



DIPLOMACY TRAINING PROGRAM

AFFILIATED WITH THE FACULTY OF LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

A training program for peoples of the Asia-Pacific region

DTP Alumni Profiles

DTP Alumnus: Mosmi Bhim

Role: PhD at the University of New England on Authoritarian Regimes in Small Island States

Active in Country: Australia/Fiji

DTP Program: Annual Human Rights and Peoples' Diplomacy Training Program 2008



Mosmi was working with Fijian NGO and DTP Partner, Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF) when she did the DTP course in 2008. Mosmi is currently completing a PhD at the University of New England on authoritarian regimes in small island states, focused on Fiji, Maldives and the Seychelles. Mosmi is particularly interested in electoral authoritarianism and judicial institutions. Electoral authoritarianism characterises regimes that present an illusion of multi-party democracy at the local and national levels while effectively stripping elections of efficacy. Mosmi has conducted interviews and research spent in Fiji, Maldives and Seychelles. Mosmi visited Seychelles in 2016 to witness its first National Assembly election and believes the Seychelles is institutionally evolving into a flourishing democracy, contributing to progression of human rights more generally.

Mosmi found the 2008 DTP program extremely thought-provoking and valuable, as it informed her of the multi-faceted progression of human rights history. Mosmi asserts that, 'governments should allow people of different cultures to be able to live happily in harmony, to encourage human rights.'

Mosmi worked in communications and advocacy in Fiji to promote human rights – and went on to teach at Fiji National University on governance and ethics and cites DTP's program as a helpful educational resource. Mosmi emphasises the importance of freedom of the press, to promote constitutional rule and prevent conditions for coups. Mosmi's keen interest in governance and human rights, has evolved from the many outbreaks of democratic instability in Fiji. During Fijian coup periods, decrees curtailed human rights, significantly reducing peoples' quality of life in the country. Any news media critical of the government was censored, the Fijian government also heavily utilised propaganda, particularly in 2009, after the removal of constitution, which has now been restored.

Reflecting on the DTP Program, Mosmi was particularly interested to learn about the development and ever-evolving role of the United Nations. Mosmi valued the diversity of her peer group and notes that her international group members were able to educate each other of the specialised and regional human rights conflicts that they were facing. Mosmi encourages future programs to elaborate more on democratic electoral processes, as she emphasises the value of fair elections to human rights.

Mosmi would like to see greater active citizenry, by all citizens having and applying a right to vote. She emphasises that the process of free and fair elections resulting in better democracy, is fundamental to the promotion and continuation of human rights. Mosmi warns that if citizens do not access their participatory rights, then elections cannot be free and objective. She is keen for her research to improve protections against dictatorial violations of political rights, when citizens cannot challenge or critically report elections.

Profile written August 2018