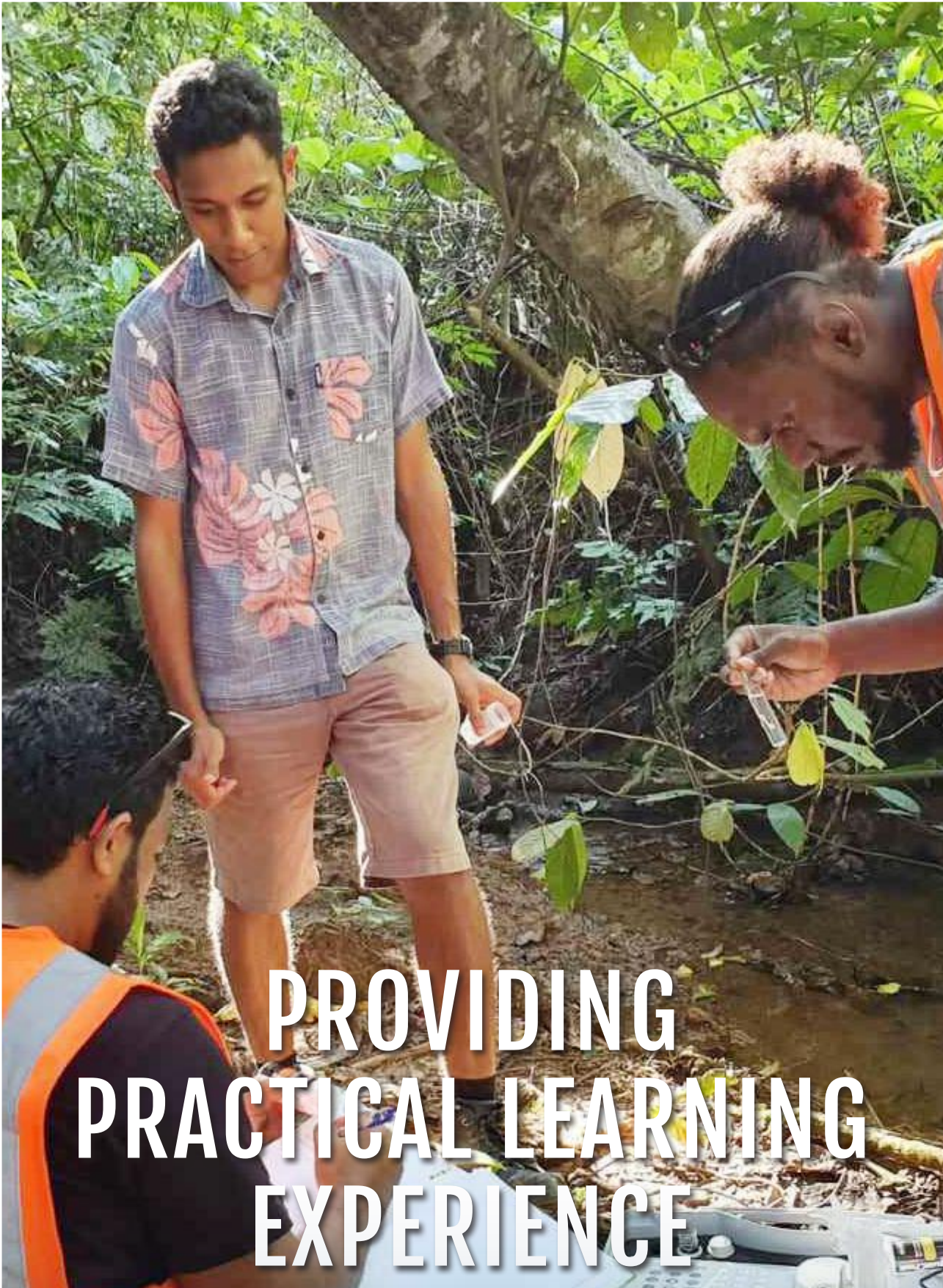




FIJI NATIONAL
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FNUUNIKUA



PROVIDING PRACTICAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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FNU ASSISTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF FIRST
KINDERGARTEN FACILITY IN WAIRIKI

PATHWAY TO THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
THROUGH FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES

FNU students assist in the production of international shows



Nickheel Singh, during the production of Pacific Island Food Revolution.

As media continues to dominate and influence our daily lives, the interest in film and television production studies continue to gain strong popularity around the globe. The studies provide students with an opportunity to learn about the wider filmmaking process, acquiring the essential practical skills and mastering the ever-evolving equipment and computer technologies that are central to this profession.

The Fiji National University (FNU) takes pride in being the only University in the country to offer Film and Television Production programme through its College of Humanities and Education (CHE).

Film and Television (FTV) Programme Coordinator, Arun Chakravorty said the progressive nature of this programme requires students to follow a stair-casing program from basics of FTV to secondary FTV through a final project phase.

