

Komaiyasa highlights importance of hard work, empowerment



Makereta Komaiyasa participates in the International Day of Forests organised by FNU's College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) staff member, Makereta Sau Lomavatu Komaiyasa believes in the adage 'hard work pays off'.

As a child, Komaiyasa would be found working at the family plantation in Naloto, Verata, Tailevu helping her father with produce that would be sold at the market.

Being the eldest child with four siblings, Komaiyasa always ensured that she was a positive influence to those around her.

"I always knew that being the eldest meant that I had to be a role model and I always held my head high because while doing any tasks I would complete them and tell my siblings that regardless of a person being male or female, they can always achieve the results they want," Komaiyasa shared.

"My father is a farmer, so this was our livelihood as our income was sourced through farming. In order to produce goods to sell at the market we had to work hard physically out in the plantation tending to the crops and for me, my physical labour was always rewarded by the income our family needed to survive."

"Every school holiday, I would spend it in the village and this upbringing inspired me to make a living out of what I have been doing since childhood."

Komaiyasa has worked at the Fiji National University (FNU) for the past five years and made her way up the College hierarchy from a Student Attaché to Demonstrator, and is now a Forest Technician at CAFF.

The Tailevu native assists lecturers with practical classes in the field, laboratory and during tutorials as well as helping Forestry students with queries and coordinates student field visits.

"I am mindful of how I carry myself at work because just like when I was younger and trying to set a good example for my siblings, I am now helping others and contributing to their academic journey that would ultimately influence their success in life," she shared.

"At this College, gender balance is evident as we have a somewhat equal number of males and females in our agriculture, fisheries and forestry programmes. It is a step in the right direction seeing students studying in different fields of choice despite agriculture being traditionally regarded as a male-dominated field."

"Female students aspire to become like women leaders we have at the College. This is a good motivating factor for them."

She said opening up employment opportunities for women will create further financial security for families.

"I always remind the students to treat each other with respect and be open to dialogue and each other's beliefs and ideas," Komaiyasa said.

"Everyone has the same right to education, expression, to work and to explore opportunities available to them and we should not dampen the life journey of other's."

Whilst playing a crucial role in the lives of her students, Komaiyasa also has personal plans that she aims to achieve in the next few years. Her major goal is to operate her own commercial farming business within the next 10 years.