

2019 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

The International Day of Sports for Development and Peace promotes healthy lifestyles and emphasises the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) focus on giving as many people as possible access to sports. It is a day when some of the world's leading sports people work together with communities to bring sporting opportunities to enrich lives, particularly children.

According to the United Nations (UN), sports was ideally positioned to contribute towards its objectives for development and peace because of its vast reach. In 2013, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) declared April 6 the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP).

The IOC and the UN have a long-standing commitment to using sports as a tool for social change and have worked together on many projects over the years. Both organisations have used sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, to bridge cultural understanding and improve education, health, economic and social development.

The right of access to, and participation in, physical education, sport and play has long been recognised in a number of international conventions. In 1978, UNESCO described sports and physical education as a "fundamental right for all." But until today, the right to take part actively in physical education, play and sport has too often been ignored or disrespected in most countries.

Young people are arriving at Universities and Tertiary Institutions with limited experience in physical education and sport than ever before. Researchers have found that many teachers believe that physical education is not important, and time allocated to teaching physical education is better utilized in coverage of examinable subjects (Marshall, 2000; Hardman & Marshall 2000, hardman 1998).

Such beliefs deny students from establishing life-long healthy behavior patterns and boost scholastic success. Furthermore, it fails to acknowledge the contribution of physical education towards a child's holistic development. It is not good enough just to give a class a bat and a ball and say 'play cricket'.

We must teach them how to play, show them how to bowl and how to bat. Basic skills in sports must be taught and practiced during normal physical education classes. We should give them the experience of taking part in the many enjoyable physical education activities which are prescribed in the school curriculum.

We need to show students how to enjoy play and interacting with others. In addition, we need to teach them to play fairly and not to give up easily. Further we need to teach them activities which they will want to play with their friends and sports they can play out of school.

These are the things which make physical education classes as important as English, Mathematics or Science subjects.

Physical Education is accepted in Fiji as an essential part of the education curriculum at all levels. In reality, physical education has travelled a long way

from its inception to its current place in the realm of education. It is no longer a drill or marching, muscle building, physical training or sports. It is a way of educating a child holistically.

Of course, its tools, contents and methods are different, but it aims at educating a person like other academic subjects. It covers both body and mind therefore, it is wrong to consider that physical education only develops the physical aspects of a person. Besides physical fitness, it also contributes to the social, moral and mental development of a person.

The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace is a vital initiative to promote healthy lifestyles amongst young people through advocating the need to strengthen physical education and sports in schools and communities. Sports and physical education are powerful tools to promote peace, prosperity, fairness, respect, justice and tolerance amongst members of our society.

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The FNU educationist, researcher, sports enthusiast and former national rugby 7s and national volleyball coach is also an alumnus, having graduated from the then Nasinu Teachers College. He was one of the FNU Alumni Award winners in 2015.

He has a long career in teaching and senior roles in the Fiji Ministry of Education, and the development of sports and physical education in Fiji. He studied in India, Japan, Wales, West Germany, East Germany, New Zealand and Australia.

Cawanibuka was an executive member of the Fiji Rugby Union Board in 1994-1995 and successfully completed the International Rugby Board level three coaching course in 2000. He is the current Fiji University Sports Association President and Vice President of Oceania University Sports Association.

Cawanibuka authored Fiji's first ever physical fitness testing manual for primary and secondary schools in Fiji in 2016 based on research carried out through FNU.