“The aim of this progression is to enable students to learn the full range of specialisations incorporated in film and television production, so as to enable career-ready technicians as they enter into Film and TV careers,” said Chakravorty.

“Graduates of this programme are equipped with necessary skills and knowledge into the following areas of film, television and documentary production – directing, editing, cinematography, research, sound design, location sound, screenwriting, VFX, production design and producing,” he added.

In addition to developing these skills, students constantly receive valuable exposure by being attached to high-profile international production companies which further enhances creativity, production and analytical skills which are essential in the rapidly evolving world of film and television.

For the past seven months, eight students who are currently enrolled in Certificate IV in Film and Television Production have been involved in the production work for eight international television reality shows undertaken by six different production companies. The reality shows include Australian Survivor, French Survivor, Love Island Australia and Eco-Challenge Race.

The Love Island

The Production Manager of the Love Island, Sharon Morrisette said the production team from ITV-USA at CBS (USA) was extremely delighted to be able to give the students an opportunity to experience the team’s production environment.

Morrisette said the attachment enabled students to witness their team’s operations with the crew and how they accomplished their goals.

She highlighted that it was encouraging to note the positivity and focus of the students that worked with the team.

“When you are in school, you do not really know what the professional environment is so what we can provide to these students is the reality of being on the ground,” said the Production Manager.

“The students have this beginning knowledge from school but when they become interns with production teams, they get to see a wider context of film and television production, they get to experience a larger technical aspect and how it becomes quite similar but also considerably more complicated in terms of what you may actually be doing – that is getting to firsthand feel the realities of being in a professional environment.”

According to Morrisette, the Love Island television series production had a crew of about 175 who worked 12-hour shifts each day.

“We work 24-hours a day. Therefore, this show helped the students to really see what having a lot on the line is about, which ensures delivering broadcast-quality full body of a show. It is an unusual kind of operation that we have and I am glad that the students got to be part of this.”

Morrisette said while Australia and the United Kingdom had already produced similar shows, this was the first time for such a show to be produced for the audience of the United States of America.

“What we have is the context of young people in their 20s and they are at that point in their life where they are sort of enjoying their life by meeting other people. This show is kind of about socialising between these youths.”

“A large villa was completely configured for the shooting where the team observed the youths for a 24-hour period and from that, we followed the story of what’s going on. We were basically looking for the realness of what they are doing and then we determined how stories will develop from there.”

Morrisette highlighted that the production team had a very good experience here in Fiji and they appreciated the level of exposure to the locals with regards to their production.

“The labour skills have been completely impressed and we hope that Fiji continues to have that sort of growth because that makes it easier as a production team to come to a location where you get people who are familiar with the business,” Morrisette added.

Singh’s experiences with the production teams

A Certificate IV in Television and Film Production student, Nickheel Singh, (*pictured*) who has turned his hobby into a

prospective career, said he was pleased to be part of something he truly desired.

“My biggest achievement was the opportunity to work for a premier production company – Pacific Productions. I worked with the team for a week,” said Singh.

“I have played the role of a camera assistant in the majority of the internships I got to work on. As a camera assistant, I had to ensure the cameraman is well facilitated. My responsibilities were to keep the batteries for camera equipment charged and ensure to have a fresh card for recording,” he elaborated.

Singh described this internship opportunity as a chance to gauge his knowledge while identifying the areas of improvement in his technical skills.

“Working with these teams was even more exciting and comfortable because I got to work with friendly crew members, who were always ready to answer even the senseless question with a smile that we end up asking sometimes,” said Singh.

The 23-year-old has also had the opportunity to be attached with Endemol Shine Group, which creates world-class content that entertains millions of people around the world. It is the world’s largest independent producer, operating on a unique local and global axis with 120 production labels across 22 markets and unrivalled creative, production, distribution and commercial capabilities.



FNU assists in the construction of first kindergarten facility in Wairiki



For the first time in history, the Wairiki community in the Province of Cakaudrove will have access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) facility from next year. This has been possible with the assistance from the Fiji National University (FNU) and a charity organisation – Children of Fiji. FNU Head of Labasa Campus, Pardeep Lal said through the partnership they were able to assist the community have its first pre-school education facility, which is now part of the Wairiki District School. Following consultations between the school head and management, the founders of Children of Fiji – Peter and Margaret from the United Kingdom, agreed to fund the project. Lal said he was happy to assist in facilitating and overseeing the project delivery. “There was a depleted building at the school and the school decided to upgrade it for this good cause given the importance of ECE nowadays,” said Lal. “Two years ago, I informed Peter and Margaret about the community not having access to an ECE facility and they agreed to fund the renovation works.” Upon agreement from the school management and the community, FNU’s School of Building and Civil Engineering from Labasa Campus took up this project as part of its community outreach project and corporate social responsibility. Lal negotiated with the school management to provide a quarters for the FNU team, which they happily did. Lal said as the national university, FNU is committed to contributing towards the United Nations Sustainable Development goals through its learning, teaching and research, particularly SDG Goal 4 – which highlights the need for quality education. Tutor Navin Kishore and Certificate IV in



