



To all members of Fiji National University

FNU community message 02nd December 2021

Bula Vinaka, Namaste and greetings to all members of the FNU family.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and observing the public health advice and restrictions which are there to protect us, our communities and our loved ones.

Last Friday, 26th November, the Fiji National University held two important events. The first was the graduation ceremony of 60 women in the Rural Womens' Entrepreneurship Training Programme, at Nairukuruku village, within the Tikina of Matailobau, in Naitasiri. It is possible through a training grant by the iTTFB to the College of Humanities and Education (CHE) that will take the training to all the 14 provinces in Fiji including Rotuma over a few years. An MOU was signed earlier to seal the relationship.

We were privileged to have the Prime Minister of Fiji, Minister of iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Forests, the Honourable Rear Admiral (Retired) Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama as chief guest. He was also accompanied by the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts Honourable Premila Kumar.

Launched in March this year, the training programme, a pilot partnership project, a first of its kind between FNU and iTaukei Trust Fund Board (TTFB) is a partnership between an established academic institution and a corporate investment company. FNU through its College of Humanities and Education (CHE) provided experienced training facilitators for the theory and practical courses towards the project, whilst TTFB provided the project funding.

The training was initially earmarked to run for 10 weeks but the COVID-19 lockdowns brought challenges, so it was extended by a few weeks to complete. However, this did not deter the spirit and drive of the women participants as they continued their training online. Relying on virtual technology and peer training, the ladies continued to thrive in their weekly online learnings.

The four areas in which training was provided included screen-printing, tailoring and dressmaking, hairstyling & hairdressing and jewellery making. The project's fundamental objective was to broaden income-generating opportunities, in particular for rural-based women and youths. It is hoped that this will help in the improvement of the livelihoods of rural and semi-rural communities.

While officiating at the event, Honourable Bainimarama said the rural women entrepreneurship is an important part of the empowerment of women.

"This Rural Women Entrepreneurship Training programme is an important part of that empowerment, particularly because Government is committed to reducing the inequalities between rural residents and urban residents," said Prime Minister Bainimarama.

The Prime Minister also highlighted that FNU is now showing real dynamism and foresight by building both its academic and vocational programmes.

"This demonstrates the kind of thinking and actions that brand the FNU as an institution that truly serves society."

Sixty women from the six villages within Tikina Matailobau, in the province of Naitasiri, namely Nairukuruku, Navuniyasi, Taulevu, Delaitaga, Nabena and Matailobau graduated in the ceremony.

The second important event was the launch of the TVET Pasifika brand in the western division. Held at our Namaka campus, Nadi, this event was well attended by our industry partners and generated good discussions around strengthening collaborations and regular dialogue.

The continued support from the Fijian Government and relevant education partners is commendable as we work together to provide quality learning and teaching to all our students. As a key educational partner, we need to listen and embrace suggestions to make our learning and teaching current and offer what is demanded by the job market.

At FNU, our primary focus is on education for employability, providing our students with the skills, experience and competencies to enjoy fulfilling careers. We are committed to ensuring that our students are highly employable and 'work ready' the day after graduation.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone to not let their guard down as we have seen last week the announcement of the new Omicron variant of COVID-19. So keep washing your hands regularly with soap and water, wear face-covering when going out, keep your 2-metre distance and use alcohol-based sanitiser when wiping your hands.

Have a productive week and keep safe.

Thank you.

Dr William May
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Fiji National University

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