go and assess their actual teaching and classroom management.

The University of the South Pacific has 8 education units in their teacher training programme. ED 300 is school practicum, where students teach under an associate teacher for six months and are assessed by the lecturers and the associate teachers.

The Fiji National University, apart from the most recent and effective teaching methodologies, also has an extensive supervised professional teaching practice, for 6 months.

Looking at the above, the Minister For Education's statement that teachers are placed at the lowest salary level [ED9A] because they are not competent or that their performance need to be assessed, is most illogical and shameful.

These teachers are all competent to handle a class of their own. They are fully trained teachers. To put them on \$12,360.00 p/a salary is exploitation at the highest level. The Bainimarama government had promised that the government would be fair to everyone. Where is the fairness here!!! The Education Ministry should be a Ministry setting examples. What example is the Minister setting here?

The Minister needs to read ILO/UNESCO recommendation on the Status of Teachers 1966.

Hon. Reddy is calling for excellence from teachers and yet he is de-professionalising the teaching profession. He is bringing double standards within the teaching profession. Same qualifications but two sets of pay!!!

This system is taking us back to 1970s when we had Grant –in-Aid [GIA] teachers, Licensed Teachers and Civil Servants.

Dr. Reddy has unilaterally decided to employ teachers based on GPA [Quality Teachers], and yet is paying them a salary that is meant for unqualified teachers!!! What has happened to Public Service Commission's Values on equal employment opportunities, equal pay for equal work?

Teachers, who have visited our office to seek assistance from the Credit Union so that they can go to the Islands to teach, have shed tears, knowing how they are being exploited by the Education Ministry.

Please note that it is not merely Phd's that produce results in schools, it is the teacher morale.

I call upon the Prime Minister, to look at the plea of these teachers and direct the Education Ministry to pay these teachers their rightful salary.

The Honourable Prime Minister must direct his Education Minister to please consult the stake holders as he is most inexperienced to make long term decisions alone.

It is worth noting that the starting salary of all newly trained teachers in 2014 was \$16,610.00 [ED8A Step 14], \$18,056.00 [ED8A Step 12] and \$23,411.00 [ED8G] for Certificate, Diploma and Degree holders respectively.

This is what the 2015 recruits should be paid.



Agni Deo Singh

GENERAL SECRETARY

4TH February 2015