Student-led study makes key recommendations for residents of Wailea settlement

A group of students from Fiji National University’s (FNU) third year Urban and Regional Planning programme recently led a community effort to identify ways to improve the living conditions of many informal inhabitants living in the Wailea settlement in Vatuwaqa. Group Leader Eseroma Tuiyoyo said they were excited to undertake the project given that the Wailea settlement is home to over a thousand squatter dwellers but are isolated from the mainstream development. “This settlement is situated in an ideal location for growth and being located close to major business districts, the residential land use is expected to thrive in years to come,” said Tuiyoyo. Upon site survey, the aspiring town planners found that the living condition of people in the Wailea settlement is poor and needed urgent improvement measures. “There are poor building structures and improper and irregular path in the settlement. We have also noted improper dump carts and improper disposal of solid waste. There is no proper sewage system with no working and open space,” he highlighted. “One of the other major concerns is unemployment.” The team conducted a series of analysis to understand the composition of the community and in order to assist them better through their recommendations. “For demography analysis, we identified the age structure, average household income, movement pattern and access to water and electricity. For the physical condition, we focused on building structure and accessibility within the area. For natural conditions we identified the type of soil, slope classes, the wetland characteristics and mangrove types and its importance,” he added. To address these issues, the student group suggested constructing multi-unit flats that can be fairly occupied by the residents. “There needs to be proper planning for affordable and quality housing to meet the basic needs of the individuals because the majority of the houses are not well planned and structured.” The student group has also made a recommendation of implementing a proper waste disposal system for sewage as most of the waste disposal is placed along with the drain and dump carts are usually full in the area. “There should be an open space, natural beautification and a sitting area for people to relax and to have outdoor activities,” suggested the student. “We also proposed an effective drainage system to achieve climate change resilience amongst the people of Wailea because there is numerous surface water and some of the drainages are blocked.”

The student group has also submitted the options of having proper waste management, recycling system and the need to have a passive and active park for the residents of the area. “To mitigate the issue of unemployment, we have made a recommendation for creating a workshop for men and women resource centres. We have noted that five per cent of the total population of Wailea work within the area. The workshop will be a form of employment for them,” said Tuiyoyo. The third-year student revealed the project has already gained the attention of a non-government organisation in Fiji. “The response has been positive and we got the feedback from one particular NGO that wants to access our information,” he said. While acknowledging the efforts of the students, Team Supervisor and Senior Lecturer in Civil Engineering at FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology, Yuyun Qomariyah said students have done great work in providing a vision to improve the standard of living in Wailea settlement, focusing on socio-economic progress. “This project was part of the assignment for the third year urban and regional planning students. I am impressed with the hard work that they have put in this project and I am hoping the project would get the attention of other stakeholders including the government as well,” she said. It took the students 11 weeks to complete the extensive project.



FNU students identify new water source location for Namara District villagers



Bachelor of Civil Engineering (Honours) Students with Supervisor and Senior Lecturer, Cyril Rachman.

Five students from the Fiji National University’s (FNU) majoring in Bachelor of Civil Engineering (Honours) have identified a new potential site as the groundwater source for the villagers of Namara District in Tailevu.

The final year students from the College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) carried out their final project in the Namara district after consultation with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation’s Department of Water and Sewage earlier this year.

The students travelled to the interior of the Tailevu Province to undertake a survey and necessary tests after receiving the blessings from the village elders. Six villages in Namara District faced issues with regular water supply for some time.

“We were informed by the village elders that the 1157 people (as per the 2017 census) relied on water carting and shallow hand-dug well around the villages for their water needs,” said the student group Team Leader Francis John Chottu.

“We spent three days in the village for survey and data collection,” he added.

Following the site analysis, the students identified the current borehole sites in the villages. According to the students the boreholes were on a runoff region of the landscape and not situated in a good catchment area.

The research conducted by the FNU students also revealed that some of the boreholes are surrounded by homes, causing the water to have a high bacterial infection.

“There is only one borehole system in the village of Tabulevu that is currently active but it cannot supply water to the whole district,” Chottu explained.

Following a thorough investigation of close to eight months, the students identified the highest spot for the location of major tanks that could supply water to the entire population in the district.

The team used the Hydrogeological maps to identify areas to indicate shallow to moderate groundwater depth.

“Our team had resort to traditional skills used by hydrology experts abroad, for example, identifying the groundwater,” he said.

“Landscape offers clues to the hydrologist about the occurrence of shallow groundwater. Conditions for large quantities of shallow groundwater are more favourable under valleys or good catchment areas than under hills and plant-loving trees,” added Chottu.

“The research and finding have made it possible to design and propose a major off-grid for water supply system. It also exhibits the best way to determine the water demand for the village and how to better do the piping network along with the distribution,”

Team Supervisor and Senior Lecturer in Civil Engineering Cyril Rachman said the need for clean and efficient supply of water is a necessity in our daily lives.

Rachman said the Sustainable Development Goal 6 also highlights the importance to “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”

“We are delighted to be able to support the villages in identifying them a best possible location for the installation of the water tank that will supply water to the entire six villagers,” he said.

“I am extremely proud that our collaborative efforts have resulted in these findings and the solution,” concluded Rachman.

Rachman said each year students from CEST undertake similar hands-on practical projects that benefit the communities, strengthen the knowledge and experience of students.



Students in the field.

Matavou cherishes Marist 7s experience

Getting a chance to be up-close and have an opportunity to take a few selfies with some of the stars of the world’s best rugby sevens players is a dream for most rugby fans.

For the fourth year student, Amelia Matavou, this opportunity was presented to her when she was part of a 42-member physiotherapy students team from the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), who assisted during the 43rd Marist 7s tournament held in Suva earlier this year.

The contingent comprised of Year 3 and 4 students from the Bachelor of Physiotherapy programme who provided sports medicine assistance pre-game, on field, and rehab support.

“I learnt a lot on and off the field. This event helped me sharpen my clinical practice out on the sports field,” Matavou said.

The FNU Physio team were divided into groups to have one day on the field and one day off the field being attached inside the medical room with other health professionals.

The active lass said being part of the physiotherapy programme was more than a professional career pathway, after her family was involved in an accident.

“It was a terrible experience. My mother fractured her right side femur (thigh bone).”

“Fortunately through rehabilitation, my mother’s full functional status has been restored and I know the importance physiotherapists plays in the lives of injured people.”

Matavou shared this incident prompted her to undertake studies in physiotherapy.

She said input from her lecturers is important who “play a key role in helping to learn to assess, diagnosis and steps for treatment”.

“Marist 7s has taught me to understand the impact of sports and exercise on every player’s body such as concussions and repetitive movement injuries.”

The final year student said the hands-on field experiences were important as they provided students an opportunity to sharpen their skills, ability to think quickly and assist accordingly.

“As a student physiotherapist, field experiences allowed us to provide performance support to players and athletes through injury prevention and maintenance with additional recovery interventions.”

The President of Marist Rugby Club, Lawrence Tikaram commended the work done by the College.

“We care for all our players welfare and through the wonderful work of Fiji National University’s CMNHS, we are able to deliver our objectives,” Tikaram commented.

Dean CMNHS, Dr William May, said the College programmes were an ideal blend of theoretical learning and practical experience, developed through industry consultations.

“We provide opportunities in the classroom, on the field, during internships and research that is unparalleled to any other University in the country,” Dr May said.

“These students have undergone intensive First Aid In Rugby (FAIR) course certified by World Rugby, making them competent to serve in such competitions,” he highlighted.

Meanwhile, Associate Dean Learning and Teaching, Dr Tima Tuiketeti said new students



Amelia Matavou (right).

should be excited about joining CMNHS next year as community outreach and field experiences provide great learning experiences.

“Apart from the competencies and skills students are expected to attain, the clinical and field attachment provide additional strategies to achieve the CMNHS graduate attributes of being: Adaptable, Compassionate, Effective communicator, Ethical, Leader and Team player”.

Volunteerism allows exploring academic interests through a real-world lens: Goundar



Certificate IV in Electrical Engineering student, Shaneil Goundar.

The most cherished lessons are taught outside the classroom, and it is sometimes so easy to get stuck in a routine as a student with classes and assignments that we do not get the most out of education. But having hands-on experience in a real-world setting is one of the most valuable additions to education and skill set according to Shaneil Goundar.

Ba native, Goundar who has recently completed his Certificate IV in Electrical Engineering was part of the team that assisted with the renovations works at Ba Muslim Primary School. The project involved making temporary classrooms for Ba Special School which burnt down in July this year.

To see that Ba Special School students don’t miss out on their essential syllabus, Fiji National University (FNU) students pursuing studies from the School of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and School of Building and Civil Engineering assisted FNU staff with electrical, plumbing, carpentry and joinery works at Ba Muslim Primary school.

Goundar said he decided to be part of the project to give back to his community, as student life is about gaining knowledge and experience.

“Studying and hanging out with friends can take up a lot of our time; however, making time to volunteer can add value to our university experience.

“I wanted to test my theoretical knowledge, and there was no better way than offering my skills in the renovation of the school which would assist Ba Special School,” he said.

According to Goundar, along with his two other colleagues, they installed ceiling fans, did ducting works and replaced the power points.

“This was a team effort which included volunteers from other departments. We had a group of students who had the same perception as me that we need to get this done and work together to get it done,” said Goundar.

Goundar emphasised that volunteering is an essential part of preparing students to take responsibility and thanked his lecturers for the opportunity.

“While doing renovations works, it allowed me to see first-hand just how much our service can impact others.

“I also got to interact with people who were from diverse backgrounds and learned patience and empathy,” he said.

Volunteerism also provided Goundar with a prospect to explore his academic interest through a real-world lens.

“I was able to connect what I have learnt in class to issues that matter in real life after this volunteer stint,” he said.

Ba campus coordinator, Nikleshwar Datt said it was encouraging to see that students had the desire to get off campus and have an impact in the communities.

“This opportunity allowed students to learn about community service and also put into practice what they had learnt in classrooms,” he said.

The senior academic said that FNU programmes are designed in such a way that it enables students to apply skills learned in classrooms.

“Our courses prepare service-driven students who are ready to help when assistance is required, and the testament to this is the ten students who assisted with the renovation works.

“I would like to thanked the students for displaying their expert skills in completing the renovation works,” he said.

Earlier this year Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts had approached FNU to assist with renovation works, so that Ba Special School students can resume classes at Ba Muslim Primary.

Nurse Ligaiviu broadens her knowledge through outreach programme

Senior nurse and student, Naomi Ligaiviu describes the community attachment component which is part of the Post Graduate Diploma in Midwifery programme offered by the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) as enriching.

Ligaiviu, a 14-year veteran nurse, was part of a 30-member team, which was accommodated at five different villages in the Naitasiri Province, to complete community attachment which is a compulsory component of the study programme.

The aim of the exercise is to enable students to form partnerships with women and families in communities, identify social determinants that affect safe motherhood and to work with communities to address health concerns.

Coordinator, Latileta Gumatua, said the programme provides students a greater understanding of the Midwife’s role as health care provider utilising the philosophy of women-centred care, pre-conception and family planning.

“The outreach activity enables students to practice primary health care in the communities and initiate relationships with women and families using good communication skills,” said Gumatua.

“Students also empower communities through interactive presentations, group discussions, role-plays and other forms of health promotion activities,” she added.

For Ligaiviu, the attachment was “an experience of a lifetime”.

“As midwives, it was a privilege to experience how women live in challenging geographical locations, the food they eat, the way they live, structures that exist in their communities, the culture and tradition, their source of income and mode of transportation to nearby health facilities and many other factors which affects their lives,” said the fulltime registered nurse.

The trip to the remote village was memorable as the bus ride went through patches of unsealed tracks, lush green vegetation and creeks.

“The first week, we did our community profiling on safe motherhood, analysed our data on the second week and presented it to the community. Then we began with health promotion activities until the last day of our community attachment.”

The health education exercises created awareness on reproductive health and safe motherhood as well as included outpatient clinics and domiciliary visits.

“We also visited the nearby Primary school to hold sessions for men, youths, and women promoting reproductive health and safe motherhood.”

During the three week stay, the students also conducted a workshop on safe motherhood, pap smear screenings, demonstrations on Breast Self-Examination and other health-related sessions.

“We realised that women in villages had to manage multiple tasks ranging from household chores to accompanying their husbands on their farms, so we planned out outreach sessions

accordingly,” Ligaiviu added.

She said the community attachment component had taught her several valuable lessons of life.

“We were in a multi-racial setting and we understood the importance of forming relationship and connections with the women and the community as an important vehicle to empower them,” she commented.

Picking Ota (edible fern plant) in the afternoons, participating in activities such as fabric printing, making new memories and being treated like family were all part of her rural attachment experience.

In acknowledging the efforts from their lecturers and the College, Ligaiviu said she picked up an important message.

“A good midwife is not someone who is judgmental but someone who can understand any situation and render quality woman-centred holistic care”.



Ligaiviu (3rd from right).



FNU Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry students. Top left Jessica Dev, Maleta Koloa, Shayal Lal. Bottom left Shavneel Chetty, Archal Sainchal and Mitesh Chand. Picture: Supplied.

Students passionate about animals

Being affectionate towards animals and having a keen interest in taking responsibility of their health and wellbeing are strong motivating factors for students to enrol in the Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry degree programme at the Fiji National University (FNU).

Offered at the University’s College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), the five-and-a-half-year degree programme is the first of its kind in Fiji and aims to equip students with an understanding of basic animal biological principles and clinical skills for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of animal diseases.

Final year students Shayal Swastika Lal and Shavneel Nadan Chetty said the programme enabled them to gain the skills and experience needed whilst learning in a practical environment, helping out at animal clinics and through community service.

Lal, 25, said becoming a veterinarian, or vet for short, was a childhood dream that everyone in her family knew she had.

The Nausori lass said after completing high school, she settled on enrolling in a different field of study but was pleasantly surprised when her father called to inform her of the new Veterinary course at FNU.

“I was interested as this was my dream career so I enquired, applied and was accepted into the

programme,” she said with a smile.

“Throughout the programme, there were definitely highlights that my colleagues and I will never forget. But what I enjoyed most of all is the practical components of the programme where we did lab work and clinic classes.”

With internship a compulsory component of the course, Lal happily recounted her days helping out various organisations carry out its operations.

“Internship was a great learning experience for me and it was an eye-opener as I got to work with experienced personnel in the field and learn from them at the same time,” she said.

“I had six placements and was involved in their projects carried out. At the Ministry of Agriculture, I was at the vet pathology lab conducting brucella tests, semen testing and blood agar making.”

“As part of their Brucella, Tuberculosis (TB) Eradication campaign we went out into farms testing animals for brucella and TB.”

Lal said at the Society of the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals (SPCA) she was part of the anesthetics team and monitored animals under anesthesia while vets from overseas conducted the surgeries.

“At Animals Fiji, I was part of the Fijian Government’s Stray Dog population control campaign. I was given the opportunity to do some spays and neuters in Lautoka and Ba under the supervision of a registered vet.”

“I also participated in the Varroa Mite surveillance campaign at the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF).”

Reflecting on her journey throughout the programme, Lal said she wouldn’t be doing anything other than what she is doing now – working with animals.

Colleague Chetty echoed similar sentiments, saying the need for more vets in Fiji also highlighted the importance of his field of study.

The 24-year-old said hailing from a farming background in Labasa meant his family had a lot of farm animals such as cows to their name.

“Once, I experienced losing a calf since proper vet support was not provided,” he shared quietly.

“This was a memory I did not forget and I’m sure it motivated me to make a difference in this field.”

“Throughout the programme, there were lecturers coming in from different parts of the country with different experiences to pass on their knowledge to us.”

“The clinical units were interesting and fun. It was where all the knowledge learnt over the years had to be tested.”

Chetty said being on attachment at the Ministry of Agriculture, BAF and at SPCA in the Central Division and Animals Fiji, Rooster Poultry and Yaqara Pastoral Limited in the West made him more confident in his knowledge and capabilities.

“At the two animal clinics, I helped out mainly in their desexing operations.”

“Desexing is a surgical procedure performed under general anaesthesia which prevents sexual and reproductive behaviour, and related health and behaviour problems. In males, the surgery is called castration and involves the removal of the testicles. In females, the surgery is called spay and involves the removal of both the ovaries and the uterus.”

According to Animals Fiji, desexing has shown to be an efficient way of controlling the animal population.

Desexed animals experienced benefits such as their reduced roaming, aggression, wailing and barking, increased life span and the lowered risk of certain cancers.

Looking forward to graduation next month alongside his classmates, Chetty said he is ready and excited to commence work in his field of passion.

¹ <https://www.animalsfiji.org/about-us/our-work/spay-neuter-vaccinate>

Community projects/campaigns carried out by FNU College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) students and staff:

1. Spay and neuter clinic: CAFF staff and Year 4 Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry students in collaboration with Charles Stuart University, Australia at Yasawa Islands and Vatuwaqa, Suva.
2. Spay and neuter outreach to Kadavu Island community: CAFF staff and Year 5 Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry students.
3. SPCA population control outreach with CLAW (Communities Compliant with Legislation and Animal Welfare): Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry Year 5 students.
4. Anti Rabies Campaign on the occasion of “World Rabies Day” by BAF (Biosecurity Authority of Fiji): CAFF staff and Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry Year 3 students.
5. TNR (Trap, Neuter and Release) campaign organised by SPCA, Charles Stuart University, Australia and CAFF: CAFF staff and Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry Year 5 students.
6. Neuter clinic with SPCA: CAFF staff and Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry Year 5 students.



CAFF staff and students during the World Rabies Day campaign with BAF.



Uraia Aune (second from left) with his colleagues from FNU's food and beverage department.

A group of students studying Hospitality and Hotel Management at the Fiji National University (FNU) have been engaged to provide food and beverage services in corporate events, which provides them additional 'hands-on' training experience and opens the door for future jobs as they meet and interact with potential employers.

Team leader, Solomone Vakadegu, 23 said the group have been engaged with a number of customers requiring their services to deliver food and beverages to guests during special events.

"There is an increase in corporate functions and a range of personal and social events which had opened learning and earning opportunities for us students at Namaka Campus, Nadi," said Vakadegu.

"As a food and beverage services provider, we work to intensify customers service and provide food and drinks to customers at a particular location or customer's intended premises," he added.

Vakadegu, a second-year Bachelor of Hospitality and Hotel Management student, said that students enrolled in the hospitality and hotel management programme are notified if their services are required.

Pathway to the Hospitality industry through food and beverage services

"We have created a Viber group, and students are alerted, and they can register if they are interested in working for that particular event. We are paid hourly for the services, and we usually work for 8 hours," he said.

Vakadegu said this had assisted them in developing their theoretical knowledge into professional skills whereby apart from serving food and drinks, the group perform tasks, such as setting up tables, removing used dishes and preparing simple meals.

The soft-spoken Vakadegu said more than twenty students have been providing the service to the general public on occasions such as weddings, company and special events.

"This year we have assisted in various functions, and the recent one is the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad which was celebrated at Lautoka's Churchill Park," said the Vanualevu native.

Apart from providing a regular source of income, Vakadegu said the service had opened many opportunities for him and his colleagues.

"Been involved in this project has enabled me to develop, valuable skills and attributes such as time management and customer service.

"At times it is challenging balancing life and study and other personal commitments, but this experience is a stepping stone to my future career success," he said.

Vakadegu is glad that he can work within his passion and is able to apply the skills he has acquired during his theoretical classes.

"So far, I have learnt that it takes a positive attitude to be in the hospitality industry and not to be afraid to take new challenges, as sometimes we have extended hours and guest complaints, but if you are passionate about it, it is so much fun," he said.

Eric Jioje, Head of School, Hospitality and Tourism Studies, Department of Food and Beverage, said the opportunity allows students to experience for first-hand the feel of working in a hospitality sector.

"This is an excellent avenue for students to learn while at the same time get the additional income which complements them in studies," said Jioje.

"Students also gain a firm foundation in hospitality fundamentals before graduating," added the Head of School.

Uraia Aune, who is in his final year of studies majoring in Hospitality and Hotel Management, said he was able to develop critical analytic skills while involved in the project.

"I enjoy working at different events and my team is very supportive of me and encourage me to get out of my comfort zone and build my self-confidence in communicating with guests," he said.

Aune is currently undertaking his industrial attachment in the housekeeping department at Pullman Nadi Bay Resort and Spa, Fiji.

He said he finds it easy to blend with the team, as the involvement in the food and beverage service has assisted him in developing the relevant skill sets required to deliver the quality guests service.

The programme has prepared Aune to manage all kinds of events.

"Through the food and beverage service, I have gained relevant skillsets and acquired all aspects of restaurant and event management," said Aune.

Upon graduation, both Vakadegu and Aune want to specialise their career path in Food and Beverage Operations and Events Management, respectively.

The Bachelor of Hospitality and Hotel Management is offered by FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies from the Namaka Campus in Nadi.

Students get opportunity to assist BAF in protecting Fiji's borders

Border protection against the entry, establishment and spread of exotic pests and diseases is critical as it poses a threat to Fiji's plants, animals, citizens and the environment.

By monitoring the entry ports into Fiji through land, air and sea, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) manages quarantine controls at these borders and also provides import and export inspection and certification to help retain Fiji's favourable animal, plant and human health status and wide access to overseas export markets.

Being on attachment at BAF and contributing to the important operations of the organisation has been a learning experience for Fiji National University's (FNU), College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) students Nalisha Lal, Janesh Kumar and Nivedita Devi.

The Bachelor of Science in Agriculture students have been at the company for about three months and have been placed on a rotational basis at each of the different stations at BAF.

This provides them with the opportunity to observe and learn how BAF Officers execute their roles on the field, the seriousness of the nature of work undertaken and its importance to Fiji and its biodiversity.

Kumar, 22, is currently based at the Suva wharf and assists the BAF Officers in the boarding and clearance of cargo and other vessels and the inspection and tailgating of containers.

He said applying his theoretical skills and knowledge to day-to-day activities allowed him to build on his capabilities.

"The main reason I enrolled in the FNU programme was that I come from a farming background and I know the importance of plants and animals in our daily lives," Kumar said.

"Applying practical skills, theories and knowledge about agriculture show how important agriculture is to Fiji's economy since Fiji is a developing country. Hence agriculture plays an important role in Fiji."

"Being on attachment at BAF has deepened my interest in this field and I hope to join BAF after my graduation."

Lal, who is originally from Labasa, added that being part of the wide range of monitoring and surveillance operations at BAF amplified the wide scope of responsibilities of the organisation.

"Every day at BAF is a day of learning and I welcome the challenge to broaden my knowledge," the 22-year-old said.

"For now I carry our surveillance with the BAF team and this includes RIFA Surveillance (Red Imported Fire Ant), GAS Surveillance (Giant African Snail), CRB (Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, AGM Surveillance (Asian Gypsum Moth) and Fruit Fly Surveillance."

These are important operations as, for instance, fruit flies are a major concern because they cause damage to fruits and vegetables, affects the production and lowers the export of these products.

"New pests and diseases not only devastate our food security but can damage agriculture or



From left - Nalisha Lal, Nivedita Devi and Janesh Kumar at the BAF Office in Suva.

horticultural production, forestry and tourism and affect our international trade."

"Hence, it is vital to protect our border from pests and diseases."

Twenty-three-year-old Devi is placed at BAF's Suva Exports Office and said she was honoured to be part of operations that sought to maintain the biodiversity and sustainability of Fiji's flora and fauna.

The Naitasiri lass also encouraged more females to enter this field of study as they were various career opportunities available in the industry.

"This is a diverse area of study, agriculture is not just about farming," she said.

Although the trio is yet to be involved directly with communities through their attachment, the work they are currently doing is of paramount importance to farmers, exporters, businesses and communities around the country.

From Fitter Machinist to Operations Manager

From humble beginnings as a youngster employed as a Fitter Machinist, Jimi Taniela (*pictured*) today is the head of one of Fiji’s oldest and largest food production company the Flour Mills of Fiji Foods Limited. The jovial senior manager joined FMF in October 1994 and has served in various departments within the organisation. Taniela’s current role involves overseeing the operations of FMF from procuring prime Australian wheat, ensuring its proper storage and maintaining high-quality milling consistency. Being part of the senior management team, Taniela provides guidance and leadership to staff, assists in creating policies, business strategies and planning. He works closely with FMF stakeholders, handles budgets, ensures targets and day-to-day operations are met by his team.

The FMF production line provides Flour to households, bakeries and hotels in Fiji and to the whole of the Pacific region. Apart from this, Taniela manages the Pea Industries and Rice Company of Fiji and also assists with other tasks for the FMF Group which requires his expertise.

Tertiary Life and Career

Taniela was born in Suva and is the eldest of two other siblings.

After attending high school at the Cathedral Secondary School, he joined the Fiji National Training Council, currently known as the Fiji National University’s (FNU) National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC). He completed the National Trade Test Certificate for Tradesman Class III Fitting and Machining in 1986 with the Latter-Day Saint Technical College.

In 1987, he then enrolled in Trade certificate in Fitting and Machining at the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) which is now part of the FNU’s College of Engineering Science and Technology (CEST).

“FIT in those days taught everything. If you are enrolled in Fitting and Machining it did not mean you will only learn that but also other fields such as mechanical, electrical, communications and so on,” he said.

“One thing that remains the same between FIT and FNU now is that it is affordable and has a wide course offering with quality faculty/lecturers,” he added.

One of his fondest memories is walking around with his friends looking for an apprenticeship job.

“I remember very well there were three of us who had studied together since high school. We walked around Walu Bay Industrial area that day and walked into Industrial & Marine Engineering Ltd (IMEL). The company had only two slots and my friends were lucky and were recruited immediately. But my friends helped me get a job placement later,” he shared.

He managed to secure a position with Carlton Brewery Limited (CBL) as an apprentice and worked there till he graduated from FIT in 1988.

“I was very lucky. Carlton Brewery was looking for an apprentice and they hired me immediately. No interview needed,” said Taniela with a smile.

From here he worked briefly for British American Tobacco and Rewa Dairy Limited before being offered permanent employment at Lees Trading Limited as a Fitter Machinist and Welder and gradually progressed to a leading hand.

“Lees was offering a very good wage rate in those days, \$2.80/hr. which was fairly good so I was really happy,” he said.

In 1994, Taniela departed Lees to join FMF Food Limited as a Fitter Machinist and Welder. In 1998, he was promoted to Factory Manager of the Biscuit Company where he served for four years before moving to Atlantic and Pacific Packaging Co Ltd, a subsidiary of FMF Foods Limited as the Manager.

In 2016, he was promoted to his current position as the Operations Manager, overlooking the entire operations of Flour Mills of Fiji.

“When I came in for an interview with FMF, I was seated in the very office I am in today. Except I was in the visitor chair and the interview was being conducted by the General Manager, Anuj Patel,” he said.

Over the years, he has done various short courses in Fiji and abroad and has also graduated with an Advance Diploma in Quality Management with TAFE Australia and FNTC in 2005 which was funded by my employer FMF Foods Ltd.

In 2013, he completed a Master in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of the South Pacific (USP). He had also pursued a Post-Graduate Diploma in Advanced Analytical



Skills and Post-Graduate Certificate in Financial Administration from USP.

Taniela boldly said, “A Man with Dreams NEEDS a Woman with a Vision”. Taniela is married to Lavenia Taniela and they have four children and two grandsons. My eldest daughter is a graduate of USP and works as an Immigration Officer with the Department of Immigration and my only son is following my footstep, working as an Engineering Supervisor with Atlantic and Pacific Packaging Co Ltd: AtPack a subsidiary of FMF Foods Ltd and a graduate of FNU in Mechanical Engineering while my two young daughters are currently attending USP and Mahatma Gandhi Memorial School.

Words of Wisdom

Giving his advice to students Taniela said, work hard, stay focused to make it happen. “Life was difficult when I was young. There was not much guidance and we were not handed the silver spoon. Today’s children, however, have much more offered to them and they should make the most of it. Parents also have an important role to play. They need to guide, mentor and encourage their children. Whatever career path a child chooses, as parents we should support them, ensure they attain their life goals.”

About FMF

Founded by Mr Hari Punja in 1973 as Flour Mills of Fiji, FMF Foods Limited, today is a Group of Company, headquartered in Suva, comprising six manufacturing facilities, each specializing in its operations with a vision “To be the Most Admired Company in the Region”. FMF is the parent company to its six manufacturing companies; Flour Mills Biscuit Company of Fiji Limited, Snax Limited, Pea Industries Limited, Rice Company Fiji Limited, Atlantic Pacific Packaging Limited. FMF Foods Limited employs over 1000 people and is one of the few companies listed on the South Pacific Stock Exchange. Source: FMF LinkedIn